

Representation of children and families in TV toy advertisements: a comparative study of Israel, Britain, and Spain

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a comparative overview of the representation of children and families in TV toy advertisements in Israel, Britain and Spain. It focuses on identifying the similarities and differences between the ads tasked with representing children in relation to specific products in different cultural environments. To a lesser extent, the article contributes, through its data, to exploring how advertisements adapt to each of the social and cultural realities in countries with different cultures.

KEYWORDS Advertising; toys; children; family; television; Israel; Britain; Spain

Advertising is one of the most constant experiences of citizens in which scenarios are recreated that contribute to their socialisation in capitalist societies, while offering a specific vision of reality in which happiness is associated with consumption experiences. Comprehending how family and children are presented in advertising so as to understand socialisation in a globalised world requires efforts that combine local and international perceptions of advertising in order to have a better grasp of its workings. To enhance the efficiency of this research, we focused on three capitalist countries with different sociodemographic features. The following criteria were used to select the countries: country of origin of the researchers; countries with different languages, sociodemographic features and family structures to those of the above country; countries where research centres agreed to cooperate with the research in translating the language and interpreting the advertisements. Three socially dissimilar countries – Spain, Britain, and Israel – were selected, with two aims: to compare how children and the families are represented in toy advertisements and to observe the constant and common variables in this representation; to observe whether each country's ads use characteristics of their respective social contexts to

construct the message and represent the characters. To this end, we offer a review of each context from a statistical point of view. The sociodemographic data with regard to the family for each of the countries show the following realities:

- Britain has a population of 66.4 million, including 19.1 million families. Family types consist primarily of a married couple, civil partnership or cohabiting couple families with or without children, or a single-parent household. Most family households consist of married couple families, representing 12.7 million families (67.2%), of which 4.8 million have at least one dependent child, while 6.1 million married family households have no dependent children. Civil partnership couple families make up 46,000 families, 5,000 of which have dependent children. Same-sex married couple families amount to 29,000 families, of which 5,000 have children. Cohabiting couple families represent 3.4 million families, of which 1.3 million have dependent children, whereas of the single parent households (2.9 million), 1.9 million households have dependent children. In addition, households made up of one person represent around 8.2 million of all the households in the Britain.¹
- In Spain, there are 47.3 million citizens, and 18.6 million households. Households are principally made up of heterosexual couples who make up 99.1% of all couples, of which most are married couples (84.3%), followed by cohabiting couples (15.7%). With a lower percentage are same-sex couples (0.9%), of which the majority are made up of men 57% while 43% are women. Couples in Spain with children represent 6.2 million households, whereas couples without children represent 3.9 million households. It must be noted that single parent households, in which one parent lives with their children, are principally made up of mothers with children and have increased in number compared to previous years.²
- In Israel, the population is 9.2 million people, including 2.6 families that represent the main population. In relation to family types, households comprising a single family represent 79.9% of the total number of family households, while 1.9% are families in households with more than one family. Non-family households make up 20.9% of the total number of households, of which the majority (19% of the total number of households) are single-person households. Couples without children make up 531,700 (25.3%) households and there are 1,3 million (61.5%) households consisting of couples with children. The average number of people per household is 3.7, with the number higher in Arab households (4.5 people per household) than in Jewish households (3.6 people per household). There were approximately 1,827,000 couples in Israel. Of the couples, 95% are married and 5% are not (approximately 98,000).³

This data shows features that affect the family structure in each country differently, which would justify studying the advertising of each to find differences and similarities between them. If we take into account the different population sizes (the population of Israel is 83% smaller than that of Spain and 87.5% smaller than that of Britain), we observe that the relative weight of the family on social structure is different in each case. Although the most common family type in the three countries is a conventionally married couple, in the UK this type is clearly less common (67.2%) than in Spain (85%) and Israel (95%), which can suggest there is greater diversity in family types in Britain. The number of children in the family households is also different. In Israel, there is a greater percentage of family households with at least one child (70%) than in Spain (62%) and Britain (38%).

With regard to the data set, we observe three social scenarios with differences in their family structures. This enables to begin a study that helps better understand how advertising represents values, emotions and other characteristics associated with toys, and whether these are conditioned by, or related to, how and when the institution of the family is represented, according to the corresponding sociodemographic context.

Previous research

Studies with similar aims have focused mainly on social representation and the representation of identity and values of the child, the family and toys in advertising. Nichols, Nixon and Rowsell worked on the discursive construction of identity and the social representation of parents in advertising in order to recognise in the advertising the children's environment and their sociability.⁴ Nelson, Atkinson, Rademacher and Ahn studied the power of persuasion of advertising and the socialisation of the family in the environment of the children, deeming necessary parental advertising awareness in the context of children.⁵ In the same vein Jayasinghe⁶ and Jayasinghe and Ritson⁷ analysed how watching advertising as part of general viewing within the family creates conversations on culture and values, consolidating family identity.

Nelson, Atkinson, Rademacher and Ahn⁸ state that parents are not represented in adverts for educational and other types of toys, whereas they are in institutional advertising. In fact, in toy advertising it is not unusual to find adverts in which the child appears with just the toy without interacting with any other children or with adults, or even in which the toy appears without a child being shown.⁹ Other authors, such as Gee and Jackson¹⁰ and Pashupati and Vasavada-Oza,¹¹ report that in toy adverts the family is constructed and reconstructed through the values that construct children's identity around 'gender' and 'education,' and by extension 'fun' and 'leisure,' and even 'violence' in certain toys, as stated by Basch, Guerra, Reeves and

Basch.¹² The research by Ulrich and Pascale¹³ on perception of gender in toy categories shows that children aged between five and 10 years old tend to identify quickly the sections for boys and girls on the strength of the colours and characters in the photographs and disregard toys which are not for their gender.¹⁴ However, Bush and Furnham,¹⁵ state that the representation of the female gender in advertising is linked to physical attractiveness, care and domestic skills, whereas the male gender is linked to violent, competitive, exciting and somewhat dangerous toys.

As regards values, in their research Landreth Grau and Zotos have discovered activities that change the traditional role associated with men, who in the advertisements are shown in less manly roles.¹⁶

Marshall et al put forward the representation of the family from a socio-historical perspective. The father is represented as the patriarchal provider and protector of the family. The relationships between members of the female sex tend to reinforce stereotypes of beauty, affectionate-nourishing relationships and occupations such as housewife.¹⁷

Objectives of the study

The main goal of this study is to explore advertising as a social phenomenon and analyse the contents in order to understand the representation of children and the family in toy advertisements on television in countries with different sociocultural settings from each other, such as Spain, Britain, and Israel. The study identifies how children and their families are represented in advertising both when adult characters portray the family and when it is the children themselves who play the role of father or mother in the commercials.

The second objective is to find out how family and children are represented in toy advertising in accordance with the following variables: type of toys, gender of the characters, actions of the characters, emotions and values, representation of the adults, representation of the family and type of family. These objectives are based on the main hypothesis, which upholds that in toy commercials broadcast on TV and aimed at children's audiences in countries with different sociocultural features, the semantic representation of the children is similar and shows little difference in regard to values, emotions, genders, actions and toy categories associated with that representation.

Arising out of this first hypothesis, we posit a sub-hypothesis 1, which holds that the representation of the family in these advertisements is limited and homogeneous in each of the countries, and that, despite the sociocultural differences of each country, the diversity of family relationships in the society of each of the countries is not shown.

Methodology

Selection of the sample

The methodology undertaken to analyse the toy commercials broadcast on TV has been different in each country due to the peculiarities of each. Resources and time slots were selected which contained content aimed at a child audience.

In the case of Spain, the 2015/16 Christmas period, which covers from November to January, was chosen. This period was selected because during this interval there is a greater presence and number of toy adverts aimed at the public. The time slots chosen were Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 09:00 and from 17:00 to 20:00, while on Saturdays and Sundays the time slot focused on the morning between 09:00 and 12:00. The TV channels chosen to obtain the studied phenomenon were the generalist channels, from among which were chosen Antena3, Telecinco, Cuatro, la Sexta and specific channels aimed at a young audience, such as Boing, Disney Channel and NeoxKids.

In the case of Britain, the sample chosen is made of adverts broadcast during the summer months of July and August 2016, and December 2016, January and February 2017. The analysis was performed during the time slots of 07:00–08:00 and 16:00–19:00 midweek and from 08:00–12:00 at weekends. The TV channels selected were the generalist channels of Channel 4 and ITV, and two channels specifically for children, POP and Tiny.

For Israel, we selected the two commercial national channels – Channel 2 and Channel 10 (currently Channel 12 and Channel 13). To locate toy ads, the channels were watched for two weeks in March 2017 from 08:00–16:00. In addition, we made use of the database of Rashut2, the Second Authority for Television and Radio that supervises commercial broadcasting in Israel, which shows the information about the advertisements broadcast on Channel 2 and Channel 10. To locate and view them YouTube was used as a resource, where numerous ads were located from over a longer period (2014–17) than the other cases due to the difficulty in locating them.

Analysis criteria: methodology and study techniques

The universe and sample of this study focuses on an analysis of commercials aimed at a children's and pre-adolescent audience (minors). Having created an analysis sheet after consultation with experts from toy manufacturers and consumer associations and based on results from our previous work and the work of other authors, a control system was applied to 10% of the sample, which the researchers analysed first separately and then together to unify and determine objective guidelines for performing the rest of the analysis. In addition to this control technique, the subjective doubts found by each of the

components were referred to the general sheet, which would be reviewed jointly in group sessions. Various meetings were held to analyse as a group specific advertisement in which researchers were uncertain about codifying certain actions related to the commercials and the representation of the social and family settings.

The variables used in this qualitative phase are the same as those in the quantitative phase with the goal of contributing to the cross-referencing of variables and comparison of results from analysing the quantitative and qualitative phase. These variables and sub-variables have been categorised in accordance with studies conducted previously and consist of product category, values, emotions, gender and phenotype, representation of adults and family roles, presence of adults, interactions between the adult and child characters, adult role and actions portrayed:

- **Product category:** large vehicles; scale-model vehicles; construction; action figures; educational; electronic; theatre; board games; dolls and accessories; movies; animal; imitation of the home; musical instruments; sports toy; crafts; other figures and accessories; beauty; other (specify in each case).¹⁸
- **Values:** integration; friendship; skill; education; solidarity; individualism; learning; beauty; physical ability and development; creativity; fun; motherhood; power and strength; domestic; and seduction.¹⁹
- **Emotions:** emotions are recorded according to the basic emotions of surprise, joy, anger, sadness, fear and disgust and prosocial emotions such as pride, embarrassment and guilt.²⁰
- **Gender and phenotype:** genders identified are male, female and both. On occasion, the advert does not depict any gender and only shows the product/service. Phenotypes are classified as: no actors; Caucasian; Black; Asian; and multiethnic.²¹
- **Representation of adults and family roles:** father; mother; grandparents; just children; celebrities; and adults.²²
- **Adult presence:** protagonists; co-protagonists; secondary roles; no presence.
- **Interaction between the adult characters and children:** family; friendly; professional; mother-child; father-child; enmity.
- **Role of the adult:** mother; father; grandparent; father and mother; several members; no family represented.
- **Actions depicted:** domestic; affectionate-nourishing; beautifying; competitiveness; strength; risk; professional; others.²³

Results

Which toy categories are the most advertised in each country? Are there differences and similarities in the percentages of representation of each category of toys between the countries studied)?

The results exhibited clear differences between the most advertised products in each country. Therefore, although initial evidence shows that there are similarities between Spain and Britain in the position occupied by the category 'dolls and accessories' in relation to the rest of toys advertised (said category is in first and second position for each country, respectively), this first observation shows a difference to be born very much in mind: the percentage represented by each category in each respective country as a proportion of each country's total sample is very different. Thus, of the total commercials analysed in the Spanish case, almost 30% of the adverts belong to the 'dolls and accessories' category, while in the UK that category represents just 12% of the sample (very similar data to that for Israel, with 10%). If we compare the most advertised category in each country, we observe that in Israel the 'crafts' category (20%) stands out above the rest (a category which in Spain is not represented and in Britain has a minimal presence), while in Britain the 'other figures and accessories' category represents 21% (which in Spain is only 4%).

In addition to this initial data, other differences and similarities that we can highlight are as follows:

In Spain (15%) and Israel (17%), the 'scale-model vehicles' toy category is in a prominent position, while in Britain (12%) no commercials of this category have been identified.

The case is similar for the 'other figures and accessories' category, which is the most advertised in Britain (6%), with a significant presence in Israel (6.5%) but a very limited presence in Spain (4%).

Adverts for 'educational' products have a notable presence in Britain (10%) sample, while in Spain and Israel this type of product is not present in the samples analysed.

By contrast, the 'board game' category is among the top places in Spain (14%) and Israel (17%), whereas in Britain (6%) its presence is very limited.

What values are the most used in toy commercials of each country?

In the three cases analysed, the value of 'fun' is the most advertised and displays very similar values, as it is present in at least 70% of advertisements of each country.

There is great disparity as regards the presence of the remaining values depending on the country and toy category advertised. In none of the

countries does any other value have as high a presence as fun, since no other value is present in more than 30% of the cases analysed.

The main values present in the commercials of each country also show similarities, but the amount they are portrayed differ in each country. Therefore, if we disregard the value of 'fun,' the five values which are most present, arranged in order of how much they are portrayed in each country, are: Spain – 'friendship' (19%), 'beauty' (16%), 'physical ability and development' (15%), 'skill'(13%), 'power and strength' (10%); Israel – 'physical ability and development' (30%), 'friendship'(21%), 'beauty' (18%), 'learning' (18%) and 'creativity' (18%); and BRITAIN – 'creativity' (21%), 'skill' (21%), 'power and strength' (21%), 'learning' (21%) and 'friendship' (17%).

What emotions are the most used in toy commercials?

In the case of emotions, 'joy' and 'surprise' are the most used in the three countries. In the Spanish and Israeli case, the presence of the emotion of 'joy' is especially significant, reaching 80% and higher, whereas in the UK the percentage is also noteworthy, the figures are not as high (almost 60% of the cases analysed).

How are the genders and phenotypes of the characters in toy commercials represented?

The analysis of genders and phenotypes shows clear differences in the advertising in each country. Whereas in Britain and Israel the presence of ads with characters of both genders in the same ad is very positively significant, in Spain this type of commercial amounts to under 30% of the commercials broadcast. In the case of Britain, we have observed that almost 60% of the adverts analysed portray characters of both genders. According to the data for the UK, we could offer a hypothesis that in Britain there is a balanced representation of the genders of child characters in toy advertisements. In the Spanish case, the hypothesis would be the opposite, as the gender most used in toy advertising is the female gender. If we take into account that in the Spanish case the most advertised toy category is that of 'dolls and accessories,' we can state that said advertisements do not foster a balanced representation of gender. Lastly, in the case of Israel, the high prevalence of adverts where no characters of any type are used to advertise the products is noteworthy. If we add the percentage of adverts containing no characters of any type to the percentage of advertisements containing characters of both genders, the result demonstrates that almost 70% of the commercials analysed from Israel do not use the characters' gender to classify the products as toys for boys or toys for girls. As regards the

British sample, this figure would be around 60%, while in Spain the figure is around 35% of cases.

In the case of the representation of the phenotypes there are also differences between the countries analysed, although these are not as notable as in the use of genders. For example, all three states use the Caucasian phenotype as the preferred type in their advertisements, as in all cases this represented more than 50% of the commercials, with Spain having 74% of commercials where the characters used are exclusively Caucasian. Britain is the country where the most commercials containing multiethnic characters have been detected, either including a portrayal of the Caucasian phenotype or without it, with 30% of the commercials having this characteristic. In the case of Israel, the figure is 20% while in Spain it represents under 15% of the adverts. It is noteworthy that there is not a higher percentage in a country such as Israel whose sociocultural characteristic is mainly the diversity of the ethnic groups in the country.

What products are the most advertised according to the gender of the characters? What values are most present according to the gender of the characters and the type of toy advertised?

From a comparison of the results for the variables of 'gender of the characters,' 'toy category' and 'values classified according to the gender of the characters,' when the gender of the characters in the commercials is only female, in the three countries analysed the most advertised toy category is that of 'dolls and accessories.' In all cases, 'fun' is the value most used, but we find differences depending on country. While in Britain the values of 'beauty,' 'motherhood' and 'learning' reflect similar portrayal rates, in the Israeli and Spanish cases 'beauty' is backed up with 'friendship' as the most used values.

In the case of ads whose representation of gender portrays only male characters, the most advertised toy categories are 'action figures' in Britain (50% of the cases); 'scale-model vehicles,' 'action figures' and 'toy weapons' in the case of Spain; and 'toy weapons' and 'scale-model vehicles' in the case of Israel. In the three cases, we observed coincidences, in the case of both toy weapons and action figures. Just in Britain, it is noteworthy that scale-model vehicles are not found among the most advertised categories when the characters are male. In the use of the values associated with genders, the UK case is remarkable as it is the only case in which 'fun' is not the most used value. Thus, 'power and strength' is present in 75% of Britain toy commercials whose characters are male only, and is much more common than 'fun' (present in 50% of the cases). Similar circumstances are observed for Spain, though in this instance 'fun' and 'power and strength' are equally represented

(50%). In Israel 'fun' is present in all the adverts analysed, coexisting with 'skills,' 'solidarity' and 'physical ability and development.'

Finally, when the adverts contain an equal presence of male and female characters, there is greater diversity in values and those most present are 'fun' (in all three countries), 'creativity,' 'skill,' 'friendship' and 'physical ability and development.' In the Israeli and British samples, there is also the value of 'learning,' with a significant percentage, a presence that does not occur in the case of the Spanish study.

How are adults represented in the toy advertisements?

According to the study's data on the presence of adults in toy advertisements, in all the commercials the presence of adults is low, though in the UK there is an equal balance between commercials with adult characters and those without adult characters. However, we must highlight that this figure is high because we have included a category to identify when the role of the adult is played by a child. In Britain, a significant proportion of ads where children play the role of adults can be observed (14%). For the Israeli and Spanish cases, the figures are insignificant or non-existent, which demonstrates a clear difference. We can also observe how in the UK the percentage of ads where children and adults share the spotlight is significant, as this can be observed in 20% of the ads, whereas in Spain and Israel the percentages are only 13% and 7%.

How are families represented in the toy advertisements?

In the analysis, and due to the array of situations, for each case the situation has been described in the way that best matches the particular characteristics of each country. Thus, in Britain, commercials where the family is not represented are the most common, amounting to 60% of the ads. However, this does not mean that there are no adults in the commercials, as the data shows that in 40% of the commercials adults are playing a family role. When the study focuses on differentiating between the presence of the father and the mother in the commercials, we can observe that the presence of just the mother, without being accompanied by any other family member, occurs in 17% of the cases; however, in the case of the father it occurs in just 3% of cases, the same percentage as commercials with the presence of both the father and the mother.

In the cases of Israel and Spain, representations of the family are portrayed to a lesser extent than in Britain. In Israel, just 23% of the ads show a family character; the most common representation of the family is that of either mother and father together or just the mother, whereas the father is not represented without the mother being present in any of the adverts.

However, in the cases from Spain there are less than 10% of ads with some type of representation of the family. The most common type of family represented is one in which both parents are present, whereas the figure for commercials where only the mother or only the father is represented does not exceed 3% of the total Spanish

How are families represented in toy advertisements and which are the most common actions associated with families according to type of representation?

Finally, this study associates the most common actions present in the advertisements in which the family is represented. This analysis enables us to observe clear differences associated with the actions and genders of the characters represented.

Thus, in Britain, when the character represented is just the father, the actions most used are 'strength' and 'competitiveness' actions, whereas when the character represented is just the mother, the actions are 'affectionate-nourishing,' 'domestic' and 'fun.'

When the characters represented comprise more than one family member, the most utilised actions are also more varied. In addition to those associated with the maternal character, here we find 'competitiveness' and 'professional activities.'

In the British sample, we detected a large number of commercials where children play the role of adults. In this case, the most common roles represented are professional roles while family roles are portrayed less commonly, although some cases have been identified where children pretend to be mothers or fathers. They represent various professional roles and leisure activities from the adult world, such as driving, going to eat pizza, cleaning a pet and cooking. In one case, they represent a couple with no children and in two cases they represent the role of mothers looking after their babies.

When children appear accompanied by adult family members, the most represented actions are of the following types: 'affectionate-nourishing,' 'domestic,' 'professional' and 'competitiveness.' In these commercials, the other family-member characters are mainly mother and father, and only in one of the cases analysed does a grandfather appear.

In the case of Israel, the actions associated with the family are 'beautification,' 'competitiveness,' 'domestic' actions and 'affectionate-nourishing' actions. Adverts show adults who do not correlate with a family situation. When adverts contain a representation of the family, with a father and mother, the actions represented are mainly 'domestic' or 'affectionate-nourishing' actions, or 'competitiveness.'

In the Spanish adverts, where the toy commercials show adults who are not linked to a family situation, the actions represented are 'risk,' 'competitiveness' or 'beautification.' When the adverts portray the family (mother only or mother with children) the actions represented are 'professions' or 'games.' When adverts portray the family, namely a father and mother or other unspecified family members, the actions represented are 'competitive-ness,' 'domestic' actions or 'affectionate-nourishing' actions. In adverts where the children portray adults, they play the role of the father and a professional activity

Discussion

This study serves to apply, on an international scenario, a model for analysing toy advertisements that has been designed to analyse the advertising for children and toys and determine how children are represented in the advertising according to the relationship with the toy category, the gender of the characters, their phenotype, the emotions, the actions, the family and the degree to which the advertising complies with legal regulations. In this work, this last variable has not been taken into account due to the total volume of the commercials analysed between the three samples and the subject matter studied. This research team is aware of the inherent differences in each of the three samples constituting the total sample for this study, but considers the results obtained to be truly relevant for different reasons. After analysing the data, we cannot confirm our hypothesis, as there are both significant differences and similarities in the representations of children and the family in toy advertising according to the countries analysed in this study, in accordance with authors such as Jayasinghe²⁴ and Jayasinghe and Ritson²⁵ who investigated how family identity is configured through advertising and the social representation of each country analysed.

Interpreting the similarities and differences can help to posit hypotheses for future studies that focus on identifying the features of the adverts associated with specific product categories, with the representation of children according to the gender of the characters and with the global representation of the family as a particular institution of each society. It can also help to determine which syntactic and semantic aspects of toy advertisements significantly show features which define and differentiate one culture from another. This result coincides in part with the research conducted by Nichols, Nixon and Rowsell,²⁶ upon understanding that advertising represents the environment of the child and its sociability. However, the results of our research do not coincide exactly because we understand that brands wish to cover a global scale extending beyond their territory, representing a global and common identity in their advertisements, which distances the advertisements from their social realities.

The data that measures the representation of children in commercials according to the different toy categories enables us to conclude that there are significant differences between the most advertised toy categories in each country. The representativeness of each product category is different in each country. Therefore in Spain, the most advertised categories are 'dolls and accessories' (27.5%) and 'scale-model vehicles' (15%); in Israel, they are 'crafts' (20%) and 'board games' (17%); and in the BRITAIN, they are 'other figures and accessories' (21%) and 'dolls and accessories' (12%).

As regards the presence of values in the advertisements, analysis of the data shows that the reality for each country is different if we compare the values most commonly present in each case. In the case of the UK, these values offer very similar figures, as the values of 'creativity,' 'skill,' 'power and strength' and 'learning' are present in 21% of the cases analysed. In the Spanish and Israeli cases, the data is more dissimilar. In Israel, the high presence of the value 'physical ability and development' (30%) is noteworthy, while the figures for Spain and Britain are very similar to each other (15% and 14%, respectively). However, these values are not always associated directly with the family, unlike the results obtained by Gee and Jackson²⁷ and Pashupati and Vasavada-Oza.²⁸ It has been observed, in addition, that in the three countries the value of 'friendship' is among the six most commonly present values.²⁹ However, the value of 'learning' offers significant and similar figures in Israel and Britain, whereas in Spain it is only present in 5% of the cases analysed.

As regards emotions, there is great consistency between the three countries, as 'joy' and 'surprise' are used almost equally in all of them. This describes a typical emotional reaction between the child and the toy, which the advertising takes advantage of to strengthen the promise of the advertising discourse associated with the product. It seems that in these cases, there is not a link with the family and, by contrast, a desire for the child to acquire a product with the aim of achieving apparent happiness, which without the product the child would not obtain. That is, there is the desire to possess this object which signifies happiness.³⁰

As regards the representation of gender and phenotype, we can observe clear differences between the countries analysed. According to the results Israel and Britain have higher percentages of simultaneous representations of characters of both genders among the different categories.³¹

However, in Spain the percentages are clearly lower and limited to very specific categories. This information must be borne in mind so as to develop an anticipated more extensive and focused study in each country in order to determine if the representation of gender varies depending on the toy categories advertised. In addition, it is striking that the value of 'solidarity' is only present in the commercials from Israel and, moreover, in those where just male characters are present, in contrast with the data collected for the

other countries. This would indicate how social representation, according to Gee and Jackson³² and Pashupati and Vasavada-Oza,³³ is reconstructed through gender. We understand that in the context of the Israeli nation this value of 'solidarity' is fundamental due to the position of its country in a hostile territory. This value is very important in that society for its own survival and therefore we understand that it appears in the adverts as a social value and the identity of the country.

As regards the first sub-hypothesis, the data on the representation of the family and the adults shows that the presence of the family in toy commercials is not predominant, but scarce. Contrary to the research by Nelson, Atkinson, Rademacher and Ahn,³⁴ which considers the importance of advertising on family socialisation of children, the data from the Israeli and Spanish samples indicates that most brands exclusively use children interacting with the toy. In the UK, the situation is different as commercials showing characters with family roles represent almost half of the sample analysed. In addition, the adverts where the children portray adult and family-member roles are also striking. In Israel this aspect has not been observed and in Spain it is only minimally present. This must be taken into account for future research as a characteristic specific to the advertising in Britain, which matches the social reality of the country more closely and differentiates it from the rest. It is especially striking that in Israel and Spain the family is represented in the commercials less often than in Britain (23% and 10%, respectively, of the total sample for each country) taking into account that they are collectivist countries where social and family relationships are decisive in their respective societies, unlike Britain. Furthermore, Anglo-Saxon individualism makes clear that the interests of the family are decisive compared to collectives.

In our opinion, the data obtained in this study reflects how the majority of the advertisements analysed associate the product with the child without the presence of the adult, which can foster an individualistic and egocentric idea. The British figures show, by contrast, more diverse advertising. Several commercials enable the children watching to identify with the characters in the adverts together with other socialisation agents represented by the figure of the adult in them. In this respect, it is important to highlight the adverts in the UK where children portray the role of adults, playing both professional and family member characters.

The adult is one of the main agents of socialisation in the learning of the guidelines and norms that a set of people who are members of the same culture share and are fundamental in the primary socialisation process,³⁵ In our opinion, it is essential to continue research involving comparisons of the similarities and differences in the ways different European countries have of representing adults and the family in advertising aimed at children. We consider it important that this line of research be continued, broadening

the case study samples to determine which actions are primarily and most frequently associated with advertisements representing adults and family. The data obtained in this respect shows how competitiveness is one of the most common actions in the cases in which the family is represented, due to its presence in board game commercials. But it has also been detected that beautification and affectionate-nourishing actions are common in ads where adults are present. In particular, this polarity is seen clearly in advertising in Britain, where competitive actions are associated with the presence of the father in the commercial and affectionate-nourishing actions are associated with the mother's presence.

Furthermore, the almost non-existent presence of grandparents in the ads in the three analysed cases has been clearly observed. This fact enables us to state that the analysed ads do not reflect one of the clearest social realities in children's socialisation, at least in the case of Spain. This opens up another line of research, to reflect on or to inspire those studies which want to stress this fact and dig deeper specifically into the culture of each community or country.

Notes

1. Office for National Statistics, 2019.
2. INE, 2019.
3. Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020.
4. Nichols, Nixon and Rowsell, "The 'Good' Parent In," 65.
5. Nelson et al., "How Media and Family," 165.
6. Jayasinghe, "Video Ethnography, Researcher Reflexivity," 26.
7. Jayasinghe and Ritson, "Everyday Advertising Context," 104.
8. See note 5 above.
9. Martínez-Pastor, Nicolás and Salas, "Gender Representation in Advertising," 187.
10. Gee and Jackson, "Leisure Corporations, Beer Brand," 83.
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33. See note 11 above.
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35. Gaitán, *Sociología de la infancia*.

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