Stereotypical Gendered Representations in Fashion Advertising
Stereotypical Gendered Representations in Fashion Advertising

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Date:
Place: Amsterdam
Name: Lena de Ligt
Signature

_____________________________
During my years at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute I have broadened my knowledge of the fashion industry immensely, specifically regarding retail and marketing. Marketing and advertising has informed me about how brands are able to become inherent and fundamental to consumers living and how consumers can feel a strong belonging and connection the other way around.

All my life I have been in support of equal rights for both sexes; until a few years ago I was unaware that I may regard myself as a feminist. While broadening my knowledge about this subject I have specifically been inspired by feminists such as: Lena Dunham and Caitlin. To me they embody the progressive feminists light-hearted ideas.

These two aspirations to me are a logical engagement in graduating at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute, as I enjoy researching both.

I would like to specially thank both of my graduation supervisors: Jan Piscaer and Charlotte Corstanje for their guidance through this process. Also, I want to thank: Gert Hekma, for moderating the panel discussion, and the panellists: Michelle Helena Janssen, Yoeri Roest, Lars Folkers and Janeth Domingos for helping me by joining the panel discussion.
Fashion brands are criticized by: feminist scholars, the media and people within the industry for the overly gendered representations in their advertising campaigns. However, these parties may be more aware of the issues concerning these representations in contrast to the consumer. This thesis focuses on these issues and eventually analyses the consumer’s points of view to conclude to what extent these are issues to the industry.

To research this, the first step is to find out what exactly the issues in representation in fashion advertising are, for example: deceptive body image, sexual objectification and rape culture. These issues are damaging for both women as men. The representations in fashion advertising and the gendered society go hand in hand as it shows that these make up a vicious circle.

After that, fashion advertisements have been analysed concerning gendered, gender-neutral and feminist representations. These advertisements are analysed on the basis of media responds. The gender neutral advertisements received positive responds from the media as well as most responds on the feminist advertising. It shows that the media is not all in favour of the gendered representations, which stirred up controversy.

That brings us to the third step, the analysis of the consumer itself through a conduction of data in the form of comments on forums and a survey hand out targeted at the consumer of generation Y. It shows that consumers overall put aesthetics above ethics. Certain characteristics go hand in hand in the perception of these consumers on the advertising campaigns that are included in the survey. This creates limitations for the industry, and thus an issue.

To answer the main question the industry’s reasoning of the representations are researched, which includes an examination to why advertisers use these gendered representations. It shows that these portrayals are used because of: a segmentation strategy (which makes it easier for brands to target their consumer), sex sells (the psychological appeal towards an advertising) and the social construction of beauty.

Whether, to what extent the representations are an issue to the industry, it thus is dependent from which point of view and perspective, this is visualized in Table 1.

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Introduction

Advertisements serve as criteria or aspirational representation for consumers. Leon Festinger (1945), Social psychologist, states: “Within the context of body image, social comparison theory states that people will make automatic comparisons to people and images that they perceive to represent realistic goals to attain and be motivated to achieve these goals” (pp. 119-140).

Therefore brands need to take in consideration that their marketing strategies and communications are genuine, sincere and well thought through, they should not implement any harmful or human unfriendly portrayal. Some portrayals have been judged and criticized by society; I will discuss and disclose these issues further in this thesis.

Feminist scholars and gender studies have argued that fashion images are usually highly gendered: they show idealized images of femininity and masculinity, making use of stereotypical ways of presenting women, and – to a lesser extent – men (Ruggerone 2006; Gill 2007).

Feminism and marketing can be contradictory, since marketing and its advertising can be really offensive to a lot of feminists, although in my opinion they do not necessarily have to be. Both fashion advertising and feminism strive and try to convey their idealization of how the world should be and what it should look like. They actually work really well together; an example is Virginia Slims, “The godmother of allegedly feminist brands”, which has been selling female empowerment since 1968. The brand created smoking advertising with the slogan; “You’ve come a long way, baby”. Later on the brand also used slogans like: “It’s a women thing” and “Find your voice” in the 1990s.

Models, usually women, are portrayed in any form of sexism too frequently, objectified and pressurized to meet gendered ideal beauty standards, with both language and imagery in fashion and marketing. But does this really affect the consumers in a way that it affects me? Taking into consideration that I might be more aware of the phenomena thanks to my education.

Companies and brands have already started implementing inclusive and soft feminism marketing strategies to satisfy their consumers. However these strategies are not always authentic, they might only be realized by these brands because of the buzz and trend surrounding the implementation of female empowering advertising, whilst not making sure equal loans are distributed in their own working environment. Therefore, not being authentic in tack-
ling gender issues as then these brands risk facing hateful media response (WGSN, 2015). Also, some brands implement feminist advertising campaign, and create controversy and commotion around their advertising: Shethinx, which will be elaborated on further in this thesis. This might be the backlash that the brand looks for, considering the viral media attention, but does not necessarily have to be.

The study is relevant to the industry as a panel discussion, which was open to public and was filmed and published online, results from the research: it gives the industry more openness and awareness from the consumer and thus more understanding and perhaps celebration towards gender neutral advertising. It came forward that the consumer of generation Y is not as conscious concerning the issues in advertising representations. The panel discussion aims to give answer to what direction the fashion industry should go.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question is: To what extent is the stereotypical gendered representation of models in fashion advertising an issue to the fashion industry?"

In order to answer this question I have investigated the following sub questions:

1. What are the current issues that are caused by stereotypical gendered representation of models in fashion advertising?
2. What are the current controversial fashion advertising concerning stereotypical gendered, gender-neutral and feminist representation, and what do they include?
3. How does the consumer of generation Y interpret the current stereotypical gendered, gender-neutral and feminist representation in fashion advertising?
4. What is the reason and relevance for the stereotypical gendered representation in fashion advertising?

My goal is to discover what exactly those issues are, why brands are doing so and if the consumers feel offended by some of these advertising campaigns and thus, should brands revise their strategy? What kind of marketing approach is able to provide the media attention and buzz needed for the brand?

The product that derived from this thesis is a panel discussion. It appeared that consumers are not conscious regarding the issues that are caused. If a brand wants to implement a gender-neutral advertising strategy, it is needed that consumers understand why this is important.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

To answer the main questions both primary as secondary data has been conducted. In case of primary data I have read articles, reports and books on feminism, gender, fashion advertising and visual culture. These articles and books are retrieved from both online as offline platforms: bib.hva.nl, scholar.google.nl, the library and news websites.

In regard to my research questions, I found many different opinions and point of views during the research process. The event that I attended to get a broader insight in the current discourses concerning feminism and gender is: "Vrouwen schrijven niet met hun tieten". Dutch feminist speakers attended like: Niña Weijers, Hanna Bervoets, Simone van Saarloos, Wiegertje Postma and Clarice Gargard. This was a literary event in where gender issues were discussed.

Quantitative research methods include a sent out of questionnaires targeted at generation Y consumers. Observational research has been done through analysing forums and looking at several different points of views of audiences towards fashion advertising campaigns.

STRUCTURE

For the structure I used the upturned triangle structure. I start off in the introduction with the issues surrounding the subject, further in the thesis I start with presenting and explaining the main question. Following
the sub-questions, these are divided in four chapters:

1. Perception of feminist scholars
2. Developments in advertising and the perception of the media
3. Perception of generation Y
4. What’s the industry’s reason?

Each of these chapters are introduced, elaborated on and concluded. Starting of with the first chapter: ‘Perception of feminist scholars’, I elaborate on the issues by uncovering them in regard to the representation of models in fashion advertising: Gendered stereotypes, deceptive body image, sexual objectification and “rape culture”. Then in ‘Developments in advertising and the perception of the media’, I look at today’s controversial marketing advertising: “the good, the bad and the ugly”. What are the responses from the media; did those brands change anything or continue their strategy? Also to what extent do the aesthetics overshadow the ethics and vice versa. Following: ‘Perception of generation Y’, I focus on the consumer; does the representation of models actually affect them? Do they see any problem in it? Or do they perceive it as normalized representations that do not need any update or change. Last but not least: ‘What’s the industry’s reason?’ In this chapter I examine the reasons from the industry side of the representation of models in fashion advertising. Do these representations sell well? Or is the representation just normalization?

To conclude I set the different views and opinions against each other and develop my own.

LIMITATIONS

An issue that is researched however not included is the lack of other ethnicities to white people that are represented in fashion advertising, this however has been discussed in the panel discussion. Also, the consumer research has been limited to generation Y in their perception on advertising campaigns.
Perception of Feminist scholars
In Western culture there is a juxtaposition of men versus women. Men ought to be strong, tough and masculine; other characteristics include an aggressive and competitive nature with lack of emotion. On the other hand, women ought to be: loving, caring and are slim but curvy. Women are described as vulnerable, empathetic, sensual and intuitive. These characteristics are based on gender roles and norms created through society and learned from birth onwards. “Gender representation in the media not only reflects, but also shapes gender roles and norms. Advertising and other representations in popular media are identified as central to the production of gender ideologies. Their stylized and idealized portrayals of men and women not only set high standards for beauty, health and happiness, but also present rather unattainable examples of good femininity and masculinity.” (Laan, 2015, p. 139)

In fashion advertising these gender roles are clearly portrayed. Many niche-oriented brands highlight gender to establish brand distinctiveness. Product categories such as cosmetics and fashion are examples of forms in which gender differentiation is essential (DeCarvalho*, 2014).

Erving Goffman (1987) took out extensive research on gender representation in advertising and according to this we can now identify six categories of gender advertisement: “1. Women are portrayed smaller or lower than men; 2. Women stroke or touch themselves, whereas men are shown with loose hands or holding something firmly; 3. Men are portrayed as autonomous or powerful, women as dependent and subordinate; 4. Women are shown in subordinate positions: lying down, in various curved, bent or tilted positions, for instance with the typical feminine ‘head cant’; 5. Women are portrayed as passive or uninvolved, whereas men are portrayed as active and present, for instance by looking straight into the camera; 6. Women are represented in family groups” (p. 23).
Figure 1. Keep her where she belongs..., by PlayBoy, 1974.
DECEPTIVE BODY IMAGE

Fashion advertising tends to portray idealised forms of gender. Models in fashion advertising often look close to perfect: young, fit, symmetrical, perfect skin, shiny thick hair, male figures have a six-pack and women are slim. Consumers may be aware of the fact that these are professional models, getting paid for their looks and Photoshop is used for the finishing touch. However, such images have led to many women developing issues: deceptive body image and self-esteem. Today some of these representations concerning physical attractiveness have become cultural norms, beginning in infancy, continuing through childhood and eventually adolescence (Mary C. Martin, 1998). Scientific research reveals that women are continually dissatisfied with their appearance. One clarification is that the ideal representation of what men and women should look like is unrealistic and out of reach as the images are manipulated and retouched through new technologies. The difference between models in advertising and the real body are high (Bergman, Beperkt houdbaar, 2010). Global research in ten different countries has shown that only 2% of women feel comfortable describing their self as beautiful, also 25% of women and girls consider plastic surgery and the minority that chose to describe their self as: attractive, pretty, cute. Only 1% of women considered their self as sexy (Denton, 2014).

Historically and culturally the concepts femininity and beauty have been very strongly connected and intertwined. You could state that a woman becomes more female when she becomes more beautiful. As for man, masculinity is more connected and intertwined with status. This is universal which makes that women are sensitive to this (Bergman, Beperkt houdbaar, 2010). Erving Goffman (1987) has done research on the subject matter looking into why advertising images do not look odd to us. He claims that the man and woman relationship in advertising is often portrayed like a child parent relationship. He argues on this with both imagery and textual analysis and questions what this means for the social status of man and women. For example, women and children are more often portrayed seated on floors and beds than men. One could perceive these places as more dirty, thus one could imply that women and children are submissive and have a lower status compared to men. The men in his analysis are portrayed as more alert, capable and powerful. These representations are offensive to men as well as women. Men are also portrayed more and more sexually. Historically we didn’t see such exposure of the male body in the media as we do now. Male beauty is also associated with physical strength (Sheehan, 2014). This physical strength as a male characteristic can be more problematic as it is intertwined with violence; when men are assaulted according to society’s norm one is able to do this by using words like: pussy, bitch or faggot. These are words based on female characteristics, thus to reclaim manhood, men have to assert domination, most efficiently and effectively by being violent (Gilligan, 1997).

SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION VS. SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT

Fashion advertising images are often sexual and sensual. This is overly seen in advertising for per-
A sexual depiction is often an explicit image of a woman that focuses on her lips, breasts or groin area (Sheehan, 2014). Elise van der Laan (2015), social scientist, researched fashion magazines and found that 75.05% of the total images represented a sexual portrayal. A term emerged called: objectification. Which Martha Nussbaum (1995), philosopher, describes and clarifies as: “treating as an object what is really not an object” (p. 249). In fashion advertising this is applied through not portraying the whole body of the model. The focus on body parts in contrast to the whole body of individuals results in the model losing its humanity. When only certain body parts are highlighted in advertisement it contributes to a suggestion that that person becomes a sexual object. Feminist scholars have argued that this portrayal and the process of objectification are demeaning and dehumanizing (Sheehan, 2014). However, in what case depicts the image sexual objectification as opposed to sexual empowerment? Some argue that it depends on the context; sexual freedom is essential in women’s freedom, sexual images in fashion advertising for example can be completely acceptable as long as it sends out a sex-positive message. An example; when a scarce dressed celebrity poses for an advertorial campaign or an actress chooses to be filmed nude for a film and they are comfortable, aware and fine with the fact that they are portrayed in a sexual manner, then it is acceptable (Ulaj, 2014).
A similar argument is that the difference between sexual objectification and sexual empowerment depends on the “power”; That is, if the person that is being “looked at” is portrayed in a sexual manner, chooses to be there in the first place and is able to leave without consequences, then they are sexually empowered. However, if the person being “looked at” has no or little power then they are sexually objectified. This power can also be described as the power of consent. If someone decides to put on sexy clothing and then appears in an image willingly this would be sexual empowerment. However, if the person being “looked at” receives hateful responds and consent without acting on that respond then they are sexually objectified (Ritchie, 2015).

This approach is visualized in figure 2. The last approach is a more clear and measurable theory to examine whether an image depicts sexual objectification or sexual empowerment.

Models’ bodies in fashion photography were increasingly sexually objectified over the past 30 years. Male models, often celebrities, are objectified but less posed and stylized in contrast to female models (Laan, 2015).

RAPE CULTURE

One could imply that our culture is hypersexualized. We live in a society where today’s fashion advertising and other media portray characteristics that are linked to the porn industry. These characteristics are seen as normal and mainstream (Lynch, 2014). As far as pornography, sexual domination is often portrayed by means of: rape, bondage, abuse and torture (Gail Dines, 2011). Whilst in some representations women, to a lesser extent men, are portrayed as objects and are thus dehumanized. The viewer gets the suggestion that the represented “object” in the advertising can be treated as an object. Not only are people portrayed as an object, brands also tend to glamourize sexual violence.

Examples are advertisement diverging from Dolce & Gabbana, Tom Ford and Suit Supply to Calvin Klein. The use of these representations can form an issue for society; they can create unintended effects. The power of advertising can be largely underestimated; it is an over $200 billion a year industry. We ourselves see 3000 ads a day. Still, most people presume advertising does not influence them. Ads sell products, but also values, concepts of success, love and sexuality and normalcy. They tell us who we are and who we should be (Kilbourne, 2016).

These ads become normal to us and these representations form an accurate portrayal of today’s society. Advertisement serves as a benchmark for what is desirable and what is normal, according to Goffman (1987) advertisement serves to define, or frame, reality. Feminists have argued that these objectifying and glamorized sexual violent representation feed into the “rape culture”. Kelsey Johnson (2015) defined it as; “The words, images, attitudes, and practices that tolerate and normalize sexual violence, ranging from light-hearted rape jokes to blaming the victim of sexual violence based on their outfit” (p. 2). Culture does not literally promote rape but it has been normalized and it is undervalued. In our culture boys and men are pressured to “score” women, approximately 3% of people involved in rape get sentenced to pris-
on, we teach girls to be careful on the streets instead of teaching boys to respect boundaries (Noellas, 2015). An example, which reflects the rape culture that I see in my own circles; often (girl) friends of mine pull silly faces when bicycling home in the dark. It is something we laugh about, however it does reflect our problematic society. In figure 3 is visualized by Paul Pierson how rape in society is oversight and underestimated.

Figure 3, Rape Culture, by Shannon Ridgeway, 2014.
Conclusion

Thus according to feminist theories gender representations in fashion advertising can create negative impact on society towards both women as well as men. As I see it, it works like a vicious circle: society holds onto gender characteristics and stereotypes, fashion and advertisement adopts, utilizes and perpetuates these, then again society sees these representations as accurate (Figure 4). Thus, as these “ideal genders” are being created, these representations eventually set boundaries for our individual identity. The normalization of these gender representations can cause issues like: deceptive body image, objectification and sexual aggression. When these representations are able to cause issues, why do marketers still portray them? That leaves us with the question which direction fashion advertising should move, to make the representation less offensive to the viewer. Since most discourse has resulted from feminist theories, a feminist approach seems imperative. However, men as well are increasingly objectified and exposed to high beauty standards. Thus, a direction that will benefit both men as women is a gender fluid advertising direction. Gender fluid advertising will not consider nor portray one sex dominant or submissive to the other. But, will advertising containing more gender fluid or feminist content be still as viable? And what brands are already busy with implementing these new directions in their marketing advertising?

Figure 4 Vicious Circle by Lena de Ligt
Developments in Advertising and the perception of the Media
Stereotypical gender roles will be of less importance in the lives of consumers over the next ten years, according to predictions made in several studies (Ellis, 2015). As reported by trend forecast website WGSN (2015), young generations are creating a culture that contains more openness without prejudice, and fewer of these young people feel obliged to identify themselves based on gender characteristics. Some brands choose to continue the representations of stereotypical gender in their advertising, others strive towards a more gender fluid or even a feminist approach.

Within the context of gender fluid advertising, brands are leaving the cultural recognized gender characteristics and chose to cast trans sexual models, men modelling for women’s collections and vice versa. Those who identify as: gender fluid, gender queer and transgender say their moment is finally coming. And probably no other industry is putting gender fluidness into focus as the fashion industry (Fischer, 2015).

There are also fashion brands that are using feminism in their marketing and advertising strategy; journalists argue that it is becoming fashionable or a trend (Fury, 2014) (Iqbal, 2015). The trend of advertising feminism is called; fevertising and has many hashtags attached to it for use on social media: #Empowerment, #PrettyCurious, #ShineStrong and #Unstoppable. These hashtags have been created through brands marketing strategies. In the following chapter I will disclose the current controversial fashion advertising concerning stereotypical gender, gender fluid and feminist advertising.
Figure 5, Gucci Guilty pour Homme, by Gucci, 2011.

Figure 6, Gender Neutral advertising Diesel, by Diesel, 2015.

Figure 7, “We Can Do It”*, by J. Howard Miller, 1943.
STEREOTYPICAL GENDER REPRESENTATIONS

Dolce&Gabbana\textsuperscript{2} has been recognized for its risqué advertising campaigns. Their 2007 Spring/Summer advertising campaign has been causing disturbance and commotion (Figure 8). This advertising campaign is an example of the gendered representations in where the stances of power relations are being portrayed. Media channels imply that the model in the portrayal is a suggestion and depiction of a gang rape, according to the fact that the women is lying and pinned on the floor surrounded by four half naked men (Duncan, 2015) (Spargo, 2015) (Moss, 2015). The advertising was banned in Spain, where it was branded as glorifying “chauvinist violence” (BBC News, 2007). It has now been pulled from all markets. The advertising portrayal can be seen as a way to promote violence against women. Dolce&Gabbana argue that the advertising portrays a sexual fantasy, however the expression on the women’s face does not indicate that she is active and willing in the scene. Feminists argue that advertising such as these misrepresent women as the object of sex. Men are also misrepresented as cruel, powerful, uncaring and out for sexual conquest (Gender Links, 2008). A contradictory approach of looking at the advertising is that the woman in the portrayal uses her sexuality to attract the men around her. The woman in this approach looks content, and is playing hard to get, to attract the men in the image. The advertising is set in a dream like place; the scene depicts a fantasy for young women and men (Christine, 2007). A spokesman said that alternative marketing strategies would be used (BBC News, 2007). The current advertising campaigns of Dolce&Gabbana portray inclusive representations and have not steered up commotion. The gender characteristics are still present but less prominent and offensive. Throughout research on the current representations of models in fashion magazines it has come forward that the portrayal of nudity, in fact, has declined. It seems that there is a decline in gender differences in fashion magazines, however this is the result of men that are portrayed in female like poses (Laan, 2015).

A recent advertising campaign of SuitSupply has also been criticized widely concerning the representations in the portrayal. Their 2016 ‘Toyboy’ advertising campaign shows scarce dressed women aside of small men in suits that are being ‘played’ with (Figure 9). The advertising campaign includes a portrayal of

\textsuperscript{2} A well-known luxury brand established in Milan in 1985
\textsuperscript{3} Dutch tailored suits brand
a man spanking a woman’s bum, and another of two men bouncing on a woman’s breasts. The advertising campaign has provoked controversy on social media and in the media accusing it for: misogyny, sexual objectification, sexism and racism (Warren, 2016). A Facebook event derived as a response against the advertising campaign. One side of the discussion argues that the body of the women portrayed in the advertising is being used as an accessory and ‘playground’ for the men’s fun and is thus being objectified. The context is important, as it is an advertising campaign for men’s suits. The portrayal depicts racism, regarding the black women’s body is used as a playground by white men, in regard to our history of slavery. The representation of the women is thus sexist according to the Oxford Dictionary (1884): ‘Sexism in language is an offensive reminder of the way the culture sees women’.

SuitSupply’s CEO, Fokke de Jong (2016), responds on this by stating: “I think our press release and idea about the campaign says a lot. It is called toy boys depicting the men as little dolls together with giant beautiful women that play with the men. Sexism implies inequality, If you want to read any form of sexism in here than it has to be towards the men they obviously do not have the upper hand here.” Critics argue that SuitSupply created this provocative advertising campaign for the media attention and buzz, which successfully derived, and was thus prepared with a pat response to the critics (Ohlrichs, 2016) (Bergman, 2016). To me though this portrayal is unfavourable for both sexes, as it also depicts men as: childish, pawing and banal.

GENDER FLUID REPRESENTATION

At Acne Studio’s, creative director Jonny Johansson has been playing with androgyny in his recent men’s collections, and senses a shift in the young generation’s attitude towards fashion (Socha, 2015). Their Fall 2015 advertising campaign includes Johansson’s twelve-year-old son: Frasse Johansson for a women’s wear collection (Figure 10). In the campaign no clear culture based gender characteristics are being portrayed. Acne Studios has a history refraining from traditional marketing communications. Daniel Björk (2011), fashion journalist, states that Acne actually once used traditional advertising, but that less people today remember it. Thus their strategy has been to refrain from it, as much as possible. A shift of strategy to traditional advertising would, according to Daniel, change the brand’s image. To me their new campaign is a great shift towards a more gender equal society. However, certain media argue that this androgyny trend is too one-sided: Men are often seen in women’s wear collections and shows but
Faran Kerncil (2015), editor at ELLE.com, states that “when women are told in an advertising campaign our new style icon is an adolescent male, a message is sent that women will never be worthy, by the sheer and inconvenient facts of our bodies’ geography. Frasse, nor any other men portrayed in advertising for women, will know what it is like to be a woman.” (p. para. 3)

A brand that is also jumping into the new ‘gender fluid’, inclusive advertising trend is & Other Stories, their Autumn/Winter 2015 Capsule athleisure collection featured two transgender models: Hari Nef and Valentin de Hingh (Figure 11). The whole crew in fact was transgender: the photographer, de stylist and the make up artist (Bennett, 2015). In the advertising no cultural based gender characteristics are being portrayed. The collection concept is called ‘the gaze’. The term ‘male gaze’, adopted from feminist film critic Laura Mulvey, refers to the way that women are represented and objectified by men in film. From there on other terms in different contexts have emerged such as ‘cis gaze’: The way that transgender people are represented by non-transgender people in fashion imagery (Stansfield, 2015). & Other Stories are constantly finding inspiration and talent in various ages, ethnicities and personalities (Mukhametzyanova, 2015).

Both the fashion industry as the media embraces this diversity and progressive mind set. However, de Hingh argues, we have to make sure this is not going to be some kind of trend, in where transgenders will be seen for two months in advertorials and when the trend has past we will past as well. The advertising campaign has gained much publicity and buzz, their campaign video gained over thirty eight thousand views and media like: Vogue, ELLE, Dazed, Wonderland, Time and The Guardian wrote about it. Responses from

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5 H&M group-owned Scandinavian fashion label
the public and the media so far have been positive. Gary Gates (2011) investigated how many people are included in the L.G.B.T. community, he found that 0.3% of the population is transgender and 3.5% identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual in the United States. The L.G.B.T. community is thus a large part of the population, which needs to be addressed as well. He also found in an earlier study that from 2000-2005 same sex-couples grew over 30% in the United States. Our culture is getting more and more open to this community. These gender-neutral advertising strategies seem inclusive, effective and at least not harmful. However, WGSN (2015) argues that gender-neutral advertising strategies are out-dated. Women control over 80% of discretionary spending and are the world’s fastest growing consumer economy. WGSN argues that the look, feel and language of most advertising is or gender-neutral or catered to men. Thus, it is interesting to see what kind of brands today are especially targeting women in both products as their communications, and how they are doing so.

FEMINIST ADVERTISING

Through social media, Instagram and Facebook, controversial subjects surrounding the female body have come to the forefront through feminist activities. Images of pubic hair, nipples, menstruation and breastfeeding have been removed and censored. (Warren, 2015).

A brand that shines a light on these issues is Shethinx, by offering underwear for women with periods. Their advertising campaign intended for display in subway stations (Figure 12) was not approved by Outfront Media; the company that sells the subway’s ad space. A spokesman argued that the ads “Seem to have a bit too much skin”, and regarding the half-grapefruit and the egg out of its shell they “seem inappropriate”. The representative also asked what a nine-year-old boy might think if he saw the ads and how his mother could explain that to him. Shethinx CEO, Miki Agrawel (2015), argues that this response might have something to do with the fact that all of Outfront’s sales representatives and five of seven members of its leadership team are men, and that a nine-year-old boy who rides the subway must have seen more objectionable images. Advertising in the subway stations that have been approved include one for plastic surgery that shows a woman holding two grapefruits to her chest, and an
other featuring a women in her bikini with the tagline: “Are you beach body ready?”. These can be very damaging according to the previous chapters in this thesis. Partly due to the Outfront’s reaction to the advertising, Shethinx did receive publicity and buzz surrounding their product, advertising and concept. Aside of the critique Shethinx received from Outfront, other media have responded positive about the advertising and product. Fast Company, ELLE and Jezebel have reviewed it as: Ingeniously designed, magic panties and stating: “yes please!” (Shethinx, 2015). Their promotional video has reached over seven hundred and nineteen thousand views.

Other taboos that Shethinx is tackling at the moment are aimed at: young mothers and other young women with incontinence and transgender people with periods. Their intention is to normalize these issues (Krantz, 2015).

Another taboo that is inherent in our society and in the media is aging; in fashion advertising we do not often see an elderly women. As stated in the previous chapter, advertising tends to sell ideal gender representations in where elderly women and men do not seem to fit the bill. However, Céline announced a new face for their Spring 2015 advertising campaign: at the time eighty year old Joan Didion, American author and journalist (Figure 13). The image encapsulates a certain cool and contemptuous feel. The media was positive about the representation as an alternative inclusive feel in contrast to the objects of sexual desire and norm that are currently mainly portrayed. Rachel Cooke (2015), the Guardian columnist, wrote about the new advertising campaign: “Oh, the brilliance of Didion! I like to think of myself as wholly resistant to the wicked wiles of big fashion, but this campaign seemed somehow to have got through, and I was all aflutter” (p. par. 3). However, not all critics have been as positive about the alternative advertising campaign. Journalists and writ-

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Luxury label founded in 1945 in Paris
ers have argued how they disapprove of the collaboration since Céline is ultimately part of the fashion business and the use of the writer seems as exploitation when the portrayal is used for selling clothes. Tim Teeman (2015) discusses how brands are casting elderly women for their advertising campaign: “They used to do their own thing…” Teeman says, “Now they have been co-opted by the industry, and their images used on advertisements that propose we spend our money on overpriced clothes and perfumes and handbags” (p. par. 2). Another argument from Arielle Dachille (2015), writer at Bustle, called this movement out on the fashion industry: “This ‘golden girl crush’ marketing trend seems to be another move in which feminism runs the risk of being domesticated by the forces it fundamentally opposes — capitalism, the patriarchy, white privilege” (p. par. 5 ). Yet, this argument is based from a perspective that is not celebrating fashion and the beauty of it, to the contrary. Concerning these statements, fashion advertising will never be able to sincerely advertise inclusivity and gender equality since the fashion business’s, as a capitalist sector, main goal is selling.
Conclusion

The extreme gender, gender-neutral and feminist representations in advertising as discussed above have proved to gain the needed publicity in their own way. One advertising campaign on its own, does not seem that harmful, but as aforementioned we see 3000 advertising a day, thus are presented and distributed on a large scale. It is inevitable that these representations then do not have impact on the consumer. As the gendered representations of Dolce & Gabbana and SuitSupply created negative controversy, so did the Shethinx and Céline advertising to another extent, whereas the gender fluid gained the least negative controversy. Thus, these portrayals have not been considered harmful or offensive by the media in contrast to the aforementioned. An issue that might occur is that the gender fluid representations have emerged for trend, and thus a profitability reason, these representations may decline after the trend is over. Regarding the positive comments and response for now these neutral gendered advertising seem as a beneficial way of getting attention from the media. After all, fashion eventually is about celebrating ‘new’ in contrast to the ‘nothing-new’ gendered representations. We know now how the media feel about these advertising campaigns, but more important for the industry is: what do the consumers perceive as ‘a good advertising campaign’? They eventually choose where they spend their money. If these consumers are not aware of the consequences that follow from stereotypical gendered advertising, or do not mind, is it then still as much of an issue?
Perception of Generation Y
As for now, we know how media and scholars think about fashion advertising concerning stereotypical gendered, gender fluid and feminism. However, the eventual purpose of advertising is to influence the consumer into buying the product. Therefore, I am interested in how consumers interpret these advertising campaigns. Whether it bothers them one way or another, they are the ones that are exposed and conveyed by advertising. To research the consumer’s point of view I limit my research to generation Y consumer; everyone who is born between 1982 and 2001. These consumers are the future and will soon be fulfilling jobs in the workplace, earning a proper salary and a sufficient disposable income to be able to buy into the advertising industry. Methods of research in the following chapter will include n-ethnographic research on forums online that contain discussions and general responses on certain fashion advertising campaigns. Also, a survey that has been analysed in where consumers rate their opinion based on given descriptions on certain fashion advertising campaigns.
SURVEY ON ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

As stated I have chosen to limit my research to generation Y consumers, regarding this survey only participants within that group, born between 1982 and 2001, have been researched. Ninety-eight people carried out the survey, from which forty-six were male and fifty-two were female. The survey consists out of twelve different advertising campaigns diverging from stereotypical gender, gender fluid and feminist portrayal. The brands that are included are: Dolce&Gabbana (Figure 8), Suit Supply (Figure 9), ACNE studios (Figure 10), &Other Stories (Figure 11), SheThinx (Figure 12), Céline (Figure 13), Victoria’s Secret (Figure 14), American Apparel (Figure 15), Marc Jacobs (Figure 16), Calvin Klein (Figure 17), Tom Ford (Figure 18) and Diesel (Figure 19). Participants were asked to evaluate their opinion on these advertising campaigns by means of descriptions like: Sexy, Offensive, Appealing, Tasteful, Shocking, Beautiful, Aesthetic and Harmful. These descriptions could be rated from a 1: opposite to a 5: extremely. The survey was uploaded at ThesisTools, a website allowing researchers and businesses to create, collect, and analyse survey data. To collect respondents the link has been distributed towards HVA students, habitants in a students building from the organization: ‘Socius-wonen’ and through social media. Thus, students from a variety of classes and disciplines have been researched.

In the following section, six brands that score highest on a certain description regarding their advertising campaign will be exemplified. ‘Most’ reflects two extremes and percentages of the scale, for example: 1 and 2 or 4 and 5. The campaign that participants overall perceived as most sexy where that of Dolce & Gabbana: 65%, as well as Victoria’s secret: 72%, Suit Supply: 33%, American Apparel: 80%, Calvin Klein: 53% and Tom Ford: 60%. However, most of these campaigns are also perceived as most harmful: Dolce & Gabbana: 31%, Victoria’s Secret: 44%, Suit Supply: 38%, American Apparel: 25%, Calvin Klein: 43% and Tom Ford: 47%. These were then also the campaigns that were perceived least tasteful: Dolce & Gabbana: 64%, Victoria’s Secret: 36%, Suit Supply: 66%, Calvin Klein: 57%, Tom Ford: 63% and apart from the aforementioned SheThinx: 54%. The advertising campaigns that were perceived by the participants as highest aesthetic level where: ACNE studios: 43%, SheThinx: 39%, &Other Stories: 37%, Céline: 57%, Marc Jacobs: 47% and Diesel: 45%. Most of these campaigns were also perceived as most beautiful: ACNE Studios and & Other stories both: 34%, Victoria’s Secret: 48%, Céline: 57%, American Apparel: 62%, Marc Jacobs: 45% and Diesel: 51%. The campaigns that have been perceived as most appealing are very varied: ACNE Studios: 38%, Victoria’s Secret: 47%, Céline: 45%, American Apparel: 49%, Marc Jacobs: 43% and Diesel: 43%. The campaigns that where most controversial and to the participants perceived as most shocking where: SheThinx: 25%, Victoria’s Secret: 19%, Suit Supply: 40%, American Apparel: 32%, Calvin Klein: 44% and Tom Ford: 46%. Finally, the campaigns that were perceived as least offensive are: ACNE Studios: 70%, SheThinx: 56%, & Other Stories: 78%, Céline: 81%, Marc Jacobs: 80% and Diesel: 77%.

The difference between the male and female perception on the advertising campaign was little. Fe-
male participants perceived the Tom Ford advertising campaign as: more offensive, more shocking, more harmful, less appealing, less tasteful, less beautiful, less aesthetic. Female participants perceived the Céline advertising campaign as more beautiful and more aesthetic. Female participants perceived the SheThinx advertising campaign as: less beautiful, less aesthetic, less shocking and less harmful. Female participants perceived the American Apparel advertising campaign as: less sexy, less tasteful, less beautiful, less aesthetic and more shocking. Female participants perceived the Suit Supply advertising as: less sexy, less tasteful and more shocking. Female participants perceived the Calvin Klein advertising campaign as: more appealing more offensive, less tasteful, more shocking and less beautiful. Female participants perceived the Victoria’s Secret advertising campaign as: more offensive and more harmful. Finally, female participants perceived the Diesel advertising campaign as: sexier, more appealing and more beautiful.

Thus, what results from this research is that the advertising campaigns that portray stereotypical gendered representations are perceived well by respondents: most sexy, some most beautiful and appealing, and most shocking. These are all important characteristics to capture the attention of the viewer or the consumer. It is noteworthy that the perceived aesthetic and tastefulness is very low in contrast to the other advertising campaigns. Most of these brands were perceived as harmful and offensive. Brands need to measure and decide what kind of message they want to send to their consumer and how they aim to position the brand. For example, if, as a brand the aesthetic and tastefulness is important: a less stereotypical portrayal is recommended. This is thus a limitation for brands and the industry. One brand that stands out is SheThinx; the brand was perceived as aesthetic, shocking, least offensive and least harmful. This is a good match: it captures the attention of the media and the consumer, however is still perceived as aesthetic. Another brand that managed to be perceived with the right characteristics is American Apparel; their advertising campaign was perceived as: sexy, aesthetic, appealing, beautiful and shocking. To a lesser extent it was also perceived: harmful (25%).
Figure 8, 2007 D&G advertising image subject to controversy, by Dolce & Gabbana, 2007.

Figure 9, SuitSupply Toyboys campaign, by SuitSupply, 2016.

Figure 10, ACNE Studios 2015 campaign, by ACNE Studios, 2016.

Figure 11, &Other Stories athleisure campaign, by &Other Stories, 2015.

Figure 12, SheThinx Campaign, by SheThinx, 2015.

Figure 13, Celine 2015 Campaign, by Celine, 2015.

Figure 14, Victoria’s Secret Perfect body Campaign, by Victoria’s Secret, 2014.

Figure 15, Marc Jacobs Family campaign, by Marc Jacobs, 2016.

Figure 16, Calvin Klein 2010 Campaign, by Calvin Klein, 2010.

Figure 17, Tom Ford 2010 Campaign, by Tom Ford, 2010.

Figure 18, Gender Neutral advertising Diesel, by Diesel, 2015.

Figure 19, American apparel made in Bangladesh Campaign, by American Apparel, 2014.
ANALYSIS FORUMS

To research the consumer’s perspective, a research has been conducted on threads and comments in a forum of ‘Thefashionspot.com’: a community platform where everyone is able to participate and share ideas and opinions. The analysis of this content is relevant as these people are not aware of the fact that they are being researched, and thus are brutally honest. As BusinessOfFashion (2013) stated: “These sites attract significant web traffic, are routinely read by industry insiders and can be powerful influencers of purchasing behaviour” (p. par. 1).

One of the advertising campaigns that has been analysed is a follow up on the aforementioned gendered representation of Dolce&Gabbana in 2007: the Dolce&Gabbana Spring/Summer 2016 advertising campaign (Figure 20). However, the perception of the forum participants on the new revised advertising strategy, that contains an inclusive family feel, was not so positive. In fact, on their total of fifty-two comments, 63% was negative, 4% was positive, 21% was neither, 2% was aware of the message and thus positive and 10% was joking about it. One person commented with: “I miss Steven Klein” (Oxymore, 2015, p. par. 12), Steven Klein is the photographer who shot most of the more sexual and darker advertising campaigns from 2005 to 2011 for Dolce&Gabbana.

The inclusive advertising campaigns of Marc Jacobs of 2015 and 2016 shot by David Sims (Figure 12) were received much better. The advertising campaign includes his muses: people in different sizes, different genders, different races and different sexuality’s. The community applauds the diversity and is aware of the issue in fashion advertising in this thread, a response was: “I love the fact that Marc uses women of different ages for his campaigns...” (Nepenthes, 2015, p. par.7), but also negative like: “Stunt casting indeed. It will draw attention, which is the job of an act. But aesthetically, she looks horrible...” (woemwoem, 2015, p. par 7.). Overall, the two campaigns gained over two hundred and thirty comments: 14% was negative, 35% was positive, 1% was aware of the message and negative, 41% was neither, 8% was joking about it and 1% was confused.

The aforementioned Céline advertising campaign (Figure 9), which got positive response from the media, also got well received by the community members in the forum, a response was: “Amazing move from Phoebe and such a great slap in the face for the shallowness and vacuity that the fashion world has become...” (Wolkfolk, 2015, p. par. 14). Overall the advertising received thirty-nine comments: 13% was negative, 49% was positive, 5% was aware of the message and positive, 2% was aware of the message and negative and 31% was neither.

Finally, the community member responses were varied concerning the controversial Alexander Wang advertising campaign (Figure 21): it portrays a naked woman, with her jeans by her ankles. Responses were: “Human sexuality is nothing to be ashamed of, but when sex meets money - as it does in advertising - it stops being about personal expression, and it’s more about the merger of two industries, both with an entirely different bottom line than personal liberation or celebrating the body.” (Tigerrouge, 2014, p. par. 5),
someone responded on this by stating: "Why is mimicking sexuality worse than mimicking any other feeling? Let’s say... happiness? Normal actors are paid to mimic sexuality too... and that’s wrong? They are also trying to sell something. And campaigns tell a story too" (Creative, 2014, p. par. 5). The campaign received seventy-three comments: 4% was negative, 30% was positive, 19% was aware of the issue and positive, 29% was aware of the issue and negative, 10% was neither, 7% was joking about it and 1% was confused.

More fashion advertising campaigns have been analysed, however excluded in this text, as the outcomes are similar. Overall the community members are not really aware of the issues as stated in the first chapter like: sexual objectification and gender stereotyping, as they do not mention it. However, they have been critical on the use of Photoshop in images: as it sometimes is too obvious, overdone and fake. Throughout the whole forum 495 results show when searching for the term: ‘Photoshop’, from which 95% are negative.
Conclusion

Thus, the generation Y consumer interprets the fashion advertising campaigns regarding stereotypical gender, gender-neutral and feminist overall as positive. Which means that to a certain extent this is not an issue to the industry. Through the research on forums it shows that the community members do celebrate inclusive representations and discuss whether certain controversial advertisings are accurate or not. However, the community members tend to put the aesthetic and beauty in a superior position to the issues discussed in the first chapter. Also a little amount of people show concerns or awareness regarding the discussed issues in the threads, therefore an informative platform would be suitable. Regarding the outcomes of the survey, it seems that: sexiness, harmfulness, distastefulness and offensiveness go hand in hand regarding the perception on the fashion advertising campaigns. As so, do the characteristics of aesthetic, beauty, tastefulness, unsexy and non-offensive. Thus, if a brand wants to position itself as an aesthetic brand it should not portray stereotypical sexual representations. In that case these representations cause limitations and are thus issues to the industry. But why do brands tend towards these portrayals if it demeans their aesthetic? Why do these brands portray such exclusive representations? And last but not least, why do brands advertise such overly sexual representations?
What’s the Industry’s Reason?
The media have expressed their critical opinions on the issues mentioned in the first chapter. Also people within the industry: Vivienne Westwood and Naomi Campbell, called the fashion industry out with a complaint on portraying too white, nearly exclusively Anglo-looking models (Mears, 2009). Model Hari Nef (2015) said: “I’ve only worked in the industry for a few years, but I know it well enough to conclude that an appeal to social justice and civil rights via fashion casting will fall on dead ears. The fashion industry does not care about these things, and it probably never will. It cares about consumers” (p. par 5.). Lucy Mangan (2015), writer at the Guardian states: “we need advertisers to break the vicious, and viciously effective, cycle that threatens to trap current and future generations of consumers, and start using “real” women – of healthy weights, and maybe slightly varying” (p. par. 4). A new advertising agency called Badgers & Winters (2016) emerged promising to never objectify women in their advertising. However, is this possible? As, for example, the ad-busting blog (2012): a feminist response to the representation of women in advertising, fashion photography and media, have argued that this advertising campaign of Rimmel (Figure 22) depicts sexual objectification. The advertising campaign of Badgers & Winters (Figure 23) for Diane von Furstenberg looks quite similar.
This lipstick is so god damn orgasmic that I need to suck a cock strawberry.

Figure 22, Rimmel London Campaign, by Ad-Busting blog.

Figure 23, Diane von Furstenberg’s launch of DVF Home, by Badgers&Winters.
SEGMENTATION STRATEGY

As discussed, fashion advertisers tend to choose ‘culturally’ recognized gender representations to sell their product. As Lori Wolin (2003) states: “Advertising is sold on the basis of the demographics of the audience expected to view the advertisements. Gender is a critical factor in developing marketing strategy via advertising messages emphasizing information that is thought to persuade the male or female target” (pp. 111-129). These representations from an industry perspective are used as segmentation strategy. It is easily identifiable, gender segments are accessible, measurable, and responsive to marketing elements and gender segments are large and profitable (Wolin, 2003). Thus, a woman would rather purchase a bag when a female is represented in the advertising, and a man will do so as a male is represented in the advertising. According to Wolin, advertisers often use colour, shape, texture, packaging, logos, verbiage, graphics, sound and name to define the gender of a brand. By closing the gap on previous gender related advertising studies, he found that women seem to prefer feminine advertising, but are also acceptant of masculine advertising. Males, do not readily accept feminine advertising. As I see it, this again depicts a vicious circle: Wolin stated that females and males accept feminine and masculine brands differently. However, as discussed in the previous chapter according to Goffman (1987) advertisement serves to define, or frame, reality. Advertising is thereby helping in socially constructing gender role stereotypes. The cause becomes the effect. Gendered representations are used to attract attention and persuade the consumer into buying the product, these images have taken a form in where the industry is ultimately targeting a narrow group. The industry shows how we think men and women are like, in the stereotypical representations, but perhaps men and women do not have to be like that. Through out research of Sarah Pickleseimer (2010) on gender role stereotyping it appears that these gender roles and stereotypes are out-dated and no longer necessary for advertising products. Male and female respondents in this study rated the advertising no more or less favourable despite the gender congruency of the represented in the image and the viewer, respondents did perceive the gender congruent advertisements as more clear in contrast to the gender incongruent advertisements. Also, according to Deanna A. Rohlinger (2002), sociologist, the consumers with the most desirable demographics to advertisers: young, single, professional, employed, high-income, well educated, and urban, are also the least likely to purchase products from a brand that depict traditional gender roles.

MATCH UP BEAUTY

Gendered stereotypes are closely associated with idealized beauty. Beauty can be defined as “qualities that give pleasure to the senses or exalt the mind”. Youthfulness, symmetry, and body ratios are identified as the ideals of beauty, physical attractiveness of models in advertisement have shown to have positive effects on viewers (Barulich, 2006). We like to look at beautiful things and advertisers capitalize on this idea of liking. To see attractive people it activates thoughts

Socially constructed is a learned set of behaviors accompanied by cognitive interpretations of these behaviors (Rohlinger, 2002)

Gender incongruent in this context means that the advertising shows a portrayal of two different genders, thus: a female with a power drill. These objects have proven to be associated with these genders through subsidiary research of Pickleseimer. This could be implemented in fashion by for example the aforementioned advertising campaign in where a male is selling a women’s wear collection. Gender congruent in this context means that the object and the person in the advertising are of a similar gender, for example: a female representation paired with a stroller.
of ‘goodness’, this develops a higher and better evaluation to other people and objects – such as the product or the person in the representation (Sheehan, 2014). Research has found that the appearance of models in the advertising must match the appearance of the included product. This combining of beauty is called: the Match-Up Hypothesis, and argues that by matching the product and the model, it gives the viewer a more coherent message. Concerning this hypothesis it was found that multiple categories within beauty exist: Classic Beauty/Feminine, Sensual/Exotic, Sex-Kitten/Trendy and Cute/Girl-Next-Door. If an advertiser wants to sell their product accordingly to this hypothesis, and the product matches one of these categories; then the model in the portrayal needs to have these same characteristics. If this message is consistent with the viewers desired self-image this may further enhance acceptance of the advertisement (Barulich, 2006). The issue remains that this desired self-image is socially constructed through advertising. The advertising industry has recognized the impact and value of using physical attractive models and celebrities for their advertising campaign. According to advertisers these models add to the effectiveness and credibility of their campaign and are generally more liked than unattractive models (Barulich, 2006).

**SEX SELLS**

Sexual objectification and offensive sexist advertising campaigns are closely associated with the industry’s philosophy that sex sells. As James B. Twitchell (1996), author and professor of English, stated: “Sex doesn’t sell, but it certainly captures attention” (p. 54). And it does, as discussed in chapter 2. Al Ries (2015), founder of Ries & Ries and marketing strategist, said about implementing controversial sexual advertising: “There are two things that happen, one positive and one negative: the positive is that many consumers are exposed to the brand’s advertising that might not have known about it before. The negative is that some consumers will lower their opinions about the brand itself” (p. par. 2). He argues and believes that the positive impact will outweigh the negative, as the bad publicity does not last that long and consumers are generally not that interested in advertising. Rony Zeidan (2015) agrees with this and acknowledges: “It was much more prevalent in the ‘90s, and as the saying goes no press is bad press, every brand has bypassed negative impacts relatively quickly. People have short attention spans after all. The purpose of advertising is for people to talk about it, whether it’s hilarious, witty, or sexual, the goal is the same. That’s brand awareness” (p. par 5.). Richard Tafling (1996) researched why sex captures attention: a sexual appeal is a psychological appeal. In humans sexual desire is an instinctive response when we look for a partner, its effectiveness is gender linked. Sexual imagery used in fashion advertising can be partly explained by the appeal of looking for that partner: We want to look good to appeal to a partner and to propagate our species. In a partner we search for the best characteristics to “survive”, when a portrayal does not fit these characteristics; sexual desire does not occur. Humans base their criteria on reproductive strategies, thus a man’s criteria can be: healthy, young, receptive and
impregnable. Women take a larger physical, physiological and temporal stake in the reproduction of children and therefore have other criteria in choosing a partner. Women tend to search for criteria like: intelligence, money, power, prestige, position, status, anything that will contribute the best genes and chances of survival to her children. Thus, it is up to advertising to convince people that products are of use for them, through a suitable sexual connection. As men's criteria are more objective than women's this reflects in the representations in advertising: Women are more often sexual and sensual portrayed in contrast to men who are most often portrayed as autonomous, powerful, active and present. These portrayals then lead back to the six categories of gendered representations from Goffman (1987).
Thus the importance of gendered advertising is the capacity of making the portrayal more understandable for the consumer. Respondents in Picklesimers (2010) research have not acknowledged difference in the effectiveness of the portrayal. Taflinger (1996) argues that the sexual portrayal is effective on behalf of human instinct; this explains the sexual portrayal, but not so much the sexist and unhealthy representations. The duration that an advertising campaign is exposed to the viewer is limited and short, it needs to be clear and capture attention. A sexual portrayal is an easy approach for a successful advertising campaign; scholars have argued that it is a quick attention grabber. When the portrayal of a brands advertising campaign depicts a risky approach on a sensitive subject such as: sexual objectification or sexism, the brand will await controversy and media attention. Gendered representations as discussed in the previous chapter are often a marketing strategy focussed on the buzz in contrast to the simplification that these marketers are not aware of the controversy surrounding the subject. Beauty seems subjective, but as these ideal gendered representations are partly constructed by advertising and even can be classified it is not completely. Beauty can be portrayed in different forms: gendered, gender neutral and feminist representations, as proven in the third chapter concerning the perception of the consumer of generation Y. The answer to this sub question is simplified in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Cause</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deceptive body image</td>
<td>Beauty is appealing, segmentation strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Objectification</td>
<td>Sex Sells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Culture</td>
<td>Sex Sells</td>
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</table>

Table 2
The main question for this paper investigates: “To what extent is the stereotypical gendered representation of models in fashion advertising an issue to the fashion industry?” To investigate and give answer to this question, the perception of several parties is needed: feminist scholars, as they introduced the issues, the media, the consumer of generation Y and finally the industry’s reasoning.

In regard to the perspective and research of scholars, the gendered representations definitely have proven to be an issue to the consumer. Society as a whole develops issues like: a deceptive body image, sexual aggression and objectification. Females are portrayed as most unfavourable in fashion advertising according to Goffman’s research, they are portrayed as passive and submissive in contrast to male models. Terms that emerged according to these issues are: sexual objectification and rape culture.

In regard to the media, responses are varied towards the different advertising campaigns that are disclosed in the second chapter. The media, for example, have not been all in favour of the inclusive advertising of Céline, for other reasons than the issues concerning gender representations. Towards the gendered representations like Dolce&Gabbana and SuitSupply, the media have not been fully acceptant. The media are most often aware of the fact that these representations are partly used by marketers to create controversy and publicity, however are still acting upon it. The media have been positive about the alternative advertising of more gender-fluid representations. It proves as well that these portrayals are able to gain publicity and buzz, without portraying sexual representations. Portraying the controversial gendered representations does create publicity and attention, however it may also tarnish the name of a brand. Our culture is getting more and more acceptant to the L.G.B.T. community, which means that the industry needs to adapt to this level as well.

Concluding from the survey analysis, it shows that overall the respondents perceived the gendered, gender neutral and feminist advertising campaigns as positive. It appeared that the characteristics: sexiness, harmfulness, distastefulness and offensiveness go hand in hand in regard to the perception of the consumer of generation Y to the advertising campaigns. So did the characteristics: aesthetic, beauty, tastefulness, unsexy and non-offensive. According to the results of the survey, the respondents perceived the gendered and sexual as most harmful and offensive; respondents have degraded most of these on aesthetic and beautiful level, however, not on sexiness or appealing. The analysis on forums shows that often still
community members chose aesthetic over ethics, however when the issues are discussed in the thread and are thus more clear: more community members are negative in contrast to positive. The community members overall are celebrating inclusive representations. To the consumer itself it is not an issue, however it is important to take in consideration that consumers may not be aware of the impact that not one, but 3000 advertising campaigns a day can have.

As to what the industry’s reasoning is for the gender and sexual representations, it is partly due to the above-mentioned creation of controversy, which causes publicity for the brand. However, other reasons are: an ever long used segmentation strategy (which makes it easier for brands to target their consumer), sex sells (the psychological appeal towards an advertising) and the social construction of beauty. As the segmentation strategy is proven to be out-dated, it becomes an issue. Also, the sexual representations, as mentioned before is an issue as it forms a limitation in the aesthetic. People from within the industry are aware of the issues and have expressed their critical opinion about it, suggesting changes in the representations. As a consequence, brands as discussed in the second chapter are already implementing new representations for their advertising campaign.

To conclude, and capsulize the research, the answer to the main question is displayed in table 1.

To rate the extent of the issue six variables are used: not an issue, insignificant issue, considerable issue, issue, critical issue and proven issue.

Thus, action that needs to occur is: make the consumer more aware of the issues, the question that follows is: What direction should the industry take in the gendered representations in fashion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminist scholars</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Consumer</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deceptive body image</td>
<td>Proven Issue</td>
<td>Considerable Issue</td>
<td>Not mentioned/ Not aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Objectification</td>
<td>Proven Issue</td>
<td>Critical Issue</td>
<td>Considerable Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape Culture</td>
<td>Critical Issue</td>
<td>Not mentioned/ Not aware</td>
<td>Not mentioned/ Not aware</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 2
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