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Documenting the changing cultural values in TV advertising in Ireland from 1960s to 1980s

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ABSTRACT

Utilising adaptations of Richard Pollay's 1983 methodology for measuring the cultural values that are contained in advertising texts this study conducts an interpretive content analysis of 214 TV adverts archived by the [Irish Film Institute](#) and funded by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland under the 'Irish Adverts Project'. Findings show that throughout the decades surveyed the dominant cultural value referenced in these adverts is Enjoyment/Leisure; followed by Success/Status, with the third most prominent cultural value being Modernity/Technology. Given that Ireland in the 1960s was emerging from decades of inward-looking, protectionist policies and was growing in confidence (economically, politically and culturally), advertising appeals that focused on topics such as holidaying overseas, social status and technology align with the cultural changes Ireland was experiencing; although the full picture for people in Ireland in these years is more mixed. The results of the analysis thereby arguably add some credence to the claim that advertising acts a 'distorted mirror', reflecting a marketable version of society back to itself.

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Introduction

This paper considers the shared cultural dialogue between advertisers and audiences by documenting the dominant cultural values in TV advertising in Ireland from the 1960s to the 1980s, and specifically whether those adverts reflect the prevailing cultural values of the time. For those paying attention to the social impact of advertising, such a consideration speaks to the perennial 'mirror or mold' debate in advertising research. This debate centres on whether the medium is powerful enough to influence and change behaviours, attitudes and collective values in society or whether advertising more accurately functions as a 'mirror' by reflecting already existing socio-cultural values and norms in its texts and, thus, should not be considered a force for significant social change. Pollay (1986) posits that advertising can be considered a 'distorted mirror' in the sense that it relies on embedded and established social values and norms in devising and designing advertising campaigns. However, the mirror is

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'distorted', since this process involves one of cherry-picking such cultural values deemed to be most desirable for achieving the objective of promoting the product or service and which are assumed to appeal to, rather than alienate consumers (Pollay 1986; Pollay and Gallagher 1990).

This idea of how best to speak to consumers is captured in the strategy of so-called 'advertising appeals', which are 'values that are encoded into advertisements as a powerful tool to influence consumers into buying a product' (Wah 2005, 61). Since audiences of advertising communications have been found to respond positively to messages that closely reference their culture (Kalliny and Gentry 2007), advertising 'appeals' will often rely on tapping into the cultural specificity of the market (Khairullah and Khairullah 2013). This tactic in advertising practice has involved ensuring that the advert disseminated is one that will 'endorse, glamorize, and reinforce cultural values' (Cho et al. 1999, 59). This is deemed to be important because if values referenced in advertising are relatable, its texts will be more likely to create a connection between the viewer or consumer and the protagonist or subject matter of the advert (Khairullah and Khairullah 2013). As an extension of the academic attention given to considering salient cultural values reflected in advertising, studies have typically focused on showing the differences in cultural values manifest in advertising across different cultures and countries (see Chan and Cheng 2002, 386 for overview) and indeed the degree to which, if it all, standardisation of advertising can be effective in different markets. As Khairullah and Khairullah (2013) have noted, the phrase 'Think Global, Act Local' (269) serves as a reminder for advertisers that accounting for culturally specific contexts remains crucial in ensuring that adverts speak to its target audience.

By devising a methodology for measuring cultural values through applying a content analysis approach to adverts, Pollay (1983) sought to empirically deal with the question of how advertising either shapes or reflects changing and shifting cultural values and cultural norms. In an exploratory study, utilising adaptations of Pollay's content analysis framework and coding categories (Sun 2013; Cheng and Schweitzer 1996; Khairullah and Khairullah 2013), this paper quantifies the cultural values and appeals that dominate Irish advertising for the period from the 1960s to the 1980s. This approach to capturing the cultural specificity of advertising remains popular (Chan and Cheng 2002; Zhang and Shevitt 2003; Wah 2005). However, while numerous cross-cultural/country comparative studies have been carried out (Cheng and Schweitzer 1996; Chan and Cheng 2002; Wah 2005; Kalliny and Gentry 2007; Cho et al. 1999), there are fewer studies that focus on tracking changing cultural values across decades in the same country. As such, this paper offers a useful, longitudinal perspective where the dominant cultural appeals in advertising over 30 years can be compared with prevailing social and cultural changes in these decades.

Literature review

Advertising as 'social tableaux' and the 'distorted mirror'

Adverts conceptualised and defined as 'social tableaux' means that 'persons are depicted in such a way as to suggest their relationships to each other or to a larger social structure' (Marchand 1985, 165–166). The historical context to advertising's use

of 'real life' to appeal to consumers is sketched out by Roland Marchand (1985) who traces this back to the 1920s and 30s and the birth of modernism in the US. For Marchand, 'tableau' means a 'slice of real life', and was a genre or style of theatre that captured and freeze-framed both iconic, recognisable, and well-known scenes and scenarios. In connection with advertising, 'social tableaux' references the dilemma or the 'truism' that *advertising reflects society*, and taps into the concern of how adverts reflect society. To whatever extent advertising is simply a mirror of the culture and the society in which it is created, it is clear that ads do capture something true about society; namely, it depicts something that can be purchased, and it offers a time and context-specific representation of styles of clothing, architecture, interiors and so on. That aside, the question motivating Marchand was whether claims that ads in the 'social tableaux' style accurately depict social life stack up. In other words, are such ads representative of life? The question can also be framed like this: if a historian analyses a series of advertisements, will they garner an accurate picture of such markers of 'real life' such as social class, wealth, race or gender roles? However, it is not the concern of advertising to be doggedly accurate about the world, but, rather, to cherry pick 'representations' of life that suit the marketing strategy for the product. For the 'social tableaux' approach, the strategy is one of attainable aspirational living; which is to say that the scene or setting that is brought to life is designed to conjure in the viewer-consumer feelings of wanting to be part of the scene and, along with that, a desire to purchase and consume the product in order to transform one's reality and one's current social position and social status. Therefore, Marchand argues that adverts designed and strategized and executed in this 'social tableaux' style might not be so revealing about how people lived in a particular era, but they may be revealing or illuminating in terms of how people (broadly and generally) wanted to or desired to live, or at least are suggestive of the values and lifestyles that advertisers thought people would positively respond to. Such ads could be 'more accurately described as 'social fantasy' than 'social reality'' (166). We might think here of the phrase *how the other half lives*, which evokes a want on the part of those envious of others' lifestyles.

Such a framing of advertising's representativeness (or not) serves as a reminder that it is advertisers who are designing adverts and putting a shape and a form on what is supposedly *aspirational*. Society-at-large is not constructing these near/achievable 'social fantasies' depicted on TV screens and on radio and in magazines. Nevertheless, advertisers do take the pulse of society, at least to the extent that it matches with their own worldviews and experiences (Cronin 2004). This view lines up with Sean Nixon's (2003) concept of *informal cultures* which describes the influence that the subjective identities and opinions of advertising practitioners have on the direction of ad campaigns. In particular, the role of the creative practitioner in the advertising process bears with it considerable power to shape adverts in a particular vein (Soar 2000). It is the job of advertisers to be effective at appealing to people's desires without alienating the viewer-consumer. Nevertheless, how 'social fantasy' is visually communicated is controlled, styled, and aestheticized by advertising creatives.

Pollay and Gallagher (1990) assert that:

advertisements do reflect a culture. The mirror is distorted, however, because advertising reflects only certain attitudes, behaviours and values ... It displays those values that are most readily linked to the available products, that are easily dramatized in advertisements, and that are most reliably responded to by consumers who see the advertisements (360).

Whether this matters or not, which is to say whether attention should be paid to what is being reflected, is answered by Pollay and Gallagher's adamant rejection of the 'myth of self immunity' (361) and instead the contention that advertising bears with it a large degree of social influence: 'Advertisements do work, even if they do not control behaviour as directly as some critics fear. Advertisements can influence awareness, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, preferences, and behaviour' (Pollay and Gallagher 1990, 361). Indeed, as echoed by later scholars (Cook 2000; Drumwright 2007), when considering the entire advertising output, 'the citizen is exposed to thousands upon thousands of advertising messages and the sheer repetition of common themes can produce a major impact even if each specific advertisement does not' (Pollay and Gallagher 1990, 362). This position suggests that adverts in the 'social tableaux' style, which appear to offer scenes of real, albeit aspirational, living and are embedded with cultural appeals and values are likely to shape the wants and desires and values of those exposed to advertising, in the long term.

Cultural values and cultural specificity in advertising

In considering changing values, the various shifts and trends apparent in advertising can be revealing. For instance, what kinds of people are used in adverts to endorse products? Are they celebrities; sportspeople; public figures? What might this tell us about social norms and values? Does it reveal something about collective values associated with civic life; or with wealth and beauty; success (athletic or otherwise); respect for expertise and authority? Consequently, if, in some period, we note a shift from the use of established TV personalities aged over 50 or so as endorsers of products in adverts, to young 'celebs', such a trend is arguably suggestive of some change in cultural values and could, for example, point to a strong, influential youth culture or to a fetishisation of youth.

However, Pollay argued that research which is focused on studying and analysing representations and portrayals of groups of people, for instance, looking at representations of gender, or class, or ethnicity, does not account for wider values. In other words, 'we do not know the extent to which the advertising is encouraging behaviors that value maturity versus youth, safety versus adventure, humility versus pride, affiliation versus independence' (1983, 72). Building on Milton Rokeach's (1973) study on the nature of human values, who defines a value as '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 (Rokeach 1973, 5; cited in Pollay 1983, 72), what is significant and characteristic of values and value systems is the ordering of priorities. Values exist in a hierarchy, such that individually and collectively our behaviours and attitudes are determined by where various values sit within that hierarchy. Consequently, as Pollay suggests, culturally approved behaviours, which are underpinned by the prioritisation of certain values (or a mode of

conduct), apply pressure on individuals to orientate themselves towards (rather than against) these behaviours, values, and attitudes.

Working within this understanding of values, it is accepted that such socialising forces as religious organisations, the family unit, educational institutions, and the mass media are instrumental in trading in value-laden teachings, content and texts (Durkheim 2011; Mead 1934; Kohn 1977; Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Herman and Chomsky 1988). Consequently, the advertising industry, as a part of the mass media, therefore warrants close attention in terms of what it can reveal about social and cultural values (Khairullah and Khairullah 2013; Jhally 2011). Advertising is also worthy of close scrutiny from the perspective of values because even if it has tended to, and does trade in conservative 'values' and in maintaining the status quo (Baudrillard 1998), unlike Institutional State Apparatuses, as conceived by Althusser (2001), advertising's *raison d'être* is simultaneously and somewhat paradoxically invested in bringing about some change of consumer behaviours, and often more broadly to reorder sets of value-driven priorities. As such, the 'study of advertising's cultural character may be very important in understanding the cultural evolution of commercialized societies' (Pollay 1983, 73) and its role in the construction of collective identities or 'collective subjectivities' (Hardt 1999).

In terms of how values may be measured, Pollay – building on a typology or taxonomy of values laid out in previous studies, including Rokeach's – devised over 40 coding categories that would correspond with various values. Of course, it is also important to bear in mind how the advert is consumed and viewed. While Pollay devised these categories for the analysis of print adverts, this study is focused on TV adverts. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to the context of the reception of the advert in terms of value transmission. The work of Gerbner and Gross and their Cultivation Theory is useful here (Gerbner and Gross 1977). Cultivation Theory refers to the long-term effects of television viewing. Gerbner (1973) suggested that sustained and substantial exposure to television can subtly change and shape our perceptions because TV is, or at least was during the decades under review, the dominant and pervasive medium for content, and he suggested that this pervasiveness gives TV the power to establish a cultural mainstream, which 'cultivates' and reinforces dominant cultural norms and social assumptions; these might be assumptions about particular ethnic groups or religions, or assumptions about women and men. This is significant because the notion of the 'mainstreaming' of TV viewers' norms, values, attitudes and worldviews means that through our TV watching, we cultivate a similarity of perspective. As McQuail (2010) explains it, '(i)n this theory of media effect, television provides many people with a consistent and near-total symbolic environment that supplies norms for conduct and beliefs about a wide range of real-life situations' (494–495). In other words, the 'underlying process is one of 'acculturation', meaning that people gradually come to accept the view of the world as portrayed on television ... as a true representation of reality and adapt their hopes, fears and understandings accordingly' (McQuail 2010, 554). Advertising, according to Hesmondhalgh (2007), does this work of constructing the symbolic environment that shapes society's norms and values.

This tracks with Pollay and Gallagher who suggest that '(v)alues are the core of the advertising message' (Pollay and Gallagher 1990, 364). They go on to suggest that 'values are the dimensions of the deep structure of personality, influencing all

perceptions and judgements, attitude and preference formation, cognition and behaviour ... They determine what beliefs are worth preserving, passing on to offspring, and even dying for' (Pollay and Gallagher 1990, 364). The advertising practitioner is hugely influential in the process of picking and choosing which values to invoke in a given campaign. At the same time, at the heart of this process, '(t)he choice of the value basis made by the creator of an advertisement presumes a shared value with the consumer' (Pollay and Gallagher 1990, 364). On the question of whether advertising precipitates changes in cultural values, Pollay and Gallagher note that this is very hard to determine and that any claims that the values manifest in advertising texts correlate to the elevation of those same values in society cannot be sufficiently backed up to be convincing.

Despite the challenges of 'proving' the societal impact of advertising, much scholarly focus has been given to this assertion. Termed 'macro-level criticisms' by Drumwright (2007), the concern is arguably less with the accuracy of advertising 'mirroring' society and more with the 'aggregate effects of advertising' (406). In other words, the focus here is with the broader, collective social impact of the entirety of the landscape of advertising. As Drumwright (2007) notes, there are typically three concerns articulated about how advertising may be harmfully influencing society: namely, promoting a materialistic consumerism that overrides self-conceptualisations as citizens; the perpetuation of reductive stereotypical depictions and portrayals of various social groups, thus robbing members of such categories of their multidimensionality and plurality; and the birthing of undesirable values such as anxiety, low self-esteem, excessive consumption in terms of food and material goods, leading to harmful outcomes for the environment, society and the individual. Of course, to counter such critiques of its industry, advertisers have often defended their practices and texts by pointing out that the arguments of academics, who suggest a more desirable repertoire of discourses and images or the injection of more helpful and positive values into ad campaigns, are simply subjective, normative positions and are not necessarily to be taken as a road map for industry-wide soul searching. Furthermore, advertising practitioners reasonably point out that levelling the finger of blame at the industry for supposedly creating an insatiable populace of materialistic consumers is misdirected since the burden of responsibility should be shouldered by the system of capitalism, which necessitates the existence of advertising. Similarly, in the academic framing of advertising's social effect, there have been disputes between the 'hypodermic' understanding of media viewers as highly susceptible, as distinct from those who suggest that people play a far more active and discerning role in the reading of media texts and advertisement (see Holmes 2005). Nevertheless, defences in this vein do not tackle or challenge the overall concern with the societal impact of advertising; which is to say that, regardless of the culpability of advertising, as an industry and a collective of practitioners, in the construction of problematic values, attitudes and behaviours, it seems clear that the media landscape of advertising no doubt shapes the worldview of its audiences.

Ireland and Irish advertising in the period

The image – or, in other words, the symbolic – was understood as being hugely important to the newly independent Irish Free State in the 1920s and 30s. As Luke

Gibbons (2011) explains, 'one of the first pieces of legislation brought in by the new Irish Free State was the Censorship of Films Act (1923)' (19); such censorship was not just underpinned by a conservatism spearheaded by the Catholic Church, but also by a recognition that controlling what people were exposed to could ensure a tighter rein was kept on the citizens of the fledgling State. Nevertheless, despite this conservatism and censorship, which was still well in operation in the 1950s and 1960s, Ireland was beginning to look outwards in terms of taking visual cultural inspiration from Europe and beyond. Crucially, in 1949 a report commissioned by the Irish State was carried out by former director of the National Gallery of Ireland, Thomas Bodkin. Titled *Report on the Arts in Ireland* it was conceived as a piece of research to survey the state of visual culture in Ireland, and with a motivation to try to hold back the tide of mass-produced, factory-manufactured, poorly designed goods and products – as fostered by US producers at this period – and instead to see what Ireland could learn from 'North European commitments to craft and design' (Gibbons 2011, 23). In other words, the report signals an explicit conscious appreciation for distinct and so-called authentic cultural manifestations, and indicates that the Irish government were serious about home-grown, Irish led design. Of course, this also had an economic bent, and soon after publication of Bodkin's report, the Irish Design Council was set-up with a view to growing export markets for Irish crafted products. The establishment of the Irish Arts Council soon followed in 1951, and just over 10 years after this, in 1962, a report on *Design in Ireland*, which was authored by six well-respected Scandinavian designers, marked an ultimately significant development for the Irish advertising industry. The findings of that report, which pointed to an underdeveloped and inconsistent Irish design sphere, led to the Kilkenny Design Workshop opening up in 1963 to support, nurture, and promote Irish craft workers [nowadays this is everything from ceramics and pottery, to woollen products like scarves and blankets]. This 1962 report resulted in a recognition that the appeal of Irish-made products would lie in their 'tradition, authenticity, and the handmade look' (Gibbons 2011, 25). Interesting too is that when these Irish designed and made craft products were launched into the US markets in the 1960 and particularly into the 1970s, they were very conscious of selling an 'Irishness'; so much so that in 1976, when the Kilkenny Design products were being launched in a high end department store in Dallas, Texas, it was accompanied by an Irish film festival screening of the 1962 film adaptation of the 1907 play by JM Synge, *The Playboy of the Western World*, and also David Lean's 1970 film *Ryan's Daughter*, filmed in Dingle, Co. Kerry. As Gibbons argues, this suggests that 'the screen image was passing from under the control of the Catholic Church to the tourist board, one idealised Ireland giving way to another' (25); with the latter shaped by an increasingly influential consumer and promotional culture, and one that would see the national advertising industry start to find its feet.

This somewhat contrived conceptualisation of 'Irishness' and Ireland was expressly constructed to attract tourism to Ireland; something that can be seen in the adverts created for Aer Lingus in the 1950s and 1960s. However, what is different about the airlines promotional materials is that they do not simply play on a nostalgic, romanticised, primitivistic vision of Ireland. Instead, adverts used by Aer Lingus intertwine 'discourses of tradition and modernity', which 'are not presented as parallel and thus

mutually exclusive opposites; rather these abstractions are synthesised to the extent that they are offered as co-existing' (King 2011, 186). Massively influential to how the expanding domestic airline (which was founded in 1936) visually represented itself in the 50s and 60s was the arrival of several Dutch graphic designers into Ireland in this period. Beginning with Guus Melai, who was recruited from KLM's in-house graphic design department, the trend continued with other Dutch so-called 'commercial artists' or graphic designers. Some of these designers had trained at the Bauhaus and were also influenced by broader European and American trends in popular and visual culture. Consequently, their modernist aesthetics start to become infused in Aer Lingus posters of the period; meaning that, in more general terms, the newly skilled and trained Irish graphic designers, thanks to their Dutch mentors, were creating work that spoke to, and had parallels with their international contemporaries. The arrival of Dutch graphic designers to overhaul such visual strategies used by Aer Lingus resulted in a shake-up and skilling-up of the Irish advertising industry; to the extent that some of these Dutch designers were instrumental and central in establishing what became ICAD (the Institute of Creative Advertising). ICAD was initially founded in 1958 and was conceived as an industry body to support creative advertising practice (King 2011). It is clear that the Dutch Bauhaus-influenced graphic designers who set up shop in Ireland for at least the decade of the 1950s and into the early 1960s were part of a movement that reshaped Irish visual culture and trends and the Irish advertising industry.

Taking the above considerations and contexts into account, this paper foregrounds the following questions:

RQ1: What are the dominant cultural values present in this database of Irish TV adverts?

RQ2: Do the most prevalent cultural values change through the years from the 1960s to 1980s?

RQ: How do the most common advertising appeals compare with sociocultural changes in Ireland in these decades?

Methods

Sampling

The sample for the study comprises a full census of the available archive; meaning that all adverts in the database were downloaded, coded and analysed. In total, therefore, 214 adverts make up the dataset for this study. Of this figure, 18 were labelled in the archive as created in the 1960s with a further 53 adverts estimated to have been produced in this decade; 41 ads were detailed as created in the 1970s with a further 62 estimated to have been created in the 70s; and with 9 labelled as 1980s, a further 31 are estimated to have been produced in the 1980s. For those adverts with no detail of the year or decade included in the online database, contact was made with the head of the IFI archive to ascertain the year that the advert was created and produced. However, as confirmed by the head archivist, no such information was available for those adverts since there was nothing stored with the 35 mm film to indicate dates or credits. As such, a judgement was made to categorise those adverts with no

date provided to the most likely decade based on the fashions apparent in the ad; the presence of public figures and personalities who were popular at different points during these decades; and, for instance, the fact that it was not until the early 1970s that colour television was a widespread occurrence in Irish TV broadcasts; in which case, all black and white adverts without a decade allotted to it was coded as 1960s. While this may be in some, or potentially in many instances, an unreliable determinant of the year of creation and broadcast of the advert, it was deemed a worthwhile exercise in order to attempt to answer RQ2 related to whether the most dominant cultural values have changed throughout the decade. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that the below findings related to this aspect of the study are tentative, at best.

Coding scheme – coding categories

Each advert in the dataset comprises one unit of analysis, where all the adverts were coded for both dominant value theme present and secondary or additional appeal manifest in the advert. Focusing on one cultural value appeal is in line with the approach of other studies and scholars (Mueller 1987; Sun 2013) since it supposes that advertisers embed one overriding value in the advert to be read by consumers. Nevertheless, ancillary appeals were often, although not always, clearly apparent and therefore in these instances, they were coded.

This study operationalises cultural value categories and cultural value themes, as adapted from Pollay (1983) by Sun (2013), Cheng and Schweitzer (1996), and Khairullah and Khairullah (2013). Specifically, three value categories were applied to the dataset. These category groupings comprise: Traditional values (T) consisting of Group belongingness and/or Collectivism, Family, Health, Knowledge, Patriotism, Tradition, and Work; Modern values (M) consisting of Beauty/youth, Enjoyment/leisure, Adventure, Individualism, Modernity/technology, Naturalness, Sexuality/Sensuality Success/status and Uniqueness; and Utilitarian values (U) consisting of Quality/effectiveness, Convenience and Economy. The definitions of several of these categories was expanded to more accurately reflect the cultural specificity and content of the dataset; specifically, related to 'patriotism', 'work', 'enjoyment/leisure', 'adventure', 'naturalness', 'sexuality/sensuality' and 'quality/effectiveness'. The descriptions of the cultural values belonging to each of the three value categories can be found in Table 1.

Coding procedure – interpretive content analysis

Drawing on Ahuvia (2001), who advocates for the use of interpretive content analysis where coding categories are complex and inter-coder reliability would be difficult to achieve, the author represents the single coder for the study. Since intercoder reliability is not a requirement of interpretative content analysis 'it has the flexibility to take context more fully into account' (146). More specifically, such a technique or method allows for a degree of subjectivity and the ability to code not just manifest, but also latent content. Given that the coding categories are open to varied interpretation, the argument of using this method centres on the fact that what is lost to replicability is gained in terms of analytical complexity. In other words, the author's familiarity with

Table 1. Descriptions of coding categories.

Operationalised cultural values [a]*Adapted from* Sun (2013); [b]*Adapted from* Cheng and Schweitzer (1996); *Category Groupings adapted from* Khairullah and Khairullah (2013): **Group 1: Traditional values (T) consisting of family, health, traditions and nurturance; Group 2: Modern values (M) consisting of modernity, beauty, sex, and youth; Group 3: Utilitarian values (U) consisting of convenience, economy, effectiveness, safety, quality, and wealth.**

[T] - **Group belongingness and/or Collectivism:** Emphasis is placed on the individual in relation to others typically in the reference group. Individuals are depicted as integral parts of the group [a] [b]

[T] - **Family:** The emphasis here is on the family life and family members. The commercial stresses family scenes: getting married, companionship of siblings, kinship, being at home, and suggests that a certain product is good for the whole family [b]

[T] - **Health:** Use of the product will enhance the vitality, strength, and soundness of the body and make individuals free from disease [a]

[T] - **Knowledge:** Emphasis is placed on the educational and informational function of a product. Use of the product will improve knowledge or wisdom [a]

[T] - **Patriotism:** Emphasis is placed on the love of and loyalty to Ireland as a country [a] *or more generally using Ireland or Irishness as a selling point [author's own inclusion/ adaptation]*

[T] - **Tradition:** The product is associated with the qualities of being classic, historical, time-honored, legendary, venerable, and nostalgic [a]

[T] - **Work:** This value shows respect for diligence and dedication of one's labor and skills. A typical example is that a medication has regained a desperate patient his or her ability to work [b] *or references the value of work [author's own inclusion/ adaptation]*

[M] - **Beauty/youth:** Emphasis is placed on a product's ability to make individuals appear attractive, elegant, handsome, young, and rejuvenated [a]

[M] - **Enjoyment/leisure:** Use of the product will bring one relaxation (e.g., rest, vacations, holidays) and enjoyment (e.g., fun, happiness, celebration) [a] *or includes scenes of activity [author's own inclusion/ adaptation]*

[M] - **Adventure:** This value suggests boldness, daring, bravery, courage, or thrill. Sky-diving is a typical example [b] *or includes exotic location [author's own inclusion/ adaptation]*

[M] - **Individualism:** The emphasis here is on the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of an individual or on the individual as being distinct and unlike others [b]

[M] - **Modernity/technology:** The commercial emphasizes the product's attributes of being new, contemporary, modern, progressive, advanced, up-to-date, or ahead of its time. The commercial may present the sophisticated technology used in manufacturing the product [a]

[M] - **Naturalness:** The commercial emphasizes the product's attributes of being pure, organic, and unadulterated and encourages environmentally preferable purchasing [a] *or includes references to freshness, either manufactured or in nature [author's own inclusion/ adaptation]*

[M] - **Sexuality/ Sensuality:** The commercial uses glamorous and sensual models and stresses the attractiveness of a clearly sexual nature [a] *[category extended by author to include 'sensuality', which is similar to sexuality but has more subtle implicit sensual and/ or sexual content]*

[M] - **Success/status:** Use of the product will elevate users' social position or rank in the eyes of others, and make individuals feel in control of their lives, or enable them to achieve their life goals [a]

[M] - **Uniqueness:** The unrivaled, incomparable, and unparalleled nature of a product is emphasized, e.g., "We're the only one that offers you the product." [b]

[U] - **Quality/effectiveness:** Emphasis is placed on the effectiveness, excellence, and durability of a product [a] *or includes references or allusions to reliability [author's own inclusion/ adaptation]*

[U] - **Convenience:** A product is suggested to be handy and easy to use [b]

[U] - **Economy:** The inexpensive, affordable, and cost-saving nature of a product is emphasized in the commercial [b]

the research questions, the dataset, the operationalised cultural values and their descriptions and the opportunity for repeated viewing of the adverts meant that a consistency could be brought to bear on the coding process. The justification for employing this tool is summed up by Ahuvia's contention that '(i)t is enough for the researchers to show that their codings are at least as plausible and compelling as rival interpretations' (2001, 149). Echoing the approach of Khairullah and Khairullah (2013), the dominant value coded was based on the researcher's first impression, or 'gestalt'; although, in instances where more than one cultural value appeared, repeated viewing of the advert was initiated in order to make a determination as to dominant and secondary value category.

Table 2. Dominant and secondary cultural values in total advert sample.

Total no. of adverts (n = 214)		1960s-1980s (n = 214)			
		Dominant theme		Secondary theme**	
Value categories	Value themes	Frequency	%*	Frequency	%
Traditional values	Family	10	4.7	9	7.5
	Group belongingness and/or Collectivism	7	3.3	16	13.3
	Health	6	2.8	2	1.7
	Knowledge	5	2.3	0	0.0
	Patriotism	3	1.4	1	0.8
	Tradition	10	4.7	2	1.7
Modern values	Work	2	0.9	1	0.8
	Adventure	12	5.6	6	5.0
	Beauty/youth	8	3.7	4	3.3
	Enjoyment/leisure	39	18.2	8	6.7
	Individualism	1	0.5	1	0.8
	Modernity/technology	20	9.3	3	2.5
	Naturalness	5	2.3	3	2.5
	Sexuality/ Sensuality	5	2.3	14	11.7
	Success/status	29	13.6	2	1.7
Utilitarian values	Uniqueness	13	6.1	2	1.7
	Convenience	8	3.7	6	5.0
	Economy	14	6.5	14	11.7
	Quality/effectiveness	17	7.9	26	21.7

*percentages rounded and therefore may not add up to 100 exactly

**120 coded for secondary value

Across 3 decades, dominant cultural value:

1. Enjoyment/leisure: 18.2%
2. Success/status: 13.6%
3. Modernity/technology: 9.3%

Across 3 decades, secondary cultural value:

1. Quality/effectiveness: 21.7%
2. Group belongingness/Collectivism: 13.3%
3. Sexuality/sensuality: 11.7%
3. Economy: 11.7%

Results

Dominant and secondary cultural values contained in sample

The results of the content analysis are featured in Tables 2–5. Throughout the three decades, it is clear that modern values (M) are invoked the most by advertisers and their clients, with some evidence of a reversal of this trend by the 1980s which seem to suggest traditional values (T) coming to the fore in terms of advertising ‘appeal’; albeit with the number of available 1980s adverts in question being small. By the 1970s, modern values are still dominating, but the utilitarian value of ‘Quality/Effectiveness’ represents the dominant cultural appeal in just under 12% of adverts coded as 1970s.

RQ1 is addressed in Table 2, which indicates that the dominant value theme, by a substantial margin, is Enjoyment/Leisure; manifest in 39 adverts, representing a frequency of 18.2% across the dataset. The second most dominant cultural appeal is Success/status, which was found to be the primary value in 29 adverts, making up 13.63% of the entire 214 adverts in the sample studied. Modernity/technology comes in as the third most dominant cultural theme, having been most prevalent value in 20 adverts, or 9.3% of the database. In these decades, where a secondary cultural value was coded, advertisers appear to have favoured values outside what could be

Table 3. Dominant and secondary cultural values in advert sample: 1960s.

Value categories		Value themes		1960s (n = 71)			
				Dominant theme		Secondary theme***	
				Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Traditional values	Family	6	8.5	3	7.5		
	Group belongingness and/or Collectivism	4	5.6	8	20		
	Health	3	4.2	2	5		
	Knowledge	0	0.0	0	0		
	Patriotism	1	1.4	0	0		
	Tradition	1	1.4	0	0		
Modern values	Work	1	1.4	0	0		
	Adventure	7	9.9	0	0		
	Beauty/youth	4	5.6	0	0		
	Enjoyment/leisure	9	12.7	1	2.5		
	Individualism	1	1.4	1	2.5		
	Modernity/technology	5	7.0	1	2.5		
	Naturalness	1	1.4	2	5		
	Sexuality/ Sensuality	0	0.0	3	7.5		
	Success/status	11	15.5	1	2.5		
	Uniqueness	6	8.5	2	5		
Utilitarian values	Convenience	4	5.6	5	12.5		
	Economy	4	5.6	3	7.5		
	Quality/effectiveness	3	4.2	8	20		

***40 coded for secondary theme

Across 1960s, dominant cultural value:

1. Success/status: 15.5%

2. Enjoyment/leisure: 12.7%

3. Adventure: 9.9%

Across 1960s, secondary cultural value:

1. Quality/effectiveness: 20%

1. Group belongingness/Collectivism: 20%

2. Convenience: 12.5%

3. Family: 7.5%

3. Sexuality/sensuality: 7.5%

classified as modern, instead embedding their adverts with either traditional or utilitarian values; although, the subordinate theme of 'Sexuality/sensuality' belonging to the set of modern values was present as often as the second cultural value of 'Economy' under utilitarian values.

Dominant and secondary cultural values in advert sample: 1960s

Extrapolating the coded adverts from the 1960s indicates a clear pattern or preference for modern values (M), as indicated in Table 3. The major cultural value appeal in this decade is one of 'Success/status', which was present in 11 adverts, comprising 15.5% of the dataset. This was followed by 'Enjoyment/leisure' at 12.7% frequency or 9 adverts, while 'Adventure' featured as the dominant cultural theme in 7 adverts, representing 9.9% of the sample for the 1960s. Much like the overall pattern for the 3 decades, advertisers in the 1960s seem to infuse their adverts with secondary values that bring in traditional and utilitarian appeals; namely 'Group belongingness and/or Collectivism' and 'Quality/Effectiveness' manifest, as minor cultural themes' in 8 each of the sample set.

Table 4. Dominant and secondary cultural values in advert sample: 1970s.

Value categories		Value themes		1970s (n = 103)			
				Dominant theme		Secondary theme~	
				Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Traditional values	Family	3	2.9	3	5.8		
	Group belongingness and/or Collectivism	2	1.9	6	11.5		
	Health	0	0.0	0	0.0		
	Knowledge	3	2.9	0	0.0		
	Patriotism	0	0.0	1	1.9		
	Tradition	5	4.9	0	0.0		
Modern values	Work	1	1.0	1	1.9		
	Adventure	3	2.9	5	9.6		
	Beauty/youth	3	2.9	3	5.8		
	Enjoyment/leisure	23	22.3	6	11.5		
	Individualism	0	0.0	0	0.0		
	Modernity/technology	12	11.7	1	1.9		
	Naturalness	2	1.9	0	0.0		
	Sexuality/ Sensuality	3	2.9	6	11.5		
	Success/status	16	15.5	1	1.9		
	Uniqueness	5	4.9	0	0.0		
Utilitarian values	Convenience	2	1.9	1	1.9		
	Economy	8	7.8	7	13.5		
	Quality/effectiveness	12	11.7	11	21.2		

~52 coded for secondary theme

Across 1970s, dominant cultural value:

1. Enjoyment/leisure: 22.3%
2. Success/status: 15.5%
3. Modernity/technology: 11.7%
3. Quality/effectiveness: 11.7%

Across 1970s, secondary cultural value:

1. Quality/effectiveness: 21.2%
2. Economy: 13.5%
3. Sexuality/sensuality: 11.5%
3. Group belongingness/Collectivism: 11.5%
3. Enjoyment/leisure: 11.5%

Dominant and secondary cultural values in advert sample: 1970s

Coded adverts from the 1970s demonstrate a broadly similar pattern to the 1960s in that modern values comprise the majority of those that dominate. However, compared to the 1960s, there is a reversal of the top spot for most prominent cultural values within this category. Specifically, 'Enjoyment/leisure' features as the most prevalent dominant cultural theme, occurring in 23 adverts, or 22.3% of the 1970s dataset, with 'Success/status' as the next most prominent cultural appeal with a frequency of 15.5% or 16 adverts. Tying for third most prevalent cultural theme is 'Modernity/technology' and 'Quality/effectiveness' (U), both featuring as the dominant theme in 12 adverts, or 11.7% of the 1970s dataset.

In instances where adverts from the 1970s had a discernible secondary cultural appeal present, 'Quality/effectiveness' (U) was, like the 1960s, the most prevalent. It constitutes the minor cultural value in 11 adverts, or 21.2% of dataset. 'Economy' (U) took second spot with 13.5% or 7 adverts, with third most prevalent secondary cultural appeal shared among three cultural themes; namely, 'Group belongingness and/or Collectivism' (T), 'Sexuality/sensuality' (M) and 'Enjoyment/leisure' (M) at 11.5% of the 1970s dataset.

Table 5. Dominant and secondary cultural values in advert sample: 1980s.

		1980s (n = 40)			
		Dominant theme		Secondary theme ^o	
Value categories	Value themes	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Traditional values	Family	1	2.5	3	10.7
	Group belongingness and/or Collectivism	1	2.5	2	7.1
	Health	3	7.5	0	0.0
	Knowledge	2	5	0	0.0
	Patriotism	2	5	0	0.0
	Tradition	4	10	2	7.1
Modern values	Work	0	0	0	0.0
	Adventure	2	5	1	3.6
	Beauty/youth	1	2.5	1	3.6
	Enjoyment/leisure	7	17.5	1	3.6
	Individualism	0	0	0	0.0
	Modernity/technology	3	7.5	1	3.6
	Naturalness	2	5	1	3.6
	Sexuality/ Sensuality	2	5	5	17.9
	Success/status	2	5	0	0.0
	Uniqueness	2	5	0	0.0
Utilitarian values	Convenience	2	5	0	0.0
	Economy	2	5	4	14.3
	Quality/effectiveness	2	5	7	25.0

^o28 coded for secondary value

Across 1980s, dominant cultural value:

1. Enjoyment/leisure: 17.5%

2. Tradition: 10%

3. Modernity/technology: 7.5%

3. Health: 7.5%

Across 1980s, secondary cultural value:

1. Quality/effectiveness: 25%

2. Sexuality/sensuality: 17.9%

3. Economy: 14.3%

Dominant and secondary cultural values in advert sample: 1980s

The third of the three decades surveyed, the 1980s dataset contained the fewest number of adverts. Consequently, the pattern revealed by the coding, while interesting, cannot be considered definitive evidence of a change of approach by advertisers in terms of cultural appeal. Nevertheless, what is found is that, while 'Enjoyment/leisure' (M) features yet again as the most prevalent cultural value (in 17.5% frequency or 7 adverts), the second major dominant cultural theme is 'Tradition' (T), which appears in 10% of the 1980s dataset or in 4 adverts. 'Health' (T) and 'Modernity/technology' (M) take joint third spot for most prominent cultural value, featuring in 3 adverts each, at 7.5% of the dataset.

For those adverts in the 1980s coded for a secondary value, it is found that, as with the 1960s and the 1970s, 'Quality/effectiveness' (U) is the most popular minor cultural theme to be embedded into adverts; featuring in 7 such coded ads or 25% frequency. 'Sexuality/sensuality' comes in second in terms of most frequent secondary appeal at 17.9% or 5 adverts, while 4 adverts (or 14.3% of ads) use 'Economy' (U) as their secondary cultural theme.

Discussion

The [Irish Film Institute](#), on their online player where they have archived, digitised and uploaded over 200 Irish TV adverts from the 60s, 70s, and 80s state:

This project has resulted in the creation of a substantial Irish TV advertising archive that is a rich treasure trove of national memory and cultural artefacts. These films may be only seconds long, but taken together they provide a unique window into Irish society and consumer habits over a 3 decade period. They tell us much about the community they were made for, as well as the era they were made in; reflecting the social mores, standards, dress sense, attitudes to gender, race and so on of the Ireland for which they were created. They are fascinating on many levels and can be enjoyed from a nostalgic, historical, social or cultural perspective

In line with these sentiments expressed by the IFI, Douglas and Craig (2007) likewise suggest that advertising 'mirrors the patterns of day-to-day life and the norms which govern social interaction. It ... reinforces the values which govern social behaviour and ... provides a showcase for the material artifacts which are a product of that culture' (416). Furthermore, 'advertisements created in a particular culture often show a high degree of congruity with cultural norms and mores' (416). Studies that centre the cross country cultural comparisons in their advertising output focus on the 'different themes and appeals that are used ... and how these reflect different societal values, mores, and beliefs' (Douglas and Craig 2007, 417). Furthermore, echoing Marchand, '*slice of life* commercials reflect day-to-day life and habits of individuals in a culture or sub culture' with, for example, 'food consumption patterns depicted in advertising form(ing) part of the ritual of daily life' (Douglas and Craig, 2007, 419).

The degree to which the advertising industry and its practitioners accurately portrayed Irish daily life cuts to the heart of this paper. Exploring the issue is necessarily restricted by the relatively little that is known about the early decades of the industry. As noted by O'Boyle (2011), sketching out a full historical background to Ireland's advertising industry remains an exercise characterised by its incompleteness; with only one attempt by Hugh Oram (1986) to do so. Poor record keeping by agencies has meant that aspects of the emergence and growth of the industry has been lost to history. Nevertheless, what seems clear is that 'conservatism was arguably the defining characteristic of Irish advertising for the first fifty years of the new state' (O'Boyle 2011, 33); surely a reflection of the prevailing social attitudes of the Irish people in first six to seven decades of the 20th century. However, the early 1960s introduction of television to Ireland had a dramatic effect on the Irish population, and on the media landscape; advertising especially so. Indeed, 'in many respects, Irish advertising did not come of age until the start of Telefis Eireann on January 1, 1962' (Oram 1986, 6; cited in O'Boyle 2011, 34). This arguably marks the period when the industry, heretofore without a strong national flavour or identity (O'Boyle 2011) started to grow in confidence and create its own culturally specific identity. This national identity started to also become apparent on the big screen. In the middle of this period under review, the 'First Wave' of Irish cinema got underway. Ging (2002) notes that while the films of the mid-70s to the mid to late 80s may now be 'written off as experimental or avant-garde and thus of little relevance to what we might refer to as a national film industry, they marked a significant period in the development of Irish modernity' (178). Indeed, by grappling with a colonial history characterised by complexity and nuance, alongside a growing progressive youth and subculture, such films in this era represent a 'powerful means of interrogating the diversity of Irish identities, their relationship with the past and their complex relation to modernity' (Ging 2002, 178). That

these cinematic texts were interested in exploring the multiplicity of perspectives on Irish cultural life speaks to a more general increase in outward-lookingness of Ireland in these decades, particularly the 1960s. This is something seen reflected in the numbers of adverts for holidays overseas and indeed, for instance, in the 1960s advert for Gold Leaf cigarettes with its James Bond inspired aesthetic suggesting at the worldly sophistication of Irish men. This opening up of Ireland and its associated sense of exploration tallies with the finding that 'Adventure' featured 'as the third most prevalent cultural value of the ads from the 60s in the dataset. It appears, from the analysis of the IFI's archive, that cultural inspiration from other countries came to bear on the aesthetic and design choices made for several of the campaigns. An advert for Irish matches in 1960s is notable for its playful, cinematic and almost Hitchcockian style, while a 1970s advert for Sandeman Port feels similarly cinematic but with an experimental tone and with influences of film noir.

McCarthy dates the onset of modernisation in Ireland to the late 50s; which marks a time of setting aside the project of economic and cultural insularity and protectionism and instead, on the advice of senior civil servant T.K. Whitaker, a sea change in approach which would involve Ireland looking outwards by attracting foreign industry to invest and locate in the country. The implementation of such policies resulted in a significant boost in terms of non-indigenous companies setting up in Ireland and indeed increased employment, although this was 'painfully slow' in the decade from 1961 to 1971, as noted by Lee (1989, 360). Crucially, the economic 'relaxation' of Ireland's heretofore commitment to preserving its isolation seeped over into the cultural and political spheres; as seen in the application to join other members of the international community in the European Economic Community in 1961 (with the country finally accepted as a member in 1973), and indeed the establishment of its national public service broadcaster RTÉ in 1962. The 1960s marked a time of further progressive cultural moves with the loosening of censorship of literature and film. Keogh (1994) sums up the 1960s as a decade 'of both radical and apparent radical change' (251), not least in terms of progressive moves made in the arena of cultural production with the setting up of RTÉ and later its flagship Late Late Show that proved to be so influential in pushing Ireland's sociocultural boundaries. It was, Keogh puts it, 'a decade of optimism' (251). However, such optimism and appetite for a radical overhaul of Irish institutions, culture and ideology were undercut by both domestic conditions and circumstances outside the state and its citizens control, such as the geopolitical upheavals of the assassination of US President JFK, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the war in Vietnam, and the beginnings of what would become The Troubles in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, the fields of art, culture and media benefitted from some key developments: increased Arts Council grants, the establishment of Kilkenny Design Workshop, the prestige of Rosc in attracting and exhibiting both national and international artists. The musician Seán Ó'Riada, a hugely influential figure in traditional music circles, excelled in the 60s at incorporating a respect for tradition while moving the genre on from the past. He came to symbolise for many 'those qualities of dynamism and national awakening for which Ireland so admired itself at the time' (MacRéamoinn 1981, 9; cited in Keogh 1994, 263).

Despite such a burgeoning dynamic cultural environment, the incalculable influence of Archbishop McQuaid on the cultural outputs – deemed by him as either suitable or wholly unsuitable for protecting the morality of the Irish populace – resulted in his personal denunciation of numerous artists and writers from John McGahern (Keogh recounts that McGahern believes his 1965 removal from his job as a primary school teacher was down to McQuaid’s objection to his use of profanity in his book *The Dark*) to producer Lelia Doolan (who he called ‘Mad, bad and dangerous’) and Edna O’Brien and the furore that greeted the 1960 publication of her *The Country Girls*. Such social and cultural conservatism points to a more complex narrative than its framing as a ‘decade of optimism’ allows for. Indeed, McCarthy notes that Bell suggests that ‘while Ireland, in the first half of this century, produced a cluster of the greatest Modernist writers (Yeats, Joyce, Beckett), the radical impact of their work was not felt here but more often in the metropolises of Europe’ (2000, 34). As such, ‘(t)he Romanticism of the Revivalists was never systematically challenged by a socially radical indigenous modernism’ (McCarthy 2000, 34). Furthermore, in Bell’s estimation, the version of modernism that made its way to Ireland at the tail end of the 60s was:

less as a result of the social ferment that afflicted Europe and the United States at the turn of the century than as a result of the Lemass/Whitaker modernisation. By this time, however, modernism as an international aesthetic movement was already a spent force and has indeed been recuperated by precisely the forces it has once set itself up in opposition to (McCarthy 2000, 34).

In other words, what can be seen in the Aer Lingus adverts of the 50s and 60s rendered in the modernist style, which as explained by King (2011) was thanks to the influence of the Dutch graphic practitioners drafted in to direct an aesthetic overhaul, represented not a philosophical rejection of the status quo in art but, rather, a somewhat delayed co-opting of a visual arts movement for capitalist purposes. Such a view is reminiscent of Bell, who suggests that in the 1960s, where modernism was apparent, it represented a:

pseudo-international style and sensibility [and] was championed not by a radical avant-garde but by the purveyors of consumer capitalism ... In Ireland this modernism degenerated into a shoddy simulation of consumer prosperity in a society undergoing a tawdry and shortlived experience of the global post-war capitalist boom (Bell 1988, 229; cited in McCarty 2000, 34).

Nevertheless, in the Aer Lingus adverts that feature in the dataset, there is a symbiotic pairing of traditional values, namely ‘Patriotism’ with modern values (both ‘Enjoyment/Leisure’ and ‘Modernity/technology’) which disrupts, albeit marginally, a narrative of modernism necessitating a rejection of, even if for purely commercial purposes, the traditional.

The built environment, as well as the culture and economy of Ireland also came under the sway of modernism in these decades. As Hanna (2013) explains, after the economic stagnation of the 1950s and the preceding decades, the 60s and 70s marked a period when ‘the city of Dublin underwent dramatic physical changes’ with ‘visible manifestations of urban modernization’ (2), namely in the building of Busáras and Liberty Hall, among others; reflecting the forward-thinking, expansionist shift in direction instigated by the Government of the day. Indeed, the 1960s is considered by

some as 'the best of decades' (Tobin 1984, 4–5 in F.S.L Lyons *Ireland since the Famine*; cited in Hanna 2013, 9) for its growth in wealth and the impact on the nation's sense of itself. While the promise of ongoing economic progress was already dwindling by the middle of the 1960s, Hanna notes that intense dissatisfaction on the part of the citizenry characterised Jack Lynch's tenure as a Fianna Fáil Taoiseach for the 7 years from 1966 to 1973 and again from 1977 to 1979. The discontent concerned issues with rising unemployment and inadequate housing and was later a manifestation of public unease about the situation in Northern Ireland, so that by the 1970s, with the increasing delegation by the state to the market and to capital to steer the Irish economy, Hanna makes reference to Terence Brown's assertion that Ireland had morphed into a somewhat cold and materialistic country (2004, 10). The psychosocial shedding of more established Irish values (arguably of care for the poor and of the importance of community), gave way to a more fragmented collective Irish identity. In the capital, the butting of modern values up against the established status quo took its toll on the physical environment of Dublin's Georgian architecture. Built during its colonial occupation by the British, many buildings were sacrificed to the ideal that it was not appropriate or representative of a modern, independent state to have so many visual reminders of its oppressive colonial past. In an alternative analysis to explain the demolition of some of Dublin's finest 18th and 19th century buildings, Hanna notes that the 'destruction of the Georgian city and its rapid replacement with ersatz modern buildings represented the rejection of the national ideals of the founders of the state and an embracing of the international sphere' (2013, 11; reference to argument made by Andrew Kincaid, *Postcolonial Dublin: Imperial Legacies and the Built Environment*. London, 2006). Rather, the erection of buildings in the modern style in these years might be taken as 'indicative of a new ideology of progress and rationalism in Irish life' (Hanna 2013, 12). Indeed, this notion of 'progress' seems to have been reflected in an accelerated pace of life and travel which witnessed Dublin become the bustling, if not to say, hectic, city that it remains today. Hanna notes that '(t)he process of reorientation of the city centre towards commerce, bureaucracy, and international capitalism was accompanied by a rapid increase in vehicular traffic in the city' (2013, 13) resulting in a reduction of the numbers of commuters into the city by bicycle by 80% during the 10-year period from 1961 to 1971, accompanied by an astounding increase in motor traffic. Such a situation necessarily meant that 'there was a new focus on transport infrastructure in central and local government' (2013, 13). This is reflected in a number of the adverts analysed in the archive. For example, a 1960s advert for CIE (the statutory body responsible for public transport provision) depicts Dublin as a modern, bustling city and centres on CIE men using the latest technology and 'scientific' approach to studying traffic congestion to keep the buses moving. Likewise, a 1970s advert for Quix washing up liquid is set aboard a fast-moving train travelling across the country. The efficiency of the product is paralleled with the efficiency and fast pace of the Irish rail network. The ad is suggestive of Ireland as a modern place; its people are busy, professional and, importantly, not naïve and know the value of good products.

Indeed, the 1960s, 'despite the advances in the arts ... was not a decade of unimpeded and inevitable progress' (Keogh 1994, 264). Nevertheless, where there were

aggressive attempts to smother social advancements by some influential leaders from the Catholic Church, they were not successful at fully stifling the emergent liberalisation of attitudes towards sex, sexuality, sexual equality and a questioning of church doctrine. At the very end of the decade, in 1969, the Irish Family Planning Association was set up against church teaching to reflect the need for advice regarding Irish women's reproductive options. Shortly after, the ban on contraceptives proved the catalyst that brought the activities of a newly emerging Irish Women's Liberation Movement to public attention with their actions around highlighting the farcical scenario of being able to travel to the North, procure condoms and return to the Republic, only to face arrest for possession of items deemed illegal. The situation for women in the decades of the 60s through to the 80s was a mixed one. A paternalistic and patronising political and religious leadership and educational system fostered generations of women who inevitably curtailed their own roles in Irish society. But this reality butted against a small but effective Irish feminist movement, populated by formidable and outspoken women, who sought and to varying degrees achieved critical and revolutionary changes for women in Ireland. Of particular note in the findings of this content analysis is the 1970s advert for Ponds hairspray which parodies the feminist movement and co-opts but ultimately undermines feminist language of equality. Indeed, the adverts throughout the database present mixed messages about women's changing roles in Ireland in these decades. A 1960s advert for Odorno deodorant depicts the modern girl as 'active', 'efficient' but who is nevertheless stereotypically 'feminine'. Similarly, Ronson hairdryer advertised in the 1970s portrays the female protagonist as adept at using a portable hairdryer with 'variable heat control'. She is the tech-savvy, modern Irish woman; but, crucially, one who can 'feel nice while you're making your hair look nice'. After all, 'apart from a mink coat, what more could a girl want?'. This suggests that advertisers were certainly aware of the burgeoning women's movement in Ireland – which was ignited through the establishment of the Irish Women's Liberation Movement in 1970 – and they sought to capitalise on the national conversations being had about women's status and position in Irish society. Indeed, in seeking an explanation for the slight reversal in trend in the 80s, where 'Tradition' features as the second most dominant value in the dataset for this decade¹, it could be that advertisers were aware of various social and political upheavals in the country. In particular, the significant shake-up of relations between the sexes, which would have been very apparent by the 1980s, coupled with the high numbers of people emigrating may have resulted in the sense that cultural themes related to traditional values may be more appealing to consumers because such concepts could be read as comforting since tradition suggests continuity and the known, rather than change and having to adapt in a changing environment.

The aspect of affluence and social class emerges as a major cultural theme in the findings of this study. In part, this can be traced back to a growing middle-class with greater disposable income than the previous generation, many of whom emigrated to seek a better life. The impact of the shift in approach by the Department of Finance reflected in the reduced rates of emigration which went from '43,000 per annum between 1956 and 1961 to 16,000 between 1961 and 1966, and to 11,000 between 1966 and 1971' (Lee 1989, 360). In addition, as well as the tentative economic

prosperity slowing the flow of people out of Ireland, these years also saw growing populations in the majority of counties across the Republic of Ireland which signified the end of population decline that had characterised the country since the famine in the 19th century. Innovative and ambitious thinking drove some important changes in the education sector also. A critical development came in the form of free secondary school education, which increased the numbers of second level pupils in the mid-60s from 104,000 by an additional 40,000 to 144,000 by the end of the decade (Lee: 362). Some overhaul to the third level education sector likewise ensued, but even with increased state subsidies and scholarships those from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds continued to be underrepresented at universities and technical colleges in the country, while their middle class peers benefited in greater numbers. Indeed, social class and social status, where it appears in the adverts analysed predominantly reference an upward social mobility on the part of those featured. For example, a 1970s advert for Curragh Carpets exudes concepts of middle-class wealth and status and the ability to afford quality goods. Although these aspects are tempered by the voiceover's admission that a young couple purchasing a new home would have to count pennies and likewise the unfurnished living room in which the couple sit on their luxurious new carpet with just a small TV to occupy the room offers a counter-balance to the notion of wealth, and as such ties in the broader findings of the utilitarian value of Quality/Effectiveness occurring as the most referenced secondary value in the archive, the opening shot of the champagne bottle, and the closing shot of the outside of a large country manor house speak to a supposedly attainable life that would not have been within the grasp of the previous generation of 30, or so, year olds. Similarly, the 1980s advert for Hoffmans lager with its premise on a spin gone awry on 'Bill's' friends speedboat speaks to an upper-middle class wealth and lifestyle that would have been invoked by advertisers to appeal to an Irish people with increased expectations of material wealth.

A global economic downturn by the mid-70s was largely ignored by the Irish Government (then led by Cosgrave), meaning that measures were not put in place to respond to growing inflation and increased unemployment. Lee recounts how '(i)nflation accelerated in all European states in 1974 and 1975, but the Irish rate far exceeded the average' (Lee 1989, 471).

The consequence of Irish spending and borrowing policies was a sharp rise in taxation from 38 per cent of national income in 1978 to 52 per cent in 1984. Between 1974 and 1984 taxes on personal incomes rose at more than double the rate of inflation. The widespread feeling that real living standards were falling during the early eighties was no consumer illusion. Personal disposable income fell about 12 per cent between 1979 and 1982 (Lee 1989, 519).

Despite this, throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, adverts for JWT holidays appear repeatedly on Irish screens. Typically, these ads feature young couples, mostly unshackled by family and children representing the first generation to be able to afford foreign holidays and indicating a relatively 'nouveau riche' cohort of the population; however representative they might be. Outside of adverts promoting overseas holidays, the cultural value of 'Enjoyment/Leisure' is invoked as an appeal for products ranging from ales and lagers to sausages, biscuits and soft drinks. This focus on fun,

relaxation and enjoying oneself as a consistent cultural theme from the 1960 to 80s chimes with changing notions of Irishness and Irish identity where, psychosocially, the country – at least as understood by its advertisers at the time – was beginning to represent a place of hope, promise and prosperity and one where its people were beginning to enjoy the fruits of economic success and increasing cultural sophistication as a result of a greater sense of its significance in the world. Nevertheless, as discussed, the reality of people's lives paints a more inconsistent picture.

Conclusion

This exploratory study set out to document the dominant cultural values used as advertising appeals in TV advertising in Ireland from the 1960s to the 1980s and to ascertain any significant change in pattern or prevalence of cultural themes. Additionally, the paper was interested in examining whether these aspects of accuracy, of being true-to-life and of cultural change are apparent in the archive of over 200 adverts created in Ireland over a 30-year period. The results of this content analysis indicate that for a period of 3 decades, advertisers in Ireland invoked modern values to appeal to its consumer markets. Such a focus on the 'modern' and specifically on status, success and enjoyment may well have shaped the wants and priorities of Irish people during these decades and indeed may well have set the population on a path of cultural change that was underpinned by a re-ordering of values and a reconceptualization of life well lived.

The dominance of 'modern' values, however, should not be taken to suggest that advertisers promoted a progressive agenda. Echoing Nixon's (2003) contention that advertisers, particularly those in creative roles, draw on 'informal knowledge' as well as their own subjective worldviews, it seems reasonable to suggest that the male-dominated field of advertising conceived of adverts that would reference pertinent debates in Irish society but presented these discourses in a more palatable and less threatening guise. Such texts, therefore, give credence to Pollay's claim that advertising acts as a 'distorted mirror'. Indeed, Douglas and Craig remind us that '(a)dvertising is created in a particular culture by individuals who are part of the culture. The creators of the advertising are guided by their values and beliefs' (2007, 417). Consequently, however much a society might be 'accurately' reflected through its advertising communications, especially those in the 'social tableaux style, it is still refracted through the worldviews of those who design, create and produce these texts.

Consideration must be given to the limitations of the study, which include the limited number of adverts present in the dataset from the 1980s – comparative to the 60s and 70s – which necessarily means that the elevation of the cultural value of 'Tradition' in the 80s should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, it is maintained that some interesting insight has been shed on what advertisers believed might appeal to the people of Ireland in these decades.

Note

1. As before, since the number of adverts coded as 1980s is small, findings related to this decade are tentative

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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