

**The Portrayal of Women in Billboard
Advertisements:
The case of Addis Ababa**

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Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.

Give thanks to him; bless his name (Pslam, 100:4). I am who I am
because of you Lord. Hallelujah!

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Abbreviations and Acronyms:

AAU- Addis Ababa University

Ad(s) - Advertisement(s)

ADIS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

EWVSA- Ethiopian Women Volunteer Service Association

etc- Extra

FWCW- Fourth World Conference on Women

HIV- Human Immune-Deficiency Virus

MAN- Media Awareness Network

PSA's- Public Service Advertisements

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Abstract

This study examined the portrayal of women in billboard advertisements located in Addis Ababa. By comparing images of women to men the study has documented the various depictions associated with the sexes.

Quantitative content analysis was chosen as a method of inquiring for this study. Out of 96 advertisements initially coded, 60 were taken as a final sample. These samples were taken from the sides of major roads, near large roundabouts and on raised grounds besides hotels.

Each advertisement were initially coded for all character mix, types of products and services advertised, role played, basis for credibility, sex object (sexual imagery) and race. Using these variables, analysis was performed to determine how women are portrayed in billboard ads.

The analysis of the data gathered reveled that stereotypes associated with women are widespread in billboard ads. However, although very small, there were progresses in some categories, where women were portrayed in diverse roles.

Chapter One

1. Background of the Study

We live in a media-saturated world (O'Sullivan et al., 1998: 1-15) and the continuous flow of media images and information is arguably the most important source of how most of us understand our world (Williams, 2003:123). How the media represent the world and events is often controversial. Individuals and groups regularly complain about how they are portrayed. Their sensitivity stems from the idea that "to be imprisoned inside the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of others can be a withering form of incarceration." This is a fate that can afflict cultures and nations as well as individuals (Smith, 1980: 27).

Media have often been criticized for the partial, selective and generalized way in which they represent different groups, creating stereotypes and emphasizing easily identifiable, unchanging and often negative characteristics (O'Sullivan and Jewkes, 1997: 73). Media have also been criticized for portraying women, young and old people, gays and lesbians, and a range of other "minority" groups in a simplistic and derogatory manner (Williams: 123). Lippmann (1965) recognized that "each member of any category will have many characteristics that are not suggested by the stereotypes." Media representations are often the end product of a selection process that invariably means certain aspects of reality are highlighted and others are neglected (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003).

Media have long been regarded as central to the pattern of discrimination operating against women in society (Tuchman, 1978b). Magazines, newspapers and advertisements all contain images of women and men; even songs on the radio (or played in shops and cafes) might feed into, or challenge, ideas about gender (David Gauntlett, 2004:42). Women's lack of or unequal access to mass communication resources, their low level of employment in media, the absence of media outlets devoted to women's

issues, and above all the continuous projection of negative and degrading images have been identified as critical areas of concern by feminist researchers, gender sensitive action programs and women's organizations (FWCW, 1995, Rana, 2005).

The rising costs of managing a mass media and the increasing need of business sectors and organizations to reach mass audiences have increased the amount of advertisements on television, radio, billboards, newspapers and magazines. Often as Tuchman and others pointed out, such commercial programming, advertisements, and public broadcasting present limited and stereotyped depictions of women and women's concerns (Tuchman, et al., 1978:45).

In fact, in media gender portrayal studies, advertising is often singled out for analysis of various aspects of gender and the longstanding concern has been whether advertisements project a stereotyped image on viewers (Kenaw, 2006). "As part of mass media, advertisements do not escape stereotypical representation. Most advertising seeks to reinforce what is socially accepted behavior and roles for the two sexes, thus defining what is feminine and masculine. For example, men are more likely to be portrayed a figures of authority in business settings while women are confined indoors especially in the kitchen and when they appear in the business world they are restricted to 'less challenging' roles like beauty and fashion industries." (www.genderlinks.org.za).

Like other mass media products, billboard advertisements are criticized for stereotypical portraying of groups, especially women. Feminists often accuse the advertising industry of a quiet conservatism and a fear of challenging certain elements of what the media think the audience needs and expects. Representation of gender roles seems to have been, for many years at least, one area where advertisers were often reluctant to do anything very different (Gauntlett: 56). And, Gauntlett notes, advertisers find themselves on the frontline of feminist counterattack because of stereotyping. Feminists in England during the 1970s and

1980s often spray painted acerbic comments on billboard advertisements. An advertisement with a woman reclining on a Fiat received the new tagline, “When I’m not lying on cars, I’m a brain surgeon” (Macdonald, 1995:87), and an ad showing a woman carving a lover’s message into a tree replaced “Renew his interest in carpentry” with “Saw his head off” (Posener, 1982).

In recent years billboard advertising has increased in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’s capital and the site of most billboards. Large numbers of billboards are now found at traffic roundabouts, along major roads, and on raised ground near popular hotels. These billboards feature prominent images of women and men, with words and graphic designs.

The goal of this study is to explore how women are portrayed in billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa. Globalization is now bringing ideas like gender equality into Ethiopia, a country with a long history of women playing prominent roles in the country’s political, economic and social life. Particularly in large cities like Addis Ababa, men and women bargain, negotiate, and settle in relationships based on individual inclination and individual economic, physical, intellectual, and emotional resources. (Arafat, Yorburg, 1976). Arguably, at least in large cities, behavior is now less frequently determined by arbitrary concepts or traditional roles.

This study will attempt to see if globalization and changing traditions have affected the content of billboard advertisements. Referring to the Western world, Courtney and Whipple (1983:24) say that “Women and men in the society today clearly are far from their portrayed images in advertising. As sex roles continue to change and expand at a faster rate than the advertisers’ response, the image of sexes in advertising is not keeping pace with the change. In fact, the image reflects the status quo of a time gone by.” Can the same be said for Ethiopia?

2. Statement of the Problem

“Advertising plays an important role in socialization. Apart from influencing what the public consumes, advertising also influences public opinion and world views. Advertisements portray and interpret society’s definition of roles for men and women.” (www.genderlinks.org.za). As the number of advertising companies increases in Addis, so do the opportunities to use images of women in their ads. Such images are now used to advertise banks, airlines, companies, organizations, beauty products and even condoms. However, considering how frequently gender issues are discussed elsewhere in the world of billboard advertising, how women are portrayed in advertisements rarely comes under scrutiny in Ethiopia.

How women are portrayed elsewhere in the advertising world raises questions about stereotyping. Baker (1989) says stereotypes are criticized for representing the world both accurately and inaccurately. A stereotype, even one that is accurate, can carry negative consequences, by reinforcing the status quo and unfairly restricting the diversity of individual roles (Sparks: 193). In Ethiopia, few studies exist on media in general and on gender in specific. And apparently no empirical research has been conducted about billboard advertisements in general and about women’s portrayal on billboards in specific. It might be important therefore to scientifically examine how women are portrayed in billboards advertisement in Addis Ababa, considering especially the visibility of billboards and the possible implications of female images. This research paper will attempt to do so empirically.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study’s general objective is to find and analyze the various images of women portrayed in billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa. Specifically, this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do women appear in billboard advertisements? Why

are they selected?

- For credibility, authority, expertise, or what?
- Which groups of women frequently appear in billboard advertisements? Is age or race a factor?
- Does the portrayal of men and women differ? How?
- To what extent do billboard advertisements promote or challenge gender stereotyping
- What do different groups think about how women are portrayed in billboard advertisements? For example, what do females, males, advertising agencies, gender studies experts, even the women portrayed in ads themselves think?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Many research papers and books address the portrayal of women in the media in developed nations. But few such studies exist about Africa, and fewer still about Ethiopia.

Some research about women and the media does exist in Ethiopia. However, this research seems to be focused only on a few issues. For example, concerning how media portrays women, almost all research deals with women in Ethiopian Television advertisements. This study may, therefore, make the following contributions:

- 1 Help identify how women compared to men are being portrayed in billboard ads
- 2 Help in creating awareness among advertisers and companies that advertise
- 3 Help highlight both positive and negative/degrading depictions of both

sexes

4 Help provide the foundation for more media research, in general, and critically analysis of gender and billboard advertisements, in particular.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study covers billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa located on both sides of Africa Avenue (Bole Road), from Haya Hulet to Meghnangna roundabout, from Harambe Hotel to Mesquel Square, Sidist Kilo and Mexico roundabouts, on the raised ground near the Hilton Hotel. The research addressed only billboard advertisements in place between Feb. 1, 2008, and April 15, 2008. The research excludes damaged billboards or images that advertising agencies had to replace. The study monitored only certain kinds of gender content in the ads such as age, race, gender roles, number of women, types of services and products, and sexual image.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

First, content analysis is susceptible to bias due to methods of data collection and interpretation. By its nature, content analysis also is limited in describing how media messages influence viewers. Also, the impact of gender portrayals has not been addressed because such a project deserves an in-depth and independent study all by itself. Second, this research is affected by lack of local research and well-documented materials to serve as a baseline. As a result, most of the literature came

from Western media studies and affected interpretation of local data.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The research paper has five chapters. Chapter One consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, significance, scope and limitations. Chapter Two contains the review of related literature. Chapter Three deals in detail with research methods by presenting a clear picture of sampling and coding procedures. Chapter Four embraces analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter Five draws conclusions and offers recommendations.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Gender Relations

Gender is not simply determined biologically by sex. Rather, the term

“gender” embraces race, class, ethnicity, and male and female power relationships (Wilfred, 2002). According to Were (1991), gender role differentiation is culturally defined in a way that creates and reinforces male dominance and female subordination. The idea of what females and/or males are expected to do is determined by the existing culture and acquired through socialization. From birth, children are taught what roles to perform, based on their gender (Were, 1991).

Carefully defining “sex” and “gender” is essential to thinking about distinctions between males and females and masculinity and femininity. Sexual differences are biological distinctions between males and females. Gender addresses social and cultural roles, about concepts of “masculinity” and “femininity,” and behavior deemed socially acceptable for men and women. Gender studies arise from concerns about positions of men and women, their social inequalities and their ensuing struggles (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002: 230).

According to many researchers, women do not have positions equal with men. In fact, Bamberger asserts that women everywhere find themselves restricted in their actions and subordinated to rules set by men (Bamberger, 1993-276). Such restriction and subordination varies, depending on different social and cultural values and norms. Gender hierarchy describes those situations where masculinity affects social power and control over work, resource, and products. In patriarchal societies in particular, those in male roles – fathers and husbands, for example – exercise social authority over women. But as Hess and Ferree (1987:32) suggest, patriarchy is one form of gender hierarchy, but not the only one.

Although evidence supports this dominance of patriarchal systems, Bamberger points out that, in earlier stages of human development, the idea of matriarchy organized the social world, where women exercised power over men (Bamberger, 1993-2). In contrast to the present, women

commanded more prestige and played prominent social, cultural, economic and political roles within communities (Teklu, 2004-1). Now, Balba suggests that traditional culture subordinates African women, treating them as minors and depriving them of a role in public affairs, despite their contributions in every sector (Balba, 1969).

In developing countries, role differentiation within the society directly affects women's professional achievement. Addis Alem (1995:23) describes how, in addition to lack of education and training, the family and women's social obligations such as house work, child care, and other informal activities affect their employment. As a developing country, Ethiopia is among those African countries where women are disadvantaged. Besides bearing children and keeping house, women participate in the day-to-day activities of society. Empress Taitu made crucial contributions in the period 1883-1910 to the domestic and foreign policies of Ethiopia as consort to Emperor Menelik II; she was described as the most powerful woman on the continent of Africa in her time (Snyper, Tadesse, 21:1995)

Now, in rural Ethiopia where farming is a family enterprise, women are important. According to Makida, agriculture was and still is the country's economic backbone. Women directly or indirectly provide more than half of the agriculture labor force. Yet, despite the fact that Ethiopian women such as Empress Taitu have played important roles in politics and many Ethiopian women provide the crucial labor for the country's key industry, they are not accepted as equals by men.

2.1.1 Gender Roles in Ethiopia

The degree of intra-household “democracy” varies from one cultural setting to another (Dessalegn, 1991-32). Although women in general are not the major decision makers in Ethiopia, the division of work and gender roles varies from one cultural setting to another. In some households, Ethiopia’s patriarchal tradition accommodates itself to competing interests of wives, children, and adult dependents. So, according to Dessalegn, peasant women in Ethiopia’s northern region of Wollo have more say in decisions than women in Ethiopia’s southern region of Wolayta. This frequently involves decisions about cultivation, land use, and cropping plans, all of which are generally accepted as the male domain. Among the Begga and Gumuz of Mettekel in western Ethiopia, women and men share agriculture work equally.

Ethiopian women have also fought side by side with men. During the Italian occupation from 1936 to 1941, members of such Ethiopian women’s associations as the Ethiopian Women Volunteer Service Association (EWVSA) contributed to the liberation struggle. Shawaragad, the head of EWVSA, worked undercover and formed an underground women’s intelligence service to carry firearms and supply information to patriots. She and other influential women also recruited women fighters for the resistance. In an interview in England in October 1936, Empress Menen, the wife of HaileSelassie I, and their daughter confirmed that women had left for the front (Makida, 2000:10).

In addition to traditional gender division of labour imposing the burden of subsistence and domestic responsibility on women leading to women working more and longer each day than men (Zewudie and Junge, 1991), most Ethiopian women work for no salary according to reports of Ethiopian Central Statistical Authority in 1999. From the estimated 60 million people in 1999, women represent one third of approximately 42 per cent of all employed Ethiopians. Of women employed, however, less than one percent worked as government employees; a little more than

one percent worked as private employees, and approximately 10 percent worked without pay or as self-employed. (Ethiopian Central Statistical Authority, 1999). Of the country's more than 300,000 civil servants employees at regional and federal levels, only about a quarter are women (Tihitina, 2001).

According to National Labour force survey (2005), the employment population for male was 87.7 percent compared to female 69 percent. Elementary occupations have the highest proportion (42.8 per cent) of employed persons in Ethiopia where the majority are females. Male were dominant in the fields of legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals, technicians and clerks. In 2005 compared to men, women outnumbered men in urban industrial division like wholesale and retail trade, hotel and restaurant, and manufacturing. Highest proportion of people working in the informal sector (26.2 percent) in urban areas goes to women according to the survey. The Ethiopian population in 2005 was estimated to be 75,067,000. Of which 37,615,000 are male while 37,452,000 are female (Statistical Abstract, 2005).

Amaz (1999), Tsion and Abyalnes (1992) say that, examining the urban areas, most women are found in the informal sector. The common occupation of women in the informal sector is fuel carrying and selling, small scale market, trading food items, handicrafts, prostitution, and domestic servants. Women's involvement in decision making processes, education and employment in the public and private sector is low. Certain fields of study and areas of work are limited to women. They have very low socio-economic position (cited in Kenaw, 2006).

Even though their efforts have been confined to lower roles in the society by tradition and fewer opportunities than men in education and employment, Ethiopian women have been and still are contributing to every sector. Carter and Steiner (2004:5) note that inequalities in education, employment, and income are even more severely marked in

some “developing” countries where women often lack certain basic human rights: rights to an education, economic security, political enfranchisement, freedom from domestic violence, access to high quality affordable health care and reproductive control. Feminist scholars in these countries have long argued for the need to engage with the ways in which the media help to shape the norms, values and beliefs that underpin these inequalities.

2.2 How Media Portray Women

The media have long been acknowledged as powerful conduits of socially acceptable behavior, conferring status, honor and public recognition (Carter & Steiner, 2004:1). At the same time, media can also disempower. As Hamelink says;

Among the tools of this disempowerment are stereotyped and damaging images of the human condition including gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, physical and mental illness and disability. Media disempowerment reduces the capacity of ordinary people to control the decisions that others take about their lives and to shape their own futures (Gender Settings, 2001)

In the 1960s, the women’s movement in the Western world began to systematically critique media institutions and programs. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), author Betty Friedan identified mass media as an indicator of the struggle over gender equality. In a world where media increasingly provide the “common ground” of information, symbols and ideas, she noted how media helped to keep women in a place of relative powerlessness. This portrayal of powerlessness is not uniquely Western. How women are portrayed varies country by country, according to each country’s culture and attitude toward women in that society (Fullerton and Kendrick, 2000). In Ethiopia, as Kenaw points out, social and cultural values greatly influence how media represent men and women

differently (Kenaw, 2006).

The relationship between media representation and world reality is complex. As Richard Dyer (1993:3) notes that “one apprehends reality only through representations of reality, through texts, discourses, images; there is no such thing as unmediated access to reality. But because one can see reality only through representation it does not follow that one does not see reality at all...”. Reality is always more extensive and complicated than any system of representation can possibly comprehend, and we always sense that this is so. Representation never “gets” reality, which is why human history has produced so many different and changing ways of trying to get it” (Dyer, 1993-3).

2.2.1 Women’s Images in Ethiopian Media

In developing countries such as Ethiopia, misrepresentation and under-representation of women in media can negatively affect development. In “Media and its Perception of Women,” Agaredech says broadcast programs, newspaper columns and advertisements show how Ethiopian society perceives Ethiopian women. “Even in seemingly trivial areas,” she says, “the presentation of women in the media tends, consciously or otherwise, to project a negative image” (2002:94). Young women, Agaredech says, are gender sensitive, and she quotes them as saying “Advertisements are nonsense. Are we supposed to see an artificial wig to advertise creams? It has nothing to do with natural beauty. In addition to that we women do not have long hair. Short hair is nice by itself.” One girl she quotes specifically says, “So most of the advertisements that we watch on TV are not compatible with the reality. For all these, I can say that the girls are advertising themselves instead of advertising the goods and cosmetics” (Agaredech, 2002:94).

In most cases, according to Abebech (2005), women get no media

coverage or are only covered in traditional roles as wives and mothers. Agaredech agreed, saying media in Ethiopia portray women stereotypically and unrealistically.

2.2.2 Stereotyped Images

Stereotypes refer to social classification of particular groups and people with highly simplified and generalized signs, implicitly or explicitly representing a set of values, judgments and assumptions concerning their behavior, characteristics or history (O'Sullivan et al, 1994: 299-300). Stereotypes are essential in order to process the vast array of information flowing around modern society. An individual cannot personally experience the vast majority of events in which they might be interested and thus must rely on their own mental maps in order to make sense of what is going on (Lippmann, 1965).

Stereotypes are not only necessary for an individual to understand their environment but central to our ability to communicate with one another (Williams, 2003). However, stereotypes often involve prejudice, emphasizing differences between individuals and groups, with a generalized, simplified concept that usually implies negative consequences. Lippmann (1965) recognised that “each member of any category will have many characteristics that are not suggested by the stereotypes and may even have some characteristics that run counter to some of the stereotypes.” Stevens (2005:2) taking into consideration the negative aspects of stereotyping points that, “Stereotyping is not necessarily an intentional act of abuse. It is, in most cases, merely a process we use to simplify our world. Stereotypes are not all bad. We could have a stereotype that is positive.”

Stereotype is an important concept in media analysis and the effects of

stereotyping have long been of concern (Pickering, 2001). There is a contradiction with the use of stereotypes to understand the world and the restrictive view they present of the world. This contradiction is at the heart of using the concept to explore the nature of media representations (Williams, 2003). According to Kenaw, stereotypes exist in various media, as media convey stereotyped ideas and images about women and men. Stereotypes are familiar in advertising, with content ranging from social class portrayal, to ethnic portrayal, to gender portrayal. Goffman, one of the first sociologists to analyze gender stereotypes in advertisements, says advertisements help to construct ideas of masculinity and femininity. He found that women in the Western world are often portrayed in stereotyped ways, in submissive or family roles, and in lower social positions than men (1979).

2.2.3 Women as Sex Objects

Advertising relies on presentation of provocative images of women's partly clad or naked, and images of female bodies are everywhere in advertisements. The media rely on women and women's bodies to sell everything from food to cars (Media Awareness Network, 2006). In many cases, the depiction of women's bodies as decorative elements, in television programs and advertisements, also show women as a spectacle of voyeuristic pleasure (Parry and Karam, 2005). The core element of psychoanalytical feminism, according to Van Zoonen (1994:87), is the display of women "as a spectacle to be looked at, subjected to the gaze of the male audience."

In an attempt to sell products and services, advertising often emphasizes sexuality and the importance of physical attractiveness. As Gordon says, "Women's bodies are sexualized in advertisements in order to grab the viewer's attention. Women become sexual objects when their bodies and their sexuality are linked to products that are bought and sold. This is

mere portrayal of women as sex objects” (Media Awareness Network, 2006). Baranski and Batt (2003) support this notion by saying ad images of half-naked women or female body parts use sexuality to help sell products.

2.2.4 Women as Consumers of Products and Services

Since the late 19th century, women in particular have been associated with consumerism. In the 20th century, consumer discourses have endorsed and reproduced particular models of femininity (Macdonald, 2004: 50). Indeed, “the ways in which discourses around consumerism have constructed feminine identities over the past century argues that the advertising industry provided multiple forms of feminine identity in order to reach new markets and increase corporate profits” (Macdonald, 2004). From multiple forms of feminine identity, addicted to shopping is one of them. As *Daily Mirror* columnist Dorothy Dix said, “Shopping is to a woman what getting drunk to a man” (Daily Mirror Dec. 19, 1935).

On billboards advertising agencies use women in great numbers to advertise a range of products aimed at women. Trowler (1988) cited a study of women in advertisements which show that women's appearances in personal hygiene products ads are seven times more than those of the advertisements in other categories. Seventy-five per cent of all advertisements portray women for products used in the bathroom or kitchen (cited in Kenaw 2006).

2.3 Feminism and Feminist Theoretical Perspectives

Feminist scholars (Gallagher, 1981; Mahoney, 1991; Roach, 1991) have outlined some of the major issues facing women in international media studies. As they note, issues of access and representation remain

paramount, whether in old or new technologies (Valdivia, 1995:11). Gender often illustrates the media's representation of so-called socially acceptable roles, positions and behaviors (Kenaw, 2005).

2.3.1 Feminism

Feminism, a movement for women's liberation and equality, has evolved through many stages during the 20th century. Each stage has produced theories to understand and explain how mediated images shape social perceptions about gender.

One well-known strand of feminism emerged in the late 1960s and dominated the 1970s, and feminist writers provided significant voices in public discourse. Early researchers at that time also examined media content in order to provide quantitative proof that media typically rely on stereotypical images of women. Women, they found, were portrayed as passive, nurturing and concerned with the domestic. These, they said, reinforced sexist attitudes and behaviors (Epstein 1978; Tuchman 1978). Then feminist media scholarship shifted the conceptual emphasis from the surface "message" of media content to the media's ideological role of reproducing male dominance (Coward 1985; Winship 1987).

Since the 1980s, debate focused on social roles of men and women and construction of their gender and sexual identities. Different views of feminism developed, including reactions against feminism. (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2002) Media analysts sought to expose how media used patriarchal ideology to shape messages and support hierarchical gender relations. Today, most feminist scholars will not examine media texts in isolation. Instead, they say, media production and cultural impact must always be analyzed within the wider context of society's gender discourses (Carter and Steiner, 2004).

2.3.2 Feminist Theoretical Perspectives

Over the past decade or so, media critiques are becoming increasingly globalized. Discussion of gender and media lead to various feminist theoretical perspectives, feminists' criticism and theory that incorporate diverse attitudes and assumptions. Feminist scholars in developing countries have urged engaging with the media to shape norms, values and beliefs underpinning gender inequalities (Carter & Steiner, 2004). The following feminists' theoretical perspectives on gender and the media touch the research questions that this particular study attempts to answer.

Liberal feminists seek equal opportunities for women to participate in society. They strive for equality with men in the male-dominated sphere of work, demanding equal access to jobs and institutional power (Ginsburg, 1999; Enriques, 2000). One liberal researcher, Enriques focused on mass media images of women, especially the ways of portraying women in media. But this approach came under attack for its silence on how images of women are produced and understood (Enriques, 2000).

Equality of women, according to liberal feminism, depends on accuracy in representation (Shields, 1996). In evaluating such equality, media studies investigate whether these images portray traditional sex roles stereotyping of women as submissive, wife, mother, and homemaker, or if images show women in roles of important decision-maker and successful professionals, independent of men. Since the early 1970s, liberal feminist research in mass communication has examined these gender stereotypes (Ginsburg, 1999).

Radical feminism highlights the fact that, in a patriarchal system, women are and have been oppressed by men. If that is so, then the entire social

system, including the media, must be uprooted (Burgess-Jackson, 1995 cited in Storer, 2004). As noted by Parry and Karam, (2005), radical feminist Kate Millet traces the roots of woman's oppression to the patriarchy's gender system. Patriarchal ideology, she says, exaggerates biological differences between men and women, ensuring that men have dominant masculine roles and women subordinate feminine ones.

Radical feminist theory, in general, lobbies for radical changes in society, and in the media, in order to establish communities of women autonomous from men. As radical feminists point out, media-owned and produced by men operate for the benefit of a patriarchal society (Enriques, 2000). As Parry and Karam (2001:383) note, "The media have always been the centre of feminist criticism because the power they communicate, patriarchal (rule of the father, subordinating the female to the male) and ideological (how men of all classes and races use the media to oppress women) messages."

Under a socialist feminist perspective, capitalist gain and maximum profits are the main purposes of media. So women are portrayed as playthings and manipulated to sell cosmetics, clothes and consumer goods (Craig, 1998). Profit goals and male dominance combine to produce mainstream media texts, norms, values and beliefs. (Carter and Steiner, 2004). Capitalist gain and patriarchy are mutually dependent, though they do not necessarily overlap (Eisenstein, 1999). Yet socialist feminist theory accounts for ways that patriarchy and capitalism interact to oppress women in the home and workplace (Parry and Karam 2005).

An extensive amount of literature on gender and the media reveal fundamental differences in how mass media portray men and women, starting from inequalities in frequency of appearance (Kenaw, 2005). However, as Gallagher (1995) asserts, numerical imbalances reveal only a small part of gender portrayal; most studies go further, monitoring gender differences in social and occupational roles, psychological and

personality traits, and physical features depicted in the media. According to Croteau and Hoynes (2003), women's appearances, more often than not, feature women in stereotyped roles.

Images of gender are communicated in all forms of mass media, explicitly or implicitly. To date, feminist scholars and media critics who analyze media content have shown that many media images in many countries are unrealistic and stereotyped (Courtney and Whipple, 1983; Mibilinyi and Omari, 1996; Wood, 1999). Steeves (1997:8) notes that "Feminist scholars around the world have documented ways in which the products and processes of global media reflect patriarchal values – by ignoring and excluding women, by stereotyping women in narrow traditional roles and by degrading women via representation of them as sex objects of abuse."

2.4 Advertising in Ethiopia

In ancient times, traders in Ethiopia advertised products by cutting or drawing symbols in stones and public criers, walking up and down streets, shouted information about their wares (Muna, 1996). This historical development of advertising in Ethiopia is closely linked to development of society at large in the country. Understanding the need for advertising goes back to generations in Ethiopia. With the use of words like "_____ is found here," Ethiopians have been selling food items and local beverages (Daniel, 2007:22). Advertisement also evolved with the establishment of the Ethiopian printing press..

The first press ad, for washing soap, appeared in the first Ethiopian newspaper, *Aimro* on August 2, 1914. Advertisements appeared in *Addis Zemen*, an Amharic newspaper, at the end of the 1950s and start of the 1960s. According to Yosef, the demand for items from local people and foreigners drove competition during the Italian occupation and helped develop Ethiopia's advertising industry. The trend continued into the early 1970s. The national lottery started to use public criers in

marketplaces and continued commercial advertising after the Ethiopian Revolution in 1974. Few advertising agencies existed before the revolution. Anbessa, opened by advertising pioneer Ato Wubshet, was among the country's first advertising agencies (Yosef Girmay, 2005).

Electronic advertising followed. Though Ethiopian Radio started transmission in September 1936, it did not accept advertisements until 1953 (Daniel, 2007). Ethiopian Television started service on Emperor HaileSelassie I's coronation day in October 1965. Four years later, the Ministry of Information and Tourism founded the Advertising and Distribution Agency "to promote the advertising industry and to promote trade." Two years later, Ethio-marketing, a private enterprise, took over (ibid).

After the Emperor's fall in 1974, the Dergue military government nationalized most companies and all advertising agencies. Almost all commercial advertisements, except public announcements, vanished. The advertising sector revived when market opportunities flourished with imported consumer goods and industry deregulation after the Dergue regime fell in 1991 (Kenaw, 2005-27). With liberal economic policies, investments and a competitive market, many advertising agencies supported print, broadcast and outdoor advertising (Daniel, 2007).

Daniel (2007; 25) says advertising in Ethiopia was not without fault. Citing a 2000 publication from the Addis Ababa City Government Bureau of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, he noted basic guidelines and identified the following problems.

- In general, Ethiopia has no advertising policy. So the rights of individuals, groups, the business sector and society can be abused by ill-conceived/indecent advertisements.
- Lack of creativity and in-depth research means that advertisements fall short of intended targets.

- Exaggeration causes misleading and boring ads.
- Significant number of ads that mimic a Western style directly conflict with Ethiopian culture and codes of conduct, missing audiences and customers.

Now, apart from print and broadcast ads, Ethiopians are exposed to outdoor advertisements, with ads everywhere, on cars, posters and billboards. Outdoor billboard advertisements became popular in recent years, and billboards with poster panels and painted bulletins advertise products, companies and service-giving organizations.

2.4.1 Billboard Advertisements

Since the Stone Age, humans have communicated visual ideas openly for others to admire. Over 5,000 years ago, hieroglyphics on obelisks directed travellers, and Egyptian merchants chiselled sales messages into stone tablets along public roads. By the 15th century, posting bill was accepted practice in Europe. In the mid-1880s, outdoor advertising became a serious art form. Not so long ago, a media planner would base a schedule around newspapers, radio, television, and outdoor advertising. The outdoor portion was easy; there were only 8-inch by 30-inch sheet posters and painted bulletins. Now outdoor ads include everything from billboards to hot-air balloons (Wells, Burnett, Moriarty, 1998). Only one fact is consistent: The outdoor message must be short and clear, initiating an immediate response (Remember the local ads: “___ is sold here”) (Daniel, 2007).

Wells, Burnett, and Moriarty (1998) further note that panels and bulletins are two standardized billboards sold commercially. Local organizations also erect free-form posters and signs. Printers lithograph or silk-screened posters and ship them to outdoor/out-of-home advertising companies. Then, pre-pasted for panels, they are applied in sections on location. Artists hand-paint bulletins, either on location or in the shop, for movable panels hoisted and attached to billboard frames

(Wells, Burnett, and Moriarty, 1998). Billboards are generally placed on the side of roads to reach pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The heavier the traffic flow, the better the location, with billboards with similar content erected in different locations to create repetition (Daniel, 2007).

According to research conducted in 2007 by Gender Links, of all advertising media in southern Africa, billboards display the highest proportion of blatant stereotypes. Not only did women appear in most billboard images, but also they constituted the highest proportion of blatant stereotypes. As the study found, ads used women as objects to attract attention, with no relationship to the actual product. So women in a scanty top advertised a car or airtime on a mobile phone.

The growing number of billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa has brought similar trends. Now images of women outnumber men in billboard advertisements. But how are they portrayed? In a stereotyped way? And which products or service organization use women in their ads? And does the image have anything to do with the content?

Chapter Three

Methodology

To generate statistical data on how billboards in Addis Ababa portray women, this study follows a quantitative research design. This study focuses mainly on how those billboard ads portray women in comparison to men.

This chapter deals with the methodology used to carry out this research. It discusses the research design, sampling process, methods of data collection, and data analysis procedures. These approaches are then

examined in light of the study's theoretical framework and their relevance to the study's goal and aims.

3.1 Method

The research method for this study is a quantitative research design, which is based in content analysis. Content analysis has been a central methodology in media studies for many decades. It is a fruitful way to examine the inherent meaning of a media text; it allows general statements about aspects of representation that non-specialists, journalists and experts alike can understand. Content analysis is an empirical (observational) and objective procedure for quantifying recorded representation using reliable, explicitly defined categories (values) on independent (variables) (Bell, 2001:13).

To find out how women are portrayed on Addis Ababa billboard ads, this researcher used two different research tactics, each to corroborate the other. The two are quantitative content analysis and in-depth interviews.

3.1.1 Method of Data Collection

The study selected billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa as its principal source. The ads, which were coded and analyzed to reveal information, were chosen for their gender-positioned content. This researcher thus examined the sample specifically for each ad's portrayal of women and portrayal of men.

The sources of information employed as literature for this study come primarily from books about women, particularly about portrayal of

women in advertisements as described in the literature review. These sources helped to develop theoretical insights pertinent to the subject.

3.1.2 Sampling

Photographs of billboard advertisements in the following locations provided the sample for analysis: on both sides of major roads in Addis Ababa, such as along African Avenue (Bole Road), from Megnagna to Haya Hulet, from Harambe Hotel (Ambassador) up to Meskel Square, near large roundabouts like Megnagna, Sidist Kilo and Mexico, and on raised ground beside the Hilton Hotel. All billboards who were found at these specific places from February 1 to April 15, 2008, were considered. The selected billboards were concentrated in the mentioned areas and visible to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The sampling period concentrated on February 1 through April 15, 2008, to gather as many billboard ads as possible and still meet the timeline and deadlines set by AAU's Faculty of Journalism and Communication. The study also included billboard ads erected within one year of and during the sample recording period to ensure a wide range of ads, especially those containing identifiable or "code able" characters. The sample excluded billboard ads without gender content or code able characters.

3.2 Coding Categories

As Kenaw (2006, 36) points out, in the absence of any empirical content analysis of how Ethiopian media portray women, it is reasonable to adopt coding frames from other researchers and from recent content analysis. Therefore, the study relies on coding frames from research on how advertisements elsewhere portray women, specifically 2007 research by

Gender Links on how five southern African countries portray women in their advertisements.

The selected coding categories directly or indirectly match my research questions and objectives. The images of females and males were coded according to types of products and services, role of women portrayed, basis for credibility and sexual imagery.

3.2.1 Character Mix

Each sample advertisement was also coded according to the age and sex of all humans appearing in the billboard ads. The categories were: all female adult, all male adult, all adults groups of both sex , female adult with teenagers or children, male adult with children or teenagers, teenagers by themselves, and a mix of sexes and ages. Advertisements with unidentifiable human images or ads devoid of human images were coded as “no character or difficult to code.”

3.2.2 *Types of Products or Services Advertised:*

Images of people were coded according to types of products or services they advertised. The products and services included:

Service giving organizations: Where images of people advertise banks, airlines, hospitals and the like.

Personal beauty and health care: Where products and services involve body health, personal hygiene and cleansing.

Clothes and accessories: Where products include clothing plus underwear, shoes, and accessories.

Home: Where products include food or drink, household furniture, cleaning agents and toiletries.

Auto: All automotive vehicles, accessories, oil, and maintenance and repair advertisements.

Technical and Occupational: Technical and occupational products like building materials for home and office, etc.

Entertainment or Leisure: Restaurants, bars and nightclubs, alcoholic drinks, etc.

3.2.3 Role

Human images were coded for roles through the following sub-categories:

Model/ Beauty Contestant/ Sex Object: The person advertising the product or service is selected because s/he is a model or a beauty contestant and because of physical attributes is a marketing ploy.

Parent/Caregiver: When human images portray mother/father, wife/husband.

Businessperson: When a human image portrays a businessperson, through dress style or meeting place.

Professionals: When human images project a professional status such as teacher, politician, engineer, etc.

Entertainer: When identifiable actors, musicians and comedians advertise products and services.

Other/ Unclear: If none of the categories applied.

3.2.4 Basis for Credibility

The central images of persons were coded for the level of credibility given to the character through the following situations: (What credibility means in this case is that the reasons/criteria's used as a base to select characters in the ads.)

User: When the human image primarily depicted users of the advertised products or services.

Authority: When the images portraying the character/s primarily presented information about the products and services or demonstrated decision-making skill or expertise on behalf of the character regarding the products or services advertised.

Both: When the human images portrayed both user and authority.

Other/ no relation to the product: When the human images neither used nor served as authorities for the products or services.

3.2.5 Sex Object (Sexual Imagery)

Human images were categorized according to the sex appeal they displayed in the advertisements. The following categories were used as indicators of these features.

This study used "Degree of dress" as described by Kenaw (2006):

Fully dressed or clothed: Those dressing normally.

Suggestively clad: Those exposing breasts or chests or wearing clingy or transparent clothing.

Partially clad: Those wearing bathing suits, especially exposing midriffs.

3.2.6 Race

This categorizes human images according to race/ethnicity:

Ethiopians: Images of blacks who apparently are Ethiopians.

Caucasians: Images of whites who are apparently from elsewhere in the world.

Blacks (African descent): Images of blacks apparently from African countries other than Ethiopia or African-Americans.

Asians: Images of people apparently from countries of Asia excluding Russia.

South Americans: Images of people from countries in South America.

Mixed: Images of people from different racial backgrounds.

3.3 Coding Procedure

The photos captured images of billboards advertising non-product ads, often called social service or public service advertisements (PSAs), as well as ads advertising products and services. According to Joshi (2001), PSAs deal with matters of public interest such as social change, political ideas, developmental programs, etc. (Cited in Kenaw, 2006). For example, in Addis Ababa, ads about the need to send children to school; campaigning against HIV/AIDS, corruption and bad practices are common PSAs.

Not all ads recorded during the sampling period could be coded, and repeat ads in different locations were ignored after the first was recorded. Sketches of humans were coded according to sex, age and race. The final sampling consisted of 96 billboard ads, with 12 repeats and 24 uncodeable. After dropping those 36 ads, the sampling included 60 ads with identifiable and code able images. These were analyzed according to the sex of the images (character mix), types of products/services advertised, role played, credibility, sexual imagery and race.

The research employed two undergraduates, one female and one male, as coders who repeatedly viewed photos of billboard ads. Each followed detailed instructions about the coding process, including learning definitions of features to be coded, growing familiar with the coding sheet, and closely examining photos of billboards. Written instructions included descriptions of variables and examples of coding so the coders would have similar definitions to guide their work.

The two coders independently evaluated the ads that served as the study's data. Then, after the coding, the codes compared the data, noted their disagreements and subsequently resolved differences by discussion. A single set of data emerged for analysis.

3.4 Coding Reliability

To check for coding reliability, the researcher compared the samples that each coder took independently. The following percentage indicates the coders' agreement for each category: 98.4% for character mix, 94.7% for types of product/service advertised, 90.3% for role, 92.3% for credibility, 95.6% for sexual imagery and 99% for race. The coders almost completely agreed on race while they argued over role and credibility.

3.5 Individual In-depth Interviews

To analyze content is to describe salient aspects of how a group of images represent relationships between and among events, people and processes. However, the explicit definitions and quantification of content analysis offer no guarantee that such empirical procedures, by themselves, will lead to valid data and inferences (Bell, 2001). Moreover, as Gallagher noted (2001:66) of all the areas in media content, advertising in particular embodies levels of complexity that will be barely scratched by purely quantitative analysis. Therefore in-depth interviews were used to complement the findings gathered from the coded data.

In-depth interviews targeted individual residents of Addis Ababa; selected professionals in advertising agencies, AAU's sociology and gender studies departments, and advertisers in companies/service givers using billboards. These interviews included residents of different ages, socio-economic classes and educational backgrounds. The interviews involved 36 individuals: 17 residents and 19 professionals, including 10 from ad agencies, one from sociology (AAU); two from gender studies (AAU), three advertisers of products or service organizations.

This two-step approach – quantitative content analysis and in-depth interviews – will be used to examine how billboard advertising in Addis Ababa portray women.

3.6 Procedure of Data Analysis

After coding, the data were transformed to percentages and entered into tables for clarity. These results will accompany qualitative descriptions of ads chosen to illustrate different ways that billboard advertising portrays women.

Chapter Four

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study attempted to examine how women are depicted in billboard ads in Addis Ababa. The key findings of the study are presented and discussed in this chapter. The chapter is composed of two sections that deal with the presentation and discussion of findings. First, the findings of all the character mix in the 60 ads sampled and the portrayals of the characters rated in terms of the specific categories are presented in tables. Secondly, in a separate section, the findings presented are discussed in a greater detail based on the formulated research questions and in relation to previous findings.

4.1 Presentation of Findings

The data gathered were coded and statistically analyzed and the major findings are presented in this section. The per cent age was calculated out of the 60 (100 %) billboard ads taken as a sample.

Table 1 Frequency of all Character Mix

Characters	% of ads	Frequency
Adult female (s)	53.3	32
Adult male (s)	18.3	11
Adult mix sex	21.7	13
Female adult with children	5	3
Other	1.7	1
Total	100	60

Considering all characters irrespective of their relation to the product/service advertisements 53.3% of the ads featured one female or

a group of females, 27.7% of ads featured adults of mixed sex and 18.3% featured one male or a group of males. Advertisements representing a female adult with a child or several children made up 5% of the ads. 'other', which was later constricted due to low frequency of 'children/teen', and the nonexistent of 'male adult with children' sub-categories, comprised 1.7 % of all ads sampled.

Table 2 Types of Products and Services Advertised

Products/ services	Women % (n)	Men % (n)	Both Sexes % (n)	Total % (n)
Service giving organizations	3.3(2)	-	13.3(8)	16.7(10)
Personal beauty/ health care	21.7(13)	1.7(1)	1.7(1)	25(15)
Cloths/accessories	6.7(4)	1.7(1)	-	8.3(5)
Home	11.7(7)	8.3(5)	3.3(2)	23.4(14)
Auto	3.3(2)	-	-	3.3(2)
Technical/ occupational	6.7(4)	5(3)	3.3(2)	15(9)
Entertainment/ leisure	3.3(2)	-	-	3.3(2)
Other	3.3(2)	1.7(1)	-	5(3)
Total (n)	60(36)	18.3(11)	21.7(13)	100(60)

Gender portrayal was significantly disproportionate within most frequent advertised products/ service categories. Personal beauty and health care products were frequently advertised by women characters. 21.7% of female characters were depicted advertising these products, while male in this category comprised only 1.7%. Cloths/ accessories were second in line using female characters. 6.7% of female characters compared to

1.7% of male characters were used here. There was a slight difference in the male/female representation with home products with 11.7 % of female characters to 8.3% male characters. Still, there was a disproportionate portrayal of characters in the roles played in the advertisements for these home products.

Although auto ads are traditionally associated with men, in the case of the billboard ads only female characters were used comprising 3.3% of the auto ads. Moreover only female characters were used individually in the entertainment sub-category (3.3%). Female characters comprised 6.7% to 5% male characters in technical/occupational ads. The above table indicates that groups of both sexes were overwhelmingly used (13.3%) in the advertisements for service giving organizations.

Table 3 Roles Played by Characters

Role	Women% (n)	Men% (n)	Both Sexes % (n)	Total % (n)
Model/ beauty contestant	40(24)	3.3(2)	-	43.4(26)
Parent/ care giver	6.7(4)	1.7(1)	1.7(1)	10(6)
Businessperson	-	1.7(1)	1.7(1)	3.3(2)
Professional	1.7(1)	5(3)	3.3(2)	10(6)
Entertainer	1.7(1)	1.7(1)	-	3.3(2)
Other/unclear	10(6)	5(3)	15(9)	30(18)
Total (n)	60(36)	18.3(11)	21.7(13)	100(60)

Regarding the sex role category, it can be seen in the above table that there was statistically significant difference in the distribution of the kind of roles the different sexes were given to play. Forty percent of female characters were given the model/ beauty contestant role, while only 3.3% of the male characters were featured in this sub-category. Female

characters were dominant in a parent/ care giver role with 6.7%. The businessperson and professional role categories were more of the domain of the male character. They (male) compromised 1.7% and 5% respectively, while women characters were non-existent in the businessperson and only 1.7% of all the female central figures had a professional role in the advertisements analyzed.

For the couples or groups consisting of both females and males they were used in 1.7% and 3.3% of the ads respectively in businessperson and professional roles. Moreover mixed sex groups constituted the higher percentage in the 'other' sub-category of roles with 15%. Female characters were second in this category of roles with 10% of the totality of ads. The 'other' sub-category mostly consists of characters that were clearly depicted as users of product/services but were not portrayed in the roles mentioned in the above table. Most of the mixed groups of characters were belonging to the 'other' sub-category were advertising airlines and household furniture/items. Both sexes were portrayed equally as shown in the above table in the entertainment sub-category where male and female characters were used equally to advertise music albums and films.

Table 4 Different Roles Portrayed (Basis for Credibility)

Credibility	Women %(n)	Men %(n)	Both Sex %(n)	Total %(n)
User	30(18)	8.3(5)	15(9)	53.3(32)
Authority	3.3(2)	3.3(2)	1.7(1)	8.4(5)
Both (user and Authority)	5(3)	3.3(2)	1.7(1)	10(6)
Other/no relation	21.7(13)	3.3(2)	3.3(2)	28.3(17)
Total (n)	60(36)	18.3(11)	21.7(13)	100(60)

Most of the characters in the advertisements were depicted as the user(s) of the advertised products and services. Of the total amount of 60 (100%) ads 32(53.3%) were depicted as users. Of the total analyzed ads in the user sub category (53.3%) 30% were women while, 15% of the ads portrayed mixed sexes and 8.3% men in the role of users. Only 1.7% of the total amount of ads portrayed couples or groups of mixed sex as product/service authority, while 3.3% of the total amount of ads portrayed women as an authority and another 3.3% of the totality of ads portrayed men as an authority, Out of the total amount of ads five percent of the characters were female actors portrayed both as a user and an authority while 3.3% of the ads portrayed men as both a user and an authority. Of all the studied ads 1.7% portrayed couples or mixed groups as both authorities and users of the advertised product. 3.3% of the total amount of ads portrayed men as neither a user nor an authority, whereas 21.7% of the total amount of ads portrayed women in other roles than a user or an authority.

Table 5 Way of Dress (Sexual Imagery)

Sexual Imagery	Women%(n)	Men%(n)	Mixed sex%(n)	Total%(n)
Fully dressed/clothed	26.6(16)	18.3(11)	16.7(10)	61.7(37)
Suggestively clad	16.7(10)	-	1.7(1)	18.3(11)
Partially clad	1.7(1)	-	-	1.7(1)
Other	15(9)	-	3.3(2)	18.3(11)
Total%(n)	60(36)	18.3(11)	21.7(13)	100(60)

The table shows sex differences related to the characters' way of dress in the ads. As can be seen in table 5 a greater proportion of women than men were portrayed both in the fully dressed/clothed and suggestively clad sub-categories. Out of the total amount of ads (100%) women were fully dressed in 26.6% whereas men were fully dressed in 18.3% of the

ads. There was a significant disparity in the suggestively clad category. Men were not at all portrayed in this category while, 16.7% out of the total ads showed women suggestively clad. Women were also the only characters used in an advertisement in partially clad sub-category (1.7% of the total amount of ads). Men and groups with both female and male characters were hardly portrayed this way.

Human images where only their face is visible in the ads was categorized in the 'other' subcategory. Females (15%) and both sexes (3.3%) advertising product in relation to beauty or personal health ads make up this category.

Table 6 Race

Race	Women%(n)	Men%(n)	Both sexes %(n)	Total%(n)
Ethiopian	31.7(19)	8.3(5)	10(6)	50(30)
Black(African decent)	5(3)	3.3(2)	6.7(4)	15(9)
Caucasian	20(12)	5(3)	1.7(1)	26.6(16)
Asian	1.7(1)	-	-	1.7(1)
South America(Latin)	-	1.7(1)	-	1.7(1)
Mixed	1.7(1)	-	3.3(2)	5(3)
Total%(n)	60(36)	18.3(11)	21.7(13)	100(60)

From the total 60(100%) ads 30 characters (50%) were Ethiopian. From the 50 % of the totality of images of Ethiopian used for ads, female Ethiopians made up for 19(31.7%) compared to 5(8.3%) male Ethiopians. Of the totality of ads 20% represented female Caucasians whereas 5% of the total amount of ads was made up of male Caucasians. Most of the

Caucasian female characters were used in personal beauty ads. Out of the total amount of advertisements 10 % represented both male and female Ethiopians, while 6.7 % of the advertisements portrayed Caucasian couples or groups of both male and female characters. After Ethiopians and Caucasians the most frequently portrayed race in the advertisements was black (characters of African descent). Of the totality of advertisements black women made up for 5%, black men made up for 3.3% and black couples or black groups of both male and female made up for 6.7 percent. Black men and women were used either to advertise household electronics (T.V) or office equipments (printers).

Only 1.7% (1) of the total amount 60 ads was male South American. Another 1.7 % of the total amount of ads portraying female Asian character was used in the 60 ads. In the mixed race sub-category there was no male characters used but 1.7% of female characters and 3.3 % of mixed sex characters were used. The females were used in a restaurant ad and mixed characters were used to advertise service giving organizations. The use of non-Ethiopians in advertisements show that ether the ads were made outside of the country or that advertising agencies directly used the ads without changing the contents to relate to their targeted audiences (Ethiopians). On the positive side it shows diversity.

4.2 Discussion of the Findings

Over the years, how gender is portrayed in advertising has become the concern of advertisers, media analysts, advertising and marketing companies, feminists and society in general. In the Western world, concerns about negative images have led to discussion and debate. Some studies in the developing world are also challenging use of negative images. This study hopes to contribute to this change. Its results indicate differences in how billboard ads portray women and men, and this will be examined in context of other gender portrayal studies discussed earlier, in the literature section. This study's results in general indicate:

- Billboard advertisers use more images of women than of men

Images of women out-number men in billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa (A.A). Although women are underrepresented in Ethiopian media in general (Agaredech, 2005) in the case of billboard ads in A.A images of women are used more than men or both sexes together to advertise products or services. Legesae Techane, the male head of customer handling services at BT Adverts, suggests why:

Images of people are used to attract attention. Especially images of women are used in this aspect. Because women are naturally attractive, they are used in billboard advertisements to capture the attention of those passing by. It's a natural thing no one will bother to look at a man when there is an attractive girl around. When a well-dressed girl walks by with a well-dressed man, definitely everyone will be looking at the girl. Therefore, more women than men are used to advertise things on billboard (Legesae Techane, April 20 2008).

The findings of this study reflect ideas discovered by studies in other countries as well as concerns of feminist theories -- liberal, radical, and socialist -- discussed earlier. A high proportion of women in ads are not likely a measure of greater gender sensitivity, but rather a reflection of the fact that advertising still relies heavily on women's physical attributes as a marketing ploy. Liberal feminists argue that frequency of appearances

doesn't tell equality or fair presentation but accurate presentation does. Derese Getachew (An instructor at AAU's sociology department) says,

The view to see women as beautiful object of gaze meant to attract attention might have an impact on the number of women's image in billboards. I think women are used to attract attention from the crowd just to have him/her glance at the billboard (Derese Getachew, May 6, 2008).



Picture 1 Female characters advertising a bank, a mattress and butter at Mexico roundabout

Although images of women dominated in billboard ads in Addis Ababa unlike the general Ethiopian media, the use of women to attract attention raises question of stereotypical representation. Most researcher (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003) argue that the number of women's appearances signals more often than not that women are featured in stereotyped roles. Categorizing images into types of products/services advertised and the role played yielded stereotyped results. The stereotypes occurred with

products and services that either men or women advertised or the role they play in the ads.

- Women dominated personal beauty/health care and cloths/accessories categories in the billboards advertising products in Addis Ababa

In terms of gender representations the gap was wide; in the personal beauty/healthcare ads, 13 (21.7%) images reflected females while one (1.7%) image was male. The female images predominantly advertised products related to hair, body health, personal beauty, and hygiene and cleansing. Trowler in 1988 citing a study of women in advertisement observed that women's appearances in personal hygiene products advertisements are seven times more than those of the advertisements in other categories. It looks like time hasn't change anything.

Shops selling both male and female clothes were mostly advertised through female images. For example, in an ad for Mikki's Fashion, a girl juggling several shopping bags is accompanied by a tagline "Addicted to Fashion" portrayed someone unable to resist the urge to shop (*picture 2*). (As one subjective indication that change is slow, in 1935, an American columnist Dorothy Dix observed how "Shopping to a woman is what getting drunk is to a man.") Only one ad clothes ad, for Ambassador Suits that makes only men's suits, featured an image of a male, in front of an expensive car and private plane and over a tagline "Makes a true gentleman" (*picture 3*), well-mannered but not addicted. So, the same type of products -- one for women, the other for men -- rely on different types of billboard ads, constructing different ideas of masculinity and femininity and reinforcing gender stereotypes.



Picture2 Miki's fashion Planet 2



Picture 3 Ambassador Cloth Makers

In the “home” category – ads for food, drink, household furniture and cleansing agents – women appeared more frequently than men. But surprisingly, men also advertised products traditionally associated with women such as cooking oil. Females and males together advertised service organizations like banks, schools, airlines and construction companies in 13.3% of ads studied, and outnumbered use of female images in this category. Mixed sexes images did not appear in billboard advertising for auto, entertainment and cloths/accessories categories.

Many studies reported a gender bias between products/services advertised and images used for those ads. In research in four southern African countries, Gender Links (www.genderlinks.org.za) found that strongly associating men or women with a product subtly reinforces gender stereotypes. For example, women almost always advertise foods,

cleaning products and household goods while men almost always advertise financial services.

A year before Gender Links released its research, Kenaw (2006) traced the same subtle stereotypes in advertisements transmitted on Ethiopian Television (ETV) and saw the same outcome all over the world by citing TV ads in international coverage. A study comparing ads in South Korea and the United States showed how women in each country were often used to advertise body/home/food products and rarely used to advertise auto/business products and services (Parker, 2002).

In billboard ads in Addis Ababa, stereotyping is evident with women advertising food, cleansing materials and beauty/body products but there were discrepancies in products/services usually related with men. First, no male image advertised service organizations, including financial institutions; female images and mixed sexes images did the advertising. Second, only women advertised cars in billboard ads. Last, in the category of technical/occupational service, female images slightly outnumbered male images, 6.7% to 5%. Although one can argue that a 1% gap is nothing, still images of women were used more often than men in categories dominated by men in other media outlets. Compared to ads in southern African countries in general, and to ETV ads in particular, females dominated billboard ads selling products and services field traditionally associated with men.

This in mind the role of female images needs a careful examination. As Gallagher (1995) points out numerical imbalances reveal only a small part of gender portrayal; most studies go further, monitoring gender differences in social and occupational roles, psychological and personality traits, and physical features depicted in the media.

- Of 36 female images advertising products/services, 24 were probably selected for physical attributes.

If gender biases shape which images advertise products/services, no wonder ads are filled with sex-role stereotypes. For example, in the model/beauty contestant/ sex object category, female outnumbered male images, 40% to negligible 3.3%. Many studies suggest that women are used more often than men in ads because their physical attributes are valued more than their views.



Picture 4 An advertisement for a VISA card

This ad portrays a woman holding a Visa charge card (*picture 4*). The woman, wearing tight clothes, completely overshadows the ATM machine. Meseret Retta, a 27-year-old housewife living in Addis wonders what product is being advertised. She says even I a woman had troubles to understand the ad was for a VISA card.

It took me a while to understand that the ad was about a VISA card. I was busy looking at the girl. Imagine if I, a woman, was so taken by the girl it took me ages to understand the ad, how long would it take a man? I think men will defiantly be attracted to the ad but how many of them understood the ad was for a VISA card? I think it took them more time that I did (Meseret Retta, April 28, 2008).

Hiwot Tehcane, a female graphic designer at Mono 2000 advertising agency in Addis Ababa, says most producers of products or services often push for the suggestive use of women in ads they commission.

Once I was asked to design an ad for a bar. I asked my customer (bar owner) what kind of information and images/pictures he want to be included in the ad. Obviously the name of the bar and the address will be there. Also some pictures of alcoholic drinks will be there. We agreed on these points but soon I was arguing with the customer. He wanted a picture of a woman who is naked above the waist in the ad. I tried to explain to him that it was wrong to use women like that. But in the end, since my job is to design whatever our (Mono 2000) customers asked, I included a picture of women wearing only a bra. With our culture it's unthinkable to have a picture of a naked Ethiopian woman on ads so, whenever we are faced with this kind of situation, we scan from magazines pictures of suggestively clad non-Ethiopian women to put in the ads [...]]The customer was mad when he saw the ad. He asked why the woman was wearing a bra. He told me he specifically asked for a naked woman. After I explained to him I was not able to get the kind of picture, he told me to enlarge the current picture. In the end the picture of the bra-wearing women dominated the ad so much she almost covered the name of the bar and the products (alcohol drinks) being advertised (Hiwot Tehcane, April 23, 2008).



**Picture 5 An ad for NIDO powder milk
Children Products**



**Picture 6 An ad for
Children Products**

Only images of females were used in the category of parent/care giver, and only images of women were mixed with images children in billboard ads, liberal feminist theory has been stressing the need to investigate traditional, but stereotypical, portrayals of women as submissive, wife, mother, and homemaker. In similarly traditional and stereotypical roles, male images dominated the professional category. Most men looked serious-minded, demonstrating technical expertise or occupied by clearly professional jobs.

The gender division of labor in Addis Ababa billboards is one sign of how advertising reinforces gender stereotypes. This study confirms what Abebech (2005) said about women's stereotypes in Ethiopian media. That usually Ethiopian media portray women in unrealistically traditional roles of wives and mothers. These stereotypes may be blatant or subtle.

- Females dominated the sub-category where their images bore no relation to product advertised, 21.7% for women to a 3.3% split for male and images.

The majority of women used in billboard ads did not have any relationship with the product or service advertised. Rather they were depicted merely as decorative object to attract attention. Under socialist feminist perspectives, capitalism gain and maximum profits are the main purposes of media. So, women are portrayed as playthings and manipulated to sell cosmetics.

Women's pictures are posted on ads for car rental, water containers, food products, mattress and cloths. The mismatch between some of the products and images of women used to advertise is sometime ironic! There is no relation between the product advertised and the images used. I don't get it. Does femininity represent these products? (Derese Getachew, May 6, 2008)

In this categories testing credibility, the majority (53.3%) of images, female or male, were depicted as users of those products and services. The ads largely used female images, 30% female to 8.3% male. Substantial numbers of females use the products and services they advertise rather than serve as authorities about those products and service. The billboards especially portrayed women as users of personal beauty and hygiene products. For example, all ads for body soap used only women.

I wander, says Selam Keber a resident of Addis Ababa, don't men ever take a bath? With all these body soap products depicting only female images it makes it look like we (women) are the only one taking a bath (Selam keber, May 12, 2008).



Picture 7 Hayat advertising sensation condom

In an ad for male condoms, Hayat Ahmed, a former Miss Addis Ababa, sits in Jeep wearing a seat belt (picture 7), forging the safety of a car restraint to a male condom (SENSATION). According to media and interview comments, the ad is popular with Ethiopian youths. Zerfu Kebede, (Resident of Addis Ababa)

Whenever someone says Hayat's name, the next thing that comes to his/her mind is *Sensation*. Not because there is an association between the product and Hayat. But a very beautiful girl is used to advertise a condom in Ethiopia. Can you believe it? It's not even a female condom she is advertising. Although the ad had successfully used Hayat's physical attributes and popularity to gain attention, I never understood the relationship between Hayat and the condom. What kind of message it wanted to pass for me is a mystery (Zerfu Kebede, May 8, 2008).

Almost everyone interviewed raised the same question: Is Hayat a product user or authority? Some suggested that Hayat can be a user if her boyfriend is. And so, if Hayat uses the product, it's good enough for everyone. Or if the beautiful people use this, but what beauty a physical have to do with using condom? What is the basis for credibility?

Yamrot Girma, an AAU post-graduate student of gender studies, criticized the ad. After assessing the impact of HIV/AIDS on women, she challenged the use of Hayat's image:

In my opinion, Hayat in this ad was used as a decorative object, something to catch the eye. She is not a doctor, an expert in making condoms, or a direct user. So I think she was used to attract attention without any relation to the product (Yamrot Girma, May 10, 2008).

- All males in the ads were fully dressed while only 26.6% of females were

In the 'sex object'/ 'sexual imagery' a category, addressing the issue of how personalities dress all the men were fully dressed. However, the same results were not possible for females. Women were the only characters in suggestively clad and partially clad sub categories. All of the women in suggestively clad category were either wearing a cloth that exposes their breast or that was clinging tightly on their body. Thirty –six

females were used individually in the sampled billboard ads .From this ten of them were suggestively clad exposing some part of their body. One woman character was found exposing her mid riff in an ad for cloths. Images of females not fully clad are used to grab attention. Advertising relies on presentation of provocative images of women’s partly clad or naked, and images of female bodies are everywhere in advertisements. The media rely on women and women’s bodies to sell everything from food to cars (Media Awareness Network, 2006).



**Picture 8 Sofan’free ad 1
2**



Picture 9 Sofan’free ad

The following shows (*picture 8 and 9*) a billboard advertisement for a hair-relaxing product, with a mix of characters advertising Sofn’free relaxing cream. The male figure is fully dressed, the female wearing tights shorts and a low cut blouse, poses suggestively. The dressing code varies according to sex for the same type of billboard ad. According to this study, the female in this ad – clearly Ethiopian – is the exception. Most females “suggestively clad” and “partially dressed” are not. The trend is to use Caucasians when the ad may clash with local culture or traditional life. However, the influence of the way women dress in ads produced outside of Ethiopia and used to advertise products/services in

Addis Ababa must be taken into account. After all white women might not be replacing anyone.

The study showed car ads as the most stereotyped regarding dress. In an ad for Sol car rent, a sexy young Caucasian woman wears low-cut top and tight shorts leans backwards towards the parked car. Apart from way of dress the woman was not portrayed as a passenger or driver of the car. Baranski and Batt (2003) support this notion by saying ad images of half-naked women or female body parts use sexuality to help sell products.

Regarding race, half of all images involved Ethiopians, with females used frequently. Where culture banned advertisers from using Ethiopian women, Caucasian women replaced them. Whites, especially women (20%), sold body soap and hair products. For ads targeting Ethiopian women, using white women may transmit confused transmit messages. Blen Bekele, (A housewife living in Addis) observed,

Our skin type and hair texture is completely different. I bought this shampoo thinking it will make my hair look like the one in the advertisement. And when it didn't I felt cheated. And, she added, perhaps Ethiopians think that if a white person uses the product then it must have a good quality (Blen Bekele, April 25, 2008).

Selmon Ayew (from one of the product advertising companies) doesn't agree with Blen. He points out that,

With most of the products advertised being imported from other countries, advertisers copy ads that already have been done by the manufacture of the product. The cost factor is another thing that plays into advertisers copying ads made by someone outside of Ethiopia for non-Ethiopians (Selmon Ayew, May 4, 2008).

Maybe the globalization process has contributed in influencing billboard ads in Addis Ababa to adopt ads produced somewhere else in the world

or lack of creativity has led to directly copying ads. A point identified in the review of literature part by Daniel (2007) as a major problem in Ethiopia's advertising industry.

Blacks -- non-Ethiopians, but Africans -- appeared in many of the study's ads, especially those used to advertise office equipment. These ads were directly adopted without trying to relate to Ethiopians (don't you think these are made elsewhere. Although arguably it is easier for Ethiopians to identify with other Blacks than with Caucasians, the ads are pitching sales to Ethiopians.

Most interviewees preferred the "mixed sex"- "mixed race," finding attractive those ads depicting diversity, carrying positive messages of ethnic diversity and gender equality. For example, the ad for an airline (picture 10) used male and female images with different racial background and age happy to fly on Kenya Airways.



Picture 10 Kenya Airways

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter concludes the major findings discussed earlier. In concluding, it also mentions of the possible implications of and reasons for the portrayals found out. Along with this, the chapter, bases on the findings in this study, presents some recommendations.

5.1 Conclusions

Focusing on examining the portrayal of women in billboard ads, in this study 60 ads which featured 36 adult female, 11 adult male, and 13 mixed sex characters were observed and analyzed. In terms of the six categories such as character mix, types of products or services advertised, role played, basis for credibility, sex object and race. The findings have been discussed so far in light with other studies conducted on gender portrayal in the media in general and particularly women's portrayal in billboard advertising.

The result shows that stereotyped portrayal of women and men are predominantly found in billboard ads in Addis Ababa. While some aspects of stereotyping have been more pronounced (e.g. types of product or services advertised and sex object), than others (e.g. role played and basis for credibility) in most ads, men and women are presented differently. The largest number of women compared to men was portrayed in a negative way.

In billboard ads located in A.A depicting women and men with stereotyped roles and positions, products and credibility has been overwhelming. The findings confirmed that mothering is a non-negotiable women's work. There was no male character depicted with children in any of the billboard ads. Although women here are represented as caring figures here, still as liberal feminist point out accuracy is a key issue. These mages of women portray traditional sex roles stereotyping of women as mother and homemaker.

A larger percentage of women in ads focusing on physical beauty outnumbered men. Female characters were frequently shown as decorative, beautiful objects. Moreover, women were seen advertising auto and occupational products traditionally belonging to men. However, women in auto and occupational ads were not selected because they were users or had authority over them but it was because of their physical attributes. According to Kenaw (2006), the ads that focus on women's physical beauty suggest the value of women's physical self rather than intellectual self.

The relations characters have with the advertised products and services are another important manifestation of gender biases as indicated in the study. In ads for beauty products women compared to men were portrayed as an authority figure with expertise. Here women's expertise and decision making were respected and referred to when it comes to beauty and household products. In addition, women were often portrayed as users of products and services than men. This traditional gender stereotype shows that while men are producers women are dependent consumers of products produced.

The discrepancy found in the results between men and women portrayals in the aspect examined might be due to differences in their education, occupation, social status and culture. The Ethiopian society can be characterized as one of traditional societies for many years. Traditional gender-related stereotypes have been part of the society, with women suffering from socio-cultural and economic discrimination and having a low level of participation and representation in many spheres of life. Consequently, the gender stereotype with several features has become significantly stronger. It might be also that lack of awareness among advertising sectors and the society, lack of training and policy in the media sector, would seem to have an impact on those working in the advertising industry and billboard ads to have such strong stereotypes in their contents.

Marketing with maximizing profit in mind might have played its own role in

the stereotyped depiction of women. To catch the attention of people, product producers and service givers have used beautiful women as decorative objects on billboard ads. Not even one male figure were used as a decorative object while, women's physical attributes were used as a marketing ploy in most of the billboard ads in Addis Ababa. Socialist feminist's media theory points out, with media's objective being capitalist gain and maximum profit, women are portrayed as playthings manipulated to sell consumer goods.

Above all, women's low employment position in the media workforce may have contributed to the current stereotyped portrayal in the ads. Media organizations and specifically out-door advertising companies where the absence of women in senior management positions or in top decision making positions evident, degrading depiction of women is likely to be enhanced. All of the advertising companies specializing in billboard ads involved in this study were owned and managed by men. Radical feminist's point out media owned and produced by men operate for the benefit of a patriarchal society.

Mixed sex portrayals were among the ads where gender equality were evident. Most of these ads were done by advertising companies outside of Ethiopia for International companies or those that reside in other countries. These ads show that gender sensitive advertisements do exist in other countries. Therefore, it is possible to create awareness and change among advertising sectors, product producers/ service givers and the society at large.

Although the ads studied are not by any means representative of all kinds of billboard ads and the coding units in this study cannot be also representative of all kinds of images of men and women portrayed in the ads, the result in this study may suggest several points to consider in making and conveying in-gender based ads. Considering all the issues discussed, the study also makes some recommendations.

5.2 Recommendations

The position of women in the Ethiopian society has been changing over the years showing improvement in education, working and living condition especially in the capital city Addis Ababa. Although some might argue that the portrayal of women in billboard ads is consistent with what is in the society and culture, on the other hand these billboard ads did not consider the changes occurring in the society. Therefore, women's portrayal in billboard ads in Addis Ababa is very stereotyped, and detrimental than their situation in the society now.

The Ethiopian media and the advertising sector should therefore, should reflect the balanced and realistic portrayal of women. Thus, the following recommendations are made on the findings in this study.

5.3 The Advertising Industry

- By acknowledging the industries contribution to the stereotyped images in the ads, open a way for portraying women in different roles in ads.
- Draft and adopt Code of conduct that defines sexist advertising.
- In collaboration with their employees create awareness about the code of conduct among customers.
- Encourage creativity.
- Promote more inclusive gender-aware advertising.
- Set aside a section to deal with complaints of gender nature and act upon the complaints.
- Stop using characters (western) with out their knowledge or

consent.

- If there is no regulatory body set up one. So as the industry can govern and regulate itself without interference from other groups.

5.4 Gender Activists

- Conduct campaigns to publicize the findings and devise strategies for increasing gender awareness and sensitivity in the advertising industry.
- Broaden media literacy, consumer awareness and activism.

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Appendix A

Billboard Pictures



Stay healthy with

VIKING

The Healthier Choice!

Food Quality

An advertisement for Viking Food Quality. The background is a solid green color. At the top, the text "Stay healthy with" is written in a small, black, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "VIKING" is written in large, bold, red, serif capital letters. To the left of the word "VIKING", the phrase "The Healthier Choice!" is written in a black, sans-serif font. In the center-right, there is a circular gold seal with a red ribbon, containing the words "Food Quality" in a cursive font. On the right side, a smiling male chef in a white uniform and tall white hat is shown from the waist up, holding a silver tray with a roasted turkey and some green vegetables. On the left side, there are three yellow product containers: a small bottle, a medium-sized jug, and a large rectangular box, all featuring the Viking logo and a picture of a chef. The overall composition is clean and professional, emphasizing the quality and health benefits of the product.

አዲስ
ቀለም



**ADDIS
PAINT**



ከአንድ ሺ በላይ የተለምዶ ለይነት ምርጫዎች ለሉን

ሰካፓም ኃ.የተ.የግል ማ.
SCAPAM PLC

P.O.BOX 7153
ADDIS ABABA



Tel :- 011 442 11 76 / 75

Fax:- 011 442 47 27



HERBAL

Spa & Tattoo Studio

**TATTOO, MAKE-UP
HAIR, STEAM BATH, WAX
MASSAGE FACIAL**



HERBAL
BEAUTY CARE
SPA & TATTOO STUDIO

Add :- Edna Mall, 2nd floor Tel :0911 21 43 03

Appendix B

**A coding Sheet for the Study of Analysis of the Portrayal of Women in
Billboard Advertisements: The case of Addis Ababa**

Coder _____

Ads	Character Mix	Types of products/services	Role Played	Basis for credibility/sexual imagery	Race

Appendix C

In-depth-Interview Questions for Advertising Agencies

1. *What does advertising mean to you? How would you define it?*

2. *In Ethiopia, how does the outdoor advertising scene look like (from your perspectives)?*

3. *In recent years billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa have grown dramatically. What do you think to be the reason behind it?*

4. *In terms of location most of the billboards (which contain images of people) in Addis Ababa are concentrated on Bole road and Mexico roundabout. Why?*

5. *There is a trend in using images of people to advertise products and services. What do you say about this?*

• *The use of women images (model/ beauty contestants) to advertise products/services*

- *The fact that images of women is used more than men. What do you think the reason behind this*
- *More over currently images of people who are not Ethiopian (Caucasians, Asians, black-Americans and African) is being used in billboard advertisements. Why?*

6. Do you have an advertisement policy (A guide book you follow)?

6. Has there been any complaints about the billboard ads you did having a women in its content?

6. Has anyone from your agency taken a gender sensitive course? Or has anyone contacted you to do so?

7. How many employees to you have? How many are women and how many are men? Especially in your graphic design section?

8. When was _____ established? How many years in the business?
