

## **Advertising has come out**

The effects of advertising's portrayal of lesbian, gay, and transgender characters on viewers' attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities

Student Name: Mariana Fried

Student Number: 505815

Supervisor: Dr. Suzanna Oprea

Second reader: prof.dr. Koen van Eijck

Research Master - Sociology of Culture, Media and the Arts  
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master's Thesis

*June 2020*

Word count: 11,000

List of journals suitable for publication: Journal of Advertising; Journal of  
Homosexuality; International Journal of Advertising

## ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of exposure to advertisements featuring lesbian, gay, and transgender characters on viewers' attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities. Sexual minorities' rising inclusion in advertising has attracted scholars' and the news media's attention, especially in Argentina, a country surrounded by more conservative media environments. Despite scholars' attribution of cultivating effects to the mass media, research on LGBT-inclusive advertising has been limited to analyzing the ads' content and commercial effectiveness. This study moved beyond the largely commercially-focused research on the topic, by assessing the extent to which exposure to advertisements portraying LGT characters change viewers' attitudes toward these groups, comparing viewers' attitudes toward ads with varying degrees of protagonism of LGT characters, and exploring the ways in which viewers evaluate LGT-inclusive ads and the trend toward LGT-inclusive advertising. By means of a mixed methods experimental design comprising closed- and open-ended questions, the study found no significant effect of exposure. Still, the results challenge ideas of advertising as having solely commercial effects as they reveal participants' belief that advertising could lead to positive social changes by normalizing sexual minorities as an everyday reality. The study questions the explanations of viewers' preference for ads with non-central LGBT portrayals as their refusal to be excluded from advertising. Instead, it suggests that this preference relates to viewers' consideration that unforced representations where inclusion is not over-focused are more positive for sexual minorities. This study revealed that the emphasis placed on inclusion and how forced such inclusion results are important factors when evaluating an advertisement, whereas the specific LGT subgroup portrayed does not determine viewers' attitudes toward the ads. By observing the nuances with which viewers evaluate advertising's inclusive trend, this study challenges the ideas of advertising featuring sexual minorities as something that viewers either support or reject. Instead, it calls on both researchers and advertising practitioners to consider that attending to who is represented is insufficient, since audiences are often critical of the actual way in which those representations are done.

**KEYWORDS:** *Advertising, Social Change, LGBT Representation, Advertisement Attitudes, LGBT Attitudes*

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	1
Media Representation and the Diffusion of Mainstream Values.....	1
Representation in Advertising.....	2
The Present Study.....	3
Theoretical Framework.....	5
Cultivation Effects.....	5
Argentina’s Context .....	7
Hypothesized Prosocial Effects .....	8
Qualitative Approach.....	10
Methods.....	11
Sample .....	13
Stimuli .....	14
Measurements .....	15
Results .....	18
Effects of Exposure on LGT Attitudes .....	18
Effects of Advertisement Liking on LGT Attitudes.....	20
Effects of Content on Advertisement Attitudes.....	22
Participants’ Evaluations of the LGT-Advertisements and the Trend.....	23
Participants’ Evaluation of the Trend .....	27
Conclusion and Discussion.....	29
Major Findings.....	30
Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research .....	32
Strengths & Practical Implications.....	33
References .....	35
Appendix A: Questionnaire.....	41
Appendix B: Approval from the EUR Ethics Review Board .....	72
Appendix C: Overview .....	73
Appendix D: Control Variables .....	75

## Introduction

In 2020, when the YouTube star Nikkie de Jager came out as transgender, the revelation immediately became worldwide news (Ritschel, 2020). The video with which the makeup artist revealed her male-to-female transition was watched 12,979,601 times in only twelve hours, after someone had “threatened to out her to the media” (Madani, 2020). Why would such a disclosure become trending news for the worldwide media and audiences? Sexual and gender minorities have for long been excluded by the media as the scarce portrayal of homosexual and transgender characters in advertisements and films illustrates (Cabosky, 2017). Moreover, for decades, the media represented homosexual and transgender people only through stereotypical and comic portrayals to get the heterosexual audience’s laughs (Cabosky, 2017; Gross, 2005). Such representations, combined with the mass media’s major role in processes of social definition, have supported the gender system prevalent in many societies, with its conceptions of what is normal for men and women, hindering the possibilities of LGBT<sup>1</sup> viewers to feel proud or viable (Gross, 1991). If today’s media still portray a world where everyone is assumed to follow heteronormative ideals (Levina et al., 2000), Nikkie’s revelation may have become newsworthy due to its deviation from mainstream content.

### Media Representation and the Diffusion of Mainstream Values

Media representation has been central to activists’ struggle for societal visibility (Levina et al., 2000) and “a vital component” of LGBT studies for media scholars (Gross, 2005, p. 513). Since the eighties, organizations have aimed at increasing media portrayals of the LGBT community to improve public attitudes about homosexuality and, thereby, eradicate discrimination (GLAAD, n.d. as cited in Gross, 2005). Besides direct experience, individuals’ ideas largely depend on “symbolically coded information—transmitted through the media” (Bruner & Olson, 1973, p. 211). Considering that minority groups perceived as deviants are relatively invisible for many people’s first-hand experiences, the media’s power to shape

---

<sup>1</sup> Although multiple variants of the acronym have been proposed to refer to sexual minorities, the LGBT acronym has been the most extensively used in academic discourse, policy, and public debates referring to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities (Peterson, 2018). Due to this study’s specific focus on the media’s representation of lesbian, gay, and transgender people, further discussed in the Conclusions, the specific abbreviation LGT will also be used throughout this paper, unless reference is made to the broader community and the field of LGBT research.

viewers' assumptions and conceptions about these groups is considerably strong (Gross, 1991). If televised content cultivates a large part of viewers' beliefs on social reality and worldviews (Perse & Ferguson, 1994 as cited in Sheehan, 2014; Signorielli, 2009), it may be able to broaden people's views toward greater acceptance of the LGBT community (Fernández & Paredes, 2016). Notably, in recent years, the mass media's representation of sexual and gender minorities has increased and become less stereotyping (Eisend & Hermann, 2019; Gross, 2005). While for a long time, viewers have accepted the "negative stereotypes they encounter as being representative of gay people" (Gross, 1991, p. 27), today's more positive LGBT media portrayals (Nölke, 2018) may be changing this. For instance, Mazur and Emmers-Sommer (2002) have argued that viewers' exposure to positive portrayals of same-sex couples in movies positively affect their attitudes toward non-traditional families.

Importantly, the diffusion of cultural views about social groups is not exclusive to one single genre, since televised content like news, drama, and commercials support each other in diffusing mainstream values (Gross, 1991). While the visibility of homosexual and transgender characters on TV shows has been considered a good teacher of cultural citizenship, exposing viewers to diverse identities (Parsemain, 2019), the teaching power of other media contents should also be explored. Specifically, research on media's representation of sexual minorities should consider portrayals that go beyond recurring LGBT characters on TV shows which are likely to be watched by audiences already supporting these groups (Gillig et al., 2018). As Gillig et al. (2018, p. 516) suggest, "brief storylines and one-time characters" can be particularly influential for conservative viewers who do not seek to consume storylines with, for example, transgender characters, but encounter these depictions in single episodes or, as this study proposes, in advertisements.

### **Representation in Advertising**

Advertising rarely featured lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people fifteen years ago, and when it did, this was often through gay-window advertising to avoid heterosexual viewers' awareness (Gong, 2019; Sheehan, 2014). This has recently changed. Not only has the number of advertisements portraying sexual minorities increased, but their stereotypical images have also decreased (Stevenson & Swayne, 2013 as cited in Eisend & Hermann, 2019),

encouraging LGBT individuals' feelings of acceptance (Nölke, 2018), and despite advertisers' fears of a backlash from conservative audiences (Sheehan, 2014). Although LGBT-inclusive advertising has been explained as marketers' strategic response to the purchasing power of the homosexual market segment (Eisend & Hermann, 2019), the possibility of it being "a prosocial move" (Read et al., 2018, p. 193) requires attention. While inclusive advertisements generate both support and negative messages from different audience segments (Sheehan, 2014), cultivation perspectives would suggest that increased exposure to media images can shape viewers' attitudes about what is right (Gerbner, 1973; Gerbner, 1993 as cited in Sheehan, 2014). If that is the case, exposure to advertising's images of homosexual and transgender people may change viewers' attitudes about these groups.

While several studies on advertising have described which LGBT subgroups are most often portrayed and how (Cabosky, 2017; Nölke, 2018; Tsai, 2010), content analyses overlook the reception of these advertisements and their potential role in challenging viewers' ideas (Tsai, 2010). The studies which did examine the reception of LGBT-inclusive ads have predominantly focused on their effects on audiences' purchase intention and attitudes toward the advertised brand (Eisend & Hermann, 2019; Gong, 2019; Um, 2014, 2016). Although their findings are valuable, whether LGBT-inclusive advertising can lead to positive societal outcomes, beyond mere commercial effects, remains unanswered. Insufficient attention has also been given to the cultural contexts in which LGBT-inclusive advertisements are embedded (Eisend & Hermann, 2019) as shown by scholarship's repeated focus on North American samples (Oakenfull et al., 2008; Read et al., 2018; Um, 2016), despite the media's LGBT inclusion being particularly striking in certain countries, like Argentina, surrounded by more conservative media environments in their region (Fernández & Paredes, 2016).

### **The Present Study**

This study examines the effects of LGT-inclusive advertising in the Argentinian context. Although limited by the scarcity of advertisements featuring bisexual characters (Tsai, 2010), this study takes into consideration both the representation of homosexual and transgender individuals, a group highly exposed to violence and exclusion in the country (Páez et al., 2015). Expanding on the theoretical and societal background exposed above, this study's first goal is to

answer: *To what extent does exposure to advertisements portraying LGT characters change viewers' attitudes toward these groups? (RQ1).*

In previous studies, audiences' attitudes toward homosexuality have been positively correlated with their attitudes toward the inclusive advertisements they were exposed to (Read et al., 2018). Furthermore, other studies suggest that viewers' liking of inclusive advertisements partly depends on a key characteristic of the advertisements: the LGT character's centrality in the plot (Han & Tsai, 2016; Hooten et al., 2009). In short, the effectiveness of advertisements on attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities may depend on viewers' liking of the way LGT characters are portrayed. This study assesses viewers' attitudes toward two types of advertisements: one featuring an LGT person as a central character of the narrative, and one in which the LGT character performs a non-leading role. By doing so, this study addresses the following question: *What are viewers' attitudes toward advertisements with varying degrees of protagonism of LGT characters? (RQ2).*

Finally, previous research shows that viewers' attitudes toward LGBT-inclusive media content also depend on how each person feels about the content they are exposed to. Viewers judge this content based on their multiple experiences when watching it, for instance, how authentic they consider the content to be, how they identify with the characters, how much disgust or hope they feel during exposure (Gillig et al., 2018; Read et al., 2018). Viewers' previous exposures and evaluations of LGBT-inclusive content also play a role in the way they evaluate this type of content (Gillig et al., 2018). Therefore, considering each advertisement as having multiple possible evaluations and as part of a broader "symbolic environment" (Gerbner, 1973, p. 267), this study examines: *How do viewers evaluate specific LGT-inclusive advertisements and the current trend toward LGT-inclusive advertising in general? (RQ3).*

To answer the research questions, this thesis relied on a mixed methods survey design comprising closed- and open-ended questions. Based on the hypotheses described in the following chapter, a between-subjects experimental design was conducted to answer the first and second research questions. Each participant was exposed to two pre-existing advertisements portraying either lesbian, gay, or transgender individuals. Depending on their randomized distribution, respondents completed closed-ended questions on their attitudes

toward homosexuality and transgender identities either before or after exposure and rated the shown advertisements. The third research question was answered through a qualitative analysis of respondents' evaluation of the advertisements and of LGT-inclusive advertising in general. While predefined scales help assess which advertisements are most positively rated and by which categories of participants, examining the varied experiences that viewers go through during media exposure requires an open, inductive, and explorative approach.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This chapter discusses the potential effects of LGT-inclusive advertisements mentioned in the first research question, in light of cultivation theory. After describing the Argentinian context, the expected effects are presented with attention to the role of viewers' attitudes toward LGT-inclusive advertisements, thereby addressing this study's second research question. Finally, the qualitative approach is described through which this study moves beyond closed-ended questions to understand viewers' evaluations of LGT-inclusive advertisements and of the trend toward LGT-inclusive advertising.

### **Cultivation Effects**

The idea that mass media's recurrent content reinforces certain beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews among its audience has been discussed for decades under the "umbrella" of cultivation theory (Morgan et al., 2015, p.676). As a "system of explanation of media effects" (Potter, 2014, p. 1030), cultivation theory suggests that the stories we are told through the media relate to, or cultivate, our beliefs and thoughts about the world (Morgan et al., 2015). Despite its original focus on the long-term effects of exposure to the stable macro-systems of televised content, originally studied in a less fragmented media environment than today's (Potter, 2014), cultivation theory still provides a valuable perspective to analyze the relation between media exposure and viewers' "conceptions of social reality" (Morgan et al., 2015, p. 675). Although much has changed in televised media since Gerbner's initial definitions, the idea that media messages support and nourish certain assumptions and stable conceptions of social reality has inspired many studies across countries and media genres (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).



In fact, the notion that consensus around dominant mainstream ideologies is maintained through the media (Gerbner, 1973; Gross, 1991) helps understand the heteronormative ideologies to which televised content has been historically associated. TV content has traditionally been seen as cultivating heteronormative values, concisely, the belief that “gender conformity and heterosexuality are a natural norm and are therefore superior to alternative identities” (Parsemain, 2019, p. 1). Television’s negative portrayal of homosexual characters has been linked to viewers’ perceptions of homosexuality as something wrong in cultivation studies conducted decades ago, before these portrayals became increasingly positive (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). While cultivation scholars emphasize that stable patterns of media content cultivate mainstream worldviews (Morgan et al., 2015), what happens when those patterns change is less clear.

LGT individuals’ increased visibility has been attentively observed by activists and scholars who claim that it could play a role in changing audiences’ perceptions of sexual minorities (Bond & Compton, 2015; Levina et al., 2000). While the generalized exclusion of sexual minorities from positive or normal portrayals symbolically maintains the mainstream moral order, their inclusion “opens up the possibility of making choices to people who might never otherwise have considered or understood that such choices could be made” (Gross, 1991, p. 30). These possibilities are not only valuable for LGT individuals’ feelings of acceptance (Nölke, 2018), but they may also promote viewers’ supportive attitudes toward these groups.

Although scholars have questioned the study of particular genres as cultivating viewers’ beliefs, rather than assessing total TV exposure (Potter, 2014), there are reasons for focusing specifically on advertising. First, advertising serves as key indicator of social recognition, as it depicts “idealized images of the material ‘good life’” (Dittmar, 2007, p. 23) and it “does not claim to depict life as it is but as it should be—life and lives worth emulating” (Gross, 2001 as cited in Tsai, 2010, para. 6). Second, minorities’ underrepresentation in advertising has been signaled as a cause of their lack of visibility in society, and as a basis for the ideas that they should be left on the margins (Sheehan, 2014). Third, advertisements can be watched by audience members unfamiliar with LGBT issues. While TV shows featuring recurring LGBT characters are often watched by viewers who already support sexual minorities, one-time

narratives can be influential for conservative viewers who do not actively seek LGBT-inclusive storylines (Gillig et al., 2018). This feature makes advertising an appropriate field to test the media's cultivation of beliefs among viewers. In an era of multiple on-demand streaming options where audiences choose from diverse sources (Morgan et al., 2015), mainstream advertising continues to present its content to heterogeneous viewers who are not autonomously looking for it. Due to this targeting of large heterogeneous audiences, advertising faces the challenge of producing cost-saving standardized messages while adapting them to local cultural standards (Toncar, 2001).

### **Argentina's Context**

Following Eisend and Hermann's (2019) call to consider how the "dynamics of support for homosexuality" (p. 381) vary across cultural contexts and moving beyond scholarship's privileged attention to the North American context, this study focuses on Argentinian audiences. Despite Latin America being a region with high rates of violence toward LGBT individuals, and where large religious groups block progress on LGBT rights (Corrales, 2019), sexual minorities' representation has come to occupy a considerable place in Argentinian mainstream media (Fernández & Paredes, 2016). Remarkably, Argentina has been considered one of "the region's standard-bearers" regarding the expansion of LGBT rights (Corrales, 2019, p. 7) and a leading country in struggles for gender-inclusiveness (Schmidt, 2019). In news media, non-binary language has been incorporated despite its rejection by the Royal Spanish Academy (Tosi, 2019), and a transgender woman has been appointed as news presenter (Curia, 2020). In Argentinian entertainment media, at least since 2013, sexual minorities have been portrayed not stereotypically, but in serious ways, seeking to arouse viewers' emotions and understanding (Fernández & Paredes, 2016). This differentiates the country's media and cultural landscapes from others in the region, like Mexico or Brazil, where LGBT inclusion in the media has been objected and censored (Fernández & Paredes, 2016).

The increase and qualitative change in the country's mass media's portrayal of sexual minorities have also been observed in advertising ("Publisexual", 2018). A change of paradigms in advertising and a trend toward more inclusive advertisements portraying homosexual and transgender characters have been widely covered in the news as "the time of risky advertising"

(Sainz & Terrile, 2019), “the new advertising” (Bendersky, 2018), and “inclusive advertising” (“Publisexual”, 2018). Whether the Argentinian audience recognizes this trend and is affected by it is unclear.

### **Hypothesized Prosocial Effects**

Several studies have addressed the mass media’s power to shape viewers’ attitudes toward LGBT groups. Exposure to gay and transgender characters on television shows has been found to be positively correlated with viewers’ supportive attitudes toward homosexual and transgender people respectively (Bond & Compton, 2015; Gillig et al., 2018). In the idealized world of advertising, however, the effect is less clear. While sexual minorities’ portrayals in advertising tend to increase when society is more supportive of them (Eisend and Hermann, 2019; Nölke, 2018), the notion that advertising influences viewers’ worldviews (Sheehan, 2014) suggests that if LGBT-inclusive portrayals in advertising increase, societal support may consequently grow. Sheehan (2014) implies that this is the case, and that with viewers’ increasingly seeing a range of people in advertisements, they will increasingly be more “comfortable with a range of people in society” (Sheehan, 2014, p. 146). The idea that media’s portrayal of diverse people improves viewers’ comfort with those who are different from themselves (Gillig et al., 2018; Sheehan, 2014) was also supported in qualitative studies suggesting that viewers themselves believe gay-themed advertising facilitates acceptance toward homosexuality (Gong, 2019). Expanding on these insights, this study expects to find a positive effect of exposure to an LGT-inclusive advertisement on viewers’ attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities.

*H1: Participants who are exposed to an advertisement portraying a lesbian (H1a), gay (H1b), or transgender character (H1c) will report more positive attitudes toward the depicted subgroup than participants in all other conditions.*

Considering that attitudes toward each of these groups have been found to be strongly correlated with each other (Norton & Herek, 2013), this study expects the effects of exposure to an LGT-inclusive advertisement to transcend to the other LGT subgroups regardless of the specific one being featured.

*H1d: Participants who are exposed to an advertisement portraying an LGT character will report more positive attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities than participants in the control condition.*

### **Mediated Effect of Advertisement Attitudes**

It is likely that the effect of an LGT-inclusive advertisement on viewers' LGT attitudes is mediated by advertisement liking, since "if consumers like an ad, they are more likely to pay attention to it, and to understand and respond to the message" (Toncar, 2001, p. 535). This may not only apply for commercial effectiveness but also for prosocial effects, as suggested by Gillig's et al. (2018) findings that the way people feel about trans-inclusive content mediates "the variance in attitudes toward transgender people" (p. 521). As viewers' attitudes toward the advertisement are expected to be correlated with viewers' attitudes toward the sexual minorities portrayed, the first hypotheses might be subject to participants positively rating the advertisements.

*H2: The more positive participants' attitudes toward an advertisement portraying a lesbian (H2a), gay (H2b), or transgender character (H2c) are, the more positive their attitudes toward the depicted subgroup will be.*

Based on the assumption explained above (Norton & Herek, 2013) that the effect of exposure to an LGT-inclusive advertisement transcends each subgroup to a broader level of attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities, it is expected that:

*H2d: The more positive participants' attitudes toward an advertisement portraying an LGT character are, the more positive their attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities will be.*

### **Predictors of Advertisement Attitudes**

Two key features of LGBT-inclusive content have been found to affect viewers' attitudes toward it: the specific LGT-subgroup being portrayed, and the LGT character's centrality in the story. Although gay and lesbian individuals are often generalized under umbrella-terms like *gay population*, each subgroup faces different experiences and oppressions (Rich, 1980 as cited in Gross, 2005). This also applies to their inclusion in advertising. Lesbian women's representation in advertising has been scarcer than gay men's and, when existent, it has often depicted

hypersexualised images to appeal to heterosexual male viewers (Nölke, 2018). Despite male heterosexual viewers' positive responses to those images, viewers are generally more used to seeing gay characters than lesbian and transgender characters due to gay men's prevalent portrayal (Davis & Needham, 2008; Eisend & Hermann, 2019). Due to these differences, viewers judge gay and lesbian characters' portrayals differently (Eisend & Hermann, 2019). Different attitudes are also expected toward transgender people's portrayal as their inclusion in advertising has been, for long, nearly non-existent (Nölke, 2018). In fact, little is known in research about viewers' response to media representations of transgender individuals (Gillig et al., 2018). Considering these inconclusive findings, this study does not postulate which subgroup will relate to better attitudes toward the ads, but rather expects that:

*H3: Participants' attitudes toward the advertisements are contingent upon the specific LGT-subgroup that is featured.*

It has also been suggested that viewers' attitudes toward advertisements vary when the sexual minorities are featured as central characters to the narrative or evenly combined with heterosexual characters. Imagery in which homosexual identities are less salient, and/or juxtaposed with heterosexual characters has been related to heterosexual viewers' more positive responses (Eisend & Hermann, 2019). To assess whether this difference in the type of portrayal affects attitudes toward the advertisements, this study hypothesizes that:

*H4: Participants will report more positive attitudes toward advertisements featuring non-leading LGT characters than toward advertisements featuring central LGT characters in the narrative.*

### **Qualitative Approach**

This study acknowledges that viewers' attitudes toward LGT-inclusive content varies not only with the characteristics of the content, and viewers' demographics, but also with the specific and complex ways in which each viewer evaluates the content and its meaning. While testing the above described hypotheses informs how participants rate different advertisements and whether they report changes in their attitudes, addressing the third research question requires an inductive and explorative approach. To understand how viewers evaluate LGT-inclusive advertisements and the LGT-inclusive advertising trend in general, open-ended

questions were relied upon. Hope, disgust, identification with the characters, judgments of the content as realistic, are some of the varied emotions and thoughts that each viewer can experience during exposure and can affect their evaluation of the content (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2007; Gillig et al., 2018; Nölke, 2018; Read et al., 2018).

Overcoming the limitations of closed-ended questions, exploring the broad range of thoughts that advertisements evoke among participants accounts for the fact that the meanings of media's representations of sexual minorities are not fixed but "generated between text and audience" (Freer, 1987 as cited in Gross, 1991). The way viewers evaluate LGT-inclusive advertisements was examined through open-ended questions such as: "What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?" which were asked for each of the two advertisements shown to participants. Furthermore, this study's qualitative approach follows scholars' call to move beyond the immediate effects of single messages toward the consideration of recurrent patterns across broader message systems (Morgan et al., 2015). Considering that the two advertisements shown to participants are only part of the broader LGT-inclusive trend in advertising ("Publisexual", 2018), it is necessary to analyze the ads reception in light of participants' awareness and evaluation of the trend, in general, moving beyond participants' liking of an illustrative advertisement. An inductive qualitative approach enables us to understand individuals' "overall viewing experience" (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 341), exploring whether they recall watching other LGT-inclusive advertisements, what their opinions about these were, and what their opinions are about the inclusion of LGT individuals in advertising.

### **Methods**

To test the hypotheses and assess the extent to which exposure to advertisements portraying LGT characters change viewers' attitudes toward these groups, a between-subjects experimental design with four conditions was adopted. Despite cultivation scholars' initial reluctance to measure short-term effects, experiments and surveys have become increasingly accepted as means for assessing cultivation immediately after exposure (Potter, 2014). Moreover, the use of anonymous online surveys, instead of in-person methods used in other studies to assess audience response to LGBT-inclusive advertising (Gong, 2019), decreases the

likelihood of social desirability bias which is problematic when assessing attitudes regarding socially sensitive issues (Grimm, 2010).

The online questionnaire (Appendix A) was released after rephrasing the items which proved not to be specific enough during the six pre-tests and obtaining approval from the EUR Ethics Review Board (Appendix B). When accessing it, respondents were given an informed-consent notice which explained the context of the study, its focus on viewers' opinions about advertising's representation of certain social groups, the voluntary nature of their participation, and guaranteed their anonymity. During the initial manipulation, participants in the experimental conditions were exposed to a pre-existing advertisement portraying a lesbian (condition 1), gay (condition 2), or transgender (condition 3) main character. No advertisement was initially shown to respondents in the control group. To reduce the likelihood of social desirability bias, participants were broadly informed that the survey was about advertising's representation of social minorities, and the initial advertisements were embedded in clips combined with two more ads portraying other minorities (i.e., ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and overweight people). After this first manipulation, participants in conditions 1, 2, and 3 were shown a screenshot of the advertisement on which the study focused (the one with the LGT main character) and asked to concentrate on that advertisement when answering the subsequent questions. Participants in the control group, instead, were asked questions about their attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities without having been exposed to any advertisement.

Only after participants in conditions 1, 2, and 3 had rated the advertisement they watched and all participants had answered closed-ended questions about their attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities, was LGT-inclusive advertising presented as main theme for the remainder of the study. With all participants informed about the study's specific focus, respondents in the experimental conditions were exposed to a second advertisement in which the same type of character they had previously watched (lesbian, gay, or transgender) was portrayed, but in a non-leading role. Respondents in the control group

were reassigned to watch and rate the two types of advertisements<sup>2</sup>. After all participants had watched and rated two advertisements, open-ended questions were asked about their evaluation of the advertisements and the trend. Appendix C presents a summary of the survey flow.

### **Sample**

In April 2020, the questionnaire built on Qualtrics was opened by 1,177 individuals. Sharing was mainly done through snowball sampling, seeking to have a diverse group of people further spreading the survey. This group included influencers who shared the anonymous link with their followers and educational institutions staff. The survey was also shared in Facebook groups for buy-sell classified ads, which gather thousands of people across different cities. The sample was limited to people currently living in Argentina as they were expected to have had comparable opportunities of exposure to the alleged inclusive trend in advertising in their everyday media consumption. Respondents younger than eighteen years old ( $n= 6$ ) or not residing in Argentina ( $n= 25$ ) were immediately forwarded to the end of the questionnaire. Cases corresponding to participants who dropped out of the survey were subsequently removed from the sample ( $n= 379$ ). The valid sample comprises 767 respondents between 18 and 80 years old ( $M_{age}=33.42$ ,  $SD_{age}=13.17$ ), overcoming the limitations of previous studies exclusively focused on young students' response to LGBT-inclusive content (Clemente et al., 2013; Levina et al., 2000; Um, 2016).

Control variables were measured at the beginning and the end of the survey. While age, highest educational level attained, and size of place of residence were measured at the beginning, participants' religiosity, gender, sexual orientation, and interpersonal contact with LGBT-individuals were measured at the end as these were more personal, sensitive aspects, and could have alerted participants to the study's specific focus in advance. Appendix D refers to empirical studies linking these control variables to this study's main variables. Female participants constituted 65.3% of the sample, 33.2% of participants were male, and 1.4% preferred not to indicate their gender or chose other answers such as "transgender woman". In

---

<sup>2</sup> One third of participants in the control group watched two advertisements featuring lesbian characters in leading and non-leading roles (condition 4.1), and the other thirds watched both types of advertisements (with more and less central portrayal) featuring gay (condition 4.2) or transgender (condition 4.3) characters.



total, 81.7% of participants indicated being heterosexual, 11.1% self-identified as bisexual, 4.4% as either lesbian or gay, and 2.8% wrote other answers in a designated text box, such as “pansexual”. Participants also indicated their highest educational level attained: 58.8% have reached university level, and half of them reported to have completed it. There was a wide range in respondents’ level of religiosity, ranging from 1 (not religious at all) to 10 (very religious) ( $M_{\text{religiosity}}=3.76$ ,  $SD_{\text{religiosity}}=2.71$ ), and most respondents (i.e., 71.8%) lived in cities with more than 1 million inhabitants. Only 6.5% of respondents indicated not knowing any close friend, colleague or relative who self-identifies as lesbian, gay, transgender, or bisexual while more than half (i.e., 56.5%) reported to have interpersonal contact with people self-identifying with two or three of these groups ( $M_{\text{contact}}=2.20$ ,  $SD_{\text{contact}}=1.14$ ).

After the initial questions on demographics, participants were randomly placed in one of the conditions: 188, 189, and 194 participants were placed in conditions 1, 2, and 3 respectively. The remaining participants were placed in the control group ( $n=196$ ) and exposed to advertisements only after their attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities had been assessed. Each third of participants in the control group watched two advertisements featuring lesbian ( $n=65$ ), gay ( $n=67$ ), or transgender ( $n=64$ ) characters.

### **Stimuli**

The study included eight audiovisual advertisements (links are available in Appendix C). Two advertisements featuring other non-LGBT social minorities were shown to participants in the experimental conditions as distractors during the first manipulation to avoid alerting them of the study’s specific focus, thereby, preventing social desirability bias. The first video was a Colgate advertisement featuring people with disabilities and overweight characters, while Skol’s advertisement featured people with diverse skin colors. All the remaining advertisements explicitly portrayed either lesbian, gay, or transgender characters. The selection criteria included not choosing advertisements depicting more than one of these subgroups, to ensure that the measured effect was by exposure to each specific subgroup.

Participants in Condition 1 were initially shown an advertisement by the ice cream brand Magnum which portrays a lesbian woman walking down the aisle where her female bride waits for them to get married. Titled “The Future”, the second advertisement they watched is

by Samsung and shows futuristic scenes from the daily lives of different people, including a lesbian couple watching on a phone screen the ultrasound of their yet-to-be-born baby. Participants in Condition 2 first watched an advertisement by the airline Aeroméxico in which a man meets another man at the airport, visibly his partner, with whom he hugs and kisses before boarding a plane together. Subsequently, participants watched an advertisement by Coca Cola in which diverse families, including a gay couple, single-parent, and adoptive families, are featured answering their children's questions about their family being different.

Participants in Condition 3 initially watched an advertisement by the bank Banco Provincia in which a transgender woman is visited at her hair salon by an older man from the countryside, who apologizes for having treated her badly in the past while they smile at each other. The last advertisement was Dove's "Your Hair, Your choice", where a voice-over talks about the freedom to choose according to one's own desires while different types of women appear on screen (an elderly woman surfing, a woman breastfeeding in public) including a transgender woman. The three advertisements featuring LGT main characters were similar in length (1:30, 1:09, and 1:19) and in that the characters' identification as lesbian, gay, or transgender was revealed in the video's second half. The advertisements featuring LGT characters in non-leading roles lasted 1:00, 1:02, and 0:45, showed the LGT character(s) as much as other characters, and repeatedly switched scenes.

### **Measurements**

Despite many studies' reliance on Herek's (1994) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men scale, this one was discarded as its statements could be perceived as unethical and outdated for the current Argentinian context. Instead, to test hypothesis H1, attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities were measured by adapting the items used in the European Social Survey for measuring attitudes toward homosexuality in a multidimensional way, including attitudes toward homosexual behaviors, individuals, and rights (original Cronbach's alpha of 0.79) (Kuyper, 2016). The ESS scale includes the items: "Gay men and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish", "Gay male and lesbian couples should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples", and "If a close family member was a gay man or a lesbian, I would feel ashamed". Because this study's hypotheses

require an assessment of respondents' attitudes toward transgender identities and toward each LGT-subgroup distinctively, the scale was adapted by changing the sentences' subject to include nine statements, with three referring to each LGT-subgroup. The original 5-point answer options were maintained, ranging from (1) Agree strongly to (5) Disagree strongly.

After recoding statements so higher scores represent more positive attitudes, reliability was tested for the three items assessing attitudes toward lesbian ( $\alpha = 0.62$ ), gay ( $\alpha = 0.63$ ), and transgender ( $\alpha = 0.69$ ) people. A reliability test including all nine items showed that, together, they reliably measured attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ). The three first items asked whether "Gay men should be free to live their own life as they wish", if participants "would feel ashamed if a close family member was a gay man", and whether "Gay men should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples", measuring attitudes toward gay men on a 1 to 5 scale ( $M= 4.65$ ,  $SD= 0.58$ ). The three following items presented identical sentences but about lesbian women ( $M= 4.66$ ,  $SD= 0.58$ ) and the three last items referred to transgender people ( $M= 4.52$ ,  $SD= 0.69$ ). Overall, the nine items measured participants' attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities ( $M= 4.61$ ,  $SD= 0.59$ ). As shown by the means for these measures, values were remarkably high, revealing participants' considerable positive attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities.

To test hypotheses H2, H3, and H4, participants' attitudes toward the advertisements were measured using the 3-item, 5-point semantic differential scale proposed by Bigné Alcañiz and Sánchez García (2001) (original Cronbach's alpha of 0.81). Participants indicated their attitudes toward each advertisement by selecting the one point out of five, which best represented their answer to "How would you describe this advertisement?" (i.e., "It's very bad/it's very good", "I did not like it at all/I liked it very much", and "It's not interesting at all/it's very interesting"). The scale proved reliable for the six advertisements across all conditions, as Table 1 shows. Consequently, twelve new variables were computed containing the mean values of the three items in the scale, per advertisement and per condition. Table 1 presents these variables' means and standard deviations.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha values, means, and standard deviations for attitudes toward the advertisement per advertisement and per condition

Scale	$\alpha$	$M$	$SD$
C1, ad 1 (Magnum)	0.86	3.60	1.01
C1, ad 2 (Samsung)	0.93	3.81	0.99
C2, ad 1 (Aeroméxico)	0.90	3.52	1.12
C2, ad 2 (Coca Cola)	0.95	4.17	1.04
C3, ad 1 (Banco Provincia)	0.87	3.52	1.12
C3, ad 2 (Dove)	0.93	3.86	1.08
C4.1, ad 1 (Magnum)	0.95	3.74	1.10
C4.1, ad 2 (Samsung)	0.94	4.15	0.88
C4.2, ad 1 (Aeroméxico)	0.89	4.09	0.83
C4.2, ad 2 (Coca Cola)	0.90	4.45	0.76
C4.3, ad 1 (Banco Provincia)	0.91	3.50	1.10
C4.3, ad 2 (Dove)	0.94	3.99	0.95

Participants' evaluation of the advertisements was assessed by asking them the reasons for preferring one advertisement over the other. Furthermore, considering the varied ways in which each person can feel about the content they watch (Gillig et al., 2018), respondents were also asked to reflect on the following: "What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?", "What aspects of the advertisement do you think provoked those thoughts and/or emotions?". Since viewers' prior exposures to LGBT-inclusive content also relate to differing evaluations of it (Calzo & Ward, 2009), participants' previous exposures were assessed by asking: "Can you name brands and/or companies that included homosexual and/or transgender characters in their advertisements?", "What was your opinion about those ads?". These questions served as a bridge from ad-specific evaluations toward exploring participants' evaluation of the "inclusive advertising" trend in general ("Publisexual", 2018). Participants' evaluation of the LGT-inclusive trend was further assessed by asking them: "What do you think about the inclusion of lesbian, gay, and transgender people in advertising, in general?", "Do you think that the inclusion of lesbian, gay, and transgender people in advertising can provoke a positive change in society?".

## Results

Before conducting the quantitative analyses, the quantitative data were cleaned using SPSS to remove data from participants who did not continue the survey until the last forced-response multiple-choice question. Four dummy variables were computed to control for educational level, gender, sexual orientation, and size of place of residence in all ANCOVA and regression analyses needed to test the hypotheses. Educational level was coded with 0 representing lower than university (26.9%) and 1 representing university or above (73.1%). Gender was coded with 0 representing male (33.7%) and 1 representing female (66.3%), other categories were included as missing values due to their low frequencies. The dummy variable for sexual orientation included the values 1 for heterosexual (81.7%) and 0 for all other identifications (18.3%). Finally, the size of participants' place of residence was coded with 1 for large cities, above one million inhabitants, (71.8%) and 0 for smaller cities, with less inhabitants (28.2%).

### Effects of Exposure on LGT Attitudes

As this study's first research question assesses the extent to which exposure to advertisements portraying LGT characters changes viewers' attitudes toward these groups, four ANCOVAs were conducted to test the effect of exposure to an LGT-inclusive advertisement on participants' attitudes toward the specific subgroup featured per condition and toward homosexuality and transgender identities more broadly. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Testing H1<sub>a</sub>, a one-way between-groups analysis of covariance measured the effect of exposure to an advertisement portraying a lesbian character on participants' attitudes toward lesbian women, with attitudes toward lesbian women as dependent variable and participants' condition as independent variable since the latter reflects the specific LGT-character featured in the watched advertisement. The assumption of equality of variance was not violated, Levene's  $F(3,733) = 1.079, p = .357$ . After adjusting for the covariates, there was no significant difference between the four conditions on attitudes toward lesbian women,  $F(3,726) = 1.554, p = .199$ , partial eta squared = .006. Participants' age, gender, religiosity, and interpersonal contact with LGBT people, however, were all significantly related to attitudes toward lesbian women (all  $p < .001$ ).

Table 2: Attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities per condition

Condition	Attitudes toward lesbian women	Attitudes toward gay men	Attitudes toward transgender people	Attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities
C1	4.62 (.04) (n= 181)	4.62 (.04) (n= 181)	4.47 (.04) (n= 181)	4.57 (.04) (n= 181)
C2	4.66 (.04) (n= 186)	4.67 (.04) (n= 185)	4.49 (.04) (n= 186)	4.61 (.04) (n= 186)
C3	4.68 (.04) (n= 185)	4.67 (.04) (n= 186)	4.57 (.04) (n= 186)	4.64 (.04) (n= 186)
Control group	4.73 (.04) (n= 185)	4.72 (.04) (n= 185)	4.58 (.04) (n= 184)	4.67 (.04) (n= 185)

Note. The table presents the adjusted mean scores for attitudes per condition; standard errors are shown between parentheses. All models were controlled for participants' age, gender, sexual orientation, religiosity, educational level, size of place of residence, and interpersonal contact with LGBT people

The same analysis was conducted to test H1<sub>b</sub> with attitudes toward gay men as dependent variable. Again, the assumption of equality of variance was not violated, Levene's  $F(3,733) = 1.565, p = .197$  and, after controlling for the covariates, there was no significant difference between the conditions on attitudes toward gay men,  $F(3,726) = 1.335, p = .262$ , partial eta squared = .005. The same four covariates above-mentioned were found to be significantly related to the dependent variable (all  $p < .001$ ). Analogous results emerged from the ANCOVA testing H1<sub>c</sub>, with attitudes toward transgender people as dependent variable for which the assumption of equality of variance was not violated either, Levene's  $F(3,733) = .054, p = .984$ . After adjusting for the scores in the covariates, no significant difference was found between the conditions on attitudes toward transgender people,  $F(3,726) = 1.648, p = .177$ , partial eta squared = .007. This time, not only participants' age, gender, religiosity, and interpersonal contact with LGBT people were significant (all at  $p < .001$ ), but also participants' sexual orientation ( $p = .013$ ) and educational level ( $p = .054$ ).

Finally, an ANCOVA tested whether participants exposed to an advertisement portraying an LGT character would report more positive attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities than participants in the control condition (H1<sub>d</sub>). To assess the differences between participants in the control group and participants in any of the experimental conditions, the dummy variable Control group Vs Experimental was used as independent variable, combining

all experimental conditions under one value. Attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities was the dependent variable. The covariates with significant relationship with the dependent variable were, again, participants' age, gender, religiosity, and interpersonal contact with LGBT people (all  $p < .001$ ). No significant difference was found between the experimental conditions ( $n=553$ ,  $M=4.60$ ,  $SE=.02$ ) and the control group ( $n=185$ ,  $M=4.67$ ,  $SE=.04$ ) regarding attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities,  $F(1,729) = 2.843$ ,  $p=.092$ , partial eta squared = .004<sup>3</sup>. Overall, the results show that exposure to an LGT-inclusive advertisement did not relate to significant differences between conditions on participants' attitudes toward the subgroup featured in the advertisement nor toward homosexuality and transgender identities more broadly. Therefore, hypotheses 1a, b, c, and d must be rejected.

### **Effects of Advertisement Liking on LGT Attitudes**

Supplementing the previous results, four multiple linear regression analyses assessed the relation between participants' attitudes toward the first advertisement they watched and their attitudes toward the LGT-subgroup featured in that advertisement and toward homosexuality and transgender identities (H2), while controlling for demographics. Results of the analyses are shown in Table 3. Since the effects of the control variables on LGT attitudes were discussed above, below we solely focus on the main effects.

The first regression, with attitudes toward the Magnum advertisement as independent variable, rejected the hypothesis that the more positive participants' attitudes toward an advertisement portraying a lesbian character are, the more positive their attitudes toward lesbian women will be (H2<sub>a</sub>;  $\beta=.091$ ,  $p=.155$ ). The total variance explained by the model, including seven control variables, was 31.5%,  $F(8,175) = 10.06$ ,  $p < .001$ . The second regression analysis, with attitudes toward gay men as dependent variable and attitudes toward Aeroméxico's advertisement as independent variable, confirmed that the more positive participants' attitudes toward an advertisement portraying a gay character are, the more positive their attitudes toward gay men will be, although the effect size was small

---

<sup>3</sup> As there was an inclination toward significance, and valuable information could have been lost by joining experimental conditions, the analysis was repeated with the four distinguished groups to test once more whether exposure could affect attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities. Results of this analysis are summarized in Table 2 and confirm that there is no significant relationship between the four groups on attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities,  $F(3,727) = 1.522$ ,  $p= .207$ , partial eta squared = .006.

Table 3: Regression model for attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and transgender people, and toward homosexuality and transgender identities

Variables	Att. Toward lesbian women		Att. Toward gay men		Att. Toward transgender people		Att. Toward homosexuality and transgender identities	
	<i>B</i> (SE <i>B</i> )	$\beta$	<i>B</i> (SE <i>B</i> )	$\beta$	<i>B</i> (SE <i>B</i> )	$\beta$	<i>B</i> (SE <i>B</i> )	$\beta$
Att. toward an ad portraying a lesbian character (Magnum)	.052 (.037)	.091	-	-	-	-	-	-
Att. toward an ad portraying a gay character (Aeroméxico)	-	-	.081 (.033)	.156*	-	-	-	-
Att. toward an ad portraying a transgender character (Banco Provincia)	-	-	-	-	.015 (.041)	.024	-	-
Att. toward an ad portraying a lesbian, gay, or transgender character	-	-	-	-	-	-	.056 (.019)	.099**
Age	-.018 (.003)	-.396***	-.016 (.003)	-.360***	-.017 (.004)	-.322***	-.019 (.002)	-.419***
Contact with LGBT	.075 (.036)	.147*	.075 (.036)	.145*	.093 (.043)	.152*	.098 (.020)	.184***
Religiosity	-.030 (.014)	-.142*	-.039 (.014)	-.180**	-.041 (.017)	-.160*	-.035 (.008)	-.158***
Gender	.161 (.079)	.131*	.177 (.079)	.143*	.264 (.095)	.180**	.198 (.045)	.156***
Education	.088 (.084)	.067	.084 (.084)	.064	.094 (.102)	.060	.100 (.047)	.074*
Sexual orientation	-.086 (.102)	-.057	-.007 (.103)	-.005	-.141 (.124)	-.079	-.059 (.059)	-.038
Size of city	.039 (.083)	.031	.060 (.083)	.047	.072 (.101)	.047	.026 (.047)	.019
R <sup>2</sup>	.315		.306		.267		.369	
R <sup>2</sup> adjusted	.284		.275		.235		.359	

\*\*\* $p < .001$  \*\* $p < .01$  \* $p < .05$



( $H2_b$ ;  $\beta = .156$ ,  $p = .016$ ). The total variance in attitudes toward gay men explained by the model was 30.6%,  $F(8,177) = 9.777$ ,  $p < .001$ . Using participants' attitudes toward transgender people as dependent variable and attitudes toward Banco Provincia's advertisement as independent variable, the third regression analysis rejected the hypothesis that the more positive participants' attitudes toward an advertisement portraying a transgender character are, the more positive their attitudes toward transgender people will be ( $H2_c$ ;  $\beta = .024$ ,  $p = .715$ ). The total variance explained by the model was 26.7%  $F(8,180) = 8.202$ ,  $p < .001$ .

The last regression analysis confirmed that the more positive participants' attitudes toward an advertisement portraying a lesbian, gay, or transgender character are, the more positive their attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities will be ( $H2_d$ ;  $\beta = .099$ ,  $p = .004$ ). Including attitudes toward the first advertisement watched by participants in the experimental conditions as independent variable, the model obtained explains 36.9% of variance in attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities,  $F(8,544) = 39.705$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Table 3).

### **Effects of Content on Advertisement Attitudes**

To answer this study's second research question, participants' attitudes toward the advertisements were measured considering the effect of two characteristics of the content: the specific LGT-subgroup featured and the character's centrality in the narrative. To test whether participants' attitudes toward the advertisements were contingent upon the specific LGT-subgroup being featured ( $H3$ ), one ANCOVA was conducted with the independent variable being the LGT-subgroup featured in the advertisements and attitudes toward the first advertisement as dependent variable (see Table 4).

After adjusting for the control variables, there was no significant difference between the three groups on attitudes toward the advertisement,  $F(2,728) = 1.377$ ,  $p = .253$ , partial eta squared = .004, therefore, rejecting this study's third hypothesis. There was a weak but significant relationship between participants' gender and their attitudes toward the advertisement, as indicated by a partial eta squared value of .011 ( $p = .005$ ).

Table 4: Attitudes toward the first advertisement per subgroup featured as main character

Group	Attitudes toward the first ad watched	N
Lesbian character	3.65 (.07)	241
Gay character	3.69 (.07)	249
Transgender character	3.54 (.07)	248

Notes: The table presents the adjusted mean scores for attitudes toward the first ad watched per LGT-subgroup featured; standard errors are shown between parentheses. All models were controlled for participants' age, gender, sexual orientation, religiosity, educational level, size of place of residence, and interpersonal contact with LGBT people.

Finally, a within-subjects t-test assessed the difference in participants' attitudes toward advertisements with more and less central portrayals of the LGT characters to test H4. Here, no control variables were used because the goal was to compare scores rather than effects. There was a statistically significant increase in attitudes scores from the first advertisement with central LGT characters ( $M= 3.61, SD= 1.07$ ) to the second advertisement with non-leading LGT characters ( $M= 4.01, SD= 1.01$ ),  $t(766)= -9.909, p < .001$  (two-tailed). The mean difference in scores for attitudes toward the advertisement was  $-.41$ . Thus, the hypothesis that participants would report more positive attitudes toward advertisements portraying non-leading LGT characters than toward advertisements portraying central LGT characters (H4) was confirmed<sup>4</sup>.

#### Participants' Evaluations of the LGT-Advertisements and the Trend

The analysis of answers to open-ended questions helped answer the third research question, revealing different ways in which viewers evaluated the LGT-inclusive advertisements and the trend toward LGT-inclusion in advertising. To aid the qualitative analysis of the answers, all responses to the open-ended questions were sorted per respondent in 767 Word documents, imported to Atlas.ti, and grouped by condition. Following the documents' random numbering in Atlas.ti, these were coded ensuring that a comparable number of documents were analyzed per condition. During repeated readings, primarily data-driven codes were built to reduce the data and elucidate how the different fragments written by each respondent and

<sup>4</sup> To assess whether the difference was particularly salient for advertisements featuring a particular LGT subgroup, the test was also conducted separately for the attitudes of participants who watched advertisements featuring lesbian, gay, or transgender characters. Statistically significant increases were found in positive attitudes scores from the first ( $M= 3.64, SD= 1.03$ ) to the second ( $M= 3.90, SD= 0.98$ ) advertisement portraying a lesbian character,  $t(252)= -3.549, p < .001$  (two-tailed), from the first ( $M= 3.67, SD= 1.08$ ) to the second ( $M= 4.25, SD= 0.98$ ) advertisement portraying a gay character,  $t(255)= -8.779, p < .001$  (two-tailed), and from the first ( $M= 3.51, SD= 1.11$ ) to the second ( $M= 3.90, SD= 1.05$ ) advertisement portraying a transgender character,  $t(257)= -5.234, p < .001$  (two-tailed).

the answers to each question across respondents related and compared to each other (Schreier, 2013). Answers were thematically analyzed to identify the main explicit and implicit ideas as well as their similarities, differences, and relationships (Guest et al., 2012). Since after analyzing 300 texts the same codes kept reappearing, suggesting that the data saturation point had been reached, the qualitative analysis was conducted with 390 texts (100 per experimental condition and 30 per control subgroup). The main themes are presented below, indicating each quote's source with the condition and participant number<sup>5</sup>.

### **Negative Comments about “Forced” Inclusion**

Participants' evaluations of the advertisements were considerably guided by a principle repeatedly expressed across conditions: The inclusion of sexual minorities, per se, should not be an advertisement's main focus. Across all conditions, when participants considered that the inclusion of an LGT character was excessively emphasized or “too forced of a situation for wanting to make it an inclusive advertisement” (C3, P7), this was negatively criticized. By describing what they experienced during exposure, participants identified aspects that signal when an advertisement focuses too much on the inclusion of sexual minorities.

First, advertisements were judged as too forcibly focused on inclusion when the connection between the story and the advertised brand was hard to believe, confusing, or made the brand too heroic a part of the story. Especially Banco Provincia's ad was repeatedly accused of being false, opportunistic, and hard to believe because of the connection it proposes between the bank's loan to a man and the man's apologies to a transgender woman: “I think it's strange that because of receiving a loan he goes and asks her for forgiveness??? Very forced” (C3, P225). Far from being signs of incomprehension, these questions pointed to viewers' dissatisfaction with the focus on inclusion when it had little to do with the advertised company: “The fact that the older man accepts the trans woman only because of the bank loan seems very out of place, they wanted to be inclusive and it turned out badly” (C3, P165). Similarly, some participants disliked Magnum's advertisement because “the whole video was forced, just to show that the protagonists' sexual choice is okay” (C4.1, P167). Others criticized the focus on a lesbian couple when the on-screen slogan read “Pleasure is diverse”: “They convey that

---

<sup>5</sup> As in C1, P1 for: condition 1, participant 1.

message of pleasure being diverse, whereas I don't think a marriage has strictly anything to do with pleasure. It kind of trivializes LGBT love to something that's just about pleasure" (C4.1, P144). Aeroméxico's advertisement was also criticized for excessively emphasizing gay-inclusion because there was "no need to clarify the sexuality of people who travel" (C2, P70). Dislike toward the over-emphasized inclusion was exacerbated by the brand's heroic claims: "they focus a lot on the gay person, showing off as being good for taking non-heterosexual people on trips, which nowadays should be the usual thing" (C2, P70). The focus on inclusion and on the brand as hero was judged negatively since "if they really were [inclusive], they wouldn't need a special advertisement to show how inclusive they are" (C2, P353).

Second, advertisements were seen as excessively emphasizing inclusion when the story was considered exaggerated, overdramatized, and lacking naturalness. The big production that made Magnum's advertisement feel "like a movie" (C1, P1), was judged as being too much and, therefore, not making the same-sex wedding seem natural: "Too much production for a poor message. So much intrigue just to present a couple of women getting married. It continues to show the situation of two women getting married as something out of the norm" (C1, P142). Another participant explained: "A marriage is nothing out of the ordinary ... putting a lot of emphasis on what you want to naturalize, makes it suspicious" (C1, P158). Similarly, some participants thought that Aeroméxico's advertisement should not "dramatize being gay so much" (C2, P75), and that Banco Provincia's ad made "the presence of the transgender character very evident" (C4.3, P176) while it is "unnecessary to emphasize the character's role so much through clothing and makeup" (C3, P297).

### **Positive Comments about "Natural" Inclusion**

Contrastingly, advertisements that do not focus excessively on the inclusion of sexual minorities were widely celebrated. Participants repeatedly explained they preferred an "advertisement that does not place as much emphasis on gender issues, or even puts them in the background" (C1, P16), where "homosexuality is not what gets all the attention" (C1, P178), and if it integrates "in a more subtle way" (C3, P54). Three main reasons explained these preferences. The first reason why Samsung's, Coca Cola's, and Dove's advertisements were praised was because they featured a broad diversity of characters and situations. By doing so,

the advertisements were seen not only as talking about diversity and inclusion but also as visually reflecting those values: Coca Cola's "advertisement more broadly represents the fact that all couples are fine ... By showing different families" (C2, P195). Dove's advertisement, also, was celebrated for "representing different kinds of women" (C3, P24) and "putting them all in the same equal situation" (C3, P15). This all-encompassing range of characters was considered better for reaching different viewers as "it doesn't talk about just one couple but about everyone!" (C1, P137).

Second, advertisements not focusing exclusively on LGT characters were positively evaluated for depicting them as just one more among others, thereby, naturally including them instead of further differentiating: "I like that the couple is just one more in the whole and not something exceptional. That they're not the main thing but one more part of the advertisement" (C4.1, P96). This also applied to Coca Cola's advertisement which: "is inclusive in that the LGT is just part as one other option, it naturalizes it" (C4.2, P98) and Dove's advertisement: "By not focusing on the transgender person, she is treated as ordinary, not as different" (C3, P26).

Third, participants positively evaluated advertisements that depict characters in simple, everyday life scenes. The depiction of ordinary situations, like two women watching the phone in bed, was related, by participants, to unforced stories and not overacted characters: "They're not staged. They're in a much more everyday role ... Naturalness, charm ... It's just a home. There's no forced situation" (C1, P763). The scene's naturalness was evaluated as more positive for sexual minorities' societal inclusion: "it takes that [the gay character's inclusion] for granted as something quotidian, it makes it more agreeable, more natural" (C2, P328).

Additionally, other factors were valued by participants when evaluating the advertisements, not directly related to them featuring sexual minorities. Besides the music and photography, participants evaluated the advertisements based on the opportunity they provided to empathize with the characters and feel related, as was the case with Banco Provincia's: "I felt it as a situation closer to my reality, maybe because of the small village environment, like the one I live in, I could picture my grandfather being the old man in the ad" (C4.3, P315). Furthermore, each participant's personal inclination to like or be interested in a

certain theme was also involved in their evaluation. Particularly, affinity toward the theme contributed to the positive evaluation of Magnum's advertisement by those who “like weddings” (C1, P77), appreciate representations of “love in romantic ways” (C1, P346), and place marital commitment high in their “order of values” (C1, P149).

### **Participants' Evaluation of the Trend**

Beyond their evaluation of the shown advertisements, 34.6% of participants mentioned that they had perhaps watched other advertisements featuring sexual minorities in the past and 52.9% were certain that they had been exposed to that type of advertising. Participants mentioned more than fifty brands which have launched LGBT-inclusive advertisements. Reactions to previous advertisements were both positive and negative, with some participants stating that they “loved” (C2, P348) those advertisements and others expressing critical views, often so strong that the objectionable points were recalled although the advertisement had been watched years before. Several respondents observed changes in how advertising represents sexual minorities and celebrated advertising's rising inclusivity: “It's perfect ... In the past, advertisements used to include them only to make fun of them, but I see now a great advance as a society” (C4.1, P322). Although brands' motivations to include LGT-characters were questioned by some participants (e.g., “clearly they're not doing it to support minority social movements but to capture more market” (C1, P764)), the trend's potential to provoke societal changes was more agreed upon.

*Potential for Normalization.* Participants explained why inclusion in advertising can lead to positive societal changes, with variations in the type of change mentioned and the degree to which it is possible. Along with the most skeptical ones who considered it impossible for advertising to generate any change, because it cannot “change LGT people's material reality” (C3, P753), were those who considered that advertising helps, but is insufficient. According to them, changes in legislation, policies, education, and domestic conversations must accompany the advertisements for positive societal changes to happen. A fraction of these participants, however, recognized that advertising plays an important role with respect to these other areas because it puts the issue on the public agenda: “advertising helped, at some point, to get the topic on everyone's lips, it's something that makes up the agenda for many legislative and

academic projects” (C4.3, P244), and because it sparks debates and “the beginning of conversations” (C4.2, P14). Other participants, instead, assigned a greater and direct power of influence to advertising: “Advertising is a gigantic tool to generate ideas, desires, needs and behind them, behaviors and ways of relating” (C4.2, P755).

Taking a rather intermediate position was the large number of participants who stated that advertising’s inclusion of sexual minorities can help people see something as natural, familiarize viewers with what they have no direct contact with, get them used to seeing gender and sexual minorities as part of an everyday ordinary reality:

It would have a positive impact because it helps normalize it ... Then the LGBT person looking at it feels normal and the non-LGBT person begins to see them as normal, until eventually they stop questioning what’s normal and what isn’t, and just accept each other as they are. (C4.1, P144).

Most participants who expressed that advertising can provoke positive social changes explained this by conferring upon advertising the ability to normalize and naturalize, in other words, to make sexual minorities part of the mainstream: “we adopt as normal what we see or watch frequently, and, generalizing, we currently consume a lot of advertising through tv, social media, internet” (C4.3, P3), “it enables us ... to naturalize others’ ways of being and living” (C4.2, P170).

*Conditions for Normalization.* Participants’ evaluation of inclusive advertising as having positive societal outcomes did not equate to an assessment of the trend as inherently positive. Beyond participants who succinctly stated that inclusion in advertising is “absolutely necessary” (C2, P135) and “shouldn’t even be discussed” (C2, P203), many other participants were more critical when evaluating the trend. Instead, they suggested that the celebrations of rising inclusion should be nuanced as “we are no longer in a year where inclusive advertising should still be treated as some kind of ‘hero and pride’” (C1, P118). In detail, participants mentioned several aspects that must be considered for advertising’s LGBT-inclusion to be truly positive.

First, LGT-inclusive advertising should narrow the differences more than it widens them. The trend was evaluated negatively if advertising “emphasizes the being different, marginal or transgressor” (C3, P759). That is why participants explained that it is key to observe not only

*who* is included but also *how* that inclusion takes place. Participants judged advertising's rising inclusivity as positive only as long as it portrays minority characters "as societal actors" (C2, P75), "as part of everyday normal life" (C2, P48), instead of only as minorities: "I'd rather see advertisements where a transgender character is included simply because s/he is a person and not because s/he's transgender, advertisements that have nothing to do with their choices" (C4.1, P155).

Second, advertising's inclusion of sexual minorities was considered as potentially positive as long as it is not merely done for commercial purposes to improve a brands' image. While several participants expressed concerns about "the market appropriating the struggles and 'embellishing' them, leaving aside LGTBIQ people's real struggle process" (C3, P6), other participants accepted commercial benefit as "inevitable" (C1, P16) but emphasized the need to accompany it with material actions: "They [the ads] shouldn't serve to keep companies up to date with society's demands while on the other hand - less visibly - they do nothing (e.g. making advertisements with trans people but not having any trans employees)" (C2, P766).

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

Advertising's increasing inclusion of sexual minorities has recently attracted considerable attention from scholars (Eisend & Hermann, 2019; Sheehan, 2014) and news media ("Publisexual", 2018). Among the latter, some argue that advertisements worldwide in general, and in Argentina particularly, are challenging prejudices, breaking taboos, and echoing the LGBT community's demands (Sainz & Terrile, 2019). Scholarship, however, has remained restricted to studying the contents and commercial effects of these advertisements, overlooking the prosocial effects they may have beyond sales goals (Sheehan, 2014). This study examined the effects of exposure to advertisements featuring lesbian, gay, and transgender characters and did not find a significant effect of exposure on viewers' attitudes toward the LGT-subgroup featured nor toward homosexuality and transgender identities (RQ1). By analyzing viewers' attitudes toward different advertisements, the results did, however, reveal that attitudes toward LGT-inclusive advertisements vary with different degrees of protagonism of the LGT characters, with non-leading roles relating to more positive attitudes (RQ2). Answering the third research question, this study has shown that viewers' evaluation of LGT-



inclusive advertisements partly depends on *how* inclusion is done, whether it seems excessively forced, over-focused, or unnatural. Moreover, the findings have indicated that viewers are not only aware of advertising's LGT-inclusive trend, but also that they evaluate it as having potential positive societal effects. This, however, does not mean the trend itself is evaluated as inherently positive, unless it is accompanied by material actions and includes sexual minorities naturally, as part of everyday life.

### **Major Findings**

*Effects of single advertisements vs. the overall trend.* The rejection of the hypotheses that participants exposed to an advertisement portraying a lesbian (H1a), gay (H1b), or transgender character (H1c) would report more positive attitudes toward the depicted subgroup, and toward homosexuality and transgender identities (H1d) should be considered in light of the large concentration of responses in the highest values for attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities, revealing participants' considerable positive attitudes. As this variable's mean values were remarkably high, changes resulting from exposure may have become difficult to observe. Furthermore, two findings from the qualitative analysis should be considered. First, most participants had previously been exposed to other advertisements featuring sexual minorities. Second, participants expressed the belief that LGT-inclusive advertising could provoke positive societal changes such as normalization of sexual minorities as an everyday reality. In fact, participants' claims that exposure to LGT-inclusive advertisements could affect viewers' assumptions about what is normal, natural, or right paralleled cultivation theory's notions (Gerbner, 1993 as cited in Sheehan, 2014). When combined, these findings point to the likelihood that viewers' previous exposures have already had cultivating effects on their attitudes and effects beyond those are no longer measurable, as viewers have reached the ceiling in attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities.

By revealing participants' awareness of the trend beyond the shown advertisements, this study has underscored the importance of moving beyond the immediate effects of single messages toward analyzing the cultivation effect of recurrent images (Morgan et al., 2015). The qualitative analysis indicated that participants were aware of dozens of LGT-inclusive advertisements and could provide critical evaluations of those. This suggests that even when

the patterns of media messages seem unstable and changing, their effects on viewers should be measured jointly by assessing their overall viewing experiences, thus, considering the content viewers have watched before and their evaluations of it.

*Linking liking to prosocial effects.* The hypothesis that the more positive participants' attitudes toward an advertisement portraying an LGT character are, the more positive their attitudes toward the depicted subgroup would be was confirmed for the advertisement featuring gay characters (H2b) and rejected for the advertisements featuring lesbian (H2a) and transgender characters (H2c). An explanation lies in the finding, from the qualitative analysis, that viewers evaluate advertisements not only depending on the characters' sexual or gender orientation but also based on other factors, such as their fondness toward the theme and the empathy toward the characters. Since Magnum's advertisement was positively evaluated by participants keen on conventional wedding rituals, it is likely that more conservative participants rated this advertisement positively for the theme and setting presented and, notwithstanding, scored low in attitudes toward lesbian women. Similarly, older participants may have felt empathy for Banco Provincia's old man's character, valued this aspect, and yet reported negative attitudes toward transgender people. Instead, in Aeroméxico's advertisement, where those features were absent, respondents who reported positive attitudes toward the advertisement may have been those who had positive attitudes toward gay men, thus, resulting in a stronger correlation.

Despite the rejection of H2a and H2c, H2d was confirmed, suggesting that positive attitudes toward an LGT-inclusive advertisement relate to more positive attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities. While this seems to indicate that the mediated effect of advertisement liking transcends each specific subgroup to a broader level of attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities, explaining this potential requires further scrutiny. This finding should, however, be cautiously read considering other studies which have found positive correlations between liking of advertisements featuring same-sex couples and attitudes toward homosexuality, but with the latter being the independent variable (Read et al., 2018).

Importantly, viewers' attitudes toward the advertisements were not contingent upon the specific LGT-subgroup featured (H3) and improved when sexual minorities had non-leading roles (H4). Although the latter is in line with previous research, this study has revealed that this preference is not as explained by heterosexual viewers' reluctance to be excluded from advertising (Han & Tsai, 2016), as it is by other factors. When supplemented with the qualitative analysis, these results question studies which have argued that heterosexual viewers prefer mixed sexual advertisements over gay-themed advertisements because they consider the latter "a potential threat to their ingroup identity" (Gong, 2019, p. 16). Instead, it was found that participants considered more societally positive the inclusion of sexual minorities in not overly emphasized ways but in more natural, less-dramatized depictions, truly inclusive of LGBT-individuals as one more among others. These findings illustrate the value of supplementing quantitative reception studies with qualitative analyses to understand the reasons behind viewers' preferences.

#### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

Three limitations should be addressed in future studies. First, the reliance on open-ended questions to explore participants' recalling of other ads precluded the statistical use of these data to assess whether more prior exposures relate to more positive LGT attitudes. Second, the lack of available material to be used as stimuli limited this study's scope as the effects of exposure to advertisements featuring other LGBT-subgroups (e.g., bisexual characters, transgender men) could not be measured. Finally, the sample size and its scarce diversity in terms of participants' gender and sexual orientation may have hindered the possibilities of finding other significant relationships for this study's hypotheses.

The list of more than fifty brands that participants recalled as having included sexual minorities in their advertisements should be further exploited by research to measure, for instance, whether people who have been more exposed to inclusive advertising in the past are those who have more positive attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities. Given that advertising's representation of other LGBT-subgroups, like bisexual people, remains virtually nonexistent (Tsai, 2010), further work is required to assess whether an increase in these portrayals is observed and whether this study's findings are confirmed when measuring

the effects of advertisements featuring other sexual minorities. Moreover, considering insights from social identity theory suggesting that viewers report more positive attitudes toward advertisements featuring members of the in-group to which they belong (Read et al., 2018), further studies should increase LGBT representation in the sample to assess how viewers' sexual and gender orientation affects their attitudes toward LGBT-inclusive advertisements.

Future studies with larger samples are also needed to shed more light on the significance of the relationships that remained unconfirmed. Moreover, research should assess whether these hypotheses can be confirmed in cultural contexts less supportive of homosexuality and transgender identities. It is also recommended that research should zoom into specific demographic groups, such as older and more religious people, and people with no interpersonal contact with LGBT individuals, which proved to be variables significantly influencing participants' attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities.

### **Strengths & Practical Implications**

The reliability of the group comparisons was strengthened by the considerable number of respondents per condition, and by the use of pre-existing material as stimuli which improved external validity, approximating real-world exposure, while still comprising comparable videos similar in length and narrative. Furthermore, by relying on a mixed methods design with closed- and open-ended questions, this study's triangulation of data provided explanations for the quantitative findings, such as the reasons behind viewers' preferences for non-central portrayals. Finally, the measurement instruments were adapted to the study and its context in a reliable way. As social and media environments move toward greater inclusion of LGBT communities, research on the topic must adapt and update its tools. This includes revising the scales with which attitudes have regularly been measured and questioning the clustering of different LGBT-subgroups under umbrella terms and scales which overlook their differing realities and levels of discrimination suffered. This study's adapted scale for measuring attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities proved highly reliable when including all nine items, with three referring to each specific subgroup. Its use and continued revision are recommended, to add items referring to other LGBT-subgroups and adapt them to the socio-cultural contexts to which the scale is applied.

Considering participants' remarkably positive attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities, this study revealed that advertisers' concerns of a backlash from heterosexual viewers (Sheehan, 2014) may no longer be well-founded, at least in the Argentinian context. However, the findings also suggest that the inclusion of sexual minorities, when done with the sole aim of showing inclusiveness and bringing the focus to the inclusion itself, can be misguided. Given that participants negatively judged advertisements over-focusing on the sexual minority or excessively emphasizing inclusion, advertising practitioners are advised to consider presenting sexual minorities in natural ways, simply as social actors, as one more among others. Furthermore, advertising practitioners should consider that the trend toward inclusiveness cannot be evaluated as positive in itself but will only be evaluated positively by viewers insofar as it narrows the differences more than it emphasizes them and is accompanied by material actions beyond the brand's promotion. Finally, the news media, also, should be cautious before celebrating advertising's inclusiveness in advance, as participants' responses evidenced that *what* is represented is not as important as *how* it is represented when assessing a trend in advertising.

## References

- Bendersky, L. (2018, October 16). La nueva publicidad: cómo impacta el feminismo en la forma de vender productos [The new advertising: How feminism impacts the way products are sold]. *La Nación*. Retrieved from <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/lifestyle/la-nueva-publicidad-como-impacta-feminismo-forma-nid2181254>
- Bigné Alcañiz, J.E. & Sánchez García, J. (2001). Antecedentes y efectos de la actitud hacia el anuncio: Propuesta de un modelo de variables latentes [Antecedents and effects of attitudes towards advertisements: Proposal for a model of latent variables]. *Investigaciones Europeas de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa*, 7(2), 41-62.
- Bond, B. J. & Compton, B. L. (2015). Gay on-screen: The relationship between exposure to gay characters on television and heterosexual audiences' endorsement of gay equality. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 59(4), 717-732. doi: 10.1080/08838151.2015.1093485
- Bonds-Raacke, J. M., Cady, E. T., Schlegel, R., Harris, R. J., & Firebaugh, L. (2007). Remembering gay/lesbian media characters: Can Ellen and Will improve attitudes toward homosexuals? *Journal of Homosexuality*, 53(3), 19-34. doi: 10.1300/J082v53n03\_03
- Bruner, J. S., & Olson, D. R. (1973). Learning through experience and learning through media. In G. Gerbner, L. P. Gross, & W. H. Melody (Eds), *Communications technology and social policy: Understanding the new "cultural revolution"* (pp. 209-227). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cabosky, J. M. (2017). Advertising gay and lesbian-themed films to mainstream and niche audiences: Variations in portrayal of intimacy and stereotypes. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 25(3), 151-165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2017.1324450>
- Calzo, J. P., & Ward, L. M. (2009). Media exposure and viewers' attitudes toward homosexuality: Evidence for mainstreaming or resonance? *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53(2), 280-299. doi: 10.1080/08838150902908049
- Clemente, J. A. R., Billedo, C. J. F., & David, C. C. (2013). The role of broadcast media in attitude change: A pilot study on a campus-based radio program and its LGBT advocacy. *Philippine Journal of Psychology*, 46(2), 165-179.

- Corrales, J. (2019). The expansion of LGBT rights in Latin America and the backlash. *The Oxford Handbook of Global LGBT and Sexual Diversity Politics*, 1–22.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190673741.013.14>
- Curia, D. (2020, February 27). Diana Zurco, la primera trans al frente del noticiero de la TV Pública [Diana Zurco, the first trans at the head of the public TV news]. *Página 12*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/249683-diana-zurco-la-primera-trans-al-frente-del-noticiero-de-la-t>
- Davis, G., & Needham, G. (2008). *Queer TV: Theories, histories, politics* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.
- Dittmar, H. (2007). The costs of consumer culture and the “Cage within”: The impact of the material “Good life” and “Body perfect” ideals on individuals’ identity and well-being. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18(1), 23-31. doi: 10.1080/10478400701389045
- Eisend, M. & Hermann, E. (2019). Consumer responses to homosexual imagery in advertising: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Advertising*, 48(4), 380-400. doi: 10.1080/00913367.2019.1628676
- Fernández, A. G., & Paredes, A. M. (2016). La diversidad sexual y su representación a lo largo de la historia de las telenovelas argentinas [Sexual diversity and its representation throughout the history of Argentinean soap operas]. *Actas de Periodismo y Comunicación*, 2(1). Retrieved from <https://perio.unlp.edu.ar/ojs/index.php/actas>
- Gerbner, G. (1973). Teacher image in mass culture; Symbolic functions of the “hidden curriculum”. In G. Gerbner, L. P. Gross, & W. H. Melody (Eds), *Communications technology and social policy: Understanding the new “cultural revolution”* (pp. 265-286). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gillig, T. K., Rosenthal, E. L., Murphy, S. T., & Folb, K. L. (2018). More than a media moment: The influence of televised storylines on viewers’ attitudes toward transgender people and policies. *Sex Roles*, 78(7–8), 515–527. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0816-1>
- Gong, Z. H. (2019). Crafting mixed sexual advertisements for mainstream media: Examining the impact of homosexual and heterosexual imagery inclusion on advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 1-22. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2018.1564005

- Grimm, P. (2010). Social desirability bias. In J. Sheth & N. Malhotra (Eds.) *Wiley International Encyclopedia of Marketing*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.  
doi:10.1002/9781444316568.wiem02057
- Gross, L. (1991). Out of the mainstream. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 21, 19-46. doi: 10.1300/J082v21n01\_04
- Gross, L. (2005). The past and the future of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender studies. *Journal of Communication*, 55, 508-528. doi: 10.1093/joc/55.3.508
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781483384436
- Han, X., & Tsai, S. W. (2016). Beyond targeted advertising: Representing disenfranchised minorities in “inclusive” advertising. *Journal of Cultural Marketing Strategy*, 1(2), 154-159.
- Herek, G. M. (1994). Assessing heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: A review of empirical research with the ATLG scale. In B. Greene, G. M. Herek, *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and clinical applications*. (pp. 206-228). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications
- Hooten, M. A., Noeva, K., & Hammonds, F. (2009). The effects of homosexual imagery in advertisements on brand perception and purchase intention. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 37(9), 1231–1238. doi:10.2224/sbp.2009.37.9.1231
- Kuyper, L. (2016). *Question design template – new core items. ESS8 New core items: Attitudes to homosexuality* [measurement instrument]. Retrieved from <https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/themes.html?t=politics>
- Levina, M., Waldo, C. R., & Fitzgerald, L. F. (2000). We're here, we're queer, we're on TV: The effects of visual media on heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 30(4), 738-758.
- Madani, D. (2020, January 13). YouTuber and makeup artist Nikkie Tutorials comes out as trans. *NBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/youtuber-makeup-artist-nikki-tutorials-comes-out-trans-n1114796>



- Mazur, M. A., & Emmers-Sommer, T. M. (2002). The effect of movie portrayals on audience attitudes about nontraditional families and asexual orientation. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 44(1), 157-181. doi: 10.1300/J082v44n01\_09.
- Morgan, M., & Shanahan, J. (2010). The state of cultivation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 54(2), 337-355. doi: 10.1080/08838151003735018.
- Morgan, M., Shanahan, J., & Signorielli, N. (2015). Yesterday's new cultivation, tomorrow. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18(5), 674-699. doi: 10.1080/15205436.2015.1072725.
- Nölke, A. (2018). Making diversity conform? An intersectional, longitudinal analysis of LGBT-specific mainstream media advertisements. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 65(2). doi: 10.1080/00918369.2017.1314163
- Norton, A. T., & Herek, G. M. (2013). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward transgender people: Findings from a national probability sample of U.S. adults. *Sex Roles*, 68, 738-753. doi: 10.1007/s11199-011-0110-6
- Oakenfull, G. K., McCarthy, M. S., & Greenlee, T. B. (2008). Targeting a minority without alienating the majority: Advertising to gays and lesbians in mainstream media. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 48(2), 191-198. doi: 10.2501/S0021849908080239
- Páez, J., Hevia, G., Pesci, F., & Rabbia, H. H. (2015). Construcción y validación de una escala de actitudes negativas hacia personas trans [Construction and validation of a negative attitudes toward trans people scale]. *Revista de Psicología*, 33(1), 151-188.
- Parsemain, A. L. (2019). *The pedagogy of queer TV*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Peterson, A. (2018). Introduction: 'Coming out all over'. In A. Peterson, M. Wahlström, & Wennerhag, M. (Eds.). *Pride parades and LGBT movements: Political participation in an international comparative perspective* (pp. 1-17). New York: Routledge.
- Potter, W. J. (2014). A critical analysis of cultivation theory. *Journal of Communication*, 64, 1015-1036. doi: 10.1111/jcom.12128
- Publisexual: La publicidad inclusiva [Publisexual: The inclusive advertising]. (2018, June 10). *Noticias*. Retrieved from <https://noticias.perfil.com/noticias/informacion-general/2018-06-10-publisexual-la-publicidad-inclusiva.phtml>

- Read, G. L., van Driel, I. I., & Potter, R. F. (2018). Same-sex couples in advertisements: An investigation of the role of implicit attitudes on cognitive processing and evaluation. *Journal of Advertising*, 47(2), 182-197. doi: 10.1080/00913367.2018.1452653
- Ritschel, C. (2020, January 13). Nikkietutorials comes out as transgender in new video. *Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/nikkietutorials-transgender-blackmail-video-youtube-beauty-blogger-a9282446.html>
- Sainz, A., & Terrile, S. (2019, January 23). La hora de la publicidad jugada: los 6 tabúes que están rompiendo las marcas [The time of risky advertising: the 6 taboos that brands are breaking]. *La Nación*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/economia/la-hora-de-la-publicidad-jugada-los-6-tabues-que-estan-rompiendo-las-marcas139-x-194-mm-nid2213309>
- Schmidt, S. (2019, December 5). A Language for All. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2019/12/05/teens-argentina-are-leading-charge-gender-neutral-language/?arc404=true>
- Schreier, M. (2013). Qualitative content analysis. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 170-183). London: Sage.
- Sheehan, K. B. (2014). *Controversies in contemporary advertising* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Signorielli, N. (2009). Minorities representation in prime time: 2000 to 2008. *Communication Research Reports*, 26(4), 323-336. doi: 10.1080/08824090903293619.
- Toncar, M. F. (2001). The use of humour in television advertising: revisiting the US-UK comparison. *International Journal of Advertising*, 20(4), 521-539. doi: 10.1080/02650487.2001.11104909
- Tosi, C. (2019). Discursive marks of diversity. About inclusive language and linguistic education: Approaches to the Argentinean case. *Álabe*, 20. doi: 10.15645/alabe2019.20.11
- Tsai, W.S. (2010). Assimilating the queers: Representations of lesbians, gay men, bisexual, and transgender people in mainstream advertising. *Advertising & Society Review*, 11(1), doi:10.1353/asr.0.0042.

Um, N. H. (2014). Does gay-themed advertising haunt your brand? The impact of gay-themed advertising on young heterosexual consumers. *International Journal of Advertising*, 33(4), 811-832. doi: 10.2501/IJA-33-4-811-832

Um, N. H. (2016). Consumers' responses to implicit and explicit gay-themed advertising in gay vs. mainstream media. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 22(3), 461-477.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2016.1154923>

## Appendix A: Questionnaire<sup>6</sup>

**Block: Consent form (1 Question)**

**Branch: New Branch**

If

If Dear participant, Thank you very much for participating in this research. This research is... Decline and end the survey here Is Selected

**EndSurvey: Advanced**

**Standard: Demographics: Age (1 Question)**

**Branch: New Branch**

If

If Thank you! Now let's start: How old are you? Younger than 18 Is Selected

**EndSurvey: Advanced**

**Standard: Demographics: Country (1 Question)**

**Branch: New Branch**

If

If Do you currently live in Argentina? No Is Selected

**EndSurvey: Advanced**

**Standard: Other demographics (2 Questions)**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Standard: C1 (22 Questions)

Standard: C2 (22 Questions)

Standard: C3 (22 Questions)

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Standard: Control group A (21 Questions)

Standard: Control group B (21 Questions)

Standard: Control group C (21 Questions)

**Block: ALL (13 Questions)**

**EndSurvey: Advanced**

Page Break

<sup>6</sup> This is a carefully translated English copy of the questionnaire presented to participants in its Spanish version.

## Start of Block: Consent form

Q1

Dear participant,

Thank you very much for participating in this research. This research is conducted by Mariana Fried as part of her Research Master Thesis in Sociology of Culture, Media, and the Arts.

The purpose of this research project "Social Representation in Advertising" is to understand the relation between commercial advertisements and people's attitudes toward certain minority groups. For that, you are invited to complete this survey.

The survey will ask you for your opinion regarding certain social groups and thoughts about two short 1-minute commercials that were broadcasted in televised and/or online media. There are no right or wrong answers.

*In order to see the commercials, you need to have a working **video and sound** system. Please check if the volume of your sound system is on, and/or grab a set of headphones if you wish to complete this survey in a public space.*

Please be aware that your participation is completely voluntarily, meaning that you can quit at any time during your participation. You will not receive any kind of compensation for participating in this study. Furthermore, your personal information will be kept strictly confidential and the findings of this survey will be used solely for academic research purposes. Hence, your **anonymity is guaranteed** at all time. No risks or discomfort are anticipated from your participation in this study.

Completing the survey takes approximately **20-25 minutes**.

If you have any questions during or after your participation, please feel free to contact the main researcher: Mariana Fried ([505815mf@eur.nl](mailto:505815mf@eur.nl)). Thesis supervisor: dr. Suzanna Oprea ([oprea@eshcc.eur.nl](mailto:oprea@eshcc.eur.nl)). Data Protection Officer of Erasmus University: Marlon Domingus, MA ([fg@eur.nl](mailto:fg@eur.nl)).

Mariana Fried

Erasmus University Rotterdam – Erasmus School of History, Culture, and Communication

**I understand the above and agree on participating in this research.**

- Accept and continue to the survey (1)
- Decline and end the survey here (2)

**Start of Block: Demographics: Age**

Q4 Thank you! Now let's start:  
How old are you?

▼ Younger than 18 (1) ... 99 (83)

**End of Block: Demographics: Age**

**Start of Block: Demographics: Country**

Q5 Do you currently live in Argentina?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**End of Block: Demographics: Country**

**Start of Block: Other demographics**

Q6 What would you say is the approximate size of the city or town where you currently live?

- More than 1 million inhabitants (e.g. CABA, Córdoba, Rosario) (1)
- Between 100,000 and 999,000 inhabitants (e.g. San Miguel de Tucumán, La Plata, Santa Fe, San Rafael, Rio Cuarto) (2)
- Between 51,000 and 99,999 inhabitants (e.g. Villa María, Rafaela, Cipolletti, Villa Carlos Paz, San Francisco) (3)
- Less than 51,000 inhabitants (e.g. Villa Dolores, Marcos Juárez) (4)

Q8 What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- Incomplete primary school (1)
- Complete primary school (2)
- Incomplete high school (3)
- Complete high school (4)
- Incomplete tertiary education (5)
- Complete tertiary education (6)
- Incomplete Bachelor / Licentiate (7)
- Complete Bachelor / Licentiate (8)
- Incomplete master and/ or postgraduate studies (9)
- Complete master and/ or postgraduate studies (10)
- Incomplete PhD, Doctorate (11)
- Complete PhD, Doctorate (12)

**End of Block: Other demographics**

**Start of Block: C1**

Q9 Now you will watch three short videos of advertisements that were broadcasted on TV and/or internet platforms. All three videos include certain social groups traditionally underrepresented in

advertising. These videos belong to the companies and/or advertising agencies that produced them, and all rights belong to their rightful owners. After watching the videos, **you will be asked several questions about one of the ads you watched.**

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press Next when the videos have finished.

Q10: Videos: <https://youtu.be/SWIB987Z1gc>; Colgate: [https://youtu.be/cSCO9\\_vLKV0](https://youtu.be/cSCO9_vLKV0). Skol: <https://youtu.be/lytNhAYMOZU>

Q11 Now that you have watched the ads, we invite you to think **only about this particular ad** when answering the following questions:



Q12 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q18 The ads you watched before featured different social minorities. Now we would like to know your opinion about some of these groups.

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate **the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one of them.**

	<b>Agree strongly (1)</b>	<b>Agree (2)</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (4)</b>	<b>Disagree strongly (5)</b>	<b>I prefer not to answer / I don't know (6)</b>
Gay men should be free to live their own life as they wish (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a gay man (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay men should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should be free to live their own life as they wish (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a lesbian woman (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish (7)

I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a transgender person (8)

Transgender people should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (9)

Q18 In the past few years, the Argentinian media have observed a change of paradigms in advertising and a trend towards more inclusive advertising, featuring homosexual and transgender characters.

In some cases, LGT characters (i. e. lesbian, gay, and transgender) have been featured as main characters in the plot.

In other cases, they have been featured in non-central roles, along with other characters.

Now we will show you one last advertisement, different from the previous one, in the way the LGT character is featured. Now the character does not play the main role, and it is presented in combination with several other characters.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press Next when the videos have finished.

Q19: Video: [https://youtu.be/-jYb2jS\\_FQc](https://youtu.be/-jYb2jS_FQc)

Q20 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q21 Now we would like you to think about the two advertisements you have watched and share your opinions about both.

There are no right or wrong answers.



Q22 Which of the two ads did you like the most?

- The first advertisement (Magnum) (1)
- The second advertisement (Samsung) (2)

Q23 Why did you like that advertisement the most?

---

Q24 What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?

Q25 The first advertisement (Magnum)

---

Q26 The second advertisement (Samsung)

---

Q140 What aspects of the advertisement do you think provoked those thoughts and/or emotions?

Q141 The first advertisement (Magnum)

---

Q142 The second advertisement (Samsung)

---

Q27 How realistic do you think the depictions of the homosexual and/or transgender characters are in the advertisements you watched?

Q28 The first advertisement (Magnum)

---

Q29 The second advertisement (Samsung)

---

**End of Block: C1**

**Start of Block: C2**

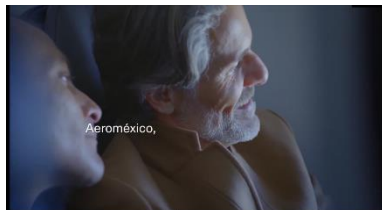
Q44 Now you will watch three short videos of advertisements that were broadcasted on TV and/or internet platforms. All three videos include certain social groups traditionally underrepresented in advertising. These videos belong to the companies and/or advertising agencies that produced them, and all rights belong to their rightful owners. After watching the videos, **you will be asked several questions about one of the ads you watched.**

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press *Next* when the videos have finished.

Q46: Videos: <https://youtu.be/7Gb3Jxa-CIM>; Colgate: [https://youtu.be/cSCO9\\_vLKV0](https://youtu.be/cSCO9_vLKV0). Skol: <https://youtu.be/IytNhAYMOZU>

Q47 Now that you have watched the ads, we invite you to think **only about this particular ad** when answering the following questions:



Q48 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q49 The ads you watched before featured different social minorities. Now we would like to know your opinion about some of these groups.

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate **the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one of them.**

	<b>Agree strongly (1)</b>	<b>Agree (2)</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (4)</b>	<b>Disagree strongly (5)</b>	<b>I prefer not to answer / I don't know (6)</b>
Gay men should be free to live their own life as they wish (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a gay man (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay men should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should be free to live their own life as they wish (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a lesbian woman (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish (7)

I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a transgender person (8)

Transgender people should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (9)

Q50 In the past few years, the Argentinian media have observed a change of paradigms in advertising and a trend towards more inclusive advertising, featuring homosexual and transgender characters.

In some cases, LGT characters (i. e. lesbian, gay, and transgender) have been featured as main characters in the plot.

In other cases, they have been featured in non-central roles, along with other characters.

Now we will show you one last advertisement, different from the previous one, in the way the LGT character is featured. Now the character does not play the main role, and it is presented in combination with several other characters.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press *Next* when the videos have finished.

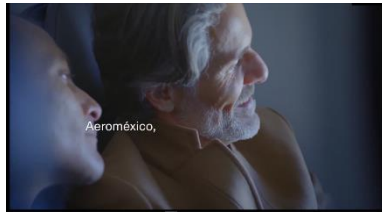
Q51: Video: [https://youtu.be/PG\\_gnAP84Uk](https://youtu.be/PG_gnAP84Uk)

Q52 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q53 Now we would like you to think about the two advertisements you have watched and share your opinions about both.

There are no right or wrong answers.



Q54 Which of the two ads did you like the most?

- The first advertisement (Aeroméxico) (1)
- The second advertisement (Coca Cola) (2)

Q55 Why did you like that advertisement the most?

---

Q56 What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?

Q57 The first advertisement (Aeroméxico)

---

Q58 The second advertisement (Coca Cola)

---

Q143 What aspects of the advertisement do you think provoked those thoughts and/or emotions?

Q144 The first advertisement (Aeroméxico)

---

Q145 The second advertisement (Coca Cola)

---

Q59 How realistic do you think the depictions of the homosexual and/or transgender characters are in the advertisements you watched?

Q60 The first advertisement (Aeroméxico)

---

Q61 The second advertisement (Coca Cola)

---

**End of Block: C2**

**Start of Block: C3**

Q62 Now you will watch three short videos of advertisements that were broadcasted on TV and/or internet platforms. All three videos include certain social groups traditionally underrepresented in advertising. These videos belong to the companies and/or advertising agencies that produced them, and all rights belong to their rightful owners. After watching the videos, you will be asked several questions about one of the ads you watched.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press Next when the videos have finished.

Q63: Videos: <https://youtu.be/f0GfkZm1nqg>; Colgate: [https://youtu.be/cSCO9\\_vLKV0](https://youtu.be/cSCO9_vLKV0). Skol: <https://youtu.be/IytNhAYMOZU>

Q64 Now that you have watched the ads, we invite you to think only about this particular ad when answering the following questions:



Q65 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q66 The ads you watched before featured different social minorities. Now we would like to know your opinion about some of these groups.

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate **the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one of them.**



	<b>Agree strongly (1)</b>	<b>Agree (2)</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (4)</b>	<b>Disagree strongly (5)</b>	<b>I prefer not to answer / I don't know (6)</b>
Gay men should be free to live their own life as they wish (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a gay man (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay men should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should be free to live their own life as they wish (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a lesbian woman (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish (7)

I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a transgender person (8)

Transgender people should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (9)

Q67 In the past few years, the Argentinian media have observed a change of paradigms in advertising and a trend towards more inclusive advertising, featuring homosexual and transgender characters.

In some cases, LGT characters (i. e. lesbian, gay, and transgender) have been featured as main characters in the plot.

In other cases, they have been featured in non-central roles, along with other characters.

Now we will show you one last advertisement, different from the previous one, in the way the LGT character is featured. Now the character does not play the main role, and it is presented in combination with several other characters.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press Next when the videos have finished.

Q68: Video: <https://youtu.be/0eOBJ8EisI8>

Q69 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q70 Now we would like you to think about the two advertisements you have watched and share your opinions about both.

There are no right or wrong answers.



Q71 Which of the two ads did you like the most?

- The first advertisement (Banco Provincia) (1)
- The second advertisement (Dove) (2)

Q72 Why did you like that advertisement the most?

---

Q73 What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?

Q74 The first advertisement (Banco Provincia)

---

Q75 The second advertisement (Dove)

---

Q146 What aspects of the advertisement do you think provoked those thoughts and/or emotions?

Q147 The first advertisement (Banco Provincia)

---

Q148 The second advertisement (Dove)

---

Q76 How realistic do you think the depictions of the homosexual and/or transgender characters are in the advertisements you watched?

Q77 The first advertisement (Banco Provincia)

---

Q78 The second advertisement (Dove)

---

**End of Block: C3**

**Start of Block: Control group A**

Q79 Now we would like to know your opinion about certain social groups traditionally underrepresented in advertising.

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate **the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one of them.**

	<b>Agree strongly (1)</b>	<b>Agree (2)</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (4)</b>	<b>Disagree strongly (5)</b>	<b>I prefer not to answer / I don't know (6)</b>
Gay men should be free to live their own life as they wish (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a gay man (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay men should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should be free to live their own life as they wish (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a lesbian woman (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish (7)

I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a transgender person (8)

Transgender people should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (9)

Q40 In the past few years, the Argentinian media have observed a change of paradigms in advertising and a trend towards more inclusive advertising, featuring homosexual and transgender characters.

In some cases, LGT characters (i. e. lesbian, gay, and transgender) have been featured as main characters in the plot.

In other cases, they have been featured in non-central roles, along with other characters.

Now we will show you two short videos of advertisements that were broadcasted on TV and/or internet platforms. These videos belong to the companies and/or advertising agencies that produced them, and all rights belong to their rightful owners.

After watching each video, you will be asked questions about the advertisements you watched.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press *Next* when the video has finished.

Q38: Video: <https://youtu.be/SWIB987Z1gc>

Q80 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q81 Now we will show you one last advertisement, different from the previous one, in the way the LGT character is featured. Now the character does not play the main role, and it is presented in combination with several other characters.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press *Next* when the video has finished.

Q82: Video: [https://youtu.be/-jYb2jS\\_FQc](https://youtu.be/-jYb2jS_FQc)

Q83 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q84 Now we would like you to think about the two advertisements you have watched and share your opinions about both.

There are no right or wrong answers.



Q85 Which of the two ads did you like the most?

- o The first advertisement (Magnum) (1)
- o The second advertisement (Samsung) (2)

Q86 Why did you like that advertisement the most?

---

Q87 What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?

Q88 The first advertisement (Magnum)

---

Q89 The second advertisement (Samsung)

---

Q149 What aspects of the advertisement do you think provoked those thoughts and/or emotions?

Q150 The first advertisement (Magnum)

---

Q151 The second advertisement (Samsung)

---

Q90 How realistic do you think the depictions of the homosexual and/or transgender characters are in the advertisements you watched?

Q91 The first advertisement (Magnum)

---

Q92 The second advertisement (Samsung)

---

**End of Block: Control group A**

**Start of Block: Control group B**

Q93 Now we would like to know your opinion about certain social groups traditionally underrepresented in advertising.

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate **the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one of them.**



	<b>Agree strongly (1)</b>	<b>Agree (2)</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (4)</b>	<b>Disagree strongly (5)</b>	<b>I prefer not to answer / I don't know (6)</b>
Gay men should be free to live their own life as they wish (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a gay man (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay men should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should be free to live their own life as they wish (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a lesbian woman (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish (7)

I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a transgender person (8)

Transgender people should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (9)

Q94 In the past few years, the Argentinian media have observed a change of paradigms in advertising and a trend towards more inclusive advertising, featuring homosexual and transgender characters.

In some cases, LGT characters (i. e. lesbian, gay, and transgender) have been featured as main characters in the plot.

In other cases, they have been featured in non-central roles, along with other characters.

Now we will show you two short videos of advertisements that were broadcasted on TV and/or internet platforms. These videos belong to the companies and/or advertising agencies that produced them, and all rights belong to their rightful owners.

After watching each video, you will be asked questions about the advertisements you watched.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press Next when the video has finished.

Q95: Video: <https://youtu.be/7Gb3Jxa-CIM>

Q96 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q97 Now we will show you one last advertisement, different from the previous one, in the way the LGT character is featured. Now the character does not play the main role, and it is presented in combination with several other characters.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press *Next* when the video has finished.

Q98: Video: [https://youtu.be/PG\\_gnAP84Uk](https://youtu.be/PG_gnAP84Uk)

Q99 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q100 Now we would like you to think about the two advertisements you have watched and share your opinions about both.

There are no right or wrong answers.



Q101 Which of the two ads did you like the most?

- o The first advertisement (Aeroméxico) (1)
- o The second advertisement (Coca Cola) (2)

Q102 Why did you like that advertisement the most?

---

Q103 What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?

Q104 The first advertisement (Aeroméxico)

---

Q105 The second advertisement (Coca Cola)

---

Q152 What aspects of the advertisement do you think provoked those thoughts and/or emotions?

Q153 The first advertisement (Aeroméxico)

---

Q154 The second advertisement (Coca Cola)

---

Q106 How realistic do you think the depictions of the homosexual and/or transgender characters are in the advertisements you watched?

Q107 The first advertisement (Aeroméxico)

---

Q108 The second advertisement (Coca Cola)

---

**End of Block: Control group B**

**Start of Block: Control group C**

Q109 Now we would like to know your opinion about certain social groups traditionally underrepresented in advertising.

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate **the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one of them.**

	<b>Agree strongly (1)</b>	<b>Agree (2)</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (4)</b>	<b>Disagree strongly (5)</b>	<b>I prefer not to answer / I don't know (6)</b>
Gay men should be free to live their own life as they wish (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a gay man (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gay men should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should be free to live their own life as they wish (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a lesbian woman (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lesbian women should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transgender people should be free to live their own life as they wish (7)

I would feel ashamed if a close family member was a transgender person (8)

Transgender people should have the same rights to adopt children as straight couples (9)

Q110 In the past few years, the Argentinian media have observed a change of paradigms in advertising and a trend towards more inclusive advertising, featuring homosexual and transgender characters.

In some cases, LGT characters (i. e. lesbian, gay, and transgender) have been featured as main characters in the plot.

In other cases, they have been featured in non-central roles, along with other characters.

Now we will show you two short videos of advertisements that were broadcasted on TV and/or internet platforms. These videos belong to the companies and/or advertising agencies that produced them, and all rights belong to their rightful owners.

After watching each video, you will be asked questions about the advertisements you watched.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press *Next* when the video has finished.

Q111: Video: <https://youtu.be/f0GfkZm1nqg>

Q112 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q113 Now we will show you one last advertisement, different from the previous one, in the way the LGT character is featured. Now the character does not play the main role, and it is presented in combination with several other characters.

**Please pay close attention.**

As the timer indicates, you will only be able to press *Next* when the video has finished.

Q114: Video: <https://youtu.be/0eOBJ8EisI8>

Q115 How would you describe this advertisement? For each of the three horizontal lines below, please select the degree that most closely matches your opinion out of the five circles shown.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
It's very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very good
I did not like it at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I liked it very much
It's not interesting at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It's very interesting

Q116 Now we would like you to think about the two advertisements you have watched and share your opinions about both.

There are no right or wrong answers.



Q117 Which of the two ads did you like the most?

- The first advertisement (Banco Provincia) (1)
- The second advertisement (Dove) (2)

Q118 Why did you like that advertisement the most?

---

Q119 What thoughts or emotions did you experience while watching these advertisements?

Q120 The first advertisement (Banco Provincia)

---

Q121 The second advertisement (Dove)

---

Q155 What aspects of the advertisement do you think provoked those thoughts and/or emotions?

Q156 The first advertisement (Banco Provincia)

---

Q157 The second advertisement (Dove)

---

Q122 How realistic do you think the depictions of the homosexual and/or transgender characters are in the advertisements you watched?

Q123 The first advertisement (Banco Provincia)

---

Q124 The second advertisement (Dove)

---

**End of Block: Control group C**

**Start of Block: ALL**

Q30 We would also like to know what you think about the trend towards more inclusive advertisements featuring homosexual and transgender characters, more generally.

The set of questions that follows contains some open-ended questions, please answer them in a complete but concise manner.

Q31 Have you ever seen any other advertisements similar to the ones we have shown you?

- Yes (4)
- Maybe (5)
- No (6)

*Display This Question:*

*If Q31 = Yes*

*Or Q31 = Maybe*

Q32 Can you name brands and/or companies that included homosexual and/or transgender characters in their advertisements?

---



*Display This Question:*

*If Q31 = Yes*

*Or Q31 = Maybe*

Q139 What was your opinion about those ads?

---

Q33 What do you think about the inclusion of lesbian, gay, and transgender people in advertising, in general?

---

Q34 Do you think that the inclusion of lesbian, gay, and transgender people in advertising can provoke a positive change in society?

- Yes, it can provoke a strong positive change in society (1)
- Yes, it can provoke a moderate positive change in society (2)
- Yes, it can provoke a small positive change in society (3)
- No, I don't think it can provoke a change (4)
- I think it can provoke a negative change in society (5)
- I don't know / I prefer not to answer (6)

Q35 Could you explain the reason for your previous answer?

---

Q36 You've **almost** reached the end of the survey, thanks for getting this far. We have four final questions we would like to ask you.

We know that they can be considered somewhat sensitive, so if you prefer not to answer them, feel free to indicate that, but please keep in mind that your answers are anonymous and will be very useful.

Q39 On a scale from 1 (not religious at all) to 10 (very religious), how religious would you say you are?

- 1 (not religious at all) (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)

- 10 (very religious) (10)

Q40 How would you define your gender?

- I prefer not to answer (1)
- Female (Cisgender, gender identity corresponding to the biological sex) (2)
- Male (Cisgender, gender identity corresponding to the biological sex) (3)
- Transgender man (4)
- Transgender woman (5)
- Other: (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Q41 How would you define your sexual orientation?

- I prefer not to answer (1)
- Heterosexual (2)
- Homosexual: gay (3)
- Homosexual: lesbian (4)
- Bisexual (5)
- Other: (6) \_\_\_\_\_

Q158 Do you know any close friends, colleagues or relatives who identify themselves with any of the following categories? (You can select more than one option)

- Yes, she identifies herself as a lesbian (1)
- Yes, he identifies himself as gay (2)
- Yes, s/he self-identifies as transgender (3)
- Yes, s/he self-identifies as bisexual (4)
- No, I do not know any close friends, colleagues or relatives who identify themselves with these categories (5)
- I don't know / I prefer not to answer (6)

Q42 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey to the end.

Are there any comments you would like to add?

**End of Block: ALL**

## Appendix B: Approval from the EUR Ethics Review Board

### Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Dr. Suzanna Oprea  
Mariana Fried

**Date**  
14 April 2020

**Subject**  
Application ethical review, 20-06 Fried

**Our reference**  
TG/to/eshcc-v-5418

**Page**  
1/2

**Department**  
Research Ethics Review Board

**Visiting address**  
ESHCC  
Burgemeester Oudlaan 50  
Van der Goot Building

**Postal address**  
PO Box 1738  
3000 DR Rotterdam  
The Netherlands

**E** [ethicsreview@eshcc.eur.nl](mailto:ethicsreview@eshcc.eur.nl)  
**W** [www.eshcc.eur.nl/English](http://www.eshcc.eur.nl/English)

Dear Sanne, dear Mariana,

On 27 February 2020 the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC) received your request for approval of your research project 'Inclusive advertising: Assessment of advertisements' effect on audience's attitudes towards gender diversity and homosexuality'.

Hereby, I inform you that your application has been approved. You have convincingly shown that you have taken adequate care and provisions in ensuring the privacy and security of your research participants, and that you have addressed any other ethical issues that your project may pose.

With kind regards,

On behalf of the ESHCC Ethics Review Board,



Tijs Gelens  
Secretary Research Ethics Review Board ESHCC

**Appendix C: Overview**

Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3	Control group
Introduction: Informed consent form			
Demographics: Age, living in Argentina, size of city, educational level			
Distractor ads <sup>7</sup> + Ad portraying a lesbian leading character (Magnum) Video: <a href="https://youtu.be/SWIB987Z1gc">https://youtu.be/SWIB987Z1gc</a>	Distractor ads + Ad portraying a gay leading character (Aeroméxico) Video: <a href="https://youtu.be/7Gb3Jxa-CIM">https://youtu.be/7Gb3Jxa-CIM</a>	Distractor ads + Ad portraying a transgender leading character (Banco Provincia) Video: <a href="https://youtu.be/f0GfkZm1nqg">https://youtu.be/f0GfkZm1nqg</a>	No exposure
Scale: Attitudes toward the ad			
Scale: Attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities			
			Randomization: 33%: Ad portraying lesbian leading character (Magnum) 33%: Ad portraying gay leading character (Aeroméxico) 33%: Ad portraying transgender

<sup>7</sup> Colgate: [https://youtu.be/cSCO9\\_vLKV0](https://youtu.be/cSCO9_vLKV0). Skol: <https://youtu.be/lytNhAYMOZU>

			leading character (Banco Provincia)
			Att. toward the ad
Ad portraying a lesbian non-leading character (Samsung) Video: <a href="https://youtu.be/-jYb2jS_FQc">https://youtu.be/-jYb2jS_FQc</a>	Ad portraying a gay non-leading character (Coca Cola) Video: <a href="https://youtu.be/PG_gnAP84Uk">https://youtu.be/PG_gnAP84Uk</a>	Ad portraying a transgender non-leading character (Dove) Video: <a href="https://youtu.be/0eOBJ8Eisl8">https://youtu.be/0eOBJ8Eisl8</a>	33%: Ad portraying lesbian non-leading character (Samsung) 33%: Ad portraying gay non-leading character (Coca Cola) 33%: Ad portraying transgender non-leading character (Dove)
Scale: Attitudes toward the ad			
Ads comparison			
Thoughts and emotions experienced, perceived realism			
Recalling and opinion on previous exposure to other LGT-inclusive ads			
Opinion about LGT-inclusion in advertising			
Demographics: Religiosity, gender, sexual orientation, interpersonal contact			
Closure and further remarks			

## Appendix D: Control Variables

Besides features of the advertisement, previous studies suggest that viewers' demographic characteristics also relate to varying attitudes toward LGT-inclusive content and toward homosexuality and transgender identities. Although cultivation theory suggests that the media provides a convergent cultural worldview to heterogeneous individuals from varied social groups (Gross, 1991; Rosenberry & Vicker, 2009 as cited in Sheehan, 2014)<sup>8</sup>, individuals' attitudes toward sexual minorities and their response to media content portraying them vary greatly across demographic groups (Bond & Compton, 2015; Holland et al., 2013). Because there may be differences on how specific subgroups of viewers respond to LGT-inclusive advertising, several demographics that could affect viewers' attitudes toward the advertisements and toward homosexuality and transgender identities were included as control variables.

First, as male and female viewers bring different perspectives when interpreting advertisements, their attitudes toward the advertisements they see considerably differ (Sheehan, 2014). Female viewers tend to be more positive about sexual minorities and their portrayal, while male heterosexual viewers tend to report hostile attitudes, especially, toward advertisements featuring male homosexual characters (Bond & Compton, 2015; Eisend & Hermann, 2019; Gong, 2019; Oakenfull & Greenlee 2004 as cited in Read et al., 2018). Correspondingly, male heterosexual individuals also tend to hold more negative attitudes than their female counterparts toward transgender people (Norton & Herek, 2013). Precisely because female viewers tend to have more positive prior attitudes toward LGT-groups, the way media exposure shapes male and female viewers' attitudes also differs (Calzo & Ward, 2009). This study controlled for gender considering that female, male, and other gender identities such

---

<sup>8</sup> In addition to those already mentioned in the main document, references in Appendix D include:  
Gomillion, S. C., & Giuliano, T. A. (2011). The influence of media role models on gay, lesbian, and bisexual identity. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 58(3), 330-354. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2011.546729  
Holland, L., Matthews, T. L., & Schott, M. R. (2013). "That's so gay!" Exploring college students' attitudes toward the LGBT population. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 60(4), 575-595. doi: 10.1080/00918369.2013.760321  
Nagoshi, J. L., Adams, K. A., Terrell, H. K., Hill, E. D., Brzuzy, S., & Nagoshi, C. T. (2008). Gender differences in correlates of homophobia and transphobia. *Sex Roles*, 59, 521-531. doi: 10.1007/s11199-008-9458-7  
Yan, H. Y. (2019). "The rippled perceptions": The effects of LGBT-inclusive TV on own attitudes and perceived attitudes of peers toward lesbians and gays. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 96(3), 848-871. doi: 10.1177/1077699018821327

as transgender participants may as well differ in their ad liking and attitudes. Second, this study controlled for participants' self-reported sexual orientation and their interpersonal contact with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender people, as variables that lead to differing attitudes toward homosexuality, transgender identities, and LGT-inclusive advertising (Gong, 2019; Yan, 2019).

Third, age was also controlled for, as it tends to affect people's attitudes toward LGT groups and their portrayal in advertisements. Because the increase in mass media's portrayal of sexual minorities is recent, scholars acknowledge that "today young people grow up reading words and seeing images that previous generations never encountered" (Gross, 2005, p. 519). Consequently, research suggests that, regardless of their sexual orientation, many young consumers prefer LGBT-friendly brands over their competitors (Snyder, 2015 as cited in Read et al., 2018). In contrast to older conservative generations, the younger population has been described as more supportive for homosexual people and the social issues they face (Bond & Compton, 2015).

Fourth, although viewers' educational level has not been included in most studies on the effects of advertising's portrayal of sexual minorities, research on the correlates of homophobia and transphobia suggests that this is a relevant variable. Wright et al. (1999 as cited in Nagoshi et al., 2008) found that the higher the educational level attained, the lower the person's likelihood of reporting homophobic attitudes. It is therefore necessary to consider whether participants' highest educational level attained influences their attitudes toward LGT-inclusive advertisements.

Fifth, the size of participants' city of residence was also a control variable, as the effects of advertisements' portrayal of sexual minorities vary not only across countries, but also within one country, with people in more conservative regions reacting differently from those in liberal regions (Eisend & Hermann, 2019). Gomillion and Giuliano (2011) suggest that viewers have different experiences with LGBT-inclusive media depending on how LGBT-friendly the city they live in is. The city's population size stands as an appropriate measure to control for LGBT-friendliness of the context, as studies among U.S. adults have shown that respondents living in rural areas had more negative attitudes toward transgender people than those living in larger

cities or suburbs, and that these results also correlated with attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals (Norton & Herek, 2013).

Finally, it was also considered that people's attitudes toward LGT-inclusive advertisements may be affected by their religiosity. In previous studies, respondents self-identified as less religious have reported more positive attitudes than more religious participants both toward transgender and homosexual people after exposure to televised content portraying these groups (Bond & Compton, 2015; Gillig et al., 2018). A difference in how religious people respond to LGT-inclusive content is also likely in the Latin American context, where religious groups have recently become powerful anti-LGBT players (Corrales, 2019).