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Perspectives on why the glass ceiling still exists for women in advertising and media and tools to help shatter it

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PERSPECTIVES ON WHY THE GLASS CEILING STILL EXISTS FOR WOMEN IN
ADVERTISING AND MEDIA AND TOOLS TO HELP SHATTER IT

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
University Honors

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This Study by: Olivia Hottle Mossman

Entitled: PERSPECTIVES ON WHY THE GLASS CEILING STILL EXISTS FOR WOMEN
IN ADVERTISING AND MEDIA AND TOOLS TO HELP SHATTER IT

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation

University Honors

May 4, 2015, Bettina Fabos, Honors Thesis Advisor

May 4, 2015, Dr. Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program

Purpose

This thesis is the product of a personal journey through my career field. Upon first beginning my classes in my Electronic Media major, I quickly noticed most of my classes were filled with men. I was among a few females in my major program, and this caused an interesting dynamic in my classes. I wondered if this was a common situation I would face upon entering my profession. As I interned at various companies in creative fields, namely video production, I noticed that my coworkers were indeed men, and as I began to pursue internships in other sectors of my field, such as media and communications planning, I saw most of these employees were women. Yet, in both types of careers, women in leadership roles and executive positions were still lacking. I was curious as to why this was happening and wanted to know more about how I could achieve an executive position myself someday, and what types of hurdles women faced more than men in accomplishing these career goals.

This ethnographic study provides current insights into the barriers women experience as they seek executive positions in the media and advertising industries—careers largely held by men. Interviews with women who currently or have previously held management roles in media and advertising companies are analyzed and presented. The knowledge gained from these interviews raises awareness of the lack of women's voices on the media channels that influence a society's perception of what is socially and culturally acceptable. This research also counteracts an absence of recent research regarding this topic. As the study evolved, it looked more at the relationships between women in a professional setting in these industries, and provided suggestions to women looking to achieve in the media and advertising fields. Finally, this paper accompanies a tangible video piece depicting abstract visuals that complement the quotes taken from the interviewees' responses. As an Electronic Media major, it is fitting for me to look at

these issues in a more visual way than could be conveyed through a research paper. In addition, creating the video helped me more thoroughly experience and understand the issues raised by my interviewees.

Literature Review

The advertising and film industry are sectors in which women appear to have a history of breaking gender roles and finding success. Women were writing, directing, and editing successful films well before the 1930s, and some even had their own studios (NWHM, n.d., para. 2). Mary Pickford blazed the trail in film. An actress known as “America’s Sweetheart,” Pickford became the first woman to earn a salary of \$1 million and eventually formed her own studio, United Artists (Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2013). Alice Guy Blaché is credited as the first female film director. She would direct over 700 films between 1896 and 1922 (McMahan, 2003). A number of women followed in her footsteps (NWHM, n.d., para. 2).

Women leaders have been present in advertising as well as film. Tere Zubizarreta opened her own advertising agency in 1976—one of the first agencies to target Spanish-speaking immigrants). Mathilde C. Weil founded her own agency in 1880 and ran it until her death in 1903 Mary Lawrence Wells founded Wells, Rich, Greene agency; she was the youngest copywriter to be inducted into the Copywriting Hall of Fame, and as named one of *Ad Age’s* Most Influential People in the 20th Century. All are stellar examples of successful, creative women leading advertising companies and paving the way for other women (*AdvertisingAge*, 2012). According to Russell (2012) the female gender actually helped women gain careers in advertising; because of their status as women they were seen as experts in targeting their own demographic, who were buying flourishing products such as “trademarked foods, cosmetics, and department store and women’s magazine” (pp. 14-16).

In fact, women continue to occupy influential roles in some areas of advertising. Advertising researchers Mallia and Windels (2011) pointed to account service positions in advertising agencies: in the past 20 years, the number of women in the role has doubled. Half of the employees in planning and research in advertising are women, and the ratio of women to men in media departments is 3 to 2. Analysis of recent movies also makes it appear that women are at no disadvantage in this field. In 2013, the top-grossing films (*The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, *Frozen*, and *Gravity*) boasted female protagonists (Buckley, 2014). In addition, women are certainly present in the workforce—47% of the labor force in 2011 was comprised of women, and 59% of the college-educated workforce in 2011 was female (Spar, 2012, para. 4).

Thus one could conclude that there would be no equity problem when it comes to the advertising and media fields. However, this is an inaccurate assumption. Workplace equality, even in a seemingly progressive and accommodating industry, has not yet been achieved. As Spar (2012, para. 5) stated, “women are working for major corporations but not leading them.” Gender inequality can be found at the highest levels of employment in advertising and media; there is an overwhelming lack of women in executive positions in advertising and media companies. Executive positions refer to advertising creative directors, film directors, Chief Executive Officers, Chief Marketing Officers, and similar positions in which men traditionally dominate. In 2013, a study conducted by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising in the United Kingdom found that women held only 26% of executive management positions (IPA, 2013). In creative departments in ad agencies, the male-to-female ratio is 2.3 to 1, and between 1996 and 2006, only 13.4% of *Adweek*’s “Best Spots” were created by women (Mallia & Windels, 2011). Women also occupy the lower-paying positions in agency departments, and

even then they still earn only “77 cents to every man’s dollar” (Spar, 2012, para. 5; see also Mallia & Windels, 2011).

There is a similar story in Hollywood. In 2012, only 7 percent of Hollywood directors were women (Spar, 2012). Women also comprised less than a third of all speaking roles in the 100 highest grossing domestic films in 2013, with only 15% of those films containing women in lead roles (Buckley, 2012). Only one woman has won an Oscar for directing (Kathryn Bigelow, *The Hurt Locker* in 2010). In 2012, no films directed by women were present at the Cannes Film Festival, an issue that was referred to as a “reflect(ion of) a global problem” (Collet-Whitet 2012, para. 1). Of the top 100 grossing films from 2002-2012, women directed only 4.4%, and 41.5% of these were organized by the Sundance Institute (Child, 2014).

Referring to women in the workplace, Spar (2012) stated bluntly that “there is undeniably still a ‘women's problem’ in the United States (para. 2).” She is not the only one with this belief. The 3% Conference, which gets its name from the 3% of creative directors that were women at the time of the organization’s founding, works to combat the gender gap. The 3% Conference boasts that, due to their efforts, the percentage of women in creative director positions has risen from 3% to 11% (The 3% Conference). This gender inequality so evident today is similar to the past. Despite a few outliers, stifling restrictions have been placed on women in advertising and media as the industries began develop. Russell (2012) provided the example of Myrtle Snell, who worked at the N.W. Ayer & Son agency, and “once noted that she never felt disapproval from her colleagues because of her sex. It was the men in the executive suite who paid her salary who were skeptical of her” and this showed in lesser pay than that of her male counterparts (pp. 14-16). This quote and example is from 1924, and yet women working in advertising in 2014 could speak these same words.

Many reasons have been posited as to why this inequality persists from researchers and discussions held between women in the workplace. Some say it is from external sources of struggle, such as men, the hiring process, and portrayal of women in the media. Others suggest it may also come the tension that stems from trying to be perfect and “have it all” in a woman’s identities as a mother, nurturer, career woman, wife, etc. Outlined below are deeper insights into some of these claims investigated in the current study.

Portrayal of Women in Media

In her 2010 book *Enlightened Sexism*, Susan J. Douglas provided several examples of the media portrayal of women and how it potentially affects actual women in the workplace. She cited some examples such as Sandra Day O’Connor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Hillary Clinton—all powerful women who the media can accept as successful. In this way, the media, Douglas explained, show images of “powerful” women in the roles of lawyers, doctors, and judges, to make one believe that feminism is no longer needed. Yet, these roles are sharply contrasted by other portrayals of women who are dumb and obsessed with shopping and looking attractive. Even the aforementioned powerful women such as O’Connor and Clinton do “not threaten existing regimes about the marking and performance of femininity” because they fit the female mold (married, physically attractive, etc.) (p. 75). In this way, the media continues to perpetuate that sexual power and purchasing power are better than economic power. She also noted that women are shown as overly emotional, which may lead to the belief that they cannot rationally run an organization.

Douglas also mentioned *numerous* examples of women still being portrayed as boy-crazy bimbos who only care about their own physical appearance or their household (cleaning, cooking, and the like) in television and movies such as *90210*, *Girls Gone Wild*, and movies like

What Women Want and *Bridget Jones's Diary* Even Johanna Coles, Editor in Chief of *Cosmopolitan* (who Douglas might say would be helping to perpetuate some of these stereotypes) discusses commercials in which “women get orgasmic over cleaning products ... or with a Swiffer, as if it's the most exciting thing that's ever happened to you. It's nonsense” (Granatstein, 2014, para. 20).

However, Douglas also acknowledged that some programs meant to empower women (*Buffy*, *Xena*, *Charlie's Angels*, even the *The Spice Girls*) are also used to reinforce stereotypical norms, though often in fantastical or mythical environments. While the programs showed a positive combination of “force and aggression with femininity and sexual display,” Douglas pointed out that the women who had the same power as men were only the ones who were “poreless, stacked, and size two” (pp. 98-99). The shows proved that it did not matter how strong a woman was, it was more important to be thin and attractive and then use that sexuality as a weapon. Yet, while a woman should be attractive, women should also not be “overly sexual,” lest they become a tease (pp. 98-99). Using sexuality as a means of getting ahead in life or using power sex is also frowned upon; the line between being hot and not too hot is blurry.

Douglas also mentioned multiple female characters that, though successful in their field, are often seen as the antagonist, sad and alone, or the self-righteous woman in a story. Douglas pointed out the stereotype that women should be kind, quiet, and sympathetic, and should never have their own interest in mind. They should never try to win, or if they do, they are manipulative. This viewpoint may indeed sway women to believe the same about themselves and their own personal dreams for their careers. The women who are successful are such because they are self-centered and spoiled, automatically classifying them into the “bitch” category. To this end, Douglas mentioned Omarosa on *The Apprentice*, and Kimberley and Amanda on

Melrose Place, adding that *Melrose Place* showed that “women could not ‘have it all’...Amanda made it clear...that successful, career-driven women could not have real love...It was almost as if ‘success’ and ‘bitch’ just went together” (p. 37). Even “getting to the top of her field meant...no personal life, no network of female friends, and regrets...about not having children” for the tough and successful *Murphy Brown* (2010, p. 38). This view that successful women are friendless, mean, and have no hope for families or romantic love could be a deterrent for women who consider taking steps toward working in an executive positions, as they do not want to become or be classified as this type of female.

She also explained that many media narratives show women competing against each other or being catty, not just in the workplace, but in other, more “everyday” scenarios. Even women who began as friends, such as two cast members of the first season of *Survivor*, Susan and Kelly, backstab each other and bicker (Douglas, 2010, p. 203). Many shows are created simply to pit women against each other (*The Bachelor*, *America’s Next Top Model*). Douglas mentioned *The Apprentice* again, in which an all-female team cannot stop yelling and arguing, which is contrasted by scenes of the all-male team who are bonding, disagreeing civilly, and staying positive. She also mentions *America’s Next Top Model*, in which a contestant says she “can’t stand living with other women because it quickly becomes ‘just like junior high school’” (Douglas, 2010, p. 205). One can also point to Vivian Kensington, Elle’s rival in *Legally Blonde*, as both an example of competing with another woman and the bitchy, successful female character. The media portrays women as never fully maturing enough to be rational or non-competitive, which is not an ideal characteristic for a woman. It appears that if one hires a woman on an executive level, she will constantly be fighting and competing, making her hiring not worth the effort or drama.

The media strongly influences the views that men and even women themselves have about the female gender. By portraying women as obsessed with fashion, makeup, physical appearance, being attractive to men, cooking and other housework, and little else, women have become branded as insufficient employees or managers. In addition, women who appear in the media as successful business leaders are often also shown as mean, negative, backstabbing, and even “bitchy.” Furthermore, women in media are often pitted against each other in competitions or shown as easily irritable, negative, and critical of other women, especially when it relates to being successful vocationally.

Sexism in Other Fields or Vocational Processes

It has been suggested that sexism in other fields may be a reason for the lack of hiring females for executive roles in media and advertising. In relation to advertising, it may be awkward for an agency’s client, whose executive board may be all-male, to collaborate and take direction from an agency team made up of women.

In an interview with *AdWeek* in 2014, Sarah Hofstetter, CEO of digital marketing agency 360i, observed that women are scarce in ad agencies because agencies reflect the gender makeup of their clients. She added facing these male clients is often a struggle: “When there are CEOs walking into a room and then the senior clients are all men, and they say to you, ‘Oh, hi. How are you?’ and I say, ‘Hi, I’m Sarah,’ they say, ‘Oh, so what do you do?’ —as if I’m an account executive. And I say, ‘Oh, I’m CEO’” (Granastein, 2014, para. 13).

Mallia and Windels (2011) corroborate this experience, citing the corporate climate of a “boys’ club” in which men are more comfortable interacting with other men both in socializing and in work (para. 32). This produces more informal social networks in which men participate, which often leads to greater rewards in their careers. Participating in these types of informal

networks is more difficult for women, who often must tend to families and do not have time for these social interactions. Hofstetter also feels that “golf outings” and “champagne ladies’ lounges” should be diminished, as they add to the fracturing and sectioning off of males and females, suggesting that there should be “more opportunities for just general collaboration or...go(ing) or and hav(ing) a drink” between genders (Granatstein, 2014, para. 17).

Even though the media portrays women as overly competitive, in reality, competitive processes common in advertising are detrimental to women. Competition is, according to Mallia and Windels, not a natural fit for women’s work styles. They refer to the “consuming nature of the creative job and macho organizational culture” as reasons why women struggled to advance in creative and advertising companies (2011, p. 30).

Another problem is the applicant pool. Business leaders often say that they wish they could hire more women for management positions, yet they cannot because there are few female applicants (Meinert, 2014). Recent research has suggested that perhaps the lack of women applying for executive roles stems from job applications that describe the ideal candidate with words typically associated with men. While men do not tend to be impacted by the wording on applications, women in the study found a fictitious management job posting less appealing when it used words such as “determined,” “aggressive,” “assertive,” and “analytical” (Meinert, 2014, para. 3). Women were more drawn to applications that said the candidate should be “dedicated,” “responsible,” “conscientious,” and “sociable” (Meinert, para. 4).

Tension between Identities

Often, the identities women try to create for themselves (even if some are perpetuated by the media) are incongruent with each other (mother and CEO, visibly attractive and mother, etc.). This leads women to feeling overwhelmed that they cannot “have it all,” meaning that some

women may not reach for higher career aspirations if they feel it does not fit with one of their already established identities.

The biggest cited identity issue for working women is the ability to be a mother and a successful executive. In her 2012 article *Why Women Still Can't Have it All*, Anne-Marie Slaughter noted several of these identity issues. She stated that men are still conditioned to be the breadwinner and women are socialized to be the caretaker. When a man sacrifices time with his family to work and be successful, it is considered a noble, understandable act (2012). She noted a common belief that successful women and mothers can only achieve if they have partners who are able to stay home with children, though she disagreed with this idea, stating that it “assumes that most women will *feel* as comfortable as men do about being away from their children” (2012, para. 38). She faced the now-common question of how to decide when and how to have a family—when one is beginning her career, or after it has been established—and notes that this decision does not have to be made by men. A recent study by Mor, Mehta, Fridman, and Morris looked at women who possessed a high degree of “identity integration,” that is, the ability of a woman to perceive her role as both a woman and a professional as compatible (2014). Women with high identity integrations were able to speak on behalf of themselves, negotiate better, and ultimately be rewarded for doing so more than those who felt an incongruence between their identities as both professional and female (Mor et. al, 2014). Therefore, an interesting paradox and question arises—women are struggling to resolve the tension between their identities as both woman and executive, with some even saying this congruence is not possible, yet women who achieve this compatibility are indeed more successful than those who do not. Could this fusing of identities be key in helping women climb the corporate ladder?

Suggestions for Increasing the Amount of Women in Leadership Positions

Some methods for improving the ratio of women in executive roles have been suggested informally in previous research. Spar (2012) stated one of the most obvious suggestions that companies should attempt is to create longer maternity leaves, more family-friendly workplaces, and perhaps even pumping rooms for mothers. She also encouraged women to stop arguing over who has the better family or works harder to have a perfect life.

Some of this has been happening among women's organizations involved with advertising and film. Women Make Movies, the Citizen Jane Institute, and Advertising Women of New York have established mentoring programs to help women succeed in advertising and media. However, Mika Brzezinski, an American television host and journalist, aspires to move past just mentorship programs, saying that women are beginning to see that women "are really investing in each other on a friendship...and business level" (Granatstein, 2014, para. 8).

A general consensus from the research implies that instead of blaming men, men should be brought on board and educated about how to recognize female issues in the workplace. Spar says that men have to help, simply because women alone cannot create change because they only make up half of the population. Companies and men should embrace differences between how men and women address issues with employees, how they use caution, and how they respond to praise (Spar, 2012, para. 15).

While contrasting traits between men and women should be recognized, demographic differences should be minimized in order to create increased collaboration in organizations. This type of collectivist setting is ideal for demographic minorities, according to Mallia and Windels (2011, p.37). Managing director and associate partner of Goodby, Silverstein and Partners, Nancy Reyes, as quoted by Granastein (2014, para. 21) also seeks to move the conversation more toward women being successful because of their creative talents:

“I think the less sometimes we think of ... wow, this woman made this ad and more like, what a great thinker, what a great creative, what a great idea. That's the kind of conversation I think I would rather have than have it be, what did a woman make this year?”

These categories (how women are portrayed in the media, sexism in other companies and processes, and tension in a woman's identities) were used as the basis of questions to female executives in the following study. In addition, the female executives interviewed provided their own views and suggestions about how to shrink the gender gap in these roles in media and advertising.

Central Themes Addressed

It is obvious that women have yet to feel the same freedom as men in seeking leadership roles in the media and advertising workplace. In such a modern, seemingly progressive time in our culture, and in such a visible industry, why is this lack of women still an issue, and how can we counteract this imbalance?

This project allowed for the exploration of several possible reasons why sexism in the workplace is still occurring in our modern culture:

- The portrayal of women in media content. Certain stereotypes about women are perpetuated in the media, which in turn make it more difficult for women to seek executive roles.
- The implications of sexism in other professional fields (that is, whether or not the number of males in executive roles of Forbes 500 companies—the clients of advertising agencies—determines the makeup of ad agency executive teams.)
- The tension that occurs as women try to succeed as both a “woman” and as “professionals.”

- Additionally, I seek to uncover new theories as to why women are either not seeking leadership roles in these fields or are being prevented from gaining in these careers.

Methodology

I intended to base the study on the experiences of women who have achieved the status of an executive in their advertising or media company. Previous research on female executives have relied on the qualitative interview method as well. Because of the already conclusive data proving a severe lack of women in these roles, my study aimed to provide some qualitative answers to expand upon these conclusions. I hoped to answer the deeper questions of *why* this is happening rather than, once again, proving quantitatively that it *is* occurring. My intent was also to provide suggestions for steps both women and men can take to help increase the number of women in media and advertising leadership roles based on the female subjects' previous personal experiences (it should be acknowledged that these steps are simply a beginning to the conversation about change and not intended to immediately and fundamentally counteract the lack of women in these industries).

I began my interviews with women in media, and sought them out through my various connections in the industry. I found three women to speak with—an owner of an advertising agency and two women working in entertainment and publicity who, though publicity is not necessarily considered a man's profession, had worked for internationally known media and entertainment companies and would be qualified to answer my questions.

Findings

I set out expecting to find women complaining about men who had subjected them to poor treatment in the workplace based on their sex, yet I actually found women complaining about their female colleagues instead. In addition, I did not find specific reasons I could point to

as causes of workplace sexism, as many had posited in my research. I also did not find clear-cut suggestions to reduce workplace sexism. However, my research did unveil an astounding realization regarding women to women relationships and power in these industries.

First, several of these women did confirm negative experiences they had had regarding men: one woman saying the company she owned only received positive press because she was “hot”; another explaining how she was labeled “Little Christie” the moment she started her job—something that would not have likely happened to a male colleague). They also confirmed working within company hierarchies dominated by men. These stories suggested obvious sexism against these women.

Second, and most surprisingly, the women stated it was primarily *other women* executives with whom they had struggled. This shocked me, and I thought it was a fluke until all my interviewees mentioned this issue. Therefore, I knew my findings presented in the video needed to be handled gently to avoid the possible view of victim blaming. It also led to my second insight that women in these executive positions appear to be, for lack of a better word, “bitchy,” causing other women to carefully tread to avoid these connotations. In fact, as one subject mentioned, this may even cause women to shy away from executive positions in order to avoid being thought of in this way.

Third, once women rise to these executive positions they tend to struggle with their titles, having trouble making decisions for their teams. These women may also grow fearful that other women will take their job, even only mentoring other women to a certain point in an effort to avoid this situation.

Finally, I collected a few suggestions from the women on how one could empower and help other women to succeed in these positions. These included mentorship, “faking it until you

make it,” remembering where one came from and how they rose through the ranks, and the programs one woman, who owned her own advertising agency, implemented to equalize her male and female employees (such as maternity and paternity leave, etc.).

Reflection

Upon beginning this research, I knew I wanted to conceptualize my research findings with a video. I wanted to use the suggestions and experiences from my interview subjects to influence the images in my video and make a piece that would get the public thinking and perhaps acting on these issues. I thought that my final video would be a very classic “informative” piece: using quotes from my female interviewees, I would construct a video using motion media and create every visual the audience would see via kinetic typography. This would be similar to videos I have seen online used primarily for the purposes of raising money for non-profits, raising awareness of human rights issues, and other types of topics in which visuals are hard to come by. However, halfway through the project I realized how time-consuming and lackluster this format would be. In addition, I am neither passionate nor even good at constructing motion media videos, and became increasingly half-hearted regarding my thesis. I did not want my time at UNI to be summarized by a video like this.

As my interviews came to a close, I realized my subjects had disclosed anecdotes and information that I had *never* anticipated. My findings led me to realize I needed to take less of a “clinical” approach to this video, and one that was more creative, poignant, thought-provoking, emotional, and most of all, sensitive, to their plights. This realization sparked an idea to create a more abstract and artsy video using young girls to sharply contrast the audio bed of quotes of the interviewees. A lover of videos that require deeper thinking and analysis, I was instantly inspired by this video project in ways that I had not felt for many years, upon my coming to college and

making videos for clients. I used the quotes of my interview subjects as the foundation of my film, rerecording the quotes with voice actors to maintain the confidentiality of my interviewees and have a high quality basis off of which to build my video.

Process

I first conducted my interviews realizing how difficult it was to find women to speak on this topic. Eventually, I decided that I did indeed need only three women to speak about this to find a wealth of quotes—any more and the video would have been much longer than is generally thought to be consumed online—and that these three women were actually saying the same things and contributing similar findings to my study. Then, I met with my advisor to determine the best way to go about constructing my quotes in a logical, thematic order. Her process was new to me, and extremely helpful and interesting for me to go through. First, I transcribed the interviews, then arranged them to fit an order—then reread them and reworked this order. I reworked and reread the transcription so many times, more than I even thought necessary, yet I ended up with a final treatment that I could easily put into effect through audio. Next, I brainstormed ideas to abstractly and emotionally communicate my points. I settled on using the idea of young girls and boys contrasted with the quotes. Using children in feminist creative visual projects is not uncommon (see examples such as the 2015 Superbowl ad for Always entitled “Like a Girl”), however, the contrast of adult women’s dialogue with the children’s actions is something new to me.

Before filming the children, I needed to obtain permission from their parents to ensure their images could be used online and with a social justice-themed work. Once again, I learned how to best write a consent form for this type of request. In addition, I received tremendous feedback from the parents my advisor and I contacted, including one mother whom was

unknown to both of us. The parents thought the project was extremely interesting and this was encouraging to me, as I saw how this thesis was actually starting the conversation about these issues in families of my child actors and how eager parents were to participate in a project of this type.

Description of Final Work

I knew I needed to carefully craft my video to touch on these important findings without offending women. I decided to use young girls as actors in my video to draw out the viewers' emotions, hopefully leading them to realize how young some of these issues start. I tried to contrast the young girls with the audio quotes to evoke the idea that we would not put down or belittle our sisters, friends, daughters, or the like, and we— whether males or females—should also do the same to our female coworkers. Therefore, my final video includes interactions between children that align with the words said by the adult women. I picked specific scenes that would fit with the situations described by the women. For instance, I planned out a scene with the boy and girl swinging and another girl pushing the boy to align with the research regarding females picking male resumes mentioned by one of my respondents. I also visualized the girls jumping on a trampoline to reflect them reaching to attain their lofty goals. This was partially based on my experience meeting a young girl, the daughter of my advisor's neighbor, for the first time. She was jumping on a trampoline during our first meeting, and framed my vision for the film, as I later learned that she had stated her desire to be a film director someday, to the chide of her father.

However, I also left some of my filming to chance, seeing what I could capture the day of the shoot based on the children's' interactions with each other. I filmed girls helping another use a play piece of construction equipment after they instinctively did so during their play, finding

that it aligned well with a scene in which a woman describes how bosses can nurture only to a certain point. The same was true of footage of children jumping over a missing section of street that I stumbled across during the day of the shoot, as well as the children simply running together.

Importance of Work to the Field

I feel that my research contributes to my field because it raises awareness of a totally different side of the sexism and women-in-power issue. It also does this in such a way that is illustrated visually and can be distributed to the masses, rather than held in a paper format that is only accessible to scholars. In addition, it visually showcases that research in an uncommon way—rather than the clinical, statistical, and cartoon-y format of many informative videos. Beyond the media and advertising field, however, I also saw how my project touched the lives of other women in businesses and families with young girls.

Conclusion: Personal Value of the Research

This work is a true expression of myself, both in the research and the execution of the video. The issue of women succeeding (or lack thereof) in male-dominated roles in my field of media and advertising had been subtly gnawing on me since the beginning of my college career. I drifted through classes primarily filled with males and have personally witnessed striking examples of how women interacted with each other and men in my professional internship experiences; I wanted to know more about why this was happening and how we could encourage more women to rise to the top in this field. I also worked with child “actors” in my film for one of the first times in my college career, learning how to best capture shots of fast-moving kiddos and meet the needs children have when in a filming situation. I was able to communicate what I learned in a way that resonated with me, both as a creator and a potential viewer. I hate to admit

that some of the stories told by these women hit me personally as I realized that I had been both subject to and guilty of things similar to what they had described. I hope that this research lingers not only with others, but me, as well, and I recognize when I can achieve more for the cause of women in the media and advertising industries in my future careers.

The final thesis video can be viewed online at <https://vimeo.com/126827488>

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