The Relevance of Erving Goffman's Gender Analysis in Advertising

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This paper aims to analyse the contemporary relevance of the analysis of gender in advertising proposed by Erving Goffman in his work Gender Advertisements (1976). Through a critical review of recent studies, we seek to explore how the categories and conceptual frameworks established by Goffman are still useful for analysing gender representation in contemporary media, including digital platforms and social networks. The article also aims to contrast the limitations of his theoretical framework with new forms of gender subordination and resistance that have emerged in contemporary advertising, and their possible adaptation to the digital media context.

Introduction

Erving Goffman (1922-1982) is widely regarded as one of the most influential American sociologists of the 20th century (Fine, Manning 2000). In 2007, The Times Higher Education Guide ranked him as the sixth most cited author in the humanities and social sciences, and the International Sociological Association in its academic assessment of Books of the Century in 1998, ranked Goffman tenth, behind Weber, Merton, Parsons, Bourdieu and Elias, but ahead of Durkheim, Foucault, Mead and Simmel, evaluating seven of his eleven books, as seminal in the history of sociology (Jacobsen, Smith 2022).

Goffman was born in Mannville, Alberta, Canada, into a family of Ukrainian Jews who emigrated to Canada in the early 20th century. After dropping out of the University of Manitoba, where he was studying chemistry, he became interested in sociology, motivated in part by his encounter with the sociologist Dennis Wrong. Goffman graduated in sociology and anthropology from the University of Toronto, but his doctoral thesis on the Shetland Islands (Communication Conduct in an Island Community, 1953) was done at the University of Chicago, shortly after Herbert Blumer (his professor) moved to Berkeley, "together they created something like a centre of symbolic interactionism" (Ritzer 1993, 100). He was president of the American Sociological Association and his best-known contribution to social theory is the study of symbolic interaction, embodied in his dramaturgical analysis, beginning with his 1959 book *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, derived from his dissertation. In this work, Goffman argues that when someone interacts with another, they try to control the impression the other will form of them by adjusting their environment, appearance and manner of behaviour.

It is this innovative approach to the study of social interaction for which Goffman is best known. His dramaturgical analysis compares social life to a theatrical performance, where individuals are actors who manage their performances. Over the course of his career, Goffman published several outstanding works such as *Asylums*

(1961), *Stigma* (1963), *Gender Advertisements* (1976), *Frame Analysis* (2006), and *Forms of Talk* (1981), ranging from total institutions to social interaction and the social construction of the self, among other topics.

Between the 1950s and 1970s, Goffman published a series of books and essays that sparked the birth of dramaturgical analysis as a variant of symbolic interactionism. His most famous exposition of dramaturgical theory is found in his 1959 work, *The Presentation of the Person in Everyday Life*, where he argued that social interactions were fragile and maintained by social representations. He looks at actors, action and interaction. Poor or disorganised representation was a major threat to social interaction, just as it is to theatrical representation.

Despite the subsequent decline of symbolic interactionism, Goffman established a distinctive position for microsociology in contemporary social theory, and specifically, its usefulness has been seen in empirical research, one of which is on the analysis of advertisements in advertising.

Goffman's reflections on gender have been recognised as important contributions to feminist analysis. Candace West (1996) points to his three main contributions:

«a) Showing how we produce and read gender displays as reflecting the "essential natures" of women and men, b) explicating how innate sex differences are advanced to justify existing institutional arrangements, and c) demonstrating how existing institutional arrangements ensure that the justifications make sense» (364).

1. *Goffman and Gender Advertisements*

The question of the relevance of Erving Goffman's gender analysis in advertising leads us to explore his work *Gender Advertisements*. Despite the limitations of its sample, this study reveals fundamental aspects of microsociology and social interaction. In his work, Goffman analyses how gender is represented in advertising, using a method that has been called "semiotic content analysis" (Jacobsen, Smith 2022). Goffman used the concept of "frames" to analyse how experiences are structured in individuals' perceptions. In the case of advertising, frames influence how viewers interpret images and messages. *Gender Advertisements* reveals how these frames perpetuate gender inequalities by naturalising certain forms of behaviour and appearance. His work was pioneering in the critique of gender representation and has been central to subsequent feminist studies. Its relevance has recently been recovered by Chris Brickell (2022). This review emphasises how Goffman's perspective has deeply influenced contemporary gender studies, particularly in the work of West and Zimmerman with their concept of "doing gender", and in Judith Butler with her theory of performativity. Brickell highlights how Goffman illustrated the role of advertising in the social construction of gender, anticipating many contemporary debates on power, social structure, and gender.

Gender Advertisements presents an argument about the non-neutrality of image construction in advertising. The main hypothesis is that any image production reveals a process of dramatization. This process can be uncovered in the analysis of identifiable contextual elements within the scenes of each advertisement. This includes where the action, the models, and the props are situated. All of this composes a narrative discourse that marks important, and inequitable, differences between genders. Advertising consists of public images, and these differ from private images

not only in their broader exposure, but also in the limited effort required to appear as one is. Public images, however, require a compositional effort, as they transform private into public, and it is through this construction of a scene that representation gains meaning, which, when made public, builds a collective imaginary (Carrera 2019). Thus, through the dramatization of social life, the symbolic representations of social reality are legitimised by the public (Weitz 1980). Therefore, social reality is both a product for publicity and a construction of it. Rituals are expressions used to produce meanings and make situations recognizable for building relationships, and this is a fundamental objective of advertising.

However, advertisements are not only representations of rituals but also hyper-ritualizations. They intentionally choreograph rituals to avoid ambiguity. In reproducing socially established rituals (attitudes, poses, gestures, ceremonies) through the media, advertising manages to amplify the symbolic effects of these rituals, making advertising itself a cultural institution that, through symbolic thought, affirms social rituals (Carrera 2019). A key concept in Goffman's analysis of gender in images is *gender display*:

«All of an individual's behaviour and appearance informs those who witness them, minimally telling them something about their social identity, about their mood, intent, expectations, and about the state of their relation to others. [...] If gender is defined as the culturally established correlates of sex (whether in consequence of biology or learning), then *gender display* refers to conventionalized portrayals of these correlates» (Goffman 1976/1987, 1).

According to Goffman, *gender displays*, like other rituals, can iconically reflect fundamental features of the social structure (Goffman 1976, 8). In analysing *gender displays*, attention must focus, especially in the case of public images, on the "scene" or "social situation" presented in the image. Social situations can be defined as "orders in which people are in mutual material presence" (Goffman 1991, 143). Goffman applies his schema for analysing social interaction and the presentation of self in society to the analysis of images. In public images, these scenes or social situations are intentionally posed by actors based on the advertiser's purpose, aiming to define and express a specific image. In his words, "Commercial posing avowedly transforms a model into almost anyone the advertiser wants to construct an imaginary scene around; private portraiture transforms a model into a decorative representation of themselves" (Goffman 1976, 17).

Beyond posing, we must consider how the people included in the "scene" act, how they relate to one another, how women and men manage this social situation, and what stereotypes are represented. It frequently occurs that advertising photographs show solitary figures, undoubtedly outside any social situation. However, for the scene to be interpretable, the subject must display appearances and informative actions, a procedure we also follow in real social situations to weave our own stories and learn the stories of others (Goffman 1991, 143-144).

Goffman emphasises that the analysis of advertising should not be limited to revealing gender stereotypes in images but should extend to examining how those involved in advertising (both creators and models) present a meaningful and interpretable scene, identifying the unique ritual language behind the infinite variety of scenic configurations (Goffman 1991). The way to identify these processes in advertisements

is through the six categories proposed by Goffman (1976), which allow recognition of meaning associated with gender:

1. Relative Size: Goffman argues that relative size in images often reflects relations of power and social status. In social interactions, especially between the sexes, biological dimorphism (size differences between men and women) tends to be represented in advertisements. Men often appear taller and stockier than women, symbolising their greater social status and authority. For example, images of couples generally show the man as taller than the woman, reinforcing the idea of male superiority.

2. "Function ranking": Role ranking, according to Goffman, is a common representation in advertisements where men assume executive or authoritative roles, while women occupy subordinate positions. This arrangement facilitates the quick interpretation of the advertisement, highlighting men's superiority in the work context and other areas of collaboration. For example, in an ad where a man and a woman collaborate, the man will generally be shown in a leadership role, while the woman will play a supportive or auxiliary role.

3. The Family: Goffman observes that family images in advertisements reinforce traditional gender roles. Women are often depicted in domestic and caring roles, while men appear as protective or authority figures. Images of mothers with children in domestic situations are common, emphasising their role as primary caregivers, while fathers are often associated with authoritative or recreational activities involving leadership and control.

4. Feminine Touch: how women's hands in advertisements are often depicted as barely touching or brushing objects in a delicate manner, as opposed to the way men touch or hold objects firmly and decisively. This "feminine touch" suggests fragility, gentleness and a lack of control or power over the object. The images show female hands gently caressing a surface or holding objects in a light and almost ephemeral manner, which contrasts with male hands that dominate and manipulate objects efficiently.

5. Ritualization of Subordination: This is the most extensive and detailed category in Goffman's analysis, already present in a later text (Goffman, 1991). He argues that women are often shown in postures and behaviours that suggest submission and dependence. Examples of this include the way women touch objects, often with a ritualised delicacy that denotes fragility and passivity, in contrast to the utilitarian and firm touch of men. In addition, women are often depicted in poses that indicate vulnerability, such as bowing their heads, looking away, or being partially

6. Licensed Withdrawal: describes how women are often shown in advertising in states of psychological abandonment or disconnection. This may involve looking away, having absent facial expressions, or appearing lost in thought. These depictions suggest that women are psychologically detached from the active or social environment in which they find themselves, dependent on men for guidance and action.

Goffman concludes that advertisements not only reflect, but also reinforce gender norms and expectations in society. Advertising images perpetuate the idea that men are dominant, authoritative and active, while women are submissive, dependent and passive. In analysing these patterns, Goffman highlights the importance of being aware

of how media representations influence our perceptions and behaviours regarding gender roles.

The inferior representation of women in advertisements, as described by Goffman in his analysis of gender, resonates deeply with Gaye Tuchman's theory of symbolic annihilation (1978) who argues that the media not only portrays women in stereotypical and subordinate ways, but also strips them of power and social relevance by minimising or distorting their presence and contributions. In the advertising analysed by Goffman, women are consistently depicted in roles of submissiveness, dependency and gentleness, which not only reinforces these stereotypes, but also contributes to symbolic annihilation by perpetuating the idea that women have no active or important role in society. This representation reinforces traditional gender norms and limits social perceptions of what women can and should be, thus aligning with Tuchman's notion that the media perpetuates gender inequality by symbolically erasing women's true capacity and agency.

2. *The persistence of Goffman's framework*

Many subsequent studies have sought to replicate Goffman's framework for gender analysis in advertising. Kroon (2022) and Coleman *et al.* (2020) highlight the enduring relevance of the gender stereotypes identified by Goffman, albeit with adaptations to cultural and social changes. Kroon (2021) examines gambling advertising in Sweden, revealing that while gender stereotypes are employed more moderately than in previous decades, they persist, especially in the portrayal of women in subordinate or secondary roles. Similarly, Coleman *et al.* (2020) investigate advertising in Turkey, showing how cultural and institutional shifts influence gender representations. Despite these changes, traditional gender roles remain prominent, with men depicted in positions of power and women often shown in domestic or sexualized roles.

In the U.S. context, Kohrs and Gill (2021) analyzed 200 advertisements from women's magazines to assess the ongoing validity of Goffman's framework 40 years later. They observed significant discrepancies, particularly in the categories of *relative size* and *licensed withdrawal*, which were rarely present. However, categories related to femininity remain most relevant in contemporary advertising. Kohrs and Gill introduce an important new category—*confident appearance*—which is especially pertinent in ads targeting women. In these, women are portrayed as exuding confidence and empowerment. This shift, as discussed further below, aligns with advertising companies' strategies to co-opt the cultural power of feminism for commercial purposes.

Furthermore, research by Belknap and Leonard (1991) extends Goffman's analysis, reaffirming the prevalence of the *feminine touch* and *ritualization of subordination* categories in advertisements for fashion magazines and luxury goods. While there has been an increase in portrayals of women in empowered roles, traditional stereotypes continue to dominate (Belknap, Leonard 1991).

Bell and Milic's (2002) study took a combined approach, incorporating content analysis and semiotic theory to examine Goffman's categories in a corpus of 827 Australian magazine advertisements from 1997 and 1998. Using key semiotic variables such as camera angle and viewing distance, their analysis revealed that

women were still depicted in symbolic and conceptual roles, while men appeared in more active, narrative roles. Although women engaged more directly with the viewer, the study confirmed that gender representations in advertising continue to reproduce dynamics of subordination, albeit with contemporary nuances (Bell, Milic 2002).

From a different perspective, the effect of gendered advertising on audiences is explored in Åkestam *et al.* (2017), whose experimental study of 254 participants in Sweden examines responses to gender stereotypes. The study found that both men and women react negatively to stereotypical advertisements, regardless of the gender being represented. These negative reactions led to lower purchase intentions and unfavourable attitudes toward the brands, suggesting that gender stereotypes in advertising provoke psychological "reactance" that affects both genders (Åkestam *et al.* 2017). The researchers provide valuable recommendations for marketing and advertising departments to be more conscious of how their messaging can alienate their audience.

3. Gender codes and emotions

Building on Goffman's work, Arlie Hochschild expanded her analysis of visual gender representations into the domain of emotions. Hochschild (1990) argues that images not only illustrate the rules governing our gender display (how to "look like a woman" or "look like a man"), but also the rules that regulate our emotions. These emotional rules apply both to the feelings expressed within the images themselves and to the emotional responses they evoke in the viewer. Thus, images do not merely convey social gender dispositions; they also shape the social realities they represent through the emotions they invoke. In this context, Hochschild introduces the concept of "meta-rules" to describe how individuals feel about conforming to gendered emotional rules:

«And we find meta-rules about how to feel about following the rule, and how to feel about oneself as one follows the rule. If a woman is to use wiles, should she do so enthusiastically? Squeamishly? Apologetically? Coolly? Tongue-in-cheek?» (Hochschild 1990, 279).

These gender rules are encapsulated in what Hochschild refers to as "gender codes": a set of guidelines dictating how one should look, behave, and feel "as a woman" or "as a man" (ivi, 279). From her analysis of women's advice books, Hochschild identifies two distinct gender codes: the traditional and the egalitarian.

Table 1 – Gender codes identified by Arlie Hochschild.

	Traditional	**Modern Egalitarian**
Look	highly gender differentiated female dress (paste colours, small patterns, smooth materials, silk, lace, ruffles, frills) (sweet 16 look, upper class lady look) high heeled shoes long finger nails long hair	less gender differentiated subdued "male" colours", bold patterns, no frills (career-woman look) business suits for work, "upper class ladylike, loo for parties low heels, short, plain nails short hair

Interactional Style	dissimulation, wiles, "getting around men" through, crying, playing on male sympathy	direct dealing, no wiles, wiles considered beneath modern woman, "sneaky"
Face	deferential to men, bashful, blush easily, downward glance face used as instrument for emotional expression, use "eyes"	direct look, no blushing, open "assertive expression" masked and open emotional expression
Body	take up as little room as possible, leaning posture, bashful knee bend, head tilt	assume full size, erect posture, weight on both legs
Hand	"fish" handshake, modified version of presenting hand for ritual kiss	direct, businesslike
Speech	hospitable to interruption, use of "female" vocabulary, e.g. "lovely"	discourages interruption, male vocabulary
Feeling Rules	gender asymmetry in love, put love of man first: cultivate love, subordinate ambition suppress anger, or deal with it indirectly don't be "too" aggressive, active or independent	gender symmetry in love: both sexes rank love in same way not good to be "clinging vine" don't be "too passive, dependent
Emotion Management	suppress initiative, try to fit "code" personality	suppress passivity, try to be assertive

Source: Hochschild (1990, 279)

Elements of these gender codes may appear mixed in images (mixed or hybrid codes), as is the case in everyday life, where individuals may mix one interactional style with another emotional style (Hochschild 1990).

4. *Female empowerment as an advertising strategy*

Goffman emphasised in his analysis of gender stereotypes transmitted in advertising images the messages of female subordination, exalted through the reproduction of the traditional female model of patriarchal submission. However, their scheme of analysis underestimates the presence of gender stereotypes associated with female empowerment as a commercial and advertising strategy. This strategy aims to portray a modern, emancipated and free image of women and calls for gender equality. This strategy, which has recently been labelled as *femvertising* or *ad-her-verstising* (Hainneville *et al.* 2023; Rodríguez Perez, Gutiérrez 2017), has been applied by advertising companies since the first decades of the 20th century to capture the attention of a new consumer profile of modern, middle and upper class women with increasing purchasing power. The case of cigarette advertising aimed at middle and upper class women is a clear example of this process of advertising adaptation to social changes and transformations in gender relations by tobacco companies (Jiménez Rodrigo 2016). One of the main challenges was to transform the social image of women smokers, traditionally associated with pejorative meanings, into an acceptable,

compatible and desirable image with respect to the new patterns of modern femininity (Amos, Haglund 2000). To this end, different tobacco companies developed different campaigns associating female cigarette consumption with three empowering meanings. First, the image of the successful, professional, economically and socially independent woman. Second, the image of the sexually emancipated woman, showing a sexy, provocative and self-confident woman who takes the initiative. And thirdly, the woman who controls and dominates her emotions (Fig. 1).

Figure 1 – Smoking advertisements in Spanish print media. Early 2000s

Tobacco companies, in turn, segmented their *gender displays* according to the different profiles of women smokers in order to increase their market share. These industries, aware of the different tastes, interests and needs of women, vary their advertising images not only according to social class, but also according to age and life cycle. Thus, for example, among younger women, advertising messages emphasise self-confidence, emancipation and freedom; while among mature smokers, emotions such as pleasure, relaxation or social acceptability are sold (Anderson *et al.* 2005).

While there has been progress in gender representation, new forms of subordination persist. Mus *et al.* (2021) highlight how food and drink advertising continues to reinforce traditional roles, showing women in domestic roles and men in positions of authority. At the same time, *femvertising* has emerged as a response to these stereotypes (Panarina 2021), but studies such as Sterbenk *et al.* (2022) criticise how this type of advertising is often used as a form of "purplewashing", where brands adopt feminist rhetoric without actually committing to gender equality. In this sense, advertising has been criticised for attempting to appropriate and benefit from the cultural power of feminism, while at the same time attempting to neutralise its critique of sexism in advertising and media (Kohrs, Gill 2021). This has been termed "commodity feminism" (Goldman *et al.* 1991). This approach broadens the field of vision from the gender analysis of advertising, which focuses on the analysis of femininity as a strategy of female subordination (the axis on which Goffman focused),

to the axis of the appropriation of feminist values, which seeks to link female empowerment with a new freedom to consume (Goldman *et al.* 1991).

5. *Masculinities and gender displays*

While Goffman examines gender relations within advertising scenes, her scheme of analysis and its empirical application focused primarily on representations of women and mechanisms of female stereotyping and subordination. This line of research on the image of women in advertising has been widely applied in subsequent feminist studies.

However, Goffman's work opens up avenues for research into gendered representations of masculinity (Schroeder, Zwick 2004; Islentyeva *et al.* 2024; Vigorito, Curry 1998). Islentyeva *et al.* (2024) study of the representation of masculinity in a sample of 50 advertising campaigns launched in the United States between 1999 and 2020 identified five main strategies: gentlemanly appearance, gender equality and fatherhood, sex appeal, sex and male dominance, and strength. Interesting cross-cultural studies have examined the prevalence of different masculinity profiles (Tan *et al.* 2013). Another line of research has focused on how companies have adapted their advertising to new models of masculinity (*menvertising*) (Pando-Canteli, Rodríguez 2021).

6. *The representation of gender in different cultural contexts*

A key aspect of the relevance of Goffman's categories is their applicability in different cultural contexts. Elhajjar's work (2021) on *femvertising* in the Middle East shows how representations of women have evolved towards more empowering images, but within the confines of traditional cultural norms. Unlike Western advertising, where *femvertising* seeks to challenge gender stereotypes, in the Middle East representations remain more conservative, reflecting traditional roles within the home (Elhajjar 2021). Similarly, Negm (2023) explored this phenomenon of *femvertising* in Egypt and showed that it elicits different responses according to gender: while women improve their attitude towards the brand, men respond more favourably to stereotypical advertising, affecting both their attitude and purchase intentions.

Figure 2 – An advertisement displayed on a bus stop
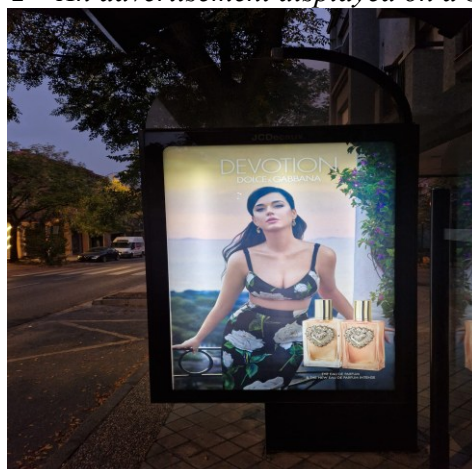
Source: The image was captured by the authors in October 2024

As an example, we propose a recent advertisement in which the relevance of Goffman's analysis is still evident. In Figure 2, we observe a contemporary bus stop advertisement that can be analysed through Goffman's theoretical framework of the ritualisation of subordination and the "feminine touch". The model's pose and the focus on the delicacy and luxury of the product reinforce an imaginary in which women, though powerful in their appearance, continue to represent themselves through aesthetic codes that perpetuate fragility and emotional detachment, as seen in the category of 'licensed withdrawal' identified by Goffman.

Tsichla (2020), on the other hand, examines how although femvertising challenges gender stereotypes in the West, stereotypes persist in subtle ways for both men and women. Through a comprehensive literature review and comparative analysis of different cultures, the study shows that although gender representations have progressed, stereotypes persist in subtle ways. Women continue to be sexualised or portrayed in subordinate roles, while men have expanded their portrayal into decorative and family roles (the work used cultural frameworks such as the Masculinity dimension of the Hofstede Index to understand variations in gender stereotypes across countries). Tsichla concludes that there is a need to update methods of analysing these stereotypes to better capture emerging trends, such as non-binary representations and new gender roles in advertising. This study highlights the importance of further research to promote more equitable representation in advertising. Similarly, Aruna and Gunasundari's (2022) study of advertising in India finds that while there has been progress in the representation of women, images continue to reproduce gender stereotypes. Women are predominantly portrayed in domestic roles or as consumers of beauty products, and this is reflected in their dress, language and other characteristics, while men are portrayed as heads of households and leaders (Aruna, Gunasundari 2022). These studies highlight the need to adapt Goffman's categories to specific cultural contexts in order to capture the complexity of gender representations.

Even in India, print advertisements for fast-moving consumer goods continue to portray stereotypical gender images. According to a study by Revathy and Hemmige (2022), women are mainly portrayed in domestic and decorative roles, reinforcing patriarchal expectations and perpetuating female subservience compared to men who are portrayed in dominant and active roles.

7. *Gender and social media images*

While Goffman's categories are still useful for analysing gender representation, their limitations have been questioned in a media context that has changed radically since the 1970s. The increasing involvement of prosumers (consumers and creators of content) would imply new ways of acting on gender that would require an adaptation of Goffman's original categories. In this new context, however, Goffman's seminal work remains valid in many ways.

Gender Advertisements has been extensively revisited in recent decades, confirming its applicability to new media (the transformation of digitalisation), especially social media. Recent studies show that while there have been changes in gender representation as a result of these new media, the same forms of subordination and stereotyping of female roles persist in new digital images, particularly on platforms

such as Instagram and Facebook. This body of literature highlights the relevance and pertinence of Goffman's analyses in the digital and globalised era, and motivates future research that addresses media representations of gender from a critical and constructive perspective.

For example, Butkowski *et al.* (2020) study of self-representation on Instagram reveals how young women tend to replicate gender stereotypes popularised in traditional media by using poses that visualise a power imbalance between men and women. In their research, Butkowski and her team quantify the use of these 'gender displays' and conclude that women who exaggerate female stereotypes in their selfies receive more positive feedback in the form of likes and comments. This finding highlights how social media not only perpetuates stereotypes, but also encourages them through social validation. Furthermore, Butkowsky's (2021) subsequent study introduces the concept of network realism to extend Goffman's theoretical framework in the analysis of digital media. While Goffman speaks of commercial realism to describe how audiences accept gender representations in advertising without questioning their plausibility, network realism refers to the authenticity and credibility that users apply to content generated on social networks. On social media platforms such as Instagram, users create their own personal representations, negotiating audience expectations and tailoring their selfies to maximise social acceptance (Butkowsky 2021). Goffman's commercial realism is characterised by the stylisation and exaggeration of gender stereotypes in advertising, with the aim of selling products. In contrast, network realism is based on constant interaction with the audience and the need to show authenticity, which means that although gender stereotypes are still present, they tend to manifest themselves in a more subtle and personalised way in social media. This concept is key to understanding how gender norms on digital platforms differ from those in traditional advertising. In the following comparative table, we can observe the differences between commercial realism and network realism, as proposed by the author (Butkowsky 2021, 98).

Table 2 – Comparing Commercial and Networked Realisms

	Commercial Realism	**Network Realism**
Structural Features	Disseminated by corporations Advertisements tailored to particular media formats and target audiences Largely one-way communications Accountability divided among multiple creators and brand	Circulated in digital social networks Users negotiate pluralistic affordances and expectations between social media platforms Dialogic realism judgments Personalised and individualised accountability
Accessibility	Separation of often homogenous professional creators and advertisement consumers	Widely available to users in the dual role of image viewers and creators
Visibility	Professional models are paid to pose for photoshoots resulting in ads disseminated in corporate publications and spaces	Users share their everyday lives and staged self-photography through persistent, searchable, and replicable means online

Economic Considerations	Corporations purchase airtime and page space	Platforms commodify user data and disseminate advertisements in exchange for free use of their services
Authenticity	Conventionalization and contrivance are expected in stage photos; tied to brand authenticity	Ethic of personal authenticity, "real" self performed for networked scrutiny
Privacy and Publicness	Private and public are distinct	Private and public are blurred
Feedback	Direct feedback from consumers is limited and displaced	Interactive, immediate feed-back conversations are ongoing.

Source: Butkowsky (2021, 98)

Again, from a critical perspective and revisiting Goffman's framework, Hoover, O'Neil, and Poutiatine (2014) analysed how images on university websites reflected leadership roles from a gender perspective, with the aim of analysing whether these representations reinforced or challenged stereotypes. They focused on the top 25 universities in the United States according to the ARWU ranking. For the analysis, they used the static images that appear when the web pages of these universities are first loaded, a total of 109 images, 72 of which contained people. Through an iterative coding process, adapting the six categories of Goffman's analytical framework, they showed how men tended to occupy more space in the images and appear in hierarchically superior roles, and women showed more signs of 'graduate withdrawal', suggesting a greater disparity in female representation. The study concluded that universities can improve the visual representation of gender equity, particularly in terms of the relative size and active presence of women in leadership roles, which could influence future perceptions of leadership.

A more recent example of the application of this empirical analysis is provided by Tsolak and Kühne (2024). Using an innovative methodology based on the estimation of body poses using neural networks and an unsupervised learning approach, the authors analysed 832,667 public Instagram images. From these, they identified 150 body pose patterns and found that 20% of these poses show significant gender differences. Women tend to adopt narrower, more asymmetrical poses, while men adopt wider, more dominant poses. In addition, the study shows how new poses associated with the use of technological devices such as mobile phones mix with traditional gender stereotypes. This study demonstrates the persistence of gender stereotypes in social networks, even in forms adapted to technological modernity (Tsolak, Kühne 2024).

Similarly, an analysis by Döring *et al.* (2016) finds that women's selfies on Instagram tend to be more stereotypical than advertising images in magazines, proving the reproduction of traditional gender roles such as the 'feminine touch' and the 'pout' (Döring et al., 2016). These studies highlight how social media, while allowing greater control over self-presentation, still reinforces traditional gender norms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, *Gender Advertisements* continue to offer valuable insights into how everyday interactions and media contribute to the social construction of gender. His detailed and critical approach reveals the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate social norms, providing essential tools for critique and social change. However, Goffman's relevance in the digital age extends beyond traditional forms of advertising. This review suggests that the categories proposed by Goffman, while useful, need to be updated to adapt to the new dynamics of digital interaction. The concept of 'networked realism', which emerges in the context of social networks, allows us to analyse how prosumers actively negotiate self-representation on digital platforms where gender stereotypes continue to be reproduced and promoted through social validation.

Although technological advances have changed the way we relate to gender representations, in many ways the patterns of subordination and stereotyping identified by Goffman persist in the digital world. Therefore, his work not only remains relevant, but also provides a solid foundation for further research into the dynamics of power and gender in the context of contemporary media.

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