Multiculturalism in Advertising:

A look at non-diversification and stereotyping in the advertising industry.

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INTRODUCTION

If a surveyor was to ask, how does advertising make one feel, would the responses depend on the participant's disposition, race, and gender? All the responses would potentially be different depending on whether a white male, young Indigenous person, or black female answered. Advertising contributes a significant portion of what society is exposed to. The general population takes advertisements for granted but the message is there to sell a product. Consumers do not always realize the fabricated messages that are present in most advertisements. Desensitization has taken place in response to the strategies that the marketers use. Numerous stereotypes are embedded in advertising which people assume as accurate.

Briefly reflect on recently published advertisements. If one were to break down the ad into sections; the setting, the topic, the cast, and the product being pushed, a common theme arises. What is displayed as a way of marketing a product, whether that be alcohol, cleaning items, or even clothing comes at the expense of multiple group identities and shows a lack of representation in the advertising market.

Over the centuries, advertising has evolved and methods of distribution have changed. What was once just reading a newspaper or magazine ad went to billboards and television which then led to us having a computer with instant access to all advertisements- twenty-four seven. But, for all the expansion and evolution in the advertising world, one major problem still remains. For many, no second thought is taken to reflect on advertising being shown to society. To the large majority that make up the minority, advertising being pushed out of agencies is controversial.

Advertising has unfairly represented many minorities. This deep- rooted problem bogs the advertising industry. From both a consumer's point of view and an agency's point of view, the industry has misrepresented and been palpably exclusive, excluding people of different races, disposition, gender, and even sexual orientation.

This paper aims to educate the public on both sides of production. It takes into consideration which people have been excluded from getting management jobs in the advertising industry and people who are not included in the ads consumers see as a result of the undiversified management. In addition to little diversity, is stereotyping in creation. Women, disabled, Indigenous, LGBTQIA+, African American, Asian American, and Latino communities encompass the minorities covered. Also discussed is a brief background of advertising, as well as progressive approaches and suggestions for advertising.

BACKGROUND

Even though the diversity problem has recently been discussed, the diversity problem within advertising has been an ongoing issue. *AdAge*, a reputable advertising industry newsletter has even recognized the problem (Geske 34–48). Common knowledge of advertising includes backlash over the years because of certain campaigns with misrepresentation and low diversity. A simple Google search of "controversial advertising" provides hundreds of examples; some of these examples can be pointed towards Dove, Nivea, Pepsi, Nike, and Gillette, all incredibly famous and popular brands. Dove made the mistake of selling soap which seemingly made people whiter, and Pepsi indicated that racial injustice could be solved with soda. One may wonder, who is in the decision-making seats behind the visuals being released?

Conversations around the problem were quiet for a long time. Now, conversations are getting louder and calling for action. Until recently, "the way minority ethnic consumers have been represented in marketing communications has sparked debate recently, touching upon issues of stereotyping and exclusion" (Licsandru and Cui 261-274). The history of advertising is incredibly unequal, for any ethnicity. Ironically, when one thinks about representation, everything in the advertising industry is accounted for, from KPI (key performance indicator), ROI (return on investment), Google Analytics, click through rate and so much more. Advertisers have found a way to know the numbers, rates, and percentages for every single ad produced. There are thorough reports, spreadsheets, and presentations arranged for stakeholders and clients to view, yet the industry failed to measure and adequately hire the people working in it.

It all ties back to the question, who is in the decision-making positions? The saying, "You can't manage what you can't measure" bears true. Plus, many can agree that "advertisements have become 'the most dynamic and sensuous representation of the cultural values in the world,'" as pointed out by Jonathan Schroeder (76-81). What is seen in advertising and shown to millions of people will start to spread certain cultural messages of how consumers see or should see the world. Research has concluded that advertising is supposed to reflect values and thoughts, but somehow America has managed to completely disregard a large portion of minorities living in the country (Schroeder 76-81). Culture is a set of expressional symbols and unrepresented or inadequately represented minorities will take inaccurate and undiversified advertising to heart. Robin Spring and Fang Yang state it best by writing, "advertising is both a reflection and projection of society" (121-139). Reflection meaning that what is seen in

advertising is a direct correlation to how the country thinks. Projection meaning what is produced in ads is a telling to society what is acceptable or not acceptable.

So, why does the industry lack diversity? One would think all individuals would be represented in advertisements, as all are potential customers. Sadly, that is not what happens. According to the article "Cultural Diversity in Advertising and Representing Different Visions of America," advertisements that have a low diversity range are often going to be supported by the dominate ideology in America (Shepherd et al. 23). By pointing this out, it becomes obvious why advertising has little diversity. A high percentage of America is white, and their values tend to be instilled into society. So, in the long run, it makes sense as to why ads with little diversity are favored. Little diversity reflects who the white people are and their values. This thought of dominant ideology can be traced to America's Protestant beginnings. Since "advertising shapes American social values" it makes sense to have been rooted in the Protestant ethics of hard work (Schroeder 76-81). This being said, the consumer market turns increasingly white with this ideology.

Also discovered is the notion that people do go out of their way to be discriminative because diversity goes against typical customs. Many times, discrimination goes unrecognized. It makes sense as many people oppose what is different to themselves and do not like disruption to the "norm." It is agreeable that nobody likes to see change and "consumers respond negatively to certain portrayals of diversity not necessarily because of overt prejudice, but because such portrayals go against their schemas or expectations" (Yang et al. 695). When people see something different or out of the ordinary, they innately are dismissive of it. This dismissive behavior is not a conscious choice, nor is it an excuse for decades of exclusion.

America is famously known as a melting pot and welcoming of new people from all over the world. Presidents boast in their speeches how great America is to live in and that America is accepting of anyone who comes here and works hard. Quite literally, America is a nation built on that of immigrants coming to his country to build a better life. However, as the white population grew to majority status, anyone else (who did not look the same way) was ignored. Minorities are just now starting to take a rise when it comes to equality (Holt 15–17). It is about time that the minority have their time in the spotlight after being kept in the dark for so long.

However, when minorities are brought into focus, it is typically never an accurate representation of them. Do not forget the incredibly stereotypical ads that consumers do see of minorities and minorities see of themselves. If minorities see themselves wrongly represented, they have no choice but to think that is who they are and will strive to be like that as they grow up. Examples can be found in the advertising made for Indigenous people and Latinos, as this will be discussed later in the paper. The ads are not made to see them in normal daily activities. Much of the advertising for the two groups are focused on specific narratives made up by the dominant race. Licsandru and Cui point out that minorities look more into social cues and looking for acceptance at the social level more than the majority does (261-274). People who are not part of the majority feel the need or even threat to assimilate and find a place where they can fit in. If advertising continues to overlook how a potential customer feels about themselves, it can and will trigger acts of exclusion, whether premeditated or not. To add, these potential customers will no longer look to a company's brand when looking around for a product to use. Instead, they will look to competitors doing a much better job at representation in an accurate and more positive way, even though they may have a lower quality product. Part

of advertising's job is to make people feel good about their purchase. Think of ads and the reason behind the purchase and the feelings associated with buying the product. The feelings are normally noted as good, warm, or excited. For example, someone may go out and buy Pillsbury products to cook with because of the warm and family-oriented commercials they see. The purchase makes it seem that they too can achieve the same warm and family-oriented feeling.

On the other hand, ads having a negative effect on consumers have been criticized. Many campaigns became boycotted because of advertising creatives agencies launched. "Some multiple ethnic embedded campaigns have been boycotted by millennials in social media such as the Pepsi Kendall Jenner commercial or [the] Nivea campaign" (Licsandru and Cui 261-274). The Pepsi Kendall Jenner can be thought of as a landmark example, as it relates to diversity. Police brutality creates a reality for some citizens and a movement began in regard. This campaign was pulled because of how the campaign was suggesting appropriation. Or take this example from former *AdAge* editor, Ken Wheaton. Ken who has been writing about the diversity issue in advertising, keenly remembers the lawsuits on Madison Avenue because of "its prejudicial hiring practices that are still threatening the industry today" (Spring and Yang 121-139). Special interest groups such as the NAACP, the National Negro Congress, among others have put the pressure on agencies to do better. Even with a push for better diversity efforts, management still falls short on the employment aspect of diversity.

DIVERSITY IN THE ADVERTISING WORKFORCE

Many agencies have struggled to hire, retain, and attract employees from minority groups. Numerous attempts have been aimed at pushing diversification into the workforce for

advertising professionals, but they have been underwhelmingly unsuccessful. Alice Kendrick and Jami Fullerton said, "for decades, the advertising industry has failed to satisfy critics as well as government officials with its own attempts to diversify its workforce" (25-32). It is no secret to agencies that employment diversity could be better. The same article also states that "agency culture emerged as a major issue cited for the lack of progress in minority hiring" (Kendrick and Fullerton 25-32). With a low diversity hiring rate, an agency's culture is subpar as to what it should be. However, if agencies were able to attract and retain a diverse set of employees the work culture could improve significantly.

Research showed numerous outcomes of implementing diverse employment and how it can dramatically improve the "health" of an organization. Studies have proven that a diverse workplace creates benefits for employees such as a better work environment, profitability, and better retention; and contributes to the overall success of the company. There is "potential for improved workplace dynamics and organization outcomes" (Cunningham). Plus, retention and attraction of employees should significantly increase as well with a higher number of diverse employees contributing to the success of the organization. These benefits are not all that can be achieved with diversity.

Another benefit besides great work culture and overall success, is better creative strategies being generated- perhaps the most important one of all when working in a creative discipline. Think of it as cross pollination because of the differences in perspectives and backgrounds. Jacqueline Lynch writes, "one potential benefit of diverse teams is improved performance" in the article, "Advertising Industry Evolution: Agency Creativity, Fluid Teams and Diversity. An Exploratory Investigation." (845–866). This "improved performance" would

certainly push the creative boundaries on campaigns (Lynch 845–866). Frankly, diversification

will create better creative strategies in the end due to the variety of minds at the table. No

longer will there only be old white men sitting making decisions. Research has shown that

"when coupled with inclusive workplace practices, employee diversity is associated with a

creative work environment" (Cunningham). Not only are there the internal benefits as

mentioned, but externally an extremely important one.

An external part of a company that is arguably the most vital to the life of the company

is the customers. New and returning customers will think highly of the company because of the

efforts of diversification. Lucas Miller writes, that "88% of those surveyed felt that using more

diversity in advertising images would help their brand's reputation." Better diversity in

advertising would in turn help a company's reputation. Cunningham states a "perceived

external image is enhanced from having a diverse workplace." With many scholarly statements

pointing towards having a diverse employee base in order to drive the reputation and sales,

retention is vital. However, no matter how hard a company works at diversifying its workplace,

convincing new employees to stay is crucial.

Sadly, many diverse recruits coming into companies do not feel comfortable in large

agency atmospheres. The recruits do not feel comfortable because they are not seeing

themselves in any position they wish to attain, moving up the corporate ladder. Emmy

Liederman makes the point that "if Black employees come in, look up the ladder and don't see

people who look like them, they will quickly leave." This makes sense, as people typically want

to feel assimilated with their coworkers. In fact, 74% of potential employees said, "the ad

industry is mediocre or worse in terms of diversity in hiring" (Kendrick and Fullerton 25-32).

This percentage is well over half of the potential new employee pool, which greatly effects the organizations efforts to be diverse. With this then came a request to make a "pipeline of entry-level racial and ethnic minority candidates" (Kendrick and Fullerton 25-32). This was put forth by the American Advertising Federation (AAF- the oldest national advertising trade association in the United States) and the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA- a United States trade association for advertising agencies), which evolved into the Minority Advertising Internship Program (MAIP). The intention of the program is to help diversify the pool of candidates (Kendrick and Fullerton 25-32). The program will work directly with university advertising programs, as they are seen as a vital part of recruitment for minority employees. Even with programs put in place, it is important to look at the current statistics of employee diversity as a source of needed change.

The Association of National Advertisers, ANA, conducted research on diversity across agencies that held membership with them in November 2018. This survey titled, "A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry," yielded results that found 87% of advertising industry agency employees are white. The report also pointed out that "ethnic diversity is poor from the senior level on down" ("A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry"). This meaning that the diversification is a widespread issue in the industry and not limited to certain levels of the workplace. Little diversification exists in all levels of management. Another prominent fact points out, "In 2019, executives at the major agencies WPP, Publicis, Dentsu, Omnicom, and IPG were between 82% and 85% white" (Rittenhouse). Yet another statistic pointing out the incredibly high percentage of white employees dominating the advertising industry workforce. Another study done in 2020 from the ANA points out that out of 870 chief

marketing positions, only 3% were African American, 5% were Asian American, and 4% were

Latino (Rittenhouse). These percentages are grossly incomparable to white people working in

advertising.

In 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the total amount of employed for

advertising, public relations, and related services industry, at 542,000 ("Labor Force Statistics

from the Current Population Survey"). Break that total into ethnic and gender segments: 85.4

thousand white, 52.5 thousand women, 6.6 thousand African American, 6 thousand Asian

American, and 7.9 thousand Latino. Knowing these statistics gives one a great jumping off point

for understanding how little diversity there is in advertising. However, diving deeper into these

numbers proves how these groups are underrepresented in the advertising industry.

At first glance, women seemingly form a large segment. This looks impressive, but

further inspection shows a less impressive figure. Women represent literally half of the world's

population. Typically, men hold positions of power and women are not included in those

positions. The advertising world is still led by what can be deemed the "boys club." The

industries "many creative departments are like male fraternities" stated Sheri Broyles and Jean

Grow (4–6). While this may not be shocking to some, others may wonder what the reason

behind this "boys club" is. The club's nature seems to be based on the theory of "people tend

to interact with others who are similar on attributes such as sex, race, and education" (Broyles

and Grow 4–6). That explanation makes sense because humans naturally seek familiarity. The

old saying "birds of feather flock together" seems fitting. It can also relate to the same idea of

how the main ideology tends to reject diversification. Men are typically in the hiring positions

and usually hire applicants that match them in appearance and thought. Many women, who

were hired into an agency, were just seen as the person there to take notes (Broyles and Grow 4–6). An assumption many take in group settings with women present in business situations. With an industry no better than a college fraternity, it is understandable as to why it is extremely hard to be accepted as a woman in this industry.

It is also known that men dominate this $300 billion industry and the ratio of men to women is very uneven. Broyles and Grow also said, "only one in three in creative departments are women" (4–6). Only a few women make up the top-ranking positions like that of Creative Directors and executive management positions. One woman discussed her journey of navigating her way through this male dominate industry. Margaret Ellman, a freelance writer in New York, claims that she had to act like a tomboy to earn respect from her male coworkers (Broyles and Grow 4–6). Her tomboy persona also determined which advertising campaigns she would be best suited to work on. Most women were only allowed to work on female related items. Margaret said, "being a bit of a 'tomboy' was also an insurance policy against being moved over to women's products, which can happen when a woman comes off as being 'too feminine'" (Broyles and Grow 4–6). It has been echoed that the only women who get anywhere in the industry are those that must try to embody male characteristics.

In many places, women were not allowed to work with the products viewed as masculine. These products could be anything from razors, shaving cream, beer and the list goes on. Another female advertising industry employee, Diane Cook, was able to confirm this claim. Diane's male account director once told her, "You can no more understand beer than I can understand tampons" (Broyles and Grow 4–6). On top of the sexism involved with where a woman would work best in the agency, unfair business practices also occurred when dealing

with clients. It has been mentioned how "men in the agency would take clients to play at a prestigious club that wouldn't allow women on the course or at the 19th hole bar" (Broyles and Grow 4–6). Women never did anything to entertain a client. They were supposed to remain as part of the background. One could associate the phrase, "to be seen and not heard" to the role of women in agencies.

The ANA, as discussed earlier, is trying to make a difference for people, companies, and the overall industry. They do this by trying to drive change and growth in order to advance the interests of all markets involved with advertising. It was founded in 1910 and it "provided leadership that advances marketing excellence and shapes the future of the industry" ("A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry"). They then formed the Alliance for Inclusive and Multicultural Marketing, and its mission is "to create a powerful voice that elevates multicultural and inclusive marketing to promote business growth in an increasingly diverse marketplace" ("A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry"). The ANA created a report that gives great insight to the diversification of the industry at agencies across the country. The report states that there is a direct relationship with diversity and the value created in the final product. As already stated, there is a substantial increase in the quality of the product when different backgrounds from all minorities are present at the drawing board. It has been proven that "companies in the top quartile for ethnic/ cultural diversity on executive teams were 33 percent more likely to have industry- leading profitability" ("A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry"). This then ties back to the original point of attracting and retaining customers that are seeking diverse companies to do business with. Therefore, it is

so important to have an inclusive atmosphere with all representation at the drawing board and

decision-making tables.

The study conducted by the ANA said that "45 percent of the top marketer positions are

female; 55 percent are male" ("A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry").

This gap has become considerably smaller due to employment reforms. It has also been stated

that, "the industry, which influences global purchasing decisions and is vital for companies

trying to reach diverse audiences, remains white and male dominated" (Rittenhouse). There is

still a lot of attention that needs to be given to the advertising industry in terms of making it

inclusive and equal to all minorities. According to the ANA "there remains significant work to do

in attaining ethnic diversity" ("A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry").

With a long road ahead of attaining optimal diversification, it is important to also look at the

numbers pertaining to other minority groups.

The research done by the ANA further breaks down the ethnic minorities and aims to

expose exclusivity. This study also covered, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos,

LGBTQIA+, and disabled minorities. The results break down as follows: African Americans make

up 3% (even though they are 13% of America's population), Asian Americans make up 5% (and

make up 6% of the population), Latinos make up 5% (and make up 18% of the population) thus

making white employees the majority at a whopping 87%. Turning the attention to the last two

groups, LGBTQIA+ and disabled. The ANA reports that the LGBTQIA+ community make up 4% of

the industry with disabled amounting to less than 1% of the industry. The report further goes

on to explain that "9 of 16 companies provide employees the opportunity to self- identify as

being LGBTQ" ("A Diversity Report for the Advertising/ Marketing Industry"). These statistics

are startlingly low and show the progress that still needs to be made in this area.

Other reports have been conducted and similar findings were made. *Forbes* concluded

similar results. Marty Swant covers the statistics in the article, "New Ad Industry Diversity Data

Provides a New Benchmark- and Room for Improvement." It was researched what positions

African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos held in advertising companies. The

percentages are broken down as follows: African Americans make up 5.8%, in that small

percentage 68% are only entry level employees, 43.5% are non-management. Only 27.6% are

moving towards the top of the company with 4% holding vice president roles or higher. Lastly,

Asian Americans make 10.7%, and Latinos makes 8.6% with no further breakdown provided

(Swant). Agencies across the country are calling for change and even allowing the public to see

their companies' data regarding diversity. Some of these agencies calling for change include

Interpublic Group and Dentsu. In addition to that, independent companies like Widen +

Kennedy and 71andSunny are starting to disclose their diversity data to the public according to

Kristina Monllos. Not only is diversity data being shared publicly but also a small sliver of the pie

is expanding in large agencies to include a diverse mix of upper management. Many of the top

agencies, like Burrell Communications, Alma, LatinWorks, Lopex Negrete Communications, and

Gravity Media, are led by a diverse team of leaders (Holt 15–17). In addition to all of this, many

of these top agencies across the country are starting to require diversity at all levels, not just

upper management. While some agencies have not come straight out and said that they want a

diverse set of employees, one upper-level manager has.

The Chief Marketing Officer of HP, Antonio Lucio stated that everyone should "want their companies to increase diversity" (Holt 15–17). A company to start this is General Mills. This company is extremely committed and addiment on hiring more women to their workforce. The company also put into place a policy stating, "women have to be 50% [of the employees] and people of color have to be 20% [of the employees]" (Holt 15–17). Holt also advises in his article that a company, no matter who they are, will not make it in the advertising industry if it fails to keep a diverse set of employees (15–17). He says, "A company cannot survive if it falls behind in who their employees are" (Holt 15–17). Advertising is headed in the right direction in regard to their employees. However, there is yet another issue to address. The narrow-minded attitude of the ad agencies in their casting and portrayal of minorities in the ads that they create to sell products.

DIVERISTY IN ADVERTISEMENTS

As previously discussed, women may fair better as compared to other minority groups in the advertising workforce, but challenges still remain not only in the workplace as employees, but their portrayal in advertisements. The white males' version of the perfect female is a stereotype that has been used for centuries- they are seen as sex symbols or mothers. Typically, women are pictured as thin white women, who constantly look perfect. Surely, it is easy to think of commercials or sponsored social media posts with perfect looking women. Perfect being defined by white males. It appears women have no problems with their skin, weight, etc. They are shown as "idealized images of thin white women to confer status on a range of beauty products and services," according to Sean Redmond in the article, "Thin White Women in Advertising" (170–190). As stated earlier, women could only work on products

that pertained to women. So, it correlates that only women would be put into "womanly deemed products" by the male managers. Indhu Rajagopal and Jennifer Gales state in their article, "It's the Image That Is Imperfect: Advertising and Its Impact on Women," that "ads seem to show more often skinny women cleaning the bathroom, making dinner or… putting on make-up; the women in these pictures are never heavy or even average in size" (3333–3337). To many, such tasks are what women do and therefore, women only show up in typical household chores. Why are images of women portrayed in this manner? The answer simply comes from the fact of men dominating the show (as previously discussed) and ads become based on desires of young adult males (Broyles and Grow 4–6). To be blunt, men do not want to see other men doing what they have been conditioned to think is work only fit for women. Nor do they want to see normal sized women doing activities. Society is influenced by what is seen and heard in advertisements. Perspectives will continue to be shaped, no matter who is watching. Besides the certain look or actions of women, they also play a submissive role.

Typically, manly figures help the female, never the female helping the male. The male can look directly into the camera while the woman looks away, as if she is not good enough to look at the camera. In many cases "men are shown accompanying the female and looking directly into the camera whereas females are portrayed with their eyes looking away from the camera" (Rajagopal and Gales 3333–3337). Quite literally, women are shown as submissive and only relying on men.

To add to this argument, women are shown as sexual objects in a vast majority of situations when they are not cleaning the house or cooking dinner. In advertisements, women are "shown in a sexual or vulnerable position in order to sell the product" (Rajagopal and Gales

3333–3337). Think about ads for literally anything, it doesn't matter if it is shaving cream or

alcohol, women are incorporated to sexualize content. To add to the sexualization is tight fitting

clothes and slender figures. Rajagopal and Gales point out "these types of ads are able to

change what women think they should look like" (3333–3337). With these types of

advertisements being shown, they do not represent women correctly and can lead to

sensitization- just think back to the thin white women who look perfect in the makeup

commercials. Women and even young girls forget who they really are and chase after that

perfect look thus becoming "sensitized by advertisements" (Rajagopal and Gales 3333–3337).

Besides being shown as a sexual symbol, women are heavily shown as "a mother, or beauty...

symbol, and these do not represent women" accurately in today's world (Rajagopal and Gales

3333–3337). Men's portrayal of women in ads appear condescending to women and is used to

push a certain agenda, which does not represent the entire community of women. While

women are always a crucial topic to study, it is equally important to examine how advertising

looks at other minority groups.

Indigenous people, form a large part of who America is and helped to ensure survival of

colonists during their first embarkment. However, like in American history, Indigenous people

have been up until recently, excluded from textbooks and advertising is not that different. They

are also a minority that is ignored and excluded from ads. Instead, they are used as symbols to

promote a theme. For representation in advertising, Indigenous people are viewed in one of

three ways: the noble savage, the civilized savage, or the bloodthirsty savage, according to the

article, "Images of Native Americans in Advertising: Some Moral Issues" written by MK Green

(323-330). These representations are centered around the "savage" that is incredibly brave, the

"savage" that is assimilated to Western/ Christian culture, and lastly, the "savage" who is

consumed by the thought of killing and being destructive. Green states in his writing that "the

images of Native Americans used in the advertisement… rely upon on one or more of the

stereotypes" (323-330). When ads present minorities as stereotypes, it perpetuates false

images of them to each generation. In addition, when a large, well-known brand pushes the

stereotypical scenes into advertising the "established brand names and trademarks [are simply

using it to represent] Native Americans to help sell their product" as stated in the article

"Winnebagos, Cherokees, Apaches, and Dakotas: The Persistence of Stereotyping of American

Indians in American Advertising Brands," authored by Debra Merksin (159-169). Despite using

these images, brands may not necessarily see what they are doing is wrong. Green argues "that

the use of such images is not morally acceptable because these images depend upon an

underlying conception on Native Americans that denies that they are human beings" (323-330).

The point being that the stereotypes strip away the identity of Indigenous people and render

them no more than noble, civil, or bloodthirsty savages. As discussed earlier, the dominant

ideology typically implements their own set of beliefs in advertising and that same concept can

be applied here (Merskin 159–169). She writes that "the findings, which are important to

scholars and practitioners, posit that these images build upon longstanding assumptions about

Native Americans by Whites and reinforce an ideology that has resulted in a consumer 'blind

spot' when it comes to recognizing this form of racism" (Merskin 159–169). This "blind spot"

only adds to the fact of how underrepresented Indigenous people are in the advertising

industry (Merskin 159-169). Indigenous people form a rich part of American history and should

be given the proper respect when it comes to using them in advertising. Regardless of a group

being or not being an integral part of history, they still deserve to be recognized in advertising. Next, an even less thought of group of people are studied.

Being disabled in America is something advertising rarely acknowledges, even though disability covers a comprehensive range of conditions. Common disabilities include ADHD, learning, mobility, and medical disabilities. Disabilities do not discriminate who they effect, and neither should the advertising industry. This should not come as a shock to anyone as mentioned in the article, "A Guide to Integrating Disability Inclusion in Marketing Campaigns," as it states, "you might be surprised to learn that their representation is still greatly lacking in advertising." People with disabilities have largely been unrepresented in advertising consumers see, a common theme for minority groups seen thus far. Currently, in the twenty first century, "advertising featuring people with disabilities lags far behind" ("Visibility of Disability: Portrayals of Disability in Advertising"). Research shows that 26% of Americans have a disability. This fact alone should be cause enough to advertise to this community. Additionally, the percentage is probably much higher for people that know or live with a disabled person. Even if this percentage seems small, the people who make up the percentage want to be represented in advertising they see.

Looking at this from an eagle eye viewpoint, this is a large community the advertising industry has been ignoring for quite some time. The disabled community is only represented in about 1% of advertisements ("Visibility of Disability: Portrayals of Disability in Advertising"). Knowing that 26% of Americans have a disability, makes the small percentage of them showing up in advertising shocking. This 1% could reflect the notion that they are seen as a problem in advertising. Why are disabled people seen as a problem in advertising? The answer is a simple

case of "rocking the boat." As previously discussed, the majority does not like to see something

that contradicts the norm- disability does just that. Ella Houston makes the point that using

them in advertising has also been "historically problematic" (791-807). Being disabled,

according to the dominant ideology, is not normal and there may be a struggle with how to

incorporate them into ads, as ad directors are not familiar with how they live. Plus, being a

"historic problem" is not how anyone should be portrayed in advertising (Houston 791-807).

For any minority, especially those that are disabled, not being able to see oneself represented

causes problems and as Houston points out "representation can generate micro level impact,

for example, influencing how individuals' perceive themselves" (791-807). Stereotypes harm

self- esteem and induce other psychological factors. It is common knowledge that what one

sees in the media about themselves, or perhaps more importantly what they do not see in the

media, begins to impact how they feel about themselves and how others see them.

As a main point, there is a common thread that links all minorities in advertising; it

rarely shows disabled people living normal lives, as compared to other groups of people that

consumers see. Again, rarely if ever, are they shown doing normal everyday tasks such as

"working, parenting, [doing] household chores or enjoying activities" like other people would

("Visibility of Disability: Portrayals of Disability in Advertising"). Disabled people do have jobs,

families, and need to perform basic life functions, despite being left out of "normal"

advertising. However, they are featured more now than in 2001, which should be considered a

step in the right direction (Randjelovic et al. 536–541). Furthermore, if "we compare the

appearance rate for all advertising, as part of the total advertising environment, to the

percentage of adults classified as disabled in the total US population… people with disabilities

are very much under- represented" (Randjelovic et al. 536–541). Again, these ads are

reinforcing negative stereotypes.

The article, "Visibility of Disability: Portrayals of Disability in Advertising," reports that

society normally does not see disabled people in advertising and when they are shown, typically

the ad being shown is focused solely on the disabled person's disability. For "most of the time,

disability is absent from advertising, except when it's focused on products that treat

disabilities" ("Visibility of Disability: Portrayals of Disability in Advertising"). This sends the

message that advertisers only need to include the disabled community when a product

specifically applies to them, quite literally excluding this group of people from other products

they too might enjoy. So, when advertising does represent the disability category, the ad itself

is very poignant and obviously made only for this community and nobody else. Again, "more

than half [of the ads are] from health and personal care categor[ies]" ("Visibility of Disability:

Portrayals of Disability in Advertising"). These highly specific categories are assumed as the

products best targeted towards disabled people.

Besides showing ads tailored for disabled people, some agencies must make special

advertising campaigns. Many agencies are now being asked to create advertising that is best

suited for color- deficient people (Kaufman- Scarborough 303-318). Perhaps a way to progress

is to also make sure advertising is accessible to all disabled people, that way they also feel

included on normal everyday products they too would need to use such as cleaning products,

hygiene, and cooking. This is a great step in the right direction, yet there is still much more to

be done. The Americans with Disabilities Act suggests that agencies should "consider their

communications with consumers, especially in the age of Web site designs given the

multisensory nature of Web pages that use sign and sound in their presentation" (Kaufman-Scarborough 303-318). Essentially, digital advertising should work towards being inclusive to people that are not able to view advertising the same as the majority. With the excluded disabled community, then comes a certain sexual orientation that is grossly ignored.

Over the past few decades, a certain demographic has been totally marginalized in advertisements. It may be due to society's taboo on this subject. This demographic includes those belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and plus community. According to David Gudelunas' report, "Consumer Myths and the Gay Men and Women Who Believe Them: A Qualitative Look at Movements and Markets," about "ten years ago nobody did research or marketing towards the gay [and others] community" (53–68). With little to no research for advertising going towards the LGBTQIA+ community, it is not surprising this market was being left unnoticed in advertisements. Gudelunas later writes how "it wasn't until the late 1980s, however, when the gay market emerged as part of larger trends in advertising and media involving the segmentation of the mass audience into more detailed and specific demographic groups" (53–68). While the LGBTQIA+ community as whole may not have been recognized until recently, there is still much not covered when it comes to advertising efforts.

Even with some media coverage, this minority group is still underrepresented in the industry. With knowing they are underrepresented in advertising, there are three phases that have been created: corporate shunning, corporate curiosity/ fear, and corporate pursuit (Gudelunas 53-68). To define these definitions; typically, corporate shunning refers to the idea that a certain person or group is perceived as a threat to an organization. Corporate curiosity is

the idea that a certain group is of high interest to an organization. Lastly, corporate pursuit comes with the notion to go after something (in this case a minority community) in order to gain financial success. Even with these three phases of interest, finding research is difficult because there is such little data recorded for this minority group and "many industry- standard metrics, such as Neilson television ratings, do not exist for the gay and lesbian audiences" (Gudelunas 53–68). With this fact, the *Wall Street Journal* makes the point to say that this minority represents a "dream market" according to Gudelunas (53-68). Alluding to the point that the LGBTQIA+ community is a better group to market to.

Though the LGBTQIA+ community may be a dream market to advertise to, "research [has] not adequately focused on the content of contemporary representations" (McInroy and Craig 32-46). Not knowing how to represent them accurately may be a barrier to putting them in advertisements. McInroy and Craig illustrate, "how such depictions impact LGBTQ young people, or how young people's experiences are affected by the present context characterized by the rapidly increasing prevalence of new media" (32-46). With this being said, it is important to note their representation has been increasingly steady for about ten years, as stated in Gudelunas' article (53–68). This is further backed by other research as well. McInroy and Craig point this out in their article that "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer young people have been increasingly represented in traditional media over [recent years]" (845–866). Additionally, Gudelunas then shares how gay men have large amounts of disposable income, so this further widens the gap of advertising between gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders, queers, intersexuals, asexuals and plus consumers (53–68). One can see an even further divide of representation within the minority community itself. Since advertisers want "single men with

no responsibility, two good incomes in the house" other parts of the LGBTQIA+ community could become ignored, turning the gay market into a boy's club all over again, as discussed with women working in the industry (Gudelunas 53–68). The brands are essentially waiting on millions of dollars to tap into from men who are supposed to have all the money at their fingertips.

When lesbians receive time in the spotlight, advertising becomes extremely stereotypical. In ads, lesbians are sexualized and featured as the typical "hot lesbian" that is "usually intertwined with her beautiful double" according to the article, "Beyond the 'Sexualization of Culture' Thesis: An Intersectional Analysis of 'Sixpacks,' 'Midriffs' and 'Hot Lesbians' in Advertising" (Gill 137–160). It is once again clear how another set of minorities are being misrepresented to the masses. This is reflected in the article, "How Minority Consumers Use Targeted Advertising as Pathways to Self- Empowerment: Gay Men's and Lesbians' Reading of Out-of-the-Closet Advertising," which states, "lesbians are clearly underrepresented in commercials" (Tsai 85-97). With the exclusiveness of advertising for this minority, another point is also of importance.

Furthermore, according to Gill this "sexualization does not operate outside of processes of gendering, radicalization and classing, and the works within a visual economy that remains profoundly ageist and heteronormative" (137–160). As discussed earlier, men yield design decisions about who is put into advertising campaigns and cast who is desirable. With the stereotyping of the LGBTQIA+ community, they must often construct strategies to self-empower themselves "to cope with the stigma and negotiate the subordinated social status" (Tsai 85-97). Overall, the LGBTQIA+ community has many wide strides to take to be seen in

mainstream advertising. With great strides in the LGBTQIA+ area and other small portions of

societal minorities, means that one incredibly significant group of people cannot be forgotten

about.

When talking about minority communities, one of the most prevalent is the African

American population. It comes as no surprise that within advertising, African Americans lack the

proper representation. For over half a century "academicians have explored the portrayal of

African Americans in... advertising... [and] much of this research has found varying degrees of

representation" (Bailey 83–104). With varying degrees of such representation other researchers

have found some timeline of when African Americans entered the industry. According to

Vincent Pham, multicultural advertising for African Americans (also including Asian Americans

and Latinos) did not come about until after 1960 (659-665). The data points towards African

Americans showing up in .06% of ads (Bailey 83–104). While shown in tiny portions of

advertising, African Americans are subject to certain roles. Bailey writes how research has

shown that "using male African Americas was highly only in the ads for clothes, shoes, and

accessories" (83–104). Essentially, this group is seen as only good enough to show basic

necessities, like that of clothing and footwear, and some extra tangible items.

Seeing this type of advertising, it can be related back to the point of stereotypical

scenarios put forth in much of advertising. Advertising made for this minority was quite frankly

based on stereotypes as stated in the article, "Exploring Collective Memories Associated with

African- American Advertising Memorabilia—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" (Motley et al.

47-57). In addition to being cast in bodywear, there is yet another category to which African

Americans are thought to belong to. Going back to Bailey's work, the point can also be made

that African Americans are associated with hip hop music and typically are unskilled workers or

athletes (83–104). Finding ads where they are featured in jobs and social aspects of daily life is

especially hard. The advertising roles can be reduced to "limited occupational roles" (Bailey 83–

104). Occupational roles meaning tasks a person performs daily like playing a sport, taking a

class, or cooking a meal. With this group seen in little advertising, it is hard to believe that

African Americans have been recognized for having a buying power up to $965 billion, much

more than any other minority group. With a large amount of disposable income in this group,

and their prevalence, it is hard to understand the ignorance. Yet consumers rarely see them in

"ads for prestige products, and many were portrayed living in poverty" (Bailey 83–104).

Perhaps this can also be connected to discrimination people practice subconsciously, as

covered in Linyun Yang's argument of why advertising can be seen as discriminative (695). Right

on the tail of African Americans comes another prevalent minority.

Another minority group amid a troublesome history with America is the Asian American

community. This group, like African Americans, are an equally important set of people that

should be recognized in advertising. Even with their massive impact on society in general, Asian

Americans make up a sliver of the advertising industry and quite frankly the advertising industry

is not without blemishes in its anti- Asian discrimination. Many times, blatant discrimination is

very clear. According to Ashley Joseph, there is a lack of representation and that

"representation is limited to stereotypical roles that mirror the model minority myth." Not only

are they thought of as the model minority, but also the opulently wealthy consumer. Just

putting Asian Americans into advertising, is not enough according to Pham (659-665).

Additionally, Pham writes, "Asian American advertising agencies challenge the norms of

whiteness within corporate America" (659-665). Meaning Asian Americans recognize not being represented in advertising. Documentation throughout the years, unveils Asian Americans going through multiple stages in the eyes of the consumer. According to Pham, multicultural advertising for Asian Americans (and other minorities like African Americans and Latinos, as mentioned previously) did not come about until after 1960 (659-665). As of now, Asian Americans are known as the model minority; however, there have been other titles assigned to them. First, Asian Americans were viewed as the "yellow peril," then it went to "forever foreigner" to "model minority" and now "model consumers" (Pham 659-665). Yellow peril refers to a Chinese and Japanese metaphor, since they were viewed as a danger to the Western world. Forever foreigner can be thought of as the citizens that will never quite be like the rest of the whites in this country- a common theme seen in discrimination against minorities. From there, is the model minority and model consumers, meaning that those people are in a demographic which is thought to be much higher achieving than the rest of the population. With little representation of the "perfect" consumer comes the minority's women.

Besides the general advertisements of Asian Americans, comes an even lesser percentage of representation- Asian American women. These types of ads are hardly ever seen. When they do appear, it is generally focused on their exceptional work ethic rather than normal life activities, i.e., like leisure time and family dynamics (Taylor and Stern 47-61). Asians are further stereotyped as the "intellectually gifted, mathematically skilled, technically competent, hard- working, serious, and well assimilated" human beings (Taylor and Stern 47-61). No wonder many people assume Asian Americans are math wizards and scientific geniuses. Again, advertisements people see condition them to generalize about a set of people in a certain way,

as seen with Indigenous and African American advertising. These ads are clearly showing

ethnically specific elements such as their skin color, eye appearance, and physical build. With

that stereotype in mind, their appearance is an unchanging look. Frequently, Asian's are

pictured in ads to be the typical skinny, short person with porcelain skin and slanted eyes. After

discussing several minorities, comes the last but certainly not least group of people who also

play a large role in America.

Lastly, Latinos in advertising have been underrepresented and portrayed incorrectly.

Pham writes that, multicultural advertising for Asian Americans didn't come about until after

1960- again this time frame is the same for other minority groups talked about (659-665). With

such exclusiveness of Latinos in advertising, they have a significant purchasing power that

should be recognized. Latino purchasing power is $266 billion (Alaniz and Wilkes 447-472). With

such a purchasing power, it is important to note the total buying power of the three significant

minorities- African Americans, Asians, and Latinos. It has been recorded that "African

Americans, Asians, and Hispanics had a buying power of $3.4 trillion in 2014, up from just $661

billion in 1990" which is a large dollar sign to show anyone who needs to include diverse

advertising into their mix of campaigns (Holt 15–17). With such a large purchasing power

outside of the larger group of mixed minorities, the community of Latinos has continued to be

increasingly put into a certain box that is only "in terms relative to the American imagination"

("Latinos and Advertising"). Quite frankly, the Latino community is alleged as America's

backyard. Just as alcohol was targeted at the African American community during bondage, the

same thought can be applied to the Spaniards conquest of Mexico (Alaniz and Wilkes 447-472).

The article by Alaniz and Wilkes also points out, "print and billboard advertisements proliferate

in Latino communities [and] [c]hildren are inundated with images of individuals who look

culturally familiar and use familiar cultural language to praise the use and effects of alcohol"

(447-472). For any ethnic minority they "seldom see their culture represented in other arenas"

(Alaniz and Wilkes 447-472). Alcohol is such a target for this minority community. Not only are

there alcohol advertisements aimed towards Latinos, but males are also portrayed as "lazy,

sleepy, and generally ineffectual background characters" as stated in the article, "Latinos and

Advertising." If the male is not a lazy being, they are thought of as a criminal. One can see a

great example come from the Frito- Lay campaign in 1967. This campaign stereotyped a

Mexican male as a "portly, mustached Mexican bandit with an oversized sombrero,

accompanied by a pair of pistols and a heavy Spanish accent" ("Latinos and Advertising"). This

only further pushed the idea that Mexicans are criminals as well. So, not only are Latinos seeing

their men as criminals, but the women are also represented as nothing more than a sexual

objects. Women "were represented as senoritas to be conquered" and thought of as the "Latin

lover" who is "sultry, seductive, [and a] fiery temptresses" ("Latinos and Advertising"). After

discussing Latinos, among other minorities, it raises the question of what can be done to instill

change in the advertising industry. This question is extremely important with a variety of

opportunities to explore.

PROGRESSION OF THE INDUSTRY

From this research, there is still a great urge for progression in diversity and inclusion, in

all areas of advertising. Progressing advertising forward involves a lot of work to be done.

However, numerous agencies across the country have played a role in assisting the introduction

of diversity and highlighting the lack of diversity. Recently, agencies have been pressured to

increase their diversity in the workforce. Research believes that having organizational racial

diversity can lead to benefits, as briefly discussed in the background section. One being that "it

influences a broader spectrum of people to purse employment opportunities" (Avery 672-679).

As pointed out, when people see other people like themselves being employed, they will

naturally feel attracted to working there. Of course, the goal of every agency is to attract the

best talent, but that talent should also be more than just a pool of white candidates. And there

has been a substantial call for enhancing the minority recruitment goals, making it so they do

have a chance of being in the pool of candidates. To do this, it all goes back to the idea of who

is in the hiring positions which are typically males. To reiterate, the men are typically going to

hire employees that look and think like themselves. Another article from *AdWeek* states how

early outreach is needed to reach all people and to "correct workplace culture before inviting in

new talent" (Liederman). To make the right decisions "we actually want to do it right, we need

people who are sitting in the seat of holding their agency accountable" (Liederman). People do,

however, recognize that the daily demands of the job can start to overshadow and block out

the progressiveness a company is trying to make.

Once diversification has been achieved, a sense of recognition can be attained and a

better understanding for "minority consumers" (Perkins et al. 235-255). To achieve this

understanding of the consumers in the minority, a certain position should be created in

organizations. A Chief Diversity Officer position is needed because "these individuals are each

charged with driving change within their businesses away from the pale, male and stale view

that remains around many industry leaders" Stephen Lepitak claims in his article, "What Chief

Diversity Officers at Some of the Biggest Agencies Are Doing to Drive Inclusion." That is why

having a dedicated role to diversity is so important in moving forward. These officers will be

able to drive the change the advertising industry has been tasked with. The diversity officers

should be able to identify the problem areas and how to fix them in the agency for

inclusiveness. Many minority candidates may leave when they are not working with other

people like themselves. For example, when any potential minority employee comes into an

agency and does not see many people that look like themselves, especially in higher up

positions, they will quickly leave, taking their talents elsewhere (Liederman). This can be

compared to when anyone wants to leave when they cannot find people to form friendships

with and assimilate to.

To help push this forward the ANA is getting the conversation started with key

questions. The ANA asked the question, "Are there any key action steps that have helped your

company improve diversity within the marketing department?" Once agencies reflected upon

this, key insights were gained. Some of these answers gave great insight on how progress can

be made and point towards what can be done. People want work atmospheres that are

inclusive, along with leadership that is inclusive, recognition of diverse holidays, and councils

that promote diversity.

In addition, current agencies could help to normalize advertising to minorities by

specializing in that. With this approach "there is an opportunity for advertising agencies to

differentiate themselves based on their ability to develop campaigns specifically targeted to

ethnic and racial minority populations" (Ambwani et al. 332–349). Advertising in the twenty

first century can become incredibly targeted, so why not put that skill to good use? While there

are already a handful of agencies that do this already, mainstreaming this approach could be beneficial. Ambwani then states, "Advertising agencies have been around for a long time and in spite of a proliferation of agencies there is very little differentiation in the scope or focus of services offered by agencies" (332–349). Despite efforts from the industry, change really can take effect in the first part of everybody's lives- schooling.

Perhaps one of the most important steps in the right direction is to start with a strong foundation. Where is that foundation taught? School. School is the first place many future advertising majors learn their skills and working abilities. While teaching diversity at the lowest level of schooling is crucial (such as that of preschool, elementary, and high school), even more crucial is continuing that learning well beyond high school graduation and into post- secondary schooling. Teaching diversity should be a normal part of the curriculum no matter the advancement level and it is a step forward into making working professionals well rounded and open minded. This would be a complete 180 degree turn of how society thinks and that would be a great achievement for advertising. Holt explains in his article that "teaching diversity in advertising will take time, effort and often outside resources" (15–17). If educators do not implement diversity into their regular lessons plans, the future of advertising may be doomed. Further, Holt points out, "Diversity and inclusion are more than just buzzwords or boxes to check… teaching diversity in education should no longer be an ancillary part of the curriculum… we must not shy away from this challenge as our students' future careers are at stake" (15–17). With this thought of not just crossing diversity education off a list, comes the thought of being open to the differences everyone brings to the table.

It is pointed out that educators should be, "Creating open- minded thinkers with empathy toward others… [it] is critical in this field, which revolves around understanding human behavior" (Spring 121-139). If minorities are brought into the loop, it will give them confidence and a sense of belonging. With having a basic understanding of human behavior, everyone can then point young professionals into the right direction as they move into their jobs. Spring also goes on to say, "cultural enlightenment can poise our students to sidestep the many messaging mistakes we see brands making today" (121-139). Naturally, teachers should want the best for their students and try to guide them away from industry mistakes. Plus, students need to be taught about the power they will hold in the advertising industry. Having the preconceived knowledge that advertising is power, will help to make better campaigns in the long run. With this hope, one will see an industry that is progressing in the right direction.

Along with teaching diversity, advertising power, and open mindedness, having the correct classroom setup is equally vital. It is important to start with diverse groups in classrooms. This can lead to being able to work better in a group setting while in the work force. Joel Geske writes "this is something that employers will want and in doing so it can lead to better inclusiveness in the industry" (34–48). The advertising industry and the classroom are two major places that teams are coming together to solve a given problem and being able to work with people of different backgrounds will come into play. If one thinks about education currently, teachers do that now by putting students into groups with a mix of personalities and perspectives. Having diversity will be "essential for creativity and finding the best solution to problems" (Geske 34–48). Being creative is a major component to this industry and a way to

become more creative in a team setting is to bring in a diverse set of people. Geske then writes

in his article:

> The fact is … if you want to build teams or organizations capable of innovating, you need
>
> diversity. Diversity enhances creativity. It encourages the search for novel information
>
> and perspectives, leading to better decision- making and problem-solving. Even simply
>
> being exposed to diversity can change the way you think. This is not just wishful thinking:
>
> it is the conclusion drawn from decades of research from organizational scientists,
>
> psychologists, sociologists, economists, and demographers (34–48).

There is also a new definition of advertising floating around which is "brand- initiated

communication intent on impacting people" (Dahlen and Rosengren 334–345). If advertising

has a new definition, perhaps the industry needs to act. Here is the chance to change and

evolve. It is 2021 and there is no place to keep practicing old practices simply because of

dominant ideology. One could argue there is no longer a dominant ideology as America has

become a diverse nation. If a brand is supposed to impact people through communication, it

should be a no brainer to start using every possible person under the sun to show accurate

representation. All people are potential customers and selling to them is the job of the

advertiser to make the consumer feel good about themselves when they purchase a product.

With all the modern technology customizing ads, it is easier than ever before. The white male

dominated workforce and their ideology in advertising needs to be replaced with a more

balanced representation of races and gender. With the new awareness, this goal will eventually

be obtained.

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