

**ADVERTISING, A REFLECTION OF OURSELVES: A CROSS-CULTURAL  
COMPARISON OF TELEVISION COMMERCIALS IN THE UNITED  
STATES AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

by

Sandra Bergés Murray

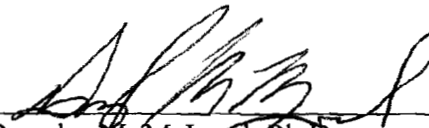
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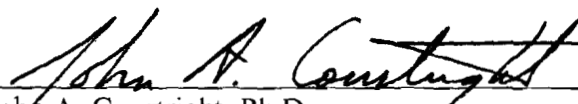
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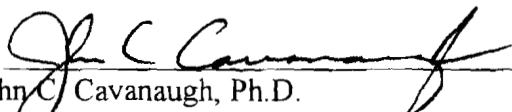
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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a comparative content analysis of TV commercials from the United States (U.S.) and the Dominican Republic (D.R.). The study proposes a new model that derives from Marxist cultural theory. This model posits a relationship between social systems and cultural artifacts. Social systems can be differentiated in terms of the structure of the society. Advertising is the cultural artifact analyzed.

Specifically, this thesis identifies three components of social systems: demographic structure (ethnic and age breakdowns), cultural values (individualism, collectivism, and time orientation), and communication patterns (direct and indirect speech). These social components are related to specific characteristics of advertising. The study identifies several differences between U.S. and Dominican TV commercials in relation to the representation of ethnic and age groups among main characters and the use of advertising appeals. Advertising appeals include achievement, affiliation, time efficiency, and hard-sell. In sum, the study analyses how observed differences in TV advertising correspond to structural differences between the United States and the Dominican Republic.

This thesis examines a total of 180 U.S. commercials and 129 Dominican-produced commercials. The results provide evidence to support the model proposed in the study. The most relevant findings are summarized:

- There is a higher percentage of all main characters that are black in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials.
- There are more white main characters in Dominican commercials than there are black and mulatto main characters combined.
- U.S. commercials have a higher proportion of all main characters that are elderly than Dominican commercials have.
- U.S. commercials use single main characters more frequently than do Dominican commercials.
- There are more affiliation appeals in Dominican commercials than in U.S. commercials; also there are more main characters in Dominican commercials than in U.S. commercials.
- There are more Dominican commercials with time efficiency appeals than U.S. commercials. This finding was in the opposite direction than the one expected.
- U.S. commercials employ hard sell appeals more frequently than do Dominican commercials.

The study concludes that advertising tends to reflect the structure of the society for which it is produced. This thesis increases the knowledge available on advertising differences between the U.S. and Latin America; thus, there are some implications for international advertisers. Finally, some suggestions for future research are offered.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Communication and culture are inextricably linked (Prosser, 1976). People of different cultural origins assign different meanings to the same events. This is not surprising since meanings are derived from social interactions with other people (Blumer, 1969); thus, people from different cultures perceive their environment differently and maintain different communication patterns.

Culture is the general understanding engendered among groups of individuals about the nature of human relationships. Each nation's culture expresses itself in a way that asserts normativeness and permits action (Edelstein, Ito, & Keplinger, 1989). Advertising, as one form of communication, conveys cultural meanings that pertain to the society in which it is produced.

Each society has its own cultural view of the world, creating and using meanings that reflect important decisions in that society (Peter & Olson, 1994). Cateora (1983) holds that symbols recognizable and meaningful to the culture must be used in communicating a promotional message. Advertisers construct messages that try to gain the audience's attention. These messages are designed so that the audience understands them and perceives the product advertised as beneficial in some manner.

The underlying assumption of this thesis is that advertising corresponds to the structure of the social system in which it is produced. This thesis proposes that due to distinctions in societal values, norms, and lifestyles, advertising in two societies with different social structures will reflect those differences. In particular, the purpose of this thesis is to examine how advertising in the United States (U.S.) and the Dominican Republic (D.R.) reflects structural differences of these social systems.

This study furthers understanding of social systems and media content produced in such systems. By examining similarities and differences between the U.S. and the D.R., this thesis attempts to answer broad questions about the relationship between cultural products such as advertising, and the underlying social system.

This thesis provides knowledge about the content of advertising used in a Latin American country. Understanding the advertising strategies used in the D.R. will be useful to the extent that one may generalize to other Latin American countries. According to Aguirre (1994), a social researcher in the D.R., Dominican culture is similar to other Hispanic cultures, except for differences in ethnicity. The D.R. is in many respects a representative country of Latin America. Throughout its history one can see the rupturing divisions, developmental dilemmas, crises, and controversies characteristic of Latin America countries (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992). For instance, the D.R. has experienced a populist dictator, radical reformism, regimes based on manipulation of the elite classes, civil war, and foreign intervention. Thus, the D.R. is representative of many Latin American countries.

## **1.2 Theoretical Overview**

### **1.2.1 Marxist Cultural Theory**

This thesis examines the relationship between social structure and one type of cultural artifact, advertising. The theoretical background of this relationship is derived from the perspective of Marxist cultural theory on the relationship between social structure and cultural products. According to Marxist cultural theory, the base (social system) determines the superstructure (culture). Williams (1973) explains that the word *determines* does not mean that the base is the cause driving the superstructure, rather that the base exerts pressures on the superstructure.

Marxist cultural theory is essentially the traditional Marxist economic theory, translated into cultural terms. Thus, instead of referring to primary production in capitalist economic relations, Marxist cultural theory refers to the primary production of society itself, indeed the production of real life (Williams, 1973). For traditional Marxist theorists, the base is the economic structure of society that conditions the superstructure; the superstructure is the culture. This thesis will extend the process defined by Marxist theory in which the economic structure determines culture. Culture is broken down into its social components and cultural artifacts. Thus, the economic structure determines social values and communication patterns, which in turn shape cultural artifacts.

The idea of the two models is illustrated below:

**Traditional Marxist Model**

Economic Structure  $\Rightarrow$  Culture

**Proposed Model**

Economic Structure  $\Rightarrow$  Social values/Communication Patterns  $\Rightarrow$  Cultural Artifacts

According to this new model the economic structure along with the system of social values and communication patterns of a society form the social system. Thus, in this case the social system has a broader perspective than the Marxist model. This thesis examines the relationship between social systems with their culture.

Culture is a broad and abstract concept that cannot be measured directly. Thus, in order to analyze culture one should look at cultural indicators. Advertising is a cultural indicator that is subject to examination. Advertising as part of the literature of a society, embodies certain meanings and values that contribute to the dominant culture (Williams, 1973). In addition, advertising content may indicate much about a society, reflecting some aspects of the social origins of the audience (McQuail, 1993).

There is a strong connection between economic power and society. Society is a complex whole that has a specific structure, with principles directly related to social intentions, defined by the ruling class (Williams, 1973). The ruling class of a society has the economic power; therefore, it is the social values of the ruling class that are



advocated as the preferred modes of conduct in a society. According to the proposed model, the social system shapes characteristics of its advertising. Thus, a comparison of advertising from different social systems will reflect structural differences of the societies.

Marxist theory is useful in analyzing different social structures, particularly when comparing a developed and a developing country. One may compare two societies situated in different economic stages and expect that their value systems will differ (Hall, 1979). If indeed one expects to find differences in advertising, these differences will be more obvious when comparing a developed and developing country.

There are several structural differences between the U.S. and the D.R. One of the most relevant differences is in relation to economic development. The U.S. is an economically developed country that plays a key role in the world economy. On the other hand, the D.R. is a developing country. In this case, development refers to progress toward a complex set of welfare goals, such as reduction of poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Brookfield, 1975). Although the U.S. is still working toward reaching these welfare goals, in relation to the D.R., it is much closer to these ends.

### **1.2.2 Components of Social Systems**

This study addresses three components of social systems: demographic structure, cultural values, and communication patterns. First, the focus of demographic

structure is on the comparison of ethnic and age distributions. Second, the focus on cultural values is on the individualism/collectivism dichotomy and time orientation. Third, the focus of communication patterns is on directness and indirectness of speech.

### **1.2.2.1 Demographic Structure**

#### Ethnicity Structure

Most societies have diverse ethnic groups. According to Marxist theory, one group may be more dominant than others due to economic power. An examination of the ethnic structure of a society is based on the actual population and distribution among different ethnic groups. This thesis will examine the role of blacks and their relative importance and economic power in two societies. It will also discuss the role of whites in one particular society.

#### Age Structure

Age is another important structural aspect of cross-cultural analysis. Once again, this requires an examination of the actual distribution of the population in terms of the proportions in each age group. A particular group may have more influence and greater economic power than its counterpart cross-culturally. Specifically, this thesis focuses on the role played by older adults (over sixty years old) in each society. Thus, both ethnicity and age are important structural aspects that should be dealt with when conducting a cross-cultural analysis.

### **1.2.2.2 Cultural Values**

According to Rokeach (1973), values are enduring beliefs that specific modes of conduct are socially preferable to opposite modes of conduct. Values are systematic concepts that can be used to describe behavior (Stewart, 1985). They are the deepest manifestations of culture. One society may be differentiated from another in terms of the degree to which their value systems are organized. Loudon and Della Bitta (1993) state that values serve as standards or criteria that tell people how to act, what to want, and what attitudes to hold. Furthermore, values are culturally determined and exert a strong influence on consumer behavior. Advertising is a powerful medium in both influencing and reflecting these cultural values. Moreover, since values are predictors of individuals' behaviors, values are present in advertising. In terms of cultural values, the individualism/collectivism dichotomy as well as time orientation will be discussed.

#### Individualism

In the past, previous researchers have found the individualism/collectivism dichotomy to be useful when conducting cross-cultural analyses of advertisements. Individualism refers to the concepts of self-reliance, self-interest, and self-esteem. Loudon and Della Bitta (1993) state that individualism is founded on a belief in the dignity, worth, and goodness of the individual. This view holds that the worth of individuals is assessed in what they can do for themselves. Individualism stresses that those inner characteristics found in each person are the key to success in life. The

theory of individualism says that individuals should have freedom in their economic pursuits and should succeed by their own initiative.

An individualistic culture sees the individual as the smallest unit of survival (Yang, 1993) and reflects a preference for independence from groups (Triandis, 1984). The purpose of collectivities is to maximize individuals' well being and advancement. McCarty (1994) states that individualistic cultures consider it acceptable that an individual stands out from the group. Indeed, individual initiative is rewarded and expected. In individualistic cultures, child-rearing patterns emphasize independence and finding oneself (Triandis, 1989).

### Collectivism

On the other hand, collectivism looks at individuals as part of a group from which they cannot be separated. A collective society values the goodness of being part of a group and conformity to the mandates of the group. Rather than stressing inner differences, the focus is on how to be a functioning group with similar backgrounds. According to Yang (1993), individuals in a collective society subordinate personal goals to the goals of the collectives to which they belong.

One of the characteristics of a collective society is cooperativeness (Yang, 1993). People have to appear as non-threatening to others. For instance, competition between in-group members is not desirable (Yang, 1993). Instead, individuals try to cooperate with the group for their common good and tend to have an identity only as

members of the group (McCarty, 1994). Child-rearing patterns in collective cultures emphasize conformity, obedience, and reliability (Triandis, 1989).

### Time Orientation

The literature shows that consumers in industrialized and urbanized societies are more concerned with time than are consumers in less developed societies. Moreover, people from industrialized societies tend to see time as a scarce resource (Gross, 1987). Because this study compares two countries in different economic stages (one being more industrialized than the other), time orientation is a useful structural difference to examine.

Graham (1981) describes three models that help understand the behavior of people that hold different time perceptions. These models are: procedural-tradition, linear-separable, and circular-tradition. Societies oriented with procedural-tradition model of time consider the amount of time spent doing an activity irrelevant; the main concern is that the activity is done right. This thesis emphasizes the discussion of the two other models, since the social systems analyzed fit the description of these time orientations.

The linear-separable model sees time as linear, with a past, present, and future. According to Graham (1981) people oriented with this model perceive time as a commodity, which can be allocated to activities. Also, given the benefits derived from these activities, one can allocate time in a way that maximizes utility.

On the other hand, the circular-traditional model perceives time as a circular system in which the same events are repeated according to some cyclical pattern. In this case, the future cannot be anticipated, but the present cannot be ignored and one must cope with it now.

### **1.2.2.3 Communication Patterns**

Patterns of communication in a society determine how people relate to each other; therefore, they are key aspects of structural differences. Two distinct patterns of communication are identified: direct and indirect. A direct communication pattern refers to communicating with as few words as possible while trying to convey the most information in the least time. In a sense, communication directness is a matter of efficiency: acting effectively with a minimum of waste (Webster's II, 1988). In contrast, an indirect communication pattern is at the opposite end of the spectrum. People communicating indirectly tend to have a more wordy conversation without going straight to the point. They avoid appearing rude by conversing indirectly.

In order to better understand the distinction between direct and indirect speech, one hypothetical example is offered. A trivial situation describes the use of both direct and indirect speech. This is a situation in which two friends, Irene and Paula, converse together at Irene's house. Paula feels somewhat thirsty.

### **Direct Speech**

Irene: "Hey Paula, do you want a soda?"

Paula: "Sure, thanks."

### **Indirect Speech**

Irene: "Hey Paula, would you like a soda?"

Paula: "Oh no, please don't worry."

Irene: "Are you sure? It is no problem at all."

Paula: "No, no it is OK, I am fine, really."

Irene: " Oh come on, just have a zip."

Paula: "Well, OK get me one."

In brief, cultures may be oriented differently in regards to these communication styles.

### **1.2.3 Illustrations on the Relationship Between Social Structure and Advertising**

After reviewing diverse components of social systems, two illustrations will be given to better understand the correspondence between social systems and advertising.

Many advertisers understand the importance of knowing the cultural values and norms of the target audience to create successful advertising. For example, McCann-Erickson, an international advertising agency in the D.R., developed an advertising campaign for an all-purpose cleaner. The campaign was based on the campaign of Taster's Choice coffee in the United States. The U.S. campaign consists of two people who get to know each other and fall in love by meeting due to Taster's Choice coffee. The campaign is in a soap-opera format. The characters are in their mid 40's; the woman is apparently divorced, lives by herself, and has a son who may be in his early 20's.

In order to successfully communicate the idea of falling in love by using a product in the D.R., McCann-Erickson employed the values and norms of that society. First, divorces are less socially accepted and less frequent in the D.R. than in the U.S. Second, middle aged people should not look to start a love relationship, according to Dominican social norms. Third, a child should live with his/her parents, or in this case with his mother. So the Dominican advertising campaign used two young adults, who apparently are in their early 20's. They are both living with their parents and the consent of the parents in this relationship is important. An additional character in the commercial is the maid, who in a sense guards the integrity of the young woman along with the mother. Clearly this is a very different situation than the one presented in the U.S. Taster's Choice campaign. Thus, the Taster's Choice campaign reflects the social structure of the U.S., whereas the Dominican ad campaign reflects the social structure of the D.R. This illustration provides evidence for the notion of adapting advertising campaigns to the cultural environment.

Nevertheless, occasionally advertisers overlook the cultural distinctions of the target audience and fail to produce the desired effects. For example, a telephone company once tried to target the Hispanic market in the U.S. by employing Puerto Rican actors. In the commercial, the wife said to her husband, "Run downstairs and phone Mary; tell her we'll be a little late" (Peter & Olson, 1994). This commercial was not successful because it was not consistent with Hispanic values and behaviors. First,



wives seldom tell their husbands what to do. Second, for Hispanics, being late is not unusual or impolite, rather it is expected.

Working with this framework, this study looks at advertisements in the U.S. and the D.R., under the assumption that a cross-cultural content analysis of advertisements will reflect the structural differences of both countries. This study will further the understanding of international differences in mass communication content.

### **1.3 Description of the study**

This thesis identifies several structural differences between the United States and the D.R. First, the roles of blacks, whites and older adults are discussed for both social systems. Second, the study considers differences in relation to the tendencies of individualism and collectivism. The U.S. places more emphasis on individualism, where individuals are valued for their own efforts. The D.R. places more emphasis on collectivism, where individuals are subordinated to the group (Yang, 1993). This thesis also discusses the differences in time orientation. People in the U.S. are more concerned with making the most of their time than Dominicans. Finally, there is a discussion on differences on communication patterns. Individuals in the U.S. tend to have direct communication speech (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993), whereas Dominicans tend to have indirect communication speech (Aguirre, 1994). Speech directness refers to communicating in a short, concise way; speech indirectness refers to communicating in a round-about way. Based on the model derived from Marxist theory, it is

hypothesized that the content of TV commercials for both societies will reflect these structural differences.

#### **1.4 Outline**

Chapter 2 describes the structural differences that underlie the U.S. and Dominican society. Chapter 3 details the characteristics of advertising that are hypothesized to reflect these differences. This chapter also includes the research hypotheses of the study. Chapter 4 describes the procedures and recording instrument used to conduct the content analysis. Chapter 5 details the results of the study. Finally, chapter 6 considers the findings and offers suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **COMPARISON OF TWO SOCIAL SYSTEMS: THE UNITED STATES AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

The previous chapter described how a model based on Marxist cultural theory may be used in comparing two countries in different economic stages. It also defined three components of social systems that will be analyzed in this study. When comparing the United States and the Dominican Republic, the present chapter will connect those structural components with the respective societies. Since the reader may not be familiar with the D.R., this chapter first provides a description of the country, which includes an overview of its history and economy. Because Marxist cultural theory is directly connected to economic development in a society, a closer look at the historical development and economic structure of the D.R. will help the reader understand the relationship of this country with the U.S.

#### **2.1 Historical Overview of the Dominican Republic**

The D.R. was the first permanent Spanish colony in the New World. Many of the traditional Spanish values are still present in today's society; for instance, 95% of the Dominican population is Catholic and the official language is Spanish. In 1492, the colony started growing based on the economic system of medieval Spain. Since native

Indians were dying rapidly due to unbearable working conditions, diseases and malnutrition, black slavery was introduced. By 1550, the leading Spaniards upon enriching themselves in Santo Domingo and impoverishing the colony, moved on to other colonies. Despite this migration, a system of political authoritarianism and a hierarchy with a centralized and state-dominated economy and society, and with political and religious unity was already established (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992). Hispaniola (name given to the Spanish colony located on the island shared by the D.R. and Haiti) suffered a period of economic depression, leading to social, political, and economic disorganization (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992).

In 1697, the island was officially divided between France and Spain. Almost a century later, the entire island was ceded to France, initiating a long period of foreign intervention. In 1804, black slaves in Haiti proclaimed their independence from France. Although the D.R. declared its independence, within weeks it was invaded by Haiti. Dominicans were oppressed by Haitians from 1822 to 1844. During this period, hatred against Haitians developed among Dominicans (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992). This sentiment still exists today in a weakened form.

In 1844, Dominicans, led by Juan Pablo Duarte, gained their independence from Haiti. However, in 1861, General Pedro Santana tried to annex the Dominican territory to Spain, but did not succeed. In 1882, the dictator Ulises Hereaux took power for seventeen years. He was the first enlightened leader who really had goals for the country (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992). He was successful in creating political order

and economic modernization; however, this modernization had costs, including obtaining international bank loans and leasing the Samaná peninsula and bay (region located in the north-east of the island). Upon the assassination of Hereaux, Ramón Cáceres led the country for five years. During these years there was relative peace in the D.R., which ended abruptly with the assassination of Cáceres.

The death of Cáceres initiated a round of domestic political warfare and economic disruption (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992). Since the Dominican government was deep in debt and in political chaos, it ultimately lost its sovereignty. In 1916, the U.S. government recognized the need to secure the stability of the D.R. and sent its military forces to the island. The U.S. remained in the D.R. for eight years. During these years, there was some economic growth, modernization, and political stability. This occupation allowed the U.S. to increase its power over the D.R.; for instance, it allowed U.S. sugar firms to expand their holdings in the island.

The U.S. occupation forces left behind a country more urbanized than before but its people were not equipped for a democratic government. Horacio Vásquez was immediately elected president and governed until 1930.

In 1930 the Trujillo Era began. The national guard was under the control of General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, who took control of the country. For thirty-one years, the dictator Trujillo governed with total economic control and brutal political repression. Because he believed that recovery and financial solvency depended on greater economic ties to the U.S., he initially granted the U.S. concessions and power

over Dominican economy. He also tied the administration to the U.S. by means of trade, foreign aid, and defense packages (which further reinforced his power.) Trujillo was responsible for numerous building projects and new economic enterprises. During his regime enforced peace and order prevailed. In short, the Dominican economy flourished during the Trujillo era; at the same time he enriched himself. Trujillo and his family and friends had control of 60% of Dominican economic assets (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992).

Using systematic terror, Trujillo's control reached all realms of the country. It included military control, political control, economic control, thought control, educational and intellectual conformity over all socioeconomic groups. By the late 1950's Trujillo's regime had begun to decline. The price of sugar went down, weakening the nation's economy; also, the United States no longer supported Trujillo. Finally in 1961, Trujillo was assassinated. Today he is held in high regard among Dominicans. Some Dominicans point to Trujillo's developmental accomplishments, administrative and organizational talents, seeing him as a symbol of prosperity, stability, and national prestige and power. By contrast, other Dominicans think of Trujillo as a self-serving and bloody tyrant (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992).

After the death of Trujillo, the U.S. exerted pressure to restore democracy in the D.R. However, in 1963, the military replaced president Juan Bosch after only six months in office. The military established a three-man civilian junta. The leader, Donald Reid Cabral, was not popular and was viewed as antidemocratic. By 1965 his

unpopularity led to rebellions and conflicts in the D.R. A civil war began, involving the followers of Bosh against the military. Since the U.S. feared that the D.R. would become another Cuba, it occupied the Dominican territory a second time.

This intervention had marked effects in Dominican society. Approximately two thousand Dominicans were killed, and thousand others suffered injuries (Wiarda & Kryzaneck, 1992). Yet, the social and psychological effects were even greater. A weak nation that had raised its hopes was crushed spiritually and physically. For Dominicans, the revolution involved driving forces such as self-determination, dignity, sovereignty, and national pride. The revolution was not so much about communism, but rather about democracy and the Dominicans' ability to manage their own destiny (Wiarda & Kryzaneck, 1992). These driving forces were stopped by U.S. forces.

Despite the intervention, the U.S. did not solve the root problems, such as poverty and inequality, that caused the revolution. After the intervention, the U.S. appointed Héctor García Godoy as the interim president of the D.R. At this point the conservative elite were back in power and looked for reimposition of the older system of corruption, authoritarianism, and favoritism (Wiarda & Kryzaneck, 1992).

Since 1966, several leaders have been president of the D.R.: García Godoy, Balaguer, Guzmán, and Jorge Blanco. However, one man, Joaquín Balaguer, has been president for the longest period of time. He governed the D.R. from 1966 to 1978 and then has been back in the power since 1986 until the present time. The long

government of Balaguer demonstrates the unwillingness of this society to change in order to avoid an uncertain future.

In short, today's Dominican social system is rooted in its history. The D.R. was initially influenced by Spain, acquiring the Spanish language and Catholic religion. It also acquired Spanish values and behaviors such as a slow-paced life style. More recently, Dominican society was influenced by Trujillo, who created conformity among Dominicans and shaped their communication behaviors. Finally, the U.S. occupation further reinforced conformity on Dominicans.

## **2.2 Economic Structure of the Dominican Republic**

The Dominican economy is predominantly agricultural. Sugar production is still the leading Dominican industry. Other important crops are rice, bananas, coffee, cacao, tobacco, pineapples, oranges, and plantains. Due to the unstable price of sugar in the world market, there has been an increasing effort by the Dominican government to diversify the economy in the D.R.

As the economy accelerated, new industries emerged: gold, cement, plastics, textiles, construction. An increase in commerce and banking fueled this diversification (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992).

One of the most significant developments in the Dominican economy is the growth of export processing zones. Export processing zones are industrial parks built for foreign investors who benefit from legal, administrative, financial, fiscal advantages,



and most important, very cheap labor (Coté, 1994). These companies in the D.R. are allowed to maintain foreign currency accounts and are exempt from taxes on profits, imports, and exports. There are 23 export processing zones in the D.R. The export processing zones employ 140,000 Dominicans, of which 100,000 are women (Coté, 1994).

The economic diversification has had an impact on the rural population. People from rural areas are migrating to urban areas. This situation has created problems of insufficient provision of basic services such as water and electricity in the cities (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992).

Another profitable area that emerged in the D.R. is tourism. In 1980 there were 5,200 hotel rooms available, and in 1992 there were 22,644 hotel rooms available in the D.R. Also, the contribution of tourism in 1985 was US \$368.2 million rising in 1990 to US \$899.5 million (Cruz, 1993 cited in Betances, 1995).

The economic power of the U.S. over the D.R. is great. For instance, the majority of Dominican foreign loans and technical assistance come from the U.S.; also the major buyer of Dominican export products is the U.S. (Del Castillo and Murphy, 1987). In addition, the U.S. is the major investor in export processing zones in the D.R.

The above mentioned economic developments have led to an increase in jobs. The fact that more women are going to the workplace everyday may lead to future changes in the structure of Dominican families, which in turn may change the value

systems of the society. Because women are becoming income earners, the patriarchal pattern of the Dominican society is reduced; males are no longer the sole breadwinners. Thus, the economic power of males relative to females is lessened by the increased participation of women in the workplace.

## **2.3 Structural Differences Between the United States and the Dominican Republic**

The structural differences between the United States and the Dominican Republic include the discussion of demographic structure, cultural values, and communication patterns.

### **2.3.1 Demographic Structure**

#### **2.3.1.1 Distribution of Ethnicity**

The ethnic breakdowns of the U.S. and the D.R. are different (see Table 2.1.) In the D.R. there is a distinction between blacks and mulattos that does not exist in the U.S. For Dominicans, mulattos are those people who have mixed features of whites and blacks (for example, a person with black facial features but with light skin). In turn, blacks are those who have all the features of blacks. However, in the U.S. there is not such a distinction, mulattos are considered black. This thesis examines the ethnicity breakdown of the main characters used in television commercials. The focus will be on

the representation of black people in both countries, and the representation of whites in relation to blacks and mulattos in the D.R.

**Table 2.1**  
**Ethnic Breakdown Between the United States and the Dominican Republic**

---

<i>United States*</i>	
<u>Total Population</u>	
248,709,873	
White	80.29%
Black	12.06%
Asian or Pacific Islanders	2.92%
American Indian	0.79%
Other	3.94%
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	
<u>Total Population</u>	
7,310,000	
White	16%
Mulatto	73%
Black	11%

---

Sources: Europa, 1994 and The World Almanac, 1994.

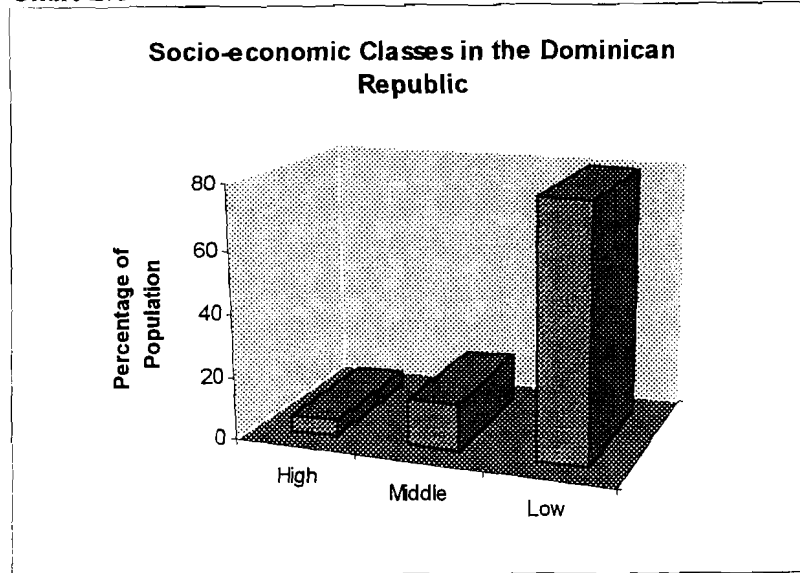
\* Hispanics are included among whites and blacks.

According to Swenson (1990), African-Americans are the largest minority group in the U.S., numbering 30.7 million. Several economic studies predict that this market should rise from an estimated \$240 billion to \$660 billion by the year 2000 (Swenson, 1990). Furthermore, roughly one-third of all African-American households have incomes of \$25,000 or more, and one out of thirteen have incomes of \$50,000 or

segment. Smikle, publisher of Target Market News, says that marketers spent \$834 million to target blacks last year in this country, double the amount spent ten years earlier (Fawcett, 1995). New marketing strategies toward blacks show this increasing effort. For example, cosmetic brands such as Maybelline, Cover Girl, Max Factor, and Revlon, have extended their product lines to include cosmetics for dark skin tones (Freeman, 1995). Thus, blacks in the U.S. have purchasing power and are frequently targeted in advertising.

By contrast, since Dominican blacks tend to be in poverty, most blacks in the D.R. are not as likely to buy the products advertised. Wiarda and Kryzanek (1992), refer to the Dominican social structure as a deeply divided and unequal society. There is a close relation between ethnicity and class. Whites tend to be wealthy, forming the Dominican elite. Those at the bottom are not only poor, but also tend to be black and dark mulattos, descendants of the original slaves, or more recent arrivals from Haiti. In between is the rest of the mulatto population. Chart 2 shows the distribution of socio-economic classes, 5% of the population falls into the category of high class, 15% of the population falls into middle class, and 80% of the population falls into low class. The white ethnic group has historically dominated the nation's social, political, and economic life (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992). Since 80% of the Dominican population is considered poor and 84% of the Dominican population is composed of blacks and mulattos, there must be a correlation between these two figures.

Chart 2.1



Source: Wiarda and Kryzanek (1992). *The Dominican Republic: A Caribbean crucible*.

The dominant class in the D.R. has a disproportionate economic power in relation to blacks and mulattos. Thus, according to the proposed model based on Marxist theory, this inequality of economic power will be reflected in Dominican commercials. By contrast, the U.S. has a more equal distribution of economic power, which will also be reflected in commercials.

In addition, Dominicans value white features much more than black features. In the D.R., a lighter skin is associated with higher status (Nelson, 1990). Dominican culture idealizes the Spanish and Indigenous heritage, suppressing African roots. Trujillo, the Dominican dictator from 1931 to 1961, reinforced this sentiment. During his regime, leading intellectuals, such as Joaquín Balaguer and Peña Battle, revised

Dominican history to reinforce Spanish origins. They claimed that Dominican blacks did not see themselves as black, but rather identified with Spanish values, considering themselves *blanco de tierra* (white of the land) (Del Castillo & Murphy, 1987). Thus, one would expect that if advertisers want to appeal to Dominican consumers, they will tend to feature white characters rather than black or mulatto characters. Therefore, U.S. commercials may use black people more often as main characters than Dominican commercials.

#### **2.3.1.2 Distribution of Age**

A second demographic structural difference is age. The difference between the United States and the D.R. in terms of the age distribution of the respective population is substantial (see Table 2.2.) The focus of this thesis will be on the highest age group (i.e., 60+). Similar to the ethnicity argument, the presence of older adults in commercials should reflect differences in economic power according to the proposed model. There are two aspects to distinguish in regards to this age group: group size and economic independence.

**Table 2.2**

**Age Breakdown Between the United States and the Dominican Republic**

	Years 0-14	15-59	60+
U.S.	21.7%	61.4%	16.9%
D.R.	37.9%	56.6%	5.5%

Source: *The World Almanac, 1994.*

First, there are almost three times as many people per capita in this group in the U.S. when compared to the D.R.; life expectancy is higher in the U.S. than in the D.R. (U.S.: Males- 72 yr./females-79 yr. and D.R.: Males- 67 yr./females- 72 yr.) Probably this disparity in life expectancy is driven in part by a greater access of people in the U.S. to healthcare in relation to Dominicans: in the U.S. there is 1 hospital bed per 198 persons and in the D.R. there is 1 hospital bed per 1,508 persons. Also, in the U.S. there is a ratio of 1 physician per 404 persons, whereas the D.R. has less than half of this ratio, 1 physician per 934 persons (*The World Almanac, 1994*).

Second, the economic power of older adults in the U.S. gives them relative independence. Pollock (1988) reported that adults over the age of fifty have a combined annual personal income of more than 800 billion dollars. There are more than twenty million households headed by someone over 65. Although many older adults in the U.S. have fixed incomes, 11% of these had incomes over \$50,000 in 1989

(Flanagan, 1994). These people have disposable incomes; their children are out of college, they have money to invest, and frequently their mortgages have been paid off (Flanagan, 1994; Pollock, 1988).

Schiffman and Sherman (1991) describe the values of the new-age elderly in the U.S. They are dynamic individuals who are more interested in experiencing new situations than possessing new products. They want to be challenged and tend to spend more time and energy on pursuing experience-rich products and services, such as travel and cultural events. In addition to these preferences, older adults in the U.S. are likely to be living by themselves and doing things themselves (i.e. shopping at the supermarket, going away on vacations.) Thus, marketers may target this group with products that provide new experiences and products that are appropriate to their lifestyles. For example, William from Financial Publishers says that U.S. seniors are more concerned with financial planning and health issues than ever before (Pollock, 1988).

In the case of the D.R., older adults tend to be dependent on their children for mobility. In addition, they do not exhibit concerns with financial planning. Because of the lack of financial planning, most older adults in the D.R. do not have any source of income once they reach retirement. So, they rely more on their children for economic needs. Also, their children take a dominant role in making economic decisions.

Thus, considering the size of the population and the economic independence of older adults in the U.S., advertisers in the U.S. target the age group 60+ more



frequently than advertisers do in the D.R. As a result, U.S. commercials should more frequently use older adults as main characters than Dominican commercials.

In short, the demographic structures of the U.S. and the D.R. have some implications in terms of size and economic power. Later, chapter 3 will discuss those implications for advertising.

### **2.3.2 Cultural Values**

Chapter one already defined the cultural values that are part of the structural differences between these countries. These values will now be linked to the U.S. and the D.R. Specifically, the discussion will be on the individualism/collectivism dichotomy and time orientation.

#### **2.3.2.1 Individualism**

Individualism is prevalent in U.S. society. People in the U.S. value individualism in such forms as independence, self-reliance, and non-conformity (Potter, 1992; Taylor, Miracle, & Chang, 1994). Individuals are encouraged to express their own convictions and achieve goals with their own effort. Personal gratifications result from knowing they have achieved success and met tough challenges without relying on others (Yang, 1993). In the U.S. people have freedom to do what they want. There is a sense of independence from outside constraints. Individualism is reflected in different ways in the daily lives of the people in the U.S. Children are socialized to become

independent, to assume responsibility for their own actions, to be able to verbalize their demands to others, and to exercise self-control over their actions (Yang, 1993). For instance, most young adults strive for independence from their parents. As soon as they can get a job and afford to live by themselves they will move out of the home. In this case, they prove to be economically independent which gives them a sense of accomplishment.

### **2.3.2.2 Collectivism**

For the most part, Latin America is formed of collective societies. For example, Greaves de Pulido and Ramírez (1994) say that Venezuelans value shared efforts, friendship, and loyalty to family and the group to which they belong. Also, the authors cite Naim and Pinangro (1986) who see that Venezuelans love peace, do not like to face open conflict, avoid confrontations, prefer to be liked by everyone, and search for harmony, which makes it difficult for them to face situations of competitiveness. Collectivism is a shared value in Latin America.

Dominicans possess a greater collective consciousness than people in the U.S. This means that more emphasis is placed on the importance of groups as opposed to individuals. In the D.R., it is more important to fit in a group than to be differentiated by standing out in a group. Aguirre (1994) gives several examples that connect Dominicans with collectivism; for instance, in poor neighborhoods people are outside during the weekends, dancing together and enjoying themselves with friends and family

despite their poverty. Thus, togetherness is an important value among Dominicans that surpasses any difficulties. Also, neighbors take care of each other and visit one another; if someone has a problem, that person can count on a neighbor to solve it (Aguirre, 1994). The D.R. is a small country (D.R. area is 18,816 sq. miles, U.S. area is 3,618,770 sq. miles, Encarta, 1994a, 1994b) and people tend to live in close proximity to their relatives and acquaintances. These factors contribute to a greater societal emphasis on collectivism.

The D.R. has a greater emphasis on family values than the U.S.; for Dominicans, family values are very important (Aguirre, 1994). Triandis (1984) refers to this affiliation with the family as *familism*. He describes that in these types of cultures the central concern is the respect and honor of the family. In the D.R., parents avoid getting divorced because it is important that children grow up with their parents.

A comparison of ratios of divorces to marriages will be useful to illustrate this difference. The proportion of divorces to marriages in the U.S. was 51.43%<sup>1</sup> in 1992 (Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1994), whereas in the D.R. in 1992, the ratio was 43.57% (Instituto de la Familia, cited in Sánchez, 1994.) These percentages may not seem significantly different; however, the number of divorces in the D.R. has a confounding factor that overestimates the percentage of divorces: the law of *divorcios al vapor*.

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<sup>1</sup> Percentage of the total of marriages in the same year.

Since 1971 there has been a law in the D.R. that literally means "steam divorces." Under this law, divorces are quickly delivered. Ever since this law came into place, foreigners who neither got married nor lived in the D.R. go there to process their divorces to obtain fast results (Sánchez, 1994). Thus, considering this factor, the 43.57% in the D.R. is fairly low when compared to the 51.43% in the U.S. This comparison indicates that divorces are more frequent among people in the U.S. than among Dominicans.

In addition, Triandis (1984) says that in *familism* a person becomes an adult only after marriage; before then, that person is still defined as a child. In the D.R., young adults continue to live with their parents until they get married. Dominicans have a lot of hope for their children. According to Aguirre (1994), the more children Dominicans have the better, since they believe that children in the future will provide them with the things they could not obtain themselves; also parents expect their children to take care of them when they are old. However, this belief may not necessarily be the reality.

In general, family is accurately described as the primary unit of Hispanic lives (Swenson, 1990). Family to a Hispanic usually means grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even close friends; very often three generations may live together in a household (Swenson, 1990). The extended family represents a type of insurance in times of distress. If a family member has economic problems, this person will receive economic support from the rest of the family.

Thus, individualism is pervasive in the U.S., while collectivism is pervasive in the D.R. These tendencies are observed in the norms and behaviors of people from both countries and should be reflected in advertising according to the proposed model.

### **2.3.2.3 Time Orientation**

The United States and the D.R. can be respectively placed in two of the models described in chapter one: linear-separable and circular-traditional models.

The linear-separable model is similar to the perception of time held in the U.S. (Graham, 1981). Peter and Olson (1994) say that people in the U.S. increasingly value their time and seek greater control of its use. In the United States, people are concerned with making the most of their time. Time is a precious commodity in this society. Individuals work very hard, and have scarce free time. Time should be used as efficiently as possible because it is a valuable resource.

Graham (1981) says that the circular-traditional model is the case in Latin America; people tend to do today those things that must be done today, preferring immediate rewards. The use of time is not planned or segmented. Triandis (1984) holds that Latin Americans refuse being slaves of time, instead interpersonal relations should take priority. Therefore, Latin Americans de-emphasize hurrying, rushing, and time efficiency.

In the case of the D.R., people value a decelerated, relaxed lifestyle, and do not exhibit concerns with time. This is reflected in different aspects of the society.

Dominicans focus on today rather than on tomorrow and there is less systematic planning in many activities than in the U.S. (i.e., family planning, financial planning, or even planning events.) In the D.R., as in the rest of Latin America, many businesses close at noon for a long lunch hour. Latin Americans enjoy a leisurely lunch, which is usually the main meal, followed by a nap (Olien, 1973). Taking a nap in the afternoon indicates the value of a slow-paced lifestyle.

In the D.R., time is not very important. If someone invites a guest for 8 p.m. it means that the guest should get there around 9 p.m. On a daily basis, Dominicans have more free time than people in the U.S. Dominicans are more likely to hire somebody to do the hard work around the house (i.e., cleaning, cooking, washing, painting, cutting the grass) than their U.S. counterparts. Labor is very cheap in the D.R.; therefore, people in middle and high class can easily afford to hire others do the domestic work. Although most of those doing domestic work are Dominicans from the lower socio-economic stratum, they also work at a slower pace. Even maids will take naps after lunch and the "hard work" that they could do in two hours takes them four hours. Thus, in general Dominicans tend to value a relaxed lifestyle.

As demonstrated before, the U.S. and the D.R. have different time perceptions. People in the U.S. are more concerned than Dominicans with making the most of their time. An emphasis on time efficiency stimulates interest in products that save time and enhance leisure time activities, which according to the proposed model, should be reflected in advertising.

### **2.3.3 Communication Patterns**

The United States and the Dominican Republic have distinct patterns of communication. These patterns are connected to the social system, since they derive from the characteristics of individualistic and collective societies. Latin Americans operate with a different set of behavioral cues than those used in the U.S. (Olien, 1973). One example is the perception of the distance maintained when speaking to another person. When two Latinos converse with each other, they stand several inches closer together than their U.S. counterparts. For the purpose of this thesis, only differences in terms of verbal content of the messages communicated will be examined.

Chapter one discussed two patterns of communication: direct and indirect. According to Loudon and Della Bitta (1993) the speech and thought behavior in the U.S. is direct or linear. The U.S. society considers as a good communicator a person who goes directly to the point in conversation. Individuals are encouraged to express their own convictions (Selnow, 1990) regardless of how others perceive their beliefs.

On the other hand, Dominicans use an indirect pattern of communication. They tend to use many words, and even though it may appear as if they convey a great deal of information, they are actually communicating a simple thought in different ways. Dominicans may be considered rude if they are direct when sending a message. Rather, they try to be polite, communicating in a round-about way, so that it does not sound too abrupt. In the D.R., people are aware of what others think of them; they carefully choose their words in order to avoid conflicts with others.

Perhaps one historical source of speech indirectness among Dominicans is the dictatorship of Trujillo (Aguirre, 1994). For over 30 years there was no political freedom of speech in the D.R. and people who spoke out against the government risked being killed. Thus, during the dictatorship Dominicans learned to communicate in an indirect and vague way. Aguirre (1994) says that the influence of Trujillo is still prevalent today, people are afraid of saying things the way they are, rather they disguise the message by using many words.

Clearly, there are two different styles of communication predominantly used in the U.S. and the D.R. Directness in communication relates to individualism, whereas indirectness relates to collectivism. While the U.S. society has a relatively direct communication pattern, Dominican society has an indirect communication pattern. According to the model proposed in chapter one, differences in communication will be shown in commercials.

After reviewing the structural differences between the U.S. and the D.R. in regards to demographic structure, cultural values, and communication patterns, the following chapter will consider how these differences may be related to the content of advertising.



## **Chapter 3**

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF ADVERTISING**

Television commercials were examined to test the model used in this thesis based on Marxist cultural theory. This model predicts that the social structure shapes its advertising. Therefore, in the comparison of two different social systems advertising, as a cultural indicator, should reflect the structural differences of those societies. Two characteristics of advertising assessed structural differences between the United States and the Dominican Republic: demographic profiles and advertising appeals.

Because a literature search did not show any studies that content analyzed Dominican advertising, more general literature that suggests advertising content differences with the U.S. was considered. Thus, differences in the content of Dominican advertising and U.S. advertising were for the most part inferred from knowledge of the structure of the Dominican society.

#### **3.1 Demographic Profiles**

Chapter two reviewed demographic differences between the U.S. and the D.R. In this regard, the study analyzes the representation of blacks cross-culturally, the representation of whites in relation to blacks in Dominican advertising, and the

representation of older adults cross-culturally. The demographic profile only looked at main characters. Main characters are those people who play a functional role that is integral to the message.

### **3.1.1 Representation of Blacks**

In the 1960s, various black civil rights organizations exerted pressure on advertisers to use more black models in their ads; since then, there has been a significant increase in the number of blacks in U.S. advertising (Kern-Foxworth, 1994). Several studies in the U.S. looked at blacks in print advertising but relatively few examined blacks in TV advertising (Licata & Biswas, 1993). Zinkhan, Qualls, and Biswas (1990a) studied the presence of blacks in print and TV advertising over time. They investigated 13,000 television commercials and 205,000 magazine advertisements from previously published studies. They did secondary analyses of major previous content analyses, along with gathering primary data collected in 1986. An inspection of Table 3.1 shows that from 1946 to 1986 only three studies looked at blacks in TV advertising (Dominick & Greenberg (70), Bush et al. (77), and the authors' study) compared to nine studies that looked at blacks in print advertising.

**Table 3.1**  
**Summary of Studies of Black Models**  
**Representation in Ads.**

Medium	Year of collection	Black Ads	Total Ads	%	Study (Date)
Magazines	1946	273	43,533	0.6	Kassarjian (69)
Magazines	1949	213		0.6	Shuey et al. (53)
Magazines	1950	25	2,828	0.9	Humphrey & Schuman (84)
Magazines	1956	230	45,244	0.5	Kassarjian (69)
Magazines	1965	305	47,015	0.7	Kassarjian (69)
Magazines	1965	44	3,089	1.4	Colfax & Sternberg (72)
Magazines	1967	45	2,872	1.6	Colfax & Sternberg (72)
Magazines	1967	268	12,342*	2.2	Cox (69 and 70)
Television	1967	71	1,573**	4.5	Dominick & Greenberg (70)
Television	1968	143	2,023**	7.0	Dominick & Greenberg (70)
Magazines	1969	138	2,467	5.6	Colfax & Sternberg (72)
Magazines	1969	335	6,365	5.3	Cox (70)
Television	1969	260	2,363**	11.0	Dominick & Greenberg (70)
Magazines	1970	82	3,148	2.6	Colfax & Sternberg (72)
Magazines	1970	246	11,224*	2.2	Cox (70)
Television	1973	288	1,944	14.8	Bush et al. (77)
Television	1974	586	4,534	12.9	Bush et al. (77)
Magazines	1978	72	3,383	2.1	Bush et al. (80)
Magazines	1979	22	772**	2.8	Humphrey & Schuman (84)
Magazines	1980	364	3,808**	9.6	Humphrey & Schuman (84)
Magazines	1981	245	3,662**	6.7	Humphrey & Schuman (84)
Magazines	1982	314	3,575**	8.8	Humphrey & Schuman (84)
Magazines	1984	267	6,602*	4.0	Zinkhan et al. (86)
Magazines	1986	125	2,863*	4.4	Primary Data
Television	1986	223	1,393*	16.0	Primary Data

\* These figures represent the total number of ads which contained adult models. All other figures represent the total number of ads that appeared in the sampled media.

\*\* These represent the total number of ads which were populated.

*Source:* George M. Zinkhan, William J. Qualls, and Abhijit Biswas. 1990. The Use of Blacks in Magazine and Television Advertising: 1946 to 1986. *Journalism Quarterly* 67, 551.

The previous Table shows that the use of blacks in TV advertising has risen from 4.50% in 1967 to 16.01% in 1986. However, the representation of blacks in print advertising has not had such a dramatic increase (0.63% in 1946 to 4.37% in 1986). In their study, Zinkhan et al. (1990a) found that there is a significant difference in the use of black characters between TV and print advertising. This difference in the presence of blacks in print and TV advertising may be explained because many of the studies focused on magazines such as Vogue, Mademoiselle, Bazaar, and Cosmopolitan, that do not necessarily regard blacks as a considerable proportion of their readership. Perhaps print media are very specific in their target market, whereas television remains a mass medium. In addition, blacks are among the heaviest consumers of TV programs; therefore advertisers may see television as a better medium to reach blacks than magazines.

Also, Wilkes and Valencia (1989) looked at blacks and Hispanics in TV commercials. They found that blacks appeared in 26% of the commercials run in prime time in 1984, including duplicate commercials. Later, Licata and Biswas (1993) analyzed TV commercials from a sample gathered in 1991. They found that 35.2% of the commercials with live models had at least one black model.

It is apparent that the presence of blacks in TV advertising has increased significantly, in part because of the economic significance of this ethnic group in the U.S. Thus, according to the proposed model, there would be more blacks in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials. Furthermore, a greater percentage of

commercials would use black main characters in the U.S. than in the D.R. Also, the proportion of black to white main characters would be greater in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials. Previous researchers have used these measures successfully to examine the presence of blacks in advertising.

### **3.1.2 Representation of Whites in Relation to Blacks and Mulattos in the Dominican Republic**

As explained earlier, whites have a disproportionate economic power in Dominican society in relation to the majority of the population (blacks and mulattos combined.) This thesis assessed this difference in advertising. Thus, the proposed model predicted that although blacks and mulattos form 84% of the population in the D.R., there would be more white main characters in Dominican TV commercials than there would be mulatto and black main characters combined due to the economic power of whites.

### **3.1.3 Representation of Older Adults**

This study also looked at the representation of older adults in TV commercials. As explained earlier, older adults form a relatively large group of the U.S. population (16.9%); therefore, they are more likely to be considered a target market in this country than in the D.R. In addition, older adults have a greater economic power in the U.S. than in the D.R.

Only a few studies have content analyzed advertisements for the presence of older people. The studies that looked at the presence of older adults in print advertising found that this group is almost invisible (Bramlett-Solomon & Wilson, 1989; Kvasnicka, Beymer, & Perloff, 1982; Gantz, Gartenberg, & Rainbow, 1980). Their findings suggest that older adults are not highly valued consumers in the magazines sampled (such as Ebony and Life), since these magazines are geared to younger readers.

Harris and Feinberg (1977) investigated the presence of older people in 80 TV commercials; only 2.52% of all characters were older adults. Hiemstra, Goodman, Middlemiss, Vosco, and Ziegler (1983), looked at the portrayal of older adults in TV advertising. Their findings show that older adults are underrepresented, since only 3.1% of all characters were over sixty years old. This finding may be explained by the emphasis in this society on values of youthfulness. Another explanation offered by Hiemstra et al. (1983) is that perhaps older people are not yet perceived to be good copy that will sell products.

Clearly these studies need to be updated because present marketers in the U.S. are more concerned about reaching this profitable segment of the population. Older adults have a growing economic importance. Greco's (1989) survey of 112 advertising agencies' executives reported that 62% felt that the presence of older adults in advertisements would increase over the following five years. The number of persons in this age group in the U.S. is projected to surpass thirty five million by the year 2000

(Statistical Abstract, 1994). Accordingly, this thesis proposed that U.S. commercials would use more older main characters than would Dominican commercials. Also, that older characters would be a greater proportion of all main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials.

### **3.2 Types of Appeals**

This study analyzed the presence of specific types of appeals in commercials. Very often advertisers try to persuade consumers by employing psychological appeals. An appeal is something that makes the product attractive or interesting to the consumer (Wells, Burnett, and Moriarti 1992). The word *appeal* may also describe a general creative strategy; for example, an emphasis on product convenience is a time efficiency appeal.

Mueller (1987) defines an advertising appeal as a message designed to motivate the consumer to purchase a product by relating to the person's interests, wants, goals, and problems. Similarly, Fowles (1982) says that people have a number of unfulfilled urges and motives in their minds, and seek resolution of those urges. He adds that part of the role of advertisers is to target those needs by demonstrating how the product provides a solution that fulfills such needs. Four types of appeals were chosen, which can best distinguish the structural differences between the U.S. and the D.R.: achievement, affiliation, time efficiency, and hard-sell. Past research has shown that these appeals are useful in analyzing cross-cultural differences in advertising, therefore

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it seems legitimate to use them for this thesis. Since the proposed model establishes a relationship between cultural values and communication patterns with advertising, these should be reflected in TV commercials by the use of certain appeals.

### **3.2.1 Achievement Appeal**

Atkinson (1974) says that achievement is the combination of two tendencies: the motive to attain success and the motive to avoid failure. Achievement appeals try to arouse a desire to perform something better (Zinkhan, Hong, & Lawson, 1990b). Also, achievement appeals refer to obtaining certain goals on the part of the consumer, for example the consumer may want to obtain academic achievement, athletic achievement, or status achievement. These goals are more likely to reflect individualism because they encourage people to stand out from the group by reaching the desired goals. In addition, ads portraying the acquisition and accumulation of material goods and high levels of consumption activity as desirable goals use achievement appeals. Thus, achievement appeals frequently relate the product to obtaining a high standard of living. According to the study of Zinkhan et al. (1990b), the following situations reflect the use of achievement appeals:

- Outperforming someone else.
- Meeting or surpassing some self-imposed standard of excellence.
- Doing something unique.
- Being involved over a long term in doing something well when there is an indication of great involvement in achieving a goal.

Individualism is related to achievement. Thus, individualism will be reflected in commercials by the use of achievement appeals. For example, a Sears commercial presents a man who won a Nobel Prize; this is an achievement appeal. Zinkhan et al. (1990b) analyzed print ads for a period of 50 years in the U.S. and found that achievement appeals have decreased over time. Yet, the use of achievement appeals should be more prevalent in the U.S. than in the D.R. since individualism is more prevalent in the U.S. than in the D.R.

Another way of measuring individualism is by examining the percentage of commercials employing single main characters across countries. Frith and Wesson (1991) used this measure when comparing cultural values implicit in print advertisements in the U.S. and England. The authors found that U.S. ads contained single individuals more frequently than did British ads. There should be a higher percentage of commercials employing single main characters in the U.S. than in the D.R.

### **3.2.2 Affiliation Appeal**

This appeal refers to the motive to form relationships. Zinkhan et al. (1990b) say that an affiliation appeal is present when someone in an advertisement wants to be with someone else and enjoys mutual friendship. Affiliation appeals seek to socially reinforce and legitimize the establishment and maintenance of positive, affectionate relations with other persons; thus, commercials involving affectionate couples and

warm relationships correspond to this category (Aaker, Batra, & Myers, 1992).

According to the study of Zinkhan et al. (1990b), the following situations reflect the use of affiliation appeals:

- Wanting to establish, restore, or maintain a close, warm, and friendly relationship with another or others.
- Being emotionally concerned over separation from another person.
- Desiring to participate or being concerned with participating in friendly, convivial activities.

Collectivism, prevalent in the D.R., should be reflected in commercials by the use of affiliation appeals. For instance, the TV commercials for Close-Up toothpaste tend to present couples kissing, or holding hands together while the jingle says “come closer with Close-Up.” These commercials are examples of affiliation appeals.

Although affiliation appeals are increasingly used in the U.S. (Zinkhan et al., 1990b), they are probably more frequently used in the D.R.

Another way of measuring collectivism is by examining the number of main characters that appear in commercials. Overall, there should be more main characters in Dominican than in U.S. commercials.

### **3.2.3 Time Efficiency Appeal**

This appeal refers to marketing strategies that emphasize the time factor. Gross and Sheth (1989) defined ads using time efficiency appeals as those presenting the product in one of the following ways: cutting preparation time, saving time, making

double use of time, or encouraging escape from a typically time-oriented lifestyle. Time efficiency appeals may be used by presenting the consumer as hurried and with little free time, and by specifying the amount of time required to use the product (Gross & Sheth, 1989).

Marketing approaches that stress saving time and effort are frequently used in the U.S. For example, there is a commercial for frozen food that says "don't miss lunch, get lunch express." This message is telling viewers that they can have lunch without taking much time to prepare it. After conducting a content analysis of a particular magazine over time, Gross and Sheth (1989) deduced that consumers in the U.S. are increasingly concerned with time. Specifically, this thesis proposed that time efficiency appeals would be more frequent in U.S. than in Dominican commercials.

#### **3.2.4 Hard-Sell Appeal**

Commercials may be characterized as whether or not they employ hard-sell appeals. Hard-sell appeals use rational, informational messages, designed to touch the mind and create a response based on logic (Wells et al. 1992). This is a direct approach, where concrete attributes are important parts of the advertising message. One important attribute of a product is the price. Commercials expressing the product price use a direct communication approach.

Another way of measuring hard-sell appeals is by examining the use of strong arguments and demands for actions (Bradley, Hitchon, & Thorson, 1994). A demand

for action is referred in this thesis as imperative commands. Imperative commands are those situations in which the commercial instructs the consumer to do something, such as: call now, do not miss this offer, come and get it.

The literature shows that U.S. advertising tends to be direct and informational. Frith and Wesson (1991) compared print ads in two countries that seemed similar: England and the U.S. They found that U.S. headlines use more direct messages than British headlines because direct speech is more highly valued in the U.S. than in England.

Advertising in the U.S., to a large extent, employs arguments and tries to appeal to the reason of the audience (Di Benedetto, Tamate, & Chandran 1992). Di Benedetto et al. (1992) found that Japanese ads tend to present little factual information on the brand advertised in comparison to U.S. ads, due to the indirect form of expression in messages in Japan. Similarly, Lin (1993) found that U.S. TV commercials supply greater levels of product information than Japanese commercials. The researcher attributed this difference to differences in communication styles. Japanese marketers tend to be more intuitive, subjective, and human relations oriented, while U.S. marketers tend to be more logical, scientific, data, systems, and procedure oriented (Lazer, Murata, & Kosaka, 1985). Similarly, advertising in the U.S. should be more direct than in the D.R.

Considering that the United States and the D.R. have different communication patterns (i.e., direct vs. indirect), the proposed model predicts that the content of

messages and selling approaches used in commercials should also be different. Since people in the United States tend to use a direct pattern of communication one would expect that U.S. commercials will more frequently employ hard sell appeals than Dominican commercials. Hard sell will be measured by the use of explicit mention of price and imperative commands in commercials.

### **3.3 Research Hypotheses**

The present study will do a content analysis of TV commercials in the United States and the Dominican Republic in order to examine the extent to which differences in commercials correspond to structural differences of both societies. The model used in this thesis is rooted on Marxist cultural theory. Based on the arguments expressed earlier regarding the distinctions of these societies and content differences, the following is proposed.

#### **3.3.1 Demographic Profile**

Since blacks form a relative larger racial group in the U.S. and have greater purchasing power, they are more likely to appear in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials. Also, since whites tend to form the elite group in the D.R. and being white represents a higher status, this thesis proposed that there would be more whites in Dominican commercials than there would be mulattos and blacks combined. Finally, since older adults (over sixty years old) form a bigger group in the

U.S. than in the D.R., and have relatively greater economic power than their Dominican counterparts, they should be more frequently portrayed in U.S. commercials.

Therefore, due to dissimilarities in ethnic and age breakdown, relative differences in economic power in the U.S. and the D.R., and roles played by black people and older adults in both societies, the following hypotheses were expected:

- H1a: U.S. commercials use more black main characters than do Dominican commercials.
- H1b: A greater percentage of U.S. commercials employs black main characters than do Dominican commercials.
- H1c: There is a greater proportion of black main characters out of the total of white and black main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials.
- H1d: There are more white main characters in Dominican commercials than there are mulatto and black main characters combined.
- H1e: U.S. commercials use more older main characters than do Dominican commercials.
- H1f: Older adults form a greater proportion of all main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials.

### **3.3.2 Cultural Values**

Since the proposed model presumes a relationship between social values and advertising, the social values of each society should be reflected in TV commercials.

Individualism is related to willingness to achieve goals, whereas collectivism is related to affiliation appeals. Since the U.S. is an individualistic society, this thesis expected

that U.S. commercials would use achievement appeals more frequently than commercials in the D.R.; also, that commercials in the U.S. would employ single main characters more frequently than commercials in the D.R. On the other hand, since the D.R. is a collective society, this thesis proposed that there would be more affiliation appeals in Dominican commercials than in U.S. commercials; also that there would be more main characters in Dominican commercials than in U.S. commercials. In addition, since the U.S. is increasingly concerned with time, this study expected to find more time efficiency appeals in U.S. commercials than in Dominican commercials. Thus, considering the differences in individualism/collectivism and time value, the proposed model predicted the following hypotheses:

- H2a: U.S. commercials use achievement appeals more frequently than do Dominican commercials.
- H2b: U.S. commercials employ single main characters more frequently than do Dominican commercials.
- H2c: Dominican commercials use affiliation appeals more frequently than do U.S. commercials.
- H2d: Dominican commercials use more main characters than do U.S. commercials.
- H2e: U.S. commercials use time efficiency appeals more frequently than do Dominican commercials.



### **3.3.3 Communication Patterns**

The United States and the Dominican Republic have distinct patterns of communication: direct and indirect. According to the proposed model, these communication patterns shape advertisements. Thus, these differing patterns should be reflected in advertisements. A direct pattern of communication, primarily used in the U.S., is reflected in commercials by the use of hard sell appeals. Two measurements indicated this appeal: explicit price and imperative commands.

- H3a: U.S. commercials make explicit price mention more frequently than do Dominican commercials.
- H3b: U.S. commercials employ more imperative commands than do Dominican commercials.
- H3c: A higher proportion of U.S. commercials employ imperative commands than do Dominican commercials.

## **Chapter 4**

### **METHODS**

This chapter describes the procedures and recording instrument used to measure structural differences between U.S. commercials and Dominican commercials.

#### **4.1 Sample**

The study content analyzed TV commercials from the U.S. and the D.R. A sample of commercials from U.S. and Dominican television was drawn during prime time. Prime time was chosen because it has the largest viewing audience, therefore it should appeal to all demographic groups. In the D.R., prime time is from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., whereas in the U.S. it is from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. The time frame taped was from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. A total of 56 hours of TV programming were taped, 26 hours in Delaware, U.S. and 26 hours in Santo Domingo, D.R. The time period covered two weeks from Monday, July 4 to Sunday, July 17, 1994. This was a convenience sample of commercials rather than a constructed-year random sample; thus it may not be representative of the entire year. During the Summer in the U.S., many of the programs are re-run, and the ratings go down. However, in the D.R. there is no such Summer re-run period.

Four major networks were selected for each country. In the U.S., the networks were ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX. In the D.R., the networks included three commercial networks, Color Visión, Teleantillas, Telesistema, and the government-owned Radio Televisión Dominicana. The taping schedule for selecting networks and broadcast times was based on a random rotation selection process. The taping schedule is attached in Appendix A.

The sample consists of 483 U.S. commercials and 380 Dominican commercials. Duplicate commercials were eliminated from the sample. A total sample of 336 non-duplicated U.S. commercials and 197 non-duplicated Dominican commercials was obtained. From these commercials, 180 commercials were randomly selected for each country as an appropriate sample for the study, yielding a total of 360 commercials. The sample did not include station promotions for TV programs, movies, or upcoming events. Even though the same number of hours was recorded for both countries, there were more commercials in U.S. than in Dominican television. This difference may be explained by the combination of two factors. First, there is a greater variety of products available in the U.S. than in the D.R., therefore there are fewer advertisements in Dominican television. Second, there is less commercial time allocation per hour of programming in the D.R. The first factor creates more demand for commercial time in the U.S. than in the D.R., which contributes to the second factor.

All 360 commercials were analyzed. However, for the Dominican sample only those commercials that were produced for the Dominican audience were used to test

the hypotheses proposed, yielding 129 Dominican-produced commercials. The place of commercial production was measured by assessing the geographic area where the commercial was produced. The commercial may be produced in the U.S., the D.R., Latin America, or somewhere else. A senior account supervisor from McCann-Erickson advertising agency in the D.R. categorized each commercial according to its place of production. Thus, only those commercials produced in the D.R. were analyzed. This decision was based on the purpose of the study, which is to look at structural differences in advertising. Commercials produced outside of the country are less likely to reflect the Dominican structure. Some examples of the commercials excluded were those produced in the U.S., such as Miller, RCA, Colgate, and Coca Cola; other commercials were those produced in Latin America, such as Fab produced in Mexico, Always Plus produced in Puerto Rico, and Goldstar produced in Argentina. Thus, only those commercials produced for the Dominican audience were considered relevant to compare structural differences with the U.S.

#### **4.2 Recording Instrument**

The recording instrument included: country, commercial identification number, tape number, place of commercial production, product type, types of appeals (achievement, affiliation, and time efficiency), explicit price mention, number of imperative commands, distinction of ethnicity of main characters, age of main characters, and brand name.

The product category ( $\alpha=0.85$ ) was based on the coding scheme used by Gilly (1988) with certain modifications. The variables of Achievement ( $\alpha=0.64$ ), affiliation ( $\alpha=0.87$ ), time efficiency ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) and price mention ( $\alpha=0.97$ ) were analyzed with a dichotomous scale--appears or does not appear. The number of imperative commands, distinction of ethnicity of main characters, and age of main characters were analyzed by using the same ratio scale (0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, and 5=5 or more). Ethnicity variables exclusively looked at the presence of whites, blacks, and mulattos in commercials. However, age variables included all ethnic groups presented as main characters in commercials. The data were analyzed by using Chi-Square and T-Test statistics. The statistical package used was SPSS. The recording instrument is attached in Appendix B, which includes the variables that were recoded along with the more specific definitions.

### **4.3 Coding Process**

The researcher coded the entire sample (i.e., 360 commercials). Two other coders were hired to assess the reliability of the coding procedure. One of them was a U.S. citizen, who coded 25% (45 commercials) of the U.S. sample; the other coder was a Dominican citizen, who coded 25% of the Dominican sample. Coders were given in-depth explanations as to how to identify the different variables in the recording instrument. The researcher went over ten commercials (not included in the intercoder sample) with the coders and demonstrated the coding procedures. In addition coders

were provided with a detailed recording instrument. Once the coding was finished, the researcher ran reliability analysis. The results showed that some of the variables were not reliable (achievement appeal, time efficiency appeal, price mention, and imperative commands); therefore, these variables were coded again. The researcher recoded all 360 commercials for those variables and hired two other coders to provide coded material for reliability assessment. This time, the recording instrument was more specific and the variables were better defined. The second reliability analysis yielded improved intercoder reliability.

#### **4.4 Reliability Analysis**

Once the coding was completed, the researcher used Krippendorff's alpha to assess the intercoder agreement of the recording instrument. An alpha of at least .60 was considered acceptable. See agreement coefficients on Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1****Agreement Coefficient of Variables**

	<b>Agreement Coefficient Nominal Scale</b>	<b>Frequency Number of Commercials with variable</b>
Product Type	0.85	309
Achievement	0.64*	21
Affiliation	0.87	100
Time Efficiency	0.94	32
Price	0.97	54
	<b>Ratio Scale</b>	<b>Number of Variables in all Commercials</b>
Imperative Commands	0.78	273
Number Main Characters	0.88	789**
White Main Characters	0.83	250***
Black Main Characters	0.70	113***
Mulatto Main Characters	0.74	109***
Age 0 To 12 years	0.93	153
Age 12 To 30 years	0.64	328
Age 30 To 60 years	0.70	214
Age 60 years Over	0.77	78

\* Simple intercoder agreement was 95%.

\*\* The discrepancy between the number of main characters and the Total of blacks, whites, and mulattos is driven by the measurement scales used. The total number of main characters was compiled by adding the totals from the four age group variables.

\*\*\* These totals are from a single variable from which the maximum value was 5. Thus, the aggregation of these three ethnicity variables does not correspond to the total of main characters.

## Chapter 5

### RESULTS

#### 5.1 Hypotheses Testing

##### 5.1.1 Hypothesis 1: Demographic Profile

###### 5.1.1.1 Ethnicity

Hypothesis 1a, which states that U.S. commercials use more black main characters than Dominican-produced commercials is not supported (Table 5.1). The mean number of black main characters in U.S. commercials is .49 while the mean number of black main characters in Dominican-produced commercials is .34 ( $t=1.52$ ,  $p$  is not significant.)

**Table 5.1 *T-Test of the Mean Number of Black Main Characters for U.S. vs. Dominican-produced Commercials.***

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Mean	.49	.34
SD	.97	.71

N=309  
 $t=1.52$ ,  $p=.129$ .

---



Hypothesis 1b, predicting that a greater percentage of U.S. commercials employ black main characters than do Dominican-produced commercials is not supported. For this analysis the ratio scale that originally measured the number of blacks (0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, and 5=5 or more) was converted into a nominal dichotomy, whether blacks appear or not in a commercial. The data was recoded as follows: 0=0 (black character does not appear) and 1,2,3,4, 5=1 (black character appears.) Table 5.2 shows that 29.4% of U.S. commercials use at least 1 black main character, percentage not significantly different from 23.3 % for Dominican-produced commercials ( $\chi^2 = 1.46$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p$  is not significant.)

**Table 5.2 Crosstabulation of Proportion of Commercials that Employ Black Main Characters by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.**

	U.S. (n=180)	D.R. (n=129)
Black Main Character Present	29.4%	23.3%
Black Main Characters Not Present	70.6%	76.7%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=309

$\chi^2 = 1.46$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .22$ .

Hypothesis 1c, that there is a greater proportion of black main characters out of the total of white and black main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials, was supported. After obtaining the frequencies per country of whites and blacks, the researcher multiplied the value in the scale by the number of commercials corresponding to each value. All totals were added, yielding 358 whites and 89 blacks in the U.S. and 304 whites and 30 blacks in the D.R. Table 5.3 shows that 19.9% of the combined total of white and black main characters are black in U.S. commercials, whereas only 9.0% of the white and black main characters combined in Dominican-produced commercials are black ( $\chi^2 = 17.68$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 5.3 *Crosstabulation of Proportion of Black Main Characters in Relation to the Total of White and Black Main Characters by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.***

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=447)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=334)
Black Main Characters	19.9%	9.0%
White Main Characters	80.1%	91.0%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=781

$\chi^2 = 17.68$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$

---

Hypothesis 1d, that there are more white main characters in Dominican-produced commercials than there are mulatto and black main characters combined, was supported. For this analysis, the total number of whites was compared with the sum of the total number of blacks and mulattos in the D.R. (Dominican-produced commercials totaled 304 whites and 139 blacks and mulattos combined). Table 5.4 shows that in Dominican-produced commercials 68.6% of all main characters are whites, whereas only 31.4% of all main characters are mulattos and blacks combined (one way  $\chi^2 = 61.49$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 5.4 Crosstabulation of Proportion of Main Characters that are Whites by Blacks and Mulattos Combined in the Dominican Republic.**

	D.R. TV Commercial Characters
Whites n=304	68.6%
Blacks and Mulattos Combined n=139	31.4%
TOTAL	100%

N=443  
 $\chi^2 = 61.49$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$

### 5.1.1.2 Older Adults

Hypothesis 1e, that U.S. commercials use more older main characters than do Dominican-produced commercials is not supported (Table 5.5). The means of older adults are similar for U.S. and Dominican-produced commercials; the U.S. has a mean of .26 and the D.R. has a mean of .25 ( $t=.09$ ,  $p$  not significant).

**Table 5.5 T-Test of the Mean Number of Older Main Characters for U.S. vs. Dominican-produced Commercials.**

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Mean	.26	.25
SD	.74	.63

N=309  
 $t=.09$ ,  $p=.926$ .

---

Hypothesis 1f, that older adults form a greater proportion of all main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials, is supported. This analysis required obtaining the frequencies per country of older adults. Then, the researcher multiplied the value by the number of commercials corresponding to each value. Finally, all totals were added, yielding a grand total of older adults per country (46 older adults in the U.S. and 32 older adults in the D.R.). These numbers were compared to the total number of main characters across all ages, which was given by adding the totals of all the different age groups, yielding 440 main characters in the U.S. and 477 main characters in the D.R. Table 5.6 shows that there is a significant difference, in U.S. commercials 10.5% of all main characters are older adults, whereas in Dominican-produced commercials only 6.7% are older adults ( $\chi^2 = 4.13$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5.6 Crosstabulation of Proportion of Main Characters that are Older Adults by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.**

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=440)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=477)
Elderly	10.5%	6.7%
Not Elderly	89.6%	93.3%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=917

$\chi^2 = 4.13$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$

---

## 5.1.2 Hypothesis 2: Cultural Values

### 5.1.2.1 Individualism

Hypothesis 2a, that U.S. commercials use achievement appeals more frequently than Dominican commercials is supported (Table 5.7). In the U.S. 10.0% of sampled commercials use achievement appeals compared to only 2.3% of Dominican-produced commercials, these percentages are significantly different ( $\chi^2 = 6.98$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Table 5.7 Crosstabulation of Achievement Appeals by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.**

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Achievement Appeal	10.0%	2.3%
No Achievement Appeal	90.0%	97.7%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=309

$\chi^2 = 6.98$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$

---

Hypothesis 2b, that U.S. commercials employ a single main character more frequently than Dominican-produced commercials is supported. For this analysis, the researcher summed the main characters across all ages. Then, the ratio scale that measured the ages of all main characters (0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, and 5=5 or more) was converted into a nominal dichotomy, whether only a single character appears or not in a commercial. The data was recoded as follows: 1=1 (only a single character appears) and 0,2,3,4, 5=2 (not a single character). Table 5.8 shows that a higher percentage of U.S. commercials (23.3%) employ single main characters than Dominican-produced commercials (13.2%) ( $\chi^2 = 5$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5.8 Crosstabulation of Single Main Characters by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.**

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Single Main Character	23.3%	13.2%
Not Single Main Character	76.7%	86.8%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=309

$\chi^2 = 5$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$

---

### 5.1.2.2 Collectivism

Hypothesis 2c, that Dominican commercials use affiliation appeals more frequently than U.S. commercials is supported. There are significantly more affiliation appeals in Dominican-produced commercials than in U.S. commercials (Table 5.9). Out of the Dominican-produced commercials 39.5% use affiliation appeals whereas 27.2% of U.S. commercials use this appeal ( $\chi^2 = 5.2$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5.9** *Crosstabulation of Affiliation Appeals by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.*

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Affiliation Appeal	27.2%	39.5%
No Affiliation Appeal	72.8%	60.5%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=309

$\chi^2 = 5.2$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$

---



Hypothesis 2d, that Dominican-produced commercials use a greater number of main characters than U.S. commercials is supported. Table 5.10 shows that the mean number of main characters across all ages in the D.R. is 3.7 compared to 2.5 in the U.S., which yields a significant difference ( $t=-3.88$ ,  $p< .001$ ).

**Table 5.10** *T-Test of the Mean Number of Main Characters for U.S. vs. Dominican-produced Commercials.*

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Mean	2.5	3.7
SD	2.2	3.2

N=309  
 $t=-3.88$ ,  $p< .001$

---

### 5.1.2.3 Time Orientation

Hypothesis 2e, that U.S. commercials use time efficiency appeals more frequently than Dominican-produced commercials is not supported (Table 5.11); the results are statistically significant but in the opposite direction. Only 7.2% of U.S. commercials use time efficiency appeals whereas 14.7% of Dominican-produced commercials use time efficiency appeals ( $\chi^2 = 4.56$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5.11 Crosstabulation of Time Efficiency Appeals by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.**

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Time Efficiency Appeal	7.2%	14.7%
No Time Efficiency Appeal	92.8%	85.3%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=309

$\chi^2 = 4.56$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$

---

### 5.1.3 Hypothesis 3: Communication Patterns

#### 5.1.3.1 Direct Communication

Hypothesis 3a, that U.S. commercials more frequently make explicit price mention than Dominican-produced commercials is supported (Table 5.12). In the U.S. 23.9% of the commercials show explicit price mention whereas in the D.R. only 8.5% of the commercials show explicit price mention ( $\chi^2=12.30$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.001$ ).

**Table 5.12** *Crosstabulation of Price Mention by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.*

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Price Mention	23.9%	8.5%
No Price Mention	76.1%	91.5%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=309

$\chi^2=12.30$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.001$

---

Hypothesis 3b, that U.S. commercials employ more imperative commands than Dominican-produced commercials is not supported. There is no significant difference between the number of imperative commands in commercials across the two countries (Table 5.13). The mean number of U.S. commercials with imperative commands is .95 and the mean number of Dominican-produced commercials with imperative commands is .79 ( $t=1.01$ ,  $p$  is not significant.)

**Table 5.13 T-Test of the Mean Number of Imperative Commands for U.S. vs. Dominican-produced Commercials.**

---

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Mean	.95	.79
SD	1.36	1.37

N=309  
 $t=1.01$ ,  $p=.313$ .

---

However, hypothesis 3c, that a higher proportion of U.S. commercials employ imperative commands than do Dominican-produced commercials is supported. For this analysis the ratio scale that measured the number of imperative commands (0=0, 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, and 5=5 or more) was converted into a nominal dichotomy, whether imperative commands appear or not in a commercial. The data was recoded as follows: 0=0 (imperative command does not appear) and 1,2,3,4, 5=1 (imperative command appears.) Table 5.14 shows that there is a significant difference in the proportion of commercials that use imperative commands across both countries. A higher percentage of commercials in the U.S. employ at least 1 imperative command (47.8% vs. 36.4%) ( $\chi^2=3.94$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 5.14 Crosstabulation of Proportion of Commercials that Employ Imperative Commands by the United States vs. the Dominican Republic.**

	<u>U.S.</u> (n=180)	<u>D.R.</u> (n=129)
Imperative Command	47.8%	36.4%
No Imperative Command	52.2%	63.6%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N=309

$\chi^2=3.94$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$

#### 5.1.4 Summary of Hypotheses Findings

The following is a summary of the major findings of the hypotheses testing discussed above.

- H1a There is no significant difference in the number of black main characters between the U.S. and the D.R. H1a is not supported.
- H1b There is no significant difference between the percentages of commercials that employ black main characters across U.S. and Dominican-produced commercials. H1b is not supported.
- H1c There is a greater proportion of black main characters out of the total of white and black main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. H1c is supported.
- H1d There are more whites in Dominican-produced commercials than there are blacks and mulattos combined. H1d is supported.
- H1e: No significant difference is found in the number of older adults (60+) present in commercials between the U.S. and the D.R. H1e is not supported.
- H1f: U.S. commercials have a higher proportion of all main characters that are older adults than Dominican-produced commercials have. H1f is supported.
- H2a U.S. commercials use achievement appeals more frequently than do Dominican-produced commercials. H2a is supported.
- H2b U.S. commercials employ single main characters more frequently than do Dominican-produced commercials. H2b is supported.
- H2c Dominican-produced commercials use affiliation appeals more frequently than do U.S. commercials. H2c is supported.

- H2d Dominican-produced commercials use a greater number of main characters than do U.S. commercials. H2d is supported.
- H2e Dominican-produced commercials use time efficiency appeals more frequently than do U.S. commercials. H2e is not supported.
- H3a U.S. commercials make explicit price mention more frequently than do Dominican-produced commercials. H3a is supported.
- H3b No significant difference is found between the number of imperative commands used in U.S. commercials and Dominican-produced commercials. H3b is not supported.
- H3c A greater percentage of U.S. commercials than Dominican-produced commercials employ imperative commands. H3c is supported.

## **Chapter 6**

### **DISCUSSION**

Three sets of hypotheses investigated differences in TV advertising between the United States and the Dominican Republic. These differences are related to structural differences of both social systems. Overall, there were fourteen propositions: nine of them were supported. This chapter discusses the implications of the results obtained.

#### **6.1 Review of the Results**

##### **6.1.1 Hypothesis 1: Demographic Profile**

###### **6.1.1.1 Ethnicity**

First, Hypothesis 1a in which no significant findings were found, is discussed. H1a predicted that U.S. commercials would use more black main characters than would Dominican-produced commercials. In the U.S. blacks represent a relatively larger group and a more profitable market segment than in the D.R. Blacks form a greater percentage of the total population and have greater economic power in the U.S. than in the D.R.

Considering that there have been increasing efforts to reach blacks in the U.S., it was expected that U.S. commercials would use black main characters more frequently than Dominican-produced commercials. However, the results showed no



significant difference. These results may be driven by the fact that there are more main characters in Dominican-produced commercials than in U.S. commercials. Because of this possible confounding variable, hypothesis 1c, that deals with this issue, will be discussed next.

H1c stated that there would be a greater proportion of black main characters out of the total of white and black main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. The results support H1c. U.S. advertisers make greater efforts in reaching the black audience than Dominican advertisers. There is a greater percentage of blacks out of white and black characters combined, in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. This finding illustrates the importance of this group in the U.S. Further analysis shows the comparison of the proportions of blacks and whites in the actual U.S. population with that in U.S. TV commercials (Table 6.1). There is a significant difference between the representation of whites and blacks in TV commercials when compared to the actual U.S. population ( $\chi^2 = 18.2$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The proportion of blacks to whites and blacks in the U.S. population is 13.1%, but the same proportion in TV commercials is 19.9%. These findings show that blacks, relative to their proportion in the population, are overrepresented in U.S. TV commercials.

**Table 6.1 Crosstabulation of Proportion of Blacks in Relation to the Total of Whites and Blacks by the Real Population of the United States vs. Representation in U.S. TV Commercials.**

---

	<u>U.S. Real Population</u> (n=19,968,915)	<u>U.S. TV Commercials</u> (n=447)
Blacks	13.1%	19.9%
Whites	86.9%	80.1%
TOTAL	100%	100%

$\chi^2 = 18.2, df = 1, p < .001$

---

In the case of the D.R., Table 6.2 shows the comparison of the proportions of blacks and whites in the actual population with that in TV commercials. There is a significant difference between the representation of whites and blacks in Dominican-produced commercials when compared to the actual population of the D.R. ( $\chi^2 = 139.1, df = 1, p < .001$ ). The proportion of blacks to whites and blacks in the population of the D.R. is 40.7%, but the same proportion in TV commercials is only 9.0%. On the other hand, the proportion of whites to whites and blacks in the Dominican population is 59.3%, the same proportion in TV commercials is 91.0%. These findings show that blacks are underrepresented in Dominican-produced commercials.

**Table 6.2 Crosstabulation of Proportion of Blacks in Relation to the Total of Whites and Blacks by the Real Population in the Dominican Republic vs. Representation in Dominican-produced TV Commercials.**

---

	<u>D.R. Real Population</u> (n=1,973,700)	<u>Dominican-produced Commercials</u> (n=334)
Blacks	40.7%	9.0%
Whites	59.3%	91.0%
TOTAL	100%	100%

$\chi^2 = 139.1, df = 1, p < .001$

---

Hypothesis 1b stated that a greater percentage of U.S. commercials would employ black main characters than would Dominican-produced commercials. Interestingly, there was no significant difference between the number of commercials in the U.S. and the D.R. that use black main characters, thus H1b was not supported. However, the finding that 29% of all U.S. commercials employed black main characters is positive in relation to the portrayal of minorities in U.S. television. Minorities, especially blacks, are increasingly used in U.S. TV commercials. This figure is in accordance with the pattern that has been shown in the use of blacks in TV advertising (Licata & Biswas, 1993; Zinkhan et al., 1990a; Wilkes & Valencia, 1989).

Hypothesis 1d, that there would be more whites in Dominican-produced commercials than there would be blacks and mulattos combined, was supported. The

findings provide support to the proposed model. If the dominant class possesses a disproportionate economic power in relation to the rest of the population, this class will be more frequently portrayed in the media. This is the case in the D.R., in which the dominant class tends to be white. Even though blacks and mulattos combined form 84% of the population, they only form 31.4% of the main characters across the three ethnic groups analyzed. In turn, whites in the D.R. only form 16% of the population, but yet they represent 68.6% of the main characters across the three ethnic groups.

Throughout the years, U.S. television has increased the representation of blacks in commercials (Zinkhan et al., 1990a). Several aspects have influenced this increase, but a key one is the growing economic power acquired by this ethnic group. Another aspect that should be considered is the composition of the television audience. This thesis stated earlier that blacks in the U.S. are among the heaviest television viewers. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that advertisers take the audience they are reaching into account. Furthermore, one may presume that black Dominicans who are in poverty are not heavy television viewers because they have essential needs to meet (for example, shelter, food, clothing, etc.), and are less likely to own a television set. As a result, blacks in the D.R. do not appear frequently in TV commercials.

One may argue that as social systems become more industrialized there is greater equality in economic power among groups of individuals. Therefore, an ethnic group that may have been overly oppressed in the past, such as the case of blacks, may emerge and grow in economic importance. Thus, it is reasonable to speculate

according to the proposed model that overtime, if the D.R. evolves towards becoming an industrialized country, Dominican blacks could gain economic power. If so, Dominican advertising will show this importance, by portraying more blacks in TV commercials.

#### **6.1.1.2 Older Adults**

In regards to the presence of older main characters in TV commercials, hypothesis 1e predicted that more older adults would appear in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. Older adults tend to be more economically independent in the U.S. than in the DR. They also form a relatively larger demographic group in the U.S.; therefore, they are more likely to be regarded as a separate target market than in the D.R. However, the results showed that there is no significant difference in the number of older main characters in commercials across countries. Since these results may be somewhat confounded by the total number of main characters per country, hypothesis 1f deals with this issue.

H1f predicted that older adults would form a greater proportion of all main characters in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. This hypothesis was supported. The percentage of main characters across all ages that were older adults was greater in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. However, after comparing the actual percentages of the U.S. and Dominican population who are in this age group, 60+ years, an unexpected finding was

encountered. In the U.S. 16.9% of the population is in the group 60+ years; in U.S. commercials only 10.5% of all main characters are older adults. This shows that this age group is still underrepresented in the media, as far as TV advertising concerns. It seems that despite the evidence of the economic influence of this group in the U.S., advertisers continue to be reluctant to portray more older people in their marketing communications. This argument goes hand in hand with the increasing concern in the United States with youthfulness.

In the D.R. only 5.5% of the population is in the age group of 60+ years; however, 6.7% of all main characters in Dominican-produced commercials are in this age group. Consequently, older adults are almost equally represented in Dominican-produced commercials when compared to the actual population. This finding may be explained in the value of collectivism in the D.R. Older adults are more likely to be living with their children in the D.R. than they are in the U.S.; therefore, commercials portraying families in the D.R. are more likely to include older people as part of the family unit. Also, Dominicans, similar to other traditional societies, perceive older adults as wise people; thus, they may be regarded as a credible source of advice for purchasing products.

In short, this demographic section demonstrated that since blacks have greater economic importance in the U.S. than in the D.R., they are more frequently used in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. It also shows that because the white population in the D.R. has a disproportionate economic power when

compared to the rest of the population it is overrepresented in Dominican-produced commercials. Finally, because older adults are more economically independent in the U.S. than in the D.R., they are more frequently used in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. Thus, in regards to demographic structure, for the most part the proposed model was supported. The relative economic and social influence of certain groups of people is reflected in advertising.

One should keep in mind that the mere presence of these groups (blacks and older adults) does not necessarily imply equal power. For example, a white person may be more likely to be portrayed in a powerful role, such as being the person who demonstrates the product or by having a high status occupational role. Perhaps minority groups are present in commercials, but they may be portrayed in roles that do not reflect their socio-economic importance. This thesis did not address neither the role played by the character nor stereotypes portrayals; thus, this issue should be addressed in future research.

## **6.1.2 Hypothesis 2: Cultural Values**

### **6.1.2.1 Individualism**

Shifting to cultural values, this study measured the reflection of collectivism and individualism in commercials. The U.S. is a relatively individualistic society. It places more emphasis on the individual and the merits of the individual than on the group. People in the U.S. value their independence and like to control their own actions

(Yang, 1993). Specifically, hypothesis 2a stated that U.S. commercials would use achievement appeals more frequently than Dominican-produced commercials. It was supported: more U.S. commercials use achievement appeals than Dominican-produced commercials. Also, hypothesis 2b which predicted that U.S. commercials would employ more single main characters than would Dominican-produced commercials was supported. Thus, since individualism is highly valued in the U.S., TV commercials in the U.S. tend to reflect it to a greater extent than Dominican advertising.

#### **6.1.2.2 Collectivism**

This thesis expected to find more appeals to collectivism in the Dominican Republic than in the United States. The D.R. is a collective society, in which individuals are valued in terms of the groups to which they belong. Also, Dominicans place more importance in fitting in the group than standing out from a group. Family values is one aspect of the D.R. that categorizes it as a collective society. It is important for family members to remain close together to support each other. Signs of affection and affiliation in commercials reflect this value of collectivism.

Hypothesis 2c predicted that Dominican-produced commercials would more frequently use affiliation appeals than would U.S. commercials. H2c was supported. There were more Dominican-produced commercials than U.S. commercials that employed affiliation appeals. In addition, hypothesis 2d, that Dominican-produced commercials would use a greater number of main characters than would U.S.



commercials was also supported. This is another sign of collectivism, when people are more likely to be portrayed in groups than by themselves.

The results provide support to the notion that values in advertising correspond to values of the social system. Individualism was reflected to a larger extent in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. Also, collectivism was reflected to a larger extent in Dominican-produced commercials than in U.S. commercials.

### **6.1.2.3 Time Orientation**

Because the U.S. is an industrialized country that places a lot of importance on time resources, it was expected that it would make greater marketing efforts appealing to time efficiency than the D.R. Hypothesis 2f stated that U.S. commercials would use time efficiency appeals more frequently than would Dominican produced-commercials. However, an unexpected finding came up. The results showed significant differences but in the opposite direction. More Dominican-produced commercials use time efficiency appeals than U.S. commercials. Three factors may explain this finding.

First, the D.R. is a society that is undergoing change at a faster speed than the U.S. This is so because the U.S. is a developed country whereas the D.R. is a developing country, therefore the U.S. society is at a relatively stable stage. In contrast the D.R. is evolving and Dominicans are becoming more concerned with time than in the past. Second, more Dominican women are entering the workplace. Between 1960

and 1990, the percentage of Dominican women in the workplace has increased by 50% (Statistical Abstract of Latin America, 1995). In the past, married women tended not to work outside of the home. In recent years however, the housewife has become an income earner, who has little time to take care of the house.

A third aspect to discuss corresponds to domestic workers. Aguirre (1994) points that with the increase of "Zonas Franca" (Export Processing Zones) more and more domestic workers find employment in these enterprises. The growth of export processing zones in the D.R. has been very large. For instance, Montaña (1994) reports that the Zona Franca Los Alcarrizos, employs over 4,000 employees within the 14 companies that operate in it. The average income of the workers is RD \$500 per week, which is equivalent to US \$37 per week for long working hours (48 hours).

Poor women want to get a job at an export processing zone; obtaining such a job means having access to remunerated work that is not considered domestic work (Coté, 1994). In turn, there has been a reduction in the number of women working as domestics, which might lead to a rise in the salary of this profession. Middle-class women, who often count on domestic workers in order to work outside of the home, will not be able to easily afford a domestic worker (Coté, 1994). Thus, these factors are influencing Dominican society to become more concerned with time and purchasing products related to time saving.

In addition, there has been an enormous increase in fast food restaurants in the D.R., especially coming from the U.S. In 1991, there were no U.S. fast food

restaurants in the D.R. Today, there are at least four Pizza Huts, several Dominos Pizza, three Wendys, one Burger King, one Taco Bell, and one McDowell's (imitation of McDonalds) in the D.R. These fast food restaurants are very popular. They are signs of change in the Dominican society. Since Dominicans are experiencing a lack of time resources to do daily activities, they are giving more value to time. Consequently, advertisers in the D.R. are responding to this concern. Also, this change in the culture is in the interest of advertisers. Conditioning people to a fast paced society goals place consumers on the hedonistic treadmill--we got to work so we can consume so that we have something to do to fill up the fleeting time.

Thus, in regards to cultural values, the proposed model used in this thesis was supported for the most part. Individualism was reflected to a greater extent in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials, whereas collectivism was reflected to a greater extent in Dominican-produced commercials than in U.S. commercials. Although the hypothesis regarding the use of time efficiency appeal did not support the proposed model, it shows that advertisers recognize the changing values of the audience, as in the case of the D.R. in relation to time. In short, there tends to be a correspondence between a social system and its advertising.

### **6.1.3 Hypothesis 3: Communication Patterns**

#### **6.1.3.1 Direct Communication**

Finally, this thesis also looked at differences in communication patterns. People in the U.S. tend to use direct speech. Directness in speech is reflected in hard sell appeals in advertising. The presence of hard-sell appeals across countries was tested. Hard-sell appeals were measured by the use of explicit price mention and of imperative commands in commercials. Hypothesis 3a predicted that U.S. commercials would make explicit price mention more frequently than would Dominican-produced commercials. H3a was supported; there were more commercials that showed explicit price in the U.S. than in the D.R. Price mention is perceived as rude and too direct in Dominican society.

Imperative commands demand the individual to do something. Hypothesis 3b stated that U.S. commercials would employ imperative commands more frequently than would Dominican-produced commercials. The results showed that H3b was not supported. There was no significant difference in the number of imperative commands used overall commercials. Hypothesis 3c predicted that a greater percentage of U.S. commercials would employ imperative commands than would Dominican-produced commercials. H3c was supported. A higher percentage of TV commercials in the U.S. employed imperative commands when compared to Dominican-produced commercials.

In regards to communication patterns, hard-sell appeals were more prevalent in U.S. commercials than in Dominican-produced commercials. Thus, the proposed model was also supported in relation to structural differences in communication.

## **6.2 Distribution of Commercials by Product Category**

It is conceivable that the significant differences were an artifact of the different kinds of products that are advertised in the two societies. In order to shed some light on this possibility, Table 6.3 shows the breakdown of commercials for each country by product type. There are few large differences between U.S. and Dominican-produced commercials across product category. The most notable differences are for the following categories: food, snacks, and soda; personal and beauty care/hygienic; stores, retail outlet and appliances; and alcoholic beverages. First, the food, snacks, and soda category forms 22.2% of all U.S. commercials and 12.4% of Dominican-produced commercials. Second, the personal and beauty care/hygienic category corresponds to 13.3% of U.S. commercials and only 3.1% of Dominican-produced commercials. Third, the stores, retail outlet and appliances category forms 8.9% of U.S. commercials and 14.7% of Dominican-produced commercials. Fourth, the alcoholic beverages category corresponds to 1.7% of U.S. commercials and 10.9% of Dominican-produced commercials.

**Table 6.3**  
**Distribution of Commercials Across Product Categories**

Product Category	U.S.		D.R.	
	n	%	n	%
Food, snacks, soda	40	22.2	16	12.4
Personal and beauty care/hygienic	24	13.3	4	3.1
Stores, retail outlet; appliances	16	8.9	19	14.7
Drugs and medicine	11	6.1	2	1.6
Household cleaning products	12	6.7	11	8.5
Restaurants and hotels	18	10.0	8	6.2
Automobiles and related products	21	11.7	10	7.8
Alcoholic Beverages	3	1.7	14	10.9
Cigarettes	0	0.0	2	1.6
Bank/credit/insurance/real state	7	3.9	8	6.2
Camera, video, or related	3	1.7	0	0.0
Utilities- electricity, telephone	12	6.7	10	7.8
Other media- newspaper/radio	0	0.0	6	4.7
Public service announcements	1	0.6	0	0.0
Corporation	0	0.0	7	5.4
Pet food and related	1	0.6	0	0.0
Other	11	6.1	12	9.3
Total	180		129	

There is no reason to expect that any of the four categories described before may be driving the results shown for the variables analyzed in this study. There is no connection between the variables and these four different distributions of product category; the proportions by product category are rather similar for both countries.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

When interpreting these results one must keep in mind the limitations that they represent. The sample of commercials was rather small, therefore no analysis per product category could be conducted. Furthermore, this is a cross-sectional study,

conducted at one point in time. Thus, one cannot assess how changes in the structure of these societies are reflected in advertising over time.

The argument of this thesis is that the values advocated in advertising correspond to the values of its social system. Since this study consisted of a content analysis, it did not assess how people from different cultures relate to advertising. This may be an important question to answer by future research.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore how structural differences of a developed country, the United States, and a developing country, the Dominican Republic, were reflected in the content of TV advertisements. Based on the logic of Marxist cultural theory, this thesis proposed a new model that posits a relationship between a broader social system and culture. The proposed social system not only takes into account the economic structure, but also the social values and communication patterns of a society. The social system shapes the cultural products. Advertising, as a cultural indicator, underlies the social system for which it is produced. This thesis provides evidence to support such a relationship and consequently support this new model. It has shown that the societal structure of these countries, the United States and the Dominican Republic, for the most part tends to be reflected in commercials.

The argument of Zinkhan et al. (1990b), that symbols contained in popular culture such as advertising reflect underlying social values, is supported. This study takes one further step to increasing the knowledge available on advertising differences between the U.S. and Latin America. This is important, because Latin America is an increasing target market for U.S. corporations. Success in international marketing requires the understanding of distinct patterns of communication in each target country (Zandpour, Chang, & Catalano 1992).

Advertising practices can differ markedly across different countries (Di Benedetto, et al., 1992) and if the markets of these are not homogeneous, standardization of advertising may not be feasible (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1987). In order to develop more effective advertising campaigns, it is necessary to understand different cultures and how advertising varies cross-culturally (Bradley, et al., 1994).

One of the assumptions of this thesis was that if individuals share similar beliefs, ideals, values, and norms, they also perceive communication symbols in similar ways. It seems that advertisers recognize the salient patterns of beliefs and behaviors of a society and use symbols that are understandable and meaningful to the target group.

This study is descriptive, thus one should be very tentative in drawing normative conclusions regarding appropriate advertising strategies for the D.R. However, to the extent that the strategies and appeals contained in these commercials reflect the collective business experience of Dominican advertisers, some tentative advise for advertisers who wish to target the D.R. are appropriate. Clearly, the



findings of this study suggest a connection between culture and advertising appeals. However, although culture influences advertising, there are some advertising strategies that appear to be universal; all of the variables coded were present in commercials for both countries, but they were present to a larger extent in one or the other country.

Television commercials directed to Dominicans should avoid being too direct in their messages; they may be regarded as too intrusive and rude. For instance, a typical commercial in the U.S. for a restaurant tends to use a direct communication approach by for example saying:

- “Come to our restaurant and you will get an enchilada with two tacos and a free ice cream for \$7.99. This offer will end soon.”

The message places emphasis on the attributes of the product. However a similar commercial for a restaurant in the D.R. will use a more indirect communication approach by for example saying:

- “This is a place for you to relax after a long work day, you can get a delicious meal at an affordable price.”

The Dominican commercial would make more emphasis on the values of the viewer and would be less direct by avoiding the use of price.

Another aspect to consider when creating commercials for the D.R. is the collective aspect of the culture. Family values are central in the D.R., and belonging to groups is important. Thus, Dominican commercials tend to use affiliation appeals to a greater extent than U.S. commercials. On the other hand very few Dominican commercials use achievement appeals, the lack of which indicates the predominance of

collectivism over individualism in the D.R. The number of main characters used in commercials is related to this general theme. Advertisers should take into account that Dominicans like to see themselves as part of a group of people; therefore, when appropriate to the product category they should use commercials in which several persons are involved in the story.

Elsewhere, this thesis argued that the D.R. shares similar historic patterns and social structures with those of other Latin American countries. To the extent that this is true, then with appropriate caution one can generalize many of these conclusions to advertising strategies in other Latin American countries.

Since this study uses a cross sectional methodology, conclusions hold for one point in time. One must be very cautious in interpreting what these findings might suggest regarding future patterns in Dominican advertising. Evolving patterns of social and economic structure however suggest the following. Advertising in the D.R. with the years to come might become more homogenous and similar to that of the U.S. For example, if more women continue to enter the workforce, there will be increasing concerns with time, which will continue to be reflected in commercials. Changes in collectivism are likely to occur because by the same token, as people have less free time available, they have less time to spend with family and friends. In the same way, communication patterns are likely to change as Dominicans become more influenced by the U.S. culture. Although in the long run, the D.R. may become a more individualistic

society, this changes will be at a slower pace than the change of time orientation; the later value is less central to core values held by Dominicans.

Finally, there are some directions for research. Future research should further investigate ethnicity/gender portrayals of characters in commercials. This will throw light on how certain groups of people are depicted in the media across cultures. It would also be interesting to analyze other media, such as print ads and billboards to further investigate cross-cultural differences. A useful study would be to analyze differences of international and local products within the foreign country, in this case the D.R. Finally, researchers should also conduct cross-cultural longitudinal studies, to understand how advertising reflects changes in social systems over time. This will be especially useful to investigate how the rise of certain groups of people in the economy produces changes in the representation of that group in advertising.

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## APPENDIX A

### Taping Schedule

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*Commercials for the Dominican Republic: Time 8:00 p.m.-10 p.m.*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
July 4-10	TL	TS	RTVD	CV	TL	RTVD	TL
July 11-17	CV	RTVD	TS	TL	CV	TS	TL

**Legend:**

TL= Teleantillas

CV= Color Visión

TS= Telesistema

RTVD= Radio Televisión Dominicana

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*Commercials for the United States: Time 8:00 p.m.-10 p.m.*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
July 4-10	CBS	ABC	NBC	FOX	NBC	ABC	FOX
July 11-17	FOX	NBC	ABC	CBS	ABC	NBC	CBS

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## APPENDIX B

### Recording Instrument

#### Recording Unit: TV Commercials

#### Instructions:

You'll have to watch the commercial at least three times to be able to figure out the presence of these variables. As you look at the commercial you can start writing down key words that identify some of the variables. Take a look at the written captions that are usually at the end of the commercial. At the end of each commercial make sure that you have marked all the variables on your coding sheet. Once you start coding the main characters of the commercial, only use those characters that are playing an identifiable function important for the story.

#### Classification Variables:

1            **Country:**

1=U.S.  
2=D.R.

2-4            **Commercial number**

5            **Tape number**

6

**Production of Commercial**

- 1= U.S.
- 2= D.R.
- 3= Latin America
- 4= Other
- 9= Cannot code

7-8

**Product Type**

- 01= Food, snacks, soda
- 02= Personal and beauty care & hygienic products
- 03= Stores, retail outlet; household appliances
- 04= Drugs and medicine
- 05= Household cleaning products
- 06= Restaurants and hotels
- 07= Automobiles, accessories and related products
- 08= Alcoholic Beverages
- 10= Cigarettes
- 11= Banking, credit card, insurance and real state
- 12= Camera, video, related
- 13= Utilities- electricity, telephone
- 14= Other media- newspaper, radio, magazines
- 15= Public service announcements and Social Issues
- 16= Corporation
- 17= Pet food and related
- 18= Other
- 09= Cannot code

## 9-11 Type of Appeals:

**Note:** For the following variables you are only going to code whether the variable appears or not in the commercial, so long as there is one reference of the described variable then it should be coded as 1=Yes or if there is none reference of the described variable then code it as 2=No.

### 9 Achievement appeal

**Description:** This item refers to indication of success or avoidance of failure. Achievement appeals may be indicated by someone in a commercial wanting to perform or performing something better than others; passing some standard of excellence; doing something unique; or being involved over a long term in doing something well where there is an indication of great involvement over time in the achievement goal. Also include wealth status achievement, athletic achievement, and academic achievement. For ex. someone graduating from college indicates academic achievement. Someone running in a marathon indicates athletic achievement. And showing a BMW getting into a luxurious house implies wealth achievement. Whenever there is some indication of success in a commercial. **DO NOT INCLUDE** situations in which the product is portrayed as better than other products. Look at the visual and the audio of the commercial. One example of achievement is "I go with the times, progress." the word progress indicates achievement of one person. This is so because is reflecting an individualistic view. However "we are working together for the progress of a better nation" is more of a collective value, therefore should not be considered achievement. Other examples of achievement are "this man won a Nobel prize" or "this 13 year old is a college graduate".

1= Yes

2= No

### 10 Affiliation Appeal

**Description:** This item refers to forming a warm or close relationship with more than one person is indicated when someone in an advertisement wants to be with other people; wanting to establish, restore, or maintain a close, warm and friendly relationship with others; being emotionally concerned over separation from others; desiring to participate or being concerned with participating in friendly, convivial activities. It is also indicated with signs of affection such as hugging, kissing, etc. For ex. a family hugging each other; three friends holding hands.

1= Yes

2= No

11

### **Time Efficiency Appeal**

Description: This item refers to commercials presenting the product as fast to use, a means of saving time, a means of making double use of time, or a means of escaping from a typically time-oriented lifestyle. It also refers to the portrayal of the consumer as busy and with limited time, or by specifying the amount of time required to use the product. For ex. "for mothers who don't have a lot of time." Look at the visual and the audio of the commercial. For example if the product allows the consumer to solve a problem fast or easily, or phrases like "the communication will be received almost simultaneously as it occurs", "you're **too busy** for discomfort of your period," or words like "instant coffee." Another time efficiency appeal is a situation where a person is presented as solving a problem **right away** thanks to a product.

1= Yes

2= No

12

### **Explicit Price**

Description: This item only refers to specific mention of price, such as "69 cents Taco". It could be in said in audio or written form. For example if the price it's in a newspaper, or it's in small captions at the end of the commercial it should be included as explicit price. Also if it says "\$2.00 off your calls", "\$25.00 minimum purchase," or if it shows a price even if it's not referring to a particular product it should be included. However **DO NOT INCLUDE** abstract references to price such as "low prices" "better value" "save money", etc. Only if the commercial says exactly how much money there is involved. Also **DO NOT INCLUDE** items that are free, such as "buy one get the second one free".

1=Yes

2=No

13

### **Number of Imperative Commands**

Description: This item refers to the number of phrases used in a commercial that ask the audience to do something in relation to the product, for example "get yourself one of this," "don't miss this offer," "call now", "buy detergent X", "come right away", "get it for...", "try it and you'll see the difference". If there is one then write 1, if there are five or more then write 5.

0= None

1= One

2= Two

3= Three

4= Four

5= Five or more

### *\* 14-20 Demographics of Commercial*

Note: These items do not include voice over, you will only code for main characters. Main characters are those people who are connected in some way through visual contact or some interaction with the commercial, or perform a functional role that is integral to the story or message being told. Just write out the number of main characters.

\* 0= None

\* 1= One

\* 2= Two

\* 3= Three

\* 4= Four

\* 5= Five or more

### *Ethnicity*

**Instructions for U.S. commercials coders:** Two types of ethnic groups will be coded: white and black. According to the above category will write out the number of characters that are white or black in the corresponding variable. Disregard all the other ethnic groups, only look at whites and blacks

You will use the above category as follows: if there are three characters that are Black just write the number 3. If there are 7 characters in a single variables just write the number 5. You are only concerned with variables 14 and 15.

**Instructions for Dominican commercials coders:** Three types of ethnic groups will be coded: white, black, and mulatto. According to the above category you will write out the number of characters that are white, black, or mulatto in the corresponding variable. Disregard all the other ethnic groups, only look at whites, blacks, and mulattos. Black characters are defined as having dark skin, non-straight hair, and black features. Mulatto characters are defined as having mixed characteristics, such as light skin with black features, or dark skin with white features.

You will use the below category as follows: if there are three characters that are Black just write the number 3. If there are 7 characters in a single variables just write the number 5.

- \* 0= None
- \* 1= One
- \* 2= Two
- \* 3= Three
- \* 4= Four
- \* 5= Five or more

14 **White**

15 **Black**

16 **Mulatto**

*Age*

Note: Here you will use the same categories that you just used for the ethnicity/gender/occupation variables; however you will code for all main characters regardless the ethnicity.

17 **0 to 12**

18 **Less than 30**

19 **Between 30 and 60**

20 **More than 60**

21 **Product Name:** (write it out)