

# **Gender Roles Portrayal in YouTube Advertisement in Russia**

**A look into Russia's gender equality values in the context of Hofstede's and GLOBE cultural frameworks**

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Abstract <p>Nowadays, gender equality is one of the global issues, and advertising is one of the ways in which gender equality values manifest themselves. Prior research agrees that women normally are the ones stereotyped in advertisements. The recent “MeToo” and “Time’s Up” movements have sparked conversations, and a new wave of socially responsible advertising that needs to be studied, especially on online media platforms that flourish today.</p> <p>The purpose of the paper was to define patterns related to gender role representation in advertisements and see how well they correlated with Hofstede’s and the GLOBE cultural frameworks, specifically in the gender equality related dimensions. YouTube was chosen due to its popularity and cultural significance, while Russia was chosen as a country with a unique historical and cultural path regarding women’s liberation. Hofstede’s and GLOBE cultural frameworks were used as reference for country-specific gender equality values.</p> <p>The research was quantitative in nature, and the method used was content analysis. Extensive theoretical research was done prior to the practical part of the study. A coding scheme was developed, and 74 commercials were coded and analyzed by the author. After this, the data thus generated were statistically analyzed.</p> <p>The results showed some sexist tendencies in Russian commercials as well as an overwhelming portrayal of young women in decorative roles. The study indicated that Russian marketers are not willing to address gender equality yet and that cultural frameworks have to be studied more critically because the results did not correspond to some of the chosen dimension scores. The author then gave recommendations for future research, such as expanding the coding categories and the range of countries studied.</p>		
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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Background.....	4
1.2	Research Problem & Research Questions.....	5
1.3	Structure of the Thesis .....	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Theory and Knowledge Basis .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1	Media and Cultural Influence.....	8
2.2	Gender Equality and Media.....	9
2.3	Cultural Frameworks .....	13
2.3.1	Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory .....	14
2.3.2	MAS dimension.....	16
2.3.3	Power Distance dimension .....	19
2.3.4	Criticism of the Hofstede’s framework.....	21
2.3.5	GLOBE cultural framework .....	23
2.3.6	Gender Egalitarianism dimension .....	24
2.3.7	Criticism of the GLOBE study.....	26
2.4	Gender Equality in Russia.....	28
2.4.1	Women in The Soviet Era .....	29
2.4.2	Women in contemporary Russia .....	31
2.4.3	Russia’s scores according to the frameworks .....	36
2.5	YouTube as a Social Platform .....	39
2.5.1	YouTube History and overview.....	39
2.5.2	YouTube in Russia .....	41
<b>3</b>	<b>Research Methodology.....</b>	<b>45</b>
3.1	Research approach .....	45
3.1.1	Research topic and purpose .....	45

	2
3.1.2 Research design .....	46
3.1.3 Research questions.....	48
3.1.4 Research method.....	49
3.2 Coding instrument development .....	51
3.2.1 Sampling .....	52
3.2.2 Coding scheme and procedure.....	55
3.3 Ethical issues.....	61
<b>4 Results of the Research.....</b>	<b>62</b>
4.1 Descriptive Frequency Analysis .....	62
4.2 Contingency Table Analysis .....	65
<b>5 Conclusions .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>6 Discussion .....</b>	<b>75</b>
6.1 Implications for the area of study .....	75
6.2 Validity and Reliability .....	76
6.2.1 Foundational issues .....	76
6.2.2 Validity .....	77
6.2.3 Reliability .....	78
6.3 Recommendations, ideas and limitations for future research .....	78
<b>References.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>85</b>
Appendix 1. Codebook.....	85
Appendix 2. Coding Sheet.....	88

## Figures

Figure 1. Scores for Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden on the 6-D Model© (Hofstede Insights 2018) .....	18
Figure 2. Top countries survey by Grant Thornton’s IBR research programme. Proportion senior management team, female. (Grant Thornton 2017, 10).....	35
Figure 3. Russia’s scores on the 6-D Model© (Hofstede Insights 2018).....	37
Figure 4. Penetration of leading social networks in Russia as of 4th quarter 2017 (Statista) .....	42
Figure 5. YouTube monthly active users number by country, 1st quarter of 2016, in millions (Business of Apps 2018).....	43
Figure 6. Gender of the main character .....	62
Figure 7. Gender of voiceover .....	63
Figure 8. Women with speaking and/or prominent roles.....	64
Figure 9. Age groups of women portrayed .....	65
Figure 10. % of women portrayed in decorative roles by age group.....	68
Figure 11. % of women portrayed in non-traditional roles by age group .....	69

## Tables

Table 1 Russian Federation’s scores GLOBE study (Grachev 2009) .....	38
Table 2. Advertisements from the sample addressing GE .....	63
Table 3. Ways in which GE was addressed.....	64
Table 4. Product category/women portrayed in non-traditional roles .....	66
Table 5. Product nationality / women portrayed in traditional role correlation .....	67
Table 6. Product nationality / women portrayed in a non-traditional role correlation .....	67

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In today's world, there is a myriad of social issues that have been present for decades and carry major significance through history. One of such global issues that recently gathered momentum is the question of gender equality. Gender equality as a concept has been discussed by feminists and researchers for a long time, its meaning and definition are debated to this day. However, generally speaking, it is the idea that everyone must be equally able to access human rights and opportunities and must be treated equally, according to fair standards, no matter their gender identity (Verloo 2007, 23).

According to the United Nations, gender equality is not only a basic human right, but is also necessary for global improvement, peaceful future and economic development since education and empowerment of women has been linked to economic growth. However, the global community still has a great distance to go to achieve it due to prejudice, gender violence, illiteracy among women in developing countries and limited access to political and social power among other gender related issues still flourishing worldwide. (Gender Equality - The unfinished business of our time.)

Sexism and the struggles of gender inequality affect roughly half of the planet's population. Women are suffering a disadvantage at the hands of patriarchy daily in varying degrees. However, it is critical to note that men are also victims to this oppressive system though the countless privileges they receive as the ultimate oppressors are undeniable. Thus, professionals, researchers, politicians and scholars in all areas of expertise must fight for equality along with activists and explore the ways in which gender inequality thrives to confront it.

According to Pollay (1986), people must consider advertising as a serious power affecting our views, life and purchasing decisions, the influence that marketers have on society cannot be dismissed and must be studied (Pollay 1986, 31). Furthermore, it is one of numerous ways in which gender equality values manifest themselves. Gender-role stereotyping has been a notable area of interest for advertising researchers since the beginning of the 1950s

(Eisend, Plagemann, and Sollwedel 2014, 256). The advertisers view genders as target groups and due to this gender roles and stereotypes are likely to be highlighted in commercials, female stereotypes specifically. The studies already conducted frequently agree on one thing: women do not tend to be depicted in a favorable light and normally are the victims of stereotyping when it comes to gender portrayal. (Milner et al. 2000, 67.)

Nowadays, advertising constitutes an integral part of our lives. Moreover, in one way or another, it transmits cultural values as it is essentially shaped by societal needs and wants. However, it inevitably influences our culture and values at the same time by reinforcing stereotypes and promoting an idealized image of a perfect consumer. (Pollay 1986, 18.) In addition, besides the state of gender equality in the world overall, marketers' decisions are influenced by culture, be it local culture of a country where a brand exists or foreign cultures that they would like to sell their product to. Thus, examining cultural values in advertising is a crucial part of understanding the reasons and forms in which gender inequality manifests.

## 1.2 Research Problem & Research Questions

In the present research the author focuses on the influence and prominence of cultural values in online advertising in Russian Federation. The motivation for the research is the author's interest in feminism and cultural communication, especially during the time of the digital era and the prosperity of social media platforms. The need for such study is clear to the author since there are not as many researches exploring gender role portrayal in online media as there are the ones examining outdated traditional media outlets. Furthermore, the recent "MeToo" and "Time's Up" movements have once again sparked conversations and a new wave of socially responsible, empowering advertisement that needs to be studied. Russian Federation is chosen due to the lack of current research on the country's gender equality values in advertisement as well as due to its unique historical, political and cultural path, especially regarding women's liberation, which is discussed in detail in the present research. YouTube, in turn, is utilized as the platform of choice due to its popularity and cultural significance. Content analysis is chosen as the research method for the present thesis.

Moreover, various cultural frameworks are used as reference, explored and examined in order to analyze their gender equality related measurements and determine whether they correctly represent contemporary Russian culture and gender roles portrayed in advertisements. The purpose of the present paper is to define patterns related to gender and sex role representation in YouTube advertisements in Russia and observe their correlation with Hofstede's and GLOBE cultural frameworks, specifically their Masculine, Power Distance and Gender Egalitarianism dimensions to identify which one portrays a more accurate picture and to detect possible mechanisms and explanations behind the research findings.

The research questions established by the author are as follows:

1. What are the patterns related to gender and sex role representation in YouTube advertisements in Russian Federation?
2. How do these patterns correlate with Russian Federation's score on MAS dimension in the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory?
3. How do these patterns correlate with the Russian Federation's score on Power Distance dimension in the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory?
4. How do these patterns correlate with the Russian Federation's score on Gender Egalitarianism dimension in the GLOBE study?

The author developed these questions with a goal of understanding patterns of gender role portrayal in YouTube advertisement in Russia and examining them to assess Russian values transmitted in it. In addition, the questions are aimed to evaluate immensely popular and widely used cultural frameworks and examine correlations between values observed and values measured on gender equality related dimensions. The author believes that the data obtained from this research could be used in future studies that question the ways cultural values are measured. Moreover, it could provide insight into Russian gender equality attitudes and portrayals as well as inspire further research in media and advertisement's influence on culture and vice versa.

### 1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in six chapters. The first chapter introduces the focus of the study and its background, purpose, research questions. In the theory and knowledge basis part of the thesis, the author elaborates on theoretical foundations of the study, discussing advertisement, cultural values and frameworks as well as the gender equality related dimensions of choice, specifics of YouTube as an online platform as well as history and statistics connected to gender equality in Russian Federation. The third part provides extensive theoretical background on the thesis' methodology where features of content analysis and the development of the coding scheme are discussed in detail. The last three chapters consist of research results and their interpretation, conclusion, and discussion where reliability of research as well as limitations and recommendations for future studies are presented.

## 2 Theory and Knowledge Basis

### 2.1 Media and Cultural Influence

When speaking about cultural values and values in general, how they differ from nation to nation, how they are formed, measured and influenced by mass media and advertisement, one must consider what values are, in the first place. Value, as defined by Rokeach is:

*A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end state of existence. A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end states of existence along a continuum of relative importance.*

Values can be a definitive of beliefs and behaviors of essentially any kind: be it religion and politics or an uncomplicated decision to purchase something. They are reflections of one's identity and frameworks which one can apply to judge and evaluate others. Therefore, since values bear such broad connotation, studying their nature, types and significance is deemed to be crucial. Virtually, advertising is one of many institutions that convey values, yet it is the one broadcasted to a widest ranging audience, at times to a whole nation or world at once. Moreover, it is an institution that is created and policed by professionals that study psychology, marketing and human behavior and are paid to use their knowledge to reinforce advertising's effect. Together these factors present a decent argument for studying it. (Pollay 2012, 72-73.)

Undoubtedly, one might argue that advertisement is too simple in nature for an average educated person to be subjected to its influence. Nevertheless, according to Pollay (1986), one's illusion of being immune to manipulation can only do more harm since while one thinks this way to maintain their own self-esteem, it results in them failing to examine the mechanisms of influence and utilise this knowledge to not be affected in the future. Consequently, one is left unarmed and has no choice but to succumb. As time goes, media channels change, the ways one encounters and interacts with advertisement vary, yet one is constantly surrounded by it wherever they go. Therefore, it is in one's best interest to observe commercials and messages they transmit in various

cultures to both comprehend contemporary values as well as the direction of cultures' possible shift due to their influence. (23.)

Mass media and what it has to offer has been of interest to sociologists from the very beginning of the 20th century, with Max Weber being the pioneer of the idea that media content was a tool for measuring nation's 'cultural temperature' (Macnamara 2005, 1). Even though, at first sight, advertisement seems to be quite a banal phenomenon with a goal of increasing sales, it is actually found, though at times unintentionally, to have a deep effect on society. In its totality, advertising tries to give value to the material world and increase consumption which is achieved through manipulation by all means possible. While representing one's culture and values to relate to their average target consumer, it is found to be repetitive, intrusive and is ultimately made by marketers with a sole goal to change people's behavior to gain profit. (Pollay 1986, 21.)

Moreover, advertising commonly exhibits values in a fashion that makes a product attractive and worth the money, hence making it into a good. What modern advertisement does is it places value more so on its human characters demonstrating how a product can be a tool to achieve those values and reach the societal norms and ideals. (Pollay 2012, 74.) Hence, knowing that it is a social and cultural weapon of sorts inevitably leads one to question how it affects various areas of our societal views, perceptions and values. Considering the fact that the area of interest for the author of the present paper is gender equality, stereotypes and gender roles, advertisement's intersection with it as well as its effect needed to be examined.

## 2.2 Gender Equality and Media

No matter the times, as the social critique of discrimination and the status quo rises, as new values appear or get amplified, advertisers might be affected and morph their strategies and methods to adjust to the newly emerged values. Nevertheless, their intentions might not lie in the good of the minorities or in representation of core values but rather in illusion creation for the sake of product to good conversion.

As far as gender equality is concerned, the feminist women's liberation movement evolved and so did capitalism's approach to it as marketers interpreted current trends and used them to lure in their target audience. For instance, in the 1990s, sexism and feminism as concepts were treated as old-fashioned issues of the past, especially in the West. Instead, a conversation about freedom of sexuality was in the spotlight. Consequently, this was the time of hyper sexualization of women since it appeared to be brave, original and risqué, not objectifying. Therefore, one can observe that women were still chosen to be objectified in most commercials (which does not contribute to gender equality), yet it was being marketed as sexually liberating and revolutionary (creating an illusion of contemporary value representation). This phenomenon is known as retro sexism. (Plakoyiannaki and Zotos 2009, 1413.)

One of many ways to make a potential consumer feel like they need the products offered is to instill the idea of inferiority and imperfection. Therefore, anyone who is far from the ideal sold by advertisement is vulnerable and the further they are, the more they are susceptible to its pressure. Thus, women and other minorities have been the main targets of media in this regard, shaping their concept of self, beauty standards, values and behaviour. Nonetheless, anyone is vulnerable when it comes to media influence and advertisement has been around for years to ensure that people consume and never have enough. (Pollay 1986, 26-27.)

Additionally, while introducing new ideas and reinforcing one's self-consciousness, advertisements tend to utilize easily understandable and readable symbols which leads to exploitation of stereotypes in particular be it regarding gender, age or race. One can argue that the images used are the reflection of the realistic society. However, by reinforcing them, advertising system encapsulates the ideal vision and values of a consumer that it prefers for their own profit, someone with stereotypical views hence someone who is easily manipulated. (ibid.)

Members of the feminist movement and scholars have been concerned about gender role portrayals in advertising for quite a long time now. The stereotypical ideals portrayed create a restrictive image that women must conform to and that damage their self-esteem and reinforce sex-roles in and outside of home. However, as mentioned prior, values expressed in

advertisements can potentially be affected by a culture hence commercials in different countries have varying gender portrayal. (Gilly 1988, 75.)

During the 1970s various researches were conducted in the US in order to examine advertisement and sex stereotyping in it. What they ultimately found was that women were in fact portrayed differently compared to men, for instance, they were generally younger, married or dependent on a man, largely presented in a home setting. Moreover, they were normally depicted as a clueless character in need of help and authority. (ibid., 76.)

A decade later, during the 1980s, researchers noticed a slight shift in female portrayal with women appearing less in situations where they depended on men, yet a home setting was still the usual place for female characters (Gilly 1988, 77). The changes were intended to reflect a more accurate picture of gender roles at the time yet they still seemed to lag behind.

By now, people, culture, societies, values have evolved and the women's liberation movement has come a long way. Nevertheless, advertisement still exhibits stereotypes and exploits femininity and women's self-image for profit. The traditional idea and image of masculinity and femininity has remained recognizable and easy to portray. Media messages stayed similar to those of the past due to presentation of social stereotypes speaking to consumer's personal identity. (Cortese 2015, 65.)

Women of today are represented in advertisement in various sexist ways one of them being sexual objectification. Growing up in a society that objectifies women and depicts them as sex-objects results in women perceiving themselves this way. This is referred to as self-objectification which leads to self-consciousness and tendency to control own body image and appearance. Internalizing beauty ideals projected in advertisement leaves women feeling embarrassed and anxious when it comes to their own bodies due to the ideal being inaccessible to most. (ibid., 68.)

Another way sexism manifests in depiction of women is the body dismemberment phenomenon. People in general are frequently portrayed with their body parts separated or head missing. However, women are more likely to be "chopped" than men. This functions as a symbol of female characters' bodies being detached from their mind and feelings and reinforces the idea of

women having no personality (when headless) or being helpless, immobilized and dependent (when portrayed without feet). (ibid., 71-72.)

Unfortunately, even though the feminist movement tried to pressure the beauty industry to change the seductive and idealized image of women (white, young, thin, photoshopped) that is frequently portrayed in commercials for products like perfume, skin care and make up, the marketers have not shifted their strategy much. Sex and ideal images sell, they evoke immediate reaction and women's insecurity helps with that. (ibid., 74.)

However, despite the sexist patterns still being present in advertisement nowadays, a new positive trend has been gaining momentum throughout the past decade. This trend is called "femvertising" which stands for female empowering advertising and it essentially includes commercials and campaigns that defy and question gender stereotypes. (Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen 2017, 795.) The phenomenon started with a famous Dove's 2004 "real beauty" commercials that were a part of the campaign that was meant to show real women and real body types, challenge ideal body standards, show women that their real bodies are beautiful as they are. Another major femvertising campaign that gained attention was the Always 2014 "like a girl" campaign that challenged the idea of doing something like a girl having a negative connotation and implying weakness. (Abitbol 2016, 118.)

Over the years, femvertising has shown itself to be a great tool to draw attention to a brand and increase sales. Therefore, even though the gender equality message of femvertising ties it with feminism, the fact that it is used to promote a product and sales, that it encourages the target audience (women) to purchase their goods counteracts the idea that female empowerment is larger than purchasing behavior and wealth. Thus, the nature of femvertising is contradictory and the phenomenon needs to be further examined and improved to ensure that the actions and the message of such campaigns are aligned. (ibid.)

Feminist scholars and activists can hope for the advertising world to change and challenge the standards further while researchers can explore the methods it uses to manipulate consumers, but without understanding of culture and how it influences the images presented in advertisement, they are only left

with partial answers and solutions. Therefore, in order to accomplish this, researchers must seek opportunities to examine value manifestation in advertisement.

As far as previous studies in this area go, a considerable number of researches has been interested in exploring advertisement to see how gender and gender roles are represented and in what ways it relates to cultural values in one or multiple countries (Gilly 1988, Milner 2005, Milner & Collins 2000, Saleem, Antero, Ummik, & Kuusik 2015, Wiles, Wiles, & Tjernlund 1995, Nelson & Paek 2005, Eisend and colleagues 2014, & Plakoyiannaki & Zotos 2009). However, it is not a topic that is as widely researched as many others. Apart from rapidly gaining relevance aided by movements that emerged in 2017 in the likes of “Me Too”, and “Time’s Up”, difference among cultures and their values is significant and constantly transforming. Moreover, the mediums of communication are evolving and in need of research due to differences in the ways they convey ideas and values.

### 2.3 Cultural Frameworks

Advertising is a product of symbols, the symbols being practices, traditions and customs of a certain culture. They primarily communicate messages potentially familiar to the receiver (consumer) to reinforce the idea that the values of a brand and the target audience are shared. Thus, the understanding of culture and its values becomes the backbone of the advertising communication, especially, if the it goes international, here is where that shared value illusion is crucial to sustain. (De Mooij 2010, 264.)

Advertisers and marketing researchers have been studying cultural values in all their variety to understand how they change from nation to nation and how they affect consumers’ priorities and buying choices. (De Mooij 2010, 27.) Moreover, when it comes to cultural values, professionals across a myriad of disciplines be it finances, arts or human resource management have always been willing to conduct research to discover correlations between values and performance, attitudes, systems and phenomena in their area of work and expertise. In order to accomplish that, one is compelled to seek a point of

reference, a theory that is able to demonstrate what values one's culture holds so one can explore its correlations with their field or subject of study.

Cultural frameworks have been a huge aid in capturing and classifying these cultural advertising nuances and concepts of values and practices of nations (ibid). Consequently, one of the author's objectives at the point of theoretical review is to examine a selection of cultural frameworks, specifically the ones that address gender equality, sex-roles and representation in cultures, in order to compare and utilize them as a reference point for further research. Cultural values are a concept that cannot be measured through observation. However, they can be derived from either products of culture e.g. folklore and advertising or by having representative of a culture share their personal values and examining patterns and tendencies in the answers. (ibid., 34.) This is how most cultural frameworks are created, including the ones the author explores in the present paper.

### 2.3.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

One of the most universally used and comprehensive cultural frameworks is Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. First used mostly by experts in the field of social sciences, the theory expanded and is cited by professionals across variety of areas more frequently than others, making it incredibly impactful and popular (Tang and Koveos 2008, 1045).

Firstly, as the concept of values is inherently subjective, it is crucial to identify what Hofstede meant by it. According to the researcher, value is "a broad tendency to prefer certain state of affair over others" and can be held by a single person or a group of people (Hofstede 2001, 5).

Furthermore, in order to recognize both intensity and direction of the concept of value (since one or the other were commonly overlooked), it was decided to differentiate between "values as the desired" and "values as the desirable". Thus, values as the desired would be significant or insignificant values in relation to an individual making them more personal whilst values as the desirable would concern values that an individual would agree or disagree with thus assigning a more general perspective to it. (ibid., 8.)

Hofstede's research itself included statistical analysis of a worldwide questionnaire, results of which were initially collected between 1967 and 1973 in over fifty countries (later updated) from managers of International Business Machines or IBM. Once the data were collected, the researcher noticed that in the answers of the managers that some general issues expressed were shared by all nations, yet the solutions were varied depending on a culture. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 30.)

According to Hofstede (1998), the results were assessed through the mean scores of the countries, meaning that they were not examining the differences in values from person to person, but rather from culture to culture, nation to nation. This is something he called "ecological analysis". The ultimate goal was to see what the solutions of each country are for global issues every country must face. (10.)

Thus, four areas were initially identified them being: social inequality, relationships between an individual and a community, feminine and masculine roles in a society, and the ways of acting when faced with uncertainty in life. (Hofstede et al. 2010, 30.)

Based on these groups the following dimensions were established:

1. Power distance which correlates with answers to the question of human inequality;
2. Uncertainty avoidance which correlates with the perception and fear of the unforeseeable future;
3. Individualism/collectivism which correlates to the ways in which individuals assimilate into groups;
4. Masculinity/Femininity or MAS which correlates with the distribution of roles between men and women.

Later on, Long-term versus Short-term orientation and Indulgence versus Restraint dimensions were developed by Misho Minkov based on the World Values Survey data. Long-term versus Short-term orientation relates to the choice of a person to focus more on the future or the present while Indulgence versus Restraint reflect the ability of a person within a certain culture to allow themselves the enjoyment of the simple human wants and satisfaction of needs. (ibid., 252.)

### 2.3.2 MAS dimension

Masculinity/Femininity (hereafter referred to as MAS) is one of four (later six) cultural dimensions presented by the researcher. MAS represents the opposition of ego versus social intents prevailing in a given society and was created through the study of IBM managers and national corporate cultures. The dimension was claimed to be influenced by history and be rooted in it, thus feminine and masculine characteristics being the ones to most probably stand the test of time. (Hofstede 1998, 3-4.)

According to the researcher, males are likely to prefer ego goals more than logical goals and vice versa for females. This difference was unique to gender whereas various other work goals were same for both. However, it is crucial to note that each person would have a unique set of goals yet their equilibrium is inevitably affected by the gender of an individual. (ibid., 11.)

Moreover, Hofstede supported his claim of connection of the ego versus social narrative to genders by presenting the fact that this was the only dimension in his framework to generate different results for male and female managers with ego being associated with males excluding those in countries scoring high on femininity. Therefore, he saw this as a clear justification of the dimension expressing values specific to the genders. However, it is worth noting that Hofstede specified that even though women and men are different on a biological level in general no matter the culture, the gender of a nation is still relevant since the social and emotional roles and their distribution according to gender fluctuates significantly from nation to nation and is reflected in their MAS scores. (ibid.)

According to House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004), in a working setting where the study was focused in the first place, masculinity was expressed through actions aimed at strengthening ego of a manager with no concern for personal relationships e.g. raise, award or a premium. On the contrary, femininity was expressed through the opposite it being regard for social relationships and well-being of other workers as a community being prioritized over ego goals. (378.)

Furthermore, MAS dimension is unique due to it being the only one that is not to be associated with national wealth whatsoever. None of the wealth related

indexes can reflect a country's score on MAS. (Hofstede 1998, 21.) This is crucial to remember because, for instance, Scandinavian countries all score extremely high on femininity and are coincidentally wealthy leading to a possible assumption that there is a correlation even though there is precisely none.

However, the scores do correlate to certain national factors such as quality of life and gender equality. According to Hofstede (1980) feminine countries tend to offer better education for women, as well as women being active on the national labor market, being in more professional positions and have higher earnings (Odekerken-Schröder, Wulf & Hofstee 2002, 408).

Hofstede (1998) listed key characteristics of a feminine society according to various areas related to work, politics and prevailing ideas among others. Some of the feminine attributes mentioned are emphasis on equality and quality of life; tendency to resolve disagreements by negotiation and compromise; welfare as a societal ideal, aid to the poor, low levels of military government spending, women constituting a great part of a government and political positions, women's liberation and even distribution of work and home responsibilities between men and women. On the contrary, masculine societies are expected to exhibit following traits: emphasis on equity and competition; economic growth of a country is favored over anything else; elevated levels of military government spending; women constituting a small part of government and political positions; women's liberation as an idea of women having access to occupations that were not available to them prior. (17.)

For instance, the perfect examples of countries scoring low on masculinity are, as mentioned prior, Scandinavian countries with Sweden scoring 5, Norway - 8, Denmark - 16, and Finland - 26, as seen on the graph below (see Figure 1). This does correspond with their great social support, gender equality, as well as common in the Nordic countries law of Jante that calls to be humble and put society before oneself thus prioritizing community and everyone's standard of living over their own goals which relates perfectly to the ego versus social goals frame (Nikel 2015).

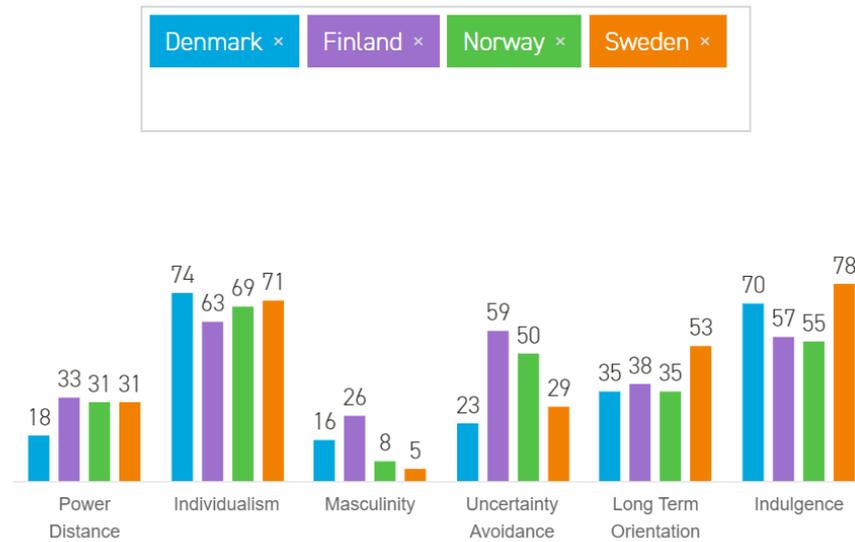


Figure 1. Scores for Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden on the 6-D Model© (Hofstede Insights 2018)

Nevertheless, despite certain examples coinciding with the framework perfectly, this dimension has been criticized along with the rest if not more strictly than others. According to Fougère & Moulettes (2007), the Masculinity dimension is deemed to be the least significant and influential due to its ambiguity. Initially, the concept of gender, its duality and the attribution of certain characteristics to them is at the center of its cultural modern critique. Even if one chooses to ignore several types of femininity Hofstede includes, the idea of existence of these fundamentally feminine or masculine characteristics that dominate a country and, inevitably, its institutions, is controversial for a modern cultural discourse. Moreover, crucial criticism concerned the suspected bias since this dimension does not take the West versus the East approach, but rather includes Scandinavian countries along with Hofstede's native the Netherlands into the poster child group of feminine thus egalitarian and humanitarian countries. (17-18.)

Additionally, during the author's initial literature review, the majority of the researches exploring gender representation in media and advertisements in-

volved Hofstede's MAS dimension and the results for some were not satisfactory. For instance, according to Milner (2008), in their study of sex-role portrayals in African television advertising, the results were inconsistent with the framework. The data showed no difference among countries when it came to gender role portrayal in the commercials which contradicted the high MAS rankings of the South Africa and feminine Kenya that were practically the same despite the discrepancy in scores. (85.)

Moreover, similar thing happened in other researches. For instance, in their "Is gender stereotyping in advertising more prevalent in masculine countries? A cross-national analysis" study, Odekerken-Schröder and colleagues (2002) wished to examine the correlation between gender stereotyping and the MAS score of a country. As a result, their hypotheses about positive correlations of the two were not proved and some were even contradicted. As a result, the authors suggested that Hofstede's MAS index was not able to reflect the gender role portrayals and how they varied from country to country. (416.)

Conclusively, considering all the facts discussed, MAS is one of the dimensions of interest for the author. In case of its reliability, it is supposed to measure and predict the gender equality and representation in a country according to Hofstede and, for its name alone, is immediately associated with gender identity. Thus, its scores are a crucial reference point in the present research.

### 2.3.3 Power Distance dimension

Even though the MAS dimension tends to be immediately associated with gender equality due to the masculinity/femininity concept it involves, there are other factors to be considered when discussing power balance of genders and sex-roles in a given society. According to Hofstede (1998), femininity does not equal feminism, but rather feminism as a movement can exist in both masculine and feminine societies while taking different shapes. As mentioned prior, women's liberation in a feminine society would strive to achieve even distribution of work and home responsibilities between men and women and initially liberating both simultaneously while masculine feminism would be

focused more an idea of women having access to occupations that were not available to them prior and a competition between genders. (19.)

Therefore, it is suggested that the goals and struggles of masculine feminism would not be automatically connected to the MAS dimension, it rather is the Power Distance dimension that influences the power struggle in society, outside of one's home and the gender balance established there. Moreover, country's economic growth and its score on the Individualism scale might affect these dynamics. (ibid.) Thus, the author finds it crucial to consider these factors as pertaining to gender equality which is one of the key concepts of this research.

Firstly, the Power Distance dimension plays a significant role when examining power distribution between genders. As mentioned prior, this dimension correlates with answers to the question of human, social inequality as well as attitude towards authority, ultimately relationship to it.

According to Hofstede, Power Distance (hereafter referred to as PD) is the level of inequality between people that possess more power versus less power in a society/culture. When referring to business it would imply the relationship between subordinate and their superior. Therefore, in a work place PD indicates the level of inequality in such a relationship one will tolerate and accept as a norm. This, in turn, is directly influenced by PD levels in an individual's society and culture, its values and practices regarding equality, class, social status, inclusivity, whether basic human rights are accessible to all disregarding their status or wealth. Moreover, the critical aspect of this dimension that Hofstede emphasized is that the norms accepted in any level of PD are basically approved by both individuals and groups with less power and the ones with more power. (Bochner & Hesketh 1994, 235-236.) In other words, according to Terlutter, Diehl and Mueller (2006) it is an eagerness in a society for either egalitarianism or hierarchy (423).

Nonetheless, even though the PD dimension is initially there to define work relationships and power dynamics, the findings and correlations between them give one an idea of how equally power is distributed and how it correlates with the dimension scores. In the initial research, it was concluded that people from countries with high PD scores were apt to act submissively

whenever their manager was present. However, high PD does not only indicate the presence of respect and fear of the higher ups, but also a preference for such dynamics, so much so the subordinates from high PD cultures indicated a preference for a more domineering authority figure. On the contrary, those from the low PD countries were in favor of someone on the opposite side of the spectrum – a friend and an equal member of the team. Moreover, Hofstede underlined the critical fact that the preference for a certain power dynamic would indicate the values for superiors and their subordinates alike. (Bochner & Hesketh 1994, 236.)

Consequently, by applying these patterns to the context of gender equality and power dynamics, one is able to observe how the PD dimension would affect the relationships between men as the dominant social group in the patriarchal system prevailing worldwide and women as the minority. Therefore, the author of the present paper includes PD as one of the dimensions to examine a compare the end results to.

#### 2.3.4 Criticism of the Hofstede's framework

Despite the model's undisputed success, critics and fellow researchers have expressed the issues they had with the framework for a variety of reasons, MAS and Power Distance dimensions included. It is worth noting that some of these were addressed by Hofstede himself in later works.

Firstly, according to Jones (2007) there is an issue of cultural homogeneity which arguably is the most prominent criticism of the framework. The problem stems from Hofstede's study considering the country's population to be a uniform entity. Nevertheless, for most countries, that proves to not be true due to them consisting of diverse ethnic groups. (5.) Thus, the study is supposedly hindered by personal bias of whoever was partaking in the study.

Moreover, there is the question of relevancy. According to Schwartz (1999), there is an overwhelming concern with suitability of a survey when examining cultural discrepancy specifically when referring to the concept of value being assessed that can be highly subjective. (ibid.) Furthermore, the results of the survey and the theory were based on respondents (managers) from one multinational organization only as well as employees working in only one field as mentioned prior. Thus, the research conditions have been questioned many

a time due to those factors specifically. Additionally, according to Javidan, House, Dorfman, Hanges and Sully de Luque (2006, 898), Hofstede did not complete most of the steps that would qualify this framework to be a result of an action research (Fougère & Moulettes 2007, 5).

National Divisions is an issue that partly echoes an idea of cultural homogeneity though they are obviously different in nature. It indicates Hofstede's understanding of the term "culture" as a purely nation-wide phenomenon and treating it as such, which is debatable since a nation might exhibit a multitude of values depending on its regions and prevalent cultures there (ibid., 7). Therefore, nation should not be used as a synonym of culture because where one culture ends and another starts is not determined by borders (Jones 2007, 5). However, according to Hofstede himself (1998), he considers national identities to be the sole instrument that can help researchers examine cultural differences (481).

Furthermore, political influences might have affected the research greatly due to the study being conducted during cold war in Europe, communism related commotion in Asia, Europe and Africa. Thus, the political turmoil may have resulted in data sensitive to the period. Besides, data on many countries were not initially present through the survey, including many socialist and Third World countries. (Jones 2007, 5.)

Moreover, the theory was criticized for being out-dated in terms of the historical, economic and cultural changes time brings. For instance, it was later suggested that values of managers from certain Asian cultures would nowadays be closer to those in the West due to historical and economical shifts. (Tang et al. 2008, 1045-1046.) Globalization is a crucial reason for these changes along with internalization, our cultures are rapidly changing, adapting and showing new perspectives on cultural dimensions.

Therefore, the author notes the criticism expressed before, including the issues addressed by Hofstede himself. This, along with discrepancies between Hofstede's dimension scores and some of the results of papers and studies reviewed by the author (Odekerken-Schröder et al. 2002, Milner 2005), are heeded before going forward for better understanding of the results of the

present research and possible discrepancies to be found between them and the framework.

### 2.3.5 GLOBE cultural framework

The GLOBE cultural framework or project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program) (Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta 2004) is another significant cultural framework used today and a far more recent than that of Hofstede. The data collection for the study started in 1994 and consisted of a survey taken by 17,300 managers from 951 organizations. GLOBE was an extensive research that included more than 160 researchers from all over the world and three support managers. Moreover, apart from the extensive data collection and the data itself being comparatively current, managers that partook in the study were a part of three industries which were food processing, telecommunications, and financial services. Undoubtedly, this fact is crucial considering Hofstede's framework was mainly based on a study of managers from one industry. (Terlutter et al. 2006, 431.)

There are nine dimensions in the GLOBE study different to those of Hofstede's though it is crucial to know that the first six dimensions that were outlined stem from his (Hofstede's) work, some were altered, transformed and various new ones were added. The dimensions outlined are:

1. Assertiveness;
2. Uncertainty avoidance;
3. Power distance;
4. Collectivism I (institutional);
5. Collectivism II (in-group);
6. Gender egalitarianism;
7. Future orientation;
8. Performance orientation;
9. Humane orientation.

Hofstede's Masculinity/Femininity dimension became two: Assertiveness and Gender egalitarianism. This happened due to the researchers' distinct understanding of the dimension, masculinity, femininity and the concept of values. Thus, they outlined their own dimension connected to gender equality

that was more suitable for a cross-cultural framework according to their study. (ibid., 432)

Furthermore, a unique feature to the GLOBE framework is the two distinct groups of indicators that it utilizes: some are value based and others are practice based. The value-based indicators represent personal values of the participants of the study while the practice-based ones are the values the participants can observe being exercised in their culture, society. What the GLOBE study does is it introduces the idea of values and practices not being essentially positively linked which challenges Hofstede's work. The exceptions to this new-found negative relativity is gender egalitarianism and in-group collectivism dimensions. The practices versus values idea has been questioned and is occasionally explained to not appear in Hofstede's research due to the difference of value definitions compared to the GLOBE study. (Tang et al. 2008, 1046.)

### 2.3.6 Gender Egalitarianism dimension

Gender egalitarianism is the GLOBE dimension that the author examines in this thesis in particular. According to House and colleagues (2004), Gender Egalitarianism is the manner in which roles are distributed among men and women in a given society. In more gender egalitarian culture, biology plays smaller to no part in deciding what social roles of a man or a woman would be. (386.) In other words, it is precisely the degree to which a company, institution or culture reduces distinctions between gender roles as well as gender inequality and discrimination (House, Javidan, Hanges and Dorfman 2002, 5).

“Attitudinal domain” and “behavioral manifestations” are concepts that represent respectively values and practices, first of which includes gender stereotypes and gender-role ideology that reflect individual's beliefs about the qualities of women and men, and the respective roles attributed to them. The practices were examined through the prism of women's participation in various spheres of a society as well as values themselves and their relationship. For the sake of understanding of these two indicators it is crucial to underline the fact that they influence each other with discriminating ideologies

encouraging sexist practices and inequality reinforcing fortifying the values established. (ibid.)

During the course of the study, a clear interconnection was discovered between higher scoring cultures (in regard to Gender Egalitarianism values) and their corresponding values. For instance, those countries are linked to more powerful economies and prosperity as well as GPN per capita. Moreover, apart from the economic advantages, social benefits are present. Members of higher scoring societies live longer, are more content, enjoy higher standards of living and knowledge, are more active in political and social life as well as they are welcoming to change. Nevertheless, Gender Egalitarianism practices scores do not correlate with social and economic indicators as much though the common deviation of societal practices from values is very low in this dimension compared to others. (ibid., 371.)

As the GLOBE researchers themselves determine, gender egalitarianism is associated with various concepts such as Hofstede's masculinity/femininity, gender-role stereotypes, gender-role ideology, gender discrimination, and gender equality (ibid., 374). Thus, each one is important to consider and examine in relation to the dimension. The comparison between MAS and Gender egalitarianism dimensions is a vital part of this research and Hofstede's framework is an unavoidable reference for virtually any study in this area. As far as the comparison goes, GLOBE's results were uncorrelated to those of Hofstede's except for some minor links in the practices indicator that do not serve any purpose for the comparison.

Furthermore, this dimension in GLOBE addresses and correlates to the concepts of gender stereotypes and gender-role ideologies. As far as gender stereotypes are concerned, members of a more egalitarian society value-wise would be more approving of female stereotypes in respect to those of males. (ibid., 377-378.)

According to House and colleagues (2004) gender-role ideologies are spread on a scale of "traditional" to "modern" (ibid). A culture that follows traditional ideologies considers men to be of greater value to society and propagate the idea of a traditional marriage or a relationship where a man is clearly dominant. On the opposite side lie modern ideologies that believe in, value

and promote egalitarian view on relationships and consider men and women as equals. (ibid., 379.) These are also linked to the Gender Egalitarianism measure with the concept of ideology pointing to the value indicator.

Last, but not least, is the concept of women's participation in economy, government and politics is discussed. The initial assumption is that the more gender egalitarian scoring countries would exhibit a prominent level of women's involvement in these areas. Therefore, after close examination, as the researchers expected, GLOBE's Gender Egalitarianism dimension scores showed to be closely related to the levels of women's participation in the fields mentioned. (ibid.)

Ultimately, this dimension is chosen as one of the reference points for this particular research as it relates directly to gender equality and presence of gender roles and stereotypes in a culture. Specifically Gender Egalitarian scores on both values and practices are decided to be taken into consideration. Power Distance dimension that mirrors Hofstede's dimension of the same name is noted as well for reference and comparison.

### 2.3.7 Criticism of the GLOBE study

According to Smith (2006), the framework with nine dimensions and 116 items might be too complex for researches to base their analysis on. However, House and colleagues (2004) have responded to this critique stating that Hofstede's framework with only five dimensions and 34 items is, on the contrary, extremely simple. (Warner-Søderholm 2012, 85.)

Furthermore, the researchers have been blamed by Graen (2006) multiple times to have a biased cultural study or not making the methodology clear enough in their book which could have meant leaving room for undocumented bias. Moreover, he suggested that the questions were constructed and framed in a way that was perpetuating biased answers. Nevertheless, the accusations have been denied by House and colleagues (2004). (ibid., 87).

Additionally, the author of the present paper finds it valuable to read and examine understanding and critique of the GLOBE study by Hofstede himself. The main concern addressed by Hofstede (2010) was the question of "What did GLOBE really measure?" This question meant a few things including

Hofstede's desire to understand how GLOBE tried to define national cultures and their dimensions by equating them to individual answers of the respondents they had in the study. This concern implied the difference between individual and collective trends that the GLOBE researchers seemed to disregard, according to Hofstede. Thus, he considered the equation of individuals to cultures to be a critical mistake that he presumed GLOBE made. Moreover, Hofstede emphasized this question explaining that the issue was transparent when one looked at the value versus practice scores correlating negatively, except for the Gender Egalitarianism and In-Group Collectivism, which is something the GLOBE researchers themselves mention and underline. (1340.)

Another concept that criticized by Hofstede's was the concept of values. The researcher specifically underlines the idea of "values as the desired" and "values as the desirable" that was defined by him in 1980. In fact, what Hofstede founded his dimensions on was the former. The issue was that the GLOBE study utilized "values" as a concept of the desirable. This is something that Hofstede found crucial when distinguishing the studies and deciding which one is better at representing the reality. (ibid., 1340-1341.)

Lastly, a critical discrepancy in GLOBE according to Hofstede is the organizational culture and GLOBE's understanding, representation of it as a concept. What they (GLOBE researchers) did is consider organizational culture to be the product of the outside world or societal culture and Hofstede criticized such approach since he himself viewed it differently since his research focused on organizational culture in particular and was conducted to aid managers in comprehending culture unique to their company. (ibid., 1342.)

Overall, the GLOBE's dimensions, scores and understanding of culture are different from those of Hofstede's in more than one manner, but it is critical to note that it also has its own constraints. (Tang et al. 2008, 1046.) Thus, both need to be critically examined further and, most probably, updated. Therefore, critical examination of the dimensions related to gender equality is one of the core objectives of the present research paper.

## 2.4 Gender Equality in Russia

Russian Federation is a large country with long history dating back to the Slavic state of Rus appearing around 10<sup>th</sup> century. Even though old tales, traditions, annals and writings of foreign tribes, states and travelers all have records of women in Russian history, they are normally undermined and deemed insignificant. This stands in contrast to the records of Western history with a myriad of Queens as prominent and influential figures. (Pushkareva & Levin 1996, 7.) However, this cannot serve as an evidence of gender inequality being an inseparable part of Russian history. What one must do is explore major factors that influenced Russian culture through the years and made an impact on the state of women in contemporary Russia.

According to Rose, Carausu, Crone and Sengupta (2014), Russian identity is a phenomenon that is forever transforming and evolving. Though this can be said about plenty if not every culture, the significant factor that dictates rapid changes in the country was the fall of Soviet Union that severely affected the state and does so to this day. Therefore, Russian culture is frequently misrepresented or rather not fully demonstrated in research. Moreover, however the country is represented does not affect the fact that Russia is evolving and shifting culturally and economically and that is not something that will cease to happen soon. (459.)

Therefore, it is essential to understand that the contemporary culture in Russian society is influenced by several factors at once. These factors are, as presented by Grachev (2004): historical traditions that were cultivated and evolved over the course of the country's history, totalitarianism or the Soviet past as well as fundamental and cardinal shift in culture with its societal values and beliefs ever since (Grachev & Bobina 2006, 68).

As far as the historical culture and traditions are concerned, quite a few of them are based on such pillars as Orthodox church, Slavic rich natural habitat and climate. Being geographically positioned at the crossroads of western and eastern cultures, Russia had a unique opportunity to absorb both and merge them incorporating characteristics that fit best. Throughout the centuries, the country has become its own distinct entity that shows traits of both polar opposites and is inevitably dependent on them. (ibid.)

Additionally, distinct times demanded distinct leaders. In Russian history, traditionally rulers were related to either military, church or the state. Consequently, depending on their affiliation, their outlook shifted the culture and societal dynamics. For instance, Peter the Great was a military leader and that was displayed through his militant tactics when attempting to westernize Russia at the time. (ibid.)

Nevertheless, undoubtedly, Soviet era has affected the way Russian culture changed and shaped gender-related issues if not the most, but significantly, especially considering it being the most recent influence to shape contemporary Russian society. Thus, it is necessary to examine the state of women throughout the Soviet era to understand how even after the fall of the Union, communism and relics of the past have influenced the transitional period up to the point where Russian Federation stands today regarding gender equality.

#### 2.4.1 Women in The Soviet Era

According to Sperling (1999), Bolsheviks declined feminism as a phenomenon and ideology. However, on the surface it seemed as if the Soviet Union already had an impressive level of gender equality. For instance, women were allowed to vote as early as the beginning of the twentieth century which was well ahead of its time. Bolsheviks were advocates for women's full engagement in politics and labor market. The refusal to accept feminism stemmed from it being closely linked to the West and perceived as a Western phenomenon making it seemingly unrelated to Russia and its gender equality struggles. Nonetheless, as noted by Olga Voronina, a feminist philosopher, liberation of women of the Soviet Union was an illusion carefully crafted by the regime to sell an emancipation fantasy while having women overwork and use them to help their country short of male power stay afloat. (67-68.)

Furthermore, a huge source of pride for the socialists of the Soviet Union was the paid employment rate for women which stood at a remarkable 90 per cent. Nevertheless, women had to take a lot more responsibilities than men due to the economic crisis. Additionally, women were the ones having to do domestic work and stand in queues with food stamps for the whole family. (Marsh 1996, 13.)

Moreover, even though women had access to paid work, professional training and education were arranged in a fashion that ensured women entered certain professions and not others. For instance, men were employed at heavy industry professions that were well-paid while women kept at educational, secretarial, and office jobs that were not as profitable. Nowadays it is often suggested that besides communist statements about the gender-neutral approach to the labor market, it was actually adjusted according to the patriarchal standards. However, it is worth noting that when it came to representation of women in politics, science and engineering, Russia along with the whole communist Central and Eastern Europe were way ahead of the West. Additionally, flexible hours and maternity leave were a part of the contract due to maternity being put on a pedestal at the time. (Metcalf & Afanassieva 2005, 399-400.)

Because of these contradictions and illusions created by the Soviet Union, in some of the earlier studies on Russian women western researchers and feminists gravitated towards the gender equality topic in Russia since the Soviet Union presented women's liberation as a war they have won. Thus, many came to analyze a country filled with emancipated women and what they discovered was that it was all a lie and misogyny was a phenomenon easily noticed. Subsequently, in the 90s, it was clear that Russian culture and women's rights had to be approached in another way when researched, without a predetermined bias and impartial assumptions. (Marsh 1996, 5-6.)

In addition, the labor exploitation marketed as emancipation aside, a myth of sexual liberation was also present. For instance, as told by Janet Hyer and Susan Gross Solomon during a time of relative sexual liberation in the Soviet Union in 1920s, female body was still policed. Sexual minorities were also targeted and regulated when it came to their sexual health and privacy and this is not surprising to anyone who understands that the roots of homophobia grow from misogyny and hostility towards femininity. Consequently, these views and tendencies were carried through to the future generations now rooted in contemporary Russia's raging homophobia and misogyny. (ibid., 9.)

Furthermore, the socialist state was demanding in terms of women being active on the labor market, yet the responsibility of reproductive labor was brought on women as well. Thus, government expected women to be mothers

and hard workers and politics concerning the issue were built around this notion. In this way, everyone was assumed to be equal while women were still treated differently and with specific expectations placed on them based on gender, highlighting yet another Soviet hypocrisy. Essentially, women were supposed to become the labor force of today simultaneously producing the labor force of the future. (Rivkin-Fish 2010, 706.)

As women's success at their maternity obligations appeared to be a litmus test for the country's overall well-being, government was in full alert throughout the 1980s due to the tendency of mothers raising children on their own and men abandoning families. According to mass media of the time, masculinity was in a state of decline while, on the contrary, matriarchy was on the rise. This resulted in Gorbachev suggesting women to retire to their natural function. However, it was argued that the masculinity crisis scare was not entirely a response to gender equality movement, but rather to the deep-rooted problems of socialism and its failure to maintain healthy family units. Nevertheless, even if the fear of the socialist dream crumbling was the reason, women were still affected negatively, with people calling them selfish for being single mothers and maintaining the focus of women's issues and topics in the area of motherhood and beauty. (ibid., 709-710.)

#### 2.4.2 Women in contemporary Russia

Perestroika and post-perestroika have been one of the last historical periods to greatly affect Russian women after the fall of Soviet Union. It brought a progressing demographic decrease, growth in production and distribution of pornography as well as gender violence. A variety of primarily western academics have agreed with feminists from the post-soviet countries such as Ukraine and Russia when it came to perestroika and post perestroika having dubious influence on the state of women in the area. For instance, the good consequence was the fact that glasnost resulted in free speech, though rather restricted. This was new to everyone and allowed women's issues (abortion, gender violence, sexual health and maternity) to be heard and expressed in press, be it official newspapers or self-published material. (Marsh 1996, 9.)

However, it is critical to mention that women were the ones most negatively affected by the inflations of 1991 and 1992, as well as by unemployment and

financial hardships that ensued. This especially affected the elderly with women receiving 70 per cent of men's pensions and 75 per cent of the unemployed at the time being women. Undoubtedly, this was not an exceptional beginning for women's rights and gender equality in modern Russia. (ibid., 13.)

Another phenomenon that grew in popularity in the 90s was nationalism. It emerged due to the demographic decrease as well as the decline of the percentage of ethnic Russians in the country. When Solomea Pavlychko spoke about the state of women in post-Soviet countries at the time, she emphasized the fact that the national awakening signified the rebirth and strengthening of the masculine culture. Because the downfall of socialism led to the promotion of an entrepreneurial man, women were ignored and their problems were easier to dismiss while patriarchy and its ideal concept of family and women flourished. The new market glorified masculinity and forced it to be idealized. (ibid., 16.)

Essentially, plenty of experts argue that even though women's liberation was less than impeccable and undeniably questionable under the communist rule, the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of nationalistic sentiment resulted in complete regression. Women were encouraged by media to leave work to become mothers and homemakers. The message behind this was rather backhanded, the new government implied that the liberation of women in the Soviet era was obviously damaging to the nation and reversing the process was the only logical path to take. (ibid., 13.)

Therefore, in the post-Soviet states, the former image of women and men as partners in the building of socialism was being replaced by that of the traditional family in which men worked outside of home and women devoted themselves to child care and domesticity. However, woman as a mother and a housewife was not the only portrayal that emerged during the 90s. The images of women being portrayed as sex objects or victims of violence became a part of the culture. Prostitution, pornography and rape were widely discussed due to glasnost and the notion that this perception of women was merely suppressed not abolished. (ibid., 14.)

Women's maternity function in contemporary Russia is still considered to be only natural and worthy of protection hence Russian labor code includes a lengthy list of hazardous professions forbidden for women (Sperling 1999, 70). In 2018 these prohibited jobs were partially abolished as a result of a campaign of an anti-discrimination center by the name of "Memorial". However, the list still exists as a number of professions stay banned. (First results of the "All jobs for women" campaign in Russia: Russian Ministry of Labor partially abolished job prohibitions for women 2018.)

Furthermore, a rather positive decision has been made concerning maternity. In January of 2007 maternity capital has been introduced, around 10,000 dollars at the time given to the family for the second or third newborn. The money granted are presented in a form of certificate that can be used for a few predetermined purposes e.g. child's education. (Rivkin-Fish 2010, 701.)

Despite maternity capital being presented by Putin as a solution for Russian Federation's demographic crisis thus focusing more on goals of the state rather than women's safety and well-being, the change was positive for women overall whom the burden of parenthood affected the most. The physical and mental energy needed to give birth to and raise children frequently deprived them of hobbies, jobs, financial stability and power. (ibid., 702)

Additionally, the way society perceived women in the job market echoed through advertisements during the 90s. Copious amounts of employers at the time suggested that only men apply for certain positions. Discrimination on the labor market increased in the post-soviet spaces according to various studies (Gurkov 2000, Harden 2001, Truss 1999, Woodall 1996) that have identified discriminative HR practices in the post-soviet organizations. The practice of not hiring women full-time or offering them a serious contract due to fear of losing them if they decide to become mothers. (Metcalf & Afanassieva 2005, 404.)

Some personal job advertisements even went as far as being specific about the type of women they wanted to have in the office: young, white, attractive and without children. These job offers often insinuated that female applicants must be willing to give their bosses sexual favors and tolerate sexual harassment that at this point was practically institutionalized. Women were

supposed to know their place in life, at home and in business. (Sperling 1999, 75.)

Unfortunately, nowadays, harassment as a term still is not a part of Russian legislation. However, the issue goes deeper than law. As sociological research on the topic shows many Russians consider the problem of harassment to be inexistent, hyperbolic and solely invented by feminists to prove a point and attract attention. Additionally, men are not seen as potential victims of harassment hence the feminist label of the issue. (Chernyaeva 2012, 1.)

This problem is rooted in Russian society and has not been solved or brought to light as much as it did in the West. In 2018, five journalists came forward with sexual harassment accusations against Leonid Slutsky, a Duma deputy. In a way, he became the antagonist face of the Russia #MeToo movement. After the accusations, a storm of mockery, jokes and victim blaming occurred as it does with every story of this sort in Russia. Women are rarely believed, an accusation can cost them reputation, a job and safety. Power wins in every case and powerful are the men. (Pushkina 2018.)

As far as the political situation is concerned, women should be prominent in politics in theory according to Russian Federation's low masculinity score, however, this is something that statistics could not confirm. Firstly, it is crucial to note that when Putin first came to power, he replaced a number of women in political administrative positions by men making the percentage of women in Duma drop from 37 per cent to 6 per cent only. This shift set the tone for gender equality in politics in contemporary Russia. (Metcalf & Afanassieva 2005, 404.) Nowadays, the number of women in chamber is only 61 which constitutes only 13,6% of said chamber. With a statistic like this, Russian Federation is ranking 105<sup>th</sup> in world classification. (Russian Federation: State Duma 2018.)

However, gender equality in managerial positions in Russian Federation is a positive statistic. According to Grant Thornton (2017), Eastern European countries, especially Russian Federation, are the top of the ranking (see Figure 2). Specifically, Russia is the only country where every company's senior leadership team has a woman on. (10.)

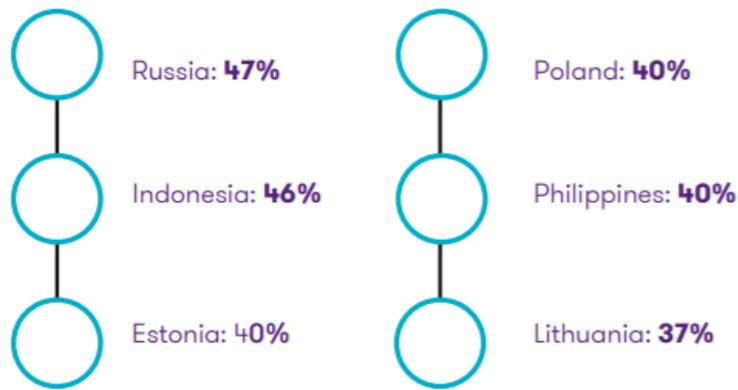


Figure 2. Top countries survey by Grant Thornton's IBR research programme. Proportion senior management team, female. (Grant Thornton 2017, 10)

When it comes to gender violence in Russia, activists who protest it have currently been struggling to achieve any impressive results. Putin's straightforward and violent way to resolve country's issues and public display of disagreement apparent by the end of his second term, established an impression of men dominating public life and spaces all over the country. By the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the hope of reversing the gender violence trend seemed to be completely gone. (Johnson 2010, 522.)

Unfortunately, almost a decade later, the issue has not vanished, and evidently, the concerns were not unfounded, gender violence remained a problem. It is proven to be an extremely critical issue as the statistics reveal domestic violence to be an epidemic in Russia, with an approximated 40,000 female victims a year and 12,000 of them being fatal cases. By using simple math, one can calculate that it is about 40 women a day, though these figures originate from statistics released by the Russian government and domestic abuse is known to be undocumented. However, even if the official numbers are to be completely trusted, these rates are as much as thirty-seven times higher than those in the United States. (Roache 2018.)

Nevertheless, these statistics have not served as motivation to aid women across the country, but rather the complete opposite. In February of 2017, Vladimir Putin passed a law that decriminalized domestic violence that does

not result in severe physical injuries. What that meant for the domestic abusers is that them causing minor injury that includes bruises, bleeding or scratches i.e. injuries that do not need urgent medical attention, would not constitute criminal offense unless it happened for the second time. Moreover, this type of violence became non-obligatory when it comes to investigation thus it became incredibly hard to report domestic violence and achieve any satisfactory result. (ibid.)

### 2.4.3 Russia's scores according to the frameworks

#### *2.4.3.1 Hofstede*

As noted by Hofstede and colleagues (2010), all of the data produced after 1995 needs to be considered separately in a way because it relates to a drastically different political and economic environment as well as completely new group of countries many of which appeared as a result of the fall of Soviet Union. Russia was, in fact, one of those countries along with other post-soviet states. This factor isolates them from the set of countries that were a part of the initial survey-based study by the fact that their scores came much later than the 1970s and that they were studied during the time of transition and turmoil. (264.)

The official Hofstede Insights website provides concise and the most up-to-date information on scores and questions one might have about each country's scores as well as the processes behind the study and dimensions as do the latest editions of Hofstede's work related to the topic.

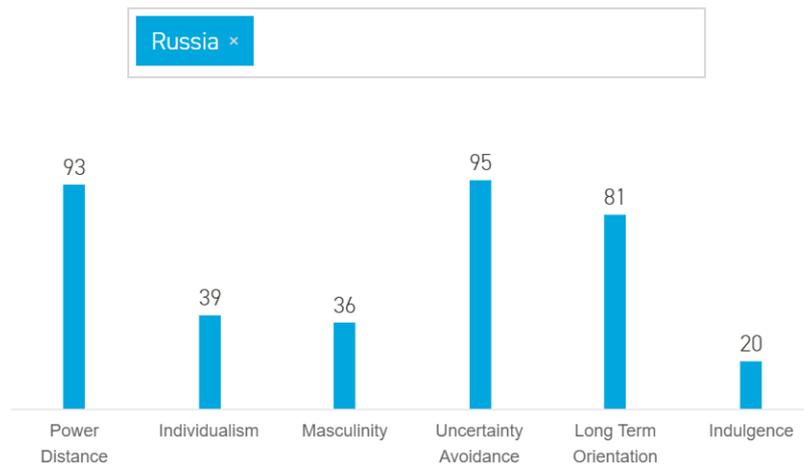


Figure 3. Russia's scores on the 6-D Model© (Hofstede Insights 2018)

On the graph above, one can observe all the dimension scores for Russia, including the score for the latest Indulgence dimension. However, since the objective of the present thesis was to explore correlations between gender representation in advertisements and MAS/Power Distance dimensions, they are the ones the author needed to acknowledge. As shown on the graph, Russian Federation scores 36 on Masculinity which is a relatively low score making Russia a feminine country, according to Hofstede. As far as Power Distance is concerned, Russia's score is incredibly high – 93. As discussed prior, both of these dimensions are in one way or the other related to gender equality according to experts and Hofstede himself. However, the considerable discrepancy between them is dubious in nature.

#### 2.4.3.2 The GLOBE study

In the GLOBE research Russian culture was assessed in the same way as the other culture's in the study discussed earlier, using responses to a questionnaire from employees of three distinct industries. Thus, the values and practices scores for Russia were calculated mainly over the course of 1996-1998. For Russian Federation being an enormous country geographically making extremely diverse, the researchers have collected responses from managers from all over: Far East, Southern and Northern Russia, Siberia, large cities of Central Region and the Urals. As for the managers' age, it

averaged around 38.8 years, and as for the gender balance, 61.7% of the respondents were men and 38.3% - women. (Grachev et. al 2006, 71.)

Presented in the table below are the scores for Russian Federation and including values, practices and the comparison to the average scores across all countries:

Table 1 Russian Federation's scores GLOBE study (Grachev 2009)

GLOBE dimension	Russian behavior score ("as is") and rank/band	61 societies behavior ("as is") average	Russian values score ("should be") and rank/band	61 societies values ("should be") average
Institutional collectivism	4.50 (17/B)	4.25	3.89 (60/D)	4.73
Group collectivism	5.36 (17/A)	5.13	5.79 (20/B)	5.66
Gender egalitarianism	4.07 (2/A)	3.37	4.18 (49/B)	4.51
Assertiveness	3.68 (54/B)	4.14	2.83 (59/C)	3.83
Power distance	5.52 (14/A)	5.17	2.62 (40/C)	2.75
Performance orientation	3.39 (59/C)	4.10	5.54 (55/D)	5.94
Future orientation	2.88 (61/D)	3.85	5.48 (34/B)	5.49
Uncertainty avoidance	2.88 (61/D)	4.26	5.07 (18/A)	4.62
Humane orientation	3.94 (37/C)	4.09	5.59 (18/B)	5.42

As one can observe here, Russia scores quite average on the Gender Egalitarianism with a practice score of 4.07 (with average across all cultures in

the study being 3.37 and 4 being considered a medium level) and value score of 4.18 (with average across all cultures in the study being 4.51 also considered as medium). As expected, the values and practices scores are rather similar since, as mentioned prior, Gender egalitarianism is one of the dimensions where these indicators are positively linked.

Furthermore, author finds it critical to note the Power Distance scores for Russia because of Hofstede's proposition of this dimension possibly being linked to gender equality due to its direct correlation to equal distribution of power. As seen in the table above, Russian Federation scores 5.52 on practices (with an average across cultures being 5.17 and the level considered relatively high) and scores 2.62 on values (with an average of 2.75 across other 61 societies and the level considered low). In contrast with Gender Egalitarianism, this dimension shows values and practices not being positively linked as suggested to be common by the GLOBE study.

## 2.5 YouTube as a Social Platform

### 2.5.1 YouTube History and overview

YouTube is one of the most popular social media platforms on the World Wide Web today. Moreover, it is the most recognized and influential video sharing platform in the world. Founded by Jawed Karim, Chad Hurley, and Steve Chen (previously colleagues at PayPal) in 2005 YouTube rapidly grew and, nowadays, one cannot deny its significant role as a part of the mainstream media. The initial intention behind the platform was to provide non-experienced users with a simple way to share videos online. Thus, the idea was to eliminate technical complications rather than to create a cultural phenomenon so the interface was designed in a simple way to ensure a non-professional could easily upload their videos to the web. (Burgess & Green 2013, 7.) According to Burgess and Green (2013), YouTube is an example of a content creating community that David Weinberger (2007) called "meta businesses" – the "new category of business that enhances the value of information developed elsewhere and thus benefits the original creators of that information" (224).

YouTube started growing expeditiously in 2007, this is precisely when InVideo ads first launched along with the Partner Program. A year later, pre-roll ads (the type of ads sampled in the present paper) appeared shown prior to some of the videos on the website and by 2009 there were 7 types of advertising introduced and allowed on YouTube. (Jackson 2011.)

YouTube's mission and values are clear as they are stated on their "About YouTube Page". The mission is to provide everyone with a way to voice their opinions, feelings, stories. As a company, YouTube trusts its users to take the opportunity and use the platform and share their story, listen to and learn from others. The fundamental values that drive the platform are freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of opportunity, and freedom to belong. (About YouTube 2019.) Undoubtedly, as the word "freedom" dominates the company's statement, it is apparent that the team behind YouTube believes in it being a platform for people to come together and speak up, a safe space and a megaphone to help exchange world views and life experiences. This is not a completely new outlook on the platform, as the original creators initially were skeptical about the content side of the website and focused on the social platform element, uniting people worldwide (Burgess et al. 2013, 8).

There is a variety of books, academic papers and websites (including YouTube's website itself) that state that YouTube is one of the most successful and widely-used platforms today. However, its influence is better perceived through numbers, statistics on views, content, user activity and demographics. Here are some key statistics provided by Omnicore:

- 88 countries have YouTube which is available in 76 languages which constitutes 95% of internet users overall – YouTube undeniably has global reach at the level that many other platforms do not;
- YouTube is technically the second largest search engine in the world.
- YouTube has 1.9 billion active monthly users and over 30 million of daily. (Aslam 2019.)

Evidently, YouTube has been rising to the top amassing an audience of 1.9 billion active users, 50 million creators, 5 billion videos watched every single day (ibid). These impressive numbers indicate that YouTube is a

platform that has giant marketing potential for advertisers. Thus, it now has thousands of partners advertising on the platform discovering categories and creators that relate to the brand or could even become their ambassadors.

When speaking about advertising a brand, understanding of the target audience and whether it is active on the platform is crucial. Thus, demographics are a critical part of platform promotion, popularity with certain demographics could guarantee YouTube partnerships with certain brands and not others. As far as the demographics go, these are the statistics:

- 80% of YouTube users come from outside its country of origin - United States, which makes it a competitive and attractive platform for international and domestic brands.
  - 62% of YouTube viewers are male and they are mainly watching strategy games and soccer, while the 38% of females primarily watch beauty videos;
  - 35+ and 55+ age groups are the most rapidly growing on YouTube;
  - Millennials prefer YouTube two to one over traditional television.
- (ibid.)

### 2.5.2 YouTube in Russia

When it comes to the Russian market, YouTube is one of the top players in the online social platform game and the numbers undeniably speak for themselves as they do for the global arena.

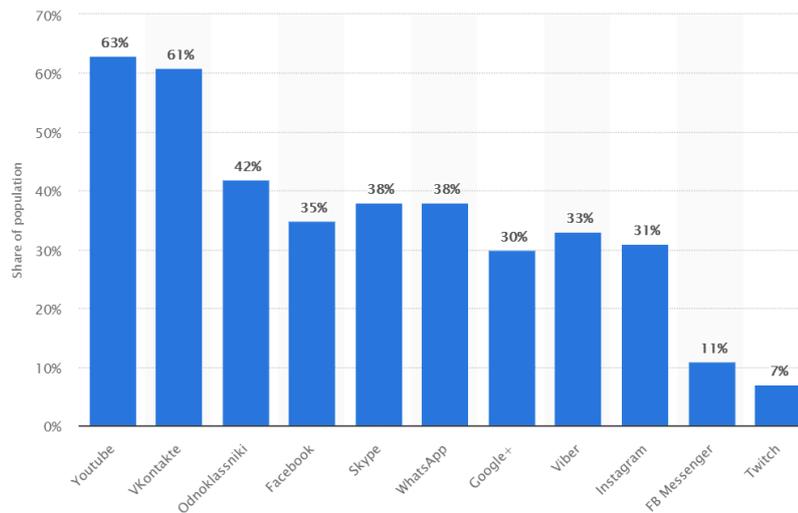


Figure 4. Penetration of leading social networks in Russia as of 4th quarter 2017 (Statista)

The graph above demonstrates the power YouTube possesses when social network penetration in Russia is concerned. Whereas Facebook as a platform for advertisement can be considered its competition in the US, for instance, in Russian Federation it loses its ground. Even the Russia's own immensely popular social network called VKontakte lags slightly behind YouTube.

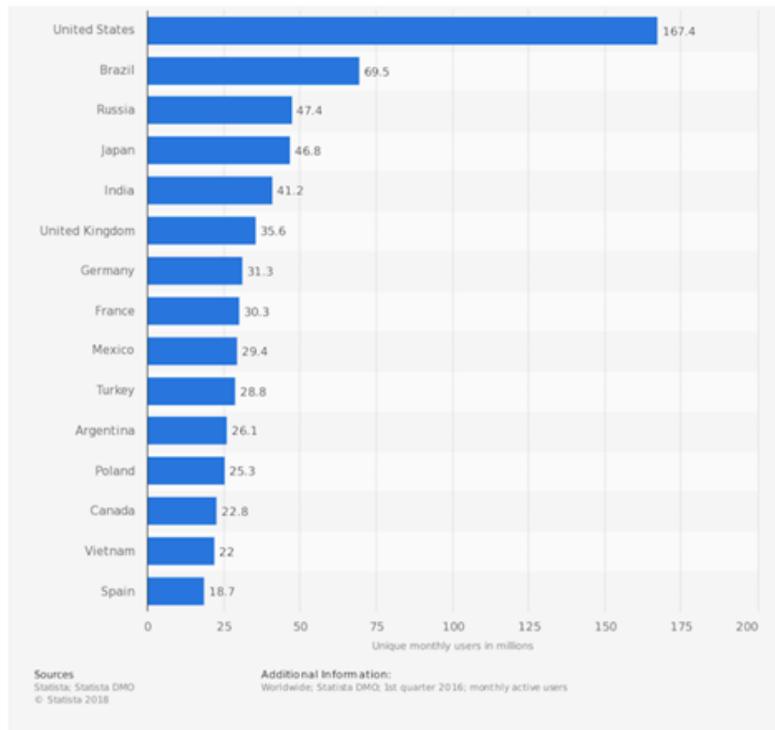


Figure 5. YouTube monthly active users number by country, 1st quarter of 2016, in millions (Business of Apps 2018)

Furthermore, not only is YouTube an impressive contender on the Russian social media market, Russian Federation as a country provides the platform with approximately over 47 million active users. Overall, it ranks third after the US and Brazil, ahead of the massively populated India.

Considering the statistics, as well as the massive power YouTube currently has, becoming a mainstream media channel and an entertainment social media platform of choice for many, including Russians, the author finds it crucial to analyze advertising there. Ever since the idea of commercials affecting our values and cultural values interfering with gender representation in advertisement, copious amounts of studies have delved into such mediums as magazines, newspapers and TV commercials. Nevertheless, with the everchanging media channels and the exposure that digital advertising now obtains, one needs to explore the advertising content available on YouTube as it is sure to be influential. Previous researches on the topic such as the one gender role portrayals in magazine advertising in Sweden, the Netherlands and the US by Wiles and colleagues (1995) suggested that such research in the

future explore electronic media outside of print advertising (47). Considering the fact that the suggestion was made back in 1995, the significance of electronic media influence was undeniable then and especially now.

### 3 Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research approach

Research approach is an agenda and the actions taken to conduct a research that extend from the steps from vague hypotheses to methodology behind the collection of data, its examination, and interpretation. Thus, in order to encounter the appropriate approach, various concepts must be taken into consideration, for instance, research purpose, question, topic, researcher's experiences and philosophy as well as their audience, research design and research methods. (J. W. Creswell 2014, 3.)

As mentioned above, prior to conducting research and exploring the designs and methods available, one should search for a topic, purpose and questions, among other things. Once topic establishes general idea and area of interest, a purpose is crucial for determining the goal for which then research questions and hypotheses are created so one's intent can be specified and educated guesses about possible results of the research can be provided. Consequently, through understanding whether one's questions are qualitative or quantitative, the researcher creates a guide for further choice of methodology. (ibid., 139.)

##### 3.1.1 Research topic and purpose

As far as the research topic is concerned, the author took an interest in feminism, movement fighting for gender equality and, consequently, gender representation in media and the way it evolves depending on a time in history, cultural norms and values as well as mediums of communication. Thus, an area of the authors interest was established and an extensive research of the values and cultures, advertisement, evolution of feminism and gender representation lead to consideration of correlation between cultural values and their development to advertisement and gender representation in it as well as whether they are interdependent, constantly influencing one another. Consequently, the topic introduced an idea of exploring various cultural frameworks available to examine how well they represent cultures regarding gender-related dimensions and what the relationship is between values and practices in a particular culture if compared.

After extensive literature review, Russian Federation was chosen as the country subjected to analysis and YouTube was chosen as the platform to draw the sample from. Russia was chosen as a result of its practices, laws, national statistics not correlating well with its scores in the gender equality-related dimensions studied and reviewed by the author as well as the fact that little research exists handling the country in the context of this topic considering the constant change the country is going through with turbulent political climate and new forms of media emerging. YouTube was chosen as the platform utilized for sample collection due to its popularity (according to the statistics discussed prior) and its exponentially growing influence surpassing mainstream media outlets thus indicating YouTube's undeniable cultural significance.

Correspondingly, a purpose was derived from the ideas connected to the chosen area. According to Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman (2013), the purpose of the research implies the researcher's reasons to conduct the study as well as what they aim to achieve (*ibid.*, 124). In the present paper, the author was determined to define patterns related to gender and sex role representation in YouTube advertisements in Russia and see how they correlate with cultural frameworks of interest to identify which one portrays a more accurate picture and to detect possible mechanisms and explanations behind them not accurately representing cultural reality in case they do not correlate.

### 3.1.2 Research design

There is an extensive amount of literature that would suggest that there are two types of research methods: qualitative and quantitative. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research paper, the author is using a three-type classification described by many researchers nowadays including Creswell (2014) and Morgan (2013). According to them, apart from quantitative and qualitative methods mentioned, one can use methods referred to as mixed research methods (Morgan 2013, 45).

Understanding of the range of processes and purposes of the mixed method, it is critical to examine the features and uses of the first two approaches (and how they compare) as they form the latter. The general distinctive features that characterize qualitative versus quantitative are as follows: while

qualitative research is commonly inductive, subjective, and contextual, quantitative research is, on the contrary, deductive, objective, and general. Moreover, whether the researcher utilizes an inductive or a deductive approach is a crucial characteristic that helps distinguish them. The general difference between the two is that the inductive approach is researcher observing and then forming a theory around it while the deductive approach takes a route of starting with theory and examining it using observation thus making it the opposite of the former. (ibid., 47-48). For instance, according to Morse (1991) qualitative research would examine a subject that does not have a substantial amount of research behind it or what has been researched about the concept is suspected to not be accurate due to researchers' bias. Consequently, qualitative research should explore and define concepts or expand them. (Creswell 2014, 112).

Moreover, though many associate qualitative research with words and quantitative researches with numbers, they are not opposites and definitely should not be studied and understood in such a simplified fashion. Qualitative research frequently explores social problems and their significance as viewed by individuals and society. Furthermore, it implies emerging more general theories from specific observations, interpreting the meaning of data collected from participants. A prime example of a qualitative technique would be an interview. (ibid., 4.)

Furthermore, as far as quantitative research goes, it implies analyzing and confirming concepts and theories by examining variable correlations. Consecutively, the variables must be quantitative i.e. measurable since the ultimate goal is to examine them utilizing statistics. Even the structure of a report written using a quantitative approach is established and is clear: introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. (ibid.)

As both discussed methods have their own pros and cons, one might need to integrate them to better apply to their specific research. Consequently, a mixed method approach would be used and can be beneficial for certain types of research. The mixed method approach would inevitably involve both quantitative and qualitative approaches, methods and questions thus there is no exact outline in place or a mold for this type of method. Therefore, one can expect to discover hypotheses along with theory, statistics and philosophical

guesses in the same research when this approach is utilized. Nevertheless, one must recognize that mixed method research is only recommended when the questions and objectives of the study require the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods while otherwise the research cannot be complete. (ibid.)

The author decided to use quantitative research approach as content analysis is the reliable and well-tried method of choice for the present paper and it is inherently quantitative by nature. As mentioned prior, deductive approach to research is one of the major indicators of quantitative research and it is the approach used by the author. The whole study is based on an extensive theoretical foundation which makes the approach deductive. (Franzosi 2008, 21.)

### 3.1.3 Research questions

Considering the purpose of the study as well as its type according to the research design selected is crucial due to the purpose statement serving as an answer expected to be obtained to the questions being asked by the researcher. It is generally recommended to ask several (preferably one or two) main research questions. Its purpose is to establish a comprehensive question that includes the broad idea of what is to be explored in the research and what the principal concept is. (ibid., 141.)

When considering questions specific to methods, quantitative questions are the ones one must explore. By design, quantitative research questions explore the interrelation among variables studied by the researcher (ibid., 144). Furthermore, it is undoubtedly crucial to ensure that the researcher is presenting questions that lead to information needed to fulfil the research purpose stated. (Morgan 2013, 46.)

The research questions in the present thesis are as follow:

5. What are the patterns related to gender and sex role representation in YouTube advertisements in Russian Federation?
6. How do these patterns correlate with Russian Federation's score on MAS dimension in the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory?

7. How do these patterns correlate with the Russian Federation's score on Power Distance dimension in the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory?
8. How do these patterns correlate with the Russian Federation's score on Gender Egalitarianism dimension in the GLOBE study?

By asking these questions, the author set various objectives:

1. To identify any sexist patterns and gender stereotypes in YouTube advertisements in Russian Federation as well as examine the overall gender role dynamics;
2. To see how these patterns correlate with Russia's scores on the three of the dimensions chosen (MAS, Power Distance, and Gender Egalitarianism) from two frameworks explored: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory and the GLOBE study;
3. To examine any consistent patterns and correlations to speculate about the possible explanations for them.

#### 3.1.4 Research method

The method chosen by the author for the present thesis is content analysis which is an inherently quantitative research method (Franzosi 2008, 21). According to Kerlinger (1986) content analysis is a method of examining and researching various forms of communication objectively and quantitatively in order to measure variables (Prasad 2008, 2). According to Franzosi (2008), Harold D. Lasswell, Lerner, and de Sola Pool (1952, 45), the creators of this method, said that there is no logical basis for performing content analysis if one is not searching for an answer that is quantitative. Consequently, the goal of content analysis is to statistically group empirical data thus answering an empirical question with statistics. (21.)

Media content analysis was initiated by Harold Lasswell (1927) in an intent to study propaganda and mass media in a systematic manner. Then, it grew in popularity due to its use for movie content analysis in the 20s and 30s. In the coming years it spread to other research areas, for instance, by the 1950s, it grew into a well-recognized methodology in mass communication social studies. (Macnamara 2005, 1.) As far as gender studies and research in the area, the majority of researchers opt for content analysis as a means of

examining advertisement. Additionally, it seems to be a method that was primarily used in the US until just over a decade ago thus making it relatively new phenomenon for the rest of the world of gender research. (Milner 2008, 74.)

As for any other method, there are various principles that content analysis must adhere to:

1. **Objectivity:** this principle means that there are specific and clear rules, following which will result in various researchers achieving the same results from the data sampled.
2. **Systematic:** means that the choice of content that is included in the research is based on a system of rules in place that will eliminate any possibility of the researcher to select material that benefits their biased opinion.
3. **Generalizability:** means that the results of the research can be pertained to other analogous researches and situations. (Prasad 2008, 3.)

As for the use of content analysis as a method, it is extensively applied in social sciences and mass communication which makes it perfect for the present research. Moreover, it is commonly specifically tailored for analysis of social and cultural change and symbols as well as such trends and their expression in mass media. Thus, it has been frequently utilized to explore discriminatory social dynamics in media and communication making it an obvious choice for looking into sexist patterns and gender role symbols which is the author's ultimate goal. (ibid., 5.)

Furthermore, content analysis takes empirical observations and expresses it in a quantitative manner helping researchers assign visible numbers and statistics to a phenomenon explored thus transforming it into an objective analysis of data that may be originally interpreted with bias. Ultimately, it is a technique that aids one to interpret and explore delicate themes that are oftentimes regarded as hard to discuss objectively. According to Woodrum (1984), content analysis is beneficial because of the ability of a researcher to return to the initial sample to double check or review the data in case of any mistakes or hesitations which is something one cannot do when working with surveys, for instance. (ibid., 7-8.)

According to Prasad (2008) a research that utilizes content analysis commonly includes the following general steps that the author of the present thesis followed:

1. Establishment of the research question or objectives;
2. Sample and content choice;
3. Coding instrument development i.e. development of content categories and units of analysis;
5. Coding schedule planning, pilot coding;
6. Examining the data collected. (ibid., 9.)

Therefore, these are precisely the steps that the researcher followed in order to ensure precision and its successful completion.

### 3.2 Coding instrument development

Content analysis as a method requires a coding instrument either designed by the researcher or borrowed from previous researches exploring the themes and topics similar to those chosen. According Berg (2007), Strauss (1987) advised that when creating a coding instrument and determining coding categories to use, either a deductive or an inductive approach can be chosen as well as a hybrid of the two. A deductive approach would imply that the coding system is created prior to the start of the coding through immersion in previously done researches while an inductive approach suggests the creation of the coding system after the data have been sampled. Nevertheless, it is proposed that utilizing the induction approach in some fashion is crucial in order to ensure that the content (be it an interview or an advertisement) can be interpreted clearly. However, it is suggested to not ignore deduction either. This is where induction and deduction should ideally work in harmony and where the hybrid method can be used. Hybrid method marries the two and allows the researcher to rely on various theories and concepts while altering them or simply supplement them with new ones during the coding process itself. Either way, both inductive and deductive approaches involve utilizing past experience with the topic of the research be it individual experience of the

researcher themselves, the reading done on the topic or prior research on it. (245 – 246.)

Therefore, the author initially decided to use the inductive method. However, after the pilot coding was performed, additional coding categories and variables were added to better suit the coding process making the approach hybrid. Although the medium the sample is taken from is a moderately uncharted territory, there is a considerable amount of trusted well-designed coding systems out there for successfully analyzing content on gender and sex-role representation in media. Many of them analyze non-moving pictures such as magazine ads or moving pictures of a more traditional media model such as TV commercials. However, the basic variables presented by various researchers that explore these mediums are to be trusted when distinguishing general gender role and sexist patterns. Nevertheless, one must remember that despite the fact that TV commercials analyzed by several researchers presented in a video format, video advertisements on YouTube are expected to be a distinct experience from the ones appearing on television since they are less likely to be formulaic and they appear to be extremely diverse in content, length and format which leaves the researcher with a possibility of unique and unconventional characteristics and categories appearing in the course of the analysis in addition to the predetermined ones.

### 3.2.1 Sampling

The samples were drawn from YouTube video ads that appeared on videos being monetized (the videos that gain revenue by having brands advertising on their content). As there is no prime time on YouTube for it being a global platform constantly broadcasting everywhere in the world no matter the time zone or country (with exception of a few countries where YouTube is in fact blocked), the times of coding were chosen based on the convenient times when the coder was available for coding. This type of sampling is called convenient coding. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016), convenience sampling (also referred to as Accidental Sampling or Haphazard Sampling) is a kind of nonprobability sampling where subjects of a study or data are chosen and collected depending on their availability, how close they are geographically, time convenient for researcher, how accessible they are/it is.

This is one of many specifics that distinguish the analysis of YouTube advertisements from those on TV since for the latter coding during prime time is beneficial for the research due to the advertisement normally getting more exposure at that time. Therefore, although convenient sampling is considered to be sensitive to bias, for this particular research the medium allows for researcher to code at their convenience not risking collecting drastically different results. (2.) As a result, 74 YouTube commercials were coded over the course of four weeks in January of 2019. Every commercial coded was unique, no advertisement was coded more than once. This was done to ensure that the frequency of appearance of the commercials did not affect the results. However, distinct commercials either for the same product or brand were coded.

It was critical to ensure that the coding process was as unbiased as possible, thus several measures were taken to accomplish that. Since YouTube is owned by Google, the mechanism behind the advertisements one sees while watching videos is Google Ads which is Google's advertising program. This is where companies, brands, channels can pay to advertise their products, services or content. A brand pays, uses the right keywords and Google targets the right customers for them.

Unfortunately for this research, the algorithm behind Google's targeting is not clear since it is not disclosed, and a major part of the process is managed by a machine. Nevertheless, there are a few things that the author was able to do to avoid bias and advertisements being targeted specifically for them as they were the only one coding:

1. Erasing Google Ads preferences and personal information;
2. Erasing search history;
3. Ensuring that an array of video categories watched is included.

Firstly, the author had to ensure that they stay incognito. On Google Ad settings all the preferences, hobbies and interests generated by Google based on previous search history and personal information such as age group, gender and occupation were deleted. Further, advertisement personalization function was turned off. Any search history that could have triggered targeted ads was erased. Russian version of YouTube was used, and the location was

still disclosed through IP address which indicated that the coder was in Russian Federation making location the only clear indicator for the advertisement targeting. All these procedures were repeated before the beginning of each coding session in order to avoid search history to meddle with the advertisements being shown to the coder.

Then, several categories of videos were chosen to be watched to balance the content out. Although not always, many times advertisement of a brand, product or service would be closely related to the type of content one watches. The categories were chosen to include traditionally women's content (beauty, dieting, fashion), men's content (cars, male grooming, pick up tips), general content (spirituality, fitness, vlogs, gaming, music, reviews, ASMR, late night shows, humor) and family/children's content (toy reviews, animated videos, family vlogs).

The following advertisements were not included:

1. Advertisements without any human characters;
2. Advertisements for other YouTube channels (personal or brands);
3. Advertisements of personal training and courses;
4. Advertisements for music videos;
5. Advertisements for films;
6. Advertisements for events i.e. seminars, conferences, concerts, festivals, trade shows, sports events;
7. Advertisements of temporary sales and or deals;
8. Global advertisements not translated into Russian and not targeted towards the Russian customer in any way.

Before finalizing the coding scheme, pilot coding was performed after the first draft version of the coding sheet was created. For the most accurate and tailored coding sheet possible, the original one needed to be tested and perfected according to the pilot sample. As a result of pilot coding, seven commercials were tested by the coder (the author) and the apparently missing categories and variables were detected and added to the sheet.

### 3.2.2 Coding scheme and procedure

Suitable, reliable and clear coding categories were created based on secondary data collected i.e. researches previously done by others exploring similar topics and themes e.g. Nelson and Paek (2005), Eisend and colleagues (2014), and Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009).

The advertisements were coded using the following variables:

1. Product nationality – (1) domestic, (2) international, (3) international brand, but Russian made commercial;
2. Product category – (1) utilitarian, (2) hedonic;
3. Gender of the main character – (1) male, (2) female, (3) both;
4. Gender of voiceover - (1) male, (2) female, (3) both, (4) no voiceover;
5. Advertisement addresses gender equality – (0) no, (1) yes;
  - 5.1 If addresses gender equality, in which way – (1) fighting for equality, denying gender specific roles, (2) denying male dominance, toxic masculinity, (3) empowering women specifically (femvertising), and (0) if it does not;
6. There are women with speaking or prominent roles – (0) no, (1) yes.

#### **Product nationality**

Firstly, product nationality was chosen as a category since YouTube is a global platform and one inevitably sees local, domestic advertisements and advertisements either from global brands in the local language targeted towards domestic customers or completely independent international product unrelated to your physical location or nationality, not targeted towards the local consumer. This certainly depends on algorithm and one's search and watch history on YouTube and on Google in general.

When Nelson and Paek (2005) analyzed cross-cultural differences in advertising featured in a transnational magazine by the name of *Cosmopolitan*, they decided on using the binary values of (1) domestic versus (2) international when coding the product nationality variable. Mooji (1998) and Samli (1995) described domestic products as simply products designed,

produced and marketed for the national customer while international products were foreign, produced, sold and marketed globally. (377.) Moreover, an additional variable was added - (3) international brand, but Russian made commercial. During the pilot coding, the necessity of this variable became apparent because certain commercials were produced in Russia with Russian actors, voiceover, stereotypes, jokes and with the Russian consumer in mind. Be it a specific to Russian Federation McDonalds advertisement or a commercial for the Russian branch of an otherwise international company as the owner, this category was out of place both in the domestic and international categories. As mentioned prior, global advertisements not translated into Russian and not targeted towards the Russian customer at all, were excluded from coding since they were in no way related to the geographical area of interest.

### **Product Category**

Then, the author chose to establish the product category in order to have an indicator to return to once the gender roles of women in the sample pool are coded. This category was established to help the author examine whether gender role patterns discovered were in any way correlated with the types of products advertised. Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) researched the correlation between female stereotypes and product categories before using values (2) hedonic and (1) utilitarian for the products. According to Batra and Ahtola (1991), hedonic products are the ones that pertain to sensory features while utilitarian products are associated with functionality and functional features primarily. (1413.)

What the researchers found was hedonic products were frequently linked to portrayal of women in decorative roles because depiction of such female roles is supposed to manipulate and evoke emotion which is what hedonic products require for successful marketing (ibid., 1426). The author of the present paper decided to include this category to examine whether there is a similar link between female stereotype portrayal and the products advertised and possibly explore novel patterns in their correlation.

### **Gender of main character**

Following the product category, the gender of the main character was coded with values being (1) male, (2) female or (3) both. Although each prominent female character or female character with a speaking role was specifically coded no matter if they were the central figure or not, the author found it crucial to record the main character's gender to statistically describe a pattern and explore whether more central figures in advertisements from the sample were male or female. This category, along with the "gender of voiceover" category was used by Eisend and colleagues (2014) in their research about gender roles and humor in advertising. They, in turn, borrowed these categories, along with several other ones not used by the author of the present paper, from well-known coding scheme created by Manstead and McCulloch (1981) and McArthur and Resko (1975). (258.)

### **Gender of voiceover**

Next coding category established was gender of voiceover, as mentioned above, with similar values as the "gender of the main character" category i.e. (1) male, (2) female or (3) both. The (4) no voiceover value was added as well since certain advertisements coded could have a clear main character, but no voiceover. This particular category was taken from aforementioned Eisend and colleagues (2014) research. The author found it critical to examine any trends connected to the gender of a narrator or off-camera voice and detect whether there is an apparent preference towards male or female voiceovers.

### **Advertisement addresses gender equality**

The last category for coding of the advertisement in particular was the indication of whether it was addressing gender equality specifically in any way. This category was chosen in order to not only study the dynamics and gender representation in advertisements as a whole, but to see the number of commercials that aim to represent the genders equally, emphasizing the issue, changing the rules, challenging toxic masculinity and empowering women. In this fashion, author intended to examine the femvertising in Russia and explore the market for such type of advertisement. The binary variables for the category were (0) no and (1) yes. In the case of a commercial addressing the

topic, the author found it helpful to record the way in each gender equality is addressed to analyze the patterns and themes most common in them if any. Consequently, the following themes were chosen: (1) fighting for equality, denying gender specific roles, (2) denying male dominance, toxic masculinity, (3) empowering women specifically (femvertising).

### **Presence of women with speaking and/or prominent roles**

This category was added in order to indicate whether there are women with speaking and/or prominent roles in the commercials coded. The need to code this in particular stemmed from the fact that not only women as main characters were coded. Therefore, an indicator was needed for whether there were prominent characters or not, especially in case the main character was male. Thus, binary variables were chosen - (0) no, and (1) yes.

As mentioned prior, following the advertisement as a whole, all the prominent female characters or female characters with a speaking role (including the central female figures) were coded using a coding frame used by Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2009) in their research examining female role stereotypes in magazines. They used research by Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976); Mitchell and Taylor (1990); Lysonski (1985); Zotos and Lysonski (1994) that explored female stereotyping and presentation in media prior creating four general groups to categorize observable stereotypes. The categories are as follows:

1. Women in decorative roles - women (1) shown in any of the decorative roles listed below, (0) not shown in any of the decorative roles listed below. If shown, in which of the following roles:
  - 1.1. (1) Women concerned with physical attractiveness - women in pursuit of beauty and physical attractiveness (e.g. youthful);
  - 1.2. (2) Women as sex objects;
  - 1.3. (0) None;
2. Women in traditional roles – women (1) shown in any of the traditional roles listed below, (0) not shown in any of the traditional roles listed below. If shown, in which of the following roles:
  - 2.1 (1) Dependency - dependent on male's protection; In need of

reassurance; Making unimportant decisions;

2.2 (2) Housewife - women's place is at home; primary role is to be a good wife; concerned with tasks of housekeeping;

2.3 (0) None;

3. Women in non-traditional roles - women (1) shown in any of the non-traditional roles listed below, (0) not shown in any of the non-traditional roles listed below. If shown, in which of the following roles:

3.1 (1) Women in non-traditional activities - engaged in activities outside the home (e.g. golf, football);

3.2 (2) Career-oriented women - professional occupations; entertainer; non-professional; Blue-collar;

3.3 (3) Voice of authority - the expert;

3.4 (0) None;

4. Women portrayed equal to men - women (1) shown as equal to men, (0) not shown as equal to men. (1417.)

Moreover, several categories were included for coding women in the advertisements upon review of Milner's (2005) research concerning sex-role portrayals in African television advertising and as a result of the pilot coding process:

1. Age - the character portrayed as a (1) Child (0–15), (2) Young adult (15–30), (3) Middle-aged adult (31–50), (4) Senior adult (>50);
2. Marital Status - the character's portrayed marital status is (1) married, (2) not married, or (3) not identified;
3. Employment - the character is portrayed (1) in a work situation, (2) in a non-work situation but appears to be employed, or (3) without indication of employment;
4. Children – (1) no children, (2) with children costars, not indicated to be their mother, (3) with children as a mother figure.

Each of the categories listed was added to collect more data on central, prominent and speaking characters in advertising and explore the trends connected to portrayal of women in commercials as workers, mothers as well as track the prominent age groups represented. The initial age category used

by Milner (2005) had the following variables: (1) less than 35, (2) 35-50, or (3) greater than 50. However, the author found them to be insufficient, specifically after performing pilot coding and seeing that more concrete definitions for the category were needed along with the child category due to their big presence in advertisements and them also being used to portray gender roles and dynamics.

The last category female character coding was the children category which was added after the pilot coding was performed. Initially, the author did not consider the category as essential. However, an impressive number of commercials from the pilot portrayed women as mothers, motherly figure or with children co-stars and this observation led to the necessity of coding this phenomenon as well. Moreover, the theme of a woman as a mother and nothing else or the role of a mother being inseparable from what a female is appeared to be prominent and crucial to explore. The variables chosen upon review of test commercials were: (1) no children, (2) with children costars, not indicated to be their mother, (3) with children as a mother figure. Based on all the categories and variables developed, a codebook was composed and an Excel coding sheet was used to code the commercials (see Appendix 1 & 2).

Due to no other coder being available to assist with the coding procedure for the present research, intercoder reliability was impossible to test due to it testing consistency within a group of coders. However, intracoder reliability is an option when there is a single coder involved and is a test of consistency of a coder through time. (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999, 269.) The intracoder reliability was ensured by the author by coding 15 commercials twice, five weeks apart from each other. The ultimate difference was minimal with the intracoder reliability percentage amounting to 96%. Such high reliability gave the researcher confidence regarding data validity.

Then, analysis of the data gathered was conducted using Excel statistics. Excel was chosen over statistical software SPSS due to convenience and the data being of size that was easily manageable in Excel with no need to transfer data from the Excel sheet codebook. The researcher followed a standard statistical analysis procedure for a research of this type excluding the hypotheses testing e.g. P-value, Chi-square, ANOVA testing due to the author's decision to focus on research questions rather than scientific assumptions as well as all

variables being categorical. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed, frequency distributions were examined. Additionally, Histograms were used for simultaneous visual representation and analysis of raw frequencies. Cross tabulation analysis was used as to examine relationships between categorical variables. (Creswell 2014, 161-180.)

### 3.3 Ethical issues

Ethics are crucial in any research and specifically when delving into content interpretation and quantitative analysis. Therefore, one needs to consider any ethical issues that may arise as well as the ethical rules to abide.

During the course of the present research, the author had to ensure that the following ethical standard was met: bias avoidance. Though this concerns a myriad of nuances, overall it pertains to the author's ability to reveal results that are both positive and negative regardless of their initial opinion, objective or hypothesis. The author must be academically honest thus they must not tamper with results and retain or conceal any information or parts of the results obtained in order to arrive to the conclusions initially anticipated by the author. (Creswell 2014, 102.)

Therefore, the author must report the full scope of data, theory, decisions regarding choosing samples, collecting and analyzing the data as well as the ultimate findings thus being transparent and honest about both positive and negative data and results obtained. The qualitative data (content) and the quantitative data (statistics) must be well represented with nothing withheld or undisclosed. (ibid.)

Additionally, the author must acknowledge the fact that a certain amount of bias is practically inevitable when conducting content analysis, especially when interpreting the data sample. Nevertheless, the objective was to prevent any bias from affecting the conclusive results by all means possible throughout the process.

## 4 Results of the Research

### 4.1 Descriptive Frequency Analysis

Frequency analysis performed showed that out of the 74 commercials coded, 26% were domestic i.e. Russian made advertisements by a Russian brand, 45% were international commercials with a Russian translation and 30% were advertisements of international brands with a Russian made commercial be it completely foreign company or a specifically Russian brunch of a global brand e.g. Khrusteam owned by PepsiCo. Additionally, 57% of the products advertised were utilitarian and 43% were hedonic.

Contingency tables showed that genders of the main character were quite evenly distributed with 41% (30) being male, 39% (29) - female and 20% (15) having both male and female characters (see Figure 6). However, the results showed bias towards male voiceover with 57% (41) of commercials having a male voiceover, 24% (18) - female, 3% (2) both and 16% (11) of the advertisements did not have a voiceover at all (see Figure 7).

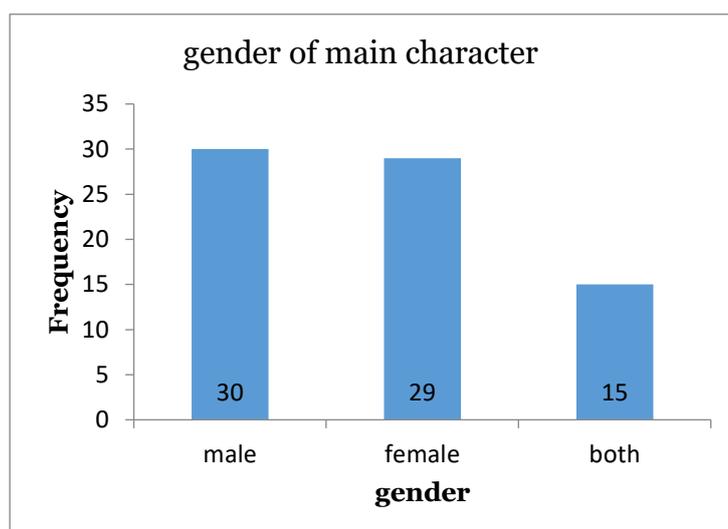


Figure 6. Gender of the main character

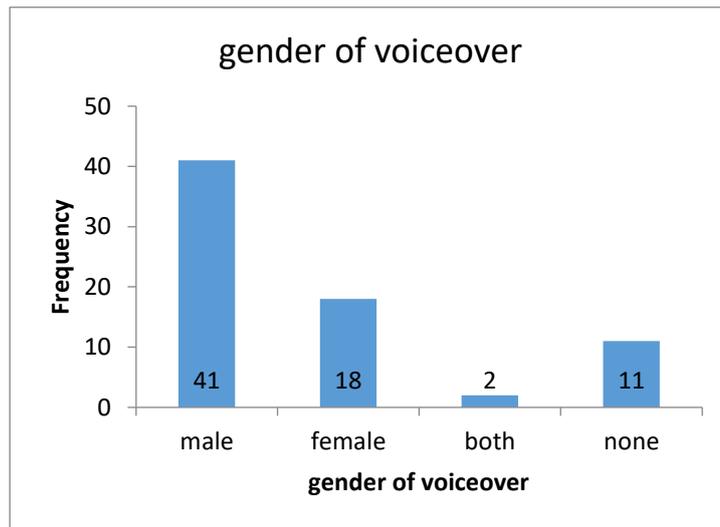


Figure 7. Gender of voiceover

As far as advertisement addressing gender equality is concerned, only 9% of the commercials analyzed did it with 57% of the ones that did doing so through femvertising or empowering women specifically (see Tables 2 & 3). From all the commercials addressing gender equality, none were domestic, 43% were international and 57% were Russian made commercials for international brands.

Table 2. Advertisements from the sample addressing GE

Ad addresses GE	Frequency	Relative frequency
No	67	91%
Yes	7	9%

Table 3. Ways in which GE was addressed

Ad addresses GE how	Frequency	Relative frequency
Denying gender specific roles	2	29%
Denying toxic masculinity and male dominance	1	14%
Femvertising, empowering women	4	57%

Furthermore, 70% (52) of commercials featured women with speaking or prominent roles including main female characters (see Figure 8). Out of all the prominent female characters 21 were portrayed in a decorative role (18 as concerned with their youth and beauty; 3 as sex objects), 7 – in a traditional role (3 as dependent; 4 as a housewife), 15 – non-traditional (3 as doing activities outside of home; 8 as professional, entertainer, career-oriented; 4 as an authority, expert), 20 – equal to men.

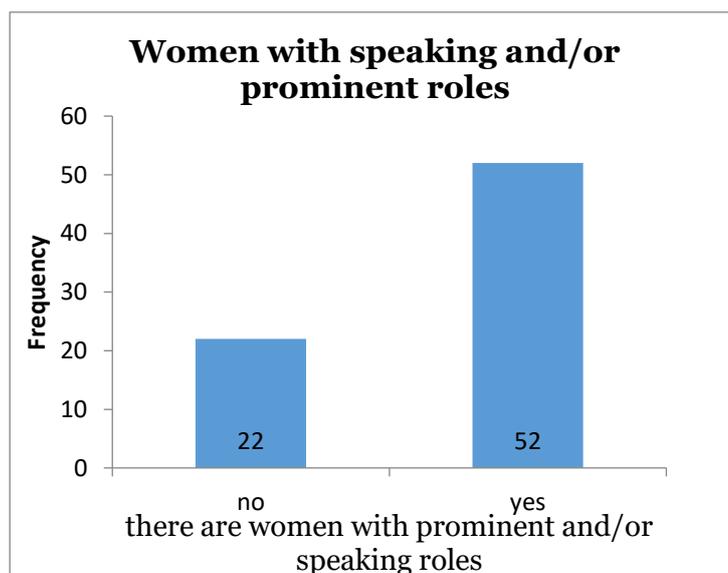


Figure 8. Women with speaking and/or prominent roles

## 4.2 Contingency Table Analysis

Most prominent age group for women depicted was young adults or 57.7% (see Figure 9), and an overwhelming majority of female characters did not have children with them as co-stars or actual family members (88%). As for the marital status and employment of women, most of these categories were not identified and the rest were evenly distributed (marital status – 62% not identified, employment – 73% not identified).

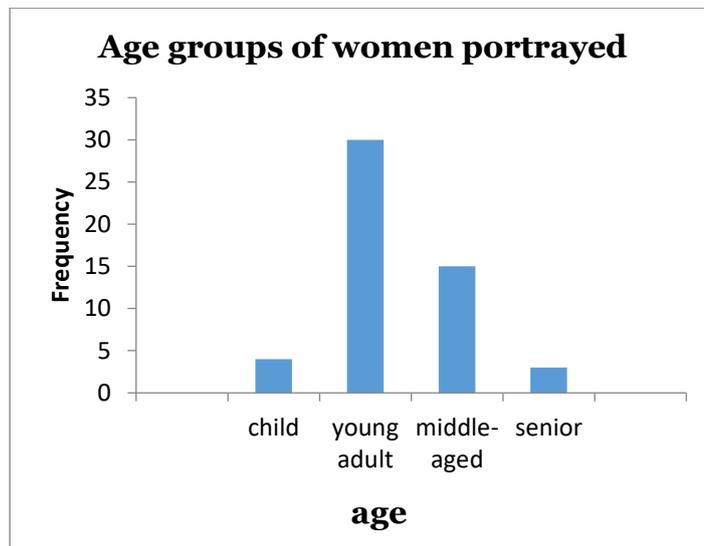


Figure 9. Age groups of women portrayed

Contingency tables showed a relationship between utilitarian products and women depicted in non-traditional roles with 67% of women being portrayed advertising utilitarian products (see Table 4). As for other variables, no meaningful relationship was found, product categories did not seem to affect the gender of the main character or voiceover significantly.

Table 4. Product category/women portrayed in non-traditional roles

Product category/women portrayed in non-traditional roles	no	yes	Grand Total	% of women portrayed in non-traditional role by product category
Utilitarian	20	10	30	67%
Hedonic	17	5	22	33%

A significant relationship was found between product nationality and depiction of some of the female roles. For instance, 5 out of 7 female characters portrayed in a traditional role were advertising domestic (100% Russian) products (see Table 5) while 12 out of 15 non-traditional role portrayals occurred in international or international Russian made commercials (see Table 6). Product nationality did not affect decorative role portrayal, however more international and international Russian made commercials (11 in international and 5 in international Russian made) portrayed women as equal to men than domestic ones (3 overall).

Table 5. Product nationality / women portrayed in traditional role correlation

Product nationality / women portrayed in traditional role	no	yes	Grand Total	% of women portrayed in a traditional role by product nationality
Domestic	8	5	13	71.4%
International	23	1	24	14.3%
International, but Russian made commercial	14	1	15	14.3%
Grand Total	45	7	52	100%

Table 6. Product nationality / women portrayed in a non-traditional role correlation

Product nationality / women portrayed in a non-traditional role	no	yes	Grand Total	% of women portrayed in a non-traditional role by product nationality
Domestic	10	3	13	20%
International	18	6	24	40%
International, but Russian made commercial	9	6	15	40%
Grand Total	37	15	52	100%

Furthermore, the absolute majority (85.5%) of all women portrayed in a decorative role were young adults (15-30 years old) (see Figure 10). Another notable correlation was found between women of the senior adult age group and the traditional role category with 100% of senior adult women being portrayed in a traditional role, as a housewife being home and busy with tasks of housekeeping specifically, while only 10% of young adult women were depicted in a traditional role.

Non-traditional roles in advertisements analyzed were dominated by young adult and middle-aged women (Young adult - 40% out of all and middle-aged - 53%) (see Figure 11). Moreover, young adult and middle-aged women made 84% of the equal to men category and were the most represented in commercials overall.

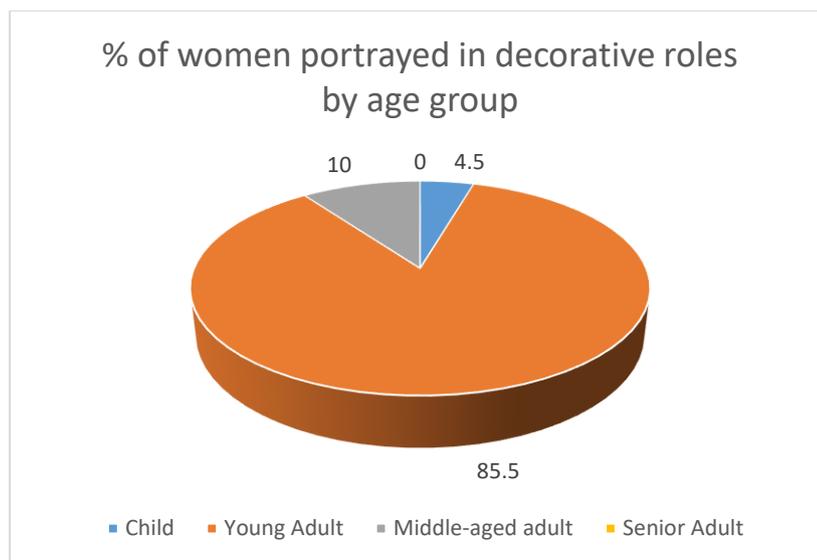


Figure 10. % of women portrayed in decorative roles by age group

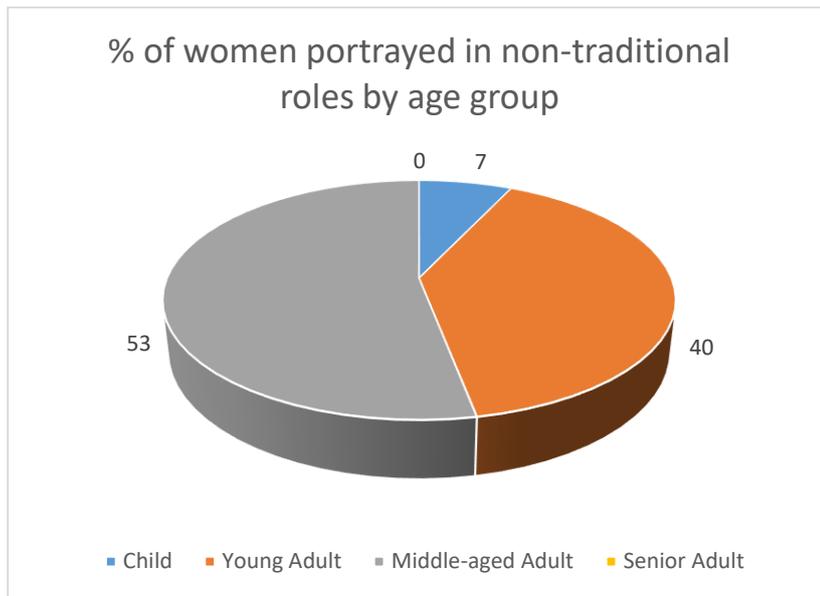


Figure 11. % of women portrayed in non-traditional roles by age group

## 5 Conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to define patterns related to gender and sex role representation in YouTube advertisements in Russia and see how they correlate with cultural frameworks of interest to identify which one portrays a more accurate picture as well as to detect possible mechanisms and explanations behind them not accurately representing cultural reality in case they do not correlate. In the following part of the thesis, the author aims to interpret the conclusions drawn from theoretical background as well as results of the content analysis performed. Moreover, the author answers the research questions established in order to reach the research objectives derived from the purpose.

The first question of research was the following: *What are the patterns related to gender and sex role representation in YouTube advertisements in Russian Federation?*

According to the results, Russian brands did not appear to be ready to address gender equality directly in their commercials. However Russian teams working for international brands seemed to be interested in the idea and trying to transmit more western feminist values to the Russian audience by bringing femvertising into their online campaigns which might encourage domestic companies to break gender norms in the future depending on whether those campaigns are profitable and met with popular success.

Even though the results showed that the main characters were as likely to be male as female, the fact that the majority of voiceovers were done by men raises a question of whether women are still used for visual satisfaction whereas men are given the power of the narrative in advertisement and life. This idea is further supported by a decent number of women being portrayed in a decorative role (slightly more than equal to men), especially with most young women portrayed that way, underlining the fact that youth, beauty and sex appeal are still valued in women in the context of Russian commercials more than them being professional, smart or demonstrating expertise. Moreover, most female characters being young adults reinforces the idolization of youth in advertisement.

Even though women depicted in a dependent role or as a housewife proved to be a rarity in advertisements in Russia nowadays which is a positive trend, the majority of such cases being from domestic commercials demonstrated that Russian advertisers specifically still persist on leaving room for such stereotype. On the contrary, the international brands' commercials displaying considerably more women as experts, entertainers or career-oriented professionals than Russian advertisements underlined the fact that Russian advertisement environment is not prepared for an independent woman in a non-traditional role.

Though limited, some presence of women in atypical, non-traditional roles was an overall positive discovery. However, more middle-aged women were depicted in such way which indicates that Russian commercials are ready to portray women as professionals and experts, but rather as an infrequent phenomenon, to manipulate consumers' expectations and mostly only when the female character is mature as in over the age of 30.

According to Plakoyiannaki and colleagues' findings (2009), hedonic products were linked to women being portrayed in decorative roles (1428). However, the results obtained by the researcher did not support their findings.

Nevertheless, utilitarian products were linked to women depicted in non-traditional roles, confirming the correlation between content category and female character portrayal in a slightly distinct way from the ones noticed by Plakoyiannaki and colleagues.

The second question of the present study was: *How do the patterns observed throughout the study correlate with Russian Federation's score on MAS dimension in the Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory?*

Russian Federation scored low on Masculinity making it a feminine country, according to Hofstede. However, numerous factors contradicted this score. The current situation of women in Russia discussed in the present paper indicated that Russian women are not constituting a great part of a government and political positions and the country itself does not emphasize equality and negotiation in its gender politics these normally being the attributes of a country with such a low MAS score. As far as the depiction of women in Russian advertisement is concerned, though not overwhelmingly

sexist, it did not fit the feminine bill leaning into gender stereotypes in and outside of home.

Furthermore, as stated by Hofstede (1998), feminism and gender equality can exist in both masculine and feminine societies while manifesting itself in different fashion (10). What the results obtained by the author showed was that gender representation in Russian commercials leaned towards mostly decorative, at times traditional, housewife roles and rarely equal to men in domestic advertisement opposing the idea of “feminine feminism” with the ideal of even distribution of work and home responsibilities between men and women. In addition, the positive statistics on women in managerial positions in Russia supported the masculine female liberation where it is manifested through women having access to occupations that were not available to them prior.

The discrepancy the author observed could be rooted in several reasons.

Firstly, it is the idea that the Masculine dimension, despite the years of work invested into it might not be consistent and credible enough due to either Hofstede’s understanding of value or his choice of dimensions. Secondly, the fact that the gender equality in a given society is associated by Hofstede with more than its MAS score and is believed to be more complex, hence one must explore the culture of choice by using all the dimension available. The last probable reason for such contradiction is the fact that Russian Federation was not a part of the initial research, has been evaluated separately during turbulent political times as well as its culture is historically unique and constantly transforming.

The third question established was: *How do these patterns correlate with the Russian Federation’s score on Power Distance dimension in the Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory?*

On Hofstede’s Power Distance scale Russia scored an extremely high at 93. The score proved itself to be rather close to the reality transmitted through Russian advertisement. Hofstede suggested the goals and struggles of feminine or masculine feminism to not be automatically connected to the MAS dimension, and the Power Distance dimension being the critical influence on the power struggle in society and the gender balance established there (ibid.

19). Russian brands not addressing gender equality, persisting on idealization of youth and beauty and male characters dominating the voiceover or narrative have all indicated high power distance between social groups i.e. minority (women) and the dominant group (men) specifically.

The fourth question of research was the following: *How do these patterns correlate with the Russian Federation's score on Gender Egalitarianism dimension in the GLOBE study?*

The Gender Egalitarianism dimension appeared to correlate with the values transmitted through advertisements sampled rather well. Russia scored quite average on the Gender Egalitarianism with a practice score of 4.07 - a medium score and slightly above the average across all countries. As for the values, Russian Federation scored 4.18 – also considered to be a medium score and being slightly below average across all cultures in the study. These scores seemed to match the overall picture the statistics showed.

While not overtly sexist and not frequently representing women as powerful, but still equal or not consistently submissive, Russian commercials had the female image regularly restricted and their depiction stereotypical at times. The sample did not include advertisements that would instantly put Russia on the top of the most patriarchal societies in the world, yet they did not seem to question gender norms or empower women overall making it rather average. The practice score being higher than that of values did not coincide much with the fact that the actual statistics concerning gender equality in Russia appeared to be far worse when compared to the values communicated through commercials. However, the average score did not contradict the reality as greatly as the low MAS score did.

In conclusion, the idea of advertisement being driven by profit and succeeding by speaking directly to their target customers' values leads one to believe that what is broadcasted in commercials in a country inevitably conveys its culture. However, one can only speculate about the amount of influence the culture itself has on commercials versus the effect of advertisement on society's values just as sociology scholars have been doing for several decades. Whichever it is, the communication of cultural values through advertisement was what the author attempted to capture during the course of the present research.

Through content analysis of YouTube commercials as a “culture capsule” the author has gained a perspective on gender role portrayal and the way in which cultural values manifest themselves in an online space, a safe place to escape reality that reveals itself in its every corner. International society has a long way to go when it comes to gender equality. Nevertheless, while governments, activists and organizations are trying to better the state that women are in today, the informational space, media and brands must be responsible and understand that what they communicate does not only provide them clicks and sales, but has a large impact on the society of today and tomorrow.

## 6 Discussion

### 6.1 Implications for the area of study

Firstly, the dubious results of the present research indicated that cultural frameworks have to be studied critically and even though since the moment Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory saw the light decades have passed and many editions with corrections were issued, it still seems to be missing something crucial since a number of researchers (including the author of the present paper) have obtained unsatisfactory results when following the Masculine score of a chosen culture specifically. The GLOBE study appeared to transmit the Russian advertisement values better, however, what has been learned is that when researching cultures, multiple frameworks and indexes must be explored in order to obtain the full picture rather than restricting one's study to only one.

Furthermore, this research showed that Russian culture is something unique which needs to be taken into consideration when embarking on a research that concerns it. Some cultural frameworks could have the correct measures of values and some could be contradictory, whichever it is, Russian Federation's scores that measure such vague concepts as culture and values must be viewed with a critical eye and only with its historical past, peculiarities and contemporary statistics in mind. As discussed in the present paper, western sociologists and feminists have been mistaken about the nature of women's liberation in the Soviet Union for decades in the past so sociology, culturology, marketing and gender studies researchers should allow this to be a lesson and an inspiration to dedicate more of their time to exploring gender equality in Russia that is proving itself to be a complex topic.

The study presented a new perspective on YouTube as a platform where commercials from international and domestic brands collide and are not as restricted and policed as advertisement is on television. The online multicultural space that is created is perfect for the future cross-cultural research and proved to provide a perspective on differences between domestic brand's and international brand's domestically made advertisement that might seem similar at first. Because of international Russian made commercials

transmitted rather unique type of content bridging Russian culture with the values of a given foreign brand, the research opens a door for a more detailed exploration of this type of intercultural advertising content.

## 6.2 Validity and Reliability

### 6.2.1 Foundational issues

Content analysis is essentially considered to be a method for validity and reliability of which strong arguments must be provide by a researcher. Firstly, the ways in which validity and reliability are approached depends greatly on the foundational issues such as nature of content and role of theory. (Potter et al., 1999, 258.)

The author of the present paper worked with all types of content to a degree - manifest content which easily observable e.g. gender of the main character and latent content that is open to interpretation, such as pattern content (examining predetermined objective patterns) and projective content that is open to the most subjective of interpretations and that needs its coder to be able to access a certain mental map created by the author. Naturally, even though they overlap, each type of content is more subjected to bias than another. Due to the fact that the coder worked with both observable and subjective, hidden patterns in the sampled commercials, it was crucial for them to find the balance between bias and ecological validity since adding more rigid specific coding rules to avoid the former may harm the latter. (ibid., 259-260.)

As for the role of theory, the authors choice was to take the deductive approach due to the research process being heavily driven by theory. The ways in which an author approaches theory can directly affect reliability of a research because the inductive approach is tied to prior observations that can be subjective by nature. Thus, using formal theory from a variety of trusted sources increase the validity of the present research. (ibid., 262.)

Furthermore, the coding process itself is influenced by the type of content analyzed. Where for manifest content objectivity is simply a question of how precise the measurements are, for pattern and projective content that also

were a part of the present research, the objectivity of the coders is a crucial variable. One might question whether coders can be fully objective when interpreting data. Experts agree that an expectation of absolute objectivity is simply impractical, however one can ensure certain steps are taken to achieve it. (ibid., 265.) For the present research, this is where intracoder reliability was needed because the coding is the closest to objectivity only when the subjective judgments are consistent whether within a group of coders or between two coding sessions done by the same coder at different time which was the case in this research. Intracoder reliability was ensured by the author by coding 15 commercials twice, five weeks apart from each other.

### 6.2.2 Validity

When considering and confirming validity the researcher must refer to two concepts. The researcher must consider the coding scheme development as well as analyze coders' decisions to evaluate them using an ideal guideline. This is needed to ensure that the data being generated are valid. (ibid., 266.)

Coding scheme is often regarded as the crucial indicator of validity. The scheme for the content analysis in the present research was developed based on formal and extensive theory that explained how the concepts and categories in the scheme were related to one another as well as coder's observations during pilot coding which gave the author confidence in the scheme's validity.

Secondly, the coders' decisions are analyzed. The possibility of subjective interpretations is once again an integral part of the bias conundrum. The standard for the data produced must be developed when having coders work with a sample. However, the concept of a standard is subjective by itself. There are standards only experts can establish. Nevertheless, some standards or norms are decided by the common subjective judgments or intersubjectivity. Researchers might be hesitant about trusting intersubjectivity while it is agreed upon that certain patterns, meanings and symbols are, in fact, universal be it violence or sexism. During the process of coding, the author trusted these subjective universal judgements while abiding the rules of coding established and ensuring that the intracoder reliability was adequate enough to rely on the subjectivity present. (ibid., 269.)

### 6.2.3 Reliability

As far as reliability is concerned, accuracy, stability and reproducibility are utilized for its assessment. Stability was tested through the intracoder reliability and due to the procedure being clear the author believes that the results can be reproduced in the future by other researchers using the tools, coding book and rules provided but with varying locations, cultural backgrounds, commercials, seasons and coders. (ibid., 270.)

Furthermore, there are several threats to reliability to be aware of. Firstly, there is a possibility of coder fatigue that the author avoided by using convenience coding thus coding when rested. Secondly, there is misapplication of coding rules which was avoided due to the rules created with structure and objectivity in mind and not allowing the coder the liberty to change them. Lastly, and interpretations and their variety can be a threat which was averted by ensuring considerable intracoder reliability. (ibid., 271.)

### 6.3 Recommendations, ideas and limitations for future research

As far as the research method is concerned, content analysis was the right choice for the research. Content analysis is an established method that has been successfully used before for similar research proving itself reliable. Moreover, it provided the most effective way to analyze the data in the context of the present research. Therefore, it is recommended to anyone who explores similar topics in the future or analyzes media in general.

As the author of the present paper had time constraints as far as the coding process was concerned, the quantity of the commercials sampled was limited. For future research, it is suggested to significantly stretch the time period over which the content is sampled. A rather restricted selection of commercials was available on YouTube for at least a few days at a time, especially considering the fact that barely any personalization was involved in the advertisement suggestion process. Therefore, dedicating more than a couple of months to the coding process would be ideal to obtain a larger sample that is more balanced and varied which is recommended. Future researchers could spread the two months coding process over the course of four to five months so that the seasonality does not affect the overall type of commercials coded. Additionally,

the present research coded translated international commercials along with domestic ones to gain perspective and perform comparison. However, only fully domestic commercials can be coded in future research in order to focus on Russian value driven advertisement specifically.

In addition, it could be helpful to conduct further research using various types of Google accounts created with different information about gender, age and general interest. This could be done in order to manipulate the system and explore the effects of a user belonging to a specific target group on Google personalization. This could allow the researchers to encounter more targeted content that the coder in the present paper was not able to see due to the completely neutral Google account they started with in the beginning of each session. Creation of a specific personalized account could also be used for research with a focus on a specific target group e.g. millennials or non-binary people.

Moreover, in future research, more significant factors of an author's interest can be included e.g. more countries for cultural comparison, other social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) or multiple, other frameworks and indexes to test and compare results to. Additionally, other specific coding categories can be added, for instance, nudity and body dismemberment and its types can be used to explore visual ways in which women are portrayed.

Furthermore, having more coders could improve research in the future. The present research only had one coder available which meant less time available as well as less commercials coded. Another factor was bias. Though the coder ensured that any possible bias was eliminated, having more than one coder undeniably increases overall objectivity. Therefore, future research could use coders from different cultures, various religious backgrounds, education and age (inter-code reliability required) for better unbiased results. Additionally, coders can be misled about the goal of the research to ensure they are completely impartial.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Codebook

Product nationality	(1) domestic, (2) international, (3) international brand, but Russian made commercial
Product category	(1) utilitarian, (2) hedonic;
Gender of main character	(1) male, (2) female, (3) both;
Gender of voiceover	(1) male, (2) female, (3) both, (4) no voiceover
Advertisement addresses gender equality	(0) no, (1) yes; If addresses gender equality, in which way – (1) fighting for equality, denying gender specific roles, (2) denying male dominance, toxic masculinity, (3) empowering women specifically (femvertising), and (0) if it does not
There are women with speaking or prominent roles	(0) no, (1) yes
Women in decorative roles	(1) shown in any of the decorative roles listed below, (0) not shown in any of the decorative roles listed below If shown, in which of the following roles:  (1) Women concerned with physical attractiveness - women in pursuit of beauty and physical attractiveness (e.g. youthful)  (2) Women as sex objects

	(o) None
Women in traditional roles	<p>(1) shown in any of the traditional roles listed below, (o) not shown in any of the traditional roles listed below.</p> <p>If shown, in which of the following roles:</p> <p>(1) Dependency - dependent on male's protection; In need of reassurance; Making unimportant decisions</p> <p>(2) Housewife - women's place is at home; primary role is to be a good wife; concerned with tasks of housekeeping</p> <p>(o) None</p>
Women in non-traditional roles	<p>(1) shown in any of the non-traditional roles listed below, (o) not shown in any of the non-traditional roles listed below.</p> <p>If shown, in which of the following roles:</p> <p>(1) Women in non-traditional activities - engaged in activities outside the home (e.g. golf, football)</p> <p>(2) Career-oriented women - professional occupations; entertainer; non-professional; Blue-collar</p> <p>(3) Voice of authority - the expert</p> <p>(o) None</p>

Women equal to men	(1) shown as equal to men, (0) not shown as equal to men
Age	the character portrayed as a (1) Child (0–15), (2) Young adult (15–30), (3) Middle-aged adult (31–50), (4) Senior adult (>50)
Marital status	the character's portrayed marital status is (1) married, (2) not married, or (3) not identified
Employment	the character is portrayed (1) in a work situation, (2) in a non-work situation but appears to be employed, or (3) without indication of employment.
Children	(1) no children, (2) with children costars, not indicated to be their mother, (3) with children as a mother figure

## Appendix 2. Coding Sheet

	brand name & parent company	product nationality	product category	gender of the main character	gender of voiceover	advertisement addresses gender equality	if addresses GE, how	women w/ speaking or prominent roles	women in a decorative roles	if yes, which decorative role	women in traditional roles	if yes, which traditional role	women in non-traditional roles	if yes, which non-traditional role	a woman equal to men	age	marital status	employment	with children
<b>1</b>	<i>Google</i>	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	3	3
<b>2</b>	<i>Domik v derevne Wimm-Bill-Dann Foods</i>	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	4	3	3	3
<b>3</b>	<i>Chudo Wimm-Bill-Dann Foods</i>	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1
<b>4</b>	<i>MTS PJSC Vim-pelCom</i>	1	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	<i>AliExpress &amp; Tmall</i>	3	2	1	4	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	1
<b>6</b>	<i>Lay's PepsiCo</i>	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	1
<b>7</b>	<i>Khrusteam PepsiCo</i>	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	<i>Adrena-</i>	3	1	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	3	1



<b>17</b>	<i>Purina Gourmet</i>	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1
<b>18</b>	<i>KFC Russia</i>	3	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1
<b>19</b>	<i>Tinkoff Bank</i>	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>20</b>	<i>Honor View 20 Huawei</i>	3	2	3	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1
<b>21</b>	<i>Puzzle English</i>	1	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>22</b>	<i>Krasniy Karandash</i>	1	2	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	3	3	1
<b>23</b>	<i>Oriflame</i>	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	2	1
<b>24</b>	<i>Komplivit vitamins Pharmstandard</i>	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	3	1
<b>25</b>	<i>Aroma Top Line</i>	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	3	1
<b>26</b>	<i>OREO Mondelez International Cadbury</i>	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>27</b>	<i>INAMORE Official Incanto Fashion Group</i>	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1
<b>28</b>	<i>Pedegree</i>	2	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	3	3	3	1

	<i>Pet- foods Mars, Inc.</i>																		
<b>2 9</b>	<i>Italki</i>	2	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	2	1	
<b>3 0</b>	<i>Du- phalac Abbott Labora- tories</i>	3	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	3	3	
<b>3 1</b>	<i>OYSHO Sport Inditex</i>	2	1	2	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	3	3	1
<b>3 2</b>	<i>Sber- bank</i>	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	1
<b>3 3</b>	<i>Mazda 3</i>	3	1	2	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	1	2	1
<b>3 4</b>	<i>Nesquik Nestlé</i>	2	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
<b>3 5</b>	<i>Garnier L'Oréal</i>	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>3 6</b>	<i>Alpen Gold Mondel ez In- terna- tional</i>	3	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	2
<b>3 7</b>	<i>YSL Beauty</i>	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1
<b>3 8</b>	<i>TUC Mondel ēz In- terna- tional</i>	3	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	1
<b>3 9</b>	<i>LEGO</i>	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>4 0</b>	<i>Tochka bank</i>	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	1
<b>4 1</b>	<i>J7 Wimm-</i>	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	3	2	1



<b>3</b>	<i>men Evyap Inc.</i>																		
<b>5 4</b>	<i>Power Stick Sam- sung</i>	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5 5</b>	<i>Beeline PJSC Vim- pelCom</i>	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5 6</b>	<i>La Prairie</i>	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1
<b>5 7</b>	<i>Food City</i>	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	1	1
<b>5 8</b>	<i>Mega- fone</i>	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5 9</b>	<i>Beeline PJSC Vim- pelCom</i>	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	3	1
<b>6 0</b>	<i>Mazda CX-9</i>	3	1	1	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	1
<b>6 1</b>	<i>McDon- alds</i>	3	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	3	1
<b>6 2</b>	<i>Adrena- lin Rush PepsiCo</i>	3	1	2	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	1	1
<b>6 3</b>	<i>Mouline x Fresh Boost Groupe SEB</i>	2	1	2	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	1
<b>6 4</b>	<i>ARKO men Evyap Inc.</i>	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6 5</b>	<i>Mazda 6</i>	3	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	4	1	3	3
<b>6 6</b>	<i>Jet- Brains</i>	2	1	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	3	1	1

