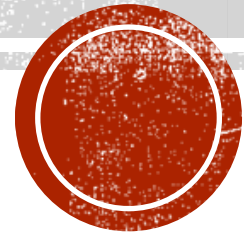


PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN:
An Empirical Study of Advertising Content
Issues and Concerns for Policy Intervention
funded by ICSSR

GDN Conference –Bonn

Knowledge for sustainable Development- research-Policy Nexus

23 October 2019



INAPPROPRIATE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISING –A GLOBAL CONCERN

- Women comprise half the human race, their contribution to civilization has been equal, if not more than men, but they have not received the treatment which they deserve in various spheres.
- Mass media a product of a little more than century reflects the biases that they suffer in society, stereotyping and objectification being the foremost in the media space.
- Advertising a commercial medium does it more frequently.
- News media does not critically analyse advertising as its sustenance often rests on advertising revenue.

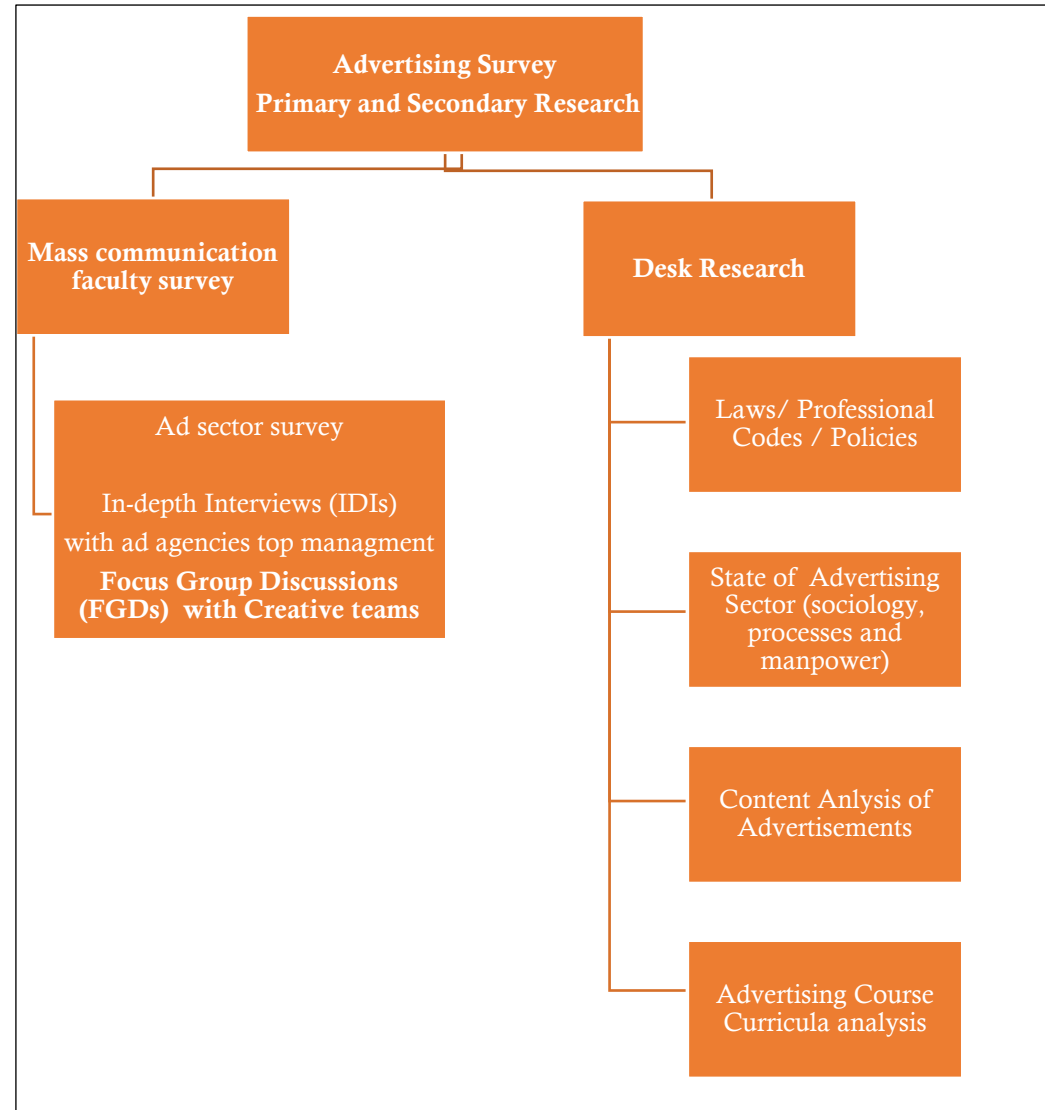


RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE AND FOCUS

- The research study has taken a 360 degree perspective to look in to areas of stereotyping and inappropriate portrayal of women in the commercial space, the extent of stereotyping and objectification, map patterns if any among brand categories, across media and across timeline of three decades
- The research has also looked at the existing laws and policies to find gaps if any.
- The study has analysed the course curricula of mass communication courses see the presence of absence of gender content and made suggestions
- The research study after analysing the problems has also made suggestions on how the menace of gender –insensitivity can be addressed by bringing out a multi-media tool kit that can serve as a repository of reference material for the content creators and has also suggested a *Gender sensitivity Test* for the creative work before it is released in the media for public consumption.



Research Trajectory



Research Hypotheses

- (1) Gender stereotypes, identified from Goffman's *Gender advertisements* including two additional indicators are prevalent in ads across various brand categories and media genre in India.
- (2) The provisions of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 are ambiguous and not followed by the Indian ad sector, in general.
- (3) Advertising during the economic liberalization in the 1990s began the new trend of projecting bold and provocative imagery of women in its narrative, thus objectifying the female form.
- (4) Indian advertising per se does not reflect the social shift to represent the changing role and status of women, based on reality.



FIELD WORK

10 FGDs and 34 In-depth interviews

Major findings

Ad sector does not follow any specific gender policies on portrayal of women in advertising; the references often come from the milieu, termed as 'slice of life'.

None of the creative team member across FGDs had any knowledge about the existence of law on the indecent representation of women

Engagement with professional codes of ethics very minimal

Client has the last word in what would appear in the ad, the choice of celebrity and the ad narrative

Ad professional have a sense of self-righteousness about their contribution to brand building and do not think they are responsible for inappropriate portrayal of women in the ad narrative.

They feel they only mirror a social reality about the subordinate roles the women play in general.



Professional codes of conduct

Except for Doordarshan code, ASCI speaks in general on portrayal and nothing on gender sensitivity, BCCC code does not even mention the word advertising in its code.

AAAI has no specific role to aid and advice ad industry on any matter except looking after its commercial interest.



COURSE CURRICULA DECONSTRUCTION

The mass communication syllabi in general is not gendered. Over 300 universities and institutions of higher learning teach mass communication including advertising in India, but more than 90 per cent syllabi is neither inclusive nor gendered. UGS's moral course curricula also does not reflect any course on gender. The document released as late as August 2019 also has nothing on gender, laws and codes of ethics.



LAWS & POLICIES

Amendments to the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, lapsed twice in the 15th and 16th parliament tenure

The professional codes of conduct by industry bodies need revisiting.



CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISEMENTS



Sample Population of Ads

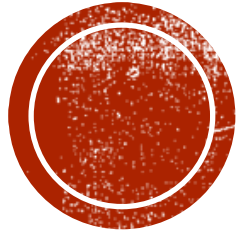
SN.	Categories	No. of Sub-categories	No. of Brands	No. of Ads			Total
				TVCs	Print	Internet	
1.	FMCGs	10	55	211	107	54	372
1.	Lifestyle	10	59	147	182	127	457
1.	Automobile	3	14	67	32	38	137
1.	BFSI	3	18	46	33	38	117
1.	Travel	5	18	37	18	30	85
Total		31	164	508	372	287	1167



Brand-wise Breakup of Ads

SN.	Medium	Categories	No. of Sub-Category	No. of Total Ad
1	All three (TVC, print, Digital)	FMCGs	Beauty Products	67
			Toiletries	47
			Detergent	47
			Aerated Drinks	56
			Snacks	61
			Beverages	44
			Stationary	32
			Medicines	6
			Electrical Appliance	4
			Cooking Oil	8
2.	All three	Lifestyle	Apparel	99
			Contraceptive	60
			Accessories	33
			Shoes	37
			Jewellery	34
			Alcohol	50
			Tobacco	38
			Deodorant	34
			Furnishing/Sanitary	26
			Telecom	45
3.	All three	Auto	Cars	54
			Two-Wheelers	55
			Tyres	28
4.	All three	BFSI	Banks	48
			Insurance	40
			Mutual Funds	29
5.	All three	Travel	Hotels	25
			Accessories	30
			Airlines	15
			Travel Sites	6
			Apps	9
Total				1167





**CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ADS ON ERVING GOFFMAN'S CLASSIC GENDER ADVERTISEMENTS
(1979)**

RELATIVE SIZE

FUNCTIONAL RANKING

FEMININE TOUCH

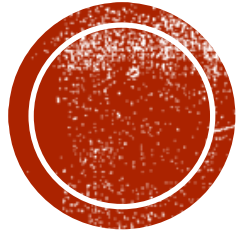
FAMILY SCENE

RITUALIZATION OF SUBORDINATION

LICENSED WITHDRAWAL

Two more indicators added:

PATRIARCHY and **OBJECTIFICATION**



MAJOR FINDINGS & INSIGHTS

MAJOR FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

- **Subordination of women** and **patriarchal narrative** came out as the dominant indicators in negative weightage of as much as 80-90%
- **Objectification** of women generally restricted to some **lifestyle and beauty products** like apparel, beauty creams, deodorants, alcohol, tobacco and condoms. These products received high negative weightage on subordination and patriarchy also.
- **BFSI** and **Auto sector** ads the worst offenders on subordination and patriarchy.
- **Television** comes out as the **dominant medium in negative portrayal** among all the three viz. TV, Print and Digital
- **Family** that has been the mainstay of Indian advertising for long has been relegated to the backyard.
- The **current decade** has seen **objectification going down by 19%** which is a welcome sign.



PARAMETRIC NEGATIVE WEIGHTAGES FOR ALL MEDIA ACROSS 3 DECADES

Column1	Relative size	Feminine touch	Functional ranking	Family scene	Ritualization of subordination	Licensed withdrawal	Patriarchy	Objectification
TVC (1991-2019)	53.15	66.14	69.49	13.58	91.93	54.92	77.76	28.35
Print ads (1991-2019)	25.54	36.02	33.60	2.69	90.32	53.23	78.49	31.45
Digital ads (2011-2019)	19.86	49.83	19.86	4.88	85.71	38.33	63.41	25.44



PARAMETRIC NEGATIVE WEIGHTAGES ACROSS 3 DECADES IN TVCs

Categories	Relative size	Feminine touch	Function ranking	Family Scene	Ritualization of Subordination	Licensed Withdrawal	Patriarchy	Objectification
1990-2000	56.10	71.95	74.39	17.07	96.34	68.29	87.80	45.12
2001-2010	55.49	68.68	78.02	11.54	92.31	57.14	89.56	29.12
2011-later	49.59	63.41	56.91	13.47	93.90	54.88	80.49	26.42



PARAMETRIC NEGATIVE WEIGHTAGES ACROSS 3 DECADES IN PRINT ADS

Categories	Relative size	Feminine touch	Function ranking	Family Scene	Ritualization of Subordination	Licensed Withdrawal	Patriarchy	Objectification
1990-2000	30.59	31.76	49.41	2.35	87.06	63.53	85.88	31.76
2001-2010	24.49	42.86	25.51	2.04	88.78	52.04	75.51	37.76
2011-later	22.46	35.83	26.74	1.60	85.56	49.20	78.61	30.48

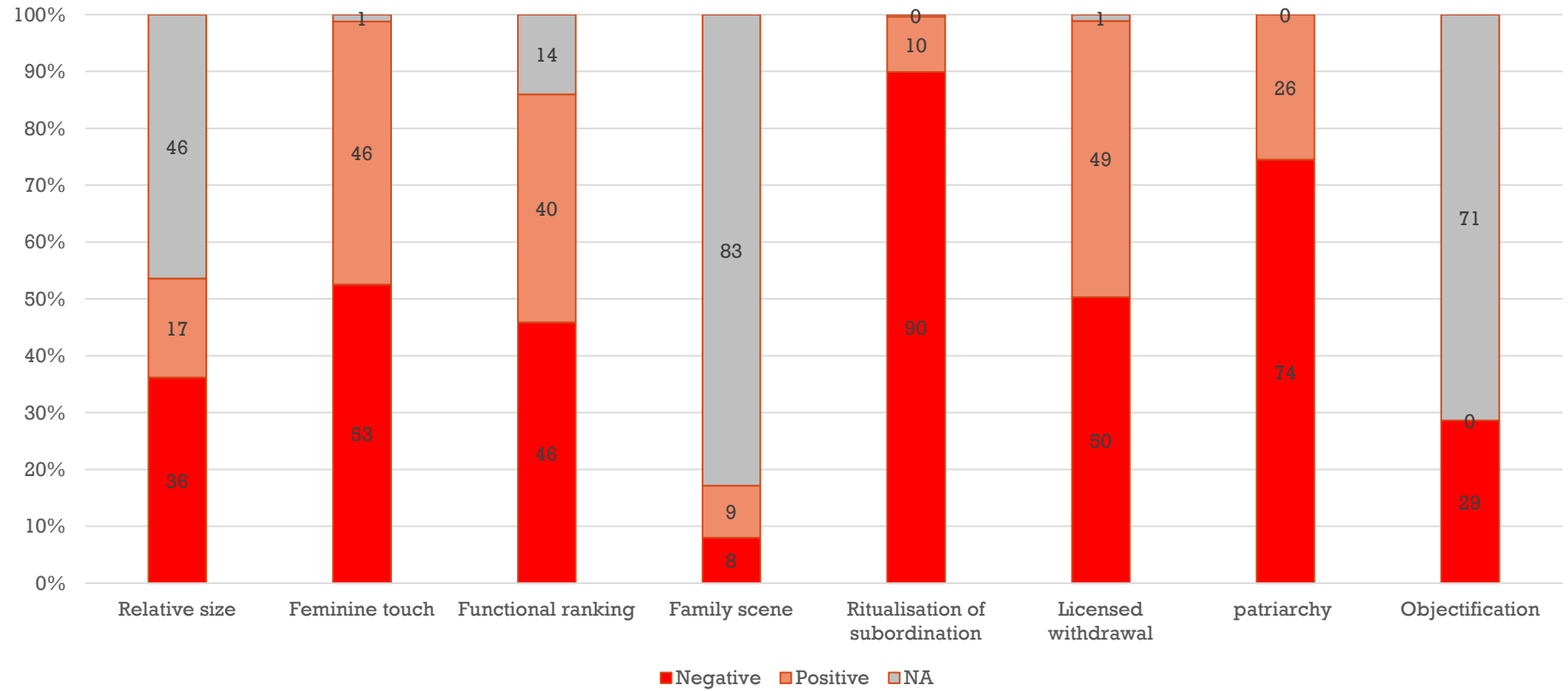


Micro data
**PARAMETRIC NEGATIVE WEIGHTAGES ACROSS 3 DECADES
 IN FIVE SUB CATEGORIES**

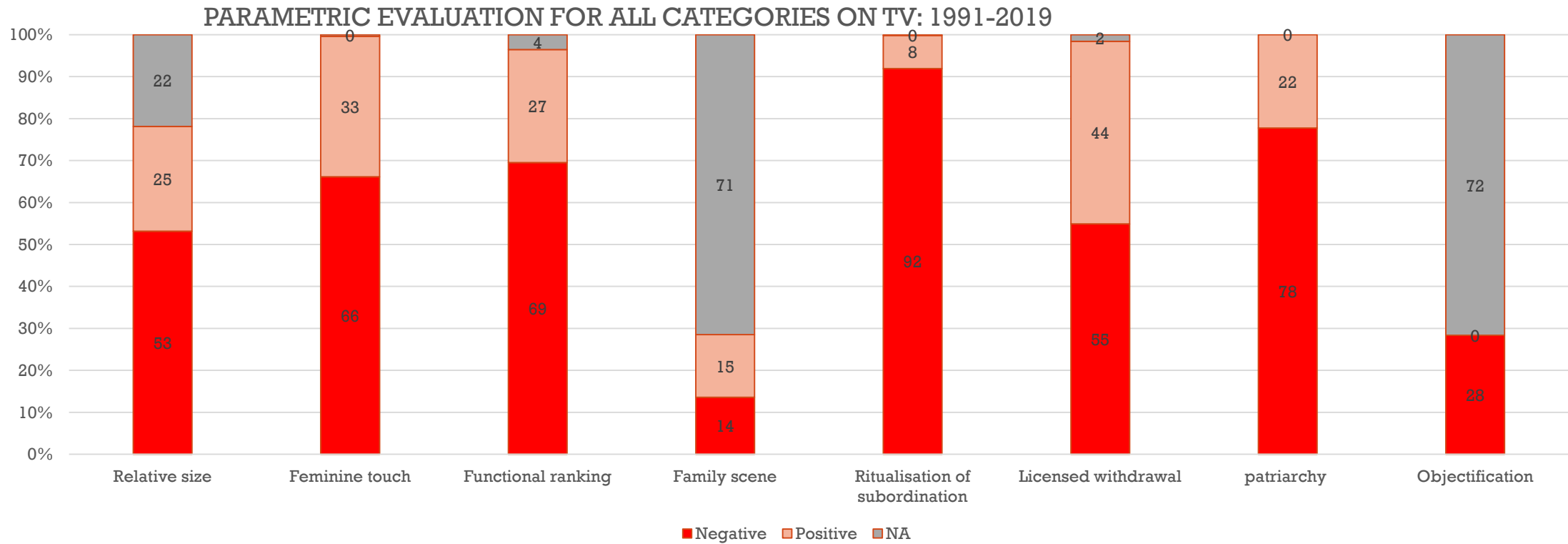
Categories	Sub-Categories	Ritualization of Subordination	Objectification	Patriarchy
Life style	Contraceptives	100.00	72.73	90.91
	Alcohol	80.00	93.33	93.33
	Deodorant	85.71	71.43	92.86
	Tobacco	90.91	81.18	90.91
FMCGs	Beauty Products	97.14	97.14	77.14



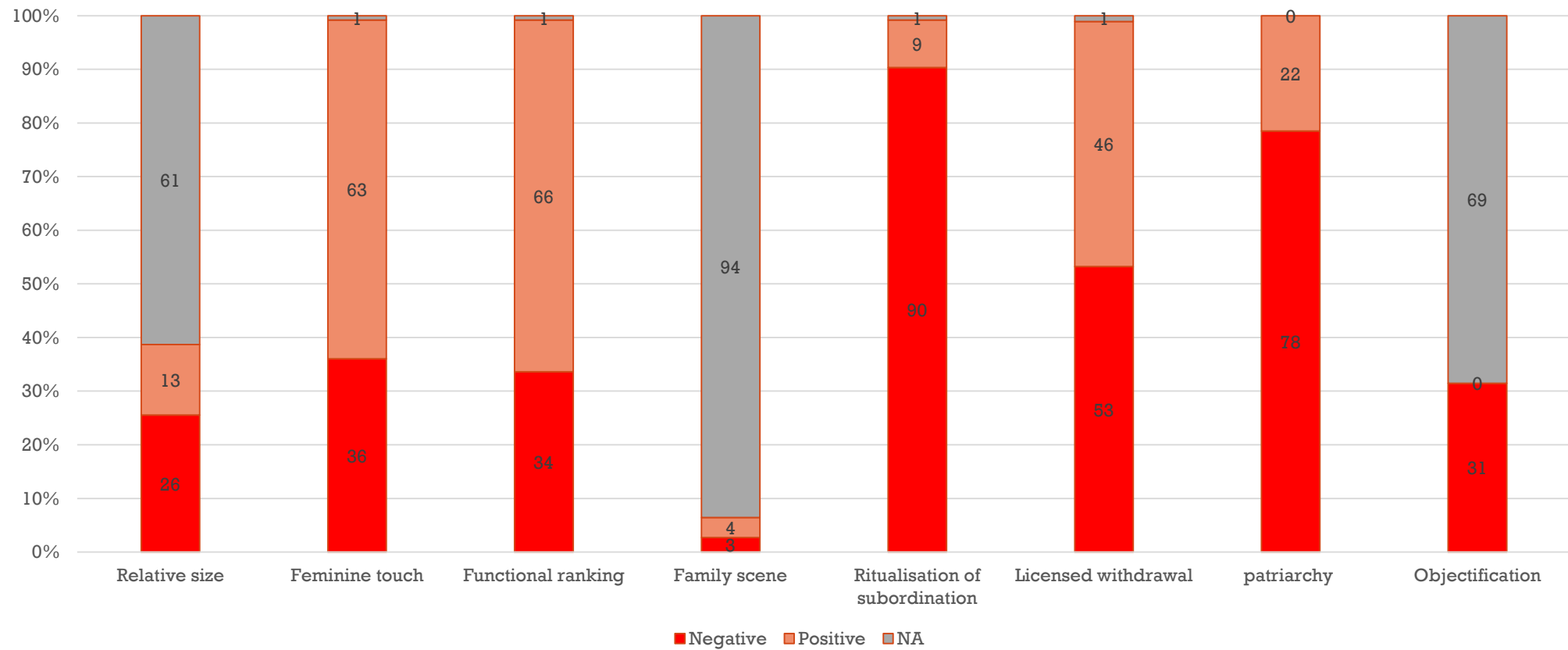
PARAMETRIC EVALUATION FOR ALL CATEGORIES (Across Media): 1991-2019



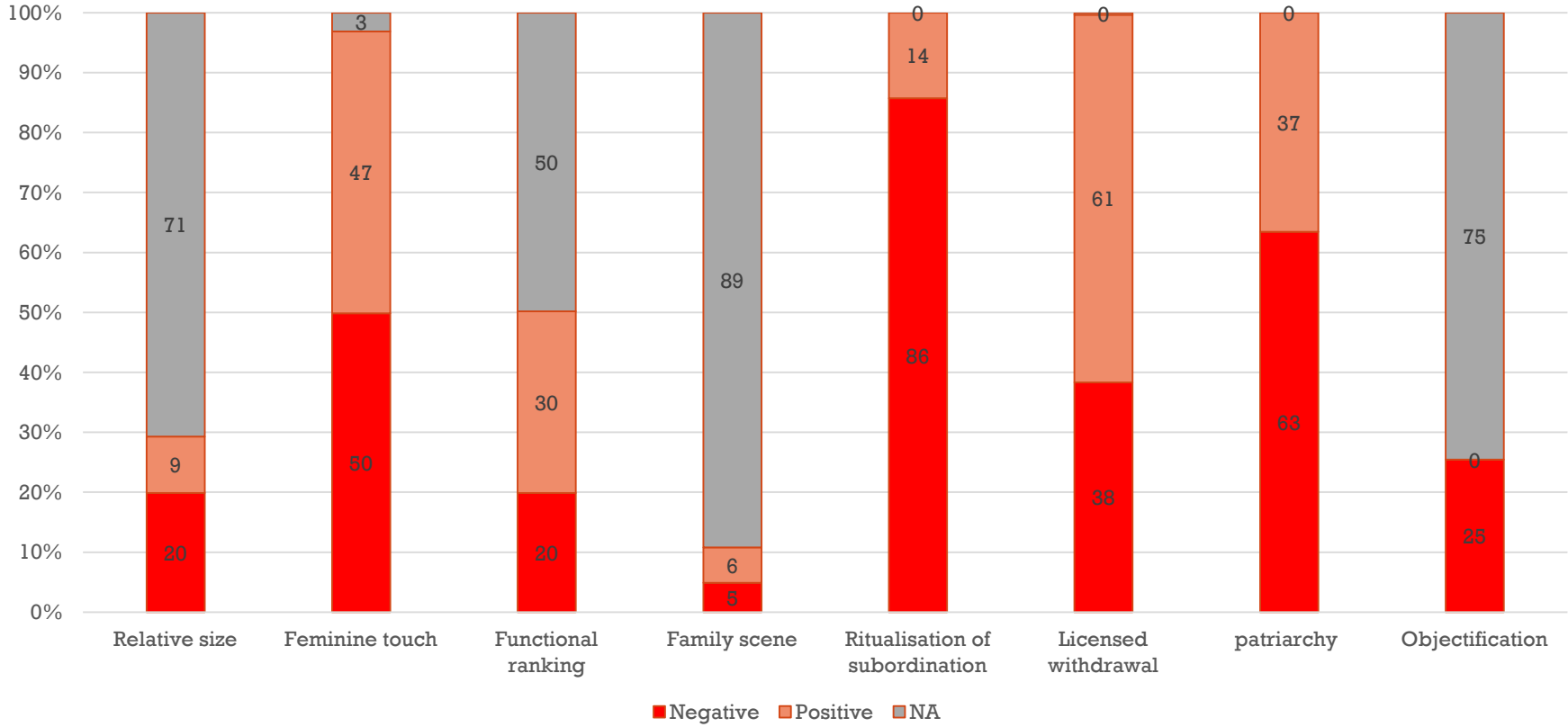
TVCs Total



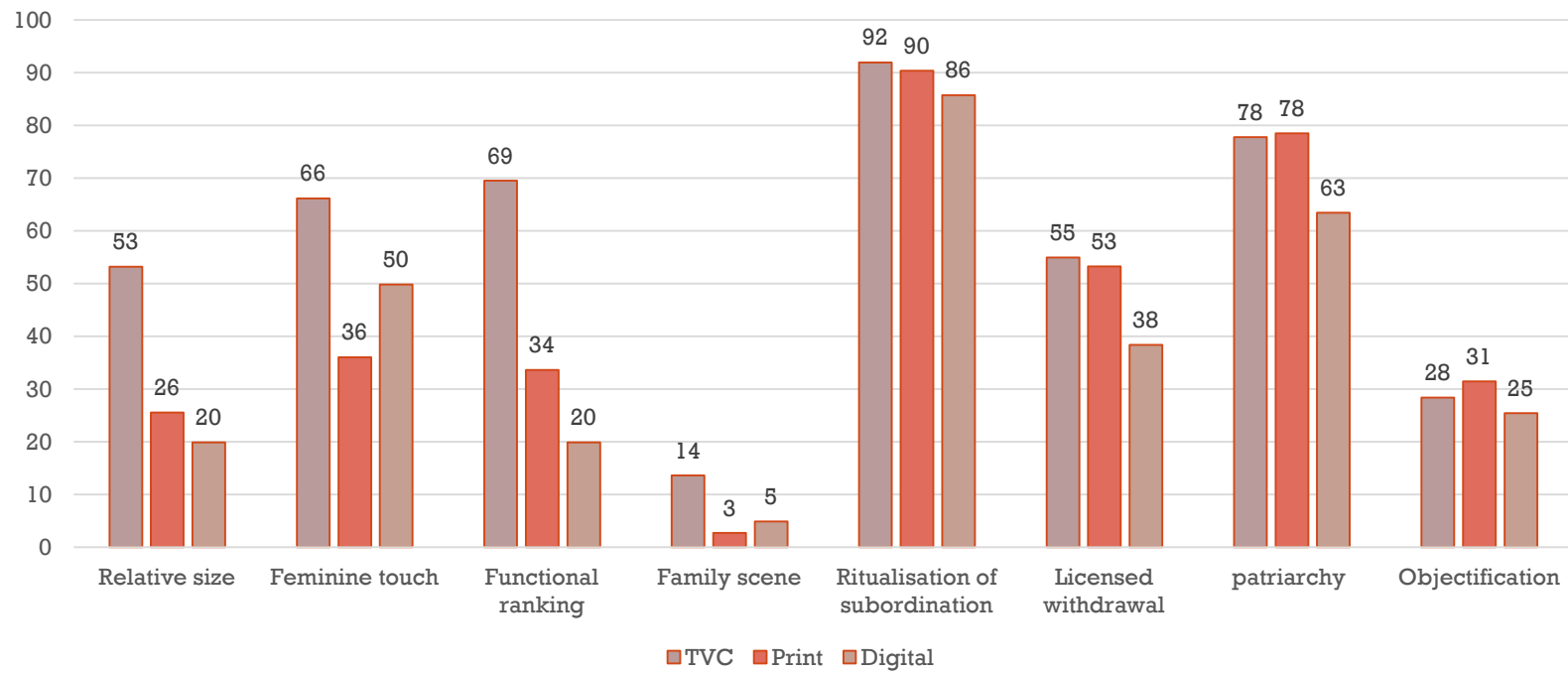
PARAMERIC EVALUATION FOR ALL CATEGORIES ON PRINT: 1991-2019



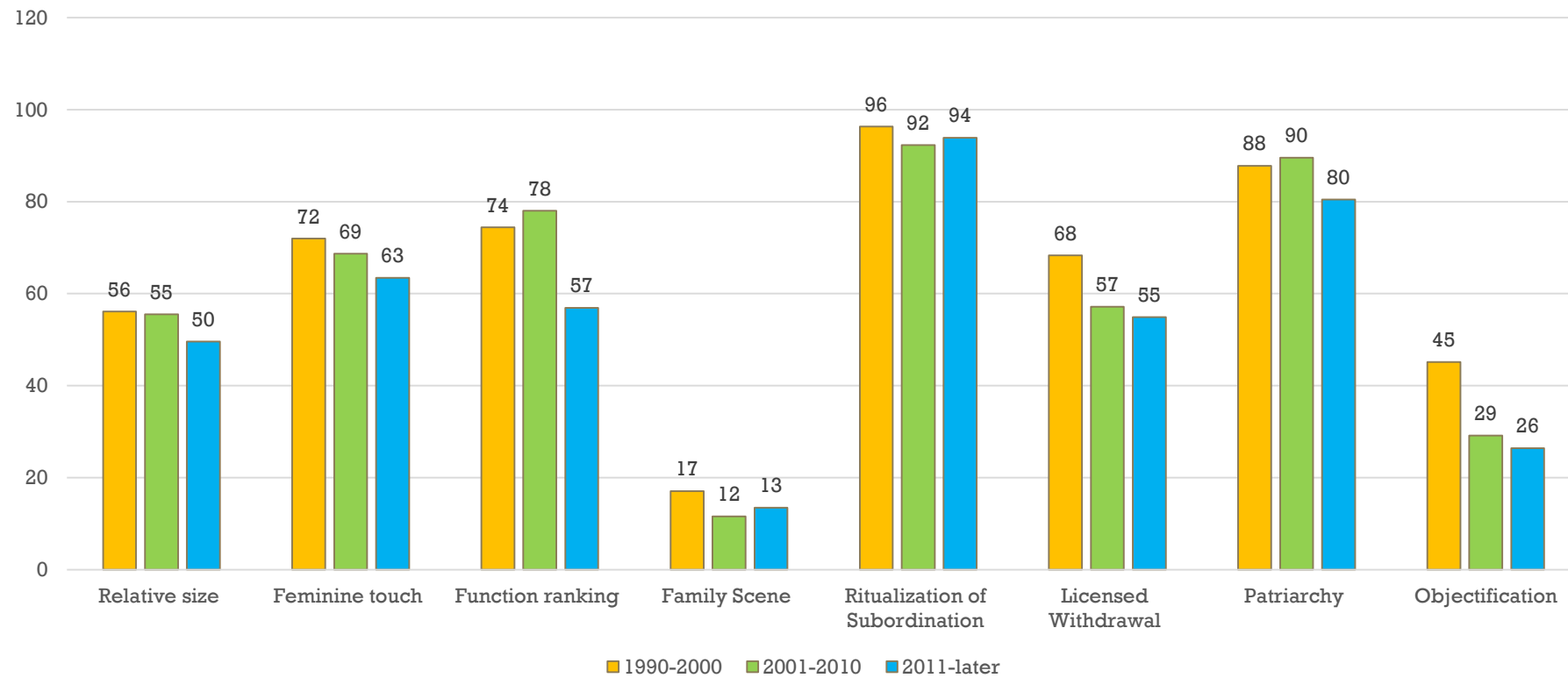
PARAMETRIC EVALUATION FOR ALL CATEGORIES ON DIGITAL: 1991-2019



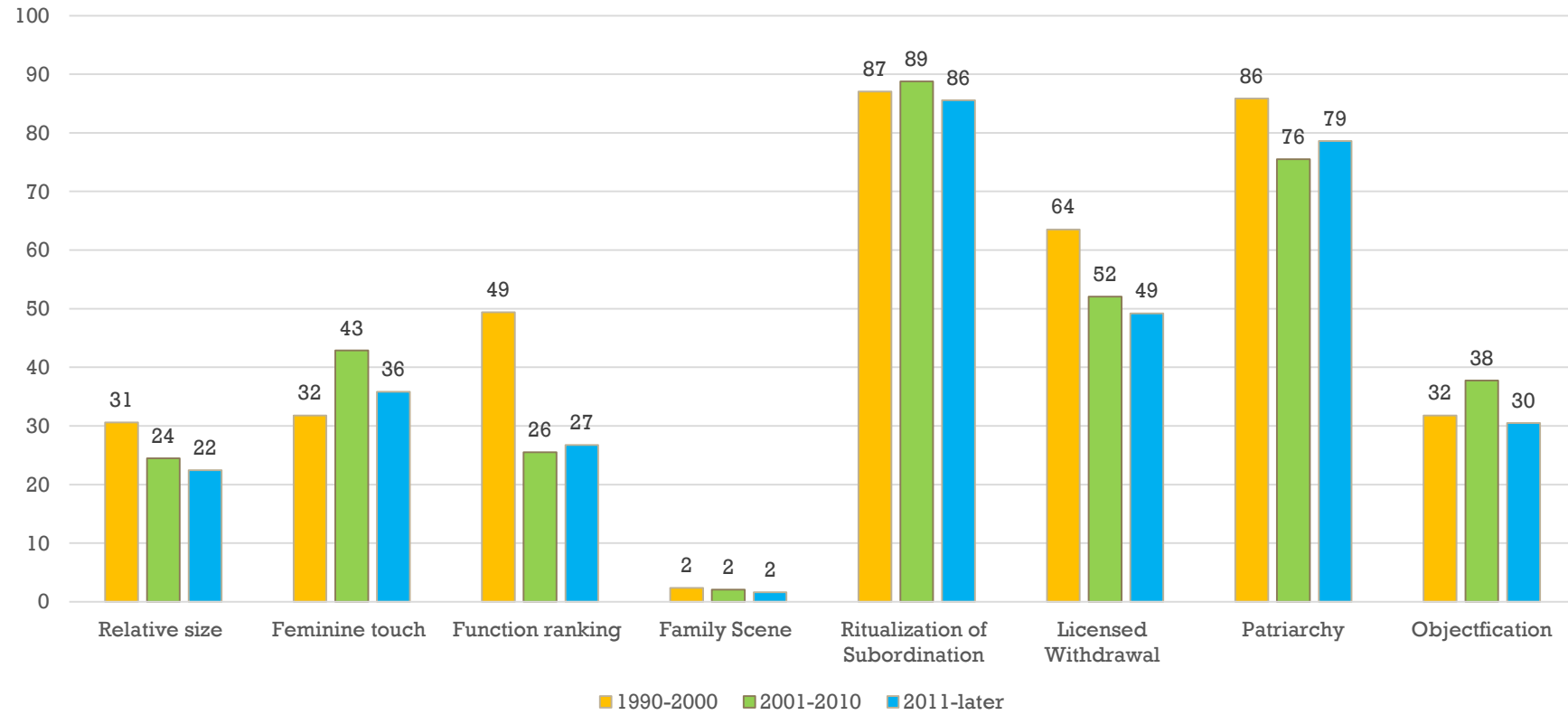
PARAMETRIC EVALUATION, MEDIA WISE, FOR ALL CATEGORIES:
Negative Weitage -1991-2019



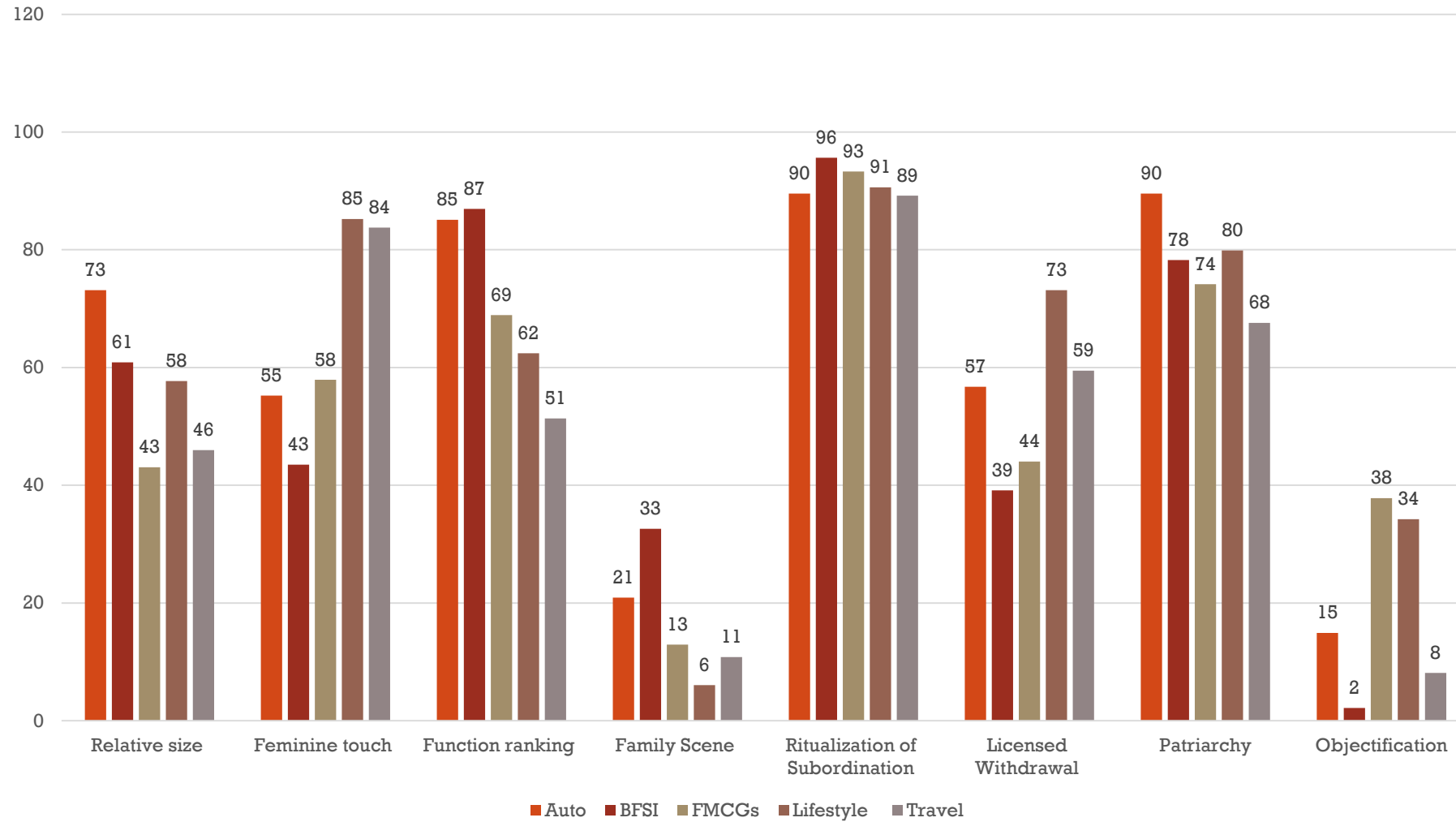
PARAMETRIC EVALUATION ACROSS 3 DECADES FOR ALL CATEGORIES ON TV



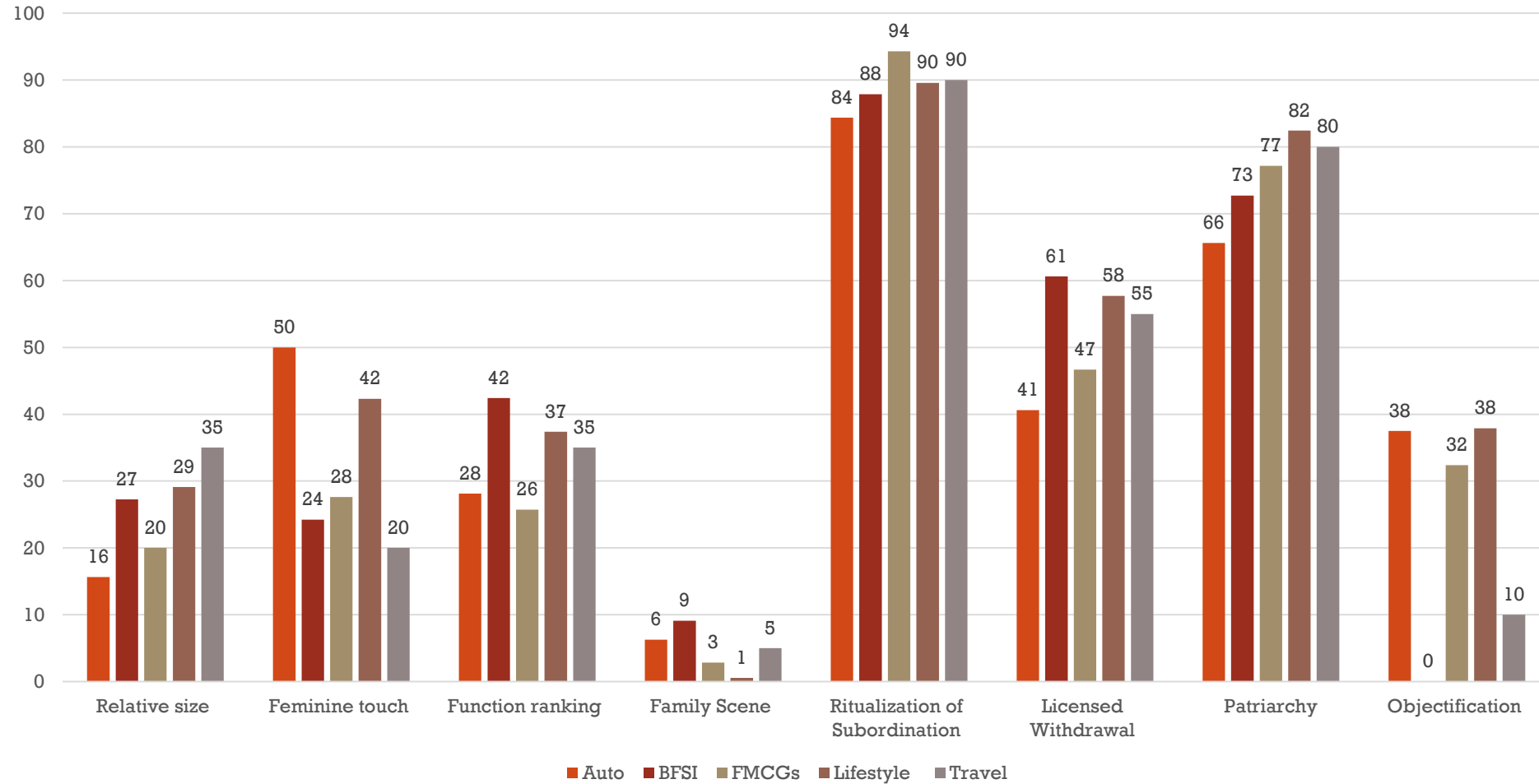
PARAMETRIC EVALUATION ACROSS 3 DECADES FOR ALL CATEGORIES ON PRINT



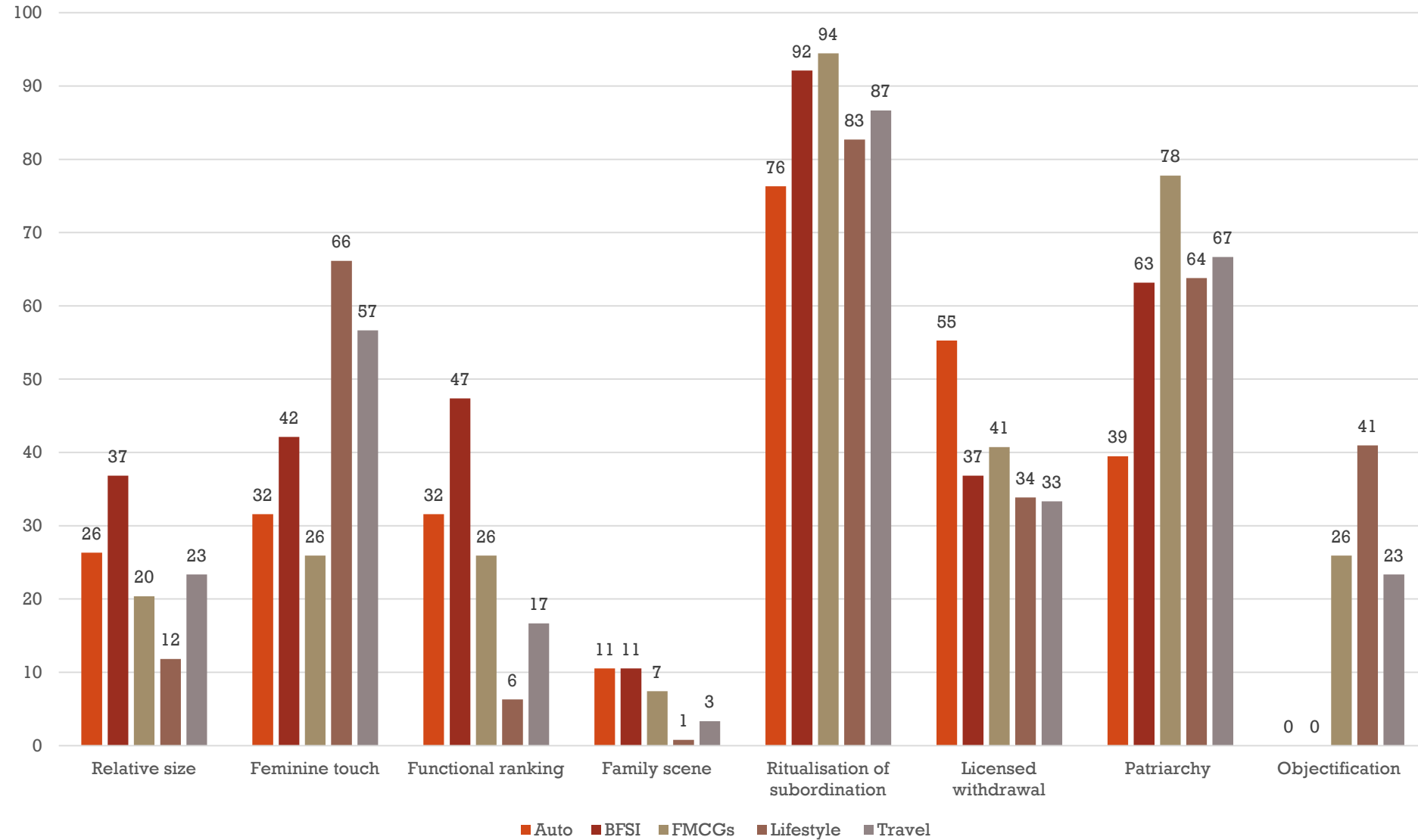
PARAMETRIC EVALUATION, CATEGORY WISE (5), IN TV: 1991-2019



PARAMETRIC EVALUATION, CATEGORY WISE (5) IN PRINT 1991-2019



PARAMETRIC EVALUATION, CATEGORY WISE (5), IN DIGITAL 1991-2019



Stages of review of research study

1. Academia interface

As a part of the process, a half-day workshop was conducted at Lucknow in October 2018 comprising academics in mass communication from six universities. This was facilitated by Dr. Tanu Dang and Dr. Neeraj Shukla of KMCU university at Lucknow. Input from a cross section of 10 media faculty was also taken by mail.

2. Presentation to ISID faculty on 15 April 2019.

3. ICSSR Review Committee meeting: on 29 April 2019 and 24 September 2019

4. Seminar with Academia-industry: A seminar to discuss initial findings and insights with various stakeholders, especially from academia and industry was organized at ISID on 18 May 2019. Faculty from Delhi university, IP university, IIMC, MR university, Manipal university and Bennett university, besides ad practitioners participated in the deliberations. Besides the findings, the research team also presented the proposed multimedia tool kit and concepts about the gender sensitivity barometer.

5. Policy paper was discussed with industry stalwarts Mr. Chinta Mani Rao, Mr. PV Narayanamoothy and Mr. Tilak Mukherjee in 19 August 2019.

6. Policy brief to be shared with MIB

7. Peer review of various chapters



Advocacy tools



MULTIMEDIA TOOL KIT (MMTK) WITH GENDER SENSITIVITY TEST



POLICY BRIEF



THE TEAM

Project Director: Prof. Jaishri Jethwaney

Co-Project Director: Prof Seema Goyal

