A 30-YEAR TREND ANALYSIS OF MALE REPRESENTATION AND OBJECTIFICATION IN *ESQUIRE* ADVERTISEMENTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................. 1  
  Purpose of Study .................................................................................................................. 1  
  Significance of Study .......................................................................................................... 2  
  Research Question ............................................................................................................. 3  
  Overview of Method ........................................................................................................... 3  

II. GENDER MAINSTREAMING .......................................................................................... 4  
  Theoretical Framework ...................................................................................................... 4  
  Criticisms of Gender Mainstreaming .............................................................................. 9  

III. GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN ADVERTISING ....................................................... 11  
  Original Research of Gender Representations ................................................................. 11  
  Gender Representations and Self-Perceptions ................................................................. 12  
  The Emergence of Metrosexual Men .............................................................................. 13  
  Media Images’ Effects on Men ......................................................................................... 13  
  Outline of Variables ......................................................................................................... 15  
  Variables ......................................................................................................................... 17  
  Clothing .............................................................................................................................. 17  
  Body Positioning ............................................................................................................... 21  
  Composition of Image ....................................................................................................... 23  
  Physical Build ................................................................................................................. 25  
  Occupation Representations ............................................................................................ 27  
  Product Display and Accompanying Text .................................................................... 30
Table 6.4: Statistical significance for all variables ........................................ 59

VII. DISCUSSION ........................................................................................................ 56

Overview of Study .................................................................................................. 56

Research Question and Hypotheses ........................................................................ 56

Findings by Hypothesis ............................................................................................. 62

Table 7.1: Overview of results ..................................................................................... 61

Answer to Research Question .................................................................................... 65

Limitations .................................................................................................................. 66

VIII. CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................... 67

Summary of Results ................................................................................................. 67

Future Research Suggestions ..................................................................................... 67

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................. 69

APPENDIX A: Operationalization ............................................................................. 76

APPENDIX B: Inter-Coder Reliability Codebook ....................................................... 78
A 30-Year Trend Analysis of Male Representation and Objectification in *Esquire* Advertisements

This study examines the representation and sexual objectification of men in *Esquire*’s advertisements. The analysis is based on a 30-year period, from 1980 to 2010. These years were chosen based on their historical context: the second wave of feminism – part of the equal rights movement – took place during the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, trends regarding the sexual objectification of men may be found as a result of an effort to equalize gender representations in the media. Past researchers have defined sexual objectification as “any presentation emphasizing sexually suggestive body parts or not including the head of the model in the picture” (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 6) and as occurring when “[a] female (or male) could be the object of another’s gaze or self-gaze. Alternatively, advertising characters might express alluring behavior…or be wearing provocative clothing” (Monk-Turner et al., 2008, p. 202). In the context of this study, sexual objectification refers to the exploitation of typically and stereotypically attractive men or women by the media through sexually suggestive poses, revealing attire, nearly-nude characters, or featuring only a part of the male body. In some scenarios, models may even be accompanied by sexual innuendo to sell either products or services.
While previous research has focused on women’s representations, few similar studies have been conducted about men. Although men are historically oppressed less often than women, this does not minimize the harm done to the male population through unattainable standards portrayed by advertisements in fashion magazines such as *Esquire*. The lack of studies of men’s representations and sexual objectification in the media suggests a further need of examination in this area. Some women-focused studies have been conducted over a long period (Kang, 1997; Lindner, 2004; Miller, 1997; Sullivan, 1988) yet only one other known study (Law & Labre, 2002) has focused solely on men; specifically, Law and Labre studied the influence that the growing metrosexual culture has on men.

According to Harrison (2008, p. 55), Mark Simpson coined the term “metrosexual” in 1994. Simpson (1994, p. 1) described the metrosexual as a “single young man with a high disposable income, living or working in the city (because that’s where all the best shops are)”. He also listed celebrity examples of metrosexuals, including David Beckham and Brad Pitt. The recent emergence of the metrosexual as an acceptable role has changed the way in which advertisers are marketing products to men, as well as opened up a broader fashion and hygiene market for this audience (Harrison, 2008). “Metrosexual man is a commodity fetishist: a collector of fantasies about the male sold to him by advertising” (Simpson, 1994, p. 1). The now-prevalent exposure of men to advertisements featuring unattainable standards of beauty has begun to rival what women have experienced for decades.
Researchers have speculated that one of the main reasons behind advertisers’ move toward the sexual objectification of men is the increased focus on gender mainstreaming. Political leaders and workforce managers are currently working with gender mainstreaming groups to create an equal environment for both men and women, and this ideology has spread to spectrums such as advertising representations. For years, feminists have attacked the media for featuring perfect (tall, thin, and beautiful) women as the societal norm, and now these erroneous images seem to have been transferred to men. Advertisers have been accused (Harrison, 2008; Law & Labre, 2002; Mager & Helgeson, 2011; Reichert & Lambiase, 2003) of creating body image issues among men by focusing on models’ perfect – and typically unattainable – bodies, thus causing a reliance of men on beauty products. These findings justify an extension of the existing research related to men’s portrayals in the media.

The primary research question is, in what ways have the representations and objectification of men in *Esquire* magazine advertisements changed over time? This is a content analysis of randomly sampled advertisements examining text, body positioning, clothing, composition of image, physical build, occupation representation, and product display in *Esquire* issues between 1980 and 2010. Issues were chosen from every five years during this time period, and all issues from each of these years were included for a total of 84 issues. All full-page, male-centered advertisements from these issues will be included. The findings will show what aspects of the advertisements contribute to the sexual objectification of male models.
CHAPTER TWO
GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Theoretical Framework

According to some scholars (Page, 2011; Rees, 2005; Scambor & Scambor, 2008), gender mainstreaming is currently the most successful approach to equalizing opportunities for members of politics and the workplace, regardless of sex. Some students of gender mainstreaming define it as “a process that seeks to advance gender equality by putting gender in the Centre of all mainstream policy areas” (Page, 2011, 318). While the majority of issues addressed by gender mainstreaming refer to inequalities toward women, this study employs the theoretical concept to argue that as various advocacy groups fight for women’s equitable representation and treatment in the media, the same advocacy to fair treatment and objectification should be applied to men. The purpose of this study as far as gender mainstreaming is concerned is to determine the scale of media representation of men in Esquire magazine as a determinant for a call to gender mainstreaming in defense of men on this particular subject matter.

According to Rees (2005), since its inception in the 1970s, there have been three approaches to gender mainstreaming. The first, “tinkering,” was introduced during the 1970s and dealt with legislation issues regarding employees’ sex. “The starting position is men, and therefore the law is framed in terms of needs as defined by men’s experiences” (Rees, 2005, p. 557). Equal treatment legislation was proposed
during this time as a solution to the gender inequity issue, but on a minor, individualized scale. The 1980s brought about “tailoring, … an approach based on rectifying the effects of past indirect discrimination on a group basis as a result of policies historically being designed to meet the needs of men” (Rees, 2005, p. 558).

Finally, during the 1990s gender mainstreaming leaders began “transforming,” or applying their solutions to the masses, targeting structural flaws at the most basic level.

Gender mainstreaming turns the focus away from individuals and their rights to equal treatment, and from groups and ameliorating their historical disadvantage, to address the ways in which systems and structures infringe those rights and cause that disadvantage in the first place. It is about embedding gender equality in systems, processes, policies and institutions. (Rees, 2005, p. 558)

“Transforming” has led to modern gender mainstreaming which surpasses international boundaries, spreading throughout the United Nations and the European Union (Page, 2011; Rees, 2005; True, 2003). This approach is more successful than past strategies because unlike equal treatment legislation, which treats women the same as men, it treats women equally to men while respecting the differences between the two sexes. Additionally, gender mainstreaming is superior to past positive action approaches because it does not portray women’s differences as a problem, thus “mov[ing] away from accepting the male, or rather a dominant version of masculinity as the norm” (Rees, 2005, p. 559).

The theory of gender mainstreaming is not limited solely to studying gender representation in the media, or treatment of male and female members of the
workplace; it has been applied to agriculture and politics – specifically, decreasing the gender pay gap. Regarding agricultural issues, gender mainstreaming is a tool for societies to increase the economic value of land by equalizing the treatment of male and female landowners and land workers. Evers & Hofmeister (2011, p. 1317) argued that in order for land to have full economic benefit, women and men must “have equal access to and control over (spatial) resources….What is also important is that the realities of everyday (social) female life and activities are recognised and valued”. This includes the value of women’s reproductive roles, which have in the past been underappreciated.

Evers & Hofmeister (2011, p. 1318) provide an example of a modern government that has successfully embraced gender mainstreaming in order to improve agriculture. Mayoress Beate Weber of Heidelberg, Germany, instituted “gender-sensitive town planning strategies [that] have been in place for some time”. In order to equalize women with men, Weber held “round tables and ‘future workshops’ run by and for women, and these made a major contribution to upgrading the town’s district planning and land use policies”. These forums give women a safe place to share their ideas without fear of degradation by their male peers, who are used to having all of the power.

Another use of gender mainstreaming lies in the field of politics, namely the gender-pay gap. While previous attempts to secure equal gender pay have focused on comparing men to women, applying gender mainstreaming allows for a discussion regarding “gendered institutions, norms and policies, as the problem that must be
addressed” (Eveline & Todd, 2009, p. 542). Eveline & Todd (2009, p. 543) cite three different countries that are currently host to companies adopting equalized pay due to gender mainstreaming applications: France, Sweden, and the UK. These companies have reviewed not specific men’s and women’s characteristics, but their wage laws in general in search for gender-based criteria.

Through similar reviews of wage laws, some governments in Australia have found that their society unfairly values the use of technology – stereotypically a male skill – over the ability to communicate with individuals and build relationships – stereotypically a female skill (Eveline & Todd, 2009, p. 545). Thus, men have historically been paid more not because of their gender, but because the skills instilled in them have a higher societal value. Gender mainstreaming shows governments and policymakers that “dealing with the gender pay gap through a purely technical process of legislation, auditing, reviewing, monitoring and accountability measures will never be enough,” but removing the stigmatized devaluation of “women’s work” is the first step to diminishing the pay gap (Eveline & Todd, 2009, p. 553-54).

Gender mainstreaming has been applied and evaluated within the European Union as a whole, too, in studying women’s access to the same positions and opportunities as men. Sarikakis and Nguyen (2009) question the application of equal treatment legislation to which the majority of policymakers default when dealing with men and women in the workplace. They proposed that gender mainstreaming would be far more effective in solving the problem of underrepresentation and lower pay for women than equal treatment legislation.
Through positive action, inequalities can be redressed proactively by creating the conditions for women’s access to positions. Often this is thought to mean that women’s ‘difference’ is simply adapted to fit in a men’s environment. GM is hoped to correct inequality without denying difference by integrating a gender dimension into organizations” (Sarikakis & Nguyen, 2009, p. 205).

However, a major obstacle to implementing gender mainstreaming instead of equal treatment legislation is that the two are often mistaken as synonymous for each other. “In the case of the EU, there is a misconception that GM simply means equal opportunities (EO)” (Sarikakis and Nguyen (2009, p. 205). Introducing gender mainstreaming into policymaking is actually a much more intensive process than creating equal treatment legislation because “the transformative nature of GM requires an agenda-setting approach, which involves fundamental re-thinking from a gender perspective” (Sarikakis & Nguyen, 2009, p. 206).

This re-thinking of gender roles within the workplace relates to the objectification of women and, now, men by the media. No longer can advertising regulators state that male and female models should be treated equally; they must borrow from the implementation of gender mainstreaming in other areas of society by determining the problems that each gender faces in the media and creating individualized “long-term strateg[ies]” that leave room for “continuous evaluation” (Sarikakis & Nguyen, 2009, p. 205).
Criticisms of gender mainstreaming

Some researchers argue that gender mainstreaming is not as successful as others believe (Prügl, 2009; Scambor & Scambor, 2008). One reason for this skepticism is that some governments’ past tendencies to sabotage the implementation of gender mainstreaming – either intentionally or not – by being too lax with enforcement or twisting it to achieve different goals. Prügl (2009) summarized this concern in her evaluation of the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming, in which she concluded that it could create change if approached correctly and with caution.

Governments and international organizations often have lacked the will to implement gender mainstreaming, have used it as an excuse to cut women-focused programs, have distorted feminist goals in the process of implementation and have co-opted feminist rhetoric for their own agendas. (Prügl, 2009, p. 175)

Another criticism of gender mainstreaming is that men would not support this ideology, typically because they fear a loss of power (Scambor & Scambor, 2008, p. 305). However, the equalities that men stand to gain from gender mainstreaming are usually omitted from reports. There are still some areas within politics and the workforce in which women have better-protected rights than men. For instance, according to Scambor & Scambor (2008), men are exposed solely to the production aspect of society, while women are exposed to both the production and reproduction spectrums. This exposure “limits the scope of development as a human being… [and] may contribute to a range of problems (e.g., health problems, risk taking, violence, etc.)” (Scambor & Scambor, 2008, p. 306). Additionally, since men are seen as
producers and not reproducers, they are thrust into the working role as opposed to spending time with their families.

Gender mainstreaming can offer a solution to these male workplace issues, including unequal parental leave policies. Within the media, however, it seems that an effort to mainstream gender has come at a price to men rather than a benefit to women. The increased objectification of men in magazine advertisements that this paper proposes may be a direct result of society’s attempt to mainstream gender in the media. Instead of successfully achieving this, policymakers have instead equalized treatment of the two sexes. Equal treatment has not ended the objectification of women that has been occurring for decades (Goffman, 1979; Reichert & Carpenter, 2004), but has led to advertisers targeting men as well.
CHAPTER THREE

GENDER REPRESENTATIONS IN ADVERTISING

Since the 1970s, gender representations in advertisements have been a popular topic of discussion in the communication field. According to Kang (1997), Goffman pioneered this area of study in 1979, shortly after the women’s liberation movement in the United States. Through his examination of the representation and sexual objectification of female models in 508 print advertisements, Goffman (1979, p. 68) found a trend of women being represented as sexually suggestive, such as “posed lying on the floor or in a bed”. Additionally, Goffman found that women were frequently portrayed as physically smaller than accompanying men (Goffman, 1979, p. 40), inferior to men (Goffman, 1979, p. 32), and withdrawn from the viewer (Goffman, 1979, p. 57).

While Goffman has since been criticized by researchers like Kang (1997) and Lindner (2004) for hand-picking the advertisements included in his study rather than using randomly-collected samples, his results still spurred further research about the representation and sexual objectification of women in the media (Dempsey, 2009; Frith & Mueller, 2003; Kang, 1997; Lindner, 2004; Miller, 1997; Monk-Turner et al., 2008; Reichert & Lambiase, 2003). These researchers altered Goffman’s methodology to include random samplings of advertisements and expanded our understanding of this phenomenon with new variables. Despite these changes, studies have continually
supported Goffman’s original findings. However, the area of male representations in
advertising is still relatively unexplored.

Studying gender representations in the media is important because of the
supposed impact they have on society and, particularly, individuals’ self-perceptions.
According to Korwin-Piotrowska, Korwin-Piotrowska, and Samochowiec (2010),

[s]elf perception is a set of features, which one identifies with. Such a
self-picture is created and modified throughout the lifetime. It consists
of convictions about one’s general appearance, physical and intellectual
condition, abilities, activity, social position, attractiveness, individual
needs, moral regulations, etc. The most important activity of self
perception is conducting activities aiming to protect, keeping and
developing one’s ego. (p. 63)

Martin and Gnoth (2009, p. 355) stated that there are three types of self: the
private, collective and public selves. “Research shows that private and collective self-
construals can be primed and that priming the collective self results in people caring
about what important others might think”. These “important others”—and, therefore,
this priming—come from a variety of sources including media and, specifically,
advertisements. There is speculation in this area of study that the self-construal has
changed over the years, especially regarding men. For this reason, this current study
undertakes a trend analysis to test that hypothesis over a span of three decades (Kang,
1997; Lindner, 2004; Miller, 1997; Sullivan & O’Connor, 1988).

Frith & Mueller (2003) have outlined the importance of studying gender
representations in the media, which have in the past been only attributed to women.
These include:

- the issue of stereotypes shaping children’s views of gender at a young age.
• the effect of unattainable beauty representations on teenage girls.

• the later effect of gender stereotypes’ impact on adults’ perceptions of gender expectations.

This last effect is expanded on by Frith & Mueller (2003, p. 93) who determined that it was one of the main problems that advertising poses. “In the case of women, there has been overwhelming evidence that advertisements have historically presented ‘traditional, limited and often demeaning stereotypes.’” These include the existing perceptions that women are sexual objects to be enjoyed by men and that women are passive, submissive and inferior.

In the past twenty years, men’s representations in advertisements have gained increasingly more media attention. This began with Simpson’s (1994, p. 1) identification of the metrosexual, a man who invests in his appearance to the same extent as women. Simpson’s metrosexual ideology caused a whirlwind of male-targeted advertisements for products that used to be solely for women, including face cream and high-end clothing. In fact, “the grooming market for young males in North America was worth around $8 billion last year [2002], and is growing fast” (“Real Men”, 2003, p. 2). However, this new marketing group has not emerged without consequences. Over the same time span, the number of men with body image and eating disorders significantly increased (Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000, p. 27). In fact, in 1997 the number of men who were dissatisfied with their chest outnumbered that of women who were dissatisfied with the same body area (Pope et al., 2000, p. 28). “Hidden behind the glossy images of handsome faces and toned, muscular
bodies…are an increasing number of adolescent males and grown men with body image dissatisfactions and dysfunctions such as [body dysmorphic disorder].” (Harrison, 2008, p.70).

Therefore, researchers in the early 2000s explored harmful male stereotypes perpetuated by advertisements, mainly regarding unattainable body images (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996; Martin & Gnoth, 2009; Patino, 2005). The examination of male models in advertisements began in 1996. Kolbe and Albanese (1996) researched the representations of men in male-audience magazines. That study found that male models were portrayed as overly masculine and fit, unlike the average male viewer. Law & Labre’s, (2002, p. 702) content analysis of male models in GQ, Rolling Stone and Sports Illustrated between 1967 and 1997 supported the theory that men in the media are increasingly being represented as lean and muscular. Additionally, Rohlinger (2002) found that, regardless of gender, audiences critiqued their own bodies by comparing them to the bodies of models in advertisements. Thus, according to Rohlinger (2002), the increase in perfectly-sculpted male models caused insecurities and, in severe cases, self-loathing that led to low body esteem, drastic diets, and body modification surgeries.

Increasingly, these consequences are manifesting in men, who are responding to a consumer culture that is less and less forgiving of those who are not sufficiently young, thin, and attractive….In short, men are increasingly dissatisfied with their bodies, go to great lengths to achieve a more youthful and hard-bodied appearance, and are suffering the psychological consequences that are a side effect of consumer culture. (Rohlinger, 2002, p. 70)
In addition to unhealthy diets, male use of steroids and other supplements, sometimes untested or unhealthy, increased along with the presence of sexualized male images in the media (Law & Labre, 2002, p. 700). Men were resorting to these methods because while the average consumer always tried to mimic media images, these images were no longer as attainable as “the ‘John Wayne’ look…. the new ideal seen in the mass media does not represent the body type most men have, just as female fashion models seen in the mass media do not represent the way most American women look” (Law & Labre, 2002, p. 706). As a result, eating disorders and body dissatisfaction among men—a problem attributed only to women in the past—were recognized as growing problems because of the media’s representation of male models (Gadalla, 2009; Lavender & Anderson, 2010; Maine & Bunnell, 2008; Ousley, Cordero, & White, 2008).

The literature presents six general categories on the question of representation and objectification, which are central to the current thesis: clothing; body positioning; composition of image; physical build occupation representation; and accompanying text and product display (see Appendix A). Some literature overlaps categories, and its importance in each fitting category is discussed. Kolbe & Albanese (1996) made a compelling explication and examination of the variables used in this study with their groundbreaking, cross-magazine content analysis on this subject.

Clothing and body positioning are considered the most obvious indicators of sexual objectification of a model. Clothing refers to the amount of clothing worn more so than the type of clothing. Body positioning refers to the way a model is posed, such
as in a standing or seated position, which can be used to portray sexuality and submissiveness. Composition of image indicates the main aspect of an advertisement, specifically, how much space the model occupies in comparison to the product for sale. Physical build references the model’s body type, ranging from thin to overweight. The models’ occupation may reinforce the perceived trend in advertising of portraying male models as unattainable by presenting them as high-powered executives (Harrison, 2008; Law & Labre, 2002; Mager & Helgeson, 2011). Finally, product display and accompanying text refer to the actual item or service being advertised, as opposed to the model. However, a lack of these two elements, or of their relevance to the item for sale, can be used as further evidence of sexual objectification of male models.

Previous studies also have examined how advertising affects human behavior and self-perception through semiotic analyses. Williamson (1978, p. 17), who used semiotics, defined it as a sign or “a thing—whether object, work, or picture—which has a particular meaning to a person or group of people.” She split the study of signs into two groups: the signifier and the signified, “whereby a signifier ‘means’ – denotes – a specific signified” (Williamson, 1978, p. 99). This type of analysis is subjective, because “while advertising texts fix symbols or images they do not fix meaning, which requires reader’s active interpretation” (Leiss, Kline, Jhally, & Botterill, 2005, p. 162). Unlike content analysis, semiotic analysis lacks specific instructions (i.e. a coding book) to be used in analyzing samples, making it difficult to obtain uniform research.
Clothing

Models’ clothing is important not just to determine if a model is sexually objectified through lack of clothing, but also to study the idea that men in advertising represent a metrosexual male image that the average man cannot attain. This unattainable figure, created partly through clothing worn by male models, “persuade[s] other young men to study them with a mixture of envy and desire” (Simpson, 1994, para. 14), thus creating the same body dissatisfaction issues among male audiences that female audiences have faced for decades.

Soley and Reid (1988) conducted a content analysis of both male and female representations in Cosmopolitan, Redbook, Esquire, Playboy, Newsweek, and Time advertisements, comparing results between 1964 and 1984. They focused on the amount of clothing worn by models, using a four-point scale that ranged from demure (everyday dress) to nude (Soley & Reid, 1988, p. 962). They found that the level of nudity in advertising increased over the 20-year period. “In 1964, 79% of the adult models were demurely dressed compared to 70% in 1984;… and in 1964, 5% of the models were nude compared to 8% in 1984” (Soley & Reid, 1988, p. 963). Sixteen years later, Reichert and Carpenter (2004, p. 827) replicated that study, focusing on an updated time span: 1983 to 2003. The latter’s findings showed that on average over the 30-year time span, female models were nude or partially-clad (wearing underwear or swimwear) 19 percent of the time, and male models were nude or partially-clad 13 percent of the time. Additionally, the percentage of female models in these clothing categories showed a three-percent increase (with 19 percent in 2003), while the
percentage of male models increased by six percent (with 15 percent in 2003) (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004, p. 828). This is indicative of the trend among advertisers to equalize, rather than liberate, male and female models.

Kolbe & Albanese (1996, p. 12) examined clothing in male advertisements from the 1993 issues of *Business Week, Esquire, GQ, Playboy, Rolling Stone*, and *Sports Illustrated*. They focused on 19 categories, including type of clothing (such as “classic menswear”), underwear, and nudity. Their research found that “popular clothing styles are business suits or casual wear, both conveying an upscale lifestyle” (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 17). Their results support the belief that the metrosexual man, as defined by Simpson (1994), was prevalent in advertising. That study did not focus on the objectification of men so much as the lifestyle represented by their clothing. However, two of the 19 categories,—"nude or partially clothed" and "underwear",—were related to objectified clothing (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 17). Additionally, the researchers also coded the frequency of models whose bare chests were shown, although this category was placed under the "body characteristics" section (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 7).

A year later, Miller (1997) studied the amount and type of clothing worn by female models in magazine advertisements. She conducted a content analysis based on randomly-sampled advertisements from 1975 to 1995 in *People, Time, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, TV Guide, Cosmopolitan, Glamour*, and *Field and Stream*. The authors ranked both the clinginess of clothing and the amount of skin visible on the models’ chests, backs, and midriffs on a scale of one to five. In that study, one
represented “very low” and five represented “very high” clinginess or visibility (Miller, 1997, p. 31). Additionally, the same five-point scale was used to rank models’ nudity levels (Miller, 1997, p. 32). Although that study did not find statistically significant changes in the attention paid to sexuality among the different years (Miller, 1997, p. 44), results showed that over 25% of both traditional and nontraditional advertisements in each year had a high level of sexuality (Miller, 1997, p. 45).

That same year, Kang’s (1997) content analysis of women’s representations examined advertisements in Vogue, Mademoiselle, and McCall’s. Kang’s study expanded Goffman’s (1979) original analysis of women in advertising by adding two foci, including “body display”, to the original five categories. She also improved the validity of the original findings because her advertisements were randomly selected (Kang, 1997, p. 983). Women were coded based on their clothing type and amount; specifically, Kang (1997, p. 985) wanted to study the amount of women who were featured in “body-revealing clothes or nudity.” She showed that women were more likely to be “in ‘sexy’ dress or nude” in 1991 than in 1979 (Kang, 1997, p. 993).

Meanwhile, Lindner (2004, p. 414) used “body display” as a category in her content analysis of female models in Vogue and Time. Lindner (2004) showed that the amount of women wearing little to no clothing was smaller in the 1985 to 2002 period (9.7 percent) than in the 1955 to 1975 period (11.5 percent) (Lindner, 2004, p. 418). Law and Labre (2002) later conducted a content analysis of men’s images in GQ, Sports Illustrated, and Rolling Stone advertisements from 1967 to 1997. While their study did not directly focus on clothing type or amount, Law and Labre’s (2002)
determination of advertisements indirectly provided information on sexy-dressed men during the period of study. Based on this description, a total of five percent of male models in these magazines’ advertisements were featured in what is considered “sexy-dress” during the thirty-year time period.

In his analysis of the progression of male underwear advertisements throughout the twentieth century, Jobling (2003) noted a significant decrease in the amount of clothing worn by underwear models. He mainly discussed Calvin Klein's "tantalizingly voyeuristic advertisements" and the increased use of male bodies, like Mark "Marky Mark" Wahlberg's "buff torso," as a popular sales technique (Jobling, 2003, p. 147). Additionally, Jobling (2003) showed examples of underwear advertisements from 1930, 1932, and 1945, and demonstrated a subtle but visible decrease in models' clothing. Finally, Jobling (2003, p. 159) concluded with a 1995 advertisement for Gucci underwear, featuring a nude male model facing away from the camera. That demonstrates a drastic change from the conservatively-clothed models of the 1930s and 1940s.

Another content analysis conducted by Saucier and Caron (2008) included clothing amount as a category for coding advertisements in gay-audience magazines The Advocate, Genre, Instinct, and Out. Their results showed that 52 percent of male models were shirtless in these advertisements between 2001 and 2004 (Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 513). Monk-Turner et al. (2008, p. 202) also examined men’s clothing compared to their representation in advertisements in Cosmo Girl, Seventeen, Country Living, Men’s Health, For Him Magazine, Golf Magazine, People, US News and
World Report, and PC Magazine. One of their three criteria for determining the sexualization of men was if the models were “wearing provocative clothing (i.e. half-dressed, tight fitting, low-cut, sexy clothes or no clothes at all)”. Monk-Turner et al. (2008, p. 205) found that 82 percent of advertisements from the 2003 issues of the aforementioned magazines featured provocatively-clothed models.

**Body positioning**

When a model is included in a still advertisement, body positioning is very influential of how viewers will interpret their power and social standing (Goffman, 1979, p. 40). For purposes of this study, body positioning refers to the posture of the model, whether standing, sitting, or featured in some other position (see Appendix A).

In his study of women in advertising, Goffman (1979, p. 40) introduced the idea of a “ritualization of subordination.” He focused on the trend of advertisers to feature either a male-female model pair or a lone woman. In the first case, Goffman (1979, p. 40) noted a tendency for the female model to be beneath the male, either because she was shorter or because she was in a seated position while he stood. In the second case, he found that women were often pictured lying down, bent over, or seated when in an advertisement by themselves, placing them in positions “from which physical defense of oneself can least well be initiated and therefore one which renders one very dependent on the benignness of the surround” (Goffman, 1979, p. 41).
By translating this idea to focus on male models, Kolbe & Albanese (1996, p. 9) also examined body positioning. They studied mainly the positioning of the head and torso, while for the purposes of this study body positioning refers to the positioning of the model’s entire body. The rationale for the different approach is because the position of a model’s whole body is more relevant to the purposes of studying sexual objectification than is the tilt of the head; however, facial angling is included as a variable. This was drawn from Kolbe and Albanese, who also studied the point of gaze of male models. “Orienting the model’s head and directing his eyes purposefully away from the camera lens while presenting his torso in line with the camera…is often associated with being a rebel, loner, or other type of detached male” (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 8). Their findings showed that over 25 percent of models were looking away from the camera. “This point of gaze strongly suggests that many men were presented in such a way as to convey aloofness and detachment” (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 8).

In her follow-up to Goffman’s book, Kang (1997) re-examined the body positioning of women in advertisements. Images that fit into her idea of body positioning, or “ritualization of subordination,” included “configurations of canting postures [that] can be read as an acceptance of subordination, an expression of ingratiation, submissiveness, and appeasement” (Kang, 1997, p. 985). The variables listed for ‘ritualization of subordination’ were female lowering, bashful knee bend, and lying or sitting on a bed or sofa (Kang, 1997, 987). Regarding these variables, Kang (1997, p. 990) showed a slight decrease in female lowering between 1979 (22.2
percent) and 1991 (19.3 percent); a slight increase in bashful knee bending (31.7 percent compared to 37.5 percent); and a slight decrease in lying or seated models (14.7 percent compared to 12 percent).

Lindner (2004, p. 413) updated findings on the ritualization of subordination among female models in advertisements even further by focusing not just on different time periods, but also on different magazine genres. Therefore, her results show two different sets of findings. First, Lindner (2004, p. 418) found a significant difference in ritualization of subordination variables between Vogue, which showed 38.2 percent of women in these positions, and Time, which featured the subordination of women in only 25 percent of advertisements. Secondly, overall findings spanning both magazines showed a significant decrease in the ritualization of subordination from 35.1 percent between 1955 and 1975 to 28.1 percent between 1985 and 2002 (Lindner, 2004, p. 418).

**Composition of image**

Pulled directly from past research, composition of image in this study required coders to identify the main aspect of an advertisement. For instance, one advertisement may focus mainly on text appeals, another on a model’s body part, and a third on an equal distribution of both (see Appendix A).

Although none of his categories focused directly on the composition of image, Goffman (1979, p. 29) introduced this variable through his discussion of the feminine touch, where women “are pictured using their fingers and hands to trace the outlines of
an object or to cradle it or to caress its surface…or to effect a ‘just barely touching.’”

Many of his examples for this descriptor consist solely of a woman’s hands or fingers presenting the advertised product to the viewer. Later researchers included this as its own entity in their list of variables.

According to Kolbe and Albanese (1996, p. 4), sexual objectification of a model “occurs when advertisers present sexually suggestive body parts or do not include the person’s head in the photograph”. This definition exemplifies the composition of image category. Advertisements featuring solely a man’s face imply a greater competency than advertisements featuring his entire body, yet five of six magazines were found to predominantly use advertisements featuring full-body models (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 8). The study found a majority of advertisements focused on men’s bodies rather than their successes or abilities, as would be implied by a full-face shot. Further, Kolbe and Albanese (1996) examined the objectification of models and reported the percentage of models whose bodies, but not heads, were shown in an advertisement. Kolbe and Albanese (1996, p. 6) defined objectification as “any presentation emphasizing sexually suggestive body parts or not including the head of the model in the picture.” These numbers were highest in *Esquire*, *GQ*, and *Playboy*, with 6.5 percent, 6.1 percent, and 4.2 percent of male models objectified, respectively.

In their study of the body composition of male models, Law and Labre (2002, p. 701) reported a slight increase in the presence of male bodies in advertisements. They found that from 1967 to 1997, the percentage of male bodies increased from 47
percent to 50 percent. Several years later, Mager and Helgeson (2011, p. 241) also examined the “consumerist trend” of the sexualization of men in advertisements. Their research focused on magazines with a variety of target audiences, including *Cosmopolitan, Ladies’ Home Journal, Esquire, Popular Mechanics, Reader’s Digest, National Geographic, and Time.* Although their hypothesis that a growing trend of advertisements would feature only a male body part was not supported, they found an “increasing trend of females and males positioned in suggestive ways in magazine advertisements” between 1950 and 2000 (Mager & Helgeson, 2011, p. 248). That study showed a noticeable acceptance of sexuality as part of modern culture.

**Physical build**

There are several studies that have focused on the physical build of male models as well (Readdy, Watkins, & Cardinal, 2011; Kolbe & Albanese, 1996; Law & Labre, 2002). According to Readdy et al. (2011, p. 311), the near-exclusive representation of male models as muscular or lean and toned became as common a trend in modern advertising campaigns as the decade-long representation of women as thin. However, this body type is an unrealistic goal for many men who may consequently suffer from physical and mental diseases, such as muscle dysmorphia or low body esteem (Readdy et al., 2011, p. 316; Law & Labre, 2002, p. 698).

Interest in the physical build of models has stemmed from Goffman's (1979, p. 28) original examination of their relative size. He focused mainly on female models' height, that women were typically pictured as shorter and, inferentially, less powerful
than men. Goffman included examples of advertisements that pictured women as taller than men; however, he denoted that the only instances where this reverse-size occurred were when the male models were "not only subordinated in social class status, but also thoroughly costumed as craft-bound servitors" (Goffman, 1979, p. 28).

Researchers' focus on models' sizes was transformed by Kolbe & Albanese (1996, p. 11), who coded male models based on their physical build instead of their height as compared to female models. "Body types were classified according to whether they were soft and round (endomorphic), strong and hard (mesomorphic), or thin and lightly muscled (ectomorphic)" (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 11). Findings in this category showed that advertising does not include models who represent the average man. "On the body type dimension, the majority of men have the physique of the traditional male icon–strong and muscular. Few men have softer bodies" (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996, p. 17).

Law & Labre (2002) expanded research on male models' physical appearance in advertisements. The models' fat and muscularity levels between 1967 and 1997 were categorized on a range of eight body compositions, from “low body fat/not muscular” to “high body fat/somewhat muscular”. Their results showed a significant increase in the “muscularity and leanness” of male models in men’s magazines over the examined time period (Law & Labre, 2002, p. 702). Specifically, the largest body composition group, "low body fat/somewhat muscular," contained 33 percent of models, with the second largest group being "low body fat/very muscular" (Law & Labre, 2002, p. 703). That same year, Rohlinger (2002, p. 62) cited the increase of
sexualized male models in magazines, based on her content analysis of male objectification in *Sports Illustrated, Men's Health, Popular Mechanics, GQ,* and *Business Week* advertisements. “In these images, the erotic male represents a physical and sexual ideal, whereby an attractive, muscular man is placed on display”. She also found that this physical build has become the standard by which society judges men (Rohlinger, 2002, p. 70).

This trend of lean, muscular male models persisted in advertisements. Saucier and Caron (2008, p. 509) coded advertisements based on a variety of categories, including "muscularity—showed evidence of muscle tone and low percentage of body fat." They found that the majority of media images in two out of four magazines featured men with muscle tone and low body fat. A combined calculation of the frequency with which lean and muscular models were featured among all four magazines showed that 53 percent of the images fit the category (Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 513).

**Occupation representations**

Advertisements in the early and mid-1900s often featured male models in "manly" occupational roles, such as the popular Marlboro man. However, as the Marlboro man phased out, and was replaced by the Metrosexual man, advertisers begun adapting men's roles in an attempt to sell "all the latest 'grooming' products" (Simpson, 1994, p. 1). Portraying men in occupational roles helps advertisers—especially those whose advertisements appear in magazines such as *Esquire*—connect viewers with the
product for sale. This is because, according to the 2011 readership data compiled by Mediamark Research Inc., 55.8% of male *Esquire* readers have either professional/managerial or top executive positions. However, this also allows for comparisons to be made by viewers with the models, who are often portrayed as unattainably lean and muscular, thus leading to the same body dissatisfaction issues discussed in relation to *composition of image* and *physical build*.

In addition to being a pioneer researcher of body display, Goffman (1979) also began the analysis of gender representation in advertising. The study of occupation representations stemmed from his interest in women's portrayals in domestic roles. Goffman (1979) determined that women are often portrayed as submissive, childlike and dependent on men or the viewer.

> In our society when a man and a woman collaborate face-to-face in an undertaking, the man—it would seem—is likely to perform the executive role, providing only that one can be fashioned….The irony has been noted that an appreciable amount of the advertising aimed at selling supplies for women's household work employs males in the depicted role of instructing professionals. (p. 32)

Thus, it is acknowledged that products used for what was stereotypically referred to as "women's work" were advertised by male models, not female, models. Relatedly, while gender displays in real life were considered natural by naïve members of society, Goffman (1979, p. 3) claimed that advertisements and other media outlets have influenced these displays without the knowledge of viewers.

Sullivan and O’Connor (1988) conducted a content analysis of female models in advertisements from *People, Saturday Evening Post, Life, Newsweek, The New*
Yorker, Reader's Digest, Time, and U.S. News and World Report, with a goal of determining changes in women's representations. Specifically, they studied a possible change in the range of female models' presented occupations and the types of products they were used to sell. Sullivan and O'Connor (1988, p. 184) found that between 1958 and 1983, there was an increase in the percentage of women portrayed decoratively, meaning that their presence added nothing but appeal to the advertisement. However, women were also portrayed in working roles more often in 1983 than 1958, showing at least some improvement in their representations (Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988, p. 186).

Kolbe and Albanese (1996, p. 11) found that of the 23 possible clothing categories, men in male-audience magazine advertisements tended to wear "classic menswear' (suit or sportcoat, dress pants, tie, shirt, and shoes) or 'casual upscale' (unbuttoned dress shirt or knit shirt, casual slacks, [or] sweater." These clothing styles, especially "classic menswear," which were most prevalent among the advertisements, were indicative of professional occupations.

On women's representations, Miller (1997, p. 27) showed that the percentage of traditional advertisements decreased during the first ten-year period, and then increased (from 63 to 55 to 65, respectively), ending with a slightly higher percentage in 1995 than in 1975. Miller (1997) examined print advertisements featuring women for similarities and changes of traditional (mother, housekeeper) roles versus nontraditional (workplace) roles of women over a period of 20 years. "This suggested
that after 20 years of the women's movement, the frequency of women portrayed in the traditional role returned to its original state" (Miller, 1997, p. 49).

Kang (1997, p. 984) revisited the idea of "function ranking," where male models were portrayed in an instructing role when paired with female models. She concluded that while 19.1 percent of advertisements in 1979 displayed this instructor-instructee relationship, only 4.8 percent did so in 1991 (Kang, 1997, p. 989). Also, a slight increase in the percentage of male models in superior roles to female models was found from 1979 to 1991 (Kang, 1997, p. 990). This increase was insignificantly small and there was no change reported within the 22-year period.

Lindner (2004) also focused partially on function ranking. She concluded that female models are still shown as inferior when paired with a male model, especially in magazines with a predominantly female audience (Lindner, 2004, p. 419).

The results for all other categories [including function ranking] revealed that the extent to which women were shown in stereotypical roles has remained fairly constant throughout the years. This is a rather surprising finding considering the changes in the actual roles women occupy in real life that have occurred since the Women's Movement and the subsequent trends toward equality, especially with regard to the business world. (p. 419)

**Product display and accompanying text**

Few studies of gender representations in advertising have focused on how aspects of an advertisement, including sexualization of models, impact how viewers perceive a product. This is important because advertisers may attempt to distract possible
customers with sexual appeals. The attention paid to the actual product combined with the accompanying text can greatly influence viewers’ feelings.

Thomas & Treiber (2000, p. 363) analyzed *Ebony, Life, Essence,* and *Cosmopolitan* magazine advertisements. The five “subtexts” that they found were good times, appearance, sex-romance, family-marriage, and celebrity identification. This current study also examines the appearance subtext, which was introduced by Thomas & Treiber, to find any possible sexualization of a product or its surrounding components within product display (see Appendix A). Thomas & Treiber (2000, p. 363) defined appearance as “operat[ing] on the expectation that a product will make its user more attractive—younger, thinner, sexier, more beautiful or powerful—common subtexts aimed at both men and women.” The product display variable is important to study to determine whether advertisers were selling the products themselves, or just sexualizing them in order to make them seem appealing.

Thomas and Treiber’s (2000, p. 363) found that advertisers may use appeals other than the product to attract viewers. Additionally, many advertisements from the 1980s were heavily text-based instead of consisting mainly of photographs. Finally, words or phrases were often used to clarify meanings – including hidden meanings – of advertisements.

It is evident that the topics given the most focus were clothing and physical build. The least amount of attention from previous studies was given to product display and accompanying text, perhaps because the image-based sexualization was considered more intriguing than textual sexualization. Lead scholars in the field of
male representation in advertising included Kolbe & Albanese (1996), Mager & Helgeson (2011), and Rohlinger (2002). Notably, many studies used content analysis.

Gender representation in advertising is constantly changing. Findings over the years have adapted to current social situations and trends. Male models, for instance, were originally referred to only in an unfavorable light. The impact of male models in advertisements on men is visibly apparent, and so men’s representations in the media are being studied with keen interest as those of women. This is evident in Kolbe & Albanese (1996), Mager & Helgeson (2011), and Rohlinger (2002). Thus, the interest this area of study is evident, supporting the need for more comparison of different constructs of gender representations in advertising. A need to advance the understanding of men’s representations over time is evident.
For as long as commercial advertising has existed, so has the objectification of both male and female models (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004, p. 824) at different degrees. While objectification is an umbrella term that has been used to determine a multitude of advertising techniques, perhaps the best definition of this type of objectification has come from Dahl, Sengupta, and Vohs (2009, p. 216), who defined the concept as “gratuitous use of sexual images in advertising, which is defined as the use of a sexual image that is unnecessarily explicit to promote a product or service.” Over the past 40 years, objectified models have been used to sell everything from cologne (Soley & Reid, 1988, p. 960) and underwear (Jobling, 2003, p. 147) to mascara (Harrison, 2008, p. 62), and their presence in advertising has increased significantly since the 1970s (Carpenter & Edison, 2005; Kang, 1997; Law & Labre, 2002; Lindner, 2004; Mager & Helgeson, 2010; Miller, 1997; Reichert & Carpenter, 2004; Soley & Reid, 1988). It is important to study these images and the effects they have on viewers because “people are bombarded daily with their culture’s stereotypical images of attractiveness from magazines, television, films, billboards, and other electronic and print media” (Lorenzen, Grieve, & Thomas, 2004, p. 743),
Objectification by gender

Objectification and sex have more frequently been used to draw the attention of male and female consumers alike in order to stand out among the “tremendous clutter” that has accumulated in an increasingly consumerist economy (Dahl et al., 2009, p. 215). Dens, De Pelsmacker, and Janssens (2009, p. 366) determined that “sex and nudity appeals are frequently used in advertising as a means to attract attention to the advertisement.” In this competitive world of advertising, sex and objectification are evolving because “over time, sexual information must become more graphic and intense to evoke the same degree of attention and arousal as it did initially” (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004, p. 825). Thus, it is important to frequently update our understanding of sex appeal and objectification and the over gender representations in advertisements.

While both male and female models have been sexualized and objectified in magazine advertisements over the years, it is women who are typically the face of victims of the media. This is due to the societal implications that follow media images: men do not experience societal barriers based on their representations, but women do. But researchers like Rohlinger (2002, p. 62) have focused on male representations regardless of the lack of real-world consequences.

Undoubtedly, there are implications of social power associated with images of masculinity and femininity in mainstream media, and it is not my intent here to diminish the social implications of these power differentials. However, although images have different social meanings, they have a similar social effect: the body becomes an object that is manipulated, disciplined, and viewed by others. (Rohlinger, 2002, p. 62)
Extensive research has been conducted on women’s objectification by advertisers, pioneered by Goffman (1979). The earliest example of female objectification was feminine touch (Goffman, 1979, p. 29)—including self-touching—in which models are shown “cradling” or “caressing” a product “to effect a ‘just barely touching’ of the kind that might be significant between two electrically charged bodies.”

Although less influential than Goffman’s research, Kerin, Lundstrom, and Sciglimpaglia (1979) released a study in the same year that focused on women’s representations in advertisements, both in magazines and other forms of media. Unlike Goffman, they focused on the development of objectified women, stating that “the idea of women as sex objects arises from the use of a woman as an attention getting stratagem when her presence adds little but decoration to the product being advertised” (Kerin et al., 1979, p. 39). They prediction a future “broadening of perspectives on women by advertisers with the use of less sex objects, but more liberties taken when sex is utilized as an attention getter” (Kerin et al., 1979, p. 41). This evolution of sexualized advertisements has occurred, as can be seen by future researchers, but models are still commonly used as sex objects, too.

Almost a decade later, Soley and Reid (1988) spurred discussion of male objectification with their determination that advertising models, both male and female, were depicted in a sexier way in 1984 than in 1964. In addition to significant decreases in the amount of clothing worn by male models between the two years,
Soley and Reid (1988, p. 965) found that women in both years were “‘sexy’ dressed or nude” more often than men. Advertisements for Calvin Klein’s fragrance, Obsession—which featured a “nude couple embracing”—were named as one of the most commonly sexualized and “titillating” (Soley & Reid, 1988, p. 960). In a follow-up study almost two decades later, Carpenter and Edison (2005, p. 13) found that “when male models appear by themselves in ads, they are often demurely dressed, [but] when they appear in conjunction with female models, they are much more likely to be sexually dressed, compared to 1964 and 1984.”

In their book examining a decrease in male body image satisfaction, Pope et al. (2000, p. 46) they found that female centerfold models in Playboy magazine were becoming thinner from the 1959 to 1979 issues. The study included all images of men from 1973 to 1998 whose height and weight were recorded in the magazine (Pope et al., 2000, p. 47). They concluded that while female Playboy models lost weight, male Playgirl models would gain mass. “[T]he average Playgirl centerfold man has shed about 12 pounds of fat, while putting on approximately 27 pounds of muscle over the last 25 years” (Pope et al., 2000, p. 47). In another study, Pope et al. (2000, p. 57) found that while nudity among female models in Glamour and Cosmopolitan magazines remained about the same from 1958 to 1998, nudity among male models steadily increased to be at the same frequency.

For gender representations, Reichert and Carpenter (2004) found that the content in both men’s and women’s magazines became increasingly more sexualized from 1983 to 2003, although models in men’s magazines (specifically Esquire and
Playboy) were objectified to a higher degree. Both “female and male models [were] more likely to be provocatively dressed – and engaged in sexual contact” (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004, p. 834) in progressive years.

In a case study that deviated slightly from popular focus on advertising representations, Lambiase (2007) found Maxim to be a main culprit of the modern objectification of female models. This men’s magazine was successful since its launch in 1997 due to its editors’ ability to draw in male readers with sexualized cover models (Lambiase, 2007, p. 113). Because of Maxim’s success, other male-targeted magazines began to pick up on this trend of sexualized covers. “Industry observers continue to credit Maxim with the increased use of sex to sell other men’s magazines, namely GQ, Details, Esquire, and even Rolling Stone” (Lambiase, 2007, p. 113). In fact, Esquire used Maxim’s strategy on six of its 12 covers in 1999, of which “three are classified as nude, and three as partially clad in three-quarter or full-body shots” (Lambiase, 2007, p. 120). Although this case study focused on cover models, not advertisement models, it is still relevant because a successful magazine’s cover is indicative of its content (Lambiase, 2007, p. 116).

Deviating from past findings of typically demurely dressed male models, Saucier and Caron’s (2008) study of models in gay men’s magazines found that over half of male models were shirtless. Of this number, most were lean and muscular, making them examples of the unattainable body image perpetuated by advertising images. Additionally, 99 percent had hairless chests, indicating objectification of these models (Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 513).
Reactions to objectification in the media

Early researchers, such as Kerin et al. (1979, p. 40), determined that sexualized advertisements that objectify models “appeal to both men and women desirous of being attractive to the opposite sex and recognized for their own sexual attractiveness to members of the same sex.” In order to determine the validity of this statement—and, therefore, the effectiveness of objectified advertising—researchers have studied the reactions of male and female viewers to sexualized advertisements and objectified models. Despite Kerin et al.’s generalized explanation of advertisers’ strategy, readers also react differently to this genre of advertisements based on their sex, displaying a variety of responses.

Women have traditionally been found to be more susceptible to the body ideals reinforced by advertisements than men. An experiment by Strahan, Wilson, Cressman, and Buote (2006, p. 217), concluded that while both women and men could identify positive aspects of their appearance even after viewing attractive, sexualized models, women were “considerably more vigilant to weaknesses.”

Additionally, inspired by a report that “adolescent girls described the ideal girl as 5 ft 7 in., 100 lb, size 5, with long blond hair and blue eyes,” Groesz, Levine, and Mumen (2002, p. 11) found that “body image for females was significantly more negative after viewing thin media images than after viewing images of either average size models, plus size models, or cars and houses”. Both Strahan et al.’s (2006) and
Groesz et al.’s (2002) results support other researchers’ findings that women almost always disapprove of sexualized advertisements.

Dahl et al.’s (2009) study reinforced the idea that women have instinctive negative reactions to sexualized advertisements. These researchers found a way to cause positive feelings among women who view sexualized advertisements: implications of a pre-existing relationship between the models. “Women report a spontaneous negative reaction…which can be mitigated with a positioning tactic that is consistent with the idea of relationship commitment–namely, a gift positioning” (Dahl et al., 2009, p. 220). In short, women were partial to advertisements featuring a gift given from the male to the female model. In a three-pronged experiment, Sengupta and Dahl (2008) found the same negative reactions to sexualized advertisements among women. In the first part of this experiment, women were shown sexual and nonsexual advertisements. Findings for this section showed that all women preferred the nonsexual advertisement (Sengupta & Dahl, 2008, p. 68). However, the third part of the experiment found that women with “liberal sexual attitudes” might prefer the sexual advertisement, proving that “attitudes toward sexually explicit ads are guided by attitudes toward sex per se” (Sengupta & Dahl, 2008, p. 72).

The only other exception to women’s negative reactions toward sexualized advertising was found when female viewers were shown a less-attractive female model, regardless of her level of dress (Dens et al., 2009, p. 375). Additionally, women had a less dramatic decrease in body esteem when viewing a fully clothed attractive model than a scantily clad attractive model (Dens et al., 2009, p. 375).
Men, however, were found to be much more accepting of sexualized advertisements featuring female or male-female models. Unlike women, men do not require implications of a pre-existing romantic relationship between models who appear to be sexually involved. “These results are consistent with the view that men have a favorable response to sex (and explicit depictions of it) on its own, with no contextual justification needed” (Dahl et al., 2009, p. 225). In fact, men sometimes reacted negatively when this relationship was implied, because these ads “strongly reminded men that they may, at times, devote monetary resources in the pursuit of sexual contact” (Dahl et al., 2009, p. 227).

While men outwardly approve of objectified female models, these advertisements led to subconscious feelings of low body esteem among men. This result was discovered by Dens et al. (2009), who experimented with showing men advertisements featuring an attractive female model who was fully clothed versus an attractive female model who was dressed revealingly. Men who viewed the revealingly dressed female model had lower body esteem than men who viewed the alternate model, to which Dens et al. (2009, p. 375) formed a “potential partner’ explanation. The implicit link to sexuality in the scarcely dressed advertisement versions may have triggered a reflex in participants to consider the opposite-sex model as a potential sexual partner, possibly unattainable, which negatively impacted their appreciation of their own body.”

Although men usually approve of the objectification of women and male-female pairs in advertising, they have conversely been found to experience negative
side effects as a result of viewing objectified male models. These negative effects did not always exist, because “in the past, the idealized male body portrayed in the media was a much more attainable goal” (Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 506). However, male models have become younger, leaner, more muscular, and more provocatively dressed over the past few decades (Saucier & Caron, 2008, p. 520). And regardless of which came first, “the change in attitudes by men or the media influence toward more muscular body types” (Lorenzen et al., 2004), Saucier & Caron (2008, p. 519) speculate that these emerging features are what “men compare their bodies to and potentially reinforce or create feelings of low self-worth and esteem.” Baird and Grieve (2006, p. 115) reported that men are beginning to develop unattainable body goals, stating that the sampled men want “to gain approximately 30 pounds in muscle mass.” This idealization is called muscle dysmorphia.

Muscle dysmorphia is “a disorder in which individuals believe they are too small and work to become larger” and has been found to be a lead cause of male eating disorders (Baird & Grieve, 2006, p. 115). While eating disorders are typically associated with women, they have increased over the past several years among the male population; Saucier and Caron (2008, p. 506) reported that 43 percent of men suffer from eating disorders, “a number that is creeping quite close to the number of women who feel dissatisfied with their body.” This drastic increase in men at risk for eating disorders prompted researchers to examine the source. Lorenzen et al. (2004) conducted an experiment to study men’s reactions to brief exposures to highly
muscular models. Their findings showed that participants suffered significant decreases in body satisfaction after viewing the muscular male models.

A possible implication could be that in order to obtain the unrealistic muscular ideal, men may try to gain muscle mass and, consequently, increase their risk for developing muscle dysmorphia…similar to women who try to lose weight to obtain the unrealistic ultra-thin ideal and increase their risk for developing eating disorders. (Lorenzen et al., 2004, p. 746)

Baird and Grieve (2006) duplicated Lorenzen et al.’s (2004) original study by showing male participants either in an advertisement featuring a muscular man, a “normal” man, or just a product. Participants’ reactions showed that men experienced the greatest increase in body dissatisfaction when viewing a muscular male, and no increase when viewing just the product. Viewing an advertisement with a “normal” man did not significantly alter men’s body satisfaction levels (Baird & Grieve, 2006, p. 118). Daily exposure to media images reinforced body image ideals. “Therefore, the total effect of muscular models on men’s body satisfaction is probably larger than what is indicated by the results of this study” (Baird & Grieve, 2006, p. 119).

In addition to muscle dysmorphia, Pope et al. (2000) introduced the Adonis Complex as modern-day men’s attempt to achieve physical perfection, based on a man from Greek mythology. “Adonis was half man and half god—the ultimate in masculine beauty” (Pope et al., 2000, p. 6).

“Men of all ages, in unprecedented numbers, are preoccupied with the appearance of their bodies….Unlike healthy men and boys, they have an unrealistic view of how they should look – and so they may abuse drugs, exercise excessively, and spend billions on products that are
often worthless. These many different body obsessions are all forms of what we call the ‘Adonis Complex.’” (Pope et al., 2000, p. xiii)

This encompasses several different body image issues, from slight disappointment to severe eating disorders. It also focuses on how the problem of body image disorders is feminized, leading to ridicule among men who suffer from these issues. “For a man…a Catch-22 situation arises when he begins to dwell on his body. If he doesn’t talk about his feelings, the pain gets internalized and the problem persists. If he does find the courage to do so, society tells him…that he’s not acting in a healthy, masculine way” (Pope et al., 2000, p. 17). So, while it is true that studies have found female models to be the majority of those objectified in the media, women receive more support from society in dealing with these body image expectations than men.

While some researchers (Cash, Cash, & Butters, 1983; Festinger, 1954) have argued that models in advertisements do not influence body esteem in viewers because they are considered “irrelevant others,” Strahan et al. (2006) found that today’s viewers often see models as reasonable adversaries. The explanation for this change in models’ effect on viewers is:

Specifically, when messages conveying cultural norms of attractiveness are particularly salient, people will not dismiss the professional model as irrelevant for the purposes of comparison. Models and celebrities are powerful examples of the cultural norms for thinness and beauty in our society. Because the average woman knows that she will be judged according to these cultural norms, images which reflect this norm may not be dismissed as irrelevant. (Strahan et al., 2006, p. 213)
Therefore, while it was true that during Cash et al. (1983) and Festinger’s (1954) studies models may have seemed so unrealistically attractive that they were not worth comparing the average person to, this is no longer true. In fact, Strahan et al. (2006, p. 213) further found that “women may misjudge the attainability of the standard, especially since the cultural norm often implies that weight and appearance are highly controllable.”

The primary research question of this thesis is, in what ways have the representations and objectification of men in *Esquire* magazine advertisements changed over time? This study hypothesizes that:

H1. Advertisements in *Esquire* magazine will present male models with less clothing in later years than in earlier years.

H2. Advertisements in *Esquire* magazine will focus more on male models’ body parts below the face in later years than in earlier years.

H3. Male models in *Esquire* magazine will be leaner and more muscular in later years than earlier years.

H4. *Esquire* magazine advertisements in the 1980s will focus on products while magazine advertisements in the 2000s will focus on male models.
CHAPTER FIVE

METHOD

This thesis employs a content analysis of advertisements in *Esquire* magazine, spanning 30 years. According to Neuendorf (2002, p. 1), content analysis is “the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics”. Additionally, this analysis is “perhaps the fastest-growing technique in quantitative research”, particularly in print journalism studies. This method involves comparing a large number of samples—in the examined studies, ranging from 100 to over 4,000—using a self-created codebook (see Appendix B). Codebooks contain constructs such as “body positioning,” “physical build,” and “occupation representation.” These constructs are then further broken down to include different ways of operationalizing them or their variability. This will provide a factorial exploration of the constructs in each advertisement. It is the primary method of analysis for researchers of gender representations in the media, including Kolbe & Albanese (1996), Law & Labre (2002), Mager & Helgeson (2010), Rohlinger (2002), and others.

Magazines were selected in order to replicate and advance previous findings from gender representation analyses. Additionally, print was chosen because still photographs allow for more detailed examinations and they are more easily reproducible than other forms of visual content. Reichert and Lambiase’s (2003) finding that sexualized advertisements appealed more to men than women contributed to the decision to code advertisements from a magazine with a male target audience.
Further, Monk-Turner et al. (2008, p. 204) found that "male actors were overwhelmingly used in male-targeted magazines." Thus, because this study focuses on the representation of male models, it was determined that a male-targeted magazine be the research platform. *Esquire* was chosen because it targets the younger generation (younger men), it was established well before 1980, and it has published uninterrupted since 1933.

Although *Esquire* originally focused almost exclusively on fashion, it has since broadened its scope to include several lifestyle topics for men who have arrived, according to the magazine’s mission statement. Mediamark Research Inc. (2011) reported that the U.S. readership was 62.4 percent male, living mainly in urban areas. People between the ages of 25 and 49 made up 51.7 percent of *Esquire*’s readers, and the median annual household income was $79,417. *Esquire* is not the only upper-class men’s lifestyle magazine, and its main competitors include *Details* and *Gentlemen’s Quarterly (GQ)*. Although *GQ* was established before *Esquire*, it was not chosen because it has had a rockier publishing history. Additionally, *Esquire* has a greater circulation than *Details*, and is more easily accessible for researchers.

The seven variables included in the codebook are accompanying text, body positioning, clothing, composition of image, physical build, occupation representation, and product display (see Appendix A). These variables were drawn from the research of Goffman (1979) and Kolbe and Albanese (1996), which focused on the representations of women and men, respectively, in advertising. Accompanying text refers to any words featured on an advertisement, from models’ quotes to product
slogan. Models’ bodies are often positioned in different ways to evoke certain feelings, such as the difference between a man standing and one lying down. Clothing amount also changes based on the level of objectification an advertiser desires, and clothing type can influence readers’ perceptions of the models’ occupations. The composition of an advertisement can imply objectification by drawing readers’ attention to a specific image, be that the model’s body, the product, or another aspect; this is based on the size and positioning of different elements of the advertisement. Physical build refers to the amount of fat and muscle tone that a model either does or does not have. Finally, product display connotes the prevalence of the advertised item; for instance, whether the advertiser relies solely on the sexualization of the model to sell the product, or if the quality and utility of the product are the main foci.

This study draws data from thirty years of *Esquire’s* publications, including all twelve issues from each chosen year. The following years are researched in this content analysis: 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010. These clustered years were chosen because they directly follow the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, when there was an effort to equalize the representation of both sexes in the media. Additionally, the 1980-2010 period is just after the gay rights movement, which led to an evolution of the ideas associated with masculinity and an outreach by advertisers to gay men (Rohlinger, 2002, p. 63).

In order to be included in the analysis, advertisements had to (a) be a full page in size and (b) feature only male models. These requirements maintain a focus on men’s representations. Advertisements were retrieved from microform issues of
Esquire. The principal researcher screened all of the advertisements and removed duplicates. After this a priori coding of the population sample, two independent coders were recruited to code 10 percent as a representative sample. The population sample includes 1,530 advertisements, so a representative total of 153 was coded. The coders are both first-year female journalism students in Ohio University’s Honors Tutorial College.

Table 5.1: Coded advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male-Only Adverts</th>
<th>All Adverts</th>
<th>Skip Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
• This table represents the amount of male-only advertisements compared to the total number of advertisements in each year.
• The skip interval is the number of advertisements skipped between those that were coded. It ensures random sampling.

The coded advertisements were chosen from a population sample through a combination of systematic random sampling (SRS) and cluster sampling. These
Advertisements were clustered based on the year in which they appear. Each year was assigned a skip interval based on the total number of advertisements in order to gain a representative sample (see Table 1). This signifies the number of advertisements that will be skipped between selections. The skip intervals were determined by dividing the population size by the desired sample size of 10 percent (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 85).

The independent coders used a five-point ordinal scale to rate each operationalization (see Appendix B), ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” An ordinal scale was chosen because it allows coders the flexibility to choose multiple variables for any given operationalization, if they deem that more than one of those variables is present (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 120). Once coders completed their analyses, a simple percent agreement was calculated (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 154), followed by a determination of Scott’s $\pi$. Each coder completed a training session, during which they coded five sample advertisements. This training session also allowed coders to ask the principal researcher any questions to ensure they understood the variables, operationalizations, and coding process.

After both coders completed their analyses, their responses were analyzed using SPSS. Queries were run using this program to find the frequency and mean for each variable. Then, the Scott’s $\pi$ value was calculated in SPSS using the macro software available online from Lombard (2005) for calculating percent agreement to get the generalizability coefficient. Scott’s $\pi$ agreement calculated from a computer program statistical software accounts for chance agreement and it is one of the indexes of intercoder reliability that can accommodate all the objectification and
representation categories. This makes Scott’s $p_i$ percentage agreement and Lombard’s (2005) reliability coefficients the index of intercoder reliability of choice for this study. Findings are displayed using a tabular presentation (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 178), as this is an ideal chart style for bivariate statistics. In order to compare any possible change over time, information is also presented by year.
CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS

This study examined the representation of men in Esquire magazine between 1980 and 2010. A population sample of 1,530 advertisements containing only male models was collected. A trend content analysis based on a representative sample of 153 advertisements assessed seven variables: accompanying text, body positioning, clothing, composition of image, physical build, product display, and occupation representation (see Appendix B).

The use of accompanying text in the advertisement was one of the variables coded for analysis. Results show that the accompanying text in the majority of advertisements was related to the product or service being advertised, and was neither a reference to the male models’ behaviors nor their physical appearances. A total of 123 advertisements (80%) fulfilled this category. Only 19 percent of the advertisements featured accompanying text that directly referenced the models’ behaviors or physical appearances (about 28 and 29, respectively).

The models’ body positioning was presented in the adverts as either standing or sitting, with only three percent of models lying down and four percent squatting or kneeling. The majority of the male models were featured in standing positions (83, 54%), while 40 (26%) were sitting in the sampled advertisements. Additionally, the data indicate that just over half (51%) of the male models’ faces were not angled away from the viewer.
The sampled data also provide information on the amount of clothes worn by male models. The majority of advertisements featured male models that were fully clothed. According to the data, about 131 models (77%) were fully clothed, and only 16 were not. Additionally, only three models were presented nude. Four percent of models were wearing pants but no shirt.

Table 6.1: Percentages of clothing depicted in advertisements by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nude</th>
<th>Accessories only</th>
<th>Pants, but no shirt</th>
<th>Arms and legs showing</th>
<th>Fully clothed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE:
- Numbers represent collapsed data for strong agreement and agreement, in percentages.
Results for the composition of image did not meet the threshold criterion. The data show that (80, 52%) of advertisements focused predominantly on a male model’s physical image, but the same data also revealed that the majority (110, 72%) of advertisements focused predominantly on the product or service being advertised. This discrepancy skewed not just the reliability tests but also the criterion. The models’ faces were least often the main aspect of advertisements, with this occurring in only 20 percent of the advertisements.
Table 6.2: Percentages of composition of image by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Full body</th>
<th>Body part</th>
<th>Face</th>
<th>Product/service</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
- Numbers represent collapsed data for strong agreement and agreement, in percentages.
- Percentages for each year may not total 100 because advertisements may be coded as multiple variables.
Figure 6.2: Composition of image in advertisements from 1980 and 2010

NOTE:
- Areas represent collapsed data for strong agreement and agreement, in percentages.

The male models (99, 65%) in the advertisements sampled here were most often lean and toned, and only six models (4%) were not. Additionally, only 24 male models (16%) were not considered to be muscular. However, there was a discrepancy in the coding scheme over the thinness of models: 122 male models considered thin versus only four considered thin. It is possible that the coding scheme was not set up properly to establish thinness versus leanness and tone. None of the male models were coded as overweight, and two models were coded as heavy-set.
Table 6.3: Percentages of physical build depicted in advertisements by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Muscular</th>
<th>Lean and toned</th>
<th>Thin</th>
<th>Heavy-set</th>
<th>Overweight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
- Numbers represent collapsed data for strong agreement and agreement, in percentages.
- Percentages for each year may not total 100 because advertisements may be coded as multiple variables.
NOTES:
• Bars represent collapsed data for strong agreement and agreement, in percentages.
• Percentages for each year may not total 100 because advertisements may be coded as multiple variables.

Most of the advertisements featured male models whose occupational roles were unclear (114, 75%). Only four percent (6) of the advertisements featured a blue collar worker or laborer, and one model was portrayed as a member of the military. There was a slight discrepancy in the coding results over the number of models who were featured as white collar professionals or businessmen.

In nine percent of the sampled advertisements, the product or service for sale was not even included in the image. However, only three percent of advertisements were sexualized without including information about the product or service for sale.
The advertised product’s quality was the main aspect of 42 percent of the population sample, and the product’s utility was the main aspect of 32 percent of this sample.

Intercoder reliability was calculated to analyze the validity of these results. The intercoder reliability over a systematic subsample of 10 percent of the advertisements (153) was calculated with Scott’s pi formula (Scott, 1955). The observed percent agreement of the overall intercoder reliability calculated was 0.59. The objectification and representation categories (constructs) related to the actual reliability values of the subtopics (variables: for example, v1, v2, v3… v7) also had small but comparatively equal sample sizes (ranging from \( n = 1 \) to \( n = 35 \)).
### Table 6.4: Statistical significance for selected variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. t-Value</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accompanying Text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Product's slogan</em></td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>-1.266</td>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Directly related to product</em></td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>1.420</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Directly related to model’s appearance</em></td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Directly related to model’s behavior</em></td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>3.990</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Positioning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Squatting/kneeling</em></td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>9.475</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Face angled away</em></td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>9.792</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nude</em></td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>10.587</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pants, no shirt</em></td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>10.288</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fully clothed</em></td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>10.304</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of Image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Full body</em></td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>9.437</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Face</em></td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>7.845</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Product/service</em></td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>3.551</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Text</em></td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>2.212</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Build</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Muscular</em></td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>5.256</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lean and toned</em></td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>1.902</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Overweight</em></td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>5.954</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Unclear</em></td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>8.138</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:**
- $N = 153$ for all values.
CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the representation of male models in *Esquire* magazine advertisements over the course of 30 years. A representative total of 153 advertisements (10% of the population sample) from 1980 to 2010 was coded by two independent coders based on seven variables: accompanying text, body positioning, clothing, composition of image, physical build, occupation representation, and product display. The primary research question was, in what ways have the representations and objectification of men in *Esquire* magazine advertisements changed over time? This study hypothesized that:

H1. Advertisements in *Esquire* magazine present male models with less clothing in later years than in earlier years.

H2. Advertisements in *Esquire* magazine will focus more on male models’ body parts below the face in later years than in earlier years.

H3. Male models in *Esquire* magazine will be leaner and more muscular in later years than earlier years.

H4. *Esquire* magazine advertisements in the 1980s will focus on products while magazine advertisements in the 2000s will focus on male models.
Table 7.1: Overview of results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accompanying Text</td>
<td>80% of text was directly related to the product or service being advertised. 19% of text directly referenced male models’ appearance or behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Positioning</td>
<td>80% of male models were either standing or sitting. 3% of male models were lying down. About half of male models had their faces angled away from the camera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>77% of male models were fully clothed. Percentages are constant among different years. 2% of male models were nude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of Image</td>
<td>Results were skewed, showing that both 52% of advertisements focused on a single body part and 72% of advertisements focused on the product or service for sale. 20% of advertisements focused on male models’ faces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Build</td>
<td>65% of male models were lean and toned. 1% of male models were heavy-set, and none were overweight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation Representation</td>
<td>75% of male models had unclear occupational roles. 1% of male models were members of the military.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Display</td>
<td>74% of advertisements focused on advertised product’s quality or utility. 3% of advertisements sexualized advertised product without providing information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE:
- Both the most and least prevalent results for each variable are shown.
Based on these data, the first hypothesis, that *Esquire* magazine would present male models with less clothing in later years than earlier years, was not supported. The percentage of male models who were fully clothed barely dropped, with 83 percent in 1980 and 81 percent in 2010 (see Table 6.1). Additionally, the amount of fully clothed models did not drop below three-fourths of all advertisements in each year. This may be due to viewer opposition to unclothed male models, as these images increased just before this study’s time period. This is consistent with Soley and Reid’s (1988) findings. While there was a spike in 1995 in the number of male models who were nude, most of the magazine issues did not feature any nudity (see Figure 6.1). This peak of nude male models reflects Jobling’s (2003) findings in his study of clothing amounts in underwear advertisements; one of his main examples for nudity in underwear advertisements is a 1995 Gucci image (Jobling, 2003, p. 159). This suggests that nudity was more popular among advertisers in 1995 than in other years.

The second hypothesis, that *Esquire* magazine advertisements’ focus on individual body parts of male models would increase over time, was supported. As shown in Figure 6.2, the focus on parts of the male models’ bodies—instead of the entire body, the face, the product for sale, or the text—was much more prevalent in 2010 than in 1980. This could be explained by a trend in the 1980s toward text-heavy advertisements. A focus on the male models’ body parts rose almost 10 percent over the 30-year period. This is inconsistent with earlier findings by Mager and Helgeson (2011). This is an important result because it sheds a new but contradictory perspective on what was previously shown in past research. One explanation for these
contradicting results could be that Mager and Helgeson (2011, p. 243) focused on a wide variety of magazines while this study focused only on male-audience magazines. This suggests that advertisers use objectification to target male audiences more often than mixed audiences.

The third hypothesis, that male models in *Esquire* magazine advertisements would become leaner and more muscular over time, was not supported. Table 6.3 shows that while 100 percent of male models in 1980 were lean and toned, only 57 percent in 2010 fit this physical build. This is not consistent with past research by Law and Labre (2002), who found that the leanness and muscularity of male models increased from 1967 to 1997. However, it is consistent with findings by Saucier and Caron (2008), who determined that 53 percent of male models in their study were lean and muscular. While the frequency of lean and toned male models dropped by almost 50 percent from 1980 to 2010, the percentage of male models who were muscular stayed relatively steady (see Figure 6.3). This indicates that the ideal muscularity of men has also remained steady over these thirty years.

The fourth hypothesis, that *Esquire* magazine advertisements would focus increasingly more on male models and less on the product or service for sale, was supported. According to the data, the frequency of advertisements focusing mainly on the product or service in the advertisement had an overall drop from 83 percent in 1980 to 55 percent in 2010. Advertisements focusing mainly on a male model’s full body image also dropped during this time period, but those focusing on individual parts of a male model’s body rose by nine percent. Additionally, advertisements that
focused mainly on a male model’s face rose by two percent. These changes could be attributed to the advertisers’ attempts to gain potential customers’ attention in an increasingly more consumerist economy, as suggested by Dahl, Sengupta, and Vohs (2009). This suggests that objectifying male models has proven to increase sales of products that are typically advertised in magazines like *Esquire*.

Based on the lack of support for hypotheses 1 and 3, this thesis argues that the representation of male models in *Esquire* magazine advertisements has not changed negatively over this time period. Unchanging representations were in part illustrated through the steady amount of clothing worn by male models. The percentage of fully clothed models consistently remained between 75 and 95 (see Table 6.1). Most magazine issues featured no nude models, and the amount of nudity did not exceed 7.5 percent. These consistencies suggest that male representation has remained the same. Additionally, although the percentage of lean and toned male models in 1980 was much higher than in later years (see Table 6.3), the percentage of lean and toned male models from 1985 to 2010 remained fairly consistent. The percentage of muscular male models moved only two percentage points overall, from 33 percent in 1980 to 31 percent in 2010. Thus, male models kept similar physical builds over the 30-year period.

However, support for hypotheses 2 and 4 shows that objectification of men increased from 1980 to 2010. This increase in objectification is based mainly on the idea that showing only part of a male (or female) model’s body, other than the face, transforms this model from a person to an object. As can be seen in Table 6.2, focus
on male models’ body parts below the face increased overall from 17 percent in 1980 to 26 percent in 2010, with a peak of 41 percent in 1995. Over this same time period, the focus on the full body of male models dropped from 42 percent in 1980 to 24 percent in 2010, showing a declining interest in men as a whole along with an increased interest in their arms, legs, abdomens, and other body parts. This implies that advertisers are distancing viewers from male models by representing them with emotionless and, often, sexualized images.

Additionally, advertisements’ focal points over this time period moved away from text and the product or service for sale. In 1980, 83 percent of advertisements focused on products or services and 92 percent focused on accompanying text (refer to Table 6.2). However, in 2010 these percentages dropped to 55 and 43, respectively, while the number of advertisements focusing mainly on individual parts of the male body rose from 17 percent to 26 percent. The findings enforce the idea that men are more often represented by individual body parts. They may also imply that some viewers may be less interested in learning about what the advertisement is selling. Instead, it can be inferred that viewers are probably most interested in viewing objectified images.

Thus, the primary research question was addressed with both negative and positive outcomes: while the representation of men has not changed between 1980 and 2010, objectification of men has. Because the majority of images featured male models with similar physical appearances, these findings imply that the male image with which many viewers identify has remained consistent over the past 30 years. If
viewers did not find this physical appearance acceptable, it would not be used so often over three decades. Additionally, the implication here is that the objectification of men has become more accepted among viewers. This slow but steady progression over the past 30 years shows that *Esquire* readers are accustomed to objectified images or probably prefer them to text-based or product-centered advertisements.

Although the hypotheses were answered, there are some limitations to consider. For instance, the gender and sexual orientation of the independent coders may have influenced certain findings. Both coders were heterosexual women, which could have skewed their interpretation of variables like physical appearance that are more subjective than, for instance, body positioning.

Another limitation is that this study does not examine the reaction of readers to magazine advertisements. It could be possible that the viewers are not offended by objectified images, or that they may prefer these images to others. Additionally, this study does not measure any real impact of gender representations on viewers. This would be an important research question to consider because if there is no perceived negative effect on viewers, then male representations in media images are not as critical female representations, which have proved to affect women negatively.

Finally, this study does not determine advertisers’ intentions. Harrison (2008) speculated that the emergence of outwardly gay communities has spurred increased objectification of male models, but this finding has not been further explored. Based on the conclusion that objectification has increased over the past 30 years, future research should examine the factors that caused this increase.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

In summary, male-only advertisements in *Esquire* magazine have consistently shown similar physical appearances among male models. However, they have focused increasingly on male models’ body parts rather than text or the product for sale. This is a great change from the text-heavy 1980s advertisements, and also suggests that viewers have come to accept objectified male images.

Certain advertising variables of male-representation and objectification were more relevant to the tested hypotheses than others. These include clothing, composition of image, and physical appearance. However, occupation representation and product display did not contribute significantly to discussion of the hypotheses.

Advertisements in the sample used here were randomly selected to ensure they represented all male-only *Esquire* images. However, findings could be advanced if future researchers focus on a variety of magazines, including those that target female audiences. A comparative study of both male-targeted and female-targeted magazines could enrich and further advance our understanding of the representation and objectification of models in this millennium. Examining advertisements from other media outlets, like newspapers and television, by replicating the hypotheses employed here would also expand this research agenda. Additionally, it would be informative to include advertisements that feature male and female models together, instead of male-only images.
Future students of ‘male representations in advertisements,’ or another media outlet, should also examine the reason behind these representations. It is possible that male viewers have come to accept – or even expect – objectification in advertising, making research less important. Therefore, it is crucial that future studies focus on viewers’ perceptions of objectified advertisements.

What we learn from these findings is that the representation of male models in male-targeted magazine advertisements has remained the same over the past thirty years, particularly regarding physical appearance. However, objectification of these models has significantly increased over this same time period. If this trend of objectification in magazine advertisements continues, then it is possible that real-life side effects, like body esteem issues and eating disorders among men, will most likely continue to increase, as seen over the past few decades.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

OPERATIONALIZATION

Accompanying text – what words are featured on the advertisement?
1. Text is the product’s slogan
2. Text is directly related to the advertised product
3. Text is directly related to the model’s physical appearance
4. Text is directly related to the model’s behavior
5. Text falls into another category

Body positioning – how is the model positioned in the advertisement?
1. Model is standing
2. Model is sitting
3. Model is lying down
4. Model is squatting or kneeling
5. Model’s face is angled away from the audience

Clothing – approximately what amount of clothing is the model wearing?
1. Model is wearing no clothing
2. Model is wearing accessories and/or underwear, but no other clothing
3. Model is wearing pants, but no shirt
4. Model is fully clothed, but with arms and/or legs exposed
5. Model is fully clothed

Composition of image – what in the advertisement is the main subject?
1. Model’s full body (head to foot) is main aspect of advertisement
2. Model’s body part (i.e. torso, limb) is main aspect of advertisement
3. Model’s face is main aspect of advertisement
4. Product or service for sale is main aspect of advertisement
5. Text is main aspect of advertisement

Physical build – what size is the model?
1. Model is muscular
2. Model is lean and toned
3. Model is thin
4. Model is heavy-set
5. Model is overweight

Occupation representation – what is the model’s implied profession?
1. Model’s occupation is unclear/not stated
2. Model is a white-collar worker/businessman
3. Model is a blue-collar worker/manual laborer
4. Model is a member of the military
5. Model has another career

Product display – how is the featured product presented in the advertisement?
1. Product is not shown
2. Product is sexualized; quality and utility are ignored
3. Product is sexualized; quality and utility are a side note
4. Product’s quality is the main point of the advertisement
5. Product’s utility is the main point of the advertisement
## APPENDIX B

### INTER-CODER RELIABILITY CODEBOOK

**Issue Month/Year:** ____________________________

**Ad Number:** ____________________________

**Coder Name:** ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operationalizations</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neutral (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accompanying Text</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text is the product’s slogan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text is directly related to the advertised product</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text is directly related to the model’s physical appearance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text is directly related to the model’s behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text falls into another category</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body Positioning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is standing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is sitting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is lying down</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is squatting or kneeling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model’s face is angled away from the audience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clothing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is wearing no clothing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operationalizations</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1)</td>
<td>Disagree (2)</td>
<td>Neutral (3)</td>
<td>Agree (4)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree (5)</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is wearing accessories and/or underwear, but no other clothing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is wearing pants but no shirt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is fully clothed, but with arms/legs exposed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is fully clothed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Composition of Image**

| Model’s full body (head to foot) is main aspect of advertisement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Model’s body part (i.e. torso, limb) is main aspect of advertisement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Model’s face is main aspect of advertisement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Product or service for sale is main aspect of advertisement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Text is main aspect of advertisement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Physical Build**

| Model is muscular | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Model is lean and toned | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Model is thin      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Model is heavy-set | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Model is overweight | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Occupation Representation**

<p>| Model’s occupation is unclear | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Model is a white-collar worker/businessman | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Operationalizations</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly Disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Disagree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Neutral</strong></th>
<th><strong>Agree</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strongly Agree</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(bold/italicized signify new variables; these rows can be ignored)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is a blue-collar worker/manual laborer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model is a member of the military</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model has another career</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Display</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product is not shown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product is sexualized; quality and utility are ignored</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product is sexualized; quality and utility are a side note</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s quality is the main point of the advertisement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product’s utility is the main point of the advertisement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>