



DOI: 10.25768/fal.r.n06.a04

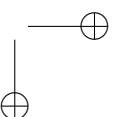
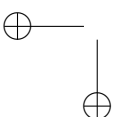
## Using metaphors to communicate Gender Equality issues in advertising

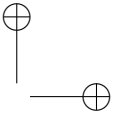
Ana Maria Sarmiento  
*Universidade Nova de Lisboa*

**ABSTRACT:** The main objective of this paper is to assess how visual and textual metaphors reasoning is used in advertising communication to promote Gender Equality issues. For this purpose, it is here analysed a film advertisement promoting a Gender Equality topic in a specific cultural context using multimodal metaphors. The results shows that a multimodal metaphor understanding is relevant to the study of Communication in International Development field, mainly when metaphors are used to communicate within different cultures. The findings also exemplify the cautions necessary while using metaphors in order to illustrate a cross-culture issue due to the culture perspective differences. How culture is rooted in the way viewers from different backgrounds might arrive at the intended interpretation of the same multimodal metaphors, and therefore a clear comprehension of the cultural assumptions, values and beliefs is essential. In addition, it illustrates that by allowing discussion when the audience is familiar with the subject, metaphors as perceive can influence in social change behaviour. Assuming the multiplicity of cultural assumptions on Gender Equality in different regions, this paper aims to contribute to the international development field by illustrating how advertising on Gender Equality issues can use multimodal metaphors to communicate initiatives on this matter in different cultural contexts.

**KEYWORDS:** metaphors and advertising; multimodal metaphors; cultural perspectives; gender equality.

**W**E are living through a moment of social change on the international development scenery. Societies, countries, communities and individuals are in a steady shifting process of understanding values, acquiring attitudes and implementing behaviours expected to be more adjustable to today's needs



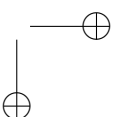
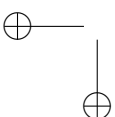


of sustaining the development to people, planet and prosperity. The leaders of several countries have come to an understanding that countries and people working together stand a chance of building a better world to all. With a watchful eye on sustainable development goals (SDGs), countries aim to implement actions and measures focusing on social change behaviours, from preserving the nature, to avoiding climate change dramatic consequences, to eradicating poverty, to reducing the gender equality gap, as part of the UN common 2030 Agenda.

The Agenda 2030 also promotes the idea of partnership among countries. Ideally, for a long-standing sustainable world development, developed countries and developing countries demonstrate a big social shift with the support and guidance in partnership initiatives and actions. Yet, this guidance might, at times, be criticized by many, based on the argument that is a “quick-fix” arrangement to reproduce the northern countries’ system in the southern countries, taking rarely into consideration the cultural assumptions of the contexts. The purpose of this paper is not to argue the countries actions; but rather, in light of understanding the role of communication for social change, to assess how metaphors, as a valuable and strong communication tool, can be used to communicate a message based on global values to a local context, keeping in mind the local cultural perspectives.

For the academic Silvio Waisbord, a crucial starting point is the need “to be sensitive to the fact that local cultures do not necessarily fit philosophical assumptions about individual rationality that are embedded in traditional models.” (Waisbord, 2001, 36). In line with the premise that different cultures might not fit the Gender Equality assumptions and connotations as undertaken by the western organizations and companies, the perspective of communicating global matters and values to a broader international audience, in the same period of time, is subject to a critical reflection. Through this critical reflection, this paper assesses one particular point: how a Gender Equality advertising campaign exploring multimodal metaphors is faring with a differentiated cultural audience?

As a starting argument, it is here initially assumed that the interpretation of a metaphors is mainly due to the reader’s individual and cultural cognitive process. Therefore, communicating a global value using multimodal metaphors in international communication campaigns might be a challenge. Looking closely at how reasoning by using metaphors in an advertising provides inter-

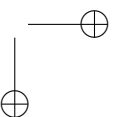
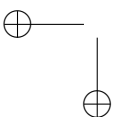




esting findings to rethink the power to communicate and elucidate different cultures on global issues. In this paper, it is questioned if global values can be communicated in different cultural perspectives, with different social, cultural, religious and moral backgrounds, and all using multimodal metaphors as a useful and valued tool. The hypothesis here is using multimodal metaphors in order to explain a global issue to a cultural differentiated audience might not provide the interpretation intended. Taking the global issue of Gender Equality, within the 2030 Agenda – SDG5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, for which international organizations and companies tend to follow the “universal” definition or, in other words, as understood through western mindset; it is here suggested to have a case study to explore the multimodal metaphor dimension of an international brand applied in an advertising diffused in the Middle East.

In Part I some interesting current approaches are presented to introduce a theoretical conceptualization of metaphors framework. It elucidates how visual and textual multimodal metaphors can be used on cross-cultural communications, based on different cultural perspectives. If Part I provides some theories on multimodal metaphors, it was considered interesting to apply some of these concepts to a practical example. To do so, it is proposed in Part II to analyse an advertisement released last year, 2018, in Saudi Arabia promoting a much-expected Gender Equality achievement: allowing women to drive in the country. This advertisement serves as a case study to illustrate how an international company promotes a Gender Equality matter relating it to an ultraconservative country audience by using multimodal metaphors. It is worth to mentioned that the analysis is limited to how metaphors are being communicated, rather than to assess their effectiveness to the audience. This leads to a discussion in Part III of the advertisement in light of concepts addressed in two different articles. The conclusion remarks present some interesting findings gathered through the analysis of the advertisement based on the article’s concepts as well as the theories on metaphors.

This discussion does not end with this paper’s outcome. It is expected to bring a valued contribution to an extended understanding of the role of international and development communication in different cultural contexts. The findings from this paper’s communication analysis of multimodal metaphors in the advertisement promoting gender equality in a conservative Middle East-





ern country serves as an exercise to pinpoint aspects that otherwise, in a more theoretical approach, could be “invisible” to viewers.

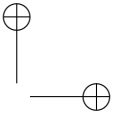
### **Reasoning by using multimodal Metaphors to understand culture perspectives**

Charles Forceville’s conceptualization is the starting point to define metaphors in this paper. “Lakoff and Johnson’s well-know definition of metaphor as «understanding and experience one kind of thing in terms of another» points towards the first criterion that needs to be fulfilled for something to be called a metaphor: two «things» are involved. Secondly, it is generally agreed upon in metaphor studies that the two «things» of a metaphor are not reversible.” (Forceville, 2016, 3).

If Aristoteles was the «grandfather» of reasoning by using metaphors, as one of first thinkers of the importance of metaphor in the discourse, considering it as one of “a series of tropes that could enhance or embellish the aesthetic meaning of a poem or the persuasive power of speeches” ( Forceville, 2016, 1), Lakoff and Johnson in the early 80s shifted the metaphor’ studies path claiming that “metaphor is primarily a matter of thought and action, and only derivatively a matter of language” (1980). Metaphors has been understood since then “the essential conceptual tools for human beings to make sense of the world”. This is particularly relevant to observe due to the most unnoticed aspect of metaphors in people’s lives. Although in many daily communications, people are exposed, and reproduce metaphors unintentionally. Many health, political and commercial communications are explained to their audiences based on visual and textual metaphors requiring people’s cognitive effort to arrive to the intended interpretation. And although embedded in communications using monomodal and/or multimodal metaphor, people pay little attention to the use of metaphors in their communication activities.

To Charles Forceville, though, the «moving image», also known as film, is the construction of message where metaphor can use the most diverse elements to communicate as a combination of moving images, sound music and language; allowing, this way, to use metaphors spoken, written and others varieties. Metaphors in films can manifest in different ways and therefore is a “multimodal” metaphor genre.





Moreover, Forceville defended the idea that since metaphors have a persuasive influence in cultural values and ways of the societies' common behaving, they are incredibly important to recognise how cultures diverge in their beliefs and knowledge. Without overlooking the individual distinct interpretations of a metaphor, the academic John Bonilla considered that "mapping from the source to the target domain are culturally determined." (Bonilla, 2019). For George Lakoff and Mark Johnson metaphors "go beyond language in the sense that they show to a certain degree how people think and interpret concepts in life." (Bonilla, 2019). Having said this, it is understood that cultural assumptions and values are often perceived by metaphor' current academics as tool to comprehend a specific culture beyond the linguistic component as it reveals that how the people from that culture experience the world. Or, in Bonilla's words, "the way we think and understand the world can be considered to some extent as metaphorical" (Bonilla, 2019).

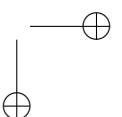
### **"Time to open new doors" on Gender Equality**

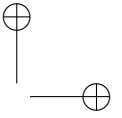
This paper suggests to analyse an advertisement that promotes a specific Gender Equality achievement, which was developed by an international commercial brand and released in the conservative country, Saudi Arabia, in 2018. This in-depth analyse is perceived in this paper as an example to better illustrate how an international organization or brand use multimodal metaphor to promote a global issue in a specific cultural context.

### **Historical Background**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been known by many as an ultraconservative country, where Human Rights, Women Rights and Animal Rights issues – just to name a few – are still to be achieved in the coming future. Indeed, although some steady progress in these areas has recently been noticed by the international community, a long path ahead is still to be envisaged.

Until June 2018, Saudi Arabia was the solely country in the world prohibiting Saudi and Foreigner women to drive within the country's territory. As a common woman's right taken for granted any elsewhere, it is not surprising that has been highly criticized by the international community as much as



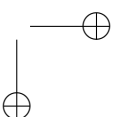
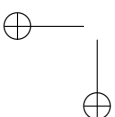


by progressists Saudi citizens. This prohibition eventually became a global symbol of oppressing women in the Kingdom. In fact, since the 90s Women movements (feminist movements), Human Rights groups and individual Saudi female activists, living in Saudi Arabia and abroad, have campaigned to ban to be overturned. Many international community personalities have also joined this fight in support of Saudi women to make this change a symbol of women empowerment's triumph in the Kingdom.

Therefore, in September 2017, when the Saudi leaders announced that the Kingdom would allow women to drive this was understood as a sign of social change. Indeed, from June 2018 onwards, women are allowed to obtain driver's licenses without having to ask permission to their guardianship (which are mainly a male guardian, a father, husband, brother, eventually an uncle or cousin). And although over the past years others signs of women empowerment achievements have been noticed – such as the number of women working has increased in a growing number of professions, and since 2015 women are allowed to vote and to run for local council 'seats – this announcement ended a longstanding policy, turning this so-called global symbol of women's oppression in Saudi as a mark of a Gender Equality's achievement.

### **Saudi Arabia as a prospectus growing market**

At the same time, it is not surprising that international brands perceived this social change as an opportunity to develop brand positioning campaigns in order to enter or increase their market penetration in Saudi Arabia. A developing country with a population in 2019 equivalent to 0,44% of the total world population (34,108,539 people living in the country), and with a significant young population (the median age is 30.2 years) (source: Worldometers ([www.worldometers.info/](http://www.worldometers.info/)), Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, World Population Prospects) the Kingdom looks economically attractive to many companies. In addition, demographics data by United Nations registered in 2018, almost half of the population of the country as female. In light of these figures, many international brands, in particular the car brands, decided to mark this moment by positioning themselves in the social change *momentum*. It is relevant to refer that, in general, the several international brands who developed the campaigns related to this historical change in Saudi did it with a special caution in avoiding to make any negative remarks





in the very much expected change. Instead, *Coca-cola*, *Nissan* or *Audi* brands took this Gender Equality shift with a positive connotation, assuming a social acceptance by both women and their families. This will be discussed further in this paper as it turns to be an essential point to communicate to a different socio-cultural, religious and moral context.

For the aim of this paper, and focusing on the reasoning by using metaphors applied to advertising, it is suggested to have a closer look on one particular film advertisement developed by the automobile brand *Audi* which used multimodal metaphors to locally position the brand.

***Audi advertisement “Time to open new doors. Audi welcomes women to the driver’s seat in KSA”***

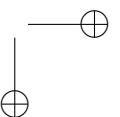
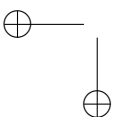
The TV advertisement abovementioned was aired on June 2018 through the media channels: TV, You Tube and Social Media; in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as other Gulf Cooperation Council’s countries. It is worth to mention that traveling by car around the Gulf countries, which only requires the GCC identity cards, is a common habit among GCC citizens.

**Description**

The add described below can be easily found on the You Tube channel: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=shLKAN2a6fw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shLKAN2a6fw).

To understand how visual and textual multimodal metaphors can work in an Ad, it is interesting to recognize the different codes used. While developing the brand positioning campaign, *Audi* linked it to the *#GenderEquality* movement.

The first and longest part of the Advertising movie motion it is a sequence of scenes telling the story of a Saudi couple (man and woman) getting ready to leave home. Right in the beginning, the woman is putting on the traditional black GCC Muslim scarf. This short first scene demonstrates a progressist point from the brand, by allowing the viewers to see a “local” woman’s hair for just a few seconds. The couple is wearing traditional GCC clothes (woman’s black abaya and scarf; and the man’s white long robe named *thawb*). More, it is easy to identify them as a Saudis due to the man’s Saudi scarf. In all GCC countries man have a head scarf, yet the Saudi ones commonly wears white



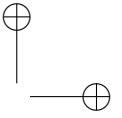
and red squares. These traditional clothes easily help the viewer in identifying the country: Saudi Arabia. The details as accessorize as the woman's bag or the woman's make-up, are all codes identifying the typical middle – upper and upper classes of Saudi couple, around their 30s, family, and progressists (as the woman is wearing a *hijab* (a scarf covering the head), instead of a traditional *niqab* (eye head accompanying the headscarf)). It is important to mention that for an Ad's viewers not acquainted to this culture; the scene could be understood simply as an Arabic couple. Yet, for residents of GCC countries where the Ad was aired, these clothes, scenario and music is recognized as typically from the GCC in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular.

While during reaching the outside of the villa, every time the couple leaves one room, the man opens a house door for his wife, as a gesture of respect and traditional values. Several doors of the house have been open for the wife. Finally, once they reach the outside it is visible that they want to enter in an *Audi* SUV (the brand that is been promoted in this Ad). The unexpected scene is that while the man is willing to open the car's door herself, the woman steps forward and opens the car's door. Looks at him and while smiling suggests him to seat on the co-pilot seat. In this scene, the woman takes control of her decision of driving and seats in the car's seat with the hands on the wheel, looking ahead, while her husband looks at her, smiling as showing his approval. During all this scene the music played as a background is traditional.

The second part of the movie motion is marked by the introduction of the textual component: "Time to Open new Doors. Audi welcomes women of Saudi Arabia to the driver's seat." Followed by the car scene with speed, louder music and faster sequence of different images of the car driving in Saudi Arabia modern city. During this second part, the more traditional scenario from the first part is shifted to a more modern one, as ahead to the future.

A final remark is how the brand presents the texts in a positive statement, yet politically correct while using the word "*Audi* welcomes..." as if is a supportive statement without being exacerbating supportive against any previous Saudi's laws.





### Mapping the multimodal metaphors

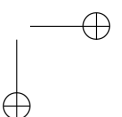
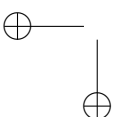
It is safe to say that the movie motion clearly contains both visual and textual multimodal metaphors. In addition, sound is crucial to complete the visual scenes.

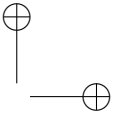
It is possible to identify as the *Source* of the metaphors, both the house and car doors. This *source* is easily recognized visually during the different scenes with closer movie shots, in special during the car door's scene which was followed by the textual metaphor as well. This is the moment that the metaphors, visual and textual, takes its reasoning to the viewers. Although alone the textual metaphors could be recognized at some extension, it is with the visual metaphors of opening the house and car doors that is fully understood.

The target is here seen as the doors' meaning is, at the same time, new barriers and new opportunities. It is in this study assumed that, in a positive perspective, it enhances the new legal, social and cultural opportunities for Saudi women. And, therefore, the mapping is perceived as opening the car's door by women in Saudi as opening a new door in their lives, giving by the current legal framework. Likewise, the metaphors used indicates that it is also time for Saudi women to continue opening others doors (social and cultural).

The multimodal metaphors interact in balance way with the visual, sound and textual components. More, the dynamic side of all three parts: visual, sound and text are harmonized and supports the same messages. Indeed, they complete the dynamic effect of the main metaphor concept, as if one part reinforces the others two.

It is here assumed that even a viewer less acquainted to the cultural aspect would most probably give the same interpretation of the metaphors used, if (and only if) is aware of the legal framework change behind the message. Therefore, the cultural aspects within the use of metaphor might be covered here, by viewers in general, however a cognitive effort is still needed at a certain extension in order to make possible the metaphors' interpretation.





### **Advertisement Analysis in light of contemporaries theoretical approaches**

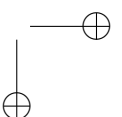
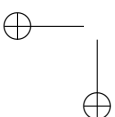
As seen previously, the theoretical approaches developed in recent years to conceptualized the reasoning of using multimodal metaphors, can be extremely useful to comprehend how to communicate a global issue, in a particular context, by using metaphors. Metaphors is a communication tool (linguistic and visual as well) which helps to explain complex subjects, using the human's ability to understand a matter by association and connotations of meanings. However, association of people are assumed in this paper based on both individual knowledge and experience, and related to cultural assumptions and connotations.

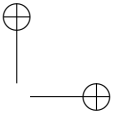
Therefore, it is suggested to discuss the multimodal metaphors interpretation in light of academics who conceptualize in this field. For this purpose, the following articles: (1) "Gender Mainstreaming in the European Union. Towards a new Conception and Practice of Equal opportunities.", by Cristine Booth & Cinnamon Bennett; and (2) "Using Message Form to Stimulate Conversations: the case of Tropes"; by Hans Hoeken, Piet Swanepoel, Elvis Saal & Carel Jansen; offer interesting findings on leading to a depth-understanding of communicating with metaphors, in particular, using this advertisement as a rationale exercise.

The purpose of this paper is not to assess if viewers gave the interpretations of the metaphors as per intended by the brand. The focus here is to have an example to illustrate how metaphors can be used in different contexts.

### **A new approach of Gender Equality**

Communicating a so-called "universal" or "global" matter in different contexts with several cultural assumptions can be a thankless calling. In many countries, Gender Equality value is perceived as a result of a "normal" consequence of society progress. By others, it might be simply understood as an unquestionable human right that people take it for granted. None of these beliefs are seen in this paper as wrong observations; but, rather, as western-minded expectations which do not fit in every region of the globe. In other words, viewing in a global scale, Gender Equality notion comprehends multiple assumptions in different geographical locations.



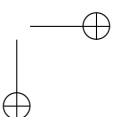


“*Time to open new doors*” is not only a friendly-slogan campaign developed by *Audi*, but most of all an example to introduce and illustrate the theoretical concept of the “three-legged stool” developed by the academics Christine Booth and Cinnamon Bennett on their Gender Equality study in 2002, more than a decade before the release of this advertisement. This advertisement on brand positioning, in particular while using the metaphors, fits into the logic of the dynamic of the “three-legged stool” rationale. Moreover, it can be extremely helpful in placing Gender Equality notion on a global scale, knowing that Gender Equality is not perceived with the same conventions, at same times, and in same spatial locations.

One of the major contributions to communication for global development and social change related on Gender Equality matters is, perhaps, the conceptualization of the metaphor of a “three-legged stool”. In their 2002 paper on Gender Equality campaigns in Europe, Booth and Bennett explored, among others, the historical periodization of equal opportunities. They mentioned that it seems common to divide political campaigns for Gender Equality into three stages based on three historical specific phases. They added that these campaigns based on the theorization of an historical progression followed by some north European countries; yet, these phases are assumed to be in line with the progression of Gender Equality historical development point of view in many other European countries.

Applying this same rationale to a global scale certainly helps to provide a clear understanding on how communicating Gender Equality in contexts with different cultural assumptions and connotations. It can be very challenging to communicate this topic if not considering the compartmentalization of these developments.

It is assumed in this study that this Gender Perspective as the third wave from Equality stool approach is more in line with the contemporary Gender Equality concept valued, defined and promoted not only by different western-minded countries, but in particular in line with the common 2030 Agenda on the SDG 5. Thus, it is expected that the communication developed by international companies – which follow the Gender Equality concept within the Agenda 2030 – would fit this same perspective; which might not necessarily be the prominent Gender Equality perspective in a specific region. . Having said this, perhaps, a closer look into this dynamic conceptualization would provide a more assertive standpoint of Gender Equality value on the ground’s



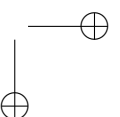
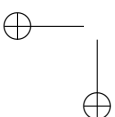


communication campaigns. Likewise, it is also believed in this paper that today's general assumption of Gender Equality value communicated by the international development and western private cooperation incorporates the western minded expectations that most probably is not entirely perceived in distinctive contexts, nor in accordance with different cultural assumptions and connotations.

More than a decade before the release of this advertisement, Booth and Bennett's theoretical approach of Equality Stool presented in their 2002 research paper, "Gender Mainstreaming in the European Union" aims to better understand the perception of Gender Equality in different contexts. The dynamic concept of this approach can be extremely helpful in placing Gender Equality notion on a global scale, knowing that Gender Equality is not perceived with the same conventions, at same times, and in same spatial locations. Applying this same rationale to a global scale certainly helps to provide a clear understanding on how communicating Gender Equality in contexts with different cultural assumptions. It can be very challenging to communicate this topic if not considering the compartmentalization of these developments.

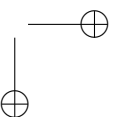
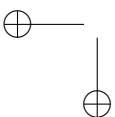
According to Booth and Bennett's research paper in 2002, the historical framework of Gender Equality follows the assumption of a progressive development of Gender Equality perspectives during three major phases (or waves, as it is named) over the 20th century. The first wave, from 1918 onwards, was considered Equal Treatment Perspective and illustrated the acquisition of "liberal equal rights and treatment before the law" (Booth and Bennett, 2002,7). This perspective focused on the legislative response of women's rights. The second wave, Women's Perspective, started from in the 60's and was a reflection of the social demands for positive action, equality of outcome and separate institutional provision in north European societies. Though, in the 90's of last century, the shift was from Women's Perspective to a Gender Perspective. This last historical wave defended the importance of equal valuing of difference and managing diversity by "recognizing the diverse needs of women and men, as well as the need to broaden responsibility for equality work to all services and providers, hence involving men in the process of social change." (Booth and Bennett, 2002, 4).

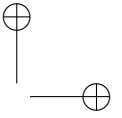
These authors also stated that this linear way of progression as per understood in many cultures (including the north countries) as the three sections of progressive society development cannot be seen in all European countries,





due to their context historical developments. Instead, Bennett added that since this historical division seems to be a simplistic association for other contexts, and “does not capture the complexities of the struggle” (Booth and Bennett, 2002) on a global scale. Consequently, it would be more suitable to recognize the interdependence of these three perspectives. In addition, these authors considered that, at different times and different spatial locations, one the above perspectives can more, or less, developed than the others due to the dynamic nature of historical development of the country. “These perspectives all work together to achieve gender equality in all social arrangements envisaging a more egalitarian society” (Booth and Bennett, 2002, 5). For them, the equal treatment perspective “describes actions that guarantee women the same rights and the same opportunities as men in the public sphere. Its main way of delivery is through statutory and mandatory legal instruments.” (Booth and Bennett, 2002, 5). Relating this description to the abovementioned example, the recent legal right to take the driver’s license in Saudi Arabia is the legislation response of Gender Equality in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, for Booth and Bennett, Women’s perspective recognize women as a “disadvantaged group in society, who deserve and require particular treatment and specialist provision in order to rectify their past experience of discrimination, which has become institutionalized.” (Booth and Bennet, 2002,5) It is fair to stress that this perspective enhances women actions to gain empowerment in the society. Again, linking this theory with the example above, the woman’s gesture of opening the car door, as a sign of taking control is no more than a metaphor for all women to taking an action from themselves to create opportunities, instead of being passive actors in continuing the development of institutionalized paradigms in societies. Lastly, Gender Perspective described actions with the purpose of changing societies to a fairer gender balance. “It acknowledges the differences between women and between men. The transformation of human lives is premised on the understanding that men are not the deliberate oppressors of women, but can also be disempowered by current social arrangements.” (Booth and Bennett, 2002). This point gives a particular focus on the men’s role in supporting initiatives favouring both women. Once again, while using this advertisement as an example to illustrate the comprehension of this theory, it is reasonable to say this perspective is demonstrated on the film scene by the man’s look of approval to his wife when she took the action to seat in the driver’s seat.





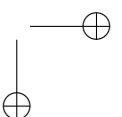
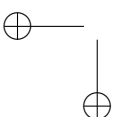
Furthermore, in the Tunis Forum for the Gender Equality in 2019 opening speech, the European politician Margot Wallström stressed the crucial aspect of Gender Equality champion by the UN and its partners: “We must remind the sceptics, a Gender Equality is not a woman’s issue, it is a human rights issue, a peace and security issue. It improves life not only for the half, but the both halves of populations. Gender Equality leads to more sustainable peace.” (Wallström, 2019). This speech is very clear and persuasive, yet does not fully compromise the different dynamics of the Gender Equality perception around the world. If this equality stool dynamic is not fully perceived in communications developed by international organizations and companies, most probably the message will not reach people from different socio-cultural, religious and moral backgrounds.

### **Reasoning by using Metaphors in advertising**

As seen previously in this paper, it is fair to assume that metaphors in advertising must take into consideration the cultural perspectives of the audience.

One first aspect mentioned by Hoeken, Swanepoel, Saal and Jansen in their joint article above-mentioned, is based on a statement claimed by the scholars Clark, Grice, and Sperber & Wilson, “within the field of pragmatics have focused on the relation between message content, message form, and communication”, and that is easily to be perceived in verbal messages but also through signs in other codes, such as visuals and sound as well. All the traditional and cultural components that the film feature carefully presents to the viewers in the different sequences created a dynamic that lead to an identification of the GCC culture. Even an audience without previous knowledge of the GCC culture, can easily identify that it is an Arab culture and, if aware of the much-talked legal shift as a Gender Equality achievement, is able to locate the story in Saudi Arabia. And, by association, understand the opening the door for this society as a symbolic triumph for women in an Arab society.

In addition, Hoeken, Swanepoel, Saal and Jansen referred, that “Tropes, such as metaphors, can stimulate people to think and talk about information they are already familiar with. As a result, the information becomes more accessible, thereby increasing the chance that it will influence relevant behaviour.” (Hoeken, Swanepoel, Saal & Jansen, 2009). This cognitive process

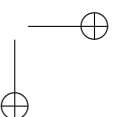
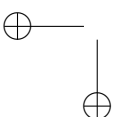


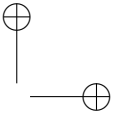


required to arrive at the intended interpretation cannot be done without an additional “activation of prior knowledge” from the audience, according to these authors. Using this advertisement as an example, the metaphors are used because the audience is already familiar with the message’s content, this is the legalization framework that was much-expected. This point is not clearly mentioned in this advertisement. Yet, to fully understand the message, the audience needs to be aware of the fact: from June 2018 onwards, women are legally allowed to drive. In their articles, the authors stressed that the audience has to invest cognitive effort to arrive at the intended interpretation of the metaphors. Thus, when the textual metaphor “*Time to open new doors*” appears on the screen, almost at the very end of the film feature, it is easier for the audience to understand the message as (1) they are acquainted with the legal overturn and, (2) the audience associated it with the driving permission during the car’s doors opening scene.

It is assumed in this paper that the advertisement viewers can, at this stage of the movie, easily comprehend the different sequences showing (1) the man opening the house doors, (2) the woman’s behaviour in opening the car’s doors and take the driver’s seat, and (3) the deeper meaning of the message, that it is time for women to open new doors: today a legal one and, moreover, envisaging social and cultural doors to be opened. Here it is also believed that the audience might understand the message, although at different levels. Further research on the effect of this advertisement message on its audience are needed to perceive the extension of the intended interpretation of the metaphors by the audience.

The article’s authors also defended the Sperber & Wilson argument, “the choice of one form over the other reveals the sender’s assumptions about the intelligence and knowledge of the intended audience”. In this advertisement, indeed, the audience interpretation of “*Time*” and “*open new doors*” is related to their knowledge that “*Time*” is an historical time for women in the Kingdom; as well as now that the “legal” opportunities were opened, cultural and social ones shall follow. Additionally, it can be understood that although there is a legal response on women allowed to drive, there are still social and cultural pressure on women to obtain the driver license, purchase and drive a car. These are the so-called “other doors” to be opened now by women and men (husbands, fathers, brothers) as well as their supporters.



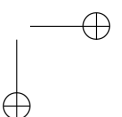
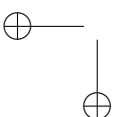


Moreover, the authors also mentioned that metaphors “can stimulate people to think and talk about information they are already familiar with. As a result, the information becomes more accessible, thereby increasing the chance that it will influence relevant behaviour.” (Hoeken, Swanepoel, Saal & Jansen, 2009). They highlighted firstly, the need of prior knowledge to help the cognitive process by the audience to arrive at the intended interpretation of the metaphor. And secondly, metaphors’ goal is not to “communicate implicitly”, but rather in a “pleasing way by deviating from the audience’s expectations”. Having said this, the message becomes more accessible to the intended audience, “increasing the chance that it will influence relevant behaviour” making people talking about the message. The authors defended the argument that metaphors in campaigns “can influence people’s behaviour not so much by changing beliefs but by activating existing ones.” (Hoeken, Swanepoel, Saal & Jansen, 2009). This point is essential to understand that, although as useful communication tool, multimodal metaphors in communications might increase the chance of influencing relevant behaviour for social change, such as in Gender Equality, yet this encouragement is limited to people’s existing beliefs and mindsets.

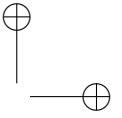
## Conclusion

Through the analysis of the advertisement in light with the two articles’ theoretical framework and the multimodal metaphors conceptualization it was possible to identify some concepts helpful to clarify that at some extension, a metaphor can be used to communicate to a specific cultural context. Nevertheless, the findings resulted from the analyses of this advertisement promoting a Gender Equality achievement in an ultraconservative cultural context appointed to different aspects to be taken into consideration while developing the multimodal metaphor in communicating to differentiated audience. Surprisingly, it responds to the initial question of this paper with a positive view that metaphor might be useful and powerful to communicate in different cultures.

Yet, some remarks must be kept in mind while reasoning by using multimodal metaphors. First, in addition to the linguistic element, it is essential to have a clear comprehension of the cultural assumptions, values, beliefs and behaviour to communicate through metaphors with both purposes, send-



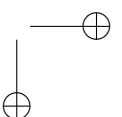




ing a message or influencing in social change behaviour. Second, although metaphors help to explain and expose a matter to the intended audience, this one needs to be familiar with the information as it requires a cognitive process from the audience to arrive to the intended interpretation. Third, the metaphor interpretation might be done at different levels, as perceived in the above-mentioned advertisement. A specific matter as such Gender Equality serves as an example to understand that since there is a “three-legged” metaphor of Equality tool composed by three dynamic phases, each of them can be used with more or less relevance than the others. The advertisement used the three of them, within their multimodal metaphor, with the intention of reaching the audience with different knowledge and perception of Gender Equality assumption. Forth, Metaphors when interpreted at some level can influence social change behaviour by allowing the discussion of the theme if the audience was familiar with the subject. All these outcomes revealed to be used in understanding how metaphors can have a relevant role in the communication in international development.

### **Bibliographic References**

- Bonilla, J. (2019). Multimodal metaphors and advertising: a cross-cultural comparison if the use of behaviour multimodal metaphors. *Darnioji daugiakalbystė | Sustainable Multilingualism*.
- Booth, C. & Bennett, C. (2002). Gender Mainstreaming in the European Union. Towards a New Conception and Practice of Equal Opportunities?. *The European Journal of Women's Studies*.
- Burgers, C.; Konijn, E. & Steen G. (2016). Figurative Framing: Shaping Public Discourse through Metaphor, Hyperbole, and Irony. *Communication Theory*.
- Forceville, C. (2015). Visual and multimodal metaphor in advertising: cultural perspectives. *Styles of Communication, Second International Conference on Communication Styles*. University of Krosno, Poland.
- Forceville, C. (2016). Visual and multimodal metaphor in film: charting the field. In K. Fahlenbrach (ed.), *Embodied Metaphors in Film, Television and Video Games: Cognitive Approaches* (pp. 17-32). London: Routledge.



- Hoeken, H.; Swanepoel, P.; Saal, E. & Jansen, C. (2009). Using Message Form to Stimulate Conversations: The Case of Tropes. *Communication Theory*.
- Leahy, K. & Yermish, I. (2003). Information and communication technology: gender issues in developing nations. *paper for Informing Science Institute*.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mody, B. (2003). *International and Development Communication*. Sage Publications.
- Paternotte, D. & Kuhar, R. (2018). Disentangling and locating the 'Global Right' Anti-campaign in Europe. *Cogitatio*.
- Skjeie, H. & Teigen, M. (2005). Political Constructions of Gender Equality: Travelling Towards ... a Gender Balanced Society?. *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*.
- Sopory, P. & Dillard, J. (2002). The Persuasive Effects of Metaphor. A Meta-Analysis. *Human Communication Research*.
- Thibodeau, P. & Boroditsky, L. (2011). *Metaphors We Think With: The Role of Metaphor in Reasoning*. Kyushu University, Japan.
- Valters, C. (2014). Theories of Change in International Development: Communication, Learning or Accountability?. *Justice and Security Research Programme*, International Development Department.
- Waisbord, S. (2001). *Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in development Communication*. The Rockefeller Foundation.
- Waisbord, S. (2007). The Irony of Communication for Social Change. *Mazi articles*.