

# **All eyes on her:**

The portrayal of women in Greek advertisements after the Greek #MeToo movement

Student Name: Penelope Soufalidaki  
Student Number: 735892

Supervisor: Anouk van Drunnen

Master Media Studies - Media & Business  
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master Thesis  
*June 2025*

Word Count: 18.270

ALL EYES ON HER:  
THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN GREEK ADVERTISEMENTS AFTER THE  
GREEK #METOO MOVEMENT

**ABSTRACT**

The relationship between advertising and society is undeniably bidirectional, since advertisements reflect prevailing societal norms and values, but can also influence and reform the cultural and social context. In recent years, sociopolitical developments in Greece have impacted the society and media content. In particular, during the Greek #MeToo movement in February 2021, women, who were at the forefront, addressed societal issues on gender-based violence and demanded change, through marching and employing both digital and traditional media. However, Greece's slow pace on societal and media transformations questions the true impact of the movement. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the advertising content was impacted by the Greek #MeToo movement, and especially to explore the representation of women in the Greek campaigns that were later produced.

For this reason, a purposive sample of 100 video advertisements was assembled, which included productions from March 2021 until May 2025. The exploration of the sample was conducted through a qualitative content analysis, integrating Visual Semiotic and Critical Discourse analysis, for the interpretation of the visual and textual signs. These signs were then translated into patterns and themes, through the deductive and inductive approach of thematic analysis, that allowed the connection with past research but also the emergence of new themes.

The emerged themes promoted female empowerment and agency, along with gender equality, through the portrayal of the multifaceted aspects of the modern independent woman. At the same time, the thematic analysis revealed the representation of women in stereotypical roles, as mothers and wives or in instances where their sexuality, youth and beauty were commodified. Nevertheless, the influence of the Greek #MeToo movement was most evident in depictions of female victimization, where women as survivors of gender-based and sexual abuse were used as means of educating, raising awareness and demanding change on gender discrimination.

KEYWORDS: *advertising, female representation, #MeToo movement, femvertising, gender-based violence*

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 <i>The power of advertising in society</i>	1
1.3 <i>Research question and goals</i>	4
1.4 <i>Method of Research</i>	4
1.5 <i>Thesis Outline</i>	5
<b>2. Theoretical framework</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 <i>Advertising and Society</i>	6
2.2 <i>Representations of femininity in global advertising</i>	7
2.3.1 <i>Feminist media theory</i>	9
2.3.2 <i>Femvertising</i>	10
2.3.3 <i>Social Media's impact on advertising strategies</i>	10
2.3.4 <i>Social movements on female empowerment: "2017 Women's March" and the "#MeToo movement"</i>	12
2.3.5 <i>Social movements' impact on brands and advertising</i>	13
2.4 <i>Women's role and portrayal in the Greek society and media</i>	14
2.4.1 <i>Pressing social phenomena and movements in Greece</i>	15
2.4.2 <i>Reactions from the Greek media</i>	16
2.5 <i>Bronstein's Feminist media framework</i>	17
<b>3. Method</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 <i>Research Design Overview</i>	20
3.2 <i>Qualitative content analysis</i>	23
3.2.1 <i>Visual semiotic analysis</i>	24
3.2.2 <i>Critical Discourse analysis</i>	25
3.2.3 <i>Thematic Analysis</i>	25
3.3 <i>Sample and sampling strategy</i>	26
3.4 <i>Operationalization and Analysis</i>	28
3.5 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	30
<b>4. Thesis Results</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1 <i>Application of Bronstein's Framework: Deductive Thematic Analysis</i>	32
4.1.2 <i>Personalization and trivialization</i>	35
4.1.3 <i>Victimization</i>	37
4.1.4 <i>Goals and rights</i>	40
4.2 <i>Results of inductive thematic analysis</i>	44
4.2.1 <i>Gender Stereotyping and Traditional Roles</i>	45
4.2.2 <i>Female empowerment and challenged stereotypes</i>	48
4.2.3 <i>Sexualization of the female body and commodification of beauty</i>	51
4.2.4 <i>Victimization and Resilience</i>	54
<b>5. Conclusion and implications</b>	<b>58</b>
5.1 <i>Limitations</i>	62
5.2 <i>Future Academic research</i>	63
<b>Reference List</b>	<b>65</b>

<b>Appendix A.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<i>Appendix A1: List of Advertisements with duration and access links.....</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>Appendix A2: Theoretical Framework Summary.....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Appendix A3: Example of the Analytical Tool/Form.....</i>	<i>77</i>
<i>Appendix A4: Visual Semiotic Analysis (Micro, Mid, Meta Levels).....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Appendix A5: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Appendix A6: Bronstein’s Framework .....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Appendix A7 .....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Table 4.1: Frequency of Bronstein’s Frames in the present dataset .....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Appendix A8: Results of thematic analysis-Codebook.....</i>	<i>81</i>
<b>Appendix B Figures’ Summary .....</b>	<b>83</b>

*To all the women who keep fighting*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The power of advertising in society**

Advertising, as a communication tool, has the potential to shape individuals' modes of thinking and penetrate their consciousness, through its ability to persuade and influence attitudes and behaviors (Pollay, 1986, p. 20). As advertising frequently presents stereotypical images, the portrayal of female identity and societal roles remains a central theme. Past studies have found that women in advertisements have been depicted in specific roles, such as housewives or mothers, a portrayal that also aligns with their expected societal roles (Schneider & Schneider, 1979, p. 83). However, advertisements can be considered as living organisms, that tend to adapt to societal changes, as their content is influenced by the ethical considerations of the advertisers and marketers and the sociopolitical environment around them (McDonald et al., 2021, p. 589).

This is why, research supports that the representation of women in advertising has significantly transformed following the emergence of the #MeToo movement in October 2017 (Matysiak, 2024 p. 251). The large impact of the movement not only raised a wave of reactions in the media from consumers and advertisers, but also contributed to the rise of "Femvertising". This new commercial trend and representational style aims at empowering women and challenging traditional societal perceptions through postfeminist branding techniques (Budd et al., 1999, p. 67). In response, numerous brands used their platforms to support feminist and progressive values, creating advertising campaigns that urged women to report sexual harassment (Nichols, 2021, p. 86). In addition to the rise of the #MeToo movement, which aimed at raising awareness and fighting sexual abuse, numerous brands began to critique conventional understanding of femininity and masculinity and to confront traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Nichols, 2021, p. 106; Hong & Zhang, 2021, p. 1278). Over the past decades, the #MeToo movement and feminist movements worldwide have brought increased attention to the pervasive gender inequalities that exist in media portrayals. For instance, in Brazil, Schweppes developed a campaign highlighting the prevalence of sexual harassment, while Gillette in the United States launched an advertisement encouraging men to take responsibility for their actions (Wilson-Barnao et al., 2021, p. 31; Kreicbergs, 2023, p. 147).

## 1.2 Societal relevance and research gap

The #MeToo movement gained a momentum in Greece in 2021 following the public disclosure of the sexual assault of a Greek Olympic athlete, creating an open discussion on sexual assault (Lekakis, 2023, p. 293). This revelation prompted numerous survivors to share their stories, thereby fostering a broader dialogue on gender-based violence in the Greek media (Harkiolakis, 2023, p. 3). Until then, available research on Greek advertisers was showcasing that campaigns still adhered to stereotypes of women as housewives and mothers, as the Greek society appears to find these images more familiar and acceptable, even though younger generations demand equal rights, and their manifestation through gender-neutral advertisements (Theodoridis et al., 2013, p. 154; Stavrianea et al., 2021, p. 20). In general, research on the contemporary depiction of women in Greek advertisements has been limited. In fact, there has been little to no scientific research examining advertisements produced after the Greek #MeToo movement, a sociocultural turning point that sparked public reflection on gender, abuse, and power dynamics (Kogiou, 2025, p. 521; Harkiolakis, 2023, p. 5).

So far, past research in Greek advertisements has showed the lack of insights on the female portrayal in advertisements. Zotos and Tsihla's research (2014c, p. 55) on the male and female stereotypes in print advertisements, suggested that it would be fruitful to investigate whether stereotyping in advertisements has changed over time, and particularly explore other mediums such as the Internet and social media, where visuals are widely incorporated. In another research, the shortage for exploration of the female roles in advertisements in relation to Greece's established social gender roles is highlighted. In that same paper, the authors explained the need for a content analysis that will identify the dominant stereotypes per advertisement in connection to a postmodern viewpoint (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014b, p. 25). Pazarzi and Tsangaris (2008, p. 47) concluded in their research, the necessity to explore whether women are depicted in commercials as independent and self-sufficient or as participants of a social reality that demands too much from them. Finally, since it has been proven that a new political generation impacts the social movement field in Greece, the use of advertising and digital platforms by this generation to communicate their activism, remains underexplored (Papanikolopoulos, 2025, p. 196).

This research gap raises questions on whether and how social movements impact the Greek advertising industry and its productions, and in particular, if there has been an evolution on female representations in advertisements in the recent Greek socio-political context. In fact, the potential impact of the Greek #MeToo movement on the country's advertising narratives and female representations remains an underexplored area in the existing literature. The present study aims at enriching this field of research, as the phenomenon of violence against women has seen a significant increase in Greece since 2019 (Karakasi et al., 2022, p. 121). The rise of this social phenomenon and the expansion of the social movements in Greece, along with the impact of the media landscape on the Greek society, raises the question of how the media respond to the new societal circumstances.

Considering that each given society has deeply embedded gender stereotypes, female stereotypes have been studied in individual country contexts, thus making the Greek case an interesting topic (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014b, p. 26). The Greek advertising industry offers a particularly compelling case study, due to its complex interplay of traditional gender norms, slow societal progress in gender equality, and deeply embedded patriarchal stereotypes in the society (Theodoridis et al., 2013, p. 154). Grau and Zotos' (2018, p. 768) research, that was developed before 2021, has already showcased the need for examining gender portrayals in digital video advertisements. This need developed due to the new societal circumstances, like the digital takeover, calling for the exploration of gender stereotypes in new forms of advertising, like native advertising and social media advertising (Grau & Zotos, 2018, p. 768). Finally, their research urges the exploration on the trend of femvertising in Greece, where women are presented less objectified and more empowered, since these types of advertisements are proven to have a direct impact on girls' self-esteem, boost gender equality and eventually engage in societal change (Grau & Zotos, 2018, p. 769).

Therefore, there is both a societal and academic need to examine the impact of recent developments and societal events on the female representation in Greek advertisements, in order to determine whether there has been any evolution, or the Greek advertising field remains detached from the country's social reality.

### **1.3 Research question and goals**

For these reasons, the present study aims to contribute to existing literature by examining the following research question: “How do Greek advertising campaigns portray women after the Greek #MeToo movement situated in year 2021?”.

In fact, the purpose of this study is to investigate the ways that women and other types of femininities are portrayed in Greek advertisements in the last four years. It seeks to assess whether gender representations in advertising have transformed, due to the contemporary social movements and post-feminist discourse within the Greek context, starting with the Greek #MeToo movement. For this reason, the study aims to analyze the content of Greek advertisements from March 2021 until May 2025, that include female protagonists, and simultaneously check the way women are portrayed, in comparison to results from past national and international research on the same topic.

### **1.4 Method of Research**

The research question will be answered through qualitative content analysis, which entails a Visual Semiotic and Critical Discourse analysis, along with a hybrid thematic analysis. The use of Visual Semiotic and Critical Discourse analysis allow for a nuanced interpretation of both the images and language within the analyzed advertisements (Barthes, 1979, p. 108; Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 50). The thematic analysis grants the association of the observations to past research’s frames, deductive approach, but also the creation of new themes, inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998, pp. 4-5). The research is focused on a purposive sample of 100 video advertisements aired between March 2021 and May 2025. These advertisements were selected for their inclusion of female protagonists and relevance to the timeframe. The chosen method enables detailed examination of visual and verbal messaging, providing insights into how women are constructed, empowered, or stereotyped through the advertisements’ narratives and techniques.

The study by using deductive and inductive thematic analysis will first explore whether the frames that were developed by Bronstein’s framework (Bronstein, 2005, p. 788) about representations of third wave feminists in news stories, can be applied to the representations of women in recent Greek advertisements. In addition, the research focuses on identifying new themes, through inductive thematic approach, by employing semiotic and discursive patterns of the portrayal of women in the contemporary Greek

advertisements. The study concludes with an evaluation of the impact of social movements and particularly the Greek #MeToo movement on the depiction of female roles in Greek advertisements.

### **1.5 Thesis Outline**

Chapter 2 provides an overview of previous research on the role of advertising in the society and the bond between them. It highlights the recent societal development like the rise of the #MeToo Movement, the explanation of femvertising and the concept of the feminist media theory and advertising activism. It dives deeper with the exploration of Bronstein's framework, on the representation of women.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological framework, including a further discussion on the use of Bronstein's media frames and the tools of Visual Semiotics and Critical Discourse analysis used in the study. This chapter guides the reader through the data collection, the operationalization and the ethical considerations of the research.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the analysis, identifying recurring themes, frames, and narrative strategies. The results of the deductive and inductive thematic analysis are discussed, with through examples of the Visual Semiotic and Critical Discourse analysis.

Finally, chapter 5 includes a reflection on the implications of this study, the limitations that arose, and suggests future research topics about the relationship of gender and society and their portrayal in the media. The study concludes with the reference list, and the Appendixes with the tables and figures, used in the research.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

The following literature review provides a deeper look into particular concepts of advertising. The review begins with an introduction of the bidirectional impact of society and advertising in section 2.1 and continues with the existing knowledge on the portrayal of femininity in advertising in section 2.2. Following this, section 2.3 incorporates the investigation of factors that affect brands' advertising campaigns and the depiction of women in them. This section includes the exploration of the media theory, femvertising, the woke and cancel culture and the social movements. Finally, section 2.4 discusses the impact of these factors in the Greek media context and section 2.5 introduces Bronstein's framework, which will be used in the analysis. In the Appendix A2 can be found that includes succinctly the theories that are mentioned in the following part (Appendix, p. 76)

### **2.1 Advertising and Society**

According to Will Rogers "Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don't have for something they don't need" (as cited in Pardun, 2013, p. 166). However, according to Franklin D. Roosevelt advertising has the power to spread knowledge and raise the standards of modern civilization (in Pardun, 2013, p. 167). Therefore, a debate on advertising arises, whether it can move beyond its role of sharing information about products and services. According to Pardun (2013, p. 169) advertising is both a mirror of society and an agent of change, meaning that it serves as an influencing factor for consumers, yet consumers also have effect on it. Fairbairn (2020, p. 4) believes that there is a bidirectional connection between advertising and society, as advertisers influence society, and the changes in society influence advertisers. Pollay uses the metaphor of "brain surgery" when he speaks of the influence that advertising has on society (as cited in Hayko, 2010, p. 79). He suggests that the values embedded in advertising messages become associated not only with the promoted products but also, with representations of race, sexuality, and gender roles (Pollay, 1986, p. 21). However, Pollay supports that advertising is not an omnipotent master, in the sense that it doesn't have the power to influence a person's values, despite all the available resources (Pollay, 1987, p. 106).

Simultaneously, advertising is usually characterized as a distorting mirror, certain values and lifestyles are seen in commercial communications, which depict an expected

or sometimes evolutionary reality (Pollay, 1987, p. 108). Overall, there has been a long-lasting controversy on advertising as “mirror” and “mold”. The “mirror” attribute aligns with advertisement’s ability to portray dominant societal values, while the “mold” suggests the reflection of prevailing societal values (Grau & Zotos, 2018, p. 762).

As there is no correct answer to this debatable topic, we accept that advertising is a continuum in which real life examples and social values lay, and as Kilbourne (1999, pp. 57-58) stated:

‘Advertising is our environment. We swim in it as fish swim in the water. We cannot escape it... advertising messages are inside our intimate relationships, our home, our hearts, our heads.’

Therefore, there is no doubt that national consumer product advertising has become an important means of each country’s social communication. When analyzing advertisements, a lot of societal themes arise such as interpersonal and family relations, sex roles and stereotyping, the fading away of older cultural traditions or the influences of younger generations and many more (Leiss et al., 1990, p. 1). Consequently, the power of advertising lays beyond its business façade. Universally and throughout time, advertising has been an integral part of the modern culture, by seizing a vast variety of symbols and ideas. The content of the messaging recycles cultural prototypes through social interventions. Its communication is made possible through the use of specific discourse that bonds together objects, persons, products, feelings and wellbeing (Leiss et al., 1990, p. 5).

## **2.2 Representations of femininity in global advertising**

Since advertising serves as a reflection of societal norms and values, the evolution of female representations in advertising provides insight into the shifting perceptions of women's roles within society over time (Pardun, 2013, p. 169). Previous research (Grau & Zotos, 2018, p. 761) has shown a general representation of women in decorative, family oriented, fewer professional and more demure roles. In past years women were presented in an inferior manner, while there was a slow shift towards more positive portrayals, indicating an equally slow change in their societal roles (Grau & Zotos, 2018, p. 762). A reoccurring theme in numerous advertisements depicting women in a sexualized and objectified manner, even when it is unrelated to the product being promoted. Advertisers often incorporate sexual imagery of women as a tactic to

capture attention and drive sales. When such portrayals persist in the media, they can shape societal perceptions, leading people to view women primarily as sexual objects. These advertisements leverage the female body to create consumer interest and draw focus to the product being marketed (Soni, 2020, pp. 20-21).

Research in Pakistani television advertisements concluded that women are objectified for products' exposure and sell, while the main focus of most of the advertisements, from a broad variety of products, is the female beauty (Mahmood et al., 2022, p. 127). Collins (2011, p. 290), concluded in the research on advertisements that women have been underrepresented, or presented in a negative manner, sexualized and subordinated. Their main roles are as non-professionals, homemakers, wives or parents and sexual gatekeepers. In the updated review of studies published since the year 2000, Furnham & Lay (2019, p. 121) supported that even though there have been many legal and socioeconomic changes in many societies over the past 20 to 40 years, the portrayal of the sexes in TV advertisements has not transformed universally. Research conducted in Spanish radio advertisements demonstrated a clear tendency to polarize the female image, confirming that women are still being portrayed in traditional roles, pinpointing the slow evolution of radio advertising (Fajula et al., 2021, p. 47).

However, research conducted by Tripathi et al., (2022, p. 224) had more optimistic results, as it found that the stereotyping of women seems to have decreased over time. This change probably results from women's evolving status in society and positive changes in their self-efficacy and aspirations. The advertisers who accept this progress, recalibrate their messages and visuals in advertisements that relate to women's product categories. Another research conducted on Indian advertisements found that in the past few years, a number of companies have taken seriously the challenge of gender equity. Most of them show a growing recognition of women's capacity for independent thought and action (Arumagam et al., 2022, p. 220).

Overall, the literature discussed so far has explained the important bond between advertising and society. This relationship is considered valuable for this research, as it will uncover the bidirectional impact between the changes in society and the evolution of the female roles in Greek advertisements in the last four years. Until now, research has presented reoccurring female stereotypes of women in domestic roles, objectified and sexualized, while more recent research has proposed new types of female portrayals that focus on gender equality and independence.

## **2.3 Factors influencing brands' campaigns on the representation of women**

### **2.3.1 Feminist media theory**

The gradual change of female stereotypes has emerged, due to modern feminist movements, the prevalence of social media and the demands of female consumers for accurate portrayals and equal gender representation in advertising (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024, p. 2). According to Steiner (2014, p. 359), the Feminist media theory relies on the feminist theory. It applies philosophies, concepts, and logics articulating feminist principles and concepts on media processes such as hiring, production and distribution, patterns of representation in news and entertainment across platforms, and reception. Feminism is an ideology that advocates for the elimination of gender inequality in political and social life, ensuring that both men and women have equal rights. Originating in the West and spreading globally, this movement has also influenced the advertising industry, compelling it to adapt its messaging. As a result, advertisements have begun to move beyond traditional gender stereotypes, leading to a shift in advertising language (Songur & Yamar, 2024, p. 306). According to Gillis et al. (2004, p. 247) the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of feminism (from 1990s to 2010) brought to light messages of female empowerment, while rejecting sexualization and challenging outdated stereotypes of feminists, crating a new era of feminism, where women are given a choice over their own lives. During the 4<sup>th</sup> wave of feminism (2012 and beyond) the new communications strategies that arose, like social media and the internet, shed light on more progressive ideas of female empowerment and new social movements (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024, p. 5).

Gomez-Boquez et al. (2024, p. 6) literature review revealed the effects of female stereotypes in advertising and the impact of contemporary advertising on women. Their findings showed that the portrayal of women in advertising has shifted from traditional and passive, to more inclusive and diverse (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024, p. 6). Such transformation indicates a societal evolution, where women are liberated and re-sexualized. At the same time, in some cases women continue to be portrayed in traditional and passive roles, reinforcing patriarchal ideologies (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024, p. 9). Therefore, it has become evident that the post-feminism movement has impacted the societal evolution of women, creating questions on whether such impact has been adapted also in the advertising industry.

### **2.3.2 Femvertising**

This inquiry is further supported by the rise of a new advertising approach, that highlights the interconnected relationship between the changes in the society and the advertising landscape. Therefore, a variety of societal reasons such as the rise of gender inclusivity activism, the growing influence of brand activism, critical discourse surrounding commodity feminism, and the increasing awareness of gender stereotyping, produced a new phenomenon called *Femvertising* (Varghese & Kumar, 2022, p. 452). The term was coined as “advertising that employs pro-female talent, messages and imagery to empower women and girls”, or only as “female empowerment advertising” (Akestam et al., 2017 as cited in Varghese & Kumar, 2022, p. 441). This type of advertising style has developed as part of brand activism towards a genuine paradigm shift in female empowerment and eventual social change (Varghese & Kumar, 2022, p. 453). The goal of this ‘pro-women’ advertising is to celebrate women rather than objectifying them, by using authentic messaging (Grau & Zotos, 2018, p. 769). Nowadays, a new Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) cause has emerged: female empowerment in the form of femvertising. Brands in different industries are using this advertising technique to increase brand awareness and sale. However, some industries remain unaware of the benefits of femvertising or its current state lacks authenticity and dilutes feminist discourse (Gomez -Borquez et al. 2024, p. 12).

### **2.3.3 Social Media’s impact on advertising strategies**

Along with femvertising, the prevalence of social media has expanded consumers’ demands asking brands to have an online presence, that also aligns with expected social values (Varghese & Kumar, 2022, p. 441). The new demands come with the increasing democratization of commentary consumption and creation, where brands are pressured to adhere to the discourse of “woke” and avoid getting “cancelled”. The examinations of this vocabulary will provide an insight into the cultural complexities of contemporary advertising literacy. This literacy goes beyond simply recognizing and interpreting advertising messages across various formats, yet it involves the ability to label and critically evaluate promotional content, applying different levels of interpretation, that include technical, strategic, aesthetic, and ethical perspectives (Gomez-Mejia, 2020, p. 311)

The high levels of competition along with the power of social media, pressure the advertisers to adopt the concept of being “woke”. The concept means that brands should be socially aware, recognize racial and gender injustices, and challenge power relations by using their platforms (Sobande, 2020, p. 2739). The term originated in the early twentieth century to denote an awareness of socio-political pressures affecting Black Americans, yet it gained momentum in 2014 after the Black Lives Matter protests. Since then, it has evolved into portraying a wider understanding of progressive causes (Smith et al., 2023, p. 513).

At the same time, brands are scared of becoming victims of the cancel culture, another trend that was also established on Social Media. The democratic commentary on Social Media and the power of the consumers can lead to brand boycotting and negative online Word of Mouth (Kyriakou et al, 2023, p. 413). Cancel culture is defined as ‘the withdrawal of any kind of support for those who are assessed to have said or done something unacceptable or highly problematic, generally from a social justice perspective especially alert to sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, racism, bullying and related issues’ (Ng, 2020, p. 623 as cited in Kyriakou et al, 2023, p. 414). It “describes when someone is shut down or deplatformed, à la a television show being canceled. It is linked to callout culture, a form of public shaming” (Gomez-Mejia, 2020, p. 319). The meanings of “woke” and “cancel” foray into debating and criticizing advertising from the standpoint of renewed societal and ethical literacies (Gomez-Mejia, 2020, p. 323).

Overall, the new social trends, consumers’ demands for gender equality, real representation and the new discourse of being politically correct have had an effect on brands’ advertisements and consequently, the way women are being represented in them. This paper strives to add to the scattered literature on the topic. The literature review by Gomez -Borquez et al. (2024, p. 11) reveals that female empowerment has been studied more critically during the third wave of feminism, despite most of the research being published during the fourth wave of feminism. This finding showcases the need for more contemporary research on female representations in the media, and especially in advertisements.

### **2.3.4 Social movements on female empowerment: “2017 Women’s March” and the “#MeToo movement”**

While feminism has been echoing in the universal political and societal scene, two female empowerment movements came to shake the water and remind society of the need for action and reaction. The first movement took place in the United States in 2017, when, after Donald Trump’s presidential victory, hundreds of thousands of women gathered in New York, to protest Trump’s inauguration and against his misogynistic and sexist comments and beliefs. The resulting Women’s March in Washington on January 2, 2017 was probably the largest single-day demonstration in contemporary US history (Berry & Chenoweth, 2018, p. 79). The significance of this movement lies in its utilization of social media as a tool for individual motivation and collective mobilization (Leiser & Romilla, 2019, p. 1). By shifting from physical protests to digital platforms, the movement facilitated broader discussions on female empowerment, expanding its reach and impact.

In the same year, on October 15 the American #MeToo movement began on social media, which had one clear common purpose: empowering victims of sexual assault and harassment by demonstrating the commonality of sexual misconduct (Levy & Mattson, 2023, p. 7). Both movements impacted largely the society which called for brands’ advertisements participation (Fairbairn, 2020, p. 1-2). Although the Women’s March of 2017 and the #MeToo movement differentiated in their developmental stages, the former functioning primarily as a political demonstration and the latter as a social campaign addressing sexual harassment and assault; they are connected through their shared core objectives of challenging patriarchal structures, promoting gender equity, and amplifying women's voices. Both movements emerged from a climate of heightened frustration and urgency surrounding women’s rights, reflecting broader sociocultural shifts aimed at dismantling entrenched systems of inequality. In this context, the Women’s March can be understood as a unifying mobilization around a wide spectrum of feminist concerns, while #MeToo represented a focused extension of this momentum, drawing attention to the sexual assault and consequently gender-based violence (Gambino, 2017<sup>1</sup>).

Even though both movements started from the United States of America, they gradually became universal, with different manifestations per country. The power of

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/29/womens-march-tamika-mallory-feminism-2017>

unity and womanhood became their axis to fight for the future generations of girls that are worth of “not waking up with poisonous nightmares, but with radiant dreams” (Cochrane, 2017<sup>2</sup>).

### **2.3.5 Social movements’ impact on brands and advertising**

According to research conducted in 31 countries, it was found that the #MeToo movement affected the propensity to report crime, as the reporting rate increased after the movement (Levy & Mattson, 2023, p. 4). Such concrete changes not only push the society ahead but also ignite new advertising and consumer demands. In particular, the Women’s March and the #MeToo movement, gave more power to female consumers, who started reacting to the objectification of their bodies in advertising, leading to brands’ boycott and backlash (Matysiak, 2024, p. 254). According to research (Bellet et al., 2024, p. 4942) after the rise of those social movements, consumers’ markets were impacted. Findings revealed that the use of stereotypes for gender-based market segmentation could face more societal resistance, implying that brands should consider becoming more vocal on social issues. The study’s results suggested that the power of consumers along with social movements impacts brands and their advertising techniques.

According to Middleton & Turnbull (2021, p. 573), alongside ongoing changes in the market, advertising institutions also changed. It was found that advertising agencies have influential capacity on institutional and market transformations regarding social equality issues. Nowadays, more practitioners accept that advertising has a clear social justice responsibility, which consequently is imprinted on their messaging. In fact, research has shown that in the United States, after the emergence of the #MeToo movement, more positive images of women in advertising were presented, embracing the new social roles and norms that underpinned society, making evident the influence of social movements on the female portrayal in advertising (McDonald et al., 2021, p. 604). Another example is that during the #MeToo movement, advertising was used to create strong public relationships between the social movement and consumers, as they participated through their personal accounts on social media, indicating the reproduction of the shared ideals by brands and consumers (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 6).

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/06/somethings-happening-how-the-womens-march-inspired-a-new-era-of-resistance>

Research conducted on a global scale (Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2024, p. 1344-1345), identified the aspects of social change that were associated with the #MeToo movement. In most countries, social change did occur primarily in the field of legal procedures and criminal justice, as charges and trials of public figures took place after the movement along with lawsuits, arrests, convictions and alterations of the laws associated with sexual assault. Additionally, high frequency of positive societal impact, in terms of raising awareness and decreasing stigma on sexual violence was showcased, through public attempts at re-establishing politics by protesting, rallying or marching. Finally, transformations were noticed in the film and music industry, where movies were produced, with the purpose to educate on the topic of sexual violence, and lyrics of songs were adapted, showcasing respect towards women (Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2024, p. 1344-1345).

Nevertheless, even though the movements may have a universal character their diffusion is not a transnational process. It is primarily a domestic political process in which potential collective actors consider their domestic political opportunities into account before taking action (Lee & Murdie, 2021, p. 849). Taking that into consideration it would be important to keep in mind that without domestic political structures, that provide protections for political and minority rights, it is unlikely that digital feminist activism like the #MeToo movement will flourish (Lee & Murdie, 2021, p. 851).

#### **2.4 Women's role and portrayal in the Greek society and media**

Just like the rest of the West world, the Greek society was impacted from the postmodern feminist movement, which resulted in an evidential transformation of the societal portrayal of the women. Undoubtedly, significant progress has been made regarding women's rights in society, contributing to the effort of achieving full gender equality. However, gender inequality remains a persistent reality in the Greek society (Demestiha et al., 2024, p. 3). This reality is translated in the media world, as Greek advertisers seem to still adhere to the stereotypes of portraying women as housewives and in submissive societal and professional roles, as the Greek society appears to find these images more familiar and acceptable (Theodoridis et al., 2013, p. 153). Even though it has been proven that younger generations accept gender-neutral advertisements, Greek brands have yet to recognize and adopt that societal change

(Stavrianea et al., 2021, p. 20). For this reason, women in Greek society chose to participate in social movements in order to also bring in Greece the change that has been unraveling for years in the west world.

#### **2.4.1 Pressing social phenomena and movements in Greece**

In Greece, the *#MeToo movement* emerged relatively late, gaining momentum in early 2021. It was initiated by the courageous disclosure of a female Olympic champion, who publicly recounted her experience of sexual abuse by the vice-president of the Hellenic Sailing Federation and representative to the Hellenic Olympic Committee (Lekakis, 2023, p. 295). Her testimony, shared in a TV interview, served as a catalyst for a wave of similar allegations. Reports of harassment and abuse initially surfaced within the sports sector, followed by disclosures from both men and women in the entertainment industry, particularly in theater and television. Subsequently, female students from various universities also came forward with their own testimonies (Kogiou, 2025, p. 511). The movement reached a turning point with serious sexual harassment and abuse allegations, that now have resulted in trials and convictions, against men in positions of power, like the former artistic director of the Greek National Theatre. The media played a pivotal role in amplifying and disseminating the movement's messages, both within Greece and globally, contributing to its integration into broader contemporary social movements (Kogiou, 2025, p. 512). This revelation prompted numerous survivors to share their stories, thereby fostering a broader dialogue on gender-based violence in Greek media (Harkiolakis, 2023, p.3).

In order to understand deeper the female status and position in the Greek society, the phenomenon of *'Femicide'* should also be discussed. In 2018, Greece began to witness a reoccurring pattern of gender-based violence, specifically characterized by the emergence of femicide as a distinct form of crime against women. Up until then, there was a lack of available data on the rate of femicides resulting from acts of aggression. In exploring how femicide is understood within Greek society and the broader gender-based social awareness, it is important to highlight that much of the issue stems from prevailing gender norms and representations, which are strongly patriarchal. These attitudes are often reinforced by the mass media and influence not only public perception, but also how the phenomenon is investigated by authorities and addressed within the justice system (Kouroutsidou & Kakarouna, 2020, p. 24). In Greek

media the act of femicide is usually accompanied by the stereotypical image of a young man, who kills his partner mainly because of his jealousy, and is described by phrases like “he killed her because he loved her”, “crime of passion”, “criminal love” or even “unexpected love”, a reality that conceals underlying inequalities, patterns of violence, and the aggressor’s sense of entitlement within intimate relationships, as well as the sexist motivations driving the act (Kouroutsidou & Kakarouna, 2020, p. 24).

#### **2.4.2 Reactions from the Greek media**

Despite the emergence of the #Metoo movement, the media depictions of the phenomenon of femicide remain widely unchanged. Even though, there has been a superficial change as outdated phrases like "crime of passion," "hate crime," and "family tragedy," are used less, the framing of femicide continues to reinforce misogynistic attitudes and gender stereotypes rather than challenging them (Kogiou, 2025, p. 521).

Lekakis (2023, p. 291), supported that the greek context includes a slow adoption of femvertising and advertising diversity, as well as a quick response to pressures by conscious consumers. Her research found that up until recently the portrayal of gender in Greek advertising is bound to heteronormativity (the normalization of heterosexuality), heterosexism (the systematic erasure of queer subjects) and hegemonic masculinity, as women have been represented as overwhelming mothers, obedient housewives, passive or high-demand girlfriends, innocent or sexy villagers (Lekakis, 2023, p. 294). Examples of socially conscious advertising and advertising divestment in Greece are unsurprisingly uncommon. However, a larger impact of the Greek #Metoo movement and advertising activism has been seen in social media discussions, where the traditional media’s presentation of femicide is heavily critiqued (Kogiou, 2025, p. 521).

Overall, examining market activism in Greece, during a period when advertisers are beginning to engage with gender justice concerns, reveals various ways in which advertising takes a stance. First, a conventional form of post-feminist advertising emerges, promoting individual empowerment while simultaneously imposing new forms of regulation. Second, an emerging form of socially conscious advertising seeks to promote diversity, yet its representation remains limited. At the same time, research conducted on consumers’ views on stereotypes in advertisements revealed that most do

not agree with traditional roles of women and support the changes in gender stereotypes, while the depiction of modern and transitional gender roles is accepted (Romniopoulou & Panopoulos, 2023, p. 28).

In Greece, substantial progress is still needed in gender politics, and market activism only superficially addresses pressing issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination (Lekakis, 2023, p. 299). Therefore, the pressing question still exists, if there has been any progress in the representation of women in the Greek advertisements, since the outbreak of the Greek #MeToo movement.

## **2.5 Bronstein's Feminist media framework**

Advertising serves as a powerful medium of representation, simultaneously reflecting and shaping societal values. The way products are marketed can either reinforce or challenge existing stereotypes (Hall, 1997, p. 257). Traditionally, advertisements have depicted women in domestic roles. However, the influence of feminist and social movements has contributed to a shift toward representing women as empowered and independent, particularly in the post-feminist era. Furthermore, the commodification of identity plays a crucial role in advertising representation. Brands strategically employ representations of race, gender, and ethnicity to appeal to consumers, even if sometimes they appropriate cultural symbols or reinforce stereotypical norms, which, in turn, influences consumer perceptions and identities (Hall, 1997, p. 266; Bartholomew, 2010, p. 941).

Building upon this theoretical background, this paper seeks to understand whether the #MeToo movement in Greece has influenced the stereotypical representation of women in advertisements. Specifically, it aims to determine whether feminist portrayals, like femvertisements, have emerged in Greek advertising following the movement. To achieve this, the study will adopt Bronstein's framework (2005, p. 788), which examines how women during the third wave of feminism were depicted in mainstream print media. Bronstein conducted her research on the portrayal of women in 94 news stories in the mainstream U.S. media from 1992 until 2004.

Bronstein's research is linked to the present research as it gives a comparative viewpoint to the way women have been represented in the media. Her research did not only examine the way third wave feminists were portrayed in mainstream print media, but also compared the results to how second wave feminists were portrayed in the past

(Bronstein, 2005, p. 783). Therefore, the evolution of the portrayal of women under different political and societal circumstances and throughout time was observed. Both Bronstein's and the present study share the goal of examining the portrayal of women in mainstream media, after the impact of a social movement. In particular, Bronstein's research focused on the analysis of the representation of women, after the impact of the feminist movement on the content of the media. This goal is associated to the present study, since it also seeks to observe the representation of women, after the impact of the #MeToo movement in the advertising media. Since nowadays, the third wave of feminism has given its place to the fourth wave, the present research seeks to also contribute to Bronstein's study by reviewing the way women are portrayed in the current post-feminism media landscape (Kokroda & Sole, 2023, p. 91-92).

Bronstein's research proved that framing in media is crucial as its manipulation can produce different attitudes toward the same issue among a single group of correspondents (Bronstein, 2005, p. 786). According to Bronstein, the third wave of feminism embraced the notion of universal sisterhood and raised awareness on discrimination issues, not only on gender, but also on class and race. The third wave was considered a hybrid movement, that critiqued the second wave. Its political agenda included reproductive rights, the gender wage gap, rape and domestic violence (Bronstein, 2005, p. 784). Bronstein's research aimed at finding whether journalists continued to use traditional second-wave feminist frames when reporting on third-wave feminism, or had they adopted new framing approaches that better reflected the unique aspects of third-wave feminist politics. Her research used applied framing theory, suggesting that symbolic representations help the public interpretation of societal events (Bronstein, 2005, p. 785).

Her research was subjected to content and textual analysis of the articles. The coders were trained to recognize the five key frames in the articles which were: Demonization, Personalization and Trivialization, Goals and Rights, Victimization, and Agency (Bronstein, 2005, pp. 789-790). The demonization aims to find hateful or disregarding portrayal of women with demonizing descriptors such as "bitches," "radical," and "bad.". The personalization and trivialization frame focuses on physical appearance, traditional gender roles, looks and fashion tastes. The goals and rights frame analyzes whether women were associated with the feminist movement values. The victimization frame looks into the presentation of women as weak or helpless, or as victims of violence and the agency frame focuses on the presentation of women as

powerful and self-actualized (Bronstein, 2005, p. 788). The content analysis showed that journalists continued to utilize several dominant frames from second-wave feminism in their portrayal of women during the third wave of feminism (Bronstein, 2005, p. 789).

Bronstein's framework helped this study to answer the research question as it was used for comparing purposes to find out whether the representation of women on video advertisements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has similarities with a framework created 20 years ago, or the stereotypical representation of women has changed. This study seeks to build upon her research by applying the identified frames to the analysis of Greek advertisements, created during the fourth wave of feminism, and under the pressure of the Greek #MeToo movement.

### **3. Method**

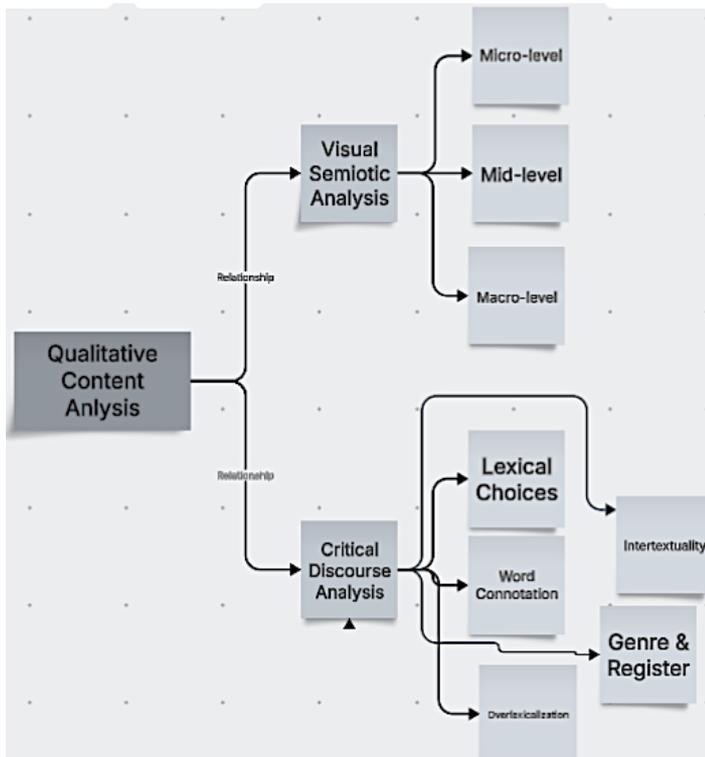
This part includes the methodology part of the research. The section starts with an overview of the qualitative content analysis, which includes the Visual Semiotic analysis, the Critical Discourse analysis, and the thematic analysis, that are employed for the exploration of the data. Then, in section 3.2, the sampling method and the final sample are presented, and finally, section 3.3 includes the in-depth demonstration of the steps that were taken to analyze the dataset.

#### **3.1 Research Design Overview**

Since the main objective of the research is to uncover the way women are portrayed in video advertisements, an analytical tool was created (see Appendix A3, p. 77). This tool/form incorporates the observations and notes that were taken throughout the analysis process. Therefore, the first step in the form is to conduct a qualitative content analysis, that includes the exploration of the visual signs through Visual Semiotic analysis, and the textual signs through Critical Discourse analysis (see Figure 3.1.1). The observations from these analyses were noted in the form, and later used for the conduct of both the deductive and inductive thematic analysis. The Visual Semiotic and the Critical Discourse analysis procedures will be further detailed in the 3.3. section of Operationalization and Analysis.

**Figure 3.1.1**

*First step of the methodology*

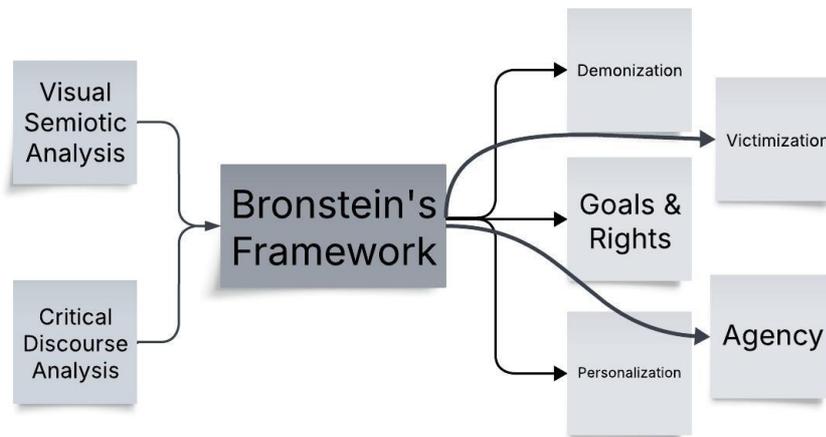


Note. Analysis of the videos' signs through Visual Semiotic analysis and Critical Discourse analysis

After the Visual Semiotic analysis and the Critical Discourse analysis, the observations, revealed whether each video advertisement included the themes of Bronstein's Framework (see Figure 3.1.2). This step is the deductive thematic analysis approach, where pre-existent literature is compared to the dataset (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 30). In the form, if a theme exists in the video a "Yes" is noted, but if it is absent a "No" is noted (see Appendix A3, Table 3, p. 79).

**Figure 3.1.2**

*Second step of methodology*

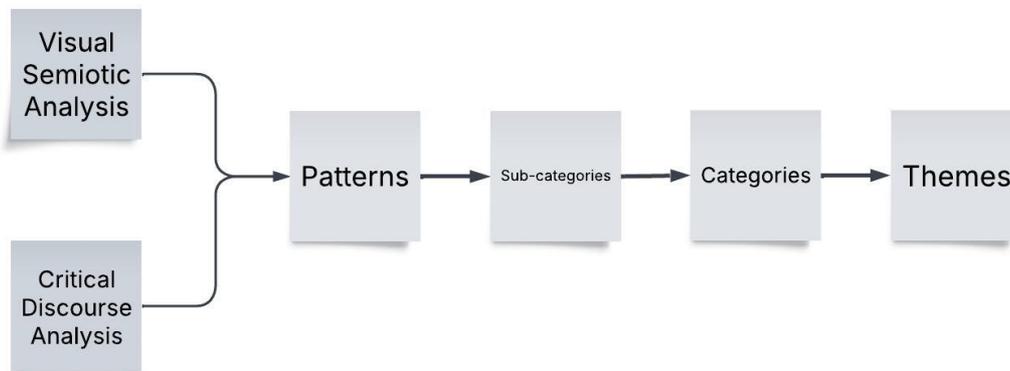


Note. Deductive Thematic analysis process with Bronstein's Framework

Finally, the method includes an inductive thematic analysis, where the same observations of the Visual Semiotic analysis and the Critical Discourse analysis, were manually reviewed (see Figure 3.1.3). This step included an inductive open coding process, where the data from the form from the previous analyses were thoroughly explored. In this step, the forms were manually scanned, to identify repeated keywords and phrases, that indicated emerging patterns. These groups of observations were, therefore, divided into sub-categories, that then were turned into overarching categories, forming the base of the initial themes. Finally, after the reformation and clarification of these categories, a codebook was created that included the final themes, with their definitions and their specific aspects (see Appendix A8, p. 81).

**Figure 3.1.3**

*Third step of methodology*



Note. Inductive Thematic analysis process, creation of the codebook and final themes

### **3.2 Qualitative content analysis**

To answer the research question of how women are portrayed in Greek advertisements after the Greek #MeToo movement in 2021, a qualitative content analysis with a hybrid thematic approach was employed. The main aim of qualitative content analysis method is to assign successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding framing. It is characterized by three main features: the reduction of the data, its systematic nature and its flexibility (Schreier, 2014, p. 2). This particular kind of method was chosen, because it requires focus on specific aspects of meaning and understanding social phenomena, such as, in this case, the portrayal of women in advertisements.

According to Brennen (2021, p. 2) all forms of material culture, such as newspaper, books, films, TV programs, digital media platforms and advertisements, are shaped by specific political and economic contexts and serve as reflections of society at a given historical moment. In the realm of media studies, qualitative research considers the diversity of meanings and values, and its aim is to interpret the data and to also clarify the role of mass communication in shaping these narratives (Brennen, 2021, p. 5). There is a general agreement that content analysis aims to analyze communication material, and within this broader context, this research focuses on the analysis of multimedia content (Mayring, 2015, p. 367).

Nevertheless, in order to translate the qualitative data from the content analysis into concrete results, a deductive and inductive approaches of thematic analysis are also employed, which are processes that allow for the translation of qualitative data. Thematic analysis is considered as “a way of seeing”, where observation precedes encoding, which in turn precedes understanding and interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 3). This happens through an encoding process, that requires a list of themes, that result from reoccurring patterns, which describe and organize observations of the data, or even interpret aspects of a phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4). The combination of the qualitative content and thematic analysis aligns with the present research, since the video advertisements’ messaging is firstly analyzed and, consequently, translated into patterns, with the aim to explore the female portrayal in advertisements, after the recent sociopolitical changes in Greece.

### **3.2.1 Visual semiotic analysis**

The phenomenon of multimedia has underpinned societies’ communication strategies for years. Hence, its analysis is interesting in order to understand the relation of communication and the society (Connolly & Phillips, 2002, p. 169). According to Connolly and Phillips (2002, p. 170), multimedia is characterized by the coherent combination of at least two different media of communication in conveying messages. As advertisements are bundles of signs that form finely constructed conventions, their content includes audio and visual signs. In order to understand these signs, a vocabulary has been created that decodes the semiotics of advertising (Campbell, 2014, p. 135).

When analyzing signs, a distinction is usually made, which is that the sign operates in two levels: connotation and denotation (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 49). Icons indicate the denotative meaning, which is the literal meaning, while indexes indicate the connotative meaning, which questions how visual elements are used with others, and their connection can modify their meaning (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 51). The image is influenced by aesthetic and ideological dimensions that become accessible through connotative readings, thereby uncovering the processes by which meaning is generated through semiotic interactions (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 50).

Semiology is a science of forms, as it studies not only the content but also the significations. In this research the theory of visual semiotics by Roland Barthes (1979, p. 110) will be employed, since advertisements are imbued with semiotic power and

the study's aim is to unveil the signification and representation of women, by decoding the "hidden meanings" in the advertisements' content. In his theory he recognizes three important terms the signifier, the signified and the sign (Barthes, 1979, p. 111). The signifier consists of a word, an image, a sound and the signified is the signifier's meaning. The sign is the associative total of the first two terms. However, they should not be viewed as separate terms but as a correlation. The signs in advertisements are embedded in a particular sociological, cultural and linguistic context, which should be kept in mind during the analysis.

In the context of media studies, semiotics engage with a diverse range of texts, including images, advertisements, and films, to provide audiences with the critical knowledge required to analyze and produce coherent and meaningful visual and textual content in the future (Bouzida, 2014, p. 1003). Therefore, the analysis of videos includes both the audio-visual signs and the discourse used, in order to understand how the content is connected to society and "meaningfully structure the social world" (Reese et al., 2001, p. 33)

### **3.2.2 Critical Discourse analysis**

At the same time, since advertisers, like authors, make deliberate choices to create particular meanings, employing semiotic resources within specific contexts. the visual semiotic analysis was partnered with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), where words are considered part of a network of meanings (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 39). The textual analysis was based on a set of tools such as word connotations, overlexicalization, structural opposition, lexical choices and genre (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 31-42). With the critical discourse analysis, the use of specific words was questioned. In particular it was explored whether these choices expressed specific ideologies or power, or if the implications of the emotional tone of the text revealed deeper meanings. It also examined whether there were specific repetitions or binary oppositions, which stressed particular ideas, and finally how the structure of the discourse of the advertisement engaged with the final message.

### **3.2.3 Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis explores and uncovers patterns through the detailed illustration and the interpretation of the data, meaning that it is the process of making sense out of

qualitative information (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 5). Through thematic analysis, the researcher is also able to combine the examination of the frequency of a theme with the overall content (Alhojailan, 2012, p. 40). According to Boyatzis (1998, p. 18), a successful thematic analysis should be open and flexible, yet systematic and focused. However, the most important competence for thematic analysis is pattern recognition, which is the ability to see patterns in superficially dissimilar information (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 18). Nevertheless, prior to exploring the data and finding reoccurring patterns, a content analysis is required, in order to examine the signs and their underlining meanings both on a visual and textual magnitude.

The present research uses visual semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis, in order to decode the signs in the advertisements, and explore the existence and frequency of the frames from Bronstein's research. This type of method is considered to be driven by pre-established theory, or bottom-down approach, and is called deductive thematic analysis. Nevertheless, due to the contemporary relevance of this research, new themes emerge from the present data, though a bottom-up or inductive approach of the thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 30-31). The inductive process of the analysis includes a codebook, through which the new themes arise. Therefore, a hybrid approach of the thematic analysis is incorporated, by including themes from past research, but also producing new ones.

Overall, the current research employs, at first, the Visual semiotic analysis and the Critical Discourse analysis, to critically and objectively examine the signs in the video advertisements and assess the way women are portrayed in them. Then, the observations from these analyses are translated and associated with Bronstein's themes, through the deductive approach of the thematic analysis. Finally, through the inductive approach of the thematic analysis new themes emerge.

### **3.3 Sample and sampling strategy**

This research's sample was selected through purposive sampling, which is a qualitative research technique used to select cases rich in information and relevant to the study's objectives. Patton (2002, p. 272) notes that "purposive sampling is one of the core distinguishing elements of qualitative inquiry". Information-rich cases provide valuable insights into key issues of the inquiry's purpose. Examining these cases leads to deep understanding and meaningful insights, rather than broad empirical

generalizations (Patton, 2002, p. 273; Guetterman, 2015, p. 3). This type of sampling allows for an in-depth exploration of themes, enhances the validity of findings, and supports the development of theories based on real-world insights (Palinkas, et al., 2015, p. 536). According to Yin (2011, p. 88) purposive sampling allows the selection of specific data that will provide the most relevant and abundant results for the given topic, incorporating the widest possible range of perspectives.

For this research the data were collected according to criterion sampling, where selection is related to specific criteria. The criterion sampling strategy is based on richness and depth of patterns, important aspects that allow the exploration of the research question's explanations (Morris, 2006, p. 91–94).

In particular, the sample includes video advertisements, from a large variety of brands, that were produced after the Greek #MeToo movement, in February 2021. The selection of the sample was based on the following criteria. The first criterion was that the advertisements should be produced by a Greek advertising company, in order to explore the Greek media, and facilitate an in-depth analysis of the female portrayal in video advertisements, in this specific country and culture. Another criterion was the presence of female protagonists in those campaigns. An equally important criterion for the sample selection was the time of the advertisements' production. In particular, the sample includes videos that were shared on television or digital platforms (Instagram, YouTube, Facebook) from March 2021 until May 2025. This specific timeframe was chosen in order to discover whether there has been a societal impact in the advertising industry, since the rise of the Greek #MeToo movement in February 2021 and the social changes that followed. Moreover, the recent nature of the data enhances the relevance of both the sample and the research findings, as they are directly connected to the current political and sociocultural Greek context. This timeliness allows for a more accurate investigation of the bidirectional relationship between contemporary social movements and the advertising content.

In order to include a controlled and precise sample, the data collection included the advertising productions of three Greek advertising companies. At first this research had the intention on focusing on the productions of the most influential and famous advertising agencies in Greece. Based on research that was conducted in 2022, on the published balance sheets of the 50 largest advertising agencies in the Greek market, it was found that the top 3 advertising agencies were “Bold Ogilvy”, “MMS - Publicis

Groupe Greece”, “The Newtons Laboratory” (Direction Business Reports, 2022<sup>3</sup>). However, while collecting the data it quickly became evident, that there were not enough advertisements with female protagonists for a sufficient dataset. Duet to the fact that the requirements this research entail a minimum of 30 videos of at least three minutes each, which is a total of 90 minutes of content. This limitation is, in itself, indicative of a broader issue: that the most prominent brands, those collaborating with top-tier agencies and generating extensive financial activity, appear to underrepresent women in their advertising campaigns. For this reason, the final criteria of collection of the data was expanded and included the whole list of advertising agencies, 50 in number (Direction Business Reports, 2022<sup>4</sup>). This last criterion will ensure the broadness and the reach of the sample, since a variety of bigger and smaller productions of advertising agencies, from different parts of Greece were included.

These criteria led to the final sampling frame that includes 100 video advertisements. The length of each video advertisement varies from 0:14 seconds to 4:30 minutes. At the end of the data’s collection, 114 minutes and 26 seconds of content were utilized for the analysis of this research. The sample includes a broad variety of advertised products and services of different brands and companies, ensuring the validity and accuracy of the results. An analytical catalogue of all video advertisements, including title, duration, and access link, is provided in the Appendix (Appendix A1, p. 73).

### **3.4 Operationalization and Analysis**

The analysis of the sample was divided into four phases and included the use of an analytical tool/form (see Appendix A3, p. 77). Phase one of the analysis included the Visual semiotic analysis, where the videos were viewed and analyzed through their visual signs. Since images have become such a fundamental part of the daily communication, it is difficult to neglect the meaning-making potential of the visual imagery, and consequently disregard the representational practices in the semiotic landscape (Aiello & Parry, 2020, p. 14). This is why, visual semiotic analysis is employed to decode and create meaning from the visual signs included in the advertisements.

---

<sup>3</sup> Complete table of the published balanced sheets of 2022: [https://direction.gr/diafimistikes\\_22vs21.jpg](https://direction.gr/diafimistikes_22vs21.jpg)

<sup>4</sup> Complete table of the published balanced sheets of 2022: [https://direction.gr/diafimistikes\\_22vs21.jpg](https://direction.gr/diafimistikes_22vs21.jpg)

This first phase of the analysis was based on the three levels of sign analysis the micro, mid, and meta-level (Mick et al., 2004, p. 21). The micro-level understands visual advertising signs as small units, like the vectors, colours, forms, camera angle and editing techniques. Mid-level analysis decodes the signs of human characteristics like gender, posture, facial expressions, physical settings, actions, clothing and gender depiction. The meta-level range of semiotics depicts the narrative structure of the advertisement, that is often likened to stories, folklore or widely known ideologies (Mick et al., 2004, p. 21-23). This approach was employed, because it entails the exploration of the signs in a multilayered aspect, enabling the detailed and organized observation of the female representation in the advertisements. This way the patterns of the visual signs are viewed through the detailed lens of this three-leveled approach, contributing to the resolution of the research question. The table used for this phase of the analysis can be found in the Appendix (see Appendix A4, p. 80).

Phase two included the Critical Discourse analysis, where the videos were viewed and analyzed based on the spoken or written content, with the aim to explore the female portrayal through discourse. The analytical tools employed for this phase were lexical choices, emotional connotation of words, overlexicalization, binary opposites and genre. The table for the second phase of the analysis can also be found in the Appendix (see Appendix, A5, p. 80).

Following the observations and findings of both the Visual Semiotic and Critical Discourse analysis, phase three included the categorization of each video advertisement based on the predefined themes of Bronstein's Framework. As part of the deductive thematic analysis process, the collected data in every advertisement were assigned to the five themes based on the presence or the absence of the frames. If a given frame was identified within an advertisement, it was marked as 'Yes' in the analysis table; conversely, if the frame was not evident, it was marked as 'No'. This binary coding system was used to indicate whether the five key frames of Demonization, Personalization and Trivialization, Goals and Rights, Victimization, and Agency were applicable to the way women were represented in the modern video advertisements (Bronstein, 2005, p. 790-792). This framework gave a guiding structure for the assessment of the female representations in the video advertisements, by contextualizing the observations from the visual semiotic analysis and the critical discourse analysis. The table used in the form with Bronstein's frames can be found in the Appendix (see Appendix A6, p. 81).

Although Bronstein's media frames provided a useful foundation for the initial categorization of the representation of women, they were not sufficient to fully capture the complexity of the analyzed advertisements. As Bronstein's framework was developed in 2005, and specifically for news media contexts, an inductive thematic analysis was also employed, to shed light on new themes, that would be more adequate for the Greek context. Therefore, phase four included this process that aimed at generating new, tailored themes allowing the research to highlight current and culturally specific patterns of female representation in Greek advertising.

These themes derived through inductive open coding, where repeated visual and discursive elements across the dataset were systematically identified, grouped, and refined into broader categories. The thematic analysis was conducted following the different phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 80). Firstly, all the collected data-observations from the visual semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis, were carefully read and generated in initial codes. This process included the deliberate examination of the tables, used for the visual semiotic and critical discourse analysis, in order to find reoccurring key words and phrases that lead to patterns. These keywords and phrases were highlighted with different colors, based on their shared content and indications (see Appendix A3, p. 77) Then, these patterns were grouped and categorized into codes. The related codes were placed into larger categories, leading to the initial themes. At the end, the themes were revised and improved, through the development of a clear definition of what each theme included. This final codebook can be found in the Appendix (see Appendix A8, p. 81), along with an example of a completed form of an analyzed advertisement (see Appendix A3, p. 77)

The development of this customized thematic framework ensured that the final analysis reflects the complexities of gender representation in a post-#MeToo media environment and aligns with the sociocultural dynamics of the present day, while also making a point through the applicability of Bronstein's frames (Bronstein, 2005, p. 788).

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

In order to secure the validity of the research, firstly, the researcher's bias should be acknowledged. The researcher's personal perspectives, cultural background, and assumptions may have influenced how the advertisements were interpreted, especially

when decoding symbolic portrayals of the gender. Since the research has grown up in Greece, she has created a subjective understanding of the social, historical, and cultural dynamics of the country and the main beliefs and stereotypes. Therefore, the data interpretation is filtered through personal understandings of the cultural nuances. Nevertheless, the research was conducted taking into consideration the importance of the scientific objectivity and critical observation that are required for valid and justifiable results.

An additional challenge concerns the translation of the materials. All advertisements were originally in Greek, and for the purposes of this research, direct quotes and part of the scenarios have been translated into English. While every effort was made to preserve the original meaning, as accurately as possible, there is an inherent risk of losing subtle cultural or linguistic nuances in translation, which could influence the interpretation of the data.

The acknowledgement of such ethical reflections aims to enhance the transparency, credibility, and overall argumentation of the findings. Transparency is an essential ethical consideration, particularly when working with intersubjective knowledge elements. In this research, practices such as data access and production transparency are employed for justification purposes. Through these practices the power of qualitative approach is more visible, allowing consumers and other scholars to critically engage with this research (Lupia & Elman, 2014, p. 26-27). Simultaneously, the confrontation of these challenges facilitates a more critical and reflective position to the research process and its conclusions.

## 4. Thesis Results

This part of the research explores the results that emerged from the content analysis. In section 4.1 the alignment with Bronstein’s framework and each frame is evaluated separately, through the deductive thematic approach. Section 4.2 exhibits the new four themes that arose from the inductive thematic analysis.

### 4.1 Application of Bronstein’s Framework: Deductive Thematic Analysis

This section presents the findings derived from the visual semiotic and critical discourse analysis of the selected video advertisements, followed by the application of Bronstein’s frames. After conducting a detailed analysis of all 100 advertisements through the dual lens of visual and textual evaluation, each advertisement was examined according to Bronstein’s feminist media framework (Bronstein, 2005, p. 788). For each video, the presence or absence of each frame was recorded using a binary (Yes/No) coding system. This procedure allowed the quantification of the frequency and the creation of the following table, that presents the frequency of the frames in the 100 video advertisements. The results are presented as percentages and enable an overview of the patterns observed in Greek advertising content from March 2021 until May 2025.

**Table 4.1**

*Frequency of Bronstein’s Frames in the present dataset*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Yes Count (%)</b>	<b>No Count (%)</b>	<b>Yes/No Ratio</b>
Demonization	3 (3.0%)	97 (66.0%)	3/97
Personalization/Transformation	75 (75.0%)	25(25.0%)	75/25
Victimization	13(13.0%)	87(36.0%)	13/87
Goals and Rights	62 (62.0%)	38 (38.0%)	62/38
Agency	86 (86.0%)	14 (14.0%)	86/14

Note. Total number of the video advertisements is 100

The following section provides a detailed explanation and critical demonstration of the five thematic frames identified in Bronstein’s framework. Each theme is discussed in relation to the findings of Bronstein’s 2005 study on media portrayals of

femininities, while also reporting the results through examples drawn from the present dataset.

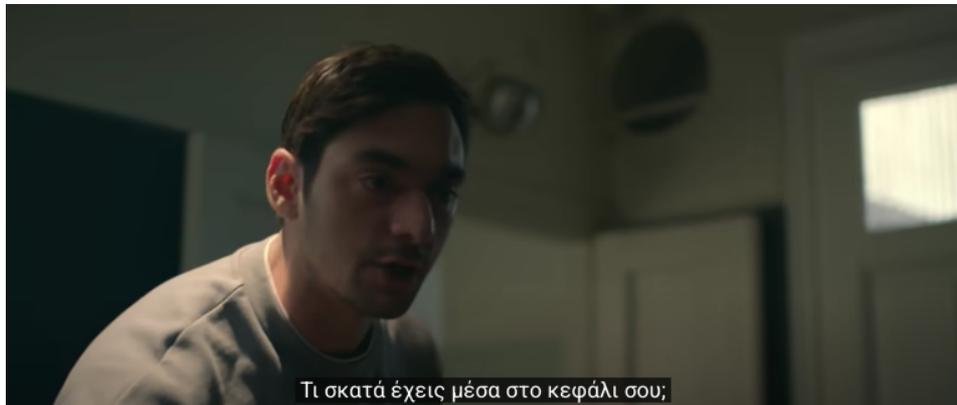
#### **4.1.1 Demonization**

According to Bronstein (2005, p. 787) the most dramatic finding involved the demonization frame, where feminists during the second wave of feminism were ten times more likely to be described as “bitches”, “radical”, and “bad” or as social deviants, by journalists in print news stories, indicating hatred feelings against women who fight for equality. Bronstein’s research results showed that the 25% of news stories contained this frame for the second wave of feminists, yet only 2% of news stories used demonizing characteristics on third wave feminists (Bronstein, 2005, p. 789).

In the examined dataset, the frame of demonization of women was found in 3% of the advertisements. This finding showcases that there has been a progress on how women are depicted, compared to the portrayal of the second wave feminists. At the same time, not much difference is observed among the percentages of the depiction of third wave feminists and women in Greek advertisements. However, there is a crucial difference on the manner this frame is used in the advertisements, as it can be showcased from the advertisements’ narratives and the visual meta-level analysis. Most scenes that included diminishing portrayal of women, were associated with the narrative of a male perpetrator and a female victim of domestic abuse. The Critical discourse analysis, also, indicated that demonizing language in this dataset is only used when women are portrayed as victims of toxic and abusive relationships, and not with the aim to offend and diminish them. These examples adopt real depictions of abusive narratives, to raise awareness on societal issues like violence against women, sexual abuse or gender inequality. In some instances, like the Lacta’s advertisement “Don’t ever leave me”, the woman is depicted to gradually lose her freedom, through the narrative of the abuse by her male partner. The critical discourse analysis revealed lexical choices such as “Shut up, you bitch” and “You are lying”, verifying the hatred language used by the male character in order to manipulate and control the female protagonist (see Figure 4.1.1). As a result, the advertisement has employed demonizing discourse directed at the female character, in an effort to present the hard reality that women go through, in abusive relationships.

### Figure 4.1.1

*LACTA Greece 2021 campaign using demonized discourse on the female protagonist*

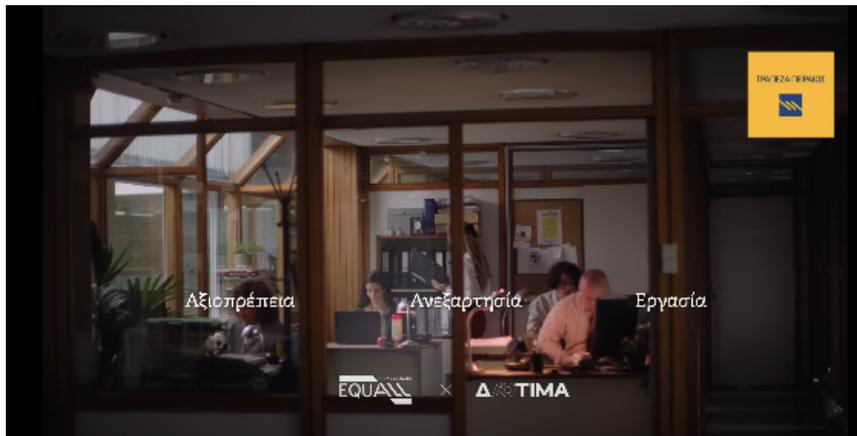


Note. Advertising agency: Ogilvy Greece, produced in honor of the International Day of Eliminating Violence Against Women.

At the same time, the 97% of the advertisements were opposed to the demonization frame and chose to perceive and present women with respect and aspiration. Sexism and the use of hatred language in the contemporary advertisements is not accepted anymore, as consumers and brands demand advertisements that promote equality and not hate. Even in the cases like the advertisements of Piraeus Bank for Women's day, "Program Equal" and "Strong me" by P&G, where women were addressed as victims of abuse, the critical discourse analysis revealed examples opposite to demonizing discourse. The advertisements used language that empowered the victim, affirmed female solidarity and presented women as respected survivors of abusive relationships (see Figure 4.1.2). This theme of empowerment will be later discussed more analytically.

### Figure 4.1.2

*Piraeus Bank EQUAL Campaign, 2023*



Note. Piraeus Bank campaign showing solidarity to women who have faced gender-based abuse. Advertising agency: The Newton's Laboratory

#### 4.1.2 Personalization and trivialization

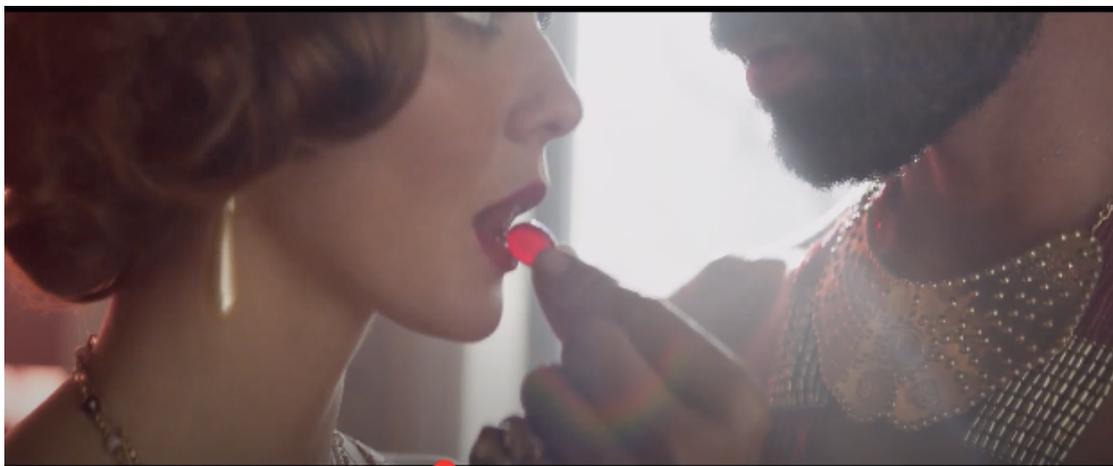
The frame of personalization and trivialization was associated with instances, where news stories were focused on female physical appearance and beauty, giving emphasis on superficial attributes over substance and, ultimately, objectifying women. This frame also focused on traditional gender roles with an emphasis on looks and fashion tastes (Bronstein, 2005, p. 786-787). In the news stories that were analyzed by Bronstein, the frame was used as a means of diminishing a woman's credibility and her message. Among the stories analyzed in Bronstein's research, a 21% percentage subjected third wave feminists to this theme. Women in those news stories were depicted positively, by meeting the conventional beauty standards (Bronstein, 2005, p. 791). This result of Bronstein research suggested that women were mostly characterized by their devotion to fashion trends and cosmetics, indicating that third wave feminists had lost their "commitment to political activism" and their main concern was to accommodate the beauty standards of the society (Bronstein, 2005, p. 791).

Throughout the present dataset, there was a consistent reoccurrence of women in used for their looks and youth. Therefore, the frame of personalization and trivialization was found in 75% of the video advertisements, indicating the prevalence of traditional beauty standards and gender stereotypes in advertisements. The analysis of the dataset suggested a specific pattern of employing women, their beauty and bodies, as means of selling the product and attracting the audience. For instance, the "Lavdas Zero"

advertisements without the use of dialogue, commodify femininity and use the female body and beauty as a vehicle for consumer desire. In the particular examples, women are sexualized and objectified as their bodies and beauty are utilized for advertising the product. The micro and mid level analysis revealed symbolic power dynamics between the genders, through framing techniques and body posture. The man was mostly depicted in powerful postures and on the top part of the screen, while the woman was more ethereal and stayed behind or underneath him. Finally, her eye contact suggested seductiveness and submission to him (see Figure 4.1.3).

**Figure 4.1.3**

*Lavdas Zero Cinnamon and Vanilla 2024 campaign*



Note. Lavdas Zero campaign using female sexualization. Advertising agency: Rock Cherry advertising

In another advertisement by the Greek airline Sky express, the two female characters are often showcasing their bodies, by wearing bikinis, in order to be associated with freedom and youth, aligning their presence with visual spectacle and not narrative depth (see Figure 4.1.4). However, their male co-protagonists are not put into such scenes and clothing. This observation confirms the existence of the gender inequality in the advertising landscape and the reinforcement of stereotypical and old-fashioned trends that support that the sexualization of the female body will enhance the effective marketability of the products.

#### **Figure 4.1.4**

*Sky Express Summer 2023 campaign*



Note. Sky Express Airlines campaign commodifying the female bodies  
Advertising agency: Soho Square

#### **4.1.3 Victimization**

In Bronstein’s research, the frame of victimization is associated with instances of women portrayed as victims of violence, weak and helpless. In his research this frame was only found on 2% of the news stories analyzed. In contrast to his results, the victimization frame on women was found in 13% of the videos analyzed in the present research. A large number of the videos advertisements that depicted women in vulnerable positions and abusive relationships, were produced prompt by the “International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women”, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November. This social issue was included in multiple brands’ campaigns, as a way to raise concerns and awareness on specific forms of violence, like domestic violence, sexual harassment in domestic and work environments.

A significant example is the Lacta’s campaign “Don’t ever leave me”, a campaign that created a wave of reactions in the Greek media. The narrative is based on the harsh reality, where a romantic relationship unravels into psychological and physical abuse (see Figure 4.1.5). The story, through the mid-level analysis, portrays the man in position of power over the fearful and visibly injured woman, who ends up murdered despite her heroic moments of resistance. This specific advertisement had a large impact in the Greek traditional and digital media, as not only the issue of violence

against women was broadly discussed, but also the phenomenon of femicide. The micro and mid level of visual analysis suggested that by employing dark lighting and suspenseful music, while also showing scenes of verbal and physical violence against the female protagonist, the campaign aims to shock the audience and simultaneously bring light to the issue of violence against women. At the same time, the campaign ends with an empowering note. The female protagonist, inspires and encourages other victims to escape their abusive relationships, in her own words, “before it is too late”. This final message, through emotional appeal, gives to the audience the tragic duality of abusive relationships, where a victim can either become a survivor or not survive at all. The campaign was the first one in the Greek advertising landscape, to discuss openly and vividly the ugliness of the phenomenon (Lekakis, 2023, p. 290). Even though the narrative might have been hard on some viewers, through the direct confrontation and the real depiction of the issue, society might understand the importance and the need for a social change.

#### **Figure 4.1.5**

*LACTA Greece 2021 campaign*



Note. LACTA campaign employing images of women as victims  
Advertising agency: Ogilvy Greece, produced in honor of the International Day of Eliminating Violence Against Women.

Additionally, the Piraeus Bank campaign raises awareness on the domestic abuse of young girls (see Figure 4.1.6). The advertisement employs visual signification of a

grey cloud, depicting the physical and psychological burden kid's carry from home to school. Through the use of metaphor, the teacher manages to cut the grey cloud that was chained to the little girl's leg. This metaphor suggests that the responsibility for ending abusive relationships lies within society, as it is the duty of educators and government authorities to identify and address these issues, through legislation and educational initiatives.

**Figure 4.1.6**

*Piraeus Bank- Eliza 2024 campaign*

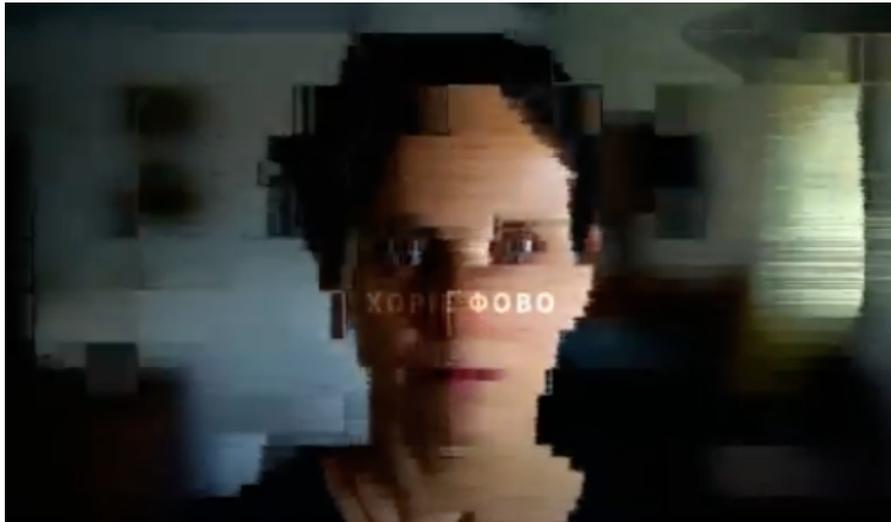


Note. Piraeus Bank campaign employing images of girls as victims, Advertising agency: The Newtons Laboratory

Finally, the universality of the phenomenon of the abuse against women is presented through campaigns like the Vodafone's for Women's day, where an AI generated woman is sharing her experience with psychological and physical violence (see Figure 4.1.7). The advertisement's message proposes that even though the face of the campaign might be AI-generated, the story is not, indicating that the phenomenon affects every woman and can happen to anyone. Nevertheless, most of the advertisements ended on an optimistic note, as signs suggested the reentrance of women in society after their traumatic experiences and the regaining of their freedom and agency. Overall, the theme of victimization had as ultimate goal the confrontation and information of the different forms of gender abuse in the Greek society.

**Figure 4.1.7**

*Vodafone Greece 2023- Recognize the signs campaign*



Note. Vodafone campaign employing images of women as victims produced in honor of the International Day of Eliminating Violence Against Women.

#### **4.1.4 Goals and rights**

This frame indicates the social empowerment of women along with gender equality, as its attention is focused on establishing social changes, fortifying wage equity, abortion rights or legislation that fosters gender equality. It also includes references to women's rights, such as economic independence, freedom from abuse and empowerment through systemic change. In Bronstein's research this frame appeared most frequently, as the 38% of news stories included the demands of institutional reforms. Women were presented with the agency of having a "personal choice" and "be able to be the President or the mother-or both" (Bronstein, 2005, p. 792). The concept of having a personal choice is very significant, as women want to be defined as they please. This frame also implies the importance of unity among women, and their power to bring social change through individual level actions (Bronstein, 2005, p. 792).

In the current research 62 out of the 100 advertisements (62%) depicted female empowerment and unity. Acts of donation and mutual aid as forms of female solidarity and empowerment have been showcased, along with women having control both in business and domestic environments. A number of advertisements also indicated gender equality in job opportunities, balanced and safe work environments. In addition, women were seen as breaking through male-dominated spaces, suggesting initiative and leadership. For example, the Vodafone's campaign "Women in Business", supported this frame through visual signs of women in suits and professional settings,

indicating equality in the workforce. The critical discourse analysis revealed the empowerment discourse used in the advertisements that aimed at building confidence of businesswomen and making them believe in their potential. The campaign included women sharing their success stories as entrepreneurs, bringing light to the importance of gender equality and equality in opportunities in business world, which is a stereotypically male dominated environment. (see Figure 4.1.8).

**Figure 4.1.8**

*Vodafone's 2021 Campaign, Four female entrepreneurs, one success story*



Note. Representation of female entrepreneurs and businesswomen

In addition, Novibet's campaign "Giant Heart", by using a female athlete as the campaign's main face, strived at breaking the stereotype of sports as a male-dominated field and raised awareness on equal chances in sports (see Figure 4.1.9). The brand's campaign scenario showcased their support of equal opportunities in sports, but also shared their practical measures on fostering a gender inclusive sports scene.

**Figure 4.1.9**

*Novibet Giant Heart, 2025 campaign*



Note. Novibet campaign showcasing gender equality in sports  
Advertising Agency: 4 Wise Monkeys

My Market's campaign also proved that women are able to equally succeed in male dominated spaces such as the logistics (see Figure 4.1.10). The reoccurrence of this theme suggests a tendency of brands using their platforms to empower women, reinforce gender equality in professional settings, and in particular shift the power dynamics in stereotypically male dominated fields.

**Figure 4.1.10**

*My Market's 2025 Campaign #WomenInLogistics*



Note. Campaign depicted women in male dominated fields, produced in honor of the International Day of Women

#### 4.1.5 Agency

In Bronstein's research this frame was often used as an opposition to the victimization frame and was characterized as "different sides of the same coin" (Bronstein, 2005, p. 793). His findings concluded that the news stories that included the theme of agency depicted women as bold and sassy, powerful and competent, independent and self-reliant (Bronstein, 2005, p. 793). The agency theme was found in 35% of the stories analyzed, making it the second most popular, after the goals and rights theme.

The frame of agency in this research was found in the majority of the video advertisements analyzed, with a percentage of 86%. Most advertisements supported female agency by refining and illuminating the multidimensional aspects of the different roles a woman has in the society. In Vodafone's campaign (see Figure 4.1.11), Myrto is a multifaceted woman equally present and successful both in her career in the company and motherhood. The brand's support and appreciation of the female employees is shown through Myrto's story, which was narrated by her proud father. He informed the audience of Myrto's double success as she got a promotion while having her first child. This specific narrative is quite important, as it disproves the sexist stereotype that women are not able to succeed in the business field, as their professional ambitions may conflict with the establishment of a family.

**Figure 4.1.11**

*Vodafone's 2025 Campaign: At Vodafone, you can grow-Myrto*



Note. Women depicted with multifaceted roles

The NRG campaign 'In Charge' seeks to challenge traditional gender stereotypes by portraying a working mother who adeptly manages both the demands of her children

and the technical task of charging her electric car, which is an activity conventionally associated with male fields (see Figure 4.1.12). The employment of the agency theme in the majority of advertisements, showcases a strong tendency of portraying women as independent, successful and autonomous. Such portrayals can be considered as progressive in the advertising field, and consequently, suggesting a transformative inclination in the societal outlook of the female roles.

**Figure 4.1.12**

*NRG's In-charge, 2021 Campaign*



Note. Representation of women as knowledgeable technicians and mothers  
Advertising agency: Frank and Fame

## **4.2 Results of inductive thematic analysis**

Although the findings' association with Bronstein's original framework suggest a degree of continuity in the representation of women, both in the news stories of the 1990s and in the contemporary video advertisements of the 21st century, it is important not to disregard the different nature of these two types of media content. Given the considerable sociocultural developments that have taken place since Bronstein's study in 2005, it became essential to move beyond the existing framework, in order to more accurately capture present day female representations in the advertising industry.

To address this need, a more refined inductive thematic analysis was conducted, aiming to reveal patterns and emergent themes that reflect the position of women within contemporary Greek society and media. This allowed the research to engage more

directly with the “now” of female representation, rather than only relying on pre-developed models. Hence, the inductive approach of the thematic analysis of the observations, from the visual semiotic analysis and the critical discourse analysis, was carried out, to determine emerging themes and trends concerning the way women are portrayed in the Greek advertisements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The main takeaways from the literature review and the observations of the Visual Semiotic analysis and the Critical Discourse analysis were translated into themes through the codebook of an inductive open coding process. The coding book was organized along the themes of 1) Gender Stereotyping and Traditional Roles, 2) Female empowerment and challenged stereotypes, 3) Sexualization of the female body and commodification of beauty, 4) Victimization and resilience. Thereby, by manually reviewing and summarizing the observations of the videos visual and textual signs, the codes were transformed into sub-categories and categories, that led to the themes mentioned above (see Appendix A8, p. 81).

#### **4.2.1 Gender Stereotyping and Traditional Roles**

Across several Greek advertisements, the traditional depictions of the past, that confine women in roles of caretakers, homemakers, or emotional nurturers are found to remain prevalent. In the majority of the advertisements, women are portrayed as maternal, overprotective, and devoted to domestic duties. The mid-level visual analysis revealed that women are mostly presented in domestic environments like the kitchen and living room, preparing or serving the meals for the family, a reoccurring image that has also been found in past research (Pazarzi & Tsangaris, 2008, p. 41). Female characters are repeatedly seen when kids are also present in the advertisement, suggesting that parenting is a woman’s main responsibility, and that the role of the mother is part of every woman’s identity (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 449). In the majority of the advertisements, women are seen nurturing their kids, providing meals, and sacrificing their time for the family.

The meta-level visual analysis found that even in cases where the advertised product and the narrative has nothing to do with the domestic environment, women are used to carry out activities connected to cleaning or cooking (see Figure 4.2.1). In fact, the dataset indicated a high association between the depiction of women and the commercialization of utilitarian products, such as food and drinks or household items,

a pattern that has been found in past research too (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009, p. 1429).

**Figure 4.2.1**

*Alpha Bank Quick Loan Campaign, 2022*



Note. Women associated with domestic chores, even when the advertising product is irrelevant to that

Aegean's, NRG's or Mevgal's campaigns (see Figure 4.2.2), are some examples where women do everything for their children, like travelling the world to visit them or give them answers to questions they haven't asked yet, suggesting a stereotypical portrayal that has also been discussed by Lekakis (2023, p. 294). Such depiction proposes the association of the female identity with the role of motherhood, while the other parts of the multidimensional self of a woman are neglected. This subconscious association of women with the maternal role, reproduces a close-minded and old-fashioned stereotype of parenting (Pazarzi & Tsangaris, 2008, p. 37). Such representations reinforce the stereotype of nuclear and patriarchal families and exclude other types of families, like homosexual couples or single parents. This is also supported through past research, that revealed the opposition of Greek consumers on the depiction of homosexual couples in the advertisements (Romniopoulou & Panopoulos, 2023, p. 28) Through the meta-level analysis and the reoccurrence of traditional representations, it is suggested that the normative patriarchal ideals of society and, consequently, women's role as mothers is a stereotype deeply rooted in the

Greek media landscape. This persistence of employing female stereotypes, even in indirect ways through subtle visual cues in advertising, strengthens the existing traditional beliefs, contributes to the stagnation of the media and does not assist the needed progress.

**Figure 4.2.2**

*Mevgal 75 years of trust and love, 2025 campaign*



Note. Women in maternal roles

In another effort to sustain the stereotypical gender roles, men are mostly seen in executive roles, like coaches, mentors, lawyers, decision makers, who usually guide or give advice to the female character (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014c, p. 46). The mid-level visual analysis, through signs like professional attires, strict facial expressions and conservative settings, indicated that men are mostly associated with higher professional roles and not with domestic environments (see Figure 4.2.3). The critical discourse analysis revealed that when humor is employed in advertisements, male characters are frequently portrayed as being intimidated by their female partners or utterly perplexed by the female behavior and emotions. This type of portrayal suggests that women are overly emotional, unpredictable, or difficult to understand, while presenting men as emotionally simple and straightforward. Such use of comedy not only trivialize women's feelings but also reinforces outdated gender binaries, casting women as irrational and men as emotionally inept (Pazarzi & Tsangaris, 2008, p. 42). This representation subtly reinforces traditional gender roles, under the guise of humor, making it more palatable, yet equally problematic. Therefore, advertisements instead of suggesting progressive images and concepts of gender norms, they choose to

reinforce the traditional gender power dynamics that are deeply engraved in the Greek society.

**Figure 4.2.3**

*Hellmann's, The lawyer, 2021 campaign*



Note. Men portrayed in strict roles and attires

Advertising agency: Ogilvy

In conclusion, the persistence of traditional gender stereotypes in Greek advertisements can be argued to reflect the enduring influence of patriarchal norms within the national media landscape, a finding that agrees with past research (Pazarzi & Tsangaris, 2008, p. 36; Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 451). This result might suggest that despite broader social shifts and feminist discourse calling for more multifaceted portrayals, advertising content chooses to recycle outdated representations that restrict women's identities, while positioning men as authoritative figures.

#### **4.2.2 Female empowerment and challenged stereotypes**

In contrast to the previous theme, in certain advertisements, the message of female empowerment was loud and clear. Different brands like Green Cola, Vodafone, Pantene and Piraeus Bank, used their platforms and audiences to raise awareness on societal issues, like gender inequality or discrimination, by strengthening the female autonomy, success and diversity. The mid-level visual analysis found repeated patterns of women presented as leaders, successful businesswomen and independent professionals. The narrative used for these campaigns was authentic, through the depiction of diverse and real women, along with original storytelling and narratives that

transmitted the true circumstances that women face in the Greek society. The representation of women in non-traditional roles has been found to be well-received and appreciated and even expected by the Greek consumers (Romniopoulou & Panopoulos, 2023, p. 28).

The meta-level visual analysis uncovered the promotion of values and ideals that encourage female empowerment such as independence, female representation and solidarity and meritocracy. Such depictions showed the growing influence of femvertising as a corporate social responsibility tool for brands and advertising agencies (Gomez -Borquez et al. 2024, p. 12). Nevertheless, most of the advertisements that were advocating for female empowerment and gender equality, were produced and shared on Women's Day, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, which might indicate a scrutinization of such portrayals in the name of commercial opportunism (see Figure 4.2.4).

**Figure 4.2.4**

*Elite Πλασμένες δυνατές- Made Strong, 2022 Campaign*



Note. Women's Empowerment Initiative, produced on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, honoring the International Women's Day

In general, an effort to deconstruct the stereotypes among genders was also noticed. The mid-level analysis and the Critical discourse analysis revealed a simultaneous representation of women in stereotypical roles and moments of empowerment within the analyzed advertising videos, reflecting a contradictory narrative. In particular, women were both seen in roles of mothers and wives, but also as independent and successful professionals. This dual portrayal reinforces past research's suggestions, that while the Greek society is gradually embracing more

progressive views on gender, traditional norms continue to have a strong influence (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 452). Advertisers, aiming to appeal to a broad consumer base, often adopt a risk-averse strategy by blending conventional femininity with selective forms of empowerment. However, this juxtaposition can also produce mixed messaging, creating a culture of positive thinking, where women are called to be positive and bounce back negative experiences with optimism, suggesting an outlook of toxic positivity (Tsaliki, 2024, p. 12).

According to the framework of postfeminist media culture, these portrayals commodify empowerment, presenting it as compatible with consumerism rather than as a challenge to structural inequality (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024, p. 9). At the same time, the meta-level visual analysis revealed that by attempting to stay aligned with the woke agenda, a large variety of brands produced advertisements with narratives that challenged power relations and raised social awareness (Sobande, 2020, p. 2740). P&G's "The lengths of strength" campaign (see Figure 4.2.5) or Vodafone's "Seaweed" and EEDA's campaign are some of the examples of advertisements that used gender neutral messaging, discouraged gender stereotypes and reinforced gender equality. These values were transmitted through empowering discourse like "Together, we can", "We should change our minds and not our hairstyles" and "Don't let discrimination, to once again exclude deserving candidates".

**Figure 4.2.5**

*Pantene Greece The lengths of Strength, 2023 Campaign*



Note. Campaign showcasing solidarity, Advertising Agency: Valtech Radon

In addition, the analysis demonstrated narratives that did not focus on gender and even reversed the stereotypes. Overall, even though the traditional roles of women, like motherhood and domestic life, have been represented through many advertisements, there is an equal number of advertisements that choose to also present the female strength and demand for gender equality. However, it should be kept in mind that the data indicated that brands tend to produce advertisements with empowering content, primarily on special occasions like the World Women's Day or the International day of elimination of abuse against women, highlighting a pseudo-testimonial aspect of wellness and assisting superficially in societal change (Vergopoulou, 2022, p. 184)

These findings suggest that although stereotypical portrayals remain present, there is a growing tendency in contemporary Greek advertising of embracing narratives of empowerment and inclusion. By promoting values such as meritocracy, equality, and collective responsibility, many campaigns challenge outdated gender roles and call for societal transformation, suggesting a slow yet existent evolution in the industry.

### **4.2.3 Sexualization of the female body and commodification of beauty**

The research also uncovered another theme among the advertisements, which was the emphasis on the female beauty and sexuality. Brands that were advertised by

women, were simultaneously promoting both the product or service and the female body, in ways that led to the objectification of the female characters (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 448). For example, the two advertisements of Lavdas' caramels Zero campaign, included sensual visual clips of the female protagonists. The micro-level analysis indicated a sensual atmosphere and aesthetic through the use of deem lighting and the employment of dark tones and colors (see Figure 4.2.6). The mid-level analysis of the advertisements depicted that women were subordinate to their male costars, and their bodies were exploited for commercial purposes. However, the mid-level analysis demonstrated that the sexualization of the women in the advertisements was not overly explicit nor provocatively objectifying. Most representations placed women in settings and attire that conveyed a subtly sensual aesthetic, without explicitly connecting them to sexualization.

**Figure 4.2.6**

*Lavdas Zero Eucalyptus & Mastic 2023 campaign*



Note. Lavdas Zero campaign using female sexualization

Advertising agency: Rock Cherry advertising

Even in instances where the advertised product was unrelated to sexuality and could have been presented through alternative means, the meta level analysis of the advertisements suggested that advertisers deliberately selected young, conventionally attractive women to sensually associate with and present the product, aiming to enhance its appeal (see Figure 4.2.7). Such portrayals were often masked under the guise of humor, aiming at the normalization of the phenomenon.

**Figure 4.2.7**

*ION Dubai Chocolate 2025 Campaign*



Note. Employment of female beauty and youth for commercial purposes (Indication: Who is delicious the chocolate or girl?)

Additionally, a repeated suggestion, that women should not age, was noticed through both the visual semiotic and the critical discourse analysis. In a number of advertisements older and more mature women were seen with anti-aging products. The discourse used in such settings was among the lines of fighting the imperfections and regaining power through beauty. The findings of the meta-level visual analysis uncovered the repetition of the narrative that women's physical appearance and beauty is aligned with their youth and consequently that their worth is evaluated through their age. Campaigns like Vichy's (see Figure 4.2.8) and L'Oreal's, reproduced the stereotype that women lose their value as they get older, through the use of discourse that equated beauty with youth.

**Figure 4.2.8**

*Vichy Greece Neovadiol Campaign 2024*



Note. Campaign of antiaging product, employing older women

The meta level analysis suggested that women are in pursuit of beauty and youthfulness, subconsciously reinforcing the societal pressure of physical attractiveness, a stereotype that has been repeated in Greek advertisements since 1982 (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 449). This reinforcement is implied through the conscious choice of the advertisers to present older women only when anti-aging products were promoted, while young women were presented when there was a more sensual narrative. Such choices are objectifying female worth and beauty, but also polarizing women and creating shame around age. In addition, even though unity and inclusivity were cherished, through discursive and visual signs, most women in the advertisements were white, suggesting the exclusive representation of women and encouraging the racist tendencies of the Greek society (Tsaliki, 2024, p. 13).

Overall, while the analyzed advertisements do not always employ explicit sexual objectification of women, the subtle use of sensual aesthetics, youth centric beauty standards, and exclusionary representation suggest a persistent commodification of the female body, reinforcing the stereotypical representations of women in Greek advertisements (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 450).

#### **4.2.4 Victimization and Resilience**

This dataset also revealed that different brands used their platforms to raise awareness on important social issues like femicides, sexism, stigma and violence against women. This theme might be connected to Bronstein's frame of victimization, yet it includes an important addition, which is resilience. The analysis suggested that even though women are presented as victims of abuse, they don't stay passive, yet they find the power to break their silence, take a stand and escape the circumstances.

A number of the advertisements analyzed showcase instances of physical and psychological abuse of women. The mid-level visual semiotic analysis identified representations of abuse, through the depiction of women with bruises on their face or expressions that showed psychological torments, emotions of fear and distress, when interacting with their abuser. The critical discourse analysis uncovered lectical and psychological abuse of women through phrases that suggested emotional bullying, financial independency and indications of psychological entrapment. Some examples

of hateful discourse against women are: “You are nothing without me”, “She was asking for it” and “Shut up, you are lying”. The meta level analysis along with use of derogatory vocabulary towards the female protagonists, suggested that abusive narratives were employed, primarily, in an effort to raise awareness about such social issues, and not as advertising techniques. Most of the advertisements demonstrated instances of manhandling, toxic relationships and examples of toxic masculinity.

The mid and meta-level visual analysis revealed that the abuse was usually initiated by the male partners of the victims’ romantic relationships and was taking place in domestic environments (see Figure 4.2.9). The advertisements also included examples of sexual abuse, where the victim was female and the perpetrator male. Such representations, although having educational potential in raising awareness about the most common types of abuse, remain limited, as they fail to inclusively reflect the broader spectrum of abuse that women and feminine-identifying individuals may experience, such as emotional, economic, and digital abuse. Nevertheless, the specific portrayal of women in these advertisements, as abused and helpless victims, intended to initiate a broader conversation in the media around the topic of abuse, enabling women to recognize the signs of violence early on and to find ways to escape abusive situations (Slakoff et al., 2020, p. 2784).

**Figure 4.2.9**

*LACTA Greece 2021 “Don’t ever leave me” campaign*



Note. LACTA campaign employing images men as perpetrators

Advertising agency: Ogilvy Greece, produced in honor of the International Day of Eliminating Violence Against Women.

The critical discourse analysis also highlighted that the majority of the advertisements that depicted images of women as victims of violence, ultimately included messages aimed at empowering the victims. These campaigns often employed phrases such as "you are not alone", "we are with you", and "we believe you". Additionally, another pattern was brought to light, where many brands that presented narratives supporting the elimination of abuse against women, collaborated with NGOs to which female victims could turn for support, or they promoted their own programs of elimination of violence against women (see Figure 4.2.10). This finding indicates a bidirectional effort to not only raise awareness of the issue, but also offer tangible support.

**Figure 4.2.10**

*P&G Greece "Strong Me" 2023 campaign*



Note. Campaign employing images of women as victims, while promoting empowering programs "The more, the stronger": unity and solidarity  
Advertising agency: Leo Burnett Greece.

In addition, the theme of resilience became evident in this dataset through the visual and critical discourse analysis. A lot of advertisements embraced entrepreneurship, leadership and financial resilience of women that had fallen victims of abuse. The theme of victimhood is used in the context of survival rather than as a cry for help. The meta-level analysis revealed a repetition of a pattern that female victims of abuse are illustrated as strong and resilient but trapped in the wrong circumstances. Whether they have been victims of abuse or have faced gender inequalities and unfairness due to their gender, women are depicted as heroes, sharing their stories,

aiming to inspire the female target audience (see Figure 4.2.11). However, since the narratives of resilience and gaining confidence are perceived as a female matter, there might be an indication that only women go through such psychological turbulence, reinforcing the mindset and image of women as the weak gender. Overall, in most of the advertisements the victimization of women, was used as a means of educational and informative platform of the phenomenon of abuse against women and was accompanied with the theme of resilience to create optimism and security for women.

**Figure 4.2.11**

*Novartis Hellas 2021 campaign, “You are a woman, you have strength”*



Note. Campaign promoting unity, female solidarity and empowerment. Women presented as strong, independent and ambitious

In sum, the analyzed advertisements demonstrate a clear attempt to raise awareness around gender-based violence, while also promote narratives of female resilience. This type of advertising is quite important as it shows the societal solidarity, and the bond between brands and their consumers. Advertisers through projects that raise awareness on societal issues, show their human side and inspire more brands to use their platforms and bring attention to issues that require change (Lekakis, 2023, p. 298).

## 5. Conclusion and implications

The present research critically questions the portrayal of women in Greek advertisements following the rise of the #MeToo movement in Greece in 2021. Through an in-depth qualitative content and deductive and inductive thematic analysis using Bronstein's media frames, visual semiotics, and critical discourse analysis, this study analyzes a purposive sample of 100 video advertisements aired between March 2021 and May 2025 in Greek media. The objective is to understand the extent to which Greek advertising has evolved, in response to the rise of social movements, the woke and cancel digital culture and the depiction of post-feminist values in through the practice of femvertising.

The questions for the female representation in the Greek advertisements are quickly raised, from the beginning of the research, during the sample selection procedure. The fact that there is a lack of advertisements with female protagonists, is in itself an indication of the gender inequality, that perpetuates the Greek society and the advertising landscape. In addition, the findings from the deductive thematic analysis, which are associated with Bronstein's frames, but also the themes that emerge through the inductive thematic analysis, demonstrate a tension between progress and stagnation. This is evident from the fact that even though Bronstein's frames might apply to the data, and with relatively consistent frequency, the manner in which the frames are employed, in Bronstein's and the present research, is different. The themes that emerge from the inductive thematic analysis, are tailor made to the present and uncover the political and sociocultural impact of the Greek context, that navigates the advertising content. This partial alignment with past research's, but also the need for the emergence of new themes, suggest a conflict between lack of and desire for progress.

On the one hand, the Greek advertisements show a persistence in reinforcing traditional stereotypes, objectifying and commercializing women, through the exploitation of their youth and beauty. This reoccurring choice is made by the advertisers, as it appears to accommodate the perceived images of the average consumer, who accepts and expects the reproduction of these norms in the advertisements (Pazarzi & Tsangaris, 2008, p. 45). It is possible that advertisers might choose the conservative strategy of reproducing gender stereotypes, because the presentation of a progressive image could be perceived as unsettling by this audience,

potentially threatening the effectiveness of the advertisement and, consequently, the marketability of the product (Vredenburg et al., 2020, p. 451). This finding confirms the concerns about the slow pace of change in Greek media culture noted by Lekakis (2023, p. 298) and supports further the Furnham & Lay's conclusion (2019, p. 120), that gender portrayals in advertisements persistently lag behind societal shifts. Therefore, the study revealed, what has also been said in the past about the Greek advertising landscape, that despite the societal pressure and the evolution of the female status, the visual imagery of advertising persists on depicting women in a limited and stereotypical fashion (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014c, p. 50).

Traditional stereotypes of women depicted as sexy, young and beautiful are also reinforced through the analysis. Scenes characterized by a sensual aesthetic, predominantly featuring young, white and thin women, reflecting an idealized standard of femininity and sexuality. By privileging a narrow depiction of female sexuality, by idealizing youth, whiteness, and thinness, the unrealistic beauty norms are encouraged, along with the notion that only women who meet these standards are considered worthy. Such examples align with prior research in gender representations in the media, where it was found that females are more likely to be associated with light clothing and nude shots in comparison to males, indicating a higher degree of sexualization (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014c, p. 53). This pattern glamorizes the sexual victimization of women and is suggested to represent a setback on women's progress in the society (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 448).

Additionally, the beauty standards, that are reflected in the analyzed advertisements, reinforce the pressure of women to stay young. Women are linked to the use of cosmetics or are associated with shopping and fashion, stereotypes that enhance traditional images about female hobbies and interests (Plakoyiannaki et al. 2008, p. 104). When mature women are presented in the dataset, they are mostly associated with the effort to stay young, and consequently, confident and beautiful. In fact, most women were young and white, indicating an exclusivity of the target audience. Even though, Greece is no longer considered as homogenous as in the past, the representation of refugee women, mixed-race women, women of African descent, of all ages, sizes and sexual orientation is still absent, proving again the slow evolution of the advertising industry (Tsaliki, 2024, p. 8).

Since the advertisements analyzed have been produced after the emergence of the Greek #Metoo movement, it was expected that a number of them would be promoting

female empowerment and strength. According to Tsaliki (2024, p. 2), after the rise of the Greek #MeToo movement, a culture of confidence and resilience had gradually begun to rise, as an emersion of the female empowerment narratives. Indeed, the study found that a large number of advertisements aligns with the values of the movement and presents female characters, that are united and advocate for equal representation and opportunities, particularly in the work field. Most narratives choose to portray women as multidimensional, assigning them roles like entrepreneurs and successful professionals, through the promotion of values like gender equality, solidarity and empowerment, suggesting a progressive turn in branding strategies, but also in societal beliefs. Campaigns and brands tend to showcase female strength and resilience, while also showing their understanding and recognition of gender inequality and gender discrimination in the Greek society.

Such depiction suggests a marked increase in femvertising and narratives promoting female agency and empowerment, since the themes of agency and female empowerment were very prominent in the dataset. These examples suggest a broader use of the femvertising strategy and the participation of the Greek brands, in the shift of the global paradigm and the eventual social change (Varghese & Kumar, 2022, p. 454). The study revealed that in the majority of the advertisements, women are depicted as independent and multifaceted beings, through the projection of female autonomy, professional success and an effort of rejection of the deeply intergraded gender stereotypes.

However, a more critical view on the phenomenon could suggest that advertisers might attempt to exploit feminist arguments, in the promotion of the products, transforming the feminist movement into a trend (Pazarzi & Tsangaris, 2008, p. 44). Nevertheless, the true intentions behind the representation of women as independent and empowered, should be overshadowed by the fact that there has been a significant attempt to change the stereotypical advertising narrative of the past. According to Tsaliki (2024, p. 13), the rationale of the Greek #MeToo movement has reproduced discourse of self-confidence, to a point where such messages have become part of the daily vocabulary. In connection to her findings, the reoccurrence of the theme of female empowerment in the present study indicates the influence the movement had, on the content of the advertisements, and suggests the pressure the media felt, to adhere to the demanded changes of the movement.

On another note, the Greek advertising field has shown in the past, the tendency to use its platform and messaging to react to contemporary social issues, such as the refugee crisis in 2015, or the climate change in 2020, with the Skip advertisement and Lidl's campaign, respectively (Lekakis, 2023, p. 295). The present study found that, after the #MeToo movement and the rise of femicides in Greece, brands have been more vocal about abuse against women. The theme of victimization, especially concerning violence against women and femicide, emerged prominently in many advertisements. The analyzed advertisements aimed at informing and protecting women from becoming victims of abuse, through the portrayal of real abusive relationships and narratives, where abuse is criticized, and awareness is risen. While this highlights the brands' empathy on a critical social issue and reflects increased awareness, it might also indicate that this theme is used for marketability reasons, since their production was confined in specific dates of the year. Therefore, in order to have consistent impact on society, such topics should be broadly discussed in the media, rather than being solely produced in honor of specific dates, like the International Woman's Day or the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women.

The campaigns analyzed in the present research primarily target women, educating them how to recognize the warning signs early, how to be cautious of those around them, and protect themselves from circumstances that might victimize them. Yet, there is a noticeable absence of messaging around toxic masculinity, or guidance on how men can avoid aggressive, manipulative, or abusive behaviors. No depiction or narrative includes educational content directed at men, who stereotypically and statistically are the perpetrators, nor does it address the deeper societal issues that contribute to the victimization of women. On the contrary, male characters are usually in executive positions or in positions of power, as it has also been found in the past (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014c, p. 46). Such one-sided confrontation of the issue suggests a superficial effort to challenge the societal norms and deeply rooted beliefs of the Greek society. As a result, the majority of the advertisements analyzed, reinforce the patriarchal idea of women as the weaker sex and in need of protection, a stereotype that perpetuates the Greek society from the past (Pazarzi & Tsangaris, 2008, p. 42).

Therefore, while the theme of victimization plays an important role in raising awareness and educating the public, it also may be employed as a form of commercial identity. Such depiction reinforces the superficial approach of the issue, rather than addressing the deeper structural and societal causes of the problem. This approach

might stem from the Greek society's belief, that women need to protect themselves, rather than men take accountability for their actions (Zotos & Tsihla, 2014a, p. 451). This, subconsciously, puts the burden of safety on women and suggests that prevention is a woman's responsibility, instead of confronting the fact that, the deeper societal origins of gender abuse lay in the preservation of the outdated gender power dynamics (Goodchild, 2016, p. 234). Therefore, Greek society may still be unwilling to face and challenge traditional power dynamics, by sharing the accountability of the phenomenon, equally to both genders.

Overall, the study contributes to the literature by offering a post #MeToo movement lens on the portrayal of women in Greek advertising. The findings of this research reinforce past results on the topic, but also contribute to a more niche and up to date scope of the phenomenon. The results suggest that there has been a significant effort of embracing female empowerment, after the rise of the Greek #MeToo movement, whether that is due to sincere transformation of the representation of women in advertisements or just a trend. In addition, there is an important attempt at educating on the topic of gender violence, even though, it is suggested that the target of the advertisements is primarily women. Such one-sided effort can be considered progressive, yet a multifaceted approach is needed to achieve a concrete societal transformation of the phenomenon (Goodchild, 2016, p. 235). Finally, the prevalence of traditional stereotypes of women and their prominent depiction as mothers and wives, with an emphasis on their sexuality, beauty and youth, suggest that the Greek society still holds systemic and sociocultural barriers, that resist the needed transformation, both from within and in the advertising industry.

## **5.1 Limitations**

Even though the research has tried to be as academically and scientifically accurate, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the issue of representativeness must be highlighted. Although, advertisements were selected from a large range of advertising companies in Greece, it is still possible that the sample is not fully representative of the broader advertising Greek landscape. The timeframe to conduct this research was limited, in order to include every advertising production created between March 2021 and May 2025. Therefore, the dataset probably could have

been broader, yet the selection of the advertisements is considered to be adequate for the needs of this research.

Another limitation lies in the subjective nature of the advertisement selection. The process of choosing advertisements based on specific criteria can introduce bias, consciously or unconsciously, which may influence the sample and the subsequent analysis. In addition, qualitative analysis and in particular thematic analysis lays in the researcher's positionality, as it was discussed in the ethical considerations' section, which implies the possible subjectiveness of the analysis.

Lastly, the absence of audience reception data does not allow for insight on how the audience perceived or interpreted the advertisements, meaning that the results were based only on visual and textual signs, and did not take into consideration other aspects that might have impacted the advertisements' production (e.g. the advertised product, the target audience, seasonality etc.).

## **5.2 Future Academic research**

Future academic research could focus on a comparative analysis of the advertising content before and after the emergence of the Greek #MeToo movement, in order to provide a broader understanding of shifts in themes and narratives. This would help determine whether the movement had a tangible impact on advertising discourse and the female portrayals. Additionally, further research into the application of femvertising techniques across various brands could offer interesting insights. Such analysis could explore whether advertisements targeting female consumers adopt more feminist discourse to maintain customer satisfaction, and whether advertisements directed at male consumers also employ inclusive language, that positions women as equals or stay loyal to the patriarchal female representations.

It would also be insightful, for a comparative research between the female and male depiction in Greek advertisements, with a wider dataset, to be conducted. This scientific approach could lead to the exposure of further stereotypes that are hidden in the contemporary Greek advertising landscape. Such exploration could also be combined with the further analysis of digital trends, such as the woke and cancel culture, and the level of pressure they put on brands and their advertising campaigns.

Another possible direction for future research would be the examination of consumer responses to advertisements, with the aim of assessing whether audiences are

able to identify the gender stereotypes being reinforced, or whether such portrayals remain unnoticed. In relation to this, it would also be insightful to explore further consumer behavior, particularly whether individuals are more inclined to support brands that engage in social advocacy, or if such efforts are overlooked. On that note, there could be a comparative study on whether international brands tend to include more progressive and inclusive content, compared to Greek brands that might resist change. This scientific approach could explore further the issue of stagnation that has been deeply rooted in the Greek society. In conclusion, the topic of gender representation in the media, along with its bidirectional bond with society, will be a timeless academic and scientific point of interest, since the media, society and the power dynamics of the gender will keep expanding and transforming.

## Reference List

- Aiello, G., & Parry, K. (2020). *Visual communication: Understanding images in Media Culture*. Sage Academic Book.
- Alhojailan, M. I. (2012). Thematic analysis: a critical review of its process and evaluation. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 39-47.
- Arumugam, T., Latha Lavanya, B., Karthik, V., Velusamy, K., Kommuri, U. K., & Panneerselvam, D. (2022). Portraying women in advertisements: An analogy between past and present. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 81(1), 207-223.
- Barthes, R. (1979). *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*. University of California Press.
- Bartholomew, M. (2010). Advertising and social identity. *Buffalo Law Review*, 58, 931-976.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Berry, M., & Chenoweth, E. (2018). Who Made the Women's March?. In Meyer, D. S. & Tarrow, S. (Eds.), *The resistance: The dawn of the anti-Trump opposition movement* (pp.75-89). Oxford University Press.
- Bellet, C. S., Dubois, D., & Godart, F. (2025). Do consumers respond to social movements? Evidence from gender-stereotypical purchases after #MeToo. *Management Science*, 71(6), 1-62.  
<https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2022.02352>
- Brennen, B. S. (2021). *Qualitative research methods for media studies*. Routledge.
- Bronstein, C. (2005). Representing the third wave: Mainstream print media framing of a new feminist movement. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82(4), 783-803.
- Bouzida, F. (2014, September 8-10). The semiology analysis in media studies: Roland Barthes Approach. In *Proceedings of SOCIOINT14-International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities* (pp. 1001-1007). Istanbul, Turkey.  
[https://www.ocerints.org/Socioint14\\_e-publication/papers/293.pdf](https://www.ocerints.org/Socioint14_e-publication/papers/293.pdf)
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Sage.

- Budd, M., Craig, S., & Steinman, C. M. (1999). *Consuming environments: Television and commercial culture*. Rutgers University Press.
- Campbell, N. (2014). The signs and semiotics of advertising. In E. Bell, S. Warren, & J. Schroeder (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to visual organization* (pp. 130-145). Routledge.
- Cochrane, K. (2017, March 6). ‘Something’s happening ...’ How the Women’s March inspired a new era of resistance. *The Guardian*.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/06/somethings-happening-how-the-womens-march-inspired-a-new-era-of-resistance>
- Collins, R. (2011). Content analysis of gender roles in media: Where are we now and where should we go? *Sex Roles*, 64(3), 290–298. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00241-3>
- Connolly, J. H., & Phillips, I. W. (2002). Semiotics and the theoretical foundations of multimedia. *Semiotica*, 141(1-4), 169-184.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2002.052>
- Demestiha, E., Karadimou, M., Daktylidi, M., & Gouliermi, T. (2024). I thesi tis ginaikas me to perasma ton chronon [The woman’s place through the pass of time]. *Open Schools Journal for Open Science*, 7(1), 1-4. DOI:  
<https://doi.org/10.12681/osj.36478>
- Direction Business Reports (2022). [https://direction.gr/diafimistikes\\_22vs21.jpg](https://direction.gr/diafimistikes_22vs21.jpg)
- Fajula, A., Barbeito, M., Barrio, E., Enrique, A. M., & Perona, J. J. (2021). Feminist stereotypes and women’s roles in spanish radio ads. *Media and Communication*, 9(2), 39-51. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i2.3762>
- Fairbairn, J. (2020). Before #MeToo: Violence against women social media work, bystander intervention, and social change. *Societies*, 10(3), 1-21.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/soc10030051>
- Furnham, A., & Lay, A. (2019). The universality of the portrayal of gender in television advertisements: A review of the studies this century. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 8(2), 109-124.
- Gambino, L., (2017, December 29). Women’s march and #MeToo leaders see progress – but ‘we’re in a hell of a fight’. *The Guardian*.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/29/womens-march-tamika-mallory-feminism-2017>

- Gillis, S., Howie, G., & Munford, R. (Eds.). (2004). *Third wave feminism*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gomez-Borquez, C. L., Török, A., Centeno-Velázquez, E., & Malota, E. (2024). Female stereotypes and female empowerment in advertising: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 48(2), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.13010>
- Gomez-Mejia, G. (2020). “Fail, Clickbait, Cringe, Cancel, Woke”: Vernacular Criticisms of Digital Advertising in Social Media Platforms. In G. Meiselwitz (Ed.), *Social Computing and Social Media. Participation, User Experience, Consumer Experience, and Applications of Social Computing* (pp. 309-324). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49576-3\\_23](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49576-3_23)
- Goodchild, C. (2016). Why Does He Abuse? Why Does She Stay? Social and Cultural Roots of Domestic Abuse. In J. Scutt (Ed.), *Women, law and culture: Conformity, contradiction and conflict* (pp.221-238). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grau, S. L., & Zotos, Y. C. (2018). Gender stereotypes in advertising: a review of current research. , *International Journal of Advertising*, 35 (5), 761-770. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1203556>
- Guetterman T.C. (2015). Descriptions of sampling practices within five approaches to qualitative. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16(2), 1-25.
- Hall, S. (1997). The spectacle of the other. In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 223-290). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Harkiolakis, T. (2023, July 13-17). *Challenging the Social Order of a Patriarchy Through Social Media Activism: The Case of the Greek #MeToo Movement* [Conference Presentation]. The European Conference on Arts & Humanities, The International Academic Forum, London, U.K. DOI: [10.22492/issn.2188-1111.2023.11](https://doi.org/10.22492/issn.2188-1111.2023.11)
- Hayko, G. (2010). Effects of advertising on society: A literary review. *Hohonu*, 8, 79-82.
- Hong, L., & L. Zhang (2021, May 19). Measuring the Impact of #MeToo on Gender Equity in Hollywood. *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, Diversity and Inclusion*.
- Kakroda, N., & Sole, N. A. (2023). Through the lens of feminism: Concept, origin, and the four waves. *Journal of Political Science*, 9(2), 87-94.

- Karakasi, M. V., Voultzos, P., Fotou, E., Nikolaidis, I., Kyriakou, M. S., Markopoulou, M., Douzenis, A., & Pavlidis, P. (2023). Emerging trends in domestic homicide/femicide in Greece over the period 2010–2021. *Medicine, Science and the Law*, 63(2), 120-131.
- Kilbourne, J. (1999). *Deadly persuasion: Why women and girls must fight the addictive power of advertising*. The Free Press.
- Kogiou, A. (2025). The effects of the Greek ‘MeToo’ movement on representations of femicide in the news media and social media. *Envisioning the Future of Communication*, 2(1), 509-522.
- Kouroutsidou, M., & Kakarouna, S. M. (2021). The phenomenon of femicide and the Greek experience. *European journal of humanities and social sciences*, 1(5), 23-26.
- Kreicbergs, T. (2023). The Analysis of Masculinity in Advertising: A Qualitative Study Based on Consumer Perceptions. *Economics and Business*, 37, 135-151.
- Kyriakou, C., Papaioannou, T., & Komodromos, M. (2023). Online criticism and cancel culture in digital marketing: a case study of audience perceptions of brand cancellation. *International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, 15(4), 412-427.
- Leiser, S., & Romilla, S. (2019, June 8-14). *Social media and social movements: a case of women’s March* [Conference presentation]. In J. vom Brocke, S. Gregor, & O. Muller (Eds.), 27th European Conference on Information Systems – Information Systems for a Sharing Society, ECIS 2919, Stockholm & Uppsala, Sweden. [https://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2019\\_rp/2/](https://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2019_rp/2/)
- Leiss, W., Kline, S., & Jhally, S. (1990). *Social Communication in Advertising: Persons, Products & Images of Well-being*. Psychology Press.
- Lekakis, E. J. (2023). When advertising takes a stand: Market activism, gender, and social change in Greece. In E. West & M. P. Mc Allister (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Advertising and Promotional Culture* (pp. 289-303). Routledge.
- Levy, R. E., & Mattsson, M. (2023). The effects of social movements: Evidence from #MeToo. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3496903>
- Lee, M., & Murdie, A. (2021). The global diffusion of the #MeToo movement. *Politics & Gender*, 17(4), 827-855. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X20000148>

- Lupia, A., & Elman, C. (2014). Openness in Political Science: Data access and research transparency. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 47(1), 19–42. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096513001716>
- Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). Analysing semiotic choices: words and images. In D. Machin & A. Mayr (Eds.), *How to do critical discourse analysis. A multimodal introduction* (pp. 49-56). Sage Publications.
- Mahmood, H., Arif, S., Tariq, R., & Yazdani, N. Y. (2022). Semiotic approach towards analyzing TV advertisements: A critical discourse analysis. *International Journal of Management Research and Emerging Sciences*, 12(2), 102-133.
- Matysiak, A. (2024). “How Dirty Boys Get Clean”– on sexual objectification of women in advertising before and after #metoo era. *Językoznawstwo*, 20(1), 235-256.
- Mayring, P. (2015). Qualitative content analysis: Theoretical background and procedures. In A. Bikner-Ahsbals, C. Knipping, N. Presmeg (Eds.), *Approaches to qualitative research in mathematics education: Examples of methodology and methods* (pp. 365-380). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9181-6\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9181-6_13)
- McDonald, R. E., Laverie, D. A., & Manis, K. T. (2021). The interplay between advertising and society: an historical analysis. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 41(4), 585-609.
- Mick, D. G., Burroughs, J. E., Hetzel, P., & Brannen, M. Y. (2004). Pursuing the meaning of meaning in the commercial world: An international review of marketing and consumer research founded on semiotics. *Semiotica*, 152(1-4), 1-74.
- Middleton, K., & Turnbull, S. (2021). How advertising got ‘woke’: The institutional role of advertising in the emergence of gender progressive market logics and practices. *Marketing Theory*, 21(4), 561-578.
- Morris T. (2006). *Social Work Research Methods: Four Alternative Paradigms*. Thousand Oaks Sage.
- Nichols, A. M. (2021). Converting the Masses: Advertising Nature and Gender in the Post #MeToo Movement Era. *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture*, 15(1), 83-113.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42(5), 533-544.

- Papanikolopoulos, D. (2025). Contentious millennials and generational dimensions in contemporary social movements in Greece. *Social Movement Studies*, 24(2), 182-198.
- Pardun, C. J. (Ed.). (2013). *Advertising and society: An introduction*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.
- Pazarzi, N., E., & Tsangaris, M. (2008). Constructing women's image in TV commercials: The Greek case. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 15(1), 29-50.
- Plakoyiannaki, E., & Zotos, Y. (2009). Female role stereotypes in print advertising: Identifying associations with magazine and product categories. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(11/12), 1411-1434.
- Plakoyiannaki, E., Mathioudaki, K., Dimitratos, P., & Zotos, Y. (2008). Images of women in online advertisements of global products: Does sexism exist?. *Journal of business ethics*, 83(1), 101-112.
- Pollay, R. W. (1986). The distorted mirror: Reflections on the unintended consequences of advertising. *Journal of marketing*, 50(2), 18-36.
- Pollay, R. W. (1987). On the value of reflections on the values in "The Distorted Mirror". *Journal of Marketing*, 51(3), 104-110.
- Reese, S. D., Gandy, J., & Grant, A. E. (2001). Prologue - Framing public life: A bridging model for media research. In S. D. Reese, J. Gandy, & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life* (pp. 23-48). Routledge.
- Romniopoulou, D., & Panopoulos, A. (2023, July 12-14). Gender and advertising: a study of depictions and stereotypes. In Boutsouki, C. (Ed.), *11th International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues* (pp.22-28). E-book. <https://ktisis.cut.ac.cy/bitstream/20.500.14279/31109/1/ICCM-2023-Conference-Proceedings.pdf>
- Schneider, K. C., & Schneider, S. B. (1979). Trends in sex roles in television commercials. *Journal of marketing*, 43(3), 79-84.
- Schreier, M. (2014). Qualitative content analysis in practice. in Flick, U. (Ed.), *the SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, (pp. 1-24). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446282243>
- Slakoff, D. C., Aujla, W., & PenzeyMoog, E. (2020). The role of service providers, technology, and mass media when home isn't safe for intimate partner violence

- victims: best practices and recommendations in the era of CoViD-19 and beyond. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 49(8), 2779-2788.
- Smith, D. S., Boag, L., Keegan, C., & Butler-Warke, A. (2023). Land of Woke and Glory? The Conceptualisation and Framing of “Wokeness” in UK Media and Public Discourses. *Javnost - The Public*, 30(4), 513-533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2023.2273656>
- Sobande, F. (2020). Woke-washing: “intersectional” femvertising and branding “woke” bravery. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54(11), 2723-2745. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0134>
- Soni, P. (2020). The portrayal of women in advertising. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*, 10(4), 20-29.
- Songur, A., & Yaman, D. (2024). The Concept of Gender and Representation of Women in Advertisements. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 24(1), 303-326.
- Stavrianea, A., Kamenidou, I., Kanaouti, S., & Theodosis, A. (2021). Stereotypes and gender-neutral advertising: perceptions of the generation Z and Y cohorts. *Asia Pacific Journal of Advanced Business and Social Studies*, 7(1), 14-23.
- Steiner, L. (2014). Feminist media theory. In R. S. Fortner, & P. M. Fackler, (Eds.) *The handbook of media and mass communication theory* (pp. 359-379). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Stubbs-Richardson, M., Gilbreath, S., Paul, M., & Reid, A. (2024). It’s a global #MeToo: A cross-national comparison of social change associated with the movement. *Feminist Media Studies*, 24(6), 1330-1349.
- Theodoridis, P. K., Kyrousi, A. G., Zotou, A. Y., & Panigyrakis, G. G. (2013). Male and female attitudes towards stereotypical advertisements: a paired country investigation. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 18(1), 135-160.
- Tripathi, S., Bansal, An., & Bansal, Am., (2022). Sociocultural changes and portrayal of women in advertisements: A temporal investigation across product categories, *Journal of Business Research*, 153(C), 216-227.
- Tsaliki, L. (2024). ‘Be confident’: the discourse of ‘resilience’ and ‘confidence’ in Greece. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2024.2439313>.

- Varghese, N., & Kumar, N. (2022). Feminism in advertising: Irony or revolution? A critical review of femvertising. *Feminist Media Studies*, 22(2), 441-459  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1825510>
- Vergopoulou, S. S. (2022). Pseudo-wellness, dead ends, and the struggle for equality: Exploring gender and wellness in original and translated commercials. *Ex-Centric Narratives: Journal of Anglophone Literature, Culture and Media*, 6, 168-187.
- Vredenburg, J., Kapitan, S., Spry, A., & Kemper, J. A. (2020). Brands taking a stand: Authentic brand activism or woke washing?. *Journal of public policy & marketing*, 39(4), 444-460.
- Wilson-Barnao, C., Bevan, A., & Lincoln, R. (2021). Women's bodies and the evolution of anti-rape technologies: From the hoop skirt to the smart frock. *Body & Society*, 27(4), 30-54.
- Zhang, J., Sun, C., & Hu, Y. (2022). Representing victims and victimizers: An analysis of #MeToo movement related reports. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 90, 1-7.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2021.102553>
- Yin, R.Y. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. The Guilford Press.
- Zotos, Y. C., & Tsihla, E. (2014a). Female stereotypes in print advertising: a retrospective analysis. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, 148, 446-454.
- Zotos, Y. C., & Tsihla, E. (2014b). Female portrayals in advertising past research, new directions. *International Journal on Strategic Innovative Marketing*, 1, 9-26.
- Zotos, Y. C., & Tsihla, E. (2014c). Snapshots of men and women in interaction: An investigation of stereotypes in print advertisement relationship portrayals. *Journal of Euromarketing*, 23(3), 35-58.

## Appendix A

### Appendix A1: List of Advertisements with duration and access links

	<b>Advertisement</b>	<b>Duration (sec)</b>	<b>Access link</b>
<b>1</b>	Volton - Lights Off	55	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEhbh_VtOml">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEhbh_VtOml</a>
<b>2</b>	Vodafone - Women in Business	76	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuMm2rLZfPc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuMm2rLZfPc</a>
<b>3</b>	AB Vasilopoulos - What are we going to eat today?	65	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=545399153154613">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=545399153154613</a>
<b>4</b>	Dodoni - Podosfairio	31	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coA2XIcPyVo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coA2XIcPyVo</a>
<b>5</b>	Novartis	64	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoRc1NL8L48">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoRc1NL8L48</a>
<b>6</b>	NRG - Incharge	50	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3piWa7y874">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3piWa7y874</a>
<b>7</b>	Green Cola - The taste of victory	51	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAadqEbXgQU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vAadqEbXgQU</a>
<b>8</b>	P&G - Hair Has No Gender	75	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/GreyAthens/videos/1314808132357354/">https://www.facebook.com/GreyAthens/videos/1314808132357354/</a>
<b>9</b>	Hellmann - The Lawyer	72	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEHCF15x6aE&amp;t=10s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEHCF15x6aE&amp;t=10s</a>
<b>10</b>	Ideal Holdings	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8OHMWwFVpY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8OHMWwFVpY</a>
<b>11</b>	Lacta - Dont ever leave me	242	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlzEfsAOct8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlzEfsAOct8</a>
<b>12</b>	Aegean - I have been there	242	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHDPTYL87Dc&amp;t=5s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHDPTYL87Dc&amp;t=5s</a>
<b>13</b>	Aegean - Girlfriend	36	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M19SOyTY30">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M19SOyTY30</a>
<b>14</b>	Aegean - Mom	38	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StHDoY5A18U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StHDoY5A18U</a>
<b>15</b>	Vodafone Foundation	67	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RqyucMlsCk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RqyucMlsCk</a>
<b>16</b>	Brava - The Coach	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ff_tE1dB-s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Ff_tE1dB-s</a>
<b>17</b>	Vichy - Liftactiv	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcaUbtPbLaI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcaUbtPbLaI</a>
<b>18</b>	Dei-Energo	14	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA_0LDvOrjY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA_0LDvOrjY</a>
<b>19</b>	Agrino - The Right Rice	26	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEXIsAa7TZM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEXIsAa7TZM</a>
<b>20</b>	Walk of Change	85	<a href="https://www.ddb.gr/work/dei-walk-of-change/">https://www.ddb.gr/work/dei-walk-of-change/</a>
<b>21</b>	Maggi - Against Food Waste	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4g7kePcIzg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4g7kePcIzg</a>
<b>22</b>	Dettol - Kids will be kids	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iezmW7_8NDo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iezmW7_8NDo</a>
<b>23</b>	InCharge 2	49	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6VE0CVCnB8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6VE0CVCnB8</a>
<b>24</b>	EEDA - Judge Equally	41	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2NcH_dLfg4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2NcH_dLfg4</a>
<b>25</b>	Paxamas - Its not paximadi	132	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZextv2PEr4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZextv2PEr4</a>
<b>26</b>	Novibet - Giant Heart	20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWtQdb05Rp4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWtQdb05Rp4</a>
<b>27</b>	Skip - End the Biiiip	50	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctn0JIYOXDw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctn0JIYOXDw</a>
<b>28</b>	DUO - Not Just A Story	101	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsYrJgU0S50">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsYrJgU0S50</a>
<b>29</b>	DUO - Unlock Pleasure	230	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktksTaTdV8Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktksTaTdV8Q</a>

20	Uni-pharma - 60 years	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e01g4Rv4ik">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3e01g4Rv4ik</a>
31	Barbastathis - Let's Cook	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbcJRLIISz4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbcJRLIISz4</a>
32	P&G - Strong Me	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byRKrgxjh04">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byRKrgxjh04</a>
33	Pantene - The Power of Hair	80	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EK5o0bdKek">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EK5o0bdKek</a>
34	Pantene - Offer Strength	20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpUFXsEf77c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpUFXsEf77c</a>
35	Vichy - Neovadiol	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7x19kjPiw8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7x19kjPiw8</a>
36	Ouzo Plomariou - Because there is sun	50	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O37DLJf6W-Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O37DLJf6W-Y</a>
37	Celestino - Eshop	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsEGzDe5eCY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsEGzDe5eCY</a>
38	Christian Artesio - Miracle Water	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsF3JscWkuI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsF3JscWkuI</a>
39	Papadopoulou - Vicky and the Markers	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtHcvrnVPkg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtHcvrnVPkg</a>
40	Calda Energy - AERMEC	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFMCqPrNmU8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFMCqPrNmU8</a>
41	Volkswagen - Hugs	50	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NfVUo8Xm18">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NfVUo8Xm18</a>
42	Kallimanis Tuna - Shakes the Water	20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDuSRil6-q0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDuSRil6-q0</a>
43	Kyknos - The Best Twist	25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sTy3syeLC8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sTy3syeLC8</a>
44	Grigoris - Don't Worry	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Gu-im94Y9c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Gu-im94Y9c</a>
45	Delta - And You Find Job	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9xevENxc5Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9xevENxc5Q</a>
46	My Market - Easter Contest	35	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twU9WDkllIc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twU9WDkllIc</a>
47	Adoro - Creamy Gouda	45	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8V8YGc-wdQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8V8YGc-wdQ</a>
48	Optima - Planteese	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zjpM91Ozu8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zjpM91Ozu8</a>
49	Feta Epiros - Epiropita	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj0Dqh4lXdA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj0Dqh4lXdA</a>
50	Epiros - Trigonakia	35	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY5mOrOm5HA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY5mOrOm5HA</a>
51	Apostolou - Talagani	25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r54lgiEYas">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r54lgiEYas</a>
52	Jumbo - Easter 2025	37	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJlYSBbtRlo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJlYSBbtRlo</a>
53	Amaretti - Share the Moment	25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YlWYjegKio">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YlWYjegKio</a>
64	Newjobs.gr - Launch	32	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx8P9DWeUKY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx8P9DWeUKY</a>
55	ION Break - Dubai	20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afMnCEchbjw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afMnCEchbjw</a>
56	ION Almond - New Generation	20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NvPvB_Tgqs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NvPvB_Tgqs</a>
57	ION Milk and Almond	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzoYEEMnZ4U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzoYEEMnZ4U</a>
58	Mevgal - 75 Years	25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBK6kLr1boQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBK6kLr1boQ</a>
59	Lavdas - Zero	33	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyL97D48s2k">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyL97D48s2k</a>
60	Power Health - Inalia	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oI2XUgLMurE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oI2XUgLMurE</a>
61	Lavdas - Zero Cinnamon	25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkC4uK0zLyU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkC4uK0zLyU</a>
62	ION - Sokofreta	30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ-dPHDz9Sw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ-dPHDz9Sw</a>
63	Delta - Grandma's Recipe	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8_xg2_0Aj4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8_xg2_0Aj4</a>
64	ION - Derby	35	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNAXDaoKsc8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNAXDaoKsc8</a>

65	Deree - We've Got Your Back	40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5Nv_ly4f_k">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5Nv_ly4f_k</a>
66	Elite	25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E08QGxih5L4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E08QGxih5L4</a>
67	Alpha Bank - Quick Loan	35	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/AlphaBankPage/videos/myalpha-quick-loan/1091391681580386/?locale=ms_MY">https://www.facebook.com/AlphaBankPage/videos/myalpha-quick-loan/1091391681580386/?locale=ms_MY</a>
67	Dove - The Code	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTYyWz8yeSI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTYyWz8yeSI</a>
68	Dove - Toxic Advice Escape Room	100	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fejzgP9T3VI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fejzgP9T3VI</a>
70	Reverse selfie Dove	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD4qpz0YVIs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD4qpz0YVIs</a>
71	What happened to Care Dove	170	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jfyq-Z1iP00&amp;t=12s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jfyq-Z1iP00&amp;t=12s</a>
72	For those who don't stop to dream Protergia	165	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41NBpYvGNDw&amp;t=44s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41NBpYvGNDw&amp;t=44s</a>
73	Equall Piraeus	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-UTRHMIYeE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-UTRHMIYeE</a>
74	Program My Home Piraeus	71	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDi3u26FIDI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDi3u26FIDI</a>
75	Equall-O Piraeus Bank	85	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKjMNb921fc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKjMNb921fc</a>
76	Lengths of Strength Pantene	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmJJtIVbyo8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmJJtIVbyo8</a>
77	SexEd Girl Durex	90	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv1ZMEltz5w">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv1ZMEltz5w</a>
78	Everything in broad light Durex	270	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IPbujBe6Z8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IPbujBe6Z8</a>
79	Its not just a toast its love Karamolegos	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjI4KLCIW-U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjI4KLCIW-U</a>
80	Advanced Care Dove	20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF-g1MylUuo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF-g1MylUuo</a>
81	F1 Piraeus & Visa	80	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PD6vJ0M0CeM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PD6vJ0M0CeM</a>
82	Nothing is impossible Nympe	64	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxLD8RbMbYA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxLD8RbMbYA</a>
83	Unlimited story Sephora	130	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH6kvvVzMfk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH6kvvVzMfk</a>
84	It's in the family Papadopoulou	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4Mri_B4Kcc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4Mri_B4Kcc</a>
85	Home connect Cosmote	100	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MLAZ0SmoNo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MLAZ0SmoNo</a>
86	Myrto Vodafone	50	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc0Bg0Ub4q8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc0Bg0Ub4q8</a>
87	Your business can Vodafone	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6RxpdlA1Re">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6RxpdlA1Re</a>
88	World Women's Day Vodafone	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnnZc9gyFQs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnnZc9gyFQs</a>
89	The great moment for education Eurobank	120	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFMCqPrNmU8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFMCqPrNmU8</a>
90	Look at the love Lacta	110	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJvr_BGmzb0&amp;list=RDsJvr_BGmzb0&amp;start_radio=1">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJvr_BGmzb0&amp;list=RDsJvr_BGmzb0&amp;start_radio=1</a>
91	True connection Cosmote	135	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bxhhnyi_5CM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bxhhnyi_5CM</a>
92	Women in Logistics My market	77	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPsrxMipqXo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPsrxMipqXo</a>

93	2 Minutes of fame Cosmote	185	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVflnTrQby8&amp;t=66s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVflnTrQby8&amp;t=66s</a>
94	Sky express-In with the new	124	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nyo6vJ1ZJAc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nyo6vJ1ZJAc</a>
95	Refresh Coach Mentos	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZM1dTUovQAE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZM1dTUovQAE</a>
96	One with the culture one with the future Dei	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLWYKS4dJzM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLWYKS4dJzM</a>
97	myHome Enter Dei	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wA-e9rv8mw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wA-e9rv8mw</a>
98	However is your morning like start with Quaker!	60	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hUeMTP1be0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hUeMTP1be0</a>
99	Piraeus Kids Piraeus	129	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s73NQpdnRNw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s73NQpdnRNw</a>
100	DEI-My home enter	120	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wA-e9rv8mw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wA-e9rv8mw</a>

### Appendix A2: Theoretical Framework Summary

Theory / Concept	Key Meaning / Contribution
Advertising as Mirror vs. Mold	Advertising both reflects (mirror) and shapes (mold) societal values. It reinforces cultural norms while also responding to social change (Pollay 1986;1987; Grau & Zotos, 2018).
Feminist Media Theory	Applies feminist critique to media production, representation, and audience reception, focusing on gender inequality in media processes (Steiner, 2014).
Femvertising	Advertising that promotes female empowerment and challenges gender stereotypes, though sometimes criticized for commodifying feminism (Varghese & Kumar, 2022).
Social Media and Brand Activism	Social media influences brands to appear socially conscious ('woke') while avoiding backlash ('cancel culture') (Gomez-Mejia, 2020; Sobande, 2020).
#MeToo Movement	A global movement against sexual harassment and assault; it inspired changes in media, advertising, and public discourse around gender power dynamics (Levy & Mattson, 2023).
Postfeminism	A phase where feminist ideas are embraced through individual empowerment and consumer choice rather than collective action (Gillis, 2004; Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024).
Bronstein's Feminist Media Framework	A tool to analyze how feminism is represented in media using frames like Demonization, Victimization, Agency, Goals & Rights, and Trivialization (Bronstein, 2005).
Sexualization and Objectification in Advertising	Ads often portray women as sexual objects, reinforcing gender inequality and beauty standards (Collins, 2011; Mahmood et al., 2022).
Intersectionality	Acknowledges overlapping systems of oppression and highlights how gender intersects with race, class, age, etc. in media representation (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024).

Greek Societal Gender Norms	Greek advertising often reflects entrenched patriarchal norms, portraying women in domestic and submissive roles (Lekakis, 2023; Theodoridis et al., 2013).
-----------------------------	---

### Appendix A3: Example of the Analytical Tool/Form

#### Semiotic, CDA, and Bronstein Framework Analysis Tables

| Advertisement Title: Don't ever leave me  
 | Brand / Product: Lacta  
 | Date of Production: 22/11/2021  
 | Platform / Medium (e.g., YouTube, TV): YouTube, TV  
 | Duration: 4:02 mins  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxXPltBr8Jg>

**Table 1: Semiotic Analysis (Micro, Mid, Meta Levels)**

Level	Description	Observations
<b>MicroLevel</b>	Analyze small visual elements: colors, lighting, vectors, forms, camera angles, typography, editing techniques	In the beginning: Soft colors, romantic aesthetic, film-cinematic angles, music allures us to a romantic film, 1:05: Shaky camera as the relationship starts to not feel so safe and romantic 1:26: Darker colors and tones, romance is over, <b>abuse</b> is starting to unveil 1:42: Dark colors, shadows, the romantic movie has turned into a thriller, camera angles show action and <b>fear</b> 2:18: Its night and dark, the light is gone
<b>Mid Level</b>	Focus on human features: body language, gestures, facial expressions, clothing, gender depiction, physical actions	In the beginning: A heterosexual couple in love, laughing, hugging, kissing, smiling to each other, wearing summer clothes, laying on the sand, his hand on her cheek holding it softly yet with a sense of power and authority 0:45: Both are helping to move stuff in, seems like a normal couple 1:05: He becomes more <b>aggressive</b> , she also is a bit angry, and reacts to his <b>controlling behavior</b> 1:12: He gets in her way, grabs her, stops her, first sign of his slight physical abuse 1:26: He grabs the phone off her hand, becomes more and more aggressive. <b>She reacts</b> , stands up, <b>starts to be scared of him</b> , 1:31-He throws a glass against the wall, near her, almost on her. She puts her hands on her face, <b>trying to protect herself</b> . He starts to chase her around the house to hit her, she manages to lock herself 1:42: It is obvious she is scared, hyper velating, crying, feeling trapped, in the room and also in her life, feeling there is no

way to escape him. He tries to push the door, showing his power over her  
 2:00: they are driving, he is behind the wheel, he grabs her face, makes her look at him and say “I want to leave you”, he then tries to nurture her and calm her down- “I will never let you leave me, NEVER”  
 2:18: He grabs her face, and tells her to shut up, he is controlling her physically now not only emotionally, he grabs her hair, she fight back, tries AGAIN to escape him  
 2:22: She opens the door of the car, he jumps over his seat, trying to catch her, she is free for a second  
 2:35: He gets to her, grabs her by the hair, drags her on the road, shows all his power he has over her  
 2:39: After a bit of fighting, he throws her off the cliff, he seems a bit distressed  
 2:40: She was murdered, by love-He didn’t let her to leave him

<b>Meta Level</b>	Look at the broader narrative or myth: what story is told, what ideology is supported, what values or morals are implied	Depiction of abusive relationship-the story of a femicide, female victim and male perpetrator: encouragement for other victims to escape, before its too late
-------------------	--	---

**Table 2: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

<b>Textual Feature</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Observations</b>
Lexical Choices	Word choices – are they loaded with value? What do they reveal about ideology or power?	I want you to be mine, only mine, No one will love you like I do: He makes it sound cute, but it is controlling and toxic, as if he has power over her, she is his property, reminding her that she only has him, We did everything together: no space for freedom Where do you think you are going? Are you lying? Don’t you understand they are trying to separate us? : Controlling behaviour starts to unveil, he gaslights her into thinking they-family and friends- are against them 2:18: SHUT UP , don’t cry, SHUT UP 2:22: Leave me: uses his words, try to escape him
Word Connotation	Emotional tone of the words – positive, negative, neutral?	In the beginning words in the scenario have dual dynamic, can sound both cute and positive but underneath hide a negative and controlling sense 1:12: His phrases have negative and toxic tone 1:36: Every time he came near me my heart would almost explode: Again dual tone could be seen as explosion from love or from fear

1:47: I told you I'm sorry I love you-turns into-Open, I'm going to break the door  
 2:00: I want to leave you: She tried to break up with him, she spoke up, she tried to escape  
 2:28: HELP  
 2:35: SHUT UP no one is listening to you why are you yelling

Overlexicalization	Repetition of similar words/phrases that stress a particular concept	He never left me alone-Never leave me-I couldn't see anyone but him/couldn't talk to anyone but him-I want to leave you-I will never let you leave me, NEVER-Leave me, leave me, leave me, : The concept of freedom-not only stay and be with him, but be his -as an object as a property, She begs him to leave her-irony form the first scen he says "Never leave me" now she begs him to Final words on the screen prove the dual meaning of everything: <b>Don't ever leave me... because I will hurt you</b>
Structural Opposition	Binary structures like strong/weak, active/passive, masculine/feminine	Man: Strong and controlling, angry  Woman: Weak and helpless, scared
Genre & Register	Style and format of the ad – formal/informal, authoritative/personal – what discourse is being produced or reinforced?	Formal, well made, feels like a short film  Feels personal as we hear the thoughts of the protagonist  Throughout the video it felt like a story, at the end the protagonist talks to the audience: I doesn't matter anymore, <b>What matter is what you are going to do, now that you still can-It is a calling to all the women that still live and have the chance to escape violent relationships, as long as they are still alive</b>
Intertextuality	Are references made to other texts, cultural narratives, or myths?	

**Table 3: Bronstein Framework**

Observations (From Table 1+2)	Frame Description	Bronstein Frame
YES	Portrayal of women using negative, vilifying language or imagery (e.g., 'bitches', 'radical', 'bad')	Demonization
NO	Focus on appearance, fashion, or traditional gender roles that reduce complexity	Personalization/Transformation
YES	References to feminism, activism, or political/social empowerment	Goals and Rights

YES	Presentation of women as helpless, harmed, or suffering	Victimization
YES-Resilience	Portrayal of women as powerful, independent, capable of choice and self-actualization	Agency

#### **Appendix A4: *Visual Semiotic Analysis (Micro, Mid, Meta Levels)***

<b>Level</b>	<b>Description / What to Look For</b>	<b>Observations</b>
Micro Level	Analyze small visual elements: colors, lighting, vectors, forms, camera angles, editing techniques	
Mid Level	Focus on human features: body language, gestures, facial expressions, clothing, gender depiction, physical actions	
Meta Level	Look at the broader narrative or myth: what story is told, what ideology is supported, what values or morals are implied	

#### **Appendix A5: *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)***

<b>Textual Feature</b>	<b>Description / What to Look For</b>	<b>Observations</b>
Lexical Choices	Word choices – are they loaded with value? What do they reveal about ideology or power?	
Word Connotation	Emotional tone of the words – positive, negative, neutral?	
Overlexicalization	Repetition of similar words/phrases that stress a particular concept	
Structural Opposition	Binary structures like strong/weak, active/passive, masculine/feminine	
Genre	Style and format of the ad – formal/informal, authoritative/personal – what discourse is being produced or reinforced?	

#### **Appendix A6: *Bronstein's Framework***

<b>Observations</b>	<b>Frame Description</b>	<b>Bronstein Frame</b>
	Portrayal of women using negative, vilifying language or imagery (e.g., 'bitches', 'radical', 'bad')	Demonization

Focus on appearance, fashion, or traditional gender roles that reduce complexity	Personalization/Transformation
References to feminism, activism, or political/social empowerment	Goals and Rights
Presentation of women as helpless, harmed, or suffering	Victimization
Portrayal of women as powerful, independent, capable of choice and self-actualization	Agency

## Appendix A7

**Table 4.1: Frequency of Bronstein's Frames in the present dataset**

Category	Yes Count (%)	No Count (%)	Yes/No Ratio
Demonization	3 (3.0%)	97 (66.0%)	3/97
Personalization/Transformation	75 (75.0%)	25(25.0%)	75/25
Victimization	13(13.0%)	87(36.0%)	13/87
Goals and Rights	62 (62.0%)	38 (38.0%)	62/38
Agency	86 (86.0%)	14 (14.0%)	86/14

## Appendix A8: Results of thematic analysis-Codebook

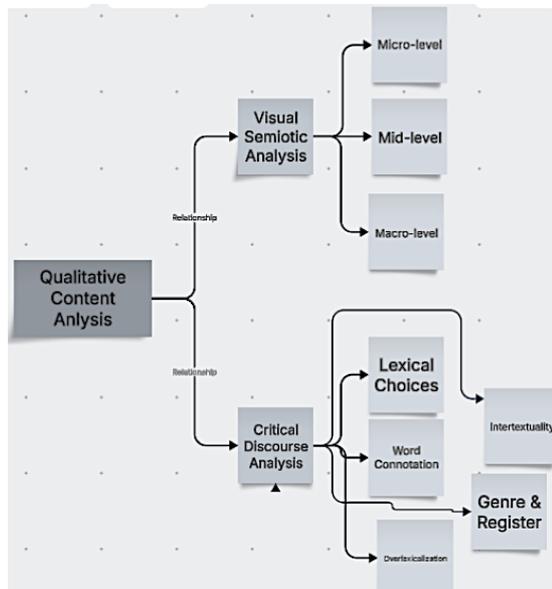
Theme	Category	Subcategory	Indicators / Codes
Gender stereotyping and Traditional Roles	Role Representation	-Women as caregivers -Men as authority figures - Gender-coded clothing and props	-Women in domestic environments-associated with providing food - Men depicted as mentors, decision-makers, or professionals (e.g., Brava Mustard, Ideal Holdings) -Women in aprons vs men in labcoats
Female Empowerment and challenged gender norms	Narrative of empowerment Women are seen in new roles	-Successful career - Discourse of strength and resilience -Central placement of female figures -Women as heroes, problem solvers, -Gender equality in at work -Reversed stereotypes	-Women as entrepreneurs, professionals, businesswomen -power, fight, lead, independence -women as protagonists, sharing personal stories -Female characters more educated than male -advocacy for equal rights and inclusion

			-Girls braver than boys, women in technology, businesswomen leading change
Sexualization of the female body and commodification of beauty	Gendered appeal Power dynamics Role limitation	-Sexual/romantic framing -Male gaze vs female passivity -Appearance focused	-seductive, sexuality, erotic undertones -association female value with youth, looks, weight,
Victimization, yet resilience	Physical and Psychological abuse  Escaping- Resilience- restarting life	-Domestic and work abuse -Freeing, unity, starting again	-abuse, anxiety, fear -attempts to fight back, seek help, escape  -optimistic and united-women can help each other

## Appendix B Figures' Summary

**Figure 3.1.1**

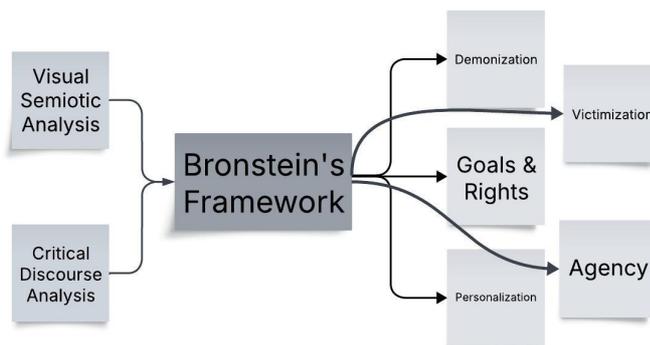
*First step of methodology*



Note. Analysis of the videos' signs through Visual Semiotic analysis and Critical Discourse analysis

**Figure 3.1.2**

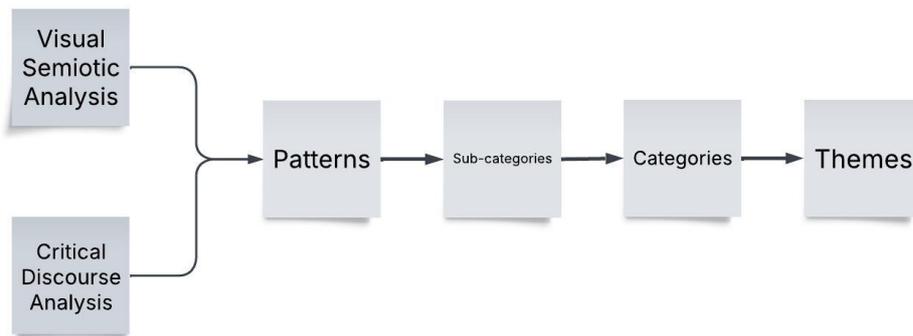
*Second step of methodology*



Note. Deductive Thematic analysis process with Bronstein's Framework

**Figure 3.1.3**

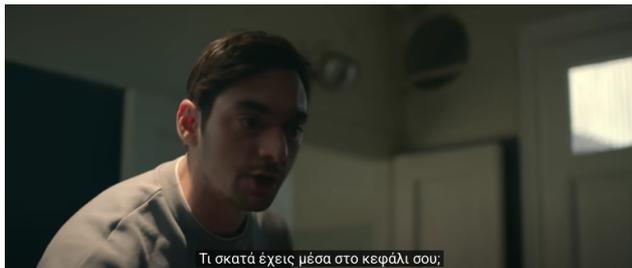
*Third step of methodology*



Note. Inductive Thematic analysis process, creation of the codebook and final themes

**Figure 4.1.1**

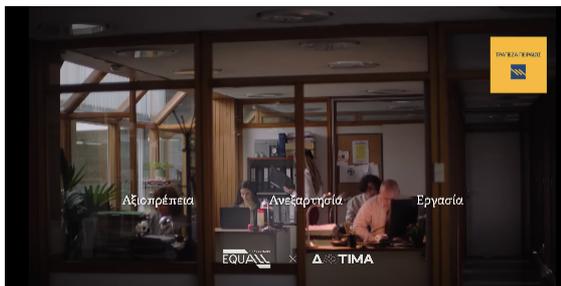
*LACTA Greece 2021 campaign*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIzEfsAOct8>

**Figure 4.1.2**

*Piraeus Bank EQUAL Campaign, 2023*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-UTRHMIYeE>

**Figure 4.1.3**

*Lavdas Zero Cinnamon and Vanilla 2024 campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkC4uK0zLyU>

**Figure 4.1.4**

*Sky Express Summer 2023 campaign*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nyo6vJ1ZJAc>

**Figure 4.1.5**

*LACTA Greece 2021 campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlzEfsAOct8>

**Figure 4.1.6**

*Piraeus Bank- Eliza 2024 campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s73NQpdnRNw>

**Figure 4.1.7**

*Vodafone Greece 2023 Recognize the signs campaign*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnnZc9gyFQs>

**Figure 4.1.8**

*Vodafone's 2021 Campaign, Four women entrepreneurs, one success story*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JumM2rLZfPc>

**Figure 4.1.9**

*Novibet Giant Heart, 2025*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWtQdb05Rp4>

**Figure 4.1.10**

*My Market's 2025 Campaign #WomenInLogistics*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPsrxMipqXo>

**Figure 4.1.11**

*Vodafone's 2025 Campaign -At Vodafone, you can grow | Myrto*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc0Bg0Ub4q8>

**Figure 4.1.12**

*NRG's In-charge, 2021 Campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3piWa7y874>

**Figure 4.2.1**

*Alpha Bank Quick Loan Campaign, 2022*



Note. Access Link [https://www.facebook.com/AlphaBankPage/videos/myalpha-quick-loan/1091391681580386/?locale=ms\\_MY](https://www.facebook.com/AlphaBankPage/videos/myalpha-quick-loan/1091391681580386/?locale=ms_MY)

**Figure 4.2.2**

*Meval 75 years of trust and love, 2025 campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBK6kLr1boQ>

**Figure 4.2.3**

*Hellmann's The lawyer, 2021 campaign*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEHCF15x6aE&t=10s>

**Figure 4.2.4**

*Elite Πλασμένες δυνατές- Made Strong, 2022 Campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E08QGxih5L4>

**Figure 4.2.5**

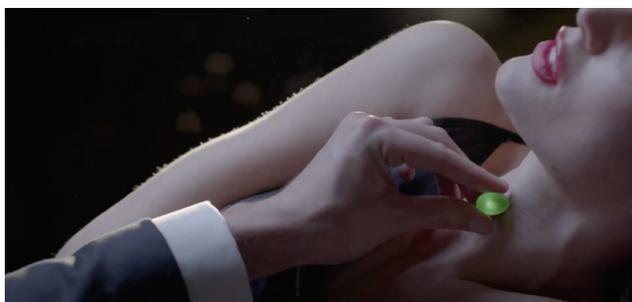
*Pantene Greece The lengths of Strength 2023 Campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EK5o0bdKek>

**Figure 4.2.6**

*Lavdas Zero Eucalyptus & Mastie 2023 campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyL97D48s2k>

**Figure 4.2.7**

*ION Dubai Chocolate 2025 Campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afMnCEchbjw>

**Figure 4.2.8**

*Vichy Greece Neovadiol Campaign 2024*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7x19kjPiw8>

**Figure 4.2.9**

*LACTA Greece 2021 campaign*



Note. Access link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlzEfsAOct8>

**Figure 5.2.10**

*P&G Greece 2023 Strong Me campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byRKrgxjh04>

**Figure 4.2.11**

*Novartis Hellas 2021 campaign*



Note. Access Link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoRc1NL8L48>