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Picturing the Public

Advertising Self-Regulation in Sweden and the UK

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Cercles Dans Un Cercle (Circles in a Circle), 1923, Figurant au catalogue Roethel, II, n° 702, p. 656 © Wassily Kandinsky/BUS 2010.

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The conception of good and evil have varied so much from nation to nation and from age to age that they have often been in direct contradiction to each other. But all the same, someone may object, good is not evil and evil is not good; if good is confused with evil there is an end to all morality, and everyone can do as he pleases...But the matter cannot be so simply disposed of. If it were such an easy business there would certainly be no dispute at all over good and evil; everyone would know what was good and what was bad. But how do things stand today? What morality is preached to us today?

Friedrich Engels (1978 [1878]:725)

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Caroline Dahlberg

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1. Introduction

A woman reads a newspaper at a public library somewhere in Britain and stumbles upon an advertisement picturing the word "FUCK". She is offended by this and writes to the British advertising self-regulatory body to voice her concern. Part of what made her offended was that she laid her eyes on this advertisement in a public library, available for all to see. She was, however, the first and only person to complain about the advertisement to the organization. The members of staff ask themselves if her reaction can be seen as a mirror of a general opinion, in other words a *widespread* offence, which means they should support the complaint. The issue of widespread offence is not related to the number of complaints but to the likely reaction of all *potential viewers*. They also consider if it is to be seen as a *serious* offence, which means that the offence cuts deeper and the consequences are more severe, and thus they should take it seriously regardless of how many people may find it offensive among potential viewers. They consider that people react differently and it is critical what kind of audience they take into account. In this case, the paper in which the advertisement is found has a *target group*, but it is displayed in a public library. Drawing the line between offence among targeted and potential audiences of the public is not always easy, as a result.

The members of staff know that according to their statistics, many people in Britain find the word "fuck" offensive.[1] But whether this should be guiding the staff's decision in this case is not clear. What is more, the sincerity of the complainant is important. The advert is picturing a male, homosexual, couple in a gay magazine, and it is advertising sexual education in an explicit way to prevent HIV from spreading. The woman could be against *the message* of the advert, rather than its *bluntness*, or she could be against *gay people*, the gay magazine and/or the fact that any gay paper was placed in a public library, i.e. the advert and the paper *as such*. About this the staff of the self-regulatory body can only speculate but not confirm. The complainant has not stated this as her reason for the complaint. They presume that the woman is not from the target group of the magazine, which is gay people, homosexual men and women. The target group's language is known to be blunt in a tongue-in-cheek way, they argue further. One council member describes gay culture as "very avant-garde".

[1] The Advertising Standards Authority in the United Kingdom has, with the British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting Standards Commission and the Independent Television Commission, published a report on this (Millwood-Hargrave 2000). It investigates to what extent people find 28 swear-words offensive. The word *fuck* comes as number three, after *cunt* and *motherfucker*, which are all labelled as *very severe* (maximum) by more than two thirds of the people in the study.

As a consequence, they assume that the preferred viewers of the advertisement, i.e. targeted readers of the paper, will not be offended. At the same time, they ask themselves whether they can presuppose that gay people are different from other people.

These questions and arguments came up, along with others amongst staff and council members, when the advertising self-regulators in the United Kingdom discussed the above case, which concerned offensiveness in advertisements. As the example indicates, it is an interpretative process to decide who is the most relevant audience of an advertisement, large or small, and what they are likely to think and feel about it. It is thus the regulators' interpretation of who the audience is, and what that audience thinks of the advertisement, which decide if they will judge it as acceptable or not.

The advertising industries in different countries have to deal with an uncertainty of how the public will react, in constant risk that the general public, or parts of it, will reject the images they produce. The interpretations and opinions of the public can never be fully investigated and understood. These uncertainties that companies face have to be handled continuously (Dahlberg 2007; Lash and Urry 1994; Lien 1997) by the advertising industry.

Advertising Self-regulation Globally

Images and people interact in different ways. Across the globe people are everyday audiences of advertising images, which have become integrated in our life worlds. These images are part of the frameworks that enable and restrain our practices, thoughts and meanings (cf. Goffman 1979 [1976]; Silverstone 2007:108-118). In everyday life, advertisements are embedded in a mix of media and other influences, which means that people interpret advertisements in complex settings (Blumer 1998 [1969]:183-194). What viewers of advertisements think and feel is hence difficult to know. The intrusion of advertising into the public sphere that we see today is not new, as shown in studies of how the public sphere has changed from the 18th Century and onwards (Habermas 1989 [1962]; McFall 2004). But various types of media are constantly evolving and with the developments of media space on the Internet, for example, advertisements take ever new shapes and parts of our everyday lives, visually and technologically. So it can be argued that the public is exposed to advertisements in more ways than before and on a grander scale. However, greater exposure does not necessarily mean greater success for advertisers, although some advertising campaigns appear to be able to increase company profit by either making people buy more of their goods or pay more for them (East 2003).[2] It may instead mean greater reflexivity on the part of the consumers (cf. Lash and Urry 1994:277) and raise new ethical issues (cf. Elias

[2] But this could also be due to other factors, such as greater availability of the goods in the stores, as Michael Schudson argues (1986:xv). The effect of the advertisements on the consumer is then not direct but mediated by retail stock.

2000 [1939]).[3] Despite this uncertainty of the effect of advertisements on people (see also Vakratsas and Ambler 1999), we can observe two practices that indicate a great belief in effects of some kind, within the industry or among audiences; firstly, the large production of advertisements and secondly, the regulation of them.

The reason for such a large production of advertisements is that modern advertising is not only about promoting goods, i.e. economic value. It creates other values as well, which means that advertising industries are commercial and cultural industries (Lash and Urry 1994:139; McFall 2004; Nixon 2003:15-36; cf. Pettinger 2004:168). A major driving force on the producer side is company status and competition among advertisers and agencies (Fletcher 2008:132-135; Nava 1997:40; Schudson 1986:e.g. xv; cf. White 1981), as well as photographers (Aspers 2006 [2001]) and other actors. Within, as well as outside, the advertising industry itself, advertisements promote careers, experiences, brands, lifestyles, identities, not least in terms of gender and creativity, and a general consumer culture/promotional culture (Goffman 1979 [1976]; Lury 1996; Nava 1997:40; Nixon 1996:167-195; Nixon 2003; Wernick 1991). Advertisements can be seen as mediators of the product's meaning (McCracken 1986). According to Grant McCracken producers of advertisements will place in the image aspects of the social world in order to evoke a specific meaning in the object, which may or may not be understood by the viewer. But we are here interested in the meaning created in relation to the advertisement as an image, by the viewer, without being connected to the product advertised or the purchase of the product (cf. Ritson and Elliot 1999:271). Apart from creating the mentioned values for producers or consumers of advertisements, fostering consumer ideals or a consumer society, the advertising images may also act as cultural resources for its viewers in acts of resistance against the norms of a consumer culture (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998; Fiske 2000 [1989]). Advertising images may also foster explicit critique and regulation.

Advertisements are today often regulated by legislation and industry self-regulation[4] in combination. Self-regulation is organized by the advertising industries in order to keep legislators at bay and is conducted by specific

[3] Sexually alluring advertisements on the Internet which encourages the user to click on pop-up windows and get to even more sexualized images may raise a question of who is responsible for what is shown or seen (the advertiser or the Internet user), to give an example from my interviews with advertising self-regulators. How much sexuality is restrained and what is worn and when has changed historically, as discussed by Norbert Elias (see e.g. 2000 [1939]:142-160), but new events such as a war or the Internet, may create less restraint as well as call for new ones.

[4] I will use the notion self-regulation as this is often, but not always, used to name this activity, both by practitioners and by scholars of the area, and the organizations doing it are often called SRO's, Self Regulatory Organizations. I could just as well have used the term regulation, soft regulation, regulation against offence or moral regulation. I use those terms as well, though they create other problems. The word *self-regulation* does not imply an evaluation of the activity from my side, nor do the other terms. It is not my intention to evaluate the practice, but to analyse it unconditionally.

organizations.[5] Advertising self-regulation is also a reaction to the criticism from members of the public rather than generated from within the industry. The mission of the self-regulatory bodies is to decide if an advertisement is acceptable or not, and to provide justifications for their decision. Thereby, they create so called soft standards for advertisements in their respective countries. They do this by implementing broadly formulated codes of ethics, which require a great deal of interpretation, especially in issues of so called *taste and decency*, mostly referred to as *harm and offense* ("serious or widespread offense"), which is the focus of this study.

The Relation of Power and Ethics

The ability to regulate often depends on power, and self-regulation as opposed to legislation increases the possibility for industries to be the actor in power to impose one's interpretation of the world on others and organize it accordingly. However, in order to gain power, the evaluative decisions made need to be justifiable, and they can only become so in relation to the public. Self-regulation is as a consequence first, and above all, a struggle over ethics, which is the value horizon that is used as the basis for power (see Evens 1999; King 2000). There is in this way an interplay between ethics and power. Power is "always already ethically informed and determined" (Evens 1999:7). Power will depend on whether the interpretations made are recognized as justifiable, which in turn depends on the situation of decision-making, and the situations always contain, in these cases, other people and their interpretive cognitive processes.[6] When people make judgements collectively the outcome is more than adding up actors with certain positions and dispositions (see e.g. Elias 1978 [1970]:128-133). This is especially true for activities that implement generally written codes

[5] The activity is called *self*-regulation, but since it is *organized* it has, of course, a radically different meaning than the self-regulation conceptualized as a *spontaneous order* that develops within an industry, market or other sort of system, discussed by Smith (1981 [1776]), Hayek (1976) and Luhmann (1995 [1984]; 2000 [1996]). Their ideas of self-regulation imply that moral issues are resolved by themselves. Advertising self-regulation is intentional self-regulation of the expression of images, and is not the unintended effect of systems. Hayek discusses spontaneous order or "catallaxy" (1976:46-47, 108-110, 115), Luhmann develops the idea of self-referentiality/autopoiesis (1995 [1984]:36-38,183-184; 2000 [1996]:106, 107-108) and Adam Smith, the idea of an invisible hand (Smith 1981 [1776]:456). The idea of an invisible hand means that the good for society will follow as a natural law if people act in accordance with their own interests, of their free will, without need of regulation; a free market would develop for the best on its own. According to Hayek, property rules need to exist as a frame to the otherwise spontaneous order in the market place. Luhmann's notion of autopoiesis means that systems develop order on their own. Karl Polanyi also discusses the market economy but argues differently, that self-regulation of markets, i.e. a free market, is not sufficient and as a consequence, legislation is also needed (2001 [1944]).

[6] The one who defines this evaluative horizon will also have a power advantage. What power is will not be clear until the ethics is settled. Agency must include evaluations embracing others, otherwise power struggles become a mere matter of self-interest (cf. Evens 1999). If these processes contain reflexivity, they must contain the idea of ethics, even if it is in order to enhance power for certain groups.

of standards in specific cases and which are supposed to be sufficiently updated with a current mood, to justify their existence as opposed to legislation. Such judgements need to contain an understanding of other people and particular settings (MacIntyre 1984: especially 152-155), in order to create a justified decision. Consequently, ethics is a driving force of action that has to be taken into account when trying to understand the ways that advertising self-regulation turns out.

Soft Regulation against Offence and the Basis of Legitimacy

Soft rules are increasing on a global scale in many areas/industries (Jacobsson and Sahlin-Andersson 2006) and advertising self-regulation is only one example among many other. The regulation of offensive advertisements can be labelled "soft issues", in accordance with Jean Boddewyn (1991), because the judgements of them require an evaluation which is subjective and dependent on general moods in societal contexts, which also have to be defined from case to case (see also Abbott and Snidal 2000; Ahrne and Brunsson 2004:48). One characteristic of soft rules is that "Authority is not predefined in the relationship between those regulated and those regulating, but must be built into each governing relationship" (Jacobsson and Sahlin-Andersson 2006:248). As a consequence, it is of interest to study how types of legitimacy are established. Setting the standards and implementing them is an ongoing process (cf. Botzem and Quack 2006), in relation to a world that is continuously changing. The self-regulators have to find a way to stay in tune with the changing moods of the general public (cf. Hargrave and Livingstone 2006; Leiss et al. 2005:581-582). The puzzle is to define something stable in a changing and, at least occasionally, self-critical world.

The ways that self-regulatory bodies handle critique is important to study because it could also be seen as a way for them to control the influence of others on the production of advertising images. Self-regulatory bodies want to protect their freedom of expression (cf. Svensson 2008)[7] and they also argue that they can adjust more quickly to cultural changes than state legislation and the handling of cases in court. They can thereby claim to provide something good for the industry as well as the public. What the public thinks and will think in the future is an uncertain element. A central idea in the literature on regulation is that uncertainty and risk foster a need to regulate and order

[7] A recently published report, commissioned by the former social democrat government in Sweden in 2006, argues that commercial products such as advertisements are not necessarily meant to be protected by the constitution, in which the freedom of expression is included (Svensson 2008:226-228). A similar argument is made by the so called liberty theory as discussed by Bivins (2004:107), which says that if freedom of speech only fosters market relations and consumer values rather than citizen values of truth, fulfilment and decision-making, it is not worthy of protection. The Swedish report from 2008 suggested legislation of gender discriminating advertising, but has not been followed.

(Power 1999; 2007).[8] Uncertainty cannot be avoided, but potential risks can be defined in the self-regulatory process. The organized self-regulation is a possibility for the industries to understand more about various interpretations of advertisements amongst the public. The self-regulators can potentially redefine the problems that are raised by the public into manageable bits and balance the control of future visual expressions towards the producer side.

The EASA and the ICC Codes

Advertising self-regulation by private governance systems, set up by the advertising industries in many countries around the world, has become the dominating model of regulation for most Western countries (Leiss et al. 2005). The worldwide "meta-organization" (Ahrne and Brunsson 2008), i.e. an organization that has other organizations as its members, *The European Advertising Standards Alliance* (EASA) consists of 32 self-regulatory bodies.

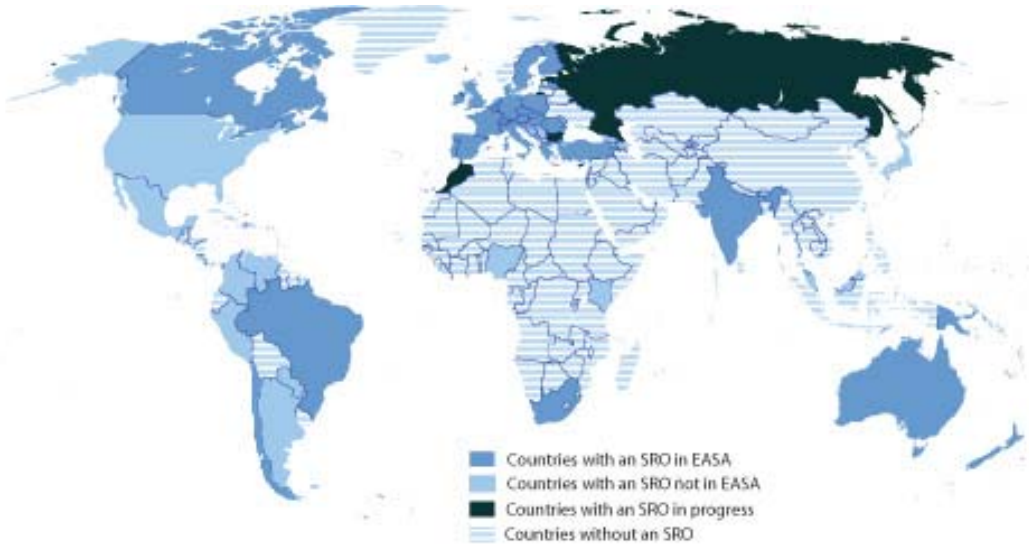

Figure 1.1. Overview of the existence and ongoing development of advertising self-regulatory organizations in the world.[9]

[8] Michael Power argues that organizations handle uncertainty by defining it as risks that can be handled. But the risk management is not really concerned with the risks in themselves, but rather the company image. It is about regulating reputation.
[9] http://www.easa-alliance.org/About-EASA/EASA-Members/Non-European-Members/page.aspx/147, 28 April 2009. See also http://www.adstandards.com/en/MediaAndEvents/ASC20090429OG.pdf, 9 December 2009.

25 of these bodies are from 23 European countries, while seven organizations are non-European. The latter are Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, India, New Zealand and South Africa. Self-regulatory organisations also exist in several other countries of the world, such as the United States, but these organizations are not members of the EASA. Other representatives of the industry are also members. An international council for self-regulation of advertisements was launched by the EASA in 2008, the EASA International Council (EIC). A central task of these organizations that try to regulate advertisements is to set up principles or standards. The EASA states:

> Self-regulation in the advertising sector is the recognition that the advertising industry (advertisers, agencies and the media) create advertising that complies to a set of *ethical rules*, namely that it should be legal, *decent*, honest, truthful, prepared with a sense of *social responsibility* to the consumer as well as society as a whole, created with due respect to the rules of *fair competition*. These ethical rules are usually drawn up in the form of a code and the ICC code very often forms the basis of the national codes.[10]

This statement from the EASA is very similar to the basic principles of advertising self-regulation, in *Article 1* of the ICC code. The EASA refers to codes shaped by *The International Chamber of Commerce* (ICC): *The Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice*. The ICC was founded in 1919 and created the code of advertising practice in 1937. The edition from 2005 was the eighth version.[11] *Article 2* and *Article 4* of the ICC rules state the following about the issue of decency and social responsibility in marketing:

> Marketing communication should not contain statements or audio or visual treatments which offend standards of decency *currently prevailing* in the country and culture concerned…Marketing communication should respect human dignity and should not incite or condone any form of discrimination, including that based upon race, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. Marketing communication should not without justifiable reason play on fear or exploit misfortune or suffering. Marketing communication should not appear to condone or incite violent, unlawful or anti-social behaviour. Marketing communication should not play on superstition.
>
> (International Chamber of Commerce 2005:13, my emphasis)

The EASA states that the purpose of self-regulation is to foster consumer trust and confidence. *Article 1* of the ICC rules also stresses that "public confidence in marketing" should not be damaged. In conclusion, there are several values to be taken into account and public confidence appears to be a central one. But how is advertising self-regulation conducted more concretely? How is it done at the national level? How is the work organized and how do the self-regulators

[10] The EASA website, http://www.easa-alliance.org/About-SR/About-SR/page.aspx/190, 6 May 2009, my emphasis.
[11] The ICC website, http://www.iccwbo.org/policy/marketing/id8532/index.html, 6 May 2009.

relate to the viewers of advertising? How is the criticism that people pose towards advertising images in public dealt with? What values are taken into account?

Purpose of the Study

In this study, I analyse the decision-processes of advertising self-regulators, with the purpose of showing how and why they decide if advertising images are acceptable or not. I include the decision-making at two organizations based in different countries, in which the self-regulatory processes are both similar and different; *The Advertising Standards Authority* (ASA) in the United Kingdom and *The Trade Ethical Council against Sexism in Advertising* (ERK) in Sweden.[12] The ethical rules described by the EASA in the quote above are what these organizations aim to follow, albeit with some specifications and specializations in terms of how their codes are formulated. The ASA deals with a range of issues including potentially misleading advertisements as well as whether advertisements may cause what they call "serious or widespread offence". ERK deals only with whether or not advertisements are gender discriminatory, an issue that the ASA incorporates under offence. As a consequence, the focus of my study is narrowed down to decisions dealing with complaints about advertising images related to one area of concern handled by the decision-makers: i.e. *offensiveness*—sometimes labelled "decency", "taste and decency" or "harm and offence"—in advertisements, with a special attention to, although not exclusively confined to, issues concerning *gender stereotyping and gender discrimination* (so called "demeaning" or "objectifying" images based on gender concerns).[13]

I will point out three reasons for this study. First of all, the study brings up an issue which concerns all of us, because advertising images are a part of our *everyday lives*. Contests and compromises of values in public, semi-public and private places are of great concern to us all, because the values that prevail there may affect our opportunity of being heard as citizens as well as our sense of selves, as we may identify with or feel offended by the images and their corresponding values and supposed effects.[14] When advertising self-regulators

[12] The Swedish name is: *Näringslivets etiska råd mot könsdiskriminerande reklam* (ERK).
[13] Apart from cases of offensiveness, self-regulators deal with issues about what the ASA call misleadingness (truth, honesty and substantiation) in advertisements. The ASA in the United Kingdom deals with many such cases, while they are dealt with by an organization other than ERK in Sweden. Since 2009, both of those organizations in Sweden have been replaced by a single organization, which will be explained in chapter 4. Cases of misleadingness (deception) differ because they often require proof from the advertiser, rather than interpretation about what audiences may think in a changing cultural environment. They can include aspects of interpreting how viewers will understand the advertisement, of course, but the focus is more on what is seen as objective truth than subjective feelings and evaluations. This is why I do not include these cases in this study.
[14] As pointed out by Silverstone (2007:165-166), the media is important for how we understand the world and how human behaviour is defined. How the media is regulated is thus a

reflect over public images, they provide us with clues to how evaluations are made, conflicts between values, and how these conflicts are dealt with, which are of general sociological interest.

Secondly, previous studies of advertising and meaning making have mainly focused on either producers or consumers of advertisements. This study analyses the ways self-regulators weigh advertising industry arguments together with arguments from the public viewers, when interpreting and evaluating advertising images.

Thirdly, advertising self-regulatory practices can shed light on how generalizations of *others* are made, which has theoretical implications. By looking at advertising self-regulation, we can question prevalent ideas within sociology about how values are socialized, because of how others are taken into account. This, furthermore, points to critical aspects of reflexivity when people make evaluations.

Reflexivity and Justification—To Picture the Public

As pointed out by Everett Hughes in a text called "What Other?", the other is what people relate to in their everyday lives, and it has been analysed by Adam Smith as well as studied by pragmatists such as George Herbert Mead (Hughes 1984 [1971]:348-354). The pragmatists, including Hughes himself, have often focused on the profession and how professionals relate to their colleagues (as others) in what they do, although they include other others as well, which are not part of the specialized field of the profession.

> Every profession does its work in some social matrix in interaction with whatever kinds of people it defines as its clients, with colleagues in the profession itself and with people in related occupations, with people related to their clients in various ways and eventually with elements of the public.
>
> (Hughes 1984 [1971]:353)

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profoundly moral issue, according to him. Advertisements are only one part of the media, but they are a large part in visual and financial terms, at least outside public service media, which means that if we follow Silverstone's argument about the media, the ways advertisements are regulated can be seen as a profoundly moral issue as well. A large part of the media is financed by advertising. Apart from media that are 100 percent commercial I will give an example: In Sweden evening papers receive 25 percent of their revenue from advertisements while the larger daily newspapers receive about 60-70 percent (Strömbäck and Jönsson 2005:11). Looking at the 2007 yearly report from one of the larger Swedish newspapers, Svenska Dagbladet, their revenue from advertisements was 520 million SWEKR while income from sales was 456 million SWEKR (2007 SvD Yearly Report, http://www.svd.se/multimedia/archive/00358/Svenska_Dagbladets__358713a.pdf). The same year the advertising investments were as follows in the United Kingdom and in Sweden: In 2007, £19,384 billion was spent on advertising in the UK, incl. production costs, while £5,478 billion was spent in Sweden (63000 million SWEKR) incl. production costs (Sources: The Advertising Statistical Yearbook, UK; Institutet för reklam- och mediestatistik, Sweden).

The idea is that the members of the profession, as guiding others, have become more and more important for the status and value of the individual. In the following I will suggest a theory on how people relate to others, which points to a less specialized way of other-directedness. Its relevance is rooted in the nature of the empirical material of this study, as decision-makers relate to the general public, or parts of it.

By looking at how self-regulators make decisions, we can learn more about how they also make typifications about what other people think is justified, ethically right, in an advertisement. The general public's mood, how they may feel about an advertisement, is sometimes imagined as a *whole*, sometimes as related to *targeted groups,* or as *women* and *men*. Decision-makers also take advertisers into account. The power relationships between advertisers and the public cannot be taken-for-granted but have to be examined when acted out in specific contexts (cf. Dennis and Martin 2005). Self-regulators are depending on the values of the industry as well as the public, in their intermediary position. That the self-regulators do not only address the interests of the advertising industry, in order to make justified decisions has consequences for how the analysis of their work in this study is framed. We must conceptualize their cognitive framework in a sense that takes into account their reflexive interpretation of various viewers among the general public, as well as advertisers (and legislators). To that end, I will make use of the theory developed by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1999; 2006 [1991]; Thévenot 2001b; 2001c; 2007a; 2007b).[15] Their theory is about how people relate to what is usually conceptualized as *everyday life* in social theory. Yet it represents an improvement on the other existing traditional everyday life theories, as it conceptualizes people's cognitive capacity in a more reflexive way, not determined by group belonging. The use of the word reflexivity is similar to Blumer's notion of "self-indication", which means that a person's understanding of a situation cannot be predicted by other things than the process of interpretation in relation to others (Blumer 1998 [1969]:81-82)[16], but

[15] Interests cannot be taken-for-granted as directors of actions (cf. Bourdieu 1998 [1994]:75-91; MacIntyre 1984:163-164; Swedberg 2005); they should rather be seen as shaped in collective decision-processes. This means that it is not certain that interest precedes action. As Alasdair MacIntyre writes: "it is through conflict and sometimes only through conflict that we learn what our ends and purposes are" (MacIntyre 1984:164), as opposed to seeing interests as a "signpost, telling [people] where to go" (Swedberg 2005:106). Like Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Swedberg connects certain interests to specific fields of activities, where each field represents a dominating interest, while Boltanski and Thévenot acknowledge the fact that many interests, in terms of worlds of worth, can be connected within an activity. The latter means that one cannot tell from the activity of a person what her interest is, because it may be mixed and only become fixated through an interaction situation in which people need to e.g. justify their stand.

[16] Blumer defines self-indication in this way: "Self-indication is a moving communicative process in which the individual notes things, assesses them, gives them meaning, and decides to act on the basis of the meaning. The human being stands over against the world, or against "alters", with such a process and not with a mere ego…The process of self-indication by means of which human action is formed cannot be accounted for by factors which precede the act. The process of self-indication exists in its own right and must be

will be elaborated upon in the study, stressing the importance of including people's "critical capacity" (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999) when conceptualizing people's meaning making.

By analyzing these decision-processes in relation to the logics of justification theorized by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, this study provides an insight into the grounds of justification used in self-regulatory practices, including the relevant text documents produced.[17] The ethics is decided in and through an *interaction* process at the micro level. There are also, however, *conventions* involved in the decision-processes, which structure it and make agreement and justification possible. As Boltanski and Thévenot's theory on worlds of worth incorporate both of these aspects, it is particularly suitable for my analysis of advertising self-regulation. The main point of the theory is that we normally use up to six worlds of worth, and/or combinations of them, as common grounds for what is justified. The worlds of worth are the following: the market world of worth (price), the industrial (efficiency), the inspired (creativity), opinion/fame (renown), the domestic (esteem) and the civic (welfare/collective interest). The type of worth is acknowledged in the parenthesis, but it is a simplified description. I discuss the full picture of what the worlds imply in chapter 3, as well as their relevance for this study. It is the situation and how it is interpreted by people who criticize, evaluate or justify something that will decide which of the worlds of worth are relevant. The conventionalized moralities that these worlds of worth represent are seen as potentially held by anyone, but we may find empirical varieties which can be seen as cultural variations.

The worlds of worth are a plurality of conceptions of the good which have been developed historically in the so called "regime of justification", as theorized by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006 [1991]; Thévenot 2001c). We need their idea of a regime of justification because the self-regulators direct themselves to people that they do not know personally (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:362), and they need to make justified decisions both in relation to the industry and the general public. As a consequence, the notion of a regime of justification, points to a less specialized way of other-directedness than Hughes and others pointed out, because the other of relevance here is more of an unfamiliar kind. In the regime of justification, we do not relate to the groups with which we belong in a more direct sense, but to parts of the general public that we do not know. This, of course, has specific and interesting implications on justification as well as socialization.

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accepted and studied as such. It is through this process that the human being constructs his conscious action" (Blumer 1998 [1969]:83-84). Alters are thus those things that needs to be interpreted and incorporated in the meaning making of an individual, which means that meaning does not originate from the individual and cannot be predicted by preceding actions as new complexes of settings constantly appears.

[17] An action, such as an advertising campaign, may be justified in line with one logic by the advertiser while criticized in accordance with another logic of justification (cf. Thévenot 2002:184). Several types of clashes and compromises may appear in the self-regulatory decision-process.

Instead of being bound by a field, the habitus, recipes, social worlds, certain frames and rituals in everyday life, Thévenot argues that people meet the world within different pragmatic "regimes of engagement" depending on to whom we relate: the regime of the familiar, the regime of justification, and the regime in between called regular planning (Thévenot 2001c:56-59). What drives people in all of these regimes are "conceptions of the good", which should form the basis of explanation, rather than merely explaining actions by things like "interests" and "dispositions" (Thévenot 2001c:59). In the *regime of justification*, the notions of what is good need to be more universally acknowledged, than in the regime of familiarity. The further away the people are to whom you relate, the broader and more collectively acknowledged the scope of conventions of the good needs to be. As the self-regulators of advertising are dealing with critique from the public and what the public may think, they are first and foremost in the regime of justification. We are in this regime when our actions and evaluations are involving distant others, such as the general idea of the public, which we can only know through conventions (Thévenot 2001c:71).

What we relate to is more relevant than where we come from, according to this theory of justification and critical capacity. By deploying this theory as an analytical tool, the self-regulatory decision-makers that are analysed in this study will be granted the possibility to transcend individual interests, and relate their judgements to a collective mode (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:361). The ability to criticize and to use various worlds of worth as the reasons for our actions and evaluations means that we do not always align with the dominating rules of a context. Criticism may lead to a compromise, so that sometimes several evaluative modes can be used in combination. A person may also use different evaluative modes to justify a particular action. This means it is not enough to locate people's positions to understand how interpretations and evaluations are made, partly because a person may be critical towards her position (see also O'Donohoe 2000:77-79), but also because position in itself is not always the source of our cognitive outlook. According to the theory, people are also able to transcend various so-called worlds of worth, as they are not confined to certain spheres of activity. This means that decision-makers' judgements may depend on various interpretations of advertising images made in relation to several modes of evaluations of what is good (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:215-217). In conclusion, this study is about the decision-processes of the advertising self-regulators and at the same time about how moral interests are pinned down.

Comparison

The empirical material consists of interviews with 38 individuals, who at the time of the interview were council members, chairs, staff and/or members of the responsible organizations of the self-regulatory bodies, ERK or the ASA (including CAP), or had held one of these positions recently, as well as (participant) observation, images and text documents from the two mentioned

self-regulatory bodies. The interviews were primarily about the decisions-making concerning specific and less specified advertisements and each inteview lasted on avarage an hour and a half. The (participant) observation was modest but consisted of an office party, a staff meeting, a consumer conference and five days in an office landscape where i conducted interviews, all at the ASA. The text documents consisted mainly of decisions from the organizations, as well as their website information. I have also analysed yearly reports from the ASA. The images were the advertising images about which they had made decisions. Some of these images were displayed and discussed in the interviews.

The different settings of the self-regulatory practices will help illuminating the importance of the social situatedness of ethical judgements. Comparing the practices within two countries is thus primarily a way to "'visibilize' the invisible" (Knorr Cetina 1999:22), because it is only in relation to another context that we can spot what is specific within a certain setting (cf. Vaughan 1992:176-177). However, what matters in a decision is not taken-for-granted but seen as depending on how context is interpreted and evaluated by the decision-makers in the decision-processes (cf. Banks 1998; Becker 1998b; Blumer 1998 [1969]:56, 78-89; Gadamer 2004 [1960]:305-311; Pink 2001:95-114; Silverman 2003:343; Sverrisson 2004). In this way, what is taken-for-granted can be analysed more easily. Comparing two countries as well as different cases of complaints will provide insights into the similarities and differences in the ways that self-regulators justify their decisions, and what the dominating evaluative modes are (Thévenot, Moody and Lafaye 2000). This will also give us an idea of what types of criticism from the public has an impact on the outcome of the decision-process.[18]

Research Questions

As described, advertising self-regulation is made by decision-makers at regulatory bodies. Decision-makers discuss possible and conflicting interpretations and moral evaluations of advertising images with each other, in order to reach a justified judgement. Looking at how these decisions are made and justified by the council members and other decision-makers at the regulatory bodies, some questions need to be asked about the various aspects of the decision-process. In each case a concrete complaint, or several, and a concrete justification from the advertiser is considered, as well as the effects for advertisers in general. But the self-regulators do not take these accounts as necessarily relevant, as if they were parties of a trial. In order to create a justified decision, they have to imagine instead what is more generally acceptable and unacceptable, i.e. they make typifications about what other

[18] A decision-process is the chain of decision-making from reception of complaint to final decision. Some cases I follow from beginning to end, while in other cases, I analyse a part or parts in the beginning, middle or end of the process. Some include interviews and some consists of only text documents.

people find worthy or not, or what is worthy in general, i.e. what are acceptable societal effects and what are not. Given this, I ask the following questions:

1. What *steps* do the decision-processes consist of?
2. What are *the meanings given to viewers of the public, advertisers and the image* in the decision-process and what other people and things do the decision-makers take into account, when and how, in concrete and abstracted forms?
3. How are the *advertising industry* and *the public* related to each other in the advertising self-regulatory practices?
4. What *types of moral claims* and conflicts are crystallized in the decision-processes?
5. How do the decision-makers perceive and handle different and *clashing interpretations* and *evaluations* of the images?
6. What is *decisive* for how decision-makers *reach a decision*?
7. Given the focus on gender discriminatoty advertisements at ERK, how can some depictions of *gender* be seen as justified while others are not?
8. What are the *similarities* and *differences* between the Swedish and the British organization in terms of how they *relate to viewers of the public* in their decision-making?
9. Are some moral claims and thus *types of viewers* given more weight and, if so, how can that be explained?

The above questions will also answer the question of how the advertising industries, through the self-regulatory bodies, handle the uncertainty of what viewers amongst the public find acceptable in advertisements.

I would also like to pose a more general question about the decision-processes taken together:

10. I have chosen a theory by Boltanski and Thévenot that stresses the non-autonomy of group values and value spheres, which makes me suggest that decision-makers deploy generally held morals in the decision-processes and that different moral logics can be combined. I would nevertheless like to explore an important issue of *autonomy* related to the advertising industry. Are the decision-makers also producers of morals by the ways that they order generally held moral logics? In other words, is a specific type of moral independence created for the advertising industry by the decision-processes, as they make selections of good and bad criticism and justifications, not just good and bad images?

These are the questions with which I approach the empirical material to show how and why the regulatory work analysed in this study is seen as a process in which values are crystallized, come into conflict and are ordered. As the title of this study implies, the decision-makers do this by *picturing the public*.

Dissertation Overview

I argue in this dissertation that advertising self-regulation is about defining and compromising conventions of morality, and the results of several instances of decision-making show a pattern of how the contextual circumstances influence the moral decisions that are made. I study the general patterns by looking at decision-processes in detail. The decision-process includes different types of reflexivity. First of all it includes reflexivity about the *distant other*, which is generalized because the self-regulators want to capture the modes of the general public as a whole or as different groups, without access to what they really think apart from those who make complaints. By analysing the self-regulators' interpretations of audiences in their decision-processes I am able to show that morals can work in different directions because the common good can be defined in different ways (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:14). Thus, one result is that moral conventions help decision-makers define the public from case to case, as each world of worth, as theorized by Boltanski and Thévenot, involve different types of justified subjects, such as citizens, parents, consumers and target groups. Secondly, the decision-processes include reflexivity about concrete others such as colleagues, good executives, the specific complaints and the advertisers. Accounts by these parties are decisive only if they build a bridge to the general public/viewers of the public and what they may find justified. Whether there is such a bridge is analysed by using the theory of worlds of worth.

The self-regulators conceptualize moods amongst publics as changing. This is an argument they use for the benefits of self-regulation in relation to legislation. As the written codes are very generally formulated, these are adjustments to the public made *in practice,* although the codes are occassionally rewritten as well. However, the relevant social groups and advertisements involved in the decision-making will be defined as more or less inclined to change by the self-regulators, in their practice, and such evaluations of different audiences will influence the decisions they make. Types of viewers to which they relate their decisions are sometimes seen as conservative and not likely to be offended by things such as sexist language, blunt words or stereotypical images, while other audiences are seen as more sensitive and critical. This study points at the patterns of how decision-makers relate to viewers in their decision-making and how these patterns can be understood.

The dissertation is organized into seven chapters and an appendix on the method used to generate and analyse the empirical material. Chapter 2 analyses former research on advertising and arrives at an approach to studying how people make meaning of advertising *images* and other important aspects of the decision-process of self-regulation, consisting of *reflexivity* and *the public*. The meanings of images go hand in hand with the understanding of viewers and their cognitive capacity. In this study, the viewers are the self-regulators, but they also incorporate other viewers in their interpretations. Chapter 2 creates an argument for how decision-makers relate reflexively to images and the viewers of the general public.

Chapter 3 presents and discusses the main theory of this study, which consists of modes of interpretation and justification, as conceptualized by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's ideas about different worlds of worth. The modes of justification conceptualized as worlds of worth are used in this study as tools to analyse and explain how and why decisions are made. This approach provides the means of explaining the plural nature of morality and how morals are developed as a combination of other social values such as variations of economic and cultural values. Boltanski and Thévenot's theory also implies that we cannot take for granted that there is a consensus of morals in the everyday world, nor within specialized fields.

Throughout the dissertation, the varying meanings of advertising images are analysed in relation to the worlds of worth. The worlds of worth are used to analyse what kinds of evaluations, conflicts and compromises, are fostered through the self-regulatory decision-processes. It is because of this that we can see what types of viewers will be seen as justified. The third chapter introduces a specific theory on *moral* meaning making, while the second chapter discussed meaning making in general, which is not necessarily moral. The second chapter discusses instead the meaning of advertising images, specifically. In addition, reflexivity and how to relate to others are pointed out as crucial aspects of meaning making in advertising self-regulatory decision-processes. These are also crucial aspects of the theory on justification. Together, the chapters show why the theory on justification can be used to analyse decision-processes dealing with offensiveness in advertisements.

Chapter 4 describes the two self-regulatory bodies, why they have been selected for this study, and how they have been evaluated by researchers in studies on their effectiveness. This is put into the context of what role the self-regulatory bodies have given to themselves; what impact they want to make on society, if any, the industry and people in general. The decision-processes of the self-regulatory bodies are described in terms of their various steps as well as how the decision-makers look at their work and their own moral reflexivity. Some aspects of whom and what they relate to in the decision-processes are analysed in this chapter, while other aspects are left to the following chapters to be dealt with in more depth.

In chapter 5, I analyse the reflexive decision-process in which decision-makers relate to both concrete and abstract people's accounts: 1) the complainants', 2) the advertisers', 3) other decision-makers' and most importantly 4) the viewers of the public's. These are the most important actors to which they relate when they interpret the situations, including the images, and evaluate them. The justifications that are made mirror the expected demands that e.g. a targeted or general public would make. The chapter shows the relevance of the worlds of worth in the regulation against offensive advertisements.

Chapter 6 analyses complaint cases of gender depiction, in order to compare how these are handled in the two countries. While chapter five takes a broader view on offensiveness in advertisements, which are not necessarily about gender, this chapter looks at the question of gender in more detail. I analyse

various types of decision-processes, structured by what aspects of gender they take into account, to see if there are any differences in the ways the images are judged in relation to principles and contexts taken into account by the different organizations.

In chapter 7, I summarize the conclusions of this study. This includes how the decision-makers make their decisions, the value conflicts and compromises that are made in the decision-processes and the general patterns of evaluative modes deployed by the organizations. It shows how different moral evaluations depend on culturally adapted organizations and clarifies how justification varies and how decisions may lead to different possibilities for critique in the public domain. The chapter also discusses the more general implications of the findings of the dissertation. The specific contribution of this study is that it paints a more complex picture of how regulatory decision-makers reflexively take their surrounding into account, when in search for defining the morally acceptable in advertising images.

In the appendix to the dissertation, I discuss the methods which I used to generate the material, the material itself, and how it has been analysed. This means that the appendix discusses e.g. the interpretative approach of this study, how my choice of theory was inductively generated and that it gives a brief description of how the material was analytically coded. I also describe how quotes and examples from the empirical material were selected for the presentation of the study.

2. The Meaning-Making of Images and the Public

This chapter is about how to understand the meaning-making in a specific practice, namely advertising self-regulation, in which the relationship to the images under scrutiny is crucial.[19] Drawing on my empirical material, when ERK or the ASA have received one or several complaints about an advertising image, this visual expression is at the centre of their decision-process. In these decision-processes, the self-regulators take various things into account when they interpret and evaluate the acceptability of the advertisement. There is at least one concrete complaint and complainant to take into account, usually a statement from an advertiser and written codes that apply to specific types of complaints. There are also organizational conventions such as previous decisions, whether and how to take media context, including size of the image, or so-called target groups into account. They also relate to other decision-makers, with whom they may discuss the case. All these things may influence the meaning of the advertising image, as can the personal expertise and experiences of the decision-maker. However, when decision-makers relate to the various things mentioned above, it cannot be taken-for-granted that the decision-makers are there as representatives of a specific position, I argue, or embody a specific view, but their cognitive processes in their decision-making needs to be analysed, i.e. what they actually take into account and how.

In order to understand the values and power relationships that are produced in advertising self-regulation, we have to analyse how the decision-makers interpret the images in relation to interpreters amongst the public. The self-regulators do not in a straight-forward sense adjust to a public. They need to establish the public's current state first and make an evaluation of what viewer accounts, concrete or conceptualized, to give weight in the decision. What type of viewers they take into account is defined in the decision-process. This is a reflexivity that contains both relationships to the concrete things mentioned above, as well as an abstract idea of the viewers of images amongst the public. The meaning-making of advertising images and the public, and how these decision-processes can be seen as reflexive, are as a consequence explored in this chapter.

In this chapter, I will first of all argue for a specific conceptualization of how to understand people's interpretations of advertising images, i.e. how

[19] Advertising images are in this study either broadcast moving images or non-broadcast still images, sometimes including copy-text material. Occasionally advertisements may also consist only of text. The approach I propose in this chapter will however work well in relation to such advertisements as well.

meaning is made in relation to such images. Secondly, I discuss the concept of the public as the self-regulators relate not only to advertising images but also to the people in public, the general viewers of advertisements, and judge whether they will be offended. Thirdly, I will also discuss some aspects of the concept of reflexivity and suggest how this notion is important in this study that tries to understand how regulators picture the public in their decision-making about whether advertising images are offensive.

Understanding Advertising Images

I will here present the dominating approaches to the meanings of advertising images in the social sciences to which I will then relate my approach. The approaches are of two kinds: the image as text approach and the image as practice approach. The image as text approach is described and criticized by me for not including active interpreters of the advertising images. The word text is used to connote the idea of text systems and other meaning systems that are understood as reproductive chains. The word *system* or *force* could also have been used to give this approach a name. The image as practice approach includes active producers and viewers, as the meaning making of this approach is located in the everyday practices of people rather than in sign-systems. I argue in the following for a practice based approach, but with a different reflexive view of the interpreter than has been included in the former studies. The interpreter will be conceptualized as able to transcend specific contexts and circumstances and combine different logics of making evaluations. In practice, this means that a person is not necessarily cognitively limited by a social position. But first I give an overview of the two dominating approaches.

The Advertising Image as Text

The so called text approach to advertising images sees the image as a container of meaning that can be laid out in the open by the researcher. People are programmed into being certain types of viewers. This is because advertising is seen as creating a forcing structure, either as coherent technology, culture or discourse. This is clearly illustrated by what Jean Baudrillard writes about advertisements in his book *The Consumer Society* (1998 [1970]), and related to Marshall McLuhan's idea that the medium is the message (1994 [1964]:7-21). McLuhan argues that the medium has its own logic, it refers to itself, is self-generating, and this is what creates its meaning; it is not the ways we use a medium that define its social meaning, but its own structure that influences and defines us as users. In a similar vein, Baudrillard writes: "Every image, every advertisement imposes a consensus – that between all the individuals potentially called upon to decipher it, that is to say, called on, by decoding the message, to subscribe automatically to the code in which it has been couched" (Baudrillard 1998 [1970]:125).

The advertising image as text approach is in the main a structuralist approach that can be described as related to system theory as well as semiotics. Semiotics is defined in the following way by a critic of this approach, Don Slater:

> Semiotics looks at all elements of culture as if they were elements of a language, and with tools derived from the analysis of language systems and texts. Elements of a culture – including consumer goods and events – are treated metaphorically as texts that can be read…We can read these texts by understanding them as a particular organization of signs drawn from language-like systems and codes of signs. The text makes sense, and is made sense of, in terms of the systems of signs from which its elements are drawn and which give them their meaning.
>
> (Slater 1997:137-138)

The root of semiotics is the structural theory by Ferdinande de Saussure (1959), later developed by e.g. Roland Barthes (1977), who argues that things gain their meaning from a system of signs (cf. Alexander 2003; Slater 1997:137-147).[20] The system of signs creates the meaning of an image, according to this line of thought, rather than everyday practices. This view has the effect that interpretations made by actors *outside of* the system of signs, are not recognized as real meanings.

Saussure regards language in itself as the carrier of meaning, while Barthes view is more sociological, because Barthes places the foundation of meaning in a socially developed code system. Saussure's idea is that language as a system is incorporated in our minds, regardless of how we use it (Barthes 1977:15). According to Barthes, the language of images (as well as text) incorporates not only its expression, as with Saussure, but also how it is received (Barthes 1977:49). Even though Barthes argues that the language of the image contains also the unexpected forms of meanings that the images produce among its viewers (Barthes 1977:47), he claims that reception structures are well incorporated into the individuals of cultural groups. All types of readings rely on one and the same ideology of a cultural group. This means that different ways of decoding images create clear structural and separate entities. When an image is "read" by the general public it is connected to "a traditional stock of signs" (Barthes 1977:19). It is the dominating belief system, built up by this system of signs, in a culture, that decides how people understand images such as advertisements.

A similar view of interpretation was developed by Althusser, with his notion of interpellation. Althusser's concept of interpellation means that subjects are constructed by ideologies, or identity structures, which speak to them (Althusser 1971 [1970]). In other words, just like Barthes argues that the ideology within a group creates coded meanings, Althusser argues that ideologies shape subjects. The ideologies can be embedded in an advertising image and connect to your identity, for example as a woman, an identity created by this image because of the whole system it belongs to and which you are already shaped by.

[20] I follow Slater's definition in my use of the word semiotics.

As a consequence, subjects cannot create meanings outside the meaning structures that are already established. Individuals' interpretations cannot change the structures they are in and as a consequence not create novel meanings (Althusser 1971 [1970]:174). We are instead interpelled—shaped as subjects—by the ideologies of capitalism and gender (cf. Butler 1993; 1997)[21] as they are expressed in e.g. advertisements.

In the same vein, Anne Cronin analyses gendered advertisements, which are seen as discourses that constitute subjects. Her account partially builds on Judith Butler's account on performativity and interpellation, arguing that speech acts create subjects and their material bodies (cf. Butler 1993; 1999 [1990]; Cronin 2000:40). She means that it is in the act of interpreting ads that we become subjects (Cronin 2000:156). The seeing subject is formed in the process of vision (Cronin 2000:89).[22] However, meaning only *appears* to be made by the viewers according to Cronin (2000:103). In reality, the advertising images are offering different but a selected number of discourses and the subject is nevertheless interpelled by the discourse that speaks to her.[23] The underlying assumption is thus that dominating ideologies prevailing in groups or larger communities are recognized and incorporated by subjects, as they e.g. view an advertisement.

Advertising as a Universal and Dominating System

According to the theories described above, advertisements provide coded messages that are interpreted in line with their embedded ideology or dominating belief systems of communities. Ideology and cultural group thus make people interpret symbols in certain ways. There are also theories stressing that the dominating system in society is advertising (e.g. Horkheimer and Adorno 2002 [1947]), which implies that advertising has a specific logic. In those cases advertising is seen as a code system that is universal. Connected to critique of capitalism and mass society, advertising has been seen as the main transformer of culture into commerce, which means that culture once was but is no longer autonomous. The dominant taste has e.g. been described as distributed by advertisements (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002 [1947]:94-136, esp. 126). What is

[21] Judith Butler too uses the notion of interpellation and has a profoundly semiotic, structural linguistic, view on the making of identities and meaning (i.e. as structured by the language system); through the naming one becomes, as interpellation brings a chain of meaning with it (cf. Benhabib 1992:216-218, and her critical account of Butler). Variation of meaning is for Butler connected to elaborations of chain sequence compositions. This will be touched upon again in the discussion on gender in chapter six.

[22] Bourdieu makes a non-semiotic account on performativity in *The Logic of Practice*, however, in which he states that it is not the discourse as Cronin argues (or the image as text) that makes what it states, but the one who "authorizes and recognizes it" (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]:110).

[23] Cronin makes a more practice based account of advertising in a later book, *Advertising Myths* (2004a), but she is still using the concepts of myth from Barthes as well as discourse. *Advertising Myths* can be seen as a way of pluralizing and making more complex the otherwise totalizing idea of the semiotic code.

fostered as beautiful by advertisements is also the kind of beauty that generates the most money. It is a commercial beauty that is liked by many. According to this idea, the cultural industries are adjusted to the advertising logics (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002 [1947]:132), which for example means today that editorials in magazines strive to be similar to the advertisements.

In line with this, Guy Debord (1994 [1967]) develops an idea of the *spectacle*. The spectacle is the economic realm, developing automatically, and speaks through for example the mass media. In the spectacle, all human life is mere appearance and the society of the spectacle makes people passive, by saying that all that appears is good. Through the spectacle, people cannot see the real state of things, which means that they cannot do anything to change society.[24] The history of different ideologies is over, now there is only one. Many similarities with Debord's account can be found in Baudrillard's first book from 1968. In this book, *The System of Objects* (1996 [1968]), Baudrillard describes the system of objects as the system of consumer goods, which is semiotically structured. In this structure everything and everyone is equivalent to consumer goods (Baudrillard 1996 [1968]:193). This is a system of significations. According to Baudrillard, the value system is decided by advertisements and objects, making the old values, and different oppositional value systems, disappear. Objects, he writes, have always been important as social markers, but have previously worked alongside other codes, for instance "gestural, ritual and ceremonial systems, language, rank at birth, codes of moral values, etc." (Baudrillard 1996 [1968]:194). However, the code establishes a universal system of signs and interpretation; it is a *totalitarian and moral code*, which nobody escapes. Consequently, all other systems are declining. The ever-increasing differentiation of society, in combination with the gradual decline of all other systems, necessitated, according to Baudrillard, "a code which, by virtue of its straightforward universality, could guarantee clear and unencumbered communication" (Baudrillard 1996 [1968]:195). Advertising creates a clear code for how to understand consumer goods as status markers. Baudrillard later argues that we have reached beyond the system of objects, where the signs still had meanings outside the illusion of the advertising code, to a state when the real and the reference have imploded (Baudrillard 1985:128). This also means that there is no more spectacle, in Debord's sense, according to Baudrillard. Those things that are bad about the spectacle for Debord are for Baudrillard signs of a reality that can be saved; Debord argues that because of the spectacle, we live in an illusion, which implies that more transparency would make us see the real state of things. Baudrillard means that there is no longer anything to reveal. If we had lived in an illusion, as with the spectacle, there would still be hope. Now everything is visible. Through the new communication system of advertising everything is instant, which means that there is no retreat, according to Baudril-

[24] This relates to the notion of false consciousness in marxist theory, although Marx and Engels wrote mostly about ideology (cf. Eyerman 1981); see e.g. *The German Ideology*, written 1845-46 (Marx and Engels 1978 [1932]). False consciousness is an effect of ideology that can be dispersed through e.g. advertising. The objective and "real" state of things is thus hidden by subjectively held ideas.

lard. The idea that brings these theories together is that there are universal forces that reshape everything into one and the same advertising logic.

The idea of a system of signs, which may incorporate ideas about gender relations, as well as other coded ideas about people and society, or the idea of advertising as a structuring force, are both often described by the notion of a code. These ideas have been the bases of many textual analyses of advertising images. These have been made in a semiotic vein where the researcher herself deciphers the messages of the images (see e.g. Andrén et al. 1978; Berger 2000; Björkvall 2003; Craig 1990; Dyer 1982; Goldman 1992; Goldman and Papson 1996; Gottdiener 1985; Hirdman 2002; Jhally 1987; Merskin 2006; Mick 1986; Myers 1986; Redmond 2003; Schroeder 2003; 2004; Williamson 1978). An influential example is Judith Williamson's (1978), who argues that advertisements create structures of meaning in themselves (1978:12). She writes: "We do not produce genuine 'meaning' but consume a predetermined 'solution'" (1978:75). The semiotic system gives us the code for how to understand an advert and according to this view the researcher believes she can grasp the meaning of the advertisements on her own (see e.g. Dyer 1982:87). The focus is generally on ideological structures behind the advertisements, so to speak (e.g. Goldman 1992).[25] The researcher has to acquire the right tools for this kind of analysis, putting the researcher as the first interpreter. The approach thus, as already described, implies a dominating code of meaning, influencing people from above, while they passively or without any other option take their messages on board. As we have seen, codes are defined as the taken-for-granted ways of communicating and understanding things in a given culture (Dyer 1982:135), or in consumer society at large. We now turn to critical theories that acknowledge a reflexive capacity among viewers, beyond the insights of the researchers themselves, but I see them as falling within the same *image as text* approach.

Consumer Resistance and Reflexive Advertising

The following accounts do to some extent also fit into the practice approach but they are placed here because they nevertheless build on the ideas of semiotics. They point out acts of resistance among consumers and how producers of advertising make use of some of the criticism of advertising images. John Fiske means that there is a dominant ideology but that people are always resisting it, pluralizing it and making cultural commodities their own (e.g. Fiske 2000 [1989]:282-287). He writes: "We all have a lifetime's experience of living in a

[25] Semiotic analyses of images often result from content analysis, but are focused on *hidden structures*. Content analysis *per se* may however merely focus on the surface of the image and the amount of times it appears in certain media, what it depicts, and so on (cf. Alexander 2003:25-27). In content analysis, images will typically be divided into themes of expressions. Many of the semiotic accounts also divide large or small amounts of images into different themes, but also take their meaning content for granted. Content analysis can be made without having a semiotic approach to meaning. For a definition of content analysis see e.g. (Kassarjian 1977) and for an example of content analysis of advertising, see Andrén et. al. (1978).

consumer society and of negotiating our way through the forces of commodification, of which ads are one, but only one, and they are no more immune to subversion, evasion, or resistance than any other strategic force" (Fiske 2000 [1989]:286-287). Fiske stresses the oppositional and subversive "reading" practices, as he calls them, of viewers/consumers. The consumers are then seen as resisting the dominant meanings and ideologies inscribed within media texts and consumer goods. All commodities both have a cultural as well as a functional value. "The creativity of popular culture lies not in the production of commodities so much as in the productive use of industrial commodities. The art of the people is the art of 'making do'. The culture of everyday life lies in the creative, discriminating use of the resources that capitalism provides" (Fiske 2000 [1989]:283). Instead of following the dominant ideology's use of the commodity, the cultural needs of people, Fiske argues, make them oppose the dominant ideology, making cultural commodities into cultural resources. The notion of "making do", in Fiske's account, comes from Michael de Certeau. In reaction against theories that see consumption (in this case of images) as the passive assimilation of dominant ideology, Certeau put emphasis on the oppositional and resistant aspects of consumption, embodied in the consumption of everyday life (1984 [1980]:29-42). He views leisure and work as intertwined, which also means that consumption and production are intertwined. The use of objects must be analysed, and it must be done in its context. We must look at the ways of "making do"; the way things are used and given meanings. Here Certeau draws a distinction between strategies and tactics. While the latter is an art of the "weak", the former is the manipulation of power relations by the "strong": "a tactic is determined by the *absence of power* just as the strategy is organized by the postulation of power" (Certeau 1984 [1980]:38). Certeau means that the everyday practices of consumption are of tactical nature. They are the "clever tricks of the 'weak' within the order established by the 'strong'" (Certeau 1984 [1980]:40). So the creative activity is still within a dominating order, in Certeau's account, I conclude.

In these accounts, consumers are provided with consumer goods by the capitalist system, but ordinary powerless people also use them in ways that are not intended. Sometimes the recognized acts of resistance can be transformed into a selling argument by advertisers, such as in advertisements that are critical of the consumer society of ideals of femininity. This may be a critique of consumer practices and ideals or a critique directed towards how advertisements commonly look. In the semiotic vein, change in the expression of advertisements is sometimes explained by self-reference within the textual sign-system (Goldman 1992:166-169; cf. Luhmann 2000 [1996]). Goldman discusses frame reflexivity as advertisements commenting on advertisements. This means that the look of an advertisement is created in order to explicitly comment on an ideological feature of one or a series of other advertisements, such as the common depiction of slim, young, white women in advertising images. They may also make fun of—or just connect to—the assumption that consumers passively take the messages of advertisements onboard. There are ideological criticisms from certain groups, which the advertisers are aware of. In reflexive ad-

vertisements, the producers incorporate the common critique of advertisements from, for example, feminist groups. The reflexive process from the advertisers' point of view is described in the following way:

> To counter viewer alienation and ensure brand name differentiation, advertisers incorporated criticism of advertising into their ads and brought into the foreground the tacit background rules which premise the routine reading of ads. Advertising reflexivity has thus been directed at re-motivating spectators to participate in the assumptions of consumption.
>
> (Goldman 1992:3)

Reflexive advertisements will, e.g., respond to feminist critique this way while at the same time foster consumer ideals, a tendency also described by Susan Bordo (2003 [1993]:298-300). Bordo shows that advertisers use the liberated woman as a selling argument, questioning the idea of women as "soft and cuddly" or overly self-critical, but argues that these images give a false impression that people are as free to choose how to live as the images imply. The critique in the image produced by the advertiser does not necessarily lead to a change in the everyday practices of people, as both Goldman and Bordo (1997:192), I believe, correctly point out. The producers of advertising are using the dreams of freedom in the images.

Discussion of the Text Approach

My main critique of the text approach, which has just been outlined above in a somewhat descriptive fashion, is that it presupposes that information and understanding are possible to predict based on the idea that images have intrinsic meanings that are transferred to those who see them (cf. Alexander 2003: 270). The idea of e.g. an ideology that speaks to and creates its viewers through advertisements disregards differences among interpreters, when they relate to complex social contexts. This leads to the misconception that the researcher can grasp the true meanings of the advertisements or that the one that is called always becomes what she is called. The analyses of underlying ideologies in images based on patterns of how images look do not reveal how these images are interpreted. The approach does not take into account the possibility amongst actors to make different types of interpretations. Rather than having meaning in itself, I argue that the image can be seen as a tool in meaning making negotiations. Critics and producers of advertisements may of course claim particular meanings in a way that is similar to semiotics, as pointed out by e.g. Goldman, but this does not mean that that is a good description of the way people actually make meaning of advertisements, or how they evaluate them and their own and others' relationships to the images.

Patterns of how advertising images look have been researched semiotically, giving examples of repeated patterns of gender depictions and class relations. Even though I argue such research cannot account for people's interpretations and evaluations, it can be seen as interesting suggestions of domination pat-

terns, as of course there may exist structures of domination, which are not even recognized or resisted (Clarke 2000 [1991]). But to fully understand the implications and meanings of these images, we need to focus also on people's interpretations of them, without taking for granted that they are related to embedded meanings, in terms of coded intentions of the producers, or supposedly apparent power structures in the look of the image at hand and images described as their siblings. We cannot predict whether there will be an enhancement of an ideology or the reverse just by revealing an ideological pattern from images *per se*, as it tells us nothing about how people relate to these images. The meaning productions amongst viewers of advertising images depend on various components and may not be in line with or even related to the producer intention. Producer intentions may also be a complex thing, as ends and purposes may change or become established in relation to criticism.

The theories of resistance imply that the meanings of the images are quite clear, while they may be contested in various ways. I argue the meanings are not clear from the outside of a context and this means that contestations of them are unclear as well, i.e. it is not clear what they are contestations of, until you analyse specific acts of what could be resistance. This is to say that meaning has to be established in concrete settings of interaction. Meanings can never be sent as readymade units, but are produced in structures and networks of meanings connected to practices as well as words. Context cannot be seen as a setting coded in one coherent way, as in the images as text approach. Consumption culture can also bring values and relations that actually lead to something that can be seen as good for consumers in terms of broadening horizons (see e.g. Appadurai 1996:33-35), which is something not recognized by, for example, Debord or Baudrillard. According to Arjun Appadurai, the media can help people create imaginary worlds different from the ones they would construct if they were only influenced by their everyday world of immediate (face-to-face) practical relationships. We may in other words expand our cognitive frames through the media, not only be fooled by it. If we become more critical of our concrete situation by influence from the media, as Appadurai suggests may be the case, this would rather make us more active than passive. Based upon this critique, I argue that the effects and meanings of images cannot be decided *a priori*, outside of the context. This means that we should analyse the processes with which people understand images (Scott 1994b), in their everyday life (Scott 1994a).[26] Because I will analyse how people interpret images and make deci-

[26] Linda Scott argues that images are more difficult to interpret than written word, because you cannot break up an image into letters (Scott 1994b:264). I would not like to imply that text is easier to interpret. The social meaning of text is of course also a case for contextual analysis. I was surprised however to find that one of my informants from ERK argued that: "it is always easier to judge an image than a text, somehow, because the image is very secluded, while the text is, gives many, how do you say, it requires you to make your own judgements. Somehow. The text seldom stops where the word stops, but the image is the image." The view on images versus text seems reversed to what Scott proposes. The informant's view on judging images is however, taken from the interview as a whole, more complex than this quote shows and does not give justice to the ways the person says he reasons in relation to the images we discussed. This reminds us however that the advertising images

sions, a practice approach is, in other words, more useful. I will now turn to the practice-based approaches to meaning, particularly the meaning of advertising images.

The Advertising Image as Practice

As opposed to the image as text approach above, the image as practice approach does not originate from the researcher's interpretations, as she relates to what she sees as socially established code systems, but from those people that either produce or consume advertisements in one way or the other (cf. Blumer 1998 [1969]:51). The image as practice account does not relate viewers' interpretations as in line with or resistant to a dominating ideology imbedded in an image that is conceptualized as a text. Instead, viewers of images make meaning of them in their everyday practices, it is argued, as do the producers of images. I discuss this approach in order to make clear how I align with it and what I add to it in this study, because of what it is now lacking.

Producers of Advertising

Former studies within this image as practice approach either focus on the *production* processes of advertising images and the relations between actors in the field/industry/market, including agencies, models and photographers (Aspers 2006 [2001]; Bourdieu 2005; Cronin 2004b; Entwistle 2002; Entwistle 2004; Frisell Ellburg 2008; Lien 1997; McFall 2004; Moeran 1996; Nixon 2003; Nixon and Crewe 2004) or on the consumers' meaning making, to which I will return. The producer perspective focuses to a great extent on the relation between economic and cultural, such as aesthetic and creative, values, as well as identity formations in terms of gender, class, status and creativity. These studies show that people, who are producing advertising images, including e.g. art-directors, copy writes, models and photographers, are also very much involved in producing depictions of themselves, such as their masculinity, status or creativity. In other words, the cultural values steer the field of advertising alongside the economic values. People are seen as directed towards the logic of the field of production to a great extent, rather than towards the system of signs or towards consumers. However, these studies also acknowledge that knowledge about consumers can feed into the logic of the producers. It is for example important

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that are under scrutiny in the decision processes may also contain words or consist only of words. According to Ricoeur (1981), which brings together a semiotic and hermeneutic approach, text brings with it a meaning structure which we make our own, appropriate, through interpretation. We do not just apply our selves to the text, but become selves through the text. I do however not agree with Ricoeur on his view on the meaning structure, a "being in the world", that comes with the text. Instead we should view the text as many signs put together in which we can see several different patterns. A parallel can be drawn to images such as advertisements, which I mean also consist of just several symbols put together and in which people may interpret several different patterns of meanings.

for advertising agencies who want to win awards not to make too predictable advertisements, which follow the typifications that many people make in a too obvious and predictable fashion, but instead manage to be in the front line of cultural and social change (Nixon 2003:89), in order to enhance their creative value (see also Lash and Urry 1994:139-141). [27] That advertising is a cultural industry and a cultural economy is not a controversial statement, but now an established way of describing the practices of producing advertising. The above-mentioned studies are all examples of that.

Consumers/Viewers of Advertising

Apart from the focus on the production practices, studies with a practice approach have been focused on how the *consumers* make meaning of advertisements in the context of lifestyles and everyday life (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998; Auslander 1996; Berger 1972; Bordo 1997; Bordo 2003 [1993]; Bourdieu 1984 [1979]; Certeau 1984 [1980]; Dawn 1997; Douglas and Isherwood 1996 [1979]; Evans and Thornton 1989; Garvey 1996; Goffman 1979 [1976]; Hebdidge 1988; Lury 1996; McRobbie 1991; McRobbie 2004; Meyers-Levy and Malaviya 1999; Phillips 1997; Ritson and Elliot 1999; Scott 1994a; Scott 1994b; Shields and Heinecken 2002). This consumer perspective shows that images are interpreted and used in different ways by different audiences, depending on where they come from and in which context they are. It is the consumers' social context, their everyday life world, that matters most for their interpretations, according to these studies or theories, rather than what producers want them to think or feel when they see a particular image.[28] According to Bourdieu, however, there is often a great homology, i.e. correspondence, between the producer intentions and consumer interpretations because people are defined by their taste and will be drawn to things that they like (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]:232, 241). This is why Bourdieu also argues that advertisers need to be in tune with people's habitus/tastes in order to be successful (Bourdieu 2005:55).

According to the phenomenological school, developed from Edmund Husserl by Alfred Schütz, meaning is structured through the practices of every-

[27] Scott Lash and John Urry have described how the commercial side of advertising has fed into traditional cultural production, such as filmmaking, and how the cultural aspects of films and art have been incorporated in advertising. This means that already popularized images of scenes which are repeated in short sequences become part of film production. Lash and Urry mention an MTV mode, but today one may perhaps see a parallel in the use of Internet game features or TV-series. At the same time, producers of advertising want the adverts to be able to stand alone, as cultural products. They are seen as able to fill cultural demands, i.e. they can provide the basis for other values than the selling of goods. The making of such advertisements is, according to Lash and Urry, not only for the purpose of creating a good experience for the consumers, but primarily in order to foster careers and status for the producers. That this is the case has been shown by a line of scholars, as just mentioned.

[28] One aspect of everyday life experiences is of course images, so other images that we see and if we have a specific purpose of looking at something are likely to affect our ways of seeing (Scott 1994b).

day life and relies upon typifications of others created by practical experience through people's own immediate interactions, but also by inheriting traditional ways of making typifications from those around a person who teach her the right way to do things and think about things (Schütz 1962:3-47). These communities of taken-for-grantedness are key features of most studies within the practice approach, which are all centred in people's work or leisure practices, where patterns of typifications take shape. However, according to Schütz, the typifications we have made are possible to question and reformulate, depending on the situation and the changing character of social settings. In line with this idea, consumer goods and advertisements have also been analysed as part of a *meaning producing network* of people and things, such as in Dick Hebdidge's Bourdieu influenced study on the lifestyle and gender patterns of scooter users in different settings (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]; Hebdidge 1988:77-115). Both Hebdidge and Bourdieu stress that the meaning of objects need to be captured in their network of social relationships. Hebdidge argues for studying the ways that meanings change if one follows the chain of production, mediation (advertising) and consumption (Hebdidge 1988:80-81). To just look at one of these steps will give an insufficient account. It is important to analyse the whole process: "The original 'network of relations' transformed over time, and with it the object, and the relationship of the user to the object" (Hebdidge 1988:114). The study clarifies how production practices, advertising images, consumer practices—including national subcultures and gender relation—and consumer goods (such as the scooter), get their meanings and changes meaning in relation to each other over time.

Advertisements are a large part of our consumption, even if we normally do not choose to consume the advertisement *per se*; they just come with the package or exist as a part of our consumer culture. Douglas and Isherwood write the following: "Consumption uses goods to make firm and visible a particular set of judgements in the fluid process of classifying persons and events. We have now defined it as a ritual activity" (1996 [1979]:45). In these ritual activities, advertisements are a part. Consumption is in many ways about looking at things, about being an audience (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998:33), whether it is of advertisements, concerts, television, sports events or just other people showing themselves off. Abercrombie and Longhurst argue that audiences should be seen as being of several kinds at the same time: "the simple, the mass and the diffused" (1998:159). These audiences and their understanding of what they see should be studied in their *everyday setting*, where the audience has experienced what they have seen. Audience groups can go from being a concrete/simple face-to-face audience into a mass audience or a diffused audience. If we are listening to a lecture we are a simple audience, when we watch television we are a mass audience and just being part of everyday life, walking in the streets or similar, make us diffuse audiences. In everyday life, we are both seen by others and audiences. The degree of attention decreases from simple to mass and from mass to diffuse audiences. However, the types of audiences feed into one another. What we see as being part of a mass audiences can be used in various ways in everyday life, e.g. (Abercrombie and Longhurst

1998:74). This means that inspiration from the media, when we are watching television as a mass audience, can be used by us when we are staging ourselves in the social interaction of everyday life, as we saw Appadurai also argued. Rituals, frames of seeing as well as everyday practices are all important ingredients also of Erving Goffman's essay *Gender Advertisements* (1979 [1976]), in which different frames of production and consumption of advertisements, as well as the staging of gender in images and everyday life, are analysed as interconnected cognitive processes.

Images and (Gender) Rituals in Everyday Practices

According to Erving Goffman (1979 [1976]), depictions of gender in advertising images can give us knowledge of how our human nature and its expressions are choreographed. We learn how to express ourselves according to certain generalizations. Our expressions are not the nature given result of certain emotions, but when a ritualized way of behaving is repeated often enough, we will see it as natural. Advertisements enhance the taken-for-granted in our everyday doings, according to Goffman, but do not create it themselves. The simplifications of others are similar in everyday practices as in advertisements, but the advertising images are able to show this more clearly, as hyper-ritualized versions, because they provide us with images to some extent free from other influences, and which may depict e.g. private settings which we would otherwise not see. We may encounter such private settings in fiction, at the theatre, in a book, or on television, but we are then prepared for fiction. Advertising images are, on the other hand, in the peripherals of our everyday lives, and may as a consequence become a part of our impressions of other people in general whom we do not know, but whom we see passing us in the streets. Goffman argues for the following relationship between advertising production and everyday life practices:

> [T]he job the advertiser has of dramatizing the value of his product is not unlike the job a society has of infusing its social situations with ceremonial and with ritual signs facilitating the orientation of participants to one another. Both must use the limited 'visual' resources available in social situations to tell a story; both must transform otherwise opaque goings-on into easily readable form. And both rely on the same basic devices: intention displays, microecological mapping of social structure, approved typifications, and the gestural externalization of what can be taken to be inner response.
>
> (Goffman 1979 [1976]:27)

The inner responses are something we, according to Goffman, *learn* how to express in accordance with certain ritualized forms. Gender is one such common form. As Goffman has argued elsewhere, in *The Arrangement between the Sexes* (1977), apart from in *Gender Advertisements* (1979 [1976]:8), the organization of gender in society is so invasive that it is very difficult to escape and hence to change. We would have to reorganize many areas of society, which

eventually may lead to a change in the ways we make typifications. Advertisements are only one aspect of this, but will in its hyper-ritualized forms help making natural, i.e. preserve, the socially structured gender relationships.[29] What Goffman writes about gender is not typical of gender alone, because his analysis is really about the kind of typifications that we make in images and everyday interactions. Gender is however a useful example because it pervades everything. What we learn from Goffman's book about gender advertisements is that analysing the production of advertising, the depiction of a ritual such as gender, the everyday practice ritualizations of the same rituals as well as how people perceive various images, will give us a good insight into how everyday people structure their understanding of each other.[30]

Goffman points out a number of so called "genderisms", ritualized ways of *depicting* gender, which are repeated *in advertising images*. These are summed up by six themes called: relative size, the feminine touch, function ranking, the family, the ritualization of subordination and licensed withdrawal. *Relative size* indicates that women and subordinated people in general are depicted as shorter or smaller. This is related to the practice of everyday life in which men and women e.g. routinely will make sure the man is taller in a relationship. In other words, it has its root in the dating practices of everyday life. *The feminine touch* means that women tend to touch themselves and objects more than men in a ritualistic way as if to make them more desirable. In *function ranking* men are the active part and women the passive; men show women how things are done at work or at leisure. Women are however depicted as the ones that can perform housework best. Advertisements sometimes show men who are not involved in housework at all, but sitting on a sofa or at a table, while the woman in the picture is doing all the work. According to Goffman "in this way avoiding either subordination or contamination with a 'female' task" (1979 [1976]:36). When men are doing housework such as cooking, cleaning or doing laundry in advertisements, they are depicted as silly and "unrealistic" (Goffman 1979 [1976]:36) in their performance of the tasks. In everyday life, household work is also gendered in a similarly ritualized way. The depictions are hyper-rituals of those existing rituals. Depictions of *families* repeat the relative size theme by picturing the fathers as family heads by literally placing them in the highest position. Girls and boys are also shown as socialized differently in depictions of parents and children: "Boys, as it were have to push their way into manhood, and problematic effort

[29] Goffman's text *Gender Advertisements* is here considered to be an example of a practice approach, even though it could be seen as an example of semiotics because he is analysing the meaning of 500 advertising images, and some images that are not advertisements but which advertise gender nevertheless, without any accounts of viewers' interpretations of them. Because this analysis is related to other types of ritualizations in fiction and everyday life, I do not consider it to be semiotic in its nature. Goffman sees images as ritualizing; they have a potential impact on our perception and understanding of the world and everyday rituals. But the analysis points at the importance of analysing how viewer frames are shaped.

[30] *Gender Advertisements* incorporates different aspects of Goffman's earlier texts on rituals in everyday interaction and practices (Goffman 1959; 1963; 1967; 1971) as well as interpretative frames (Goffman 1974). Advertisements and gender can be seen as specific kinds of ritualistic behaviour and connected to certain types of frames (Goffman 1977; 1979 [1976]).

is involved. Girls merely have to unfold" (Goffman 1979 [1976]:38), are the messages of such depictions, according to Goffman; these depictions build on everyday stereotypes of gender differences and enhances them. The theme *ritualized subordination* shows how women are depicted as subordinated with various means, they are placed lower in the image, often lying down on a bed or on the floor, while the man is sitting or standing or is not in the image at all. Children are depicted in relation to parental figures, as women are in relation to men. Submissive postures are more often displayed by women, who may bend their legs, heads or whole bodies to a greater extent than men in advertisements. Women are also more often depicted in manners of childish playfulness or as clown-like. The ways that parents play with their children in real life, are found in advertising images of men and women, where men play with women as if they were children. Men are also often depicted holding their arm around women as if they were their property or helping women do something, in advertisements. This is a hyper-ritualized version of the courtesy rituals between men and women in everyday life, Goffman argues. The last theme, *licensed withdrawal,* indicates that women more than men tend to be depicted as drifting away, looking very emotional, scared, laughing or leaning against men; these postures either indicate a belief that women cannot restrain themselves or cannot take responsibility like men do. These depictions are rooted in the ritualistic relationship between parents and children, placing the woman on the same level as the child. Goffman discusses all of the ritualistic gender makings of everyday life that he argues shape the stereotypes that producers of advertisements and models use as backdrop for the creation of advertising images. Goffman argues that at the same time, depictions of gender relations in advertising images advertise gender itself, and certain expressions of gender, apart from the product. The gender depictions may, as a consequence, enhance everyday life practices of gender.[31]

John Berger's book *Ways of Seeing* consists of ideas about vision, oil paintings and advertisements, and it shows some of the same gender pattern as Goffman's. The general gender pattern in advertisements according to Berger is that:

> [M]en act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.
>
> (Berger 1972:47)

[31] There is no necessity to the doings of gender—the simplified difference and similarities between people in terms of men and women as ideas and in practice—according to Goffman. Nor is there a necessity in the ways gender is done. But because it is *repeatedly* done and because human beings use *rituals in their interactions*, gender is likely to continue being done.

Advertisements are described as being about our dreams and the ways that the individual can change in order for her dreams to become reality (Berger 1972:142). Berger argues that if the fantasies that advertisements provide us with are relevant they will be seen as "credible" by their viewers (1972:146). Moreover, he argues that "[w]e never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves" (Berger 1972:9). I deduce from this that the relationship between the dreams we have about our own future lives and how advertisements present these dreams, is probably important for the ways that advertisements may offend us. If the gap is too wide between the depiction of the advertisement and our own imaginations, and if the advertisement is not able to influence our imagination in its own direction, or if we feel it enhances behaviours that are bad for others, it is a likely assumption that we will feel that the advertisement intrudes in our everyday life, where we also create generalizations of others and they of us.

The depictions of women and men in advertisements have changed since Berger and Goffman wrote their books on the subject, but similar patterns can still be detected without much effort.[32] These recurring patterns of "genderisms" in advertising images do not necessarily mean that viewers interpret and evaluate them in a similarly patterned way. I mention Berger's description of men and women in advertisements, even though his account does not have the theoretical strength of Goffman's, mainly because his simple description is actually an important feature of the criticism towards advertisements today. Much of the criticism of advertisements that ERK (Sweden) receives is about just that: women being depicted as passive objects and men as the doers and viewers, a pattern also pointed out by Goffman. Some of Goffman's other "genderisms" also appear in the complaints, a typical example being men that are portrayed as a bit silly when related to housework products. It will be made clear, however, that gender patterns in images, of the more subtle type that

[32] Susan Bordo implicitly shows that Berger's as well as Goffman's analysis of gender depictions can still be true (1997:197), but she also acknowledges that men have become an object of sexualized nature to a greater extent than before. Goffman is, however, not discussing the obviously sexualized images of women, but rather more subtle depictions of gender, the patterns of which can explain sexualized images as well. Bordo discusses sexualized men in underwear. But there are also other aesthetics of masculinity in advertising such as what has been called the "new man" and the "new lad" (Nixon 1996). Joanne Entwistle has pointed out in her study of male fashion models (2004) that it has been common that more feminine looking male models, i.e. slim, boyish and with original looks are chosen for *editorial fashion* shoots while traditional masculine looking men, with sharp jaw lines and muscles, are chosen for *commercial* advertising images. The commercial advertisements in magazines are more rigidly casted in terms of repeating traditional looks of models than editorials. The same pattern can be seen in terms of dark skin colours on models. Still, today it is difficult to find black women in advertisements in a magazine such as Vogue. This is clear from prestigious Italian Vogue's so called *Black issue* from 2008, in which the editorials were filled with black models. This was a statement because it has been so uncommon. The advertisements of the same magazine depicted almost a hundred percent white people (VOGUE Lug (August) 2008, N. 695), however. The advertising self-regulators in my study do not deal with editorials in their regulation, even though they are seen as advertising by many people.

Goffman shows, are not normally seen as offensive or gender discriminatory by self-regulators.

Discussion of the Practice Approach

I have now discussed some studies of advertising that focus on the practice-based meaning of images. They study producer practices or consumer practices. The studies I have referred to are all based on how meaning is produced, amongst producers or consumers (viewers) of images (or consumer goods), which were studied by interviewing performers of these practices or participating in the practices in order to study them, except a few cases that only take this perspective theoretically. Taken together, these studies focus on people's meaning making in their *normal settings*, which means they get close to the true contexts, the social relations, in which people interpret their world, or they argue that we should. This also separates these studies from the image as text accounts, but also from studies of "experiment" type. Blumer argues that the researcher must study the effect of the media, and aspects of the media (such as advertising), in its natural settings, as opposed to experiment studies in which advertising images are taken out of their everyday life context and tested on groups of people in order to measure their response (e.g. Richmond and Hartman 1982; Severn, Belch and Belch 1990). Such studies do not take the complex context of influences into account that would normally be a part of people's encounter with advertisements.

Natural settings should be understood as constantly undergoing change, where the audiences are interpreting what they see depending on their complex situations, which is quite different from the situations created in experiment settings (Blumer 1998 [1969]:191-194). Because the relations of people and various media are not fixed but varying, the interpretations that the audiences make of their interactions with people, things, institutionalized ideas and the media (including advertising images) must be seen as *processes*. The changing experiences people have of these relations influence the interpretations and evaluations of the advertising images they see. Experiences and interpretations develop in processes and take place prior to any *effect* of a media message or reaction to an advertising image. This means that we cannot take media effects for granted and not study them as isolated phenomena. People see images in relation to other visual impressions and other people, who also make interpretations. In other words, the images do not work as stimuli to a certain response. This is the reason for Blumer to stress a) the importance of giving attention to the processes of interpretation if we are going to understand effects of the media and b) that experiment studies are not sufficiently fruitful for a sociological analysis of effects.

My approach in this study will build on the image as practice approach, including Blumer's approach to how we interpret images, where effects are seen

as processes.[33] But I also develop it, as discussed below. The image as practice approach is chosen because the study is analysing the self-regulators' interpretations of images and other people's interpretations in specific settings and the ways they make decisions. What, then, is the scope of the image as practice approach and what can be added to it? Former researchers within the practice approach have looked at either the producer side or the consumer, but almost only in isolation, apart from the network studies mentioned that have looked at the products and the advertisements and their development in relation to changes in consumer culture. What is missing in these previous studies is the understanding of advertising as an industry which is dependent on actors from the outside such as the (general) public. By focusing on the self-regulatory practices of ethical councils I bring together different actors who make meaning and morals together: advertisers, the public and the self-regulators. This is a meaning production in the practices of everyday life, in the work of the self-regulators. But it is not necessarily just a matter of adding actors who bring a specific world view with them, because of their positions. So how should we conceptualize how people deal with value conflicts?

As we have seen, everyday life theories place the formation of meaning in everyday life practices, either in specialized *fields* or in the so called *lifeworld*.[34] Former conceptualizations of everyday life have neglected to *thoroughly* analyse the reflexive aspects of everyday life in which different ways of evaluating things come into conflict. These reflexive aspects are in other words events in which people do not take a common meaning horizon—the established practices of making meaning or what is valued—for granted. Meaning and evaluating is instead taking shape and may be questioned. Schütz does not show how conflicting world views and idealizations are dealt with (Perinbanayagam 1975:518), nor do Bourdieu, Hebdidge, Goffman or other traditional everyday life theorists in general, which is of crucial importance in the analysis of self-regulation.[35] What is missing is an approach for understanding how people take

[33] A similar idea about how effects are produced is used by Howard S. Becker in his famous study of marihuana users and the effects of drugs (Becker 1973 [1963]; Becker 1986), in which the effect depends on steps of socialization including experiencing and interpreting in relation to other people/social settings. The key idea is that our interpretations and evaluations of images or consumption of a drug is decided in settings, which include other people, concrete but also abstract others as in this study, who help us see new things and interpret and evaluate our own experience. This happens at various steps of a process.

[34] Common meaning is thus created within the frame of a world which we have in common, the lifeworld, and/or within specialized areas of activities that make up fields.

[35] Schütz discusses the crisis of taken-for-grantedness in his account of the stranger who encounters a different culture than he is used to (Schütz 1944). The solution to the problems that confronts the stranger is, however, socialization, i.e. alignment with the group, and not a compromise between differences. This builds on the notion of group belonging with a common horizon of meaning. Schütz points out in the same text that individuals can encompass different value logics, but how they are compromised is not explored, and he does not walk down that line, as people are instead seen as transforming their recipes, i.e. the cultural resources they have and with which they understand others of the same cultural group. (Hebdidge and Goffman have been discussed and Bourdieu will be discussed further in the next chapter.)

into consideration different types of evaluations, being able to combine them and not just aligning with them or moving between them as if physically travelling between spheres or fields. The bases of evaluations may be part of old experience, current or imagined, and this should be acknowledged.

There are, admittedly, studies that have focused on how practitioners of advertising agencies, as a kind of intermediaries, relate to clients and consumers in a reflexive way (e.g. Cronin 2004c; cf. Entwistle 2006, on fashion buyers). Based on interviews with practitioners, Anne Cronin argues that it is in practice difficult for practitioners at agencies to be creative, because they have to adjust to the fact that clients and consumers like what is familiar to them (cf. McFall 2004:75). The practitioners of Cronin's study either rely on their own taste, for the most part as young, male, supposedly hip, consumers (cf. Bourdieu 1984 [1979]; 1993), in the shaping of their advertisements, or they try to pick up trends amongst consumers. Creativity as originality is in practice more a myth than reality in this field of activity. Giving the impression that they have knowledge of consumers is something that they use in order to sell themselves to clients. Focus groups with consumers are also an important ingredient in that work.

Cronin's and other's studies give us a hint of the importance of being able to combine creativity, market values and knowledge about the culture of target groups of advertisements and expectations of clients, in advertising practices and other practices concerning cultural and economic actions (see also e.g. Entwistle 2006; Malefyt and Moeran 2003). They point to the intertwined relationship of production and consumption amongst practitioners.[36] Advertising self-regulators are just like advertising practitioners, who produce advertisements at agencies, consumers of advertising while they are practicing their profession. They also relate to viewers of advertising and an advertising industry. They do not have to sell their work to clients like the advertising practitioners however, but they need to make their existence legitimate in the eyes of the industry[37] as well as the eyes of the (general) public who view the advertising images. The *moral activity* that is performed, I argue, by advertising self-regulators also combines economy and culture, production and consumption. The former studies we have mentioned do not, however, make explicit *what*

[36] In line with this and as already pointed out by the Chicago School sociologist Everett C. Hughes (1984 [1971]:348-354), quoted in the *Introduction*, professional groups are concerned with various "others". Professional groups *often* need to relate to the tastes and morals of people outside their own field of practice. Politicians, advertisers, journalists and corporations of various kinds are examples of this. Self-regulators of various sorts are not the only ones. As I have already pointed out, sociological studies have however tended to focus more and more on the autonomy of professions, i.e. how professionals relate for the most part to their in-group, their colleagues or competitors in a field, as this has been seen as a tendency that has grown stronger in society. A journalist, scientist or an artist, it has been claimed, is relating to what is valued in her field of practice as this is what shapes her own identity and value. But many professions spend a lot of time thinking about how to approach the general public as consumers, students or other types of groups.

[37] That a recently published report from *The Advertising Standards Authority* was called "More effective, efficient, cost-effective and in tune with our stakeholders" (ASA 2010), indicates this.

types of values and evaluations are made by practitioners, and I intend to do so, in my study of advertising self-regulation.[38] Before I explore further the concept of reflexivity, I will now discuss how to conceptualize the public to which the regulators of offensive advertisements relate and try to temporarily define, as the images are judged in accordance with their depictions of the public.

The Public

The public has at least two meanings; it is our common world as well as people in general. Advertisements are per definition public, and they are supposed to reach the larger portion of the general public. They may of course be targeted, either through the choice of media or e.g. by sending advertisements to certain groups of people via mail. This targeting builds on the idea that the general public can be divided into various parts, built on lifestyle and other types of group membership. One may speak of publics to stress the plural nature of the public as people. The ideas of target groups may not always accurately correspond to who sees the advertisements. But how do the self-regulators conceptualize—picture—the public? I argue that analysing the self-regulation of advertisements also means looking at a negotiation of advertisements' status in relation to two aspects of the public: our common world on the one hand and the status of the viewers on the other (cf. Arendt 1998 [1958]; Habermas 1989 [1962]; Hartley 1992; Lippman 1997 [1922]; Livingstone 2005; Livingstone, Lunt and Miller 2006). Our common world, sometimes called the public space, civic sphere or everyday life, is the context of the abstract viewers, to which self-regulators relate. Viewers of the public can be conceptualized by the self-regulators as e.g. citizens, general public, target audiences or consumers. As we are interested in how the decision-makers conceptualize the viewers and their contexts, the concept of the public as space as well as people will be discussed to further frame the approach of this study.

The Public as a Space

Hanna Arendt defines public space as something that will require us to think of the social world also in moral terms: "If the world contains a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal men" (Arendt [1958] 1998: 55). What is more, the public space must give room to a plurality of opinions and perspectives ([1958] 1998: 58). In other words, and as already established: to act in a moral way means considering others (cf. Levinas 1991 [1961], for a radical version of this). In a related fashion, the ideal for Jürgen Habermas is a public sphere in

[38] Cronin points to the important fact that advertising practitioners relate to clients and consumers in a reflexive way. But her study and similar studies do not provide a theory of *how and why* this occurs. We need another type of theory, reflexive to a yet higher degree and more concrete, to conceptualize the intermediary position of advertising self-regulators.

which there is an open discussion between people who are seen as equals and who act for the common good (cf. Livingstone 2005:11). For Arendt and Habermas the public should be a moral space in which everyone has influence and work towards that which is good for the community. This idea is similarly formulated by C. Wright Mills, in terms of how public opinion is shaped if it is to be democratic:

> Public opinion exists when people who are not in the government of a country claim the right to express political opinions freely and publicly, and the right that these opinions should influence or determine the policies, personnel, and actions of their government.
>
> (Mills 1956:309)

To form a real public opinion, according to these theorists, people have to meet face-to-face and interact with each other. They also have to be listened to by other people, so that they collectively can form ideas that will influence politics. When most communication that is accessible to many people today is through the media, it is difficult to form a real public sphere: "The world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only" (Habermas 1989 [1962]:171). Through the use of opinion polls and political propaganda, people become consumers of politics rather than producers of it (Habermas 1989 [1962]:175). Habermas describes the two forms of public opinion that exist today in the public sphere as separate forces that move in different directions; one that can act as a political power through its critique, which is in line with his ideal, and one that is shaped for the sake of publicity (Habermas 1989 [1962]:236). In other words, one type of public opinion shaped through the practices and interactions of people and for them as a collective, and one that is shaped about people by others, concerned with special interests disconnected from that which concerns everyone. Mills has discussed how a mass society has developed in the latter way (Mills 1956:298-324).

The public, as in the notion of a world in common, is in *this study* a place for audiences and morals that are both contested and not, and might not always live up to Arendt's, Habermas' or Mills' ideals. The self-regulators define the public but also relate to it. Self-regulators cannot cover the make-up of our common world in its totality or constantly update its accuracy, I argue, but have to relate to the public in a way that is seen as acceptable by people that live in it. An important part of the self-regulators' work is to create justifiable interpretations of our common world.

The Public as Viewers

The public as people is of interest in this study as potential viewers of advertisements, because these are the people that the self-regulatory bodies relate to. The public is sometimes seen as the general public, which makes up a public mood, as expressed by the advertising self-regulators. These may however be

divided into several moods, such as target groups or cultural groups. We have already discussed that viewers are conceptualized as active by many scholars. For the purpose of analysis, some social theorists have nevertheless conceptualized the viewers as *active* or *not*, because viewers may be different or not always embodying the same level of activity. Active viewers are sometimes called citizens or publics, while passive viewers are sometimes called audiences, consumers or masses. Taking this simplified distinction on board, it has been pointed out by Sonia Livingstone (2005; Livingstone, Lunt and Miller 2006), that it is problematic to separate out audiences from the notion of publics, as well as citizens from consumers, as areas of interests, because all media viewers, regardless of their level of activity, are interesting if we want to understand how interaction in everyday life works and creates patterns of understanding. The viewers of the public as a whole are as a consequence defined as encompassing all of these things, in this study. It is an empirical matter to decide what viewer-types decision-makers relate to. They form in their decision-processes ideas about publics, i.e. how various audiences will relate to images and what effect the images may have on the public.

An example of how the meanings of viewers are shaped is provided by this example from media regulation in the United Kingdom, based on how they are defined in text documents by practitioners. *The Office of Communication* (Ofcom) is the statutory body that regulates broadcast media and communication (i.e. radio and television) in the United Kingdom and it has delegated the regulation of broadcast advertising to *The Advertising Standards Authority* (ASA). Ofcom provides and can withdraw the license of commercial television and radio stations. The organization has formulated documents on their own mission. In the working paper *Citizens and Consumers: Discursive Debates During and After the Communications Act 2003* (Livingstone, Lunt and Miller 2006), the authors show how the notions of *consumer* and *citizen* are central in those texts which define the interests that Ofcom is supposed to protect. The notion of the consumer, the citizen, the public and the audience, are often given different values by the body (Livingstone, Lunt and Miller 2006:9), but sometimes all of these terms are used as equivalents, the authors show (Livingstone, Lunt and Miller 2006:12), or are fused as in the notion of the consumer-citizen. The types of values that are being protected become blurred, when it appears as if the citizen is made into a consumer, not just by the way they are labelled but by the values related to the people Ofcom see themselves as serving. It serves a purpose to make a distinction between types of viewers, such as consumers, audiences and citizens, when different values are connected to them. Speaking of particular types of viewers thus means discussing the values that are given importance.

There is no single force that defines people, such as an advertising system or advertising self-regulation. However, this is a study about self-regulation and its social aspects. No matter how the viewers of advertisements are classified, as the public, the general public, consumers, citizens or audiences for example, what really identifies their meaning *in this study* is how they are conceptualized in the decision-processes by the decision-makers, through the values that are connected to them. This is not all that the public is, but it is the only public that

matters for the outcome of the decision-processes. The decision-makers have to picture the public as *people* as well as a *space* of moral values, as they are mixed; if they provide a justifiable decision, the people of the general public will probably find it acceptable even if this was not something they knew they believed before, or something that their own social group, so to speak, supports. The ways that the audiences of the public are defined by the self-regulators, through the ways that images are interpreted and evaluated, influence, I argue, what evaluations are given power to influence these particular decision-processes. Decisions will be communicated to the advertising industry and the general public as what is seen as generally justified, and not, in advertising images. I am interested in what values are seen as accountable in the decision-processes, as this influence the values and types of public (viewers) that are seen as justified in the public domain. This means that the decision-makers take a reflexive stance towards values, as they have to have a resonance in the unknown public. Because if this I now turn to the concept of reflexivity.

Reflexivity as a Concept and in Practice

Decision-makers relate to people's (subjective) interpretations and try to evaluate whether they are accounts that can be seen as generally held. In order to understand the self-regulation of advertising images, the relationship between conventions and reflexivity in the decision-making is central, as well as how generalizations about the public are made by the decision-makers. This has been shown for the self-regulation of gender discriminatory advertisements in Sweden (Dahlberg 2007) and, despite other differences in the ways that the self-regulation of advertising are organized in the two countries, these are central components of British self-regulation as well.

Two Types of Reflexivity

Former reflexivity theories amongst sociologists are concerned both with stabilization and change, leaning towards one *or* the other aspect of these things. This depends on the theory's stance to *the taken-for-granted*. So-called *Self-reflexivity* has been conceptualized as being about adjustments to current norms, for example of gender, as shown in different ways by e.g. Harold Garfinkel (1984 [1967]), Erving Goffman (1977; 1979 [1976]), Angela McRobbie (2004), as well as Candace West and Don Zimmermann (1987). In these cases, the taken-for-granted is seen as reinstalled—as we are born into a meaning structure socially shaped through history—and naturalized, through acts of repeated rituals. Reflexivity is thus according to those studies and theories conceptualized as ritualization and alignment, stressing the stabilizing aspects of people's doings. This means that reflexivity is not necessarily conceptualized as a radical force (cf. Pollner 1991), which consciously changes the status quo.

However, these ritualistic events may also fertilize a conscious raising reflexivity which questions the taken-for-granted. Understanding reflexivity as conscious raising rather than alignment makes an understanding of change and conflict possible. Reflexivity of that type has been conceptualized as being about questioning the profound constitution of different things, such as a) science, b) the self or c) society (in the shape of e.g. organizations, institutions and systems), and as having a cognitive, aesthetic or ethical dimension (for discussions and accounts on these various aspects of reflexivity, see: Beck 1994; Blumer 1998 [1969]; Giddens 1991; 1994; Lash 1994; Lash and Urry 1994; Wacquant 1992).

Göran Ahrne and Nils Brunsson (2004:47) argue that one reason why soft rules[39] are created is that in mixed social settings, such as large cities, norms have not always been socialized through continuous interaction between people, so silent consensus of ways of doing things cannot be taken-for-granted (cf. Brunsson and Jacobsson 2000). If people need to get along, or decrease uncertainty, soft rules or standards can be a way of coordinating differences. Rule making or the setting of standards is then necessarily a more reflexive process than the socializing of norms. These things are important for the self-regulation of advertising images as well, where the interpretations and evaluations of the images from moral standpoints also require an interpretation of other people's interpretations, primarily in relation to the public, as discussed above.

The "Reflexive Cognition" of Decision-makers

Drawing on my empirical material, the council members at ERK and the ASA make, according to my interpretation of their doings, reflexive decisions about the reflexive interpretations of the general public, as well as the advertisers' justifications. It is a process of bringing back knowledge of others' reflexivity (cf. Lash and Urry 1994) into the decision-process. A process of similar kind is called "institutionalized reflexivity" by Lash and Urry (1994:322; cf. Wacquant 1992:41), and thus combines the repetitive aspects of institutionalization (Connell 1987:141) with change. Taking from Anthony Giddens, Lash and Urry write: "In modernity reflexivity consists of social practices being constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information received about those very practices, thus altering their constitution" (1994:297). The reflexive methods, as we may call them, used by the council member make them aware of, shapes, different stances of interpretation, amongst others and themselves (cf. Berger 1991; Wacquant 1992:37). This means they make accounts of accounts, i.e. we must interpret the decision-makers' interpretations of other people's interpretations of advertising images.

The decision-makers interpret and evaluate whether images are justified or not, which includes *the other,* i.e. people of the public whom the decision-makers do not know or the knowledge of which is uncertain. This means that we need

[39] A "soft" rule is a guideline that is open for change and not as authoritative as a rule.

to take into account a kind of reflexivity amongst individuals which implies that people can look beyond what is taken-for-granted amongst family, friends and colleagues (Boltanski and Thévenot 2000), i.e. beyond the concrete others (Mead 1934:135-164) with which they are *familiar,* which they engage in frequent everyday interactions and with whom they, as a consequence, develop a common understanding, as they are more likely to share a horizon of meaning.

Decision-makers reflexively put together various interpretations from the situation that they are in when they make a decision. These are interpretations that generally clash. This means we must take into account the possible "critical capacity" of people (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999); amongst decision-makers, advertisers and the public in this study. The focus is however on the critical capacity of the decision-makers, who in their turn conceptualize the critical capacity amongst the public and industry players. Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot write:

> If we want to take seriously the claims of actors when they denounce social injustice, criticize power relationships or unveil their foes' hidden motives, we must conceive of them as endowed with an ability to differentiate legitimate and illegitimate ways of rendering criticism and justifications. It is, more precisely, this competence which characterizes the ordinary sense of justice which people implement in their disputes.
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:364)[40]

They also need to provide a decision that will be evaluated by others and as such be seen as justified. The decision-makers evaluate the critique from complainants and the justifications formulated by the advertisers. They may not always find them justified, but their work is about handling and judging other people's "sense of justice" and "sense of "injustice", as well as to executing this competence themselves. But how do they do this? I propose that we conceptualize this as a "reflexive cognition" (Stark 2009: 19, 184-187) related to different morals. During the course of this study, the conceptualizations of reflexivity have emerged as useful, building on the idea of institutionalized reflexivity, but taken further by the described ideas of justification.

I have now argued that a reflexivity focused and practice based study on advertising and self-regulation is needed, and that the conceptualization of reflexivity departs from theories on the taken-for-granted but also from some already

[40] Lash criticizes reflexivity accounts by scholars for sometimes being taken too far. He writes: "just how 'reflexive' is it possible for a single mother in an urban ghetto to be?" (Lash 1994:120). His critique is not directed towards the reflexivity of Boltanski and Thévenot, but towards the developed ideas about self-reflexivity in the texts of Beck and Giddens. The critical capacity that we should take into account here, in this study, does not imply that people are completely free from constrains. It does mean however that we cannot assume that single mothers or others accept their positions and the values related to them and take them as generally held. They do not necessarily make virtues out of necessities, i.e. learn to prefer what is possible for them, nor do they necessarily make virtues out of the dominating society's evaluation of them. Their cognitive and evaluative capacity reach wider than that. They are reflexive in their ability to evaluate things in relation to *different logics* of evaluation.

existing studies that look at reflexive practices of producing advertising. Drawing on the empirical material, the self-regulators try to conceptualize how the images will affect the public and what the public will think and feel. Given this, group norms may be taken into account, but the reason for doing so may rest on more generally held morals. This implies that the decision-makers cannot simply relate to and align with the viewers as entities belonging to established group values or community values (as in the notion of generalized other: Mead 1934; reference group: Merton 1957 [1949], cf. Turner 1956; social worlds: Strauss and Corbin 1997), because this *in itself* would not create justified decisions.[41] The decision-makers thus relate the validity of the accounts of complainants and advertisers, as well as all other things they take into account, to what they believe the general public may think and feel about the advertising image, i.e. what critical accounts can be justly made. In conclusion, the reason why reflexivity of this type is such a crucial part of this study is that advertising needs to communicate with a larger public. The generalizations that decision-makers make of who constitutes the public need to be constantly updated, because they are seen as changing with current events in the public domain. Values may be organized as more or less generally held logics rather than tied to groups.

The traditional reflexivity stemming from phenomenology and pragmatism rests on the idea of affiliation with social groups. Phenomenology and pragmatism have developed similar views on reflexivity as it is situated or related to becoming a situated subject of specific type or aligning with a concrete context. The reflexivity of Boltanski and Thévenot used in this study departs from these views by being more transcendental. It has however its roots in both strains of thought, as people are reflexive in relation to conventions of what is worthy, conventions that are entities historically shaped by people in the practices of everyday life, but which are given relevance according to a setting which may be variously defined.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the meanings of images have been argued as depending on the practices of people as well as their interpretations. As this study analyses the interpretative practices of advertising self-regulatory decision-makers it is what *they* take into account in their decision-processes that are crucial. The meanings

[41] Generalized others are defined as group norms, sub-group norms or community norms according to Mead, which individuals relate to and align with at a given moment (Mead 1934:152-164). Social worlds can be viewed as coming into conflict with each other (Strauss and Corbin 1997:70). However, people are in such disputes seen as involved as representatives of word views rather than critical of the ones they belong to. Decision-makers in advertising self-regulation need to make decision based on more widely held bases of justification. Reference groups are also groups with specific norms, or varieties of norms, tied to them, with which people may identify and align or which they may repel (Merton 1957 [1949]:298-384). This in itself is important, but we should in contrast understand the bases of values as shaped without being tied to groups.

of the images depend on the empirical nature of the decision-processes. Drawing on the empirical material, decision-makers relate to the following things when they make decisions: the written codes, routines of handling the complaints worked out by the organizations, individual dispositions amongst decision-makers to find certain images unacceptable, as well as various actors that make accounts in the decision-process about how images are understood; such as complainants, advertisers and publishers/broadcasters. Partly because of the written codes, the self-regulators in cases of offence or gender discrimination will relate their accounts to how they think the general public, sometimes in the shape of women in general, men in general or target groups, will evaluate the advertisement. But this is also something that must be done, I argue, if they are to create justifiable decisions. The exact implementation of codes is, moreover, decided in situations. Relating to all of these aspects is seen as *a reflexive activity* and the study aims at understanding what types of possibly stable entities are parts of ordering these practices and what the end results is of the reflexive handling of these entities.

In order to reach a decision about whether an advertising image is acceptable, the self-regulators reflexively take the various mentioned aspects into account. Reflexivity varies depending on what the reflexivity is directed towards. Reflexivity has been conceptualized as, on the one hand, an act of adjustment to norms and on the other, a conscious movement of the reflecting individual among different meanings of a situation. In this study, reflexivity is a concept that focuses on the second meaning, that conventions cannot be taken-for-granted and are not necessarily adjusted to. My definition of reflexivity is the following: Reflexivity is a *movement* of the interpreting individual between some types of conventions or *stable entities* that can be related to in a conscious and critical way, but which ones will count are *collectively decided* in a process.[42] What the conventions are may differ, but I will argue for a specific theory on the relationship between conventions and reflexivity, which is suitable for analysing the decision-making of the advertising self-regulators. This is because they relate to the (general) public, first and foremost, and various interpretations of how the people of the public will react to images.

In the regulatory practices of the ASA and ERK, the images become symbols of relationships between people and things, which are judged as being offensive, e.g. gender discriminatory, or not. It is the interpretation of the image that is evaluated. At the same time, modes of evaluation influence the way that images are interpreted. The matter of offensiveness is of course a matter of degree, rather than a question of either or, as an advertisement may be objectifying but not to such a degree that it has to be banned. As some aspects or levels of offensiveness will often be disregarded, this means the decision must be justifiable, nevertheless, when weighing different moral aspects together. In order to understand organized self-regulatory activities, which in this study are

[42] As students of a phenomenon we cannot take for granted that actions can be explained through what is taken-for-granted in everyday life. People may instead be contemplating what their everyday world is made of.

seen as processes of interpretive and classifying work, we need a theory that incorporates change through reflexivity as well as how the uncertainty of changing interpretative patterns can be ordered, i.e. handled by the self-regulators.

In sum, this chapter has discussed the meaning making of images and the public and argued for a practice based and reflexive stance, i.e. one which includes an active viewer who is able to take various aspects into account. In the following chapter, we discuss the ways that the self-regulatory bodies deal with moral judgements in relation to the public, which suggests a theory that incorporates the problem, of how the uncertainty of changing interpretative patterns can be ordered, by capturing what values are connected to the generalized publics that are shaped in the decisions of the self-regulators. I argue that by using the theory of "worlds of worth", developed by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006 [1991]), we will be able to analyse the different definitions of people in general by connecting them, to different modes of evaluations, if and when they are used in the decision-process. The world of worth approach, which I use in this study, makes possible an understanding of conflicting perspectives and interpretations. I will develop how it does so in the next chapter.

3. Theory: Worlds of Worth in Advertising Self-Regulation

This chapter discusses theories on values and morals and outlines the theory mainly deployed in this study, the theory of moral conventions by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot. Sociologists have largely explained the variation of morals by the differing practices of specific groups, mostly based on profession (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]; Durkheim 1992 [1957]; Engels 1978 [1878]). According to Durkheim, the professional group should regulate itself morally, as a complement to the moral regulation of the state (Durkheim 1992 [1957]; see also Ruonavaara 1997). This is because a professional ethics corresponds to the interests and mode of the group in a much better way than the state can accomplish. Such regulation would not be too far from the practice of individuals as they are already socialized into the specific conscience of the group. As a consequence, this specialized form of regulation would advance the solidarity within groups. Durkheim's idea might sound like a description of how self-regulation of industrial branches would work, but I argue that the self-regulation of advertising does not build on this premise.

Although I have already used the terms interchangeably, I will discuss definitions of the concepts ethics, morality and morals, for the sake of clarifying how they are related to each other in this study. Morals have been described as a general term about evaluations of the good and bad, while moralities are different standards of how things ought to be (Durkheim 1973:175; Lee 1928). According to the mentioned definition, morals and morality are both un-reflexive conduct, while ethics is the organized reflecting about these conducts. Bourdieu distinguishes between ethos and ethics, where ethos is in our dispositions, the habitus, and ethics is the explicitly stated versions of what is good and bad; ethics is "a systematic morality" (1993 [1984]:86), implying a close connection between ethos and the notion of morality. Lee makes the same type of distinction, claiming that ethics is "ordered, systematic, critical, rational investigation and reflection" over un-reflexive morals (Lee 1928:456). I will use these notions differently, as will be described.

In what ways are the decisions of the advertising self-regulators connected to these notions of ethics and morals? The self-regulators make moral judgements about the acceptability of the advertising content, related to the justifications of advertisers and interpretations of viewers. What kind of moralities they draw on in the decision-process is an empirical question. Moralities will here be seen as conventionalized entities of what is good (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]). At the empirical level, advertising self-regulators make use of ethical

codes, but as written texts they have no clear meaning before they are interpreted and implemented in their context. As morals are shaped in practice, I study ethics in practice. In the interpretation of the ethical codes of the self-regulatory bodies, the self-regulatory activity involves a more reflexive version of the concept of morals/ethics than the one described above, drawing implicitly on various conventionalized moralities. This means that the reflexive evaluations cannot be explained as being the mirror of the decision-makers' ethos. Norms, ethos, habitus, and such entities develop socially without having to be generally justified (see e.g. Hechter and Opp 2001). But the professional group of advertisers cannot regulate themselves morally in that manner, i.e. create a professional ethics by relating only to the taken-for-granted interest of the group, that makes up its ethos. If regulators want to make justified decisions, which they say they do, it means taking the unknown public into account. This means that the advertising self-regulators are reflexively relating to various moralities, which are more universally recognized, rather than those connected to specific groups or spheres.

From Specialized to Critical Plurality

Ethics is constructed in human practice and depends on the various social settings in which people find themselves (cf. Aristotle 1998 [circa 340 BC]; Bourdieu 1984 [1979]:44-50; Bourdieu 1998 [1994]:141-145; MacIntyre 1984; Nietzsche 1998 [1886]:109-130; van Hooft 2006:107). This is an old claim that stems primarily from Aristotle and has developed within virtue ethics and it means that values takes shape through ongoing practices in societies. The practices in which ethics are constructed are often conceptualized as relying on the logics of one amongst several value spheres in societies (Alexander 2006; Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]; Simmel 1981:55-62; Walzer 1984; Weber 1991 [1948]). Weber, for example, separates the social world in the following spheres (of ethics): the economic, the political, the aesthetic, the erotic and the intellectual (Weber 1991 [1948]:323-359). He argues that each of these originate from the religious sphere and after having become autonomous, often clash with the values represented by religion, or with each other. The focus in Weber's theory is, however, more on how the worlds evolve and become separated and autonomous than how they can be *combined*.[43]

Apart from the mentioned sphere theories, the practices in which ethics are constructed have also been seen as shaped in fields and similar separated and specialized areas of value logics of everyday life. The relationship between advertising images and everyday life, as basis for how we understand each other and the world, is an important part of analysing the interpretative processes of self-regulation. Everyday life theories have the everyday interaction between people as their focus (cf. Adler, Adler and Fontana 1987; Caughey 1982). The

[43] Simmel, Walzer and Alexander's uses of value spheres do not solve the problem of *combination* either.

ongoing interaction between people in everyday life has created organizations, institutions, rules or rituals, which shape our way of understanding and controlling each other and the world. As a consequence, we may, for example, internalize a morality from a certain society (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]; 1990 [1980]; 1973; 1984 [1893]; Durkheim 1992 [1957]). *Everyday life* is where the possibility for shared meanings in a social world is made (Berger and Luckmann 1991 [1966]; Garfinkel 1984 [1967]). The same potential of making shared values and understandings is attributed to the notion of *the public realm/the common*, as discussed by Hannah Arendt (1998 [1958]) as well as the notion of *the lifeworld* (Habermas 1990 [1983]; Husserl 1970 [1954]; Schütz 1962; 1967 [1932]). Everyday life clearly creates *shared* understanding, but it also encompasses *distinctions*. People create different grounds for understanding within distinct groups (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]; Goffman 1974; 1977; 1979 [1976]; Schütz 1944; Simmel 1971 [1908]-b), boundaries conceptualized by these sociologists in terms of fields, habitus, recipes, frames and rituals.[44] But despite the plurality of cognitive outlooks, these viewpoints never seem to be able to co-exist. There are processes of socialization, alignment and clashes, but no compromises.

The combination of values is crucial in situations when a person cannot justify her actions by relating them to one conventional way of doing things, the taken-for-granted (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999; 2000). We need a theory that is not only about specialization but about fusion as well. In relation to the individual, the old dichotomy between universal theory and plural theory must be dissolved in favour of a *universal plurality*. Sometimes it is necessary to relate, on the individual level, different evaluative modes to each other, such as in advertising self-regulation. In sum, in this study, we move from Weber's idea of conflicting values and the studies of how culture, aesthetics, ethics and the economy are entwined within the logics of fields, mentioned in the previous chapter, to a study of the more *specific* ways in which ethical/moral aspects of a cultural economy such as advertising come into conflict and how these conflicts are compromised in processes of decision-making. The sociology of morals that will be described is not normative but theorizes the values and virtues shaped in everyday life, which are related to standards of what is seen as good.

Regimes, Worlds and Critical Moments

Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot are two of the founders and major figures of the French economics of convention school, which analyses conventions of (economic) actions in relation to uncertainty and critique (see Jagd 2007, for an overview).[45] This line of thought has also been labelled pragmatic sociology

[44] Bourdieu develops the idea of autonomous fields of activities with a dominating value within each field, the doxa, and people position themselves within fields in terms of habitus groups inhabiting certain tastes.

[45] As Jagd writes, Richard Swedberg and David Stark are amongst those who have pointed out the relevance of these theories for economic sociology, i.e. sociological studies of economic actions. I use this theory for actions that are not economic transactions but which are

(Bénatoül 1999; Silber 2003; Thévenot 2001c). It had its start in the 1980's but developed primarily in the 1990's. The two labels, convention school and pragmatic sociology, are important as they together best show what this theory is about. Their pragmatic heritage can most visibly be traced to George Herbert Mead's writings on sympathy and how this reflexive ability is connected to economic relations of buyers and sellers (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:60-61; Mead 1934). In line with pragmatism, Boltanski and Thévenot stress that the importance of general principles is decided in the situation.[46] Their theory is not, however, a micro-sociology in the same way as traditional everyday life sociology.

Everyday life theories centre on the taken-for-granted; how it is created and how people relate to its objectified versions. In everyday life, we order our doings in relation to what we think other people can understand, depending on context. Gender is one of those schemata that seem to be useful in almost any situation, in order to interact with others (Garfinkel 1984 [1967]; Goffman 1977; Goffman 1979 [1976]; West and Zimmerman 1987). Based on this observation, Erving Goffman argues that gender depictions in advertisements are a condensed version of the gender images we give off and gender rituals we repeat, in everyday life (Goffman 1979 [1976]). In other words, the advertisers make use of this conventionalized behaviour (cf. Bourdieu 2005:55). In parallel to this, Bourdieu writes: "a critic can only 'influence' his readers insofar as they grant him this power because they are structurally attuned to him in their view of the social world, their tastes and their whole habitus" (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]:240). This also mirrors the advertising world's idea of target readers and viewers in the ways they try to pin down their preferences through market research or through storing information about previous choices of consumption and information, implying that people are happy with, rather than critical of, their positions. One example of this is the kind of advertising on the Internet that is adjusted to the tastes and preferences a person seems to have by the previous choices, in terms of clicks or buys, she has made. Goffman proposes that if we analyse how advertisers and models create a scene in an advert, we can learn a lot about the scenes of everyday life, not that these scenes mirror

organized in order to evaluate evaluations of advertising images, commercial features of the public sphere and entities with established features of both economic and cultural value, and which arguably are justified and criticized in various ways.

[46] Pragmatism is a philosophical perspective that developed with Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and others (Dewey et al. 1917; James 1978 [1907, 1909]; Mead 1934). Its main concept is that reality is what appears to be useful for us in our everyday doings. The idea of thinking into the future is also important. It departs from phenomenology (see e.g. Beauvoir 1997 [1949]; Benhabib 1992; Heinämaa 2003; Husserl 1962 [1913]; Merleau-Ponty 1964; Schütz 1953, and phenomenologically inspired sociologists such as Bourdieu 1990) by being more focused on the meanings that appear in a situation and their consequences rather than inherited meaning structures of how things are usually, or the self as firmly situated by its position. As shown by Boltanski and Thévenot, this does not have to imply that pragmatism is devoid of historically shaped social structures. Additionally, both personal and more abstract versions of subjects may be addressed.

each other, but they build upon each other. The ways that advertising images are made build on the rituals and conventions of everyday life.

The habitus will reproduce itself according to Bourdieu's theory and as a consequence the theory does not take into account the *actual empirical critique* against advertising images' depictions of different groups. Instead of following a certain gender pattern for instance, complainants criticize the visualization of predictable patterns in people's actions that threaten to preserve the status quo. And as a consequence, the critique from the public makes a lack clear, between key ideas of everyday life theories such as Bourdieu's theory of group formation and Goffman's ritualized typifications on the one hand and the existence of reflexive critique on the other. Everyday life theories do not take into account that people (not only scientists) do not always passively agree with the taken-for-granted meanings, but may reflect upon what our possible evaluative horizon is made of and how various aspects of our cultures, such as advertisements, affect that horizon. The self-regulators relate to both of these social processes, conventions and (critical) reflexivity, and align with both. The advertising self-regulators try to apply the typifications that the (general) public makes, to interpret and understand the advertising image, just like the producers of advertising according to Goffman, but they also need to take into account the more critically reflexive aspects of everyday understandings among the (general) public, otherwise they cannot justify their existence. In this *double-reflexive* way, the self-regulators relate to the audiences of the advertisements in their decision-making.

The theory of Boltanski and Thévenot on justification departs from traditional everyday life sociology by being focused on processes that lead to justified actions and it is also focused on principles of justification that may transcend specific situations (Silber 2003:429). The key here is the idea of transcendence, which is essential for reflexivity of moralities. To put it simply, they connect logics of evaluation, spheres of value, to the interaction level rather than seeing morals as moulded by fields, identities, or other group affiliations. A consequence is that the individual is seen as more reflexive, than with e.g. Bourdieu.

According to this theory, conflict situations consist of clashes between different modes of evaluation, which require reflexivity on the part of the decision-makers. This means that Boltanski and Thévenot have developed a theoretical framework that takes both collective conventions and individual reflexivity of decision-making into account (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999; Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]; Thévenot 2001b; Thévenot 2007b). They formulate a theory that makes explicit the types of conventionalized moralities that people use universally, i.e. not only within the specific areas of activity from which they, the moralities, originate. Conventions and reflexivity are connected in their theory by the fact that people decide, in relation to the specific situation they are in, which historically and collectively shaped moralities are applicable. The situation cannot be objectively defined by social position. Instead, by analysing situations of disputes we will understand why certain judgements are made (Jagd 2007; cf. MacIntyre 1984:164).

The empirical cases studied can be described as in the *regime of justification* (Thévenot 2001c; 2007b), which means that the morals employed and ethics/moralities prescribed must be related to *the common* rather than specialized groups or fields, or autonomous spheres. Thevenot points out that people act in this regime, as opposed to what he calls "the regime of familiarity" and "the regime of regular planning" (Thévenot 2001c:67-71), when we do not know the people in relation to whom we want to justify our actions. The morality principles of this regime are called *worlds of worth* (divided into six logics: market, industrial, inspired, fame, domestic and civic) and I use these in the analysis of advertising self-regulation in order to understand which types of people, relations and things are seen as valued. In the worlds of worth, things, actions, relations and types of subjects are more or less worthy; More or less worthy *subjects* may e.g. be: the well brought up, persons of means, poor people, experts, creative people, fathers and unmarried. Whether they are worthy or not depends on the world of worth used to interpret, evaluate and justify the situation. In advertising self-regulation, the critique from a member of the public delivers a clash between different worlds of worth from the start, between advertisers and complainant, because the complainant criticize the type(s) of value(s) the image represent(s). Complainants, advertisers and decision-makers are not usually aware of using the particular worlds of worth as bases for their evaluations, but I argue in this study that they are nevertheless the bases of their reasoning. The complainant may for example find that an advertising image undermines a good upbringing of children. In the Swedish organization, the complainant does not need to have a specified justification herself, but then the decision-makers will find one, if there is one related to their specific area of concern. The decision-makers then have to create a justified decision, by relating the concrete complaint to the public. They must ask themselves if the critique is justified. The ASA will generally relate their decision-making to ideas about more culturally diverse viewers. Because of this dynamic character of the empirical cases, they can be theoretically conceptualized as what Boltanski and Thévenot call "critical moments" (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:359-360; cf. Thévenot 2001b: 411, on "critical uncertainty"). These critical moments are defined as encompassing more than one evaluation mode that needs to be combined into compromises. The theory of worlds of worth contains the whole (potential) process of movement from conflict to compromise (but not necessarily consensus) and from crisis to agreement, which suits the processes of decision-making that are studied here. David Stark (2009), however, pointed out that a compromise is not a necessary end result.

Boltanski and Thévenot have developed their theory in relation to and as a critique of Bourdieu (Boltanski and Thévenot 2000:211-212; Silber 2003:435, 442; Thévenot 2001c:66; Thévenot 2004); they point this out implicitly and explicitly in several texts, by criticizing the idea of taken-for-grantedness, the bodily embedded habitus and using group belonging as the basis of analysing possible agreements between people, which are key ideas of Bourdieu's work. In order to make a more detailed description of the differences which are relevant for this study, I will consequently first show how Boltanski and

Thévenot's theory departs from Bourdieu's, based on my own reading of Bourdieu, and then describe their theory and how it will be used. As Bourdieu's theory is also more widely known, it will also enable some clarification of the theory of Boltanski and Thévenot. Bourdieu's theory is, however, based on similar premises as other everyday life theories, all of them more or less reproducing the idea of people's socialization into group values. This means that Boltanski and Thévenot's theory is in effect a critique of them as well. We will, however, not reject everyday life *per se* by using the theory on worlds of worth; we will just conceptualize it, and its connection to value formation differently.

Justification Theory beyond Bourdieu

In order to understand the social shaping of cognition and classification, which advertising self-regulation is arguably about, Bourdieu's theory may seem appropriate to turn to as he has developed such a rich social explanation for how the cognitive structures of people and social structures are shaped by each other. He shows how value spheres such as economy and culture, ethics and aesthetics are entrenched in fields and cultivate the cognitions of individuals depending on their position. However, Boltanski and Thévenot give us a different *base* than fields and habitus to explain how individuals interpret and evaluate the world. Individuals' cognitive processes are more reflexive and critical, than in Bourdieu's account, and incorporate an ability to relate to a wider range of others as well as themselves when evaluating the world. I argue as a consequence that the theory of Boltanski and Thévenot offers a better understanding of the cognitive aspects of advertising self-regulation.

According to Bourdieu, the unity of a group or a person's character is the habitus, which has been formed by the social conditions around it, the relations within a field. The habitus structures the tastes of different groups, their ways of seeing and interpreting the world (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]; 1984 [1979]; 1990 [1980]; 2005). The taken-for-granted is shaped in the common sense world, as well as specialized by fields; Bourdieu puts it in the following way:

> Habitus are generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices – what the worker eats, and especially the way he eats it, the sport he practices and the way he practices it, his political opinions and the way he expresses them are systematically different from the industrial owner's corresponding activities. *But habitus are also classificatory schemes, principles of classification, principles of vision and divisions, different tastes. They make distinctions between what is good and what is bad, between what is right and what is wrong,* between what is distinguished and what is vulgar, and so forth, but the distinctions are not identical. Thus, for instance, the same behaviour or even *the same good* can appear distinguished to one person, pretentious to someone else, and cheap or showy to yet another…the main idea is that to exist within a social space, to occupy a point or to be an individual within a social space, is to differ, to be different.
>
> (Bourdieu 1998 [1994]:8-9, my emphasis)

Whether we adjust easily or not to a social setting or feel a natural part of it depends, according to Bourdieu, on our habitus. The habitus is developed in fields, but in a hierarchical manner, and encompasses our sense of ethics, what is good or bad. The habitus simultaneously belongs to a field as well as to individuals of that field. There are distinctions between classes within a field, e.g. the field of cultural consumption (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]), or between artists within the field of art production (e.g. Bourdieu 1993). The classes take their shape as clusters around certain social positions within the field. Fields are also connected through the habitus, and are homologous that way. This means fields do not come into conflict in practical everyday life. For example: the avant-garde, i.e. innovative, artist will have a specific position in the art field, with a lot of cultural capital and often little economic capital, which is equivalent to her position in the field of cultural consumption in which she will consume other avant-garde artist's work and buy avant-garde clothes, food and music that are acceptable within this group of people. The avant-garde gains its value because it rejects mass culture and instead forms an elitist group of new rare knowledge, taste and performance. Avant-garde is the opposite of low, popular culture.

In *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984 [1979]:44-45) analyses how different social classes interpret an image of a woman's pair of worn out hands. The 'lower' classes tend to judge the image for what the hands are in a concrete form and judge them as terribly deformed, that they must hurt, that they are the effects of hard work, etc. The hands are seen as ugly but the work they represent is the visualization of a virtue in these groups. The 'higher' classes tend instead to make references to abstract things, such as art, paintings, novels and photographs, which are aesthetic judgements. The hands then become works of art and nothing they identify with as such. The lower classes *feel* the hands and relate them to *concrete experiences*, while the higher classes distance themselves from them by seeing them as *abstract symbols*, related to their *theoretical knowledge*. This is how the habitus gives us different cognitive references, according to Bourdieu, which will make us understand and judge things we see differently. Howard S. Becker argues somewhat similarly that the initiated art audience—the professional or person educated in the field—can recognize to a greater extent the art of everyday features such as walking and running, while the everyday audience of laypersons that have learned about conventions for what is art as opposed to ordinary things will look for more conventional signs of art, which they have learned about as members in society in general (Becker 1982:50). In a similar vein, the working class habitus prevents people from enjoying service in restaurants, because they cannot distance themselves from the service activities (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]:374). Persons embody singular logics of values and evaluations, i.e. they are of one position at a time and may clash with people of other position bound logics. An individual does not encompass non-homologous value logics, because she is completely formed by previous experiences *of socialization with no return*. This means that people have their habitus as a cognitive frame, and do not bring with them previously-held positions or evaluative modes not currently related to their habitus.

The individual incorporates the structured nature of the field into her habitus. We are socialized into a cognitive scheme that we share with others and which creates a common sense world (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]:468). This world can be represented by the state (Bourdieu 1998 [1994]:46, 52-58), which gives the people of one nation common frames for perception. The social setting we share with a larger group is, however, also split into specialized fields, with their own logics (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]:469). As a consequence of this, Bourdieu argues that cognitive structures are "dispositions of the body" (Bourdieu 1998 [1994]:54). The cognitive structures become a part of our habitus and it is with this embodied taste that we also classify others (Bourdieu 1998 [1994]:53). According to Richard Jenkins, Bourdieu's notion of field can be summed up in the following way: "Each field, by virtue of its defining content, has a different logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance which is both the product and producer of the habitus which is specific and appropriate to the field" (Jenkins 2002 [1992]:84). Individuals' transitions between fields and what then happens to their habitus are not clear, however (cf. Jenkins 2002 [1992]:90).

What is missing in Bourdieu's theory is an understanding of how our classificatory schemes can have layers, and that they may be imagined, and/or include other people's interpretations, and how we may move between these layers in our reflexion and judgement. This means we can encompass several fields in one situation, to use Bourdieu's vocabulary, and that our moral characters as individuals (or within groups) are not necessarily tied to one coherent habitus. And we do not always only occupy one social space at a time, which determines our cognition of the world; it is this possibility of moving outside of particular positions that gives room for reflexivity.

In a critical account of Bourdieu's work, King argues that the idea of the habitus is not consistent with Bourdieu's own ideas on practice as interactive processes in which we relate to other people: "the habitus ensures that the individual will inevitably act according to the logic of the situation. The origin of individuals' actions lies not in their interaction with other individuals but in the objective structures which confront them. It is to those structures, the *opus operatum*, not to others, to whom they must now defer" (King 2000:423). Bourdieu's theory of the field implies that there is a coherent logic within specific settings that determines people's cognition, rather than people's action shaping the field. In a field, people can distinguish themselves from others by the clothes they wear, etc., implying that there are differences between the positions in the field, but the distinctions always fall within a single dominating logic of a field. This is not unproblematic. Even if we have, as individuals, a bodily inscribed habitus, we will get into settings where there is a mixture of possible grounds for justifications and where it is not clear what the best ethics is. As a consequence, the plurality of ethics and/or evaluation grounds cannot be conceptualized as existing separately, side by side, as with Bourdieu's idea of fields, because it means that we are only confronting one field at a time. If a person exists in several fields, according to Bourdieu, the positions of the individual are homologous to each other. Instead, they must be understood as

mixed, at least at some instances of social activity. In relation to Bourdieu's theory of the habitus, the self-regulators can be seen as examples of the fact that the habitus does not operate so rigidly, and that people are more reflexive than he argues.

"The feel for the game" that Bourdieu (e.g. 1998 [1994]:80) writes about is not enough for the self-regulators of advertising when they decide if an image is ethical or not, if by feel for the game we mean an embodied idea of how "to do things right" within the advertising industry. This is what Bourdieu would call ethos (1993 [1984]:86).[47] Complainants have to agree on the fact that advertisements exist; the self-regulators do not question the entire system of advertising. They do work for the benefit of the advertising industry. But, despite this, the ethics considered cannot, I argue, rely on "the feel for the game" among the decision-makers, or for that matter within the industry itself. Things that are valued amongst the decision-makers within the organizations or the types of images that are valued in the industry, because they make decision-makers or advertising producers more valuable, can come into conflict with other ideas of what are ethical images. People's embodied senses of ethics are to be conceptualized differently.

According to Bourdieu, an ethical position in a field is created in relation to other ethical positions in the same field (1993 [1984]:144-145). This means that both ethos and ethics are tied to position. Boltanski and Thévenot, in contrast, argue that we cannot explain conflicts between values only by referring people to positions in one field with its more or less objective relations. They suggest instead that:

> The same persons have, on the same day and in the same social space, to use different devices for assessment, including the reference to different kinds of worth, when they shift from one situation to another...Situations close to each other in space and time are justified according to different principles. And the same persons have to move through those situations.
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:369)

To conclude; when we analyse certain aspects of the social world, such as the self-regulatory decision-processes, the situation and the evaluation principles that it requires may be more central than social group defined as social position (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:365; Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:128; Thévenot 2007c:236).[48] The theory suggests that cognition does not reproduce the patterns of a social group in a straightforward sense, as if connected to a

[47] Ethos is "morality made flesh" (1993 [1984]:86, cf Bourdieu 1977:94-95). As a consequence ethos is the ethical part of the habitus. Ethos differs from ethics in that ethics is "an intentionally coherent system of explicit principles" (1993 [1984]:86).

[48] The use of worlds of worth can happen consciously or unconsciously, but deviates from the unconscious use of ethos, as theorized by Bourdieu. The study subjects can contemplate various moral effects and be critical towards some of them in a situation. The worlds of worth are however theoretical constructs. People use equivalents of the entities of the theory in their practice, if it is a valid theory, but will not always be clear about what world of worth they are supporting and criticizing.

certain position in one field of relations; instead, the various modes of coordination of information that are made available in a specific situation are more central (Thévenot 2001b:407). But the importance of *conventionalized* worlds of worth depends on the fact that one cannot rely on the shaping of an evaluative logic from scratch depending on situation; there are modes of evaluation that have developed historically and which are potentially part of our value horizons. Nor can one restrict oneself to the taken-for-granted of specific groups. To make justified claims and decision, those involved have to take into account more general principles of justice. This may be especially important when dealing with something as general as advertising images.

Worlds of Worth

In their book *On Justification* (2006 [1991]), Boltanski and Thévenot describe six worlds of worth, or "principles of evaluations" as others have called them (Stark 2000:3). These can be in conflict but there can also be compromises based on them. As stated, the worlds of worth are called: the inspired, the domestic, the civic, the market, the industrial world of worth and the world of fame/opinion. They can be seen as stable in the sense that they can be referred to as grounds for justifying evaluations. An important point that Boltanski and Thévenot make in their book is that the market polity (world of worth) does not represent all economic actions; instead, economic relations consist of at least the market and the industrial polity (2006 [1991]:193-194). What is more, all of the worlds are dependent on common judgement, i.e. judgements by laymen of the everyday world. The theory of different worlds of worth shows that the common good—and thus a moral basis for doing something—can be justified in different ways, connected to different modes of evaluations, and there is an intricate connection between what is good and how the world can be defined. The different orders of what is good have been established historically and more or less universally.

These six worlds have been generated by Boltanski and Thévenot by studying three types of data, which they have collected (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:365-369). The first is disputes appearing in everyday life (on an interaction level) collected together with graduate students. In these instances, they saw a pattern of evaluation principles (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:4-6), which they then looked for in their second piece of data: classical philosophical texts.[49] They claim that although people in general do not read these texts, the

[49] Boltanski and Thévenot construct so-called "polities" based on the thinking of six philosophers. They are called polities because they are able to incorporate worth of particular types and the common good at the same time (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:77-78). The polities are turned into current worlds of worth by relating the historically developed ideas by philosophers to current types of people, actions and things as they are described and evaluated in handbooks. A polity and world of worth of the same name imply the same mode of evaluation. Boltanski and Thévenot's theory is basically about how individuals are connected to one or several common goods, represented by these worlds of worth. The idea

evaluation principles represented by them can be found embodied in everyday life, e.g. in the media and everyday practices. The third piece of data consisted of handbooks on good behaviour in modern companies.[50] They selected handbooks that could represent the evaluation logics they had already established in order to generate a more complete and *concrete* picture of what the different worlds consist of, pinning down their differences in terms of what is worthy and unworthy in connection to types of people, activities and things. Through these handbooks they could also more fully understand what kinds of compromises could be made between different worlds (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:13-14, 153-158), as well as more accurately describe the pragmatic consequences of the worlds of worth, i.e. what happens when the theoretical principles meet actual situations.

The worlds of worth are both separated but also possible to combine depending on situation. A situation is however not given by an outer setting, but depends very much on people's interpretations in relation to the worlds of worth. Boltanski and Thévenot's theory on worlds of worth can as a consequence be described as a compromise between an interactionist and a structural approach (cf. Biggart and Beamish 2003). It relies on the importance of some kind of systematic evaluation, but you cannot foresee what worlds of worth or combinations of them will be the most relevant. Instead, the coordination of people and things, i.e. the type of evaluation mode, as well as possible combinations between different worlds of worth are decided in an interaction or conflict situation. The worth of each mode represent one type of common good amongst several that exist in the regime of justification (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:77-78; Wagner 1999:347-348). The French original word *grandeur* (translated into worth) implies that we are dealing with *entities*, different types of *standards*, by which we can evaluate things. The worlds of worth create different logics, interconnected systems, of evaluating the common good. A mode of evaluation will not be disregarded if it can be claimed to serve a common good, in relation to the situation (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:224). How the situation is defined is not always agreed upon, however. This means that the individual cannot justify her evaluation on an individual level with no connection to what others recognize and acknowledge. Because of this, we need to make use of these conventionalized evaluation modes. Personal as well as abstract relationships between people are included in all of the worlds of worth taken together, albeit not one by one. By this I mean that we may relate to family or colleagues as well as more abstract groups of fellow

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of the worlds of worth is to construct worlds that represent what people think in everyday life.

[50] This is relevant in this study as advertising self-regulation is about influencing economic enterprises to take ethical aspects of images into account, or at least helping the industry appear as if they do, in their production of advertising. Decisions communicate to the advertisers and the media (publishers and broadcasters) but also to agencies, i.e. the advertising industry as a whole. Decisions also communicate to the public (viewers) what can and cannot be justified in advertising images. Sales are not justified as the only reasons for why advertising images look the way they do in these decision processes.

citizens of a nation. People may also move between the more particular to the more general.

Boltanski and Thévenot's theoretical framework has the advantage that it takes into account the plurality of evaluation logics that, for example, economic organizations use in their daily work (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999; Thévenot 2001b; Thévenot 2007b). This means that a plurality of value principles, which are separated because they make up different logics of evaluation, originally connected to specific settings, can be valid within the activities of one and the same organization. We can justify our claims in relation to price (market), efficiency (industrial), fame (opinion), creativity (inspired), respect (domestic) or collective interest (civic). These value principles can come into conflict but they can also be combined, according to their theory. This is central for understanding processes of coordination and compromise generated for example in decision-processes. We may use these theorized moral logics to understand how regulators of offensive advertisements weigh aspects such as target groups against general principles of equality, when they interpret and evaluate advertising images.

To use one example, the domestic mode of evaluation creates an order between people and things which has developed in family relations historically. But as relations have become more complex, the organization of the family will often combine various evaluative logics to create justification between the people involved in a specific situation. The domestic world of worth is thus only a symbolic family and stands for particular good things, which can create family-like relationships. If we have a family dispute, it will most likely involve this evaluative mode, but will probably quite easily be combined with other modes in modern societies. The idea of traditional kinship and family relations has been developed by combining the domestic worth with other types of goods, such as the civic and inspired, because passionate love (inspired) and gender equality (civic) can be given as examples of what many people would argue are values that should be fostered in family relationships, not only trust and authoritative bonds that define the domestic world of worth. This means that not only the 'economic' organization of a company, but also the family, and other institutions include the various evaluative modes. The conventionalized worth of the domestic world can, however, explain why disputes often appear in families and companies, as people criticize these values from the point of another world of worth, or as people defend values of the domestic world of worth when they are violated by other values.

> We have explored a view on complexity which results from the variety of modes of coordination. They are in critical relationship to one another but *compromises* can bring local and temporal compatibility between them. We can then theorize organizations as arrangements which have been specifically designed for such a compromised complexity. Therefore, their members have to engage in different modes of coordination, depending on the configuration of the situation in which they find themselves. We do not see organizations or institutions in strict correspondence to each order of worth: the civic worth corresponding to the state, the inspiration

> worth to the church, or the domestic to the family. All organizations have to cope with critical tensions between different orders of worth.
>
> (Thévenot 2001b:410)

The six worlds of worth provide a combination of the 'universal' and the specific. That the worlds of worth are universal means that the conventions of evaluative modes can and do transcend the situations where they were formed, and become applied elsewhere, by individuals in other organizations and institutions.[51] In this way, Boltanski and Thévenot's theory departs, as mentioned, from the general idea of everyday life sociology, which remains focused on settings where values are shaped, such as within certain frames (Goffman 1974; cf. Silber 2003:429). According to Boltanski and Thévenot (2000), we are not merely driven by interest connected to individual disposition or position, but also by what is good and just, which is a differently conceptualized type of interest. They create a theory that is not normative in itself, but which takes into account people's normative (moral) views. In the regime of justification, the explanatory value is in the "situated arrangements" directed towards others rather than dispositions. This means that the type of morality that is relevant in a situation is not decided beforehand because of the moral character of a person. The self-regulators always work towards the public, or more precisely, public audiences sometimes regarded as a general public and sometimes as target groups or other types of groups. Accordingly, the ethics that are shaped at ERK and the ASA depend on the definition of the public. The definition of the public, however, also depends on the definition of the good, related to the interpretation of the image, its purpose and outcomes.

[51] From Smith, Boltanski and Thévenot take the idea that "principles have to be adapted to situations" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:54), which is one of the focal ideas in their theory, but with the specification that the principles that are adjusted to situations, called the worlds of worth, are limited to a certain number. This means that we do not just randomly make any kinds of judgements if we want them to be justified and that it is useful to relate our judgements to certain conventions. A principle cannot stand alone, and cannot be justified for itself. Principles only make sense when they are connected to the proper circumstances. For example: to have perfection as a goal in the domestic world of worth would be seen as madness, while it is natural in the industrial world of worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:54), as we will see below. It will also be clear however that the nature of the situation can be defined in different ways, which relate advertising images to various moralities.

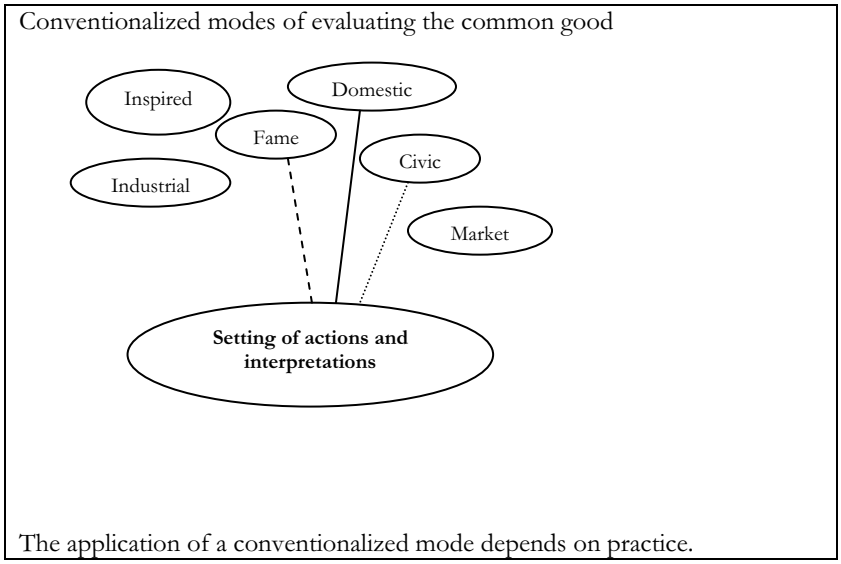

Figure 3.1. *Worlds of worth decided in practice*

With the idea of habitus, conflicts arise between people because they represent different positions within a field with a dominating logic, or conflicts may arise because people represent different fields. With sphere theory, conflicts may arise between different spheres with their autonomous logics. The six worlds of worth are described as worlds with coherent and separated logics, but, as described above, these may come into conflict within a person and be combined into so-called compromises, by the same person, depending on the meaning(s) given to a situation, by her and other people. According to the theory of worlds of worth, it is not a field or a sphere that objectively defines the situation; a person can transcend a situation, because something can be seen and justified through different worlds of worth and sometimes with several in a combination. All worlds of worth are potentially relevant co-ordinations of people and things and can be part of compromises. The ones that become relevant are decided by the people in the context of a particular situation. In the fictive illustration of figure 3.1, the domestic mode is dominating, which means that trustworthiness is the kind of social bond we want to create, but is combined in a compromise with the world of fame (it is also important to be known by many) and the civic world of worth (equality rather than patrimony will increase trust, it is argued in this fictive setting). In another setting, other worlds may dominate and/or be combined into compromises. These combinations appear, according to Boltanski and Thévenot, because it is natural for human beings to be critical, instead of just settling with one, dominating logic.

People are defined by actions rather than social positions such as women or men. But what the action means is decided in conflict situations such as decision-processes, as pointed out by Thomas Bénatoül (1999), in his text about the pragmatic stance. This means that "intentions, dispositions, or habits, charac-

ters, causes, etc." (Bénatoül 1999:385) are decided in such disputes or interaction situations and cannot be taken-for-granted, i.e. taken as the starting point for analysis. In the different worlds of worth, people need to think of others, develop a kind of ethics, but for different reasons and with different outcomes in terms of justification and worth.

> [W]e have been able to observe the operation of six *higher common principles* to which, in France today, people resort most often in order to finalize an agreement or pursue a contention. These principles may thus be said to constitute the basic political equipment needed to fabricate a social bond. Still, our list of *principles* is not exhaustive; we can distinguish the shape of other *polities* that might be constructed in conformity with our proposed model.
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:71)

This means that new evaluation principles can be generated from below (Thévenot 2001b:409), discovered and systematically theorized. Laurent Thévenot, Michael Moody and Claudette Lafaye have, for example, started exploring an ecological world of worth (2000). It is, however, the original six worlds of worth that are fully developed as a theoretical model, and I will confine myself to them. The table below gives an overview of the most important differences between what is highly valued in the different worlds of worth. In the text that follows, the unworthy of each world is also defined and the worthiness more fully described. Boltanski and Thévenot do not claim that these evaluative modes conceptualized as the six worlds of worth are always relevant. Studies do suggest that they are relevant outside of France, such as in the United States, the United Kingdom and states such as Hungary during and after socialism; Stark demonstrates, for example, how people in Hungary playing the board game Monopoly are not cognitively restrained by socialism or capitalism, but are able to mix the two. Other studies have shown their relevance for evaluating the worthiness within professions, such as that of scholars (Kirwan 2006; Moody and Thévenot 2000; Stark 2009; Thévenot 2001a), which are arguably on a globalized job market. This means it is a qualified guess that the worlds of worth can be used as analytical tools around the world, not least because they are open to various types of combinations, which give room for cultural variation.

	Market	Industrial	Inspired	Opinion (Fame)	Domestic	Civic
Mode of evaluation (worth)	Price, cost	Productivity, Efficiency	Grace, nonconformity, creativeness	Renown, fame	Esteem, Reputation	Collective Interest/ welfare
Test	Market competitiveness	Competence, reliability, planning	Passion, enthusiasm	Popularity, audience, recognition	Trustworthiness	Equality and solidarity
Qualified objects	Freely circulating market goods or service	Project, method, Plan	Emotionally invested body or item: artistic or religious	Sign, media (e.g. advertising images)	Patrimony (status from superior), locale, Heritage/ tradition	Rules and regulations, fundamental rights, welfare policies
Format of relevant information/ Proof	Monetary	Measurable: criteria, statistics	Emotional involvement and expression	Semiotic	Oral, exemplary, personally warranted	Formal, official
Human qualification	Desire, purchasing power	Professional, competency, expertise	Creativity, ingenuity	Celebrity	Authority	Equality
Qualified human beings	Customer, consumer, merchant, seller	Engineer, professional, expert	Creative beings, (irrational people: women, children, madmen, artists)	Celebrity, opinion leaders, fans	Authority (husband, father, parent, leader, the establishment)	Equal citizens, solidarity unions
Elementary relation	Exchange	Functional link	Passion	Recognition	Trust	Solidarity

Figure 3.2. *Orders of worth.* The table is a combination of tables of the worlds of worth in Boltanski and Thévenot (1999:368), Thévenot (2001a) and Thévenot, Moody and Lafaye (2000:240). I have added a few words to exemplify a couple of things, such as qualified objects and human beings, based on the definitions of the worlds of worth in Boltanski and Thévenot's book *On Justification* (2006 [1991]).

The order of the worlds in the table of figure 3.2 follows the way I have chosen to present them below. The "formats of relevant information" that you can see in the table are "proof" that underpins the argument from a specific world. Sign and media are qualified objects in the world of opinion/fame, which can be related to advertising images. However, advertising images are not only mediated signs, according to my interpretation, but may be connected to the various worlds of worth depending on the interpretation of content, purpose and outcomes in terms of offence, social responsibility and gender issues connected to the advertisements, and hence that is how I have chosen to use the theory in this study. It must be established amongst those involved in a situation that the

situation is of the kind that allows for a particular logic of evaluation. A so-called "test" is made for this purpose (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:16-17), which means that *certain things and types of people* are looked for that belong to a certain world. In order to make an evaluation, some entities have to be stable. Objects have a certain status in this labelling. The *normal situation* is to make a reality test based on objective definitions of objects in relation to worlds of worth. People are not, however, objectively defined and can move between the worlds of worth. When the objectivity of an object is questioned, as in *uncertain situations* with several interpretations and evaluations of the situation, we have a so-called *critical situation* in which several worlds of worth can be used as grounds for justification (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999; Thévenot 2002:190).

According to the theory of worlds of worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:178-185), publicity is related to the moral logic of the world of fame, because it is a world in which getting things or people known to many people, to have an image, create worthiness. One can argue that advertising falls into this category of things. But because of the critical situations that appear through the complaints of advertisements and the decision-processes that follow, the advertisements can be seen as symbols of different relationships represented by other worlds of worth as well. In critical situations different grounds of justifications come into conflict and the advertising images can be seen as focal points in public life for the elicitation of these different ideas, cognitions of the good, amongst different audiences, advertisers and decision-makers. To settle an agreement of relevant justifications means, according to the theory of Boltanski and Thévenot, that the situation of uncertainty is not solved by interaction on the local level alone, e.g. between advertisers and audiences, but always in relation to *the collectively and historically conventionalized worlds of worth*. In the instances when shared meanings of an object cannot be taken-for-granted, the objects are, like actors, entities that move between the worlds of worth.

In the following pages, I describe the characteristics of the worlds of worth one by one, but first, I will simply describe how they are ordered in this chapter:

First of all I will describe the *market* world of worth. Worth is here measured in money. I chose to present the market logic first, because it is perhaps for some people the most counter-intuitive form of ethics. That people are evaluated and justify actions on this basis is however not difficult to see in the practice of people. So it is clearly an ethics made in practice, albeit seldom on its own. For the advertising industry, the desire among consumers to buy and the competition with other producers on the market is, of course, of great importance.

Secondly I describe the *industrial* world of worth. As the industrial logic is often tightly connected to the market world of worth, it will be presented right after. The advertising industry wants to make efficient advertisements and the self-regulators want to make efficient rulings on what is acceptable. They may need to justify their decisions through, for example, experts and statistics. These are aspects of the industrial logic.

Thirdly, I describe the *inspired* world of worth. People among the general public are, however, not predictable in accordance with the industrial world, but may react emotionally in a non-conformist way. The uncertainty of how people react is something that the self-regulators need to consider, and they cannot rely merely on statistics and market research. I present the inspired logic in third place, because it represents those values that are related to the unpredictable and creative.

Fourthly, the world of *fame/opinion* is presented because it is closely connected to advertising with its aim of making things known to larger groups of people/audiences. The advertisers are very much dependent on what audiences think of their advertisements. There is a tension between how advertisers need to lean on known audience moods, while at the same time developing an understanding of how these may change.

Whilst the world of fame represents the value of being known, regardless of why, there may also be a need to create a relation of trust, not only fame. The *domestic* world of worth represents this value and is presented fifth. The aim of the self-regulators is to foster trust and consumer confidence. The *domestic* world of worth also helps self-regulators specify notions from other worlds of worth that are of interest in this study such as target groups (fame) or equality/citizen rights (civic), in the shape of compromises. Because of the various experiences of the domestic world, as e.g. women and men, citizen rights can be defined as being about the rights of women or men as collectives. That means a compromise has been made between the civic and domestic world of worth, according to the theory. It also represents good manners and traditional relationships, which some may want to support while others critique.

Last of all I present the *civic* world of worth. It is the logic of evaluation originally connected to the state, but because the self-regulators are replacing some regulation by the state, we need to take this logic into account. The self-regulators need to convince the citizens that they can also foster ideals of equality.

Despite my ordering of them, there is no hierarchy among these worlds of worth that can be established in isolation from a specific empirical setting.

The Market Mode of Evaluation

Because sociology has its roots in a critique of the individualistic values of the market, it is not easy to associate market bonds with the idea of a polity that stands for the common good, Boltanski and Thévenot point out (2006 [1991]:78-79).[52] They nevertheless show that the market can be seen as a polity through two works by Adam Smith: *The Wealth of Nations,* in which he discusses the notion of *the invisible hand,* and *Theory of Moral Sentiments: a Theory of Justice*, in

[52] I will only refer to Boltanski and Thévenot's interpretations of philosophers here, despite the obvious possibility to criticize their interpretations of specific philosophers or discuss other texts that support their view and the moral logics that they present.

which the idea of *sympathy* is important. Both are ideas that justify the market as a polity (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:55, 74-82, 200-201). Smith's idea of an invisible hand states that if we have free competition, i.e. buyers and sellers acting out of self-interest, this will lead to the best results for the community as a whole. The common good is then a kind of unintended consequence. According to the idea of an invisible hand that governs the market, the market is self-regulative, because although the ideal of the market is competition, which is one of the higher principles in this polity, the end result is a common good (cf. Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:43-61, 79). Balance in the market polity is reached by competition, in accordance with the idea of the invisible hand, but also by the idea of sympathy. In the market polity, people act out of self-love and self-interest (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:48). However, sympathy comes before the idea of utility in terms of self-interest, because in order to compete on the market, one has to have knowledge about other people's "tastes and passions" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:53).

The market world of worth exists as a moral logic amongst people by the fact that it makes a person more worthy, according to this logic, if she is able to generate money and is a person of means, than if she is not. I will give two examples. A person may have no or low income and thus be defined as unable to contribute to the common good as tax payers or consumers, and thereby be seen as unworthy by others. In addition, the market world of worth can sometimes be a feature of the evaluation of people for positions in the scientific world. If the candidate is good at generating funding, she will be seen as more worthy for the position. The market world of worth is however one of several conventionalized worlds of worth that people in general use in order to interpret and evaluate other people and their actions and to justify their actions as well as to postulate critique.

In the market polity, worth is measured in wealth (B&T 2006:55).[53] Sympathy for others and the ability of being a so-called impartial spectator are also part of the worthy person in this polity (B&T 2006:56-57). This means that selfishness and self-interest, significant values in this world of worth, go hand in hand with sympathy and attention for others (B&T 2006:55, 200-201).[54] We need to understand others in the market polity to make a good deal, as buyers or sellers. The seller of goods needs to know what other people desire. The consumer makes the best buys when she knows which goods are most desired by others. In this way, she can minimise her risk of being deceived as well. This is clear when we consider if a chair at the auction hall is worth bidding on; we decide if the piece is a rarity and if people want it in general. The best buy is if we can get it cheap even if people in general want it; we know this is more likely

[53] In the following, the abbreviation B&T 2006=*On Justification: Economies of Worth*, by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006 [1991]).

[54] The idea of an ability to take on other people's roles or points of views in the market polity, based on Smith's idea of sympathy, is also a feature of Mead's theory, which Boltanski and Thévenot refer to (B&T 2006:60-61). The individual in Mead's theory relates to other people and he explicitly discusses the ability to relate to possible customers (see Mead 1934: 298-303, on sympathy).

in places (often small towns) where those who would buy it do not show up. So we make a calculation about other people's passions for the sake of self-interest, but it is nevertheless a genuine interest in other people's passions, because our interest is related to and defined by other people's passions. To sum up, attention for others (sympathy) strengthens self-interest and self-interest fosters the common good (through the invisible hand), according to Smith's theory and the market polity as constructed by Boltanski and Thévenot. A person also sees herself in relation to others. Consequently, in this context, sympathy for others will also go hand in hand with self-interest (B&T 2006:58-59). By knowing what other people think, we can judge what things are worth in a way that can benefit us.

In the market polity, the higher common principle is competition and wealth that leads to exchange of money and commodities. The mere *idea* of an invisible hand makes the market polity a basis for justification. It does not matter if we can prove that there is no such thing. The idea of the market world of worth is that it is justifiable for people to coordinate their actions according to the principles of this world, but it does not mean that the neoclassical theories of how markets work are true (B&T 2006 [1991]:195; cf. Callon 1998; 2007). Because Boltanski and Thévenot see societies as complex, it is not enough to analyse them from the world of the market, or any other singular world of worth. They stress, as mentioned, that the economic sphere and the market world are not equivalent. To understand economic relations at least one other world is necessary, in most cases the market is combined with the industrial world of worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:200).

The practices of people, philosophical ideas and handbooks together shape the conceptualizations of the worlds of worth/polities, as already mentioned. Boltanski and Thévenot use the handbooks to point out more specific aspects and updated versions of what is worthy and not in each world of worth than found in the philosophical texts. On the bases of these handbooks they define what things, actions, types of people and social relations shape the world logic. The practical handbook they use in order to construct the particular order of the market world of worth[55] that people turn to in their everyday lives, thus supports Smith's aforementioned ideas.[56] Based upon the chosen handbook, the following features characterize the market world of worth: In the market world of worth, it is important to be able to control one's emotions, as opposed to the inspired world, where such emotions are an asset. In the market world, it is worthy to have perspective on things and to be able to separate oneself emotionally from a situation. It is also an asset to be able to adjust in an opportunistic way to a situation in order to profit from it. This requires that one understands other people. Other people are, however, also understood as detached, so it is not other people's opinions that you adjust to as you would in the world

[55] Mark H. McCormack, *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*, published in 1984.

[56] The handbooks they use, in addition to the one mentioned in the previous footnote, and motivations for why they are chosen, are presented in *On Justification* (see Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:153-158, and 148-152 for background)

of fame. Instead, it is their tastes and passions that are important for whether you make a profit. As a consequence, it is pointless to have the kind of integrity that is valued in the world of inspiration. The very rich dominate this world, because everyone desire what they have (B&T 2006:201). Examples of unworthy states in the market world of worth are a) when a market product is not desired, b) persons who do not adapt to situations so that they can make a profit, or c) having no means to buy things. The market world and its values also help give value to things that do *not* belong to it, such as friendship (B&T 2006:203). Friendship is not defined by self-interest like the market bond, but it gets its value by being defined as something *different* from the market, as being something else. This is why it often upsets people when friends e.g. charge their friends near-market prices for services they perform for them.[57]

I make the following assumptions about the market world of worth in relation to advertising self-regulation: Given that the market world of worth is about understanding other people's desires, in order to e.g. sell goods, advertisers want their commodities to be desired and the advertisements are mediators for this desire—at least that is one purpose of advertisements. Advertising self-regulation could as a consequence be seen as an organized activity that possibly decreases rejection of the advertising industry and particular advertisers among the general public, by regulating against offensive advertisements that otherwise would upset potential customers. In a way, advertising self-regulation can help make the advertisements more desirable. When it comes to the moral meaning of advertisements, the market world of worth may, however, play a different role as well. Advertising images may be criticized for depicting people who appear as e.g. too materialistic in their choice of partner. The worth of the market world of worth is in those cases contrasted with love between couples in a relationship, which is seen as more worthy if built on other values. Advertisers may also argue that their advertisements look as they do because they know what their customers desire. Given that there is also a fluctuating threat—from the point of view of the advertising industry and the self-regulatory organizations—of increased legislation on the area, it is perhaps possible to justify the market logic in public spaces that advertisements represent by developing the ability and willingness to make compromises with other worlds of worth. The advertising self-regulators could be seen as creators of such compromises; their job is to point them out. One could say that this is done by involving other worlds of worth in the interpretations and evaluations of advertising images.

[57] See e.g. comments from the public on the answer given by etiquette columnist Magdalena Ribbing in the Swedish daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* to the question of how much to charge for petrol expenses when giving friends a lift, http://www.dn.se/blogg/etikettfragan/2009/06/29/forkastligt-hog-skjutspeng-4013, downloaded 8 July 2009. People who comment have different opinions about how much to charge and why, which can be analysed in line with Boltanski and Thévenot's theory as a result of the different ways they define the situation and thus evaluate it according to different logics.

The Industrial Mode of Evaluation

The industrial polity is shaped on the basis of Henri de Saint-Simon's writings on industrial systems during the first quarter of the 19th Century. According to Saint-Simon, one of the precursors of the founder of sociology as an autonomous discipline, August Comte (see e.g. Abraham 1977), society is a system consisting of objective facts that we can measure and describe in their true existence. For Saint-Simon, worth lies in the activity of production and in various specialized occupational activities. Natural forces of society bring people together, according to Saint-Simon, rather than ideas or principles. A worthy person in the industrial polity is someone who can organize the facts of the social world in a systematic manner. Experts are highly valued in the industrial world, but not popular ideas. Along the same lines, the ability to control the future and thereby also handle uncertainty is highly valued, as well as things like standardization, quantifications and efficiency (B&T 2006:122, 209-210). In addition, objectivity and the ability to follow a foreseeable and successful pattern are highly valued.

> The quality of worthy beings, beings that are functional, *operational*, or (when humans are involved) *professional*, thus expresses their capacity to *integrate themselves* into the *machinery*, the *cogwheels* of an organization, along with their *predictability*, their *reliability*, and it guarantees *realistic projects* in the future. People are in a state of unworthiness when they produce nothing useful, when they are *unproductive*, when they fail to do much *work*, owing to *absenteeism* or *turnover*, or because they are *inactive, unemployed, handicapped*, or—when they turn out work of poor quality—because they are *inefficient,* unmotivated, *unqualified*, *unsuited* to the job. Things are unworthy when they are *subjective*. Beings are also unworthy when, instead of being open to the *future*, they cling to the mold of the past, by failing to *evolve*, by remaining *static*, rigid, *ill-adapted*.
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:205)[58]

One could argue that efficiency can be reached by various means, but according to this world, the means are of specific types. If things work out as predicted and planned, they have passed the test in this world. In many situations, the worth of this world has variations, such as in subjectivist approaches to scientific method. We then e.g. see a compromise between the industrial world, the inspired and the domestic, I argue.

I make the following connections between the industrial world of worth and advertising self-regulation: The self-regulatory bodies are concerned with handling uncertainty about what the public thinks, as I see it. The decisions should in most cases be as consistent with former decisions as possible, to create a more or less predictable pattern for the industry to follow. They are, however, open to making exceptions if justified by the social context. What is more, to satisfy the judgements of this world, advertising self-regulators will, for example, use experts and opinion surveys to establish relations of facts and to chart

[58] Emphases by italics in quotes are from the original, unless otherwise mentioned.

what people think of various things, such as how people perceive swearwords, so that their judgements can be claimed to be justified and efficient.

The Inspired Mode of Evaluation

Inspiration, the inspired polity, is built on St. Augustine's idea of the city of God, in which people act from love for others and in the interest of the community, without craving for fame or acting out of love of oneself (see B&T 2006:83-90). St. Augustine, who lived in 354-430, wrote the book *The City of God (against the Pagans)* 413-426, just after the fall of the Roman Empire. He created two types worlds: the city of God versus the city of Man, and argues that humanity has been torn between them during its history. In the city of God, worth is given to a person through God's compassion and grace. Grace is as a consequence not a person's doing but given by God. This means that an inspired person cannot be proud of herself for her grace, just grateful for her gift. Boltanski and Thévenot make use of Augustine's definitions of the two cities in the following way:

> Only the city of God [compared to the city of Man, the earthly city] merits the name of *polity* according to our definition, for of the two it alone can lead beings to transcend their particularity in pursuit of a common good...These two cities present opposing forms of deficiency and worth. While the earthly city is imbued with 'pride' (which is responsible for the Fall and original sin), the city of God is founded on 'humility,' which is the true measure of worth. Indeed the 'proud' are possessed by self-worship and are 'self-complacent' (The City of God: 571-572 [14.13]).
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:84-85)

The inspired world of worth is about being authentic and individual, but not selfish. This means that the inspired polity, later called the inspired world of worth, is defined through the values of the City of God, but also by what is unworthy according to its logic, i.e. the earthly city, the city of Man. Inspiration can be compared to a calling, which will make a person sacrifice many other values; it is also seen as something that comes naturally, because it has been given to you. In other worlds of worth, it would be seen as insane to consider oneself as being inspired (B&T 2006:85-86). Boltanski and Thévenot show how this worth is always repelling the world of fame in its essence, even if we will also see how compromises between the two worlds can be made. In relation to a quote by Weber, Boltanski and Thévenot give a few concrete examples of characters that usually embody this worth:"'No prophet has ever regarded his quality as dependent on the attitudes of the masses toward him' (Weber 1968 [1922], 242) [Quoting Weber's *Economy and Society*]" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:88). In the same way, avant-garde groups among artists and politicians, or mavericks of any area, innovators and originals, gain their worth in this world by not relying on what the masses think. These are people who are sometimes regarded as the outcasts of societies and sometimes as its geniuses (cf. Becker 1982:233-246; Bourdieu 1993:e.g. 105).

One could also compare how scientists are worthy by being totally dedicated to their passion, instead of concentrating on making a name for themselves or only worrying about being cited many times by other scholars. Creating a name and publishing, however, play a part in the career of a scientist, as well as traits belonging to several other worlds of worth, but what values that matter may be debated and given different weight according to country, university and culture of the discipline.[59] To conclude, the inspired worth is characterized by: independence, non-superficiality, creativity, authenticity and rejecting status, fame and vainglory. A person should follow her inner voice in order to be worthy in this world. She should be herself, preferably an "unusual", "irrational" and "unique" self, who is e.g. "exciting, spontaneous [and] emotional" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:159). Worthy types of people are fantasy fairytale figures, as well as children, women, madmen and artists (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:160). To be unworthy in this world is to be predictable and rational (industrial world of worth) to follow habits (domestic), to be repetitive, boring and to be normal (both of the former), to be formal (civic), to be selfish and care about money (market) and popularity, the praise of other people (fame). It is not only the inspired world that is aligned against the selfishness of the market world of worth; so are the domestic and civic worlds, but in different ways. A person who seeks success through fame is also unworthy in the inspired world of worth because she is not following her own inner voice, but is superficially interested in external rather than internal confirmation (cf. MacIntyre 1984:181-203, on internal and external goods). Such a person has no integrity, which is highly valued in the inspired world of worth.

I make the following assumptions about the inspired world of worth in relation to advertising self-regulation: Inspiration is appreciated in the advertising industry, as shown by former studies mentioned in the previous chapter conceptualized in terms of creativity and aesthetic values. Former studies, however, also indicate that creativity of the advertising world does not have this pure form, as compromises often have to be made with e.g. market worth and fame (the advertisement has to generate money and be in line with preconceptions that the clients have of agencies and audiences). Creativity is nevertheless a worth that can be used to justify actions and criticism amongst practitioners and the industry (such as the idea of freedom of expression as a value in collision with legislation against sexism and offensive advertisements). Creativity may also be part of the intended/interpreted message of the advertising image, but clash with other moral factors such as responsibilities towards children (domestic). The inspired world of worth and the domestic world of worth may thus be clashing in the self-regulatory process. Creativity among the audiences of the public is not always highly valued in the eyes of the advertising industry,

[59] The last example from the academic world builds primarily on my three years' experience from two committees appointing university lecturers and professors. But some of these value clashes are also discussed in texts on research ethics, such as in the report from the Swedish Research Council *Vad är god forskningssed?* (*What is good research practice?*) (Gustafsson, Hermerén and Petersson 2005), which means they are widely known amongst scholars, albeit not discussed in terms of this theory.

because it makes them unpredictable. The uncertainty of how the public feels about specific advertisements needs to be handled by the self-regulators. They do this probably by combining the world of inspiration with other worlds of worth, in order to be able to measure opinions or focus on target groups. The self-regulatory bodies also built their existence on the uncertainty of how people evaluate advertisements, as they often argue that they are able to adjust to such changes in a better way than could court processes.

The Evaluative Mode of Fame

Instead of seeing the popular, the value of fame, as a part of the market logic, (as does Bourdieu 1998 [1996]), Boltanski and Thévenot argue that it is a world of its own. They build their idea about the polity of fame on Thomas Hobbes' notion of honour in *Leviathan,* written in 1651 (B&T 2006:98-100). Worth is then measured in recognition by others. What matters is the esteem other people give you. As a consequence, "[D]isputes arise when a gap develops between an individual's self-esteem and the esteem in which others hold him or her, the latter being the reality" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:102). Because worth depends on the opinion of others, it varies if other people's opinions fluctuate (B&T 2006:178). The reflexivity within a person between how she sees herself and how other people judge her builds a bridge to the other worlds of worth.

Worth is established when a person or a thing attracts attention. To stay worthy as a person, one should become famous and stay in the focus of attention (B&T 2006:180), contrary to the domestic world where one should not try to gain attention if there is no justification for it. Attention is a value in itself, but a person or a company have to keep track of what the public thinks in order to adjust and create as appealing an image as possible. This also means that in this world, one should adjust to the public rather than sticking to contracts that may become obsolete because they are no longer in tune with what the public thinks. People are worthy if they are widely recognized or have dedicated fans. For example, the prestige of academics is only recognized by a few, so this group has little worth in this world and as a consequence, not much power (B&T 2006:100-101). This may have changed with the fact that many academics are now seen in the media, but it still serves well as an example of a group that, with few exceptions, is not especially visible or recognized by a large proportion of the public. It is a group without much power according to this world because it is not *widely* recognized.

The changing opinions of others are aspects of uncertainty. If the general public creates stable opinions, they constitute more reliable entities of worth, which is something good in this world, because it means that there will be groups of people that you as a person, whether you are a consumer or a producer, can turn to and rely on for opinions. "Persons are relevant inasmuch as they form a *public* whose '*opinion* prevails,' a *public* 'that creates *public opinion*' and thereby constitutes the only 'true' *reality*" (B&T 2006:179). People and opinions

are worthy when they are known, in a semiotic way. By gaining the worth of opinion, one can also influence what groups of audiences for example think, i.e. the content of their opinions. This is how target groups are created and their existence means a greater predictability of what the audiences will think. "The natural order distributes the range of *images* by *positioning* them in relation to their *publics*, which are divided into *targets* or *audiences*" (B&T 2006:183). Some people work in their profession with the establishment of this value, such as advertising agencies and journalists. In line with what has just been described: being in the limelight is a value in itself, but to have no image or an unclear image is to be unworthy in this world.

The following propositions can be made about the world of fame in relation to advertising self-regulation: This world of worth can be connected to the advertising industry in a very direct sense, as public relations and advertising are ways of making things popular and recognized, which are highly valued features in this world of worth. Advertising is of course partly a means to enhance the image of an idea, a company, a product, a person or a group of people. It is a means to create opinions or enhance existing opinions. The world of fame very much relies on the semiotic connections, i.e. agreements upon understandings of what signs mean. The concept of the target group fills this function. The idea of target groups and viewers that recognize specific signs and symbols are perhaps reasons for advertisers to argue for why their advertisements are fashioned the way they are, as they make assumptions about viewers of the advertisements. It is interesting to see to what extent this is justified in the decision-making. It is clearly the case that other ideas of what is justifiable clash with the making of opinion for its own sake and, as a consequence, bring other worlds into consideration. The critique levelled at advertisements and the regulatory organizations that have developed are indicative of this. The values of other worlds of worth limit the ways it is justified to create renown for a product or a company. Advertisers may have a good idea of their target group, perhaps developed with the help of advertising agencies. They construct an image based on this knowledge. People in general may, however, see the images and find them offensive, or advertisers may have misjudged the appropriateness of using target groups as justification in a particular case, or they may have failed to back up claims about target groups in an acceptable way. It is likely that decision-makers take this world of worth into account at least in some cases, as their mission is to foster advertisements of meritorious standards, but not to abolish advertising.

The Domestic Mode of Evaluation

The domestic polity is a symbolic family in which the principle of kinship rules (B&T 2006:90-98). Boltanski and Thévenot build their formation of the domestic polity primarily on the work of a theologian, Bishop Jacques-Beligne Bossuet's book, *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, published in 1703. According to Boltanski and Thévenot, Bossuet argues in this book that the king

of a country has the same status as God; the king or the state is the father of a people and the people must love their leader and what he decides. The leader of the household or the enterprise represents his subordinates' will, per definition. The king, just like the state, is seen as an extension of the family, i.e. of paternal authority. A person acts in the interest of the leader of the family, the country or the company. There is a familial bond between people within the same family, enterprise or organization. Hence, the domestic model is meant to be used even when there are no blood relations. To help each other and protect the weak, within this symbolic home, are value acts in this polity. Value depends on position within a hierarchy; it is important to know one's place and function within the symbolic family. At the same time, a person is also defined by the status of her family, work place, or other group of belonging, whatever the boundary is of the symbolic family. Both of these aspects are shown in the following quote:

> To know ones rank is to know one's worth, and to know oneself: the [good man] is esteemed for never '[pretending] to be what he is not' (…in the logic of this polity, such a pretence is a mark of madness), that is, for the precision with which he is able to evaluate his own worth by relating it to the place he occupies in the chain of bonds of personal dependence. Even domestic servants, within the bounds of their own deficient state, share in the worth of their master and his goods.
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:91)

What is more, the servants also tend to take over their masters' interests and make them their own. The power of the father, the prince, or the leader, is justified because he is supposed to protect and defend his subordinates. The prince must also be a good person and behave well according to the standards of this polity. As a superior, he must give of himself to others (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:96).

There is no difference in the domestic polity between the private and the public. Relationships are personalized at the same time as the personal is made public. Domestic relationships exist inside and outside families (B&T 2006:164), just like the values of other worlds of worth transcend their original settings. In the same way, the family as a group or as a norm may consist of a compromise with the other worlds of worth, which is often the case. Family constellations change with history and culture, but the worth that the domestic world represents is arguably still an ingredient. Worth in the domestic world is relational, always depending on the relationship to other people and how they evaluate you as a person in relation to others. "It is through reference to generation, tradition, and hierarchy that order can be established among beings of a domestic nature" (B&T 2006:165). In this world there is a hierarchical relationship between people, e.g. between women and men, which have been established through tradition. Women and men are as a consequence valued differently; types such as the father and the husband are more worthy than women and children. Women are instead meant to be protected by their husbands, as are children by their parents. To be worthy as a husband and father one, has to

meet these expectations. The unmarried are unworthy in this world, to give one example. Objects also play a role in a world of worth. In the industrial world the value of a mobile phone depends on how good it is technically, but in the domestic world, the value of the same mobile phone will depend upon the value it gives its owner, if it is a status symbol or not. If we do not know the other person's rank, we make guesses depending on outer signs, such as clothes, other types of consumer goods and titles.

The various virtues within this world and how they are displayed, depend on the relationship one has to another person. Worthiness is position-related. People are personally dependent on each other in this world and relate to each other as concrete individuals. Hierarchical relations are important in the shaping of value; the people of higher rank in the domestic world depend on lower ranks to gain their value in the vertical, quantitative, sense. At the same time, in the horizontal, qualitative sense, the type of relation, such as friendship, gains its value from being different from e.g. the selfishness of the market world, as it builds on bonds of loyalty and trust.

Normally, because the domestic world relies on hierarchy, worth trickles down, when dispersed, not up. People of lower rank in a hierarchy may, however, lower or strengthen the rank of their superiors, depending on how they behave (B&T 2006: 172). People gain their value from the family/company/school to which they belong, depending very much on the reputation of this group. For this reason, one must also always speak well about one's own family, company, etc. Good manners in general, to be proper, are a natural part of the worthy person in the domestic world of worth (B&T 2006:167) and these are normally shaped by a good upbringing. Various sorts of receptions, social gatherings, can be used as a test for a person's value according to this world, which depends on how well one can behave in relation to others and pay respect to others in a correct manner (B&T 2006: 175). Unworthy beings do not act according to their rank, they speak loudly and attract attention in various ways without justification (B&T 2006: 176). The unworthy are:

> *overly casual*, *disorderly*, *awkward* and *talkative*. They make *errors of judgement*, *awkward mistakes*, and *inappropriate remarks*, behaviour that turns people *against them* and makes them *despicable* in the eyes of the more worthy. The same tendency not to stay in their place inclines them to *envy*, which leads them to be *gossipmongers*.
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:177)

By gossiping about superiors, the more worthy, a person attempts to make the distance between them smaller, but this is just an illusion because within the domestic world, this diminishes one's worth. Esteem and trustworthiness are two sides of the same good.

I make the following assumptions about the domestic world of worth in relation to advertising self-regulation: Critique from the general public about the content of advertisements is often connected to this world of worth. For example, the expressions of the advertisement may have bad language or behav-

iour that children, or sometimes adults, may emulate and become unworthy beings. That is a critique in line with the domestic world of worth. This world also carries with it a traditionalism that may be criticized by some viewers, such as the images of traditional gender roles. That is a critique of the domestic world of worth. This world is also relevant in relation to how the decision-makers speak of their organizations and the practice of self-regulation – almost always in a positive manner.

The Civic Mode of Evaluation

The civic polity is constructed on the basis of Rousseau's idea of the social contract (B&T 2006:107). His book, *The Social Contract*, published in 1762, became widely read during the French Revolution, according to Boltanski and Thévenot (B&T 2006:115), which indicates it had a widespread influence. One main concept of *The Social Contract* is that the state and its focus on general interest can eliminate personal dependences (B&T 2006:115). The citizen is seen as having "independent judgement", i.e. not tied to a specific interest. In other words, Rousseau is critical of the society in which people specialize into occupations and in which the citizen of general interest seems to have disappeared. To create utility, worth, according to Rousseau, is to conform to the state rather than one's profession. Being worthy in the civic world, i.e. entering the state of a citizen, means furthering not one's own personal interest but rather the general interest. According to Rousseau, the general interest is more than the sum of all individuals' interests in the collective.

> Rousseau [sets] up a radical opposition between the 'general will' and 'the will of everyone': the 'will of everyone' is oppressive, because it expresses the opinion of others taken in their 'particular' state: the 'will of everyone...is concerned with private interests, and is the sum of individual wants.' In contrast, the general will, which 'is concerned only with the common interest,' is the will of the same individuals, but taken in their general state, that is to say, as citizens (SC 66) [Boltanski and Thévenot are quoting *The Social Contract*].
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:110)

The individual also benefits from looking to the common interest. According to this world of worth, one should show solidarity and struggle for collective interests first. By relying on the state or another power that secures common interest, the individual will not have to depend directly on other individuals. Being restrained by the law means having privileges as a citizen, which gives the individual an additional status, a value outside herself through the collective of which she is a part. This means, as a consequence, that human beings gain their worth as collectives in the civic world of worth, not as individuals (B&T 2006:185-186). It is important to be acknowledged, and thereby have an established worth, in legal texts (B&T 2006:190-191). Consequently, collective actions such as legal expressions represent worth in this world as well as decisions

made by courts and other bodies that build their decisions on legal texts. Codes and criteria are similarly worthy objects.

The civic world can offer something else than the inspired world, the world of fame and the domestic world: "The civic polity must do for humanity taken as a whole, as a body politic, what love never, or only rarely, allows persons to achieve in the order of individual relations" (B&T 2006:117). Worth is not an individual endeavour in the same sense as in some of the other worlds of worth. Persons are worthy when they represent the general will and interest, not when they act as isolated individuals, in their own interest (B&T 2006:187). As single individuals they have no power. The collective values are all the time threatened by individual interests, which require that people "struggle" to overcome these forces in their own selves as well as struggle to maintain collectives together (B&T 2006:190). Legal texts are one way to make these values more stable and more worthy, i.e. recognized as worthy. Soft laws will as a consequence have more difficulties gaining legitimacy, of being worthy, according to the rules of the civic world. On the other hand, soft law is presumably more responsive[60], which is in favour of the world of fame and its idea of creating a popular image as well as the uncertainty of the inspired world of worth. In the civic world of worth, to show solidarity with larger groups, such as workers or women, is worthy, if they are made into "a cause" (B&T 2006:310), which requires a compromise with the industrial or the domestic world of worth. But divisions into subgroup interests are otherwise unworthy.

I make the following postulations about the civic world of worth in relation to advertising self-regulation: The civic world of worth is important for the self-regulators when they want to point out that they take the general public into account, equally. However, sometimes target groups are important (fame). Often the relationship between the general public and target audiences is discussed amongst decision-makers, trying to decide which one is most important in that decision-process. A group mood is sometimes claimed to be established in relation to specific media. An example is what is acceptable or not amongst gay people for whom a gay magazine is published. Taking the value of equality into account, may then imply the equal rights of gay people or that viewers are equally offended. As was discussed in the previous chapter, advertising images are often based on ideas of gender differences and that women or men as a group are offended by the images. Criticisms of advertising images are regularly made to the advertising self-regulators because they are seen as fostering gender inequality. This addresses the worth of the civic world of worth in relation to the domestic world of worth. Other subgroups make complaints, which calls for the self-regulators to consider specific citizen interests sometimes within specific residential areas, such as posters with lightly dressed women close to a place of worship, which may offend religious groups as citizens of a community. Decision-makers have to decide if specific groups, targeted audiences or the general public should be taken into account in a decision. This is related to

[60] This is also the argument that the advertising self-regulators use to justify their activity in relation to legislation.

the context of the advertisement, such as media type, but also an idea of what is the state of the public mood taken more generally in accordance with the civic world of worth.

Critical Compromises between the Worlds of Worth

In this study, I use these worlds of worth as tools for understanding my empirical material in terms of modes of coordinating value judgements and/or making compromises between them. The point that Boltanski and Thévenot formulate is that the evaluations people make in a specific situation can be based on any one of these worlds but more often a combination of them, in the shape of a compromise (see e.g Thévenot 2001b:412). The worlds of worth that are relevant are pinned down in practice, such as at a meeting or in another interpretative situation where there may be a conflict between values. The worlds of worth also transcend that situation as they are established historically and make up moral conventions that can be seen as generally held bases of justification. Things and people in a situation will thus be pinned down and related to a relevant world of worth:

> To make an agreement possible, particular persons must divest themselves of their singularity and converge towards a form of generality transcending persons and the situations in which they interrelate. Persons seeking agreement have therefore to focus on a convention of equivalence external to themselves.
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999:361)

There are three different levels of interests that an individual can have: 1) her own personal interest, 2) the interest of the governing body, company or corporation that she may belong to, and 3) the interest of the people as a collective in a more general sense (B&T 2006:112-113). This means that a person is able to reflect on herself as individual self, as part of a particular group and as citizen, which are separated in terms of worth. In this thesis, it will become clear how the complete theory of worlds of worth is important, in order to relate to possible viewers of advertisements and thereby make justifiable decisions about regulations, as opposed to simply relating to consumers/the market logic.

The worlds have in common that to be worthy is a cognitive capacity to step outside the world of the familiar: "Worth is the way in which one expresses, embodies, understands, or represents other people (according to modalities that depend on the world under consideration). Worth is thus associated with a capacity for expression in general terms" (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:132). All of the worlds of worth build on value logics which are supposed to be seen as everyday generalizations of what is good, and a way to justify actions. All of the worlds of worth may also be questioned. The various worlds of worth direct critique against each other of typical kinds because of their evaluative logics. Boltanski and Thévenot discuss these typical kinds of

critique, as well as examples of compromises between the worlds, which they find in their handbooks. I will only give a few examples here, but potentially all of the worlds can be combined into a compromise depending on the empirical situation. In the modern workplace, there are often clashes between the industrial and the domestic world of worth. Because of this, people are sometimes advised not to mix professional and private life. However, there are often compromises between these worlds of worth, which are seen as worthy. For example, it is often seen as important to foster a good company spirit and to introduce softer values at the work place, in order to create a more humane atmosphere. Good manners are also seen as crucial at a work place. All of these belong to the domestic world of worth. In the same way, the passionate feelings from the inspired world can be combined with the industrial world of worth, which has the effect of making people more dedicated to their work. The compromises with other worlds temper the instrumental aspects of the industrial world of worth, for the benefit of everyone's good. Another interesting compromise often made in the modern world is between the civic world and the domestic when citizen rights are connected to experiences from the private realm, such as gender roles. The oscillation between different aspects of worth in this way can be helpful in the study of how the self-regulators define the general public in relation to certain advertising images. All of the worlds of worth have disadvantages that may be criticized from another world of worth, such as instrumentality, unequal positions, an overemphasis on formality, and so on. The different worlds create a sort of noise of unworthy features in the other worlds (B&T 2006:135).

According to Thévenot we have an *actor* and an *interpreter*, and the actor represents a certain world of worth, which can be interpreted in different ways depending on the evaluation logic of the interpreter (see figure 3.3). Given the empirical material of this study, the self-regulators start from an actual complainant, and his or her interpretation of the advertisement, take the advertiser's view of the situation into account as well as the other decision-makers amongst the council members, or the staff (the latter is only relevant at the ASA). In the decision-process, the self-regulators' former decisions also become part of the actions that they interpret and judge. These aspects may clash in various ways similar to what figure 3.3 illustrates. The self-regulators must consider accounts of accounts, interpretations and evaluations of others' interpretations and evaluations, which create a chain of judgements of the type illustrated in figure 3.3. But the decisive point is how they imagine relevant viewers of the public will interpret and react to the advertising image, and what they base that judgement on.

		ACTOR	
		CIVIC	*MARKET*
INTERPRETER	*CIVIC*	Sympathetic	Greedy
	MARKET	Naïve	Realistic

Figure 3.3. "Figures of Judgement in a Complex Situation", (the figure is taken from Thévenot 2002:184). The figure illustrates the outcome of an interpreter's judgement of an actor, depending on the worlds of worth; when an interpreter bases her judgement on a different principle than the actor, there is a clash. In the process of advertising self-regulation, the self-regulators interpret the actions of complainants, advertisers and other decision-makers.

The self-regulatory bodies are here conceptualized as organizations that encompass several evaluation logics, and can be seen as organizations that specifically work to construct compromises between ways of evaluating what is offensive in advertisements. We can imagine that all of the worlds of worth that have been described in this chapter could potentially be important in the decision-making.[61] How a situation is interpreted and evaluated will depend on what objects, subjects and relations that are recognized. How people involved in a decision-process define the situation is thus crucial.

Conclusion

Using the theory of worlds of worth by Boltanski and Thévenot makes me postulate the following questions to my empirical material: How do the self-regulators' interpretations and evaluations in the decision-processes correspond to the worlds of worth? The worlds of worth are theoretical constructs, but the study investigates if the empirically found reasoning overlaps with features of one world or with combinations of worlds. The study will thus analyse the types of people, objects, relations and values that are pointed out as relevant by decision-makers and how this could be related to the theory. The study analyses what worlds come into conflict, how and why, and what compromises are made. Given this: What does this imply in terms of how the general public is classified? And how is this related to the interpretations of the images involved? The point is not simply to test the theory of Boltanski and Thévenot, but to use

[61] To recapitulate, they may for example consider people's unpredictability and integrity (inspired world of worth), citizen rights (civic), personal experiences as women, parents or children (domestic), in what ways viewers are a targeted audience and thereby will be in tune with the image of a brand or a media context (fame), if the advert will sell or live up to standards of free competition (market) and if the self-regulation is efficient and reliable (industrial).

it as a theoretical tool to address the specific questions that are raised in this study, with the overarching aim of showing how and why it is decided if an image is acceptable or not acceptable.

The advertising image is evaluated in terms of whether it may cause offence or be gender discriminatory and if this is a problem on a general level or not; it becomes connected to subjects, objects and relation as it is interpreted and evaluated in these decision-processes. The moral conventions that the worlds of worth represent can be described, I argue, as cognitive frames that decision-makers relate to in order to limit the scope of what to take into account when interpreting and judging an advertisement.

Thévenot, Moody and Lafaye (2000) use the theory of worlds of worth to analyse the differences in cultural repertoires between two countries, France and the United States, as well as how the repertoires are used, which shows a cultural pattern. I will use the notions of worlds of worth in a similar way, but more specifically in order to see what viewer morals of the public are given more or less credence, by looking at the worlds of worth that are taken into account in the United Kingdom (at the ASA) and in Sweden (at ERK) respectively.

Figure 3.4 below shows how the theory is related to the practice of advertising self-regulators in this study. In a specific case, dealing with the complaint of an advertisement, decision-makers relate to complainant(s), advertiser (or broadcaster), written codes, organizational conventions and position-related morality. Some of these aspects may be given more or less relevance at specific stages and may turn out not to be particularly influential on the decision.[62] What is more, I argue that the decision-makers collectively and reflexively envision what the general public or parts of it may think about the image or how they will be affected by it. As shown in the figure below, the decision-makers try to conceptualize what evaluative modes the public are best represented by, when they judge an advertisement. In other words, the so-called ideas of the public consist of modes of evaluation amongst the people of the public, as the decision-makers define them. By using the theory of worlds of worth, we can apart from analysing what moralities come into conflict and what compromises are made between different moral logics in the decision-process under scrutiny look at what type of public that is defined by the decision-process.

[62] The entity called organizational conventions consists primarily of: former decisions, other decision-makers, how to take the media context of the advertising image into account, if at all, as well as whether and how to take target groups into account.

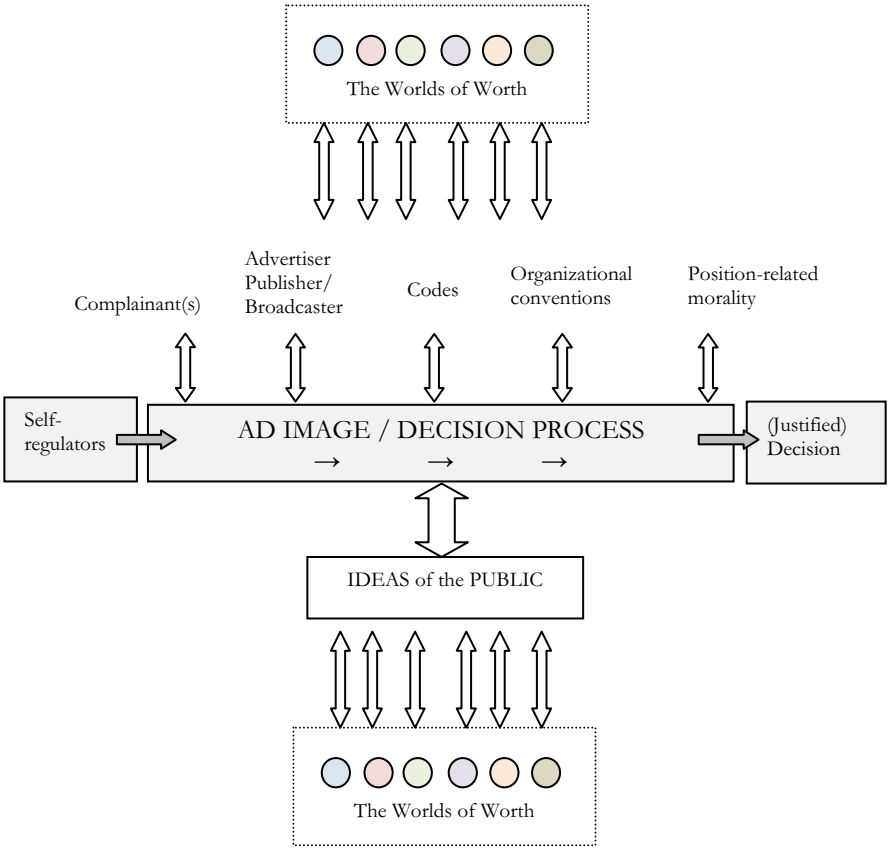

Figure 3.4. *Theorizing the decision process.* The figure illustrates what is potentially taken into account by decision-makers and is based on my empirical material. It is this process that I will analyse by deploying the theory of worlds of worth, which may be relevant in different ways at different steps of the process, as decision-makers put different aspects and evaluative modes in relation to each other, (cf. figure 3.1 and 3.3, for a fuller idea of how the theory is applied).

4. Country Contexts, Organizations and Individuals

In the previous chapter, I illustrated in figure 3.4 the crucial components of the decision-processes, building on my empirical material. The figure also describes the theory used to analyse the empirical material about the decision-process. In this chapter, I first describe the contexts of the two organizations and why they were chosen for this study. I argue that the two organizations provide means to compare contexts. Secondly, I discuss previous research on the so-called effectiveness of self-regulation in general and advertising self-regulation in particular and how the question of effectiveness is related to the organizations of this study and to justified decision-making. I argue that justification is the basis of effectiveness and thus a more important focus than effectiveness *per se*. Thirdly, I describe how the decision-processes of the two organizations are structured as a sequence of people who make decisions. I also describe the people involved in these processes. Fourthly, I analyse the individual decision-makers' reflexion on their own cognitive movement in the decision-processes and if they see their and the organization's role as re-active to what audiences think or if they are also normative. Relating to the theory of worlds of worth, I argue decision-makers are to be seen as reflexive as their modes of evaluation shift and transcend their own personal positions in society. I give empirical examples of how decision-makers relate to some of the components mentioned in the third chapter. I show that when evaluating a complaint, decision-makers relate to four things on an individual level; 1) their own background experience, which they may transcend, 2) the way the ASA works, the conventions of the organization, 3) the advertiser and what is good for the industry in general and 4) the relevant audience of the public, in addition to complaints and relevant codes. In other words, the chapter also shows that in these types of decision-making, which includes justification, individual's cognitive capacity is not determined by a single position (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999). I argue that the individual decision-maker has to take the organization and the abstracted members of the public of a country into account. Repeating the components shown in figure 3.4, this chapter discusses the organizational level as well as the individual level of decision-making, whereas chapters 5 and 6 focus on the collective decision-making in relation to concrete cases of complaints and images.

The Advertising Standards Authority (The ASA)

The ASA was established in 1962 and implements rules created by *The Committee of Advertising Practice* (CAP), which builds on *The ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice*.[63] CAP was established in 1961, an industry body shaped by *The Advertising Association* in the United Kingdom.[64] CAP works within the ASA and the staff shares an open office landscape in central London, but CAP is directed towards the industry while the ASA is directed towards the general public and takes care of both complaints from the public and from other industry players (usually competitors) about advertisements. CAP should not be seen as a separate entity, but as a part of the ASA system. When advertisements are misleading, the ASA has legal backups, if the advertisers do not follow their decisions. In cases of taste and decency (mostly referred to as harm and offence), such back ups are not used, because they are seen as cases of more subjective judgment (Boddewyn 1991; Fieldwork 2006).[65] The ASA only handled non-broadcast advertisement for many years, but has handled both broadcast and non-broadcast advertisements since 2004. The ASA has a large staff that deals with complaints on a daily basis. The workforce of the ASA is about one hundred, including CAP, the ASA staff, administrators, management groups and the ASA council members.[66] It is the everyday staff of the ASA, split up in different teams, that handle the complaints first of all and the council that makes the final decision. The council meets once a month but also makes decisions online several times every month. The council members are paid £ 15,000 per year.[67] The final and official formulations of the decisions are published on their website. The ASA is financed by a 0.1 percent levy on all advertisements, except for Royal Mail mailsort contracts for which the levy is 0.2 percent. This gave the ASA an income of £ 7,846,000 in 2008.[68] The levy is

[63] http://www.asa.org.uk/asa/about/history/, 1 August 2009.

[64] See Boddewyn (1983) for a previous description of how the ASA is organized and the role of outside participation. Broadly speaking, the description is still valid in how it describes the role of the everyday staff and the council at the ASA. One similarity is that two thirds of the council members still do not come from the advertising industry (see *40 years of effective self-regulation: Advertising Standards Authority Annual Report 2001,* document downloaded from the ASA website http://www.asa.org.uk, 7 September 2006*; The Advertising Standards Authority's Annual Report 2008*, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx, 21 December 2009.

[65] In 2008 the ASA received 24,988 complaints (about 15,239 advertisements), within remit, of which 31 percent where about offensiveness, 45.4% about misleadingness, 10.3% about harm, 13.1 % were so called miscellaneous. Some cases may be labelled as being about offensiveness *and* harm. The same year, 5 percent were industry complaints and the rest were complaints from the public, which is described as a normal distribution. Cases of offensiveness normally receive more complaints per advertisement than cases of misleadingness. *The Advertising Standards Authority's Annual Report 2008*, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx, 21 December 2009.

[66] See e.g. the ASA's Annual Reports of 2004 and 2005 on the amount of staff.

[67] *The Advertising Standards Authority's Annual Report 2008*, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx, 21 December 2009.

[68] Excluding interest, which gave an additional income of about £ 80 000 that year, see *The Advertising Standards Authority's Annual Report 2008*, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx, 21 December 2009.

collected by *The Advertising Standards Board of Finance* (Asbof), and since 2004 also from *The Broadcast Advertising Standards Board of Finance* (Basbof), both of which has been chaired by Winston Fletcher 1999-2009 (Asbof), 2004-2009 (Basbof), who comes from the advertising industry.[69] Asbof appoints together with Basbof the chairman of the ASA council (Lord Borrie 2001-2007), the chairman of CAP and BCAP (Andrew Brown 1999-), as well as the Independent reviewer (Sir John Caines 1999-2009) of the ASA. The boards of Asbof and Basbof consist of representatives of the industry and some of their members are the same.

The Trade Ethical Council against Sexism in Advertising (ERK)

ERK was established in 1988. It was one of several self-regulators of advertising in Sweden, dealing with both broadcast and non-broadcast advertisements. ERK and *The Council on Market Ethics* (MER), established in 1989, were, however, the two bodies dealing with advertising complaints in relation to advertisers in *general*. These two bodies existed until January 2009. There is however an ethical council on direct marketing and 13 other advertising self-regulatory bodies, which still exist, dealing with *specific* trade issues e.g. alcohol and pharmaceuticals. ERK's secretary for many years explains the establishment of ERK in the following way:

> In the 70's, the Market Court established that the Market Law was not applicable to gender discriminatory advertisements. It was trying an advertisement for a detergent, or engine cleanser, lubricant, it's name was CRC, and there was an image of a spray bottle and a relatively lightly dressed woman, in classical 70's, or perhaps one should say 80's, style, who was a clear eye-catcher, so to speak. The Market Court then established that the Market Law was not applicable, so they could not deal with the case, and then there was a lively debate during the 70's and 80's whether or not to legislate against gender discriminatory advertisements, and at the end of the 80's the industry decided to clear up its own mess. And it is no secret that the industry wants to avoid legislation, because one does not think it would be more effective, but a blunter, instrument. So I suppose that is the explanation why gender discriminatory issues were separated from other issues, because at approximately the same time MER was shaped, however, which may seem a bit strange, but that is the background to why ERK is a separate council, in its own line, but that may seem a bit silly sometimes. But at the same time it is a very specific issue, so it works to have it separated, since it is very particular. It is an area of concern which requires an enormous engagement of the people of the council. And I usually say, because sometimes the council is criticized for not having members specialized on media, that is gender and media theory, but I usually say that the most important thing is to be dedicated.

[69] See *The Thirty Fourth Annual Report 2008/2009*, from Asbof, at http://www.asbof.co.uk/operation.htm#, 17 February 2010.

Even though ERK dealt with a specialized area of complaints, sexism and gender discrimination in advertisements (excluding advertisements for products that could be seen as unethical in themselves, such as pornography), while MER dealt with the rest, ERK was the dominating body. 1989-2008 they received 4904 complaints, dealing with approximately 2500-3000 cases of advertisements[70], while MER dealt with 244 cases in total from 1989-2008, even though there may have been more complaints than that, i.e. several people complaining about the same advertisement.[71] Gender related issues in advertisements have dominated the media debate about advertising self-regulation in Sweden. This means that ERK has been exposed in the media as well, and more so than MER.[72] ERK and MER were financed and organized by their stakeholders, i.e. the responsible parties, which consisted of some advertisers and media representatives, as well as a couple of representatives of the agencies. None of the organizations have people working full time for them only.

Since January 2009, when both ERK and MER stopped existing, their work has been incorporated into a new self-regulatory body called *The Advertising Ombudsman*. This body is financed by a greater number of stakeholders from the advertising industry, consisting of advertisers and media representatives. It is, however, voluntary to join as a paying member. There is no levy on advertisements and advertising time for advertisers in Sweden as there is in the United Kingdom. The new organization states that it wants to promote a high level of ethics in advertising and that it follows the ICC rules.[73] Moreover, it seems to have incorporated some of the established practice of ERK by using their specific codes on gender related complaint issues, which is an elaboration of what is written on the subject in the ICC rules.[74] It is also stated in their new decrees that they may follow established practice within specific areas.[75] Some of the former council members of ERK are now council members of the new regulatory body.[76] The new organization has links to the former decisions made by ERK and MER, published on their websites, which indicate that these deci-

[70] 2169 cases of advertising campaigns 1995-2008, which means that 2500-3000 is a mere estimation made by me for the whole period 1989-2008, www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, 14 December 2009.
[71] www.marknadsetiskaradet.org, 3 March 2009.
[72] According to one of the council members of ERK, interviewed in 2005, MER was not as efficient as ERK in making itself known. Searching for the organizations in the articles of the Internet versions of some of the largest newspapers in Sweden, Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet, Expressen, Svenska Dagbladet and Sydsvenskan, indicates this as well. I found that all of them gave at least twice as many hits, but two of the papers gave six to twelve times as many hits, for ERK compared to MER (searching the full names).
[73] http://www.reklamombudsmannen.org/anmal_reklam.aspx, 17 May 2009.
[74] See e.g.:
http://www.reklamombudsmannen.org/Uttalanden/Uttalande.aspx?page_id=107, 18 May 2009, and
http://www.reklamombudsmannen.org/Uttalanden/Uttalande.aspx?page_id=105, 18 May 2009.
[75] http://www.reklamombudsmannen.org/om_ro/ro_och_rons_instruktion.aspx, 14 December 2009.
[76] http://www.reklamombudsmannen.org/om_ro/opinionsnamnd.aspx, 17 May 2009.

sions are not obsolete in relation to current industry ethics. Even though the self-regulatory body of the Swedish case is changed, the analysis of ERK still provides knowledge about how decisions have been made and in relation to what. It may also give us insights about why it disappeared. My study is however not about organizational change.[77]

Comparing Contexts

The Swedish and the British regulatory bodies are organized and financed in different ways and have developed in different contexts. The justice systems of the two countries differ with their different focus on praxis; the making of laws and the interpretations of the written law are often described as being more flexible in the United Kingdom than in Sweden, as the United Kingdom has the combination of common law, i.e. former court decisions, and statutes (Glenn 2000), while Sweden has a system built to a greater extent on written legislation. Another difference is the tradition of gender equality politics, which has been more pronounced in Sweden. In fact, the reason for choosing Sweden is that it was the only country that had a specific council for gender discriminatory advertising and has often been looked upon as a model country of gender equality politics.[78] Regardless of this, Sweden is, compared to the other Nordic countries, the only country *without* any legislation against sexism in advertisements at all.[79] Sweden is an outlier through its historical focus on gender politics, while minimizing these types of legal restrictions. Even if Sweden is different from the other Nordic countries in this respect; it is similar to the United Kingdom in its more liberal stance on the issue of advertising regulation. In addition, the Swedish broadcasting media are to some extent part of the British self-regulatory system, because TV3 and Channel 5 (Kanal 5) are broadcast from the United Kingdom and, as a consequence, follow British broadcasting regulation, which means that the ASA deals with complaints against advertisements broadcast on these channels.

The reason for choosing the United Kingdom is that the *Advertising Standards Authority* there is often seen as a model for self-regulation[80]; its organiza-

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[77] A Consumer Ombudsman exists and existed before, during and after MER and ERK, but deals only with misleading advertisements. In these cases the ICC codes overlap to a great extent with the law, which also protects the consumer from misleading advertisements. For an account of how the Swedish Consumer Ombudsman dealt with advertisements in the 1980's, see Boddewyn (1988:247-265; 1992:115-118).

[78] At least when it comes to parliamentary representation for women (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Norgaard and York 2005) and parental leave for women as well as men (Haas and Hwang 1995).

[79] See e.g. *Kommittédirektiv Dir. 2006:82, Könsdiskriminerande reklam, Beslut vid regeringssammanträde den 27 juli 2006*, Committee Directive 2006:82, Sex Discriminating Advertisements, Decision at Government Meeting July 27 2006, http://www.sou.gov.se/pdf/2006/Dir%202006_82.pdf, 15 December 2009.

[80] Boddewyn gives a few examples of countries that have followed their example (1988:267). Today, the ASA also initiates new member states of the European Union in their practices according to the chairman's introduction from *The Advertising Standards Annual Report 2004*,

tional structure resembles "the best practice" of self-regulation as described by the EASA[81], and some marketing researchers describe it as one of the most effective (Boddewyn 1992; Harker and Wiggs 2000). In addition, the country's capital is one of the most globalized cities in the world, with New York and Tokyo (Sassen 2001; Scott 1997). Like other global cities, it generates extensive creative industries and cultural economies, often described as the hubs of reflexive modernity in which advertising is a key player (Lash and Urry 1994; cf. Nixon 2003). London is also one of the world's most ethnically diverse, and the European Union's most densely populated, areas. Audiences and complainants of advertisements, of course, do not always live in the capital city, but as the capital inhabit a large proportion of the population, its characteristics are important. Last but not least, the ASA recruits two thirds of its council members from the public and has a great number of staff that also participates in the decision-process. ERK has none of these things. This creates a variation in my material in how the decision-processes are organized, which deepens the understanding of the phenomenon (Aspers 2007:92-93; Becker 1998a:85-88; cf. Glaser and Strauss 2006 [1967]:55-58; Knorr Cetina 1999:22; Platt 1992:41; Ritchie, Lewis and Elam 2003:78-80).This is not least because it allows the researcher to distinguish patterns that she would not otherwise see, and the ability to point them out. Figure 4.1 summarizes the important characteristics and differences between the two organizations.

especially p. 27, 6-7, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx, 4 January 2010. What is more, Anders Ericson, president of the Association of Swedish Advertisers, calls the British system fantastic, http://www.dn.se/ekonomi/branschen-vill-ha-reklamombudsman-1.755480, 15 January 2008. When I chose the ASA, Sweden seemed to be an exception however, judging by the way advertising self-regulation was organized and practiced. The new organization is more alike the ASA than was ERK, but still far from similar.

[81] *EASA Self-regulation: A Statement of Common Principles & Operating Standards of Best Practice,* June 13 2002, http://www.asa.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C6489DC8-1D8C-43EA-947C-51A05934944B/0/EASA_Common_Principles.pdf

Sweden/ERK= specialized, small org.	The UK /The ASA= broad, large org.
Country as role model for gender politics	Advertising self-regulatory organization (ASRO) as role model for advertising self-regulation
ASRO with gender focus	ASRO with no gender focus, the issue is discussed like other questions of offence
ASRO funded by voluntary members	ASRO funded by non-voluntary levy on advertisements
No everyday staff at ASRO, council members not paid by organization, but paid part-time secretary, assistant and paid chairman	Everyday staff at ASRO, employed and paid; council members, employed and paid part-time
Context features of viewers: No obvious global city features in capital of country	Context features of viewers: Global city features in capital of country (creativity intensive, reflexivity intense, ethnically diverse, densely populated)
None of the council members of the ASRO are recruited from the public, i.e. all of them belong to the advertising industry	Council members of the ASRO are mainly recruited from 'the public', i.e. outside the advertising industry (albeit an elite group of the public)

Figure 4.1. *Summary of variation between the self-regulatory organizations*

In order to explore the types of ethical evaluations that are developed in the decision-makings including gender related issues and reflexivity, the two countries make a good combination. The two cases of self-regulatory bodies illuminate each other through their different, but not too different, contexts. As an entity, the two organizations set in different countries can be seen as giving a broader picture of the phenomenon of self-regulation than if the study had focused on the organization in one country alone. It is not evident that countries per se are important. However, countries often provide frameworks for value traditions, which should not be disregarded (cf. Bourdieu 1998 [1994]; Moody and Thévenot 2000). In the decision-processes of advertising self-regulatory bodies, decision-makers relate to viewers of a country, in which e.g. a particular media culture may play a role in evaluating their stance towards particular advertisements.

"Is it Effective?"

The question of whether advertising self-regulation is effective is often asked, which is why I will address the issue here, even though this study is not an evaluative one. I also bring up this subject because it helps me describe the work of the advertising self-regulatory bodies and the boundaries of this study. In this study, I analyse *the processes of decision-making* by the practitioners of self-

regulation (cf. Gupta and Lad 1983:421-422), not to judge if self-regulation is effective in terms of diminishing unethical advertisements, but to understand the evaluations that are made of the influence of images on people in terms of offence and gender discrimination. I do this, however, by talking to decision-makers about these processes, and reading documents related to them. I end with an argument about how we should conceptualize effectiveness in relation to justification in this study.

Other studies have focused on effectiveness; comparisons have e.g. been made between countries about how advertising self-regulation works in terms of effectiveness, by marketing researcher Debra Harker, and collaborators (Harker 2000; 2002; 2003; Harker and Harker 2000; Harker and Wiggs 2000; Harker, Wiggs and Harker 2005) and Jean J. Boddewyn (1988; 1989; 1991; 1992). These studies are, however, always quite descriptive, none of them focus on the questions that I explore in this study, and they are mainly concerned with what the industry should do in order to develop effective advertising self-regulation.[82]

As Gupta and Lad point out (1983:419), the question about the effectiveness of self-regulation always depend on what perspective you take, for whom, when and in relation to what purpose it is effective. For the advertising industry, effectiveness is important mainly as a means to decrease the risk for legislation. But when asking about effectiveness, what is often implied is if advertisers and agencies follow the decisions of the advertising self-regulatory bodies. According to Boddewyn (1989), the large part of advertisers follow the self-regulatory rulings, which means that self-regulation is effective in enforcing their decisions. But we do not know if this has an impact on the display of certain types of images. Misleading advertisements seemed to have decreased in the United Kingdom in 1989, when Boddewyn published his study. He considered this a sign of effectiveness. In this dissertation, we are interested in offensive advertisements, including gender (discrimination), issues that are more problematic to "measure" and, as a consequence, it is difficult to say if they have increased or decreased. This is because the things that people may see as offensive and gender discriminatory can change. My informants also argue that most advertisers follow the outcome of a decision (Fieldwork 2004-2006), even though there are some famous exceptions such as Ryanair (ASA), Sisley (ERK) and French Connection ("FCUK") (ASA) (cf. Amy-Chinn 2007), which reappear as offenders of the codes. A telling example is that French Connection once published an advertisement with the text "FCUK the Advertising Standards Authority", which was banned by the ASA in addition to a chain of advertisements featuring the letters FCUK.[83]

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[82] My approach is not prescriptive and is not intended to be merely descriptive. I intend instead to make a theoretically informed sociological analysis of advertising self-regulation.
[83] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/140490.stm, 28 July 1998, downloaded 23 November 2010. An ASA adjudication from 12 January 2005 exemplify when complaints about an advertisement from French Connection was upheld, because it used the expression FCUK, http://www.asa.org.uk/ASA-action/Adjudications.aspx, available until January 2010.

Staff members of the ASA told me that cases of offence are hard to judge but easier to handle than cases of misleadingness, because there is not as much evidence to consider. The staff has to be more thorough and precise in their investigations of misleadingness. Staff members in such cases can also risk blame for being wrong, whereas in cases of offence, it is possible to claim that the decision is a matter of subjective judgement. A council member stresses, in the same vein, that the cases of offence are more difficult intellectually and the ones she finds more interesting, even though the cases of misleadingness are more time-consuming and can be technically difficult. In the cases of misleadingness the staff does all the preparatory work for the council, while in the cases of offence, the council will have more to discuss. In the cases of offence, the focus is more on the difficulty of interpreting than finding evidence. This is true also at ERK, which, to recall, is an organization that does not handle misleading advertisements at all.

The advertising industry is here defined as all the actors who contribute to the displaying of advertisements, even if merely by financing their making or providing the media space for these still or moving images. The term *advertising industry* includes advertisers and sellers of advertising space as well as the advertising agencies.[84] This is important not least because it is the advertisers, the buyers of advertising products and advertising space in various media, that are *made* responsible by the self-regulatory bodies for how the advertising image looks; the agencies are only indirectly held accountable. Advertisers must take responsibility for how the advertisements are shaped, even if this is often done by agencies. The ASA also makes broadcasting media responsible, and they must remove banned advertisements. Advertisers are punished by supposedly bad publicity. Their advertisement cannot be shown. At the ASA, there may also be forced pre-checking of future advertisements.[85]

According to Harker and Wiggs (2000:4-5), to achieve effective advertising self-regulation, *the public* should be involved in the decision-process as well as *agencies* and *the media*. If we relate this to the organizations of this study, we can establish the following: The public is involved in the decision-process to a greater extent at the ASA in the United Kingdom than at ERK in Sweden, as mentioned above. At the ASA, there are representatives from the public in the council, at least if by that we mean that two thirds are recruited from outside the advertising industry. These people may nevertheless have had experience dealing with advertising in some way. They all come from highly educated and powerful/prestigious positions such as professor/chair of department/museum and headteacher (cf. Boddewyn 1983; 1988; Fieldwork 2006).[86] At ERK, no

[84]The advertising world consists of three parts: the advertisers, the media and the agencies (Fletcher 2008; Moeran 1996). Advertisers belong to different industries, but in the act of advertising their products, the advertisers form a necessary part of the advertising industry (cf. Becker 1982; 1998a).

[85] http://www.asa.org.uk/Media-Centre/2006/The-Copy-Consultant.aspx.

[86] To give an example, the following professions/titles were represented in the 2006 council (ASA): Lord (Labour member, lawyer); Partner, Media Liaisons; Managing Director, Boots Opticians; Worldwide Strategic Planning Director, Publicis Ltd; Non-executive Director of

representatives of the public have been involved.[87] As I pointed out, agencies are not involved as parties of the process in any of the countries, since it is the advertisers that are seen as responsible. The self-regulatory bodies do, however, provide education for people at agencies. People from agencies or with experience from agencies are sometimes represented in the councils. When it comes to the media, it is involved in Sweden by having representatives on the council. In the United Kingdom, the media type is important if it is targeted and broadcasters are made responsible for advertisements on air. In addition, according to Harker and Wiggs, the system of advertising self-regulation is more effective when the self-regulatory bodies can handle industry complaints separately (2000:5). This is because they consume a lot of council time. Today, all complaints go to the ASA, regardless of who the complainant is, a member of the public or a competitor.[88] The same is true for ERK. The number of (known) industry complaints is, however, quite small.[89]

Boddewyn mentions some problems concerning effectiveness (1989), e.g.: a) people in the industry do not always know the rules, at least not the less experi-

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Enterprise Inns plc, SSL International plc, Imperial Tobacco Group plc, Morrisons Supermarkets plc; Chairman, Broadcasters' Audience Research Board; Visiting Professor; Director, National Media Museum; Professor; Independent consultant on corporate responsibility Former CEO, Portman Group; Former Haematologist; Chief Executive Officer, Stephenson Harwood; Headteacher, at a high school; Co-director, for a charity; Public Policy Director, at a large bank; Fundraising Manager, for specific trust, see *The ASA Annual Report 2006*, downloadable from their website for five years, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx. There were 16 council members including the chairman; 7 women and 9 men, in 2006. Only twelve make decisions at a time, because they are separated into the ASA non-broadcast council and broadcast council. Nine council members are on both councils.

[87] In November 2005, the following people were represented in the council of the ASA, according to the then current website: Association of Swedish Advertisers (Sveriges Annonsörer), Swedish Association of Advertising Agencies (Sveriges Reklamförbund), The Swedish Media Publishers' Association (Svenska Tidningsutgivareföreningen), The Swedish Magazine Publisher Association (Sveriges Tidskrifter), The Swedish Radio Broadcaster's Association (Radioutgivareföreningen), SF Media, The Swedish Directmarketing Association (SWEDMA), TV 3, TV 4, Kanal 5 and The Outdoor Media Corporations (Utomhusbolagen: Clear Channel and JC Decaux). There were 15 council members including substitutes in 2005 and a chairman and deputy chairman; 10 were women and 7 were men, including all. The chairmen are judges. The secretary was from the Association of Swedish Advertisers from 1995 and to the end. Professions represented were for example: lawyer, journalist, marketing manager, publisher, pr-consultant, project manager, editor, manager of communications, sales manager, and art director/creative director.

[88] The ASA does however require more from an industry complaint in terms of substantiation.

[89] If a company, i.e. a potential competitor, complains, the ASA will always name the complainant. This means that the advertiser will know who have made the complaint. The ASA would also require more of the reasons to challenge the advert. If a company claims that that the advertising company is not correct in claiming to produce the best or most efficient vacuum cleaner, the ASA would ask the company to give them some proof, a test or similar, that supports their complaint. Otherwise, such complaints from competitors could spoil the business of a company. With the ordinary public, however, the ASA would not require the complainant to provide a test or the equivalent, but would look it up themselves; the public can be looser in their claims.

enced, because it takes some time to be socialized by people in the field; b) the public do not always complain or know where to complain even if they have an objection to the ad. According to Boddewyn, it still remains to study how well the industry adheres to the norms of the self-regulators. This is probably still true. The present study does not study effectiveness as defined above; I have chosen instead to examine how the self-regulators interpret and adhere to the norms/ethics of the public. This is a more interesting question from a societal and sociological point of view. The question of how well the self-regulators impose their norms is perhaps more interesting for the industry, but may hide, or make one forget, the importance of the preceding question about how the decision-makers relate to the public. Both the oral and written goals and justifications of ASA and ERK show an awareness of this issue. Writing in the 2006 *Annual Report* of the ASA, Lord Borrie, who was then Chairman of the ASA Council wrote: "[O]ur effectiveness should not be measured merely by the number of complaints that we receive, or our speed of response. We need to be ready to address the differing concerns of consumers and the changing face of the industry we regulate."[90]

Complaints from the public also raise important issues of effectiveness, such as if self-regulation is effective when it comes to changing gender roles and stereotypes in images. There have been studies focusing on the way that the ASA in the UK deals with cases about offensiveness (taste and decency) in ads, sometimes also with a focus on gender issues, worldwide and prescriptive (Boddewyn 1991), evaluating the effectiveness of the ASA (Amy-Chinn 2006; 2007; Cronin 2004a), or the effectiveness of ERK (Svensson 2008). Both Cronin and Amy-Chinn argue in their research that the ASA is not effective or useful, when it comes to dealing with this issue.[91] Svensson argues in a report that ERK is not enough, laws are needed. The ASA and ERK do not look at larger bodies of images, so their decisions are not effective in detecting and decreasing *subtler* patterns of gender in images that build on repetition (cf. Amy-Chinn 2007; Boddewyn 1991:29; Dahlberg 2007; Goffman 1979 [1976]), unless they acknowledge a public mood that responds to this, or that they can classify the advertisements as evoking severe offence. ERK judges some gender stereotypes as unacceptable on the basis that they are harmful should they occur often, but these are of less subtle type. ERK may disregard complaints about gender norms, even though both the complaints and advertising type are recur-

[90] Pdf of *The Advertising Standards Authority Annual Report 2006*, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx.

[91] Although the ASA argues for its existence by claiming that they are better at adjusting to cultural changes in society than the courts, Cronin questions its willingness to adjust to changes in public opinion (Cronin 2004a:44). Amy-Chinn (2006; 2007) proposes that the ASA's decisions enforce sexist gender norms because their task is to follow the general opinion, not to question it, and the prevailing attitude is e.g. that most people like to look at female bodies, as the ASA writes in its own study *Herself Reappraised* (Advertising Standards Authority 1990); the general public finds them more beautiful than male bodies, as Amy-Chinn also points out. As a consequence, it is justified to expose female bodies to a greater extent than male bodies in advertisements. Amy-Chinn argues the decisions of the ASA will rather increase than decrease offence (2007).

ring. Typical examples are complaints about beauty ideals in underwear advertisements. Such images are generally accepted by ERK if they are not objectifying to a higher degree and stereotyping in a relatively clear way. It all depends, I argue, on what can be a justified decision, which in turn may depend on the context of decision-making.

According to my analysis, effectiveness is a part of justification. Analysing the process of advertising self-regulatory decision-making in relation to justification rather than effectiveness creates deeper insights about the phenomenon of self-regulation in the two countries. This also means that the decisions are not directed towards effectiveness per se, but rather towards justification. Creating an organizational structure for the decisions is, of course, a way to make any activity more effective, but it also provides legitimacy by the ways the decisions are justified. The organizations provide means to relate to the *unknown other*. In the following I provide the instances of the decision-processes that structure the work of the people I have studied.

The Organization of the Decision-processes at the ASA

The people of the ASA consist of staff, the Council members and the management. The staff members at the ASA tell me when I visit their office in London that the basic idea of their work process is to back up the propositions made by them—i.e. suggested ways of moving forward with the complaints—by several pieces of information. This happens at every step of the decision-process. The pieces of information may consist of former cases including complaints, adjudications and images, and sometimes of expert advice. An example of expert advice used in cases of offence is the survey quoted at the beginning of this dissertation on people's perception of swearwords. Otherwise, it is more common to consult particular experts in issues of misleadingness, who then report on the validity of a particular statement in an advertisement. A typical example would be an advertisement claiming to affect the body in specific ways, by e.g. making you slim, taking away wrinkles, or something similar.

Each complaint has a file that includes the advertisement itself, the complaint, a description of the target group of the advertisement if there is one, made by the media source, a so-called action sheet, an allocation sheet, e-mails including comments from the council members on a website called *Council online*, where council members regularly make comments and vote on cases online, letters to complainant and advertiser, statements from complainants and advertisers (when received), and documents with help notes about the particular subject under investigation. The relevant code clauses are also chosen to fit the specific case.

At the ASA, the complaint first reaches the *Complaint reception team*, which consists of five people. They sort out clear non-breaches of the code, and close those cases (these do not include cases of offensiveness, since these tend to be complex); they classify the valid complaints without making any decisions. The Complaint reception team sends the latter complaints to one of the so called

Complaints teams. There are four Complaints teams with four to five people in each team. The Complaints teams also double check the classifications and descriptions of the case made by the Complaint reception team. They sort out cases that are outside the remit of their task—types of commercial (and non-commercial) messages they do not regulate—and, if it is easy to decide that an advertisement does not breach the code, the case is closed (they do not close cases of offence, either). Otherwise, an executive of the relevant Complaints team decides whether the case needs investigation, in which case it is sent directly to one of the *Investigations teams*.

The content of the file is checked by the manager of one of the complaints teams, before it is sent further. The role of the manager of the complaints team is to guide the executives, if needed, but also to check their recommendations so that they are correct. One of the team managers tells me when I ask if she follows a check list, that there is nothing written in terms of criteria but that she checks that copies are saved and that all of the complainant's points are acknowledged by the executive. The manager also checks to make certain that the correct code clauses are included, as the complaints executives have to include those before the case is sent to one of the Investigations teams. The code clauses are also the points for investigation, so it is important that the right ones are addressed. Otherwise, if something has been misunderstood, there would be a risk of complaint from the complainant that they have missed the point he or she was trying to make and this could lead to more work for the ASA. The relevant code clauses in this study are those concerning offence/decency, but also social responsibility and harm when they are related to cases of offence/decency.[92] This means that the staff must develop an interpre-

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[92] The CAP codes relevant for this study, for non-broadcast advertisements:
"2 Principles
2.2. All marketing communications should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and to society."
"5 Decency (i.e. avoiding serious or widespread offence)
5.1. Marketing communications should contain nothing that is likely to cause serious or widespread offence. Particular care should be taken to avoid causing offence on the grounds of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. Compliance with the Code will be judged on the context, medium, audience, product and prevailing standards of decency.
5.2. Marketing communications may be distasteful without necessarily conflicting with 5.1 above. Marketers are urged to consider public sensitivities before using potentially offensive material.
5.3. The fact that a particular product is offensive to some people is not sufficient grounds for objecting to a marketing communication for it."
"10 Safety
10.1. Marketing communications should not condone or encourage unsafe practices. Particular care should be taken with marketing communications addressed to or depicting children (see section 47)."
"11 Violence and anti-social behaviour
11.1. Marketing communications should contain nothing that condones or is likely to provoke violence or anti-social behaviour."
The BCAP codes relevant for this study, broadcast advertisements:
"Television Advertising Code - section 6 - harm and offence
Background

tative skill that is meaningful in relation to the established codes as well as the complainants. Such a skill also comes into play in the letters that are sent to complainants by the ASA. Staff members write these based on standardized letters but they are now tailored in a more personal way, as this seems to work better.

The Complaints team executive sends a letter to the complainant after a decision has been made to send the case to investigation or to close it. The complainant may reply if desired. For comparison and, if possible, consistency, the complaints team executive looks up previous cases by searching in the appropriate databases and then attach those to the case. Normally, two or three such examples are sufficient. Sometimes, there might only be one, and sometimes it would be relevant to attach more than three because the adjudications have been different. A team manager tells me she would make sure that these are good precedent cases. If the case is about a particular area, so called "help notes" about this area would also be attached; these are notes provided by CAP that explain how the ASA has looked upon a specific area, such as religion and offence.[93] These help notes are not binding for the council-members of the ASA, but they give both decision-makers as well as the industry an idea of how to consider a specific concern, as they can be found on a public website.

6.i. (1) The rules in this Section (and in 7.3: Harm and Distress to Children) are intended to prevent advertising leading to harm. They are also to prevent advertising causing offence to viewers generally or to particular groups in society (for example by causing significant distress, disgust or insult, or by offending against widespread public feeling).
The ASA and BCAP will not act, however, where advertising is simply criticized for not being in 'good taste' unless the material also offends against generally accepted moral, social or cultural standards. Apart from freedom of speech considerations, there are often large and sometimes contradictory differences in views about what constitutes 'bad taste' or what should be deplored. Nevertheless, licensees may wish to make judgements about matters of taste in order to cater for their particular audiences.
(2) The use of humour may reduce the risk of offence in borderline cases. But where there is a risk of significant offence, humour will rarely help. Nor will it usually reduce the likelihood of harmful influence, particularly on children.
(3)There are additional rules about health, safety and social harm which apply to all advertising but which are focused on particular issues or categories of product or service (such as Driving Standards, Alcohol, Medicines, Food or Lotteries, Pools & Bingo)."
"6.1 Offence
6.1. Advertisements must not cause serious or widespread offence against generally accepted moral, social or cultural standards, or offend against public feeling"
"6.2 Violence and cruelty
6.2. (a) Advertisements must not encourage or condone violence or cruelty; (b) Gratuitous and realistic portrayals of cruel or irresponsible treatment of people or animals are not acceptable"
"6.6 Harmful or negative stereotypes
6.6. Advertisements must not prejudice respect for human dignity or humiliate, stigmatise or undermine the standing of identifiable groups of people"
These codes could be found on the CAP website: http://bcap.org.uk/The-Codes/Key-principles.aspx, 27 February 2010.
[93] http://copyadvice.co.uk/Ad-Advice/Help-Notes/Religious-Offence.aspx, 9 February 2010. These particular help notes were updated in 2003.

The individual executives work with specific letters, which means they will get all the cases involving advertisers whose name begin for example with the letters A-C. This is an advantage because it makes the work process more efficient when the same executive contacts the same advertiser the second time, because he or she knows whom to contact, and how. The Complaints team executive makes a recommendation either to investigate or not to investigate. In the latter case, it is the ASA Council that makes the final decision online, on a website, about whether to investigate or go with the recommendation of the Complaints team. When a case is not proposed for investigation, this decision is not normally published on the website, apart from those the ASA chooses to write about in their Annual Reports. Cases of offence always reach the Council online, i.e. they are not closed down quickly and easily as some cases are, unless the complainant has provided incomplete information. The case goes to one of the Investigation teams if the council decides this.

Every week, the council makes decisions about cases on Council online, including both broadcast and non-broadcast advertisements. The council members look at the cases and the recommendations of the Complaints team executive and write online comments about the recommendations. They can also make more elaborate remarks. They do not see each other's statements until after they have all commented. All of the members' comments come via e-mail to the managers of the Complaints teams. The complaints managers talk with the ASA council chairman once a week about the council members' written input. In principle, only one of the members of the council needs to argue for investigation. The council members do not have to justify their evaluation of the case at this point; if they say that they do not feel good about the advertisement that is enough, in theory, for investigation to come about. If a council member argues for investigation and the chairman of the council thinks investigation is not necessary, it is the task of the complaint manager to phone the council member and persuade the person to change his or her mind. Normally this is done if only one or two of the council members have had comments against the recommendation. Otherwise, if there are more people concerned amongst the council members, the case will go to Investigations.

The Investigation team then develops a recommendation for a decision, which the council members will be able to comment on Council online. There are four Investigation teams and four people in each group. First, the Investigation team executive looks at all the evidence in the file, as well as previous decisions on similar cases. The next step is to write a letter to the advertiser, explaining the issue and the codes that are seen as relevant to the complaints. If it is a broadcast advertisement, the broadcaster also receives a letter. The recommendation that the Investigation team plans to give to the council is first sent to the complainant(s), advertiser and, when relevant, broadcaster. Sometimes, a second recommendation is written after online comments from the council. The council then votes online. If there is a tied vote, or if the chairman finds it appropriate for other reasons (for example, if the case is of principal interest or there are council members who are particularly concerned) the case will be dealt with face-to-face at the council meeting at the office in London. (Some cases of

lesser importance may be informally resolved by one of the Investigation teams.) There is an opportunity for the parties involved in the process (the complainant or advertiser) to contest the decision of the ASA council by complaining to the so-called Independent reviewer. This reviewer only makes recommendations, however, and the Council is not bound to change their decision even if the Independent reviewer disagrees with it.

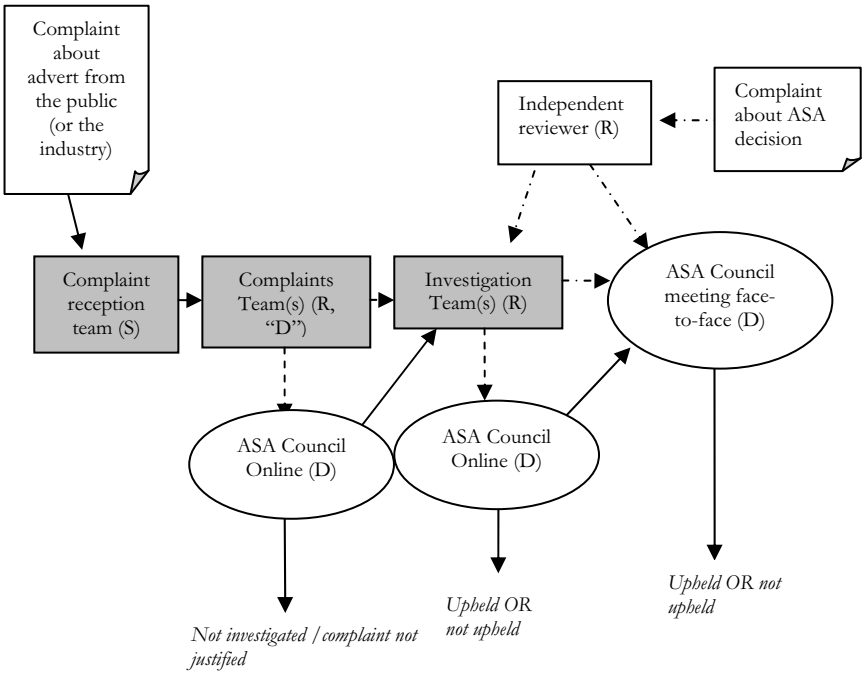


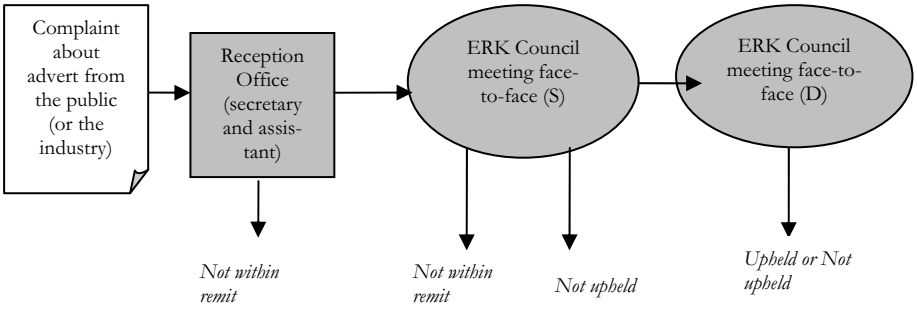
Figure 4.2. *The sequence of a case at the ASA*—the various teams, the council and the Independent reviewer. Illustration of the process of decision-making at the ASA, disregarding the easier cases mentioned when the teams can close cases or make informal investigations (the easy cases do not include cases of offence). The abbreviation S=Sorting function, R=Recommending function, D=Decision-making function, "D"=can decide to investigate (positive decision) but negative decisions need to be confirmed by the council. All cases of offence are seen by the council.[94]

When the decision has been made after investigation, it will be published on the ASA website. All of the decisions after investigation are published, regardless of whether they are upheld. The organization can also raise complaints themselves, but this is uncommon.[95]

[94] See also e.g. *The ASA Annual Report 2003, (booklet)*:5.
[95] The Complaint reception team, the four Complaints teams and four Investigation teams, including their managers, and the council, make up the staff of the ASA. There is however also one head of all of the Complaints teams and one head of all of the Investigation teams, above the team managers, as well as a separate management group, consisting of six people,

The Organization of the Decision-process at ERK

In Sweden, at ERK, the process is much shorter in terms of work groups involved, because the council both sorts the complaints and makes decisions. It does not, however, mean that ERK deals more quickly with complaints. Compared to the ASA, ERK has more specific codes related to gender roles.[96] Between council meetings, the secretary sorts out cases that are obviously outside of the remit of ERK and presents the other cases to the council. Cases that are sorted out at the first council meeting will not be dealt with. The cases that are still not obvious are dealt with at two meetings. In complaint cases within remit that have the slightest chance of being upheld, ERK asks the advertiser to make a statement before a decision can be made; this occurs between meetings. It may sometimes take a long time to get a statement from the advertiser. Normally ERK will wait for a statement, but if they do not receive one after three reminders, they will make a decision. Only upheld cases are continuously published on the ERK website.



in 2006. Including the chairman, this is in total 62 people. The ASA has some administrative staff in addition to this as well as the CAP teams and CAP management group. There are three CAP teams called the code policy team, the monitoring team and the compliance team.

[96] ERK writes the following about the criteria they followed in their activity of making decisions, in paste tense after it had been shut down: "When judging advertisements that have received complaints, ERK used *The International Chamber of Commerce* (ICC) codes of advertising, which e.g. prescribe that advertisements shall be shaped with duly sense of social responsibility. According to *Article 4, point 1*, in the ICC rules, advertisements are not allowed to be discriminatory of e.g. sex. In addition to this, ERK used three specific criteria for gender discriminatory advertisements:
Advertisements that display women or men as pure sex objects and which can be seen as offensive (sexist advertisements).
Advertisements which preserve an obsolete view on gender roles and thereby display women or men in a demeaning (offensive, my addition) way (gender stereotyping advertisements).
Advertisements that in any other demeaning (offensive, my addition) way is apparently gender discriminatory of women or men."
Source: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, 26 February 2010.

Figure 4.3. *Illustration of the process of decision-making at ERK.* S=Sorting function, D=Decision-making function. The image is simplified as the council meetings involve both sorting and decision-making.

When ERK receives a complaint, they decide if it is worth bothering an advertiser about it or if they can decide right away that they will not uphold the complaint. Sometimes, council members tell me, they receive "very strange" complaints, in which they think the complainants are putting too much into the advertising image, making irrelevant interpretations that are not of general validity. But at the same time, it is normally enough that one of the council members thinks that the council should consider the complaint.

Sometimes, ERK tells the advertiser they have received a complaint, and asks for a statement, even though the members of the council know beforehand that the complaint will not be upheld. This may happen in cases when ERK wants to publish a statement about why they have not upheld the complaint. Decisions on cases of complaints that have not been upheld are sometimes published, because they are seen as particularly interesting and informative. An important example of a previous decision of such general interest is one of the first annual Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) underwear campaigns, shown before Christmas. The decisions not to uphold the complaints about those advertisements, as well as later H&M Christmas campaigns, are published on their website, with a part of or the whole written grounds of the decisions. When similar images receive complaints, such as subsequent H&M campaigns, ERK would compare with the campaign from 1993, shown in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4. *H&M Christmas Campaign 1993*. The campaign was not banned by ERK, but published as an example on the ERK website.[97]

[97] Source of images: http://www.etiskaradet.org/fallningar/Bilder/HM%2093%20och%2094%20fria.jpg, last downloaded 25 March 2010.

Shifting Modes of Evaluation in Decision-making

As the descriptions of the two organizations show, the decision-process consists of some recurring aspects to which the individual decision-makers have to relate. But how does the individual decision-maker shape her ideas of offence amongst viewers of the public, in relation to her perception of the organization? This is related to whether the organizations, ERK or the ASA, are active or re-active. With this I mean whether they are merely reacting to public opinion or whether they also allow room for decisions that are tailored to foster more gender equal attitudes or practices amongst the public. In the following quote, an ASA council member contemplates how to conceptualize the public in the decision-making, and in relation to what:

> I mean, that criterion of "serious and widespread offence" it's a really good criteria in the sense that it makes you think about whether something is important or not important, in terms of how society works. But what if society is actually quite regressive on that question, you know, what if everybody in England actually has a very juvenile attitude towards sex or women's rights, or gays? Is it the ASA's job to engineer a better society or is it to police the industry; well the ASA is clear, it's the second one, you know our job is to watch the industry. We're not there to improve conservative English people and their relationships or attitudes towards Europe or America.

As stated in the quote above, the decision-makers of the ASA relate to what they imagine to be patterns of the societal mind. This is true also for ERK, but they have code formulations about gender roles that may allow them to deal with gender-related complaints somewhat differently. In the quote above, the council member means when saying "police the industry" that their job is to make the advertising industry (advertisers, publishing media and indirectly the agencies) aware of what the public thinks is acceptable, regardless of whether the ASA as a whole or the individual council members agree on what they think the public thinks. If the general mood is to lessen specific behaviour that exists in society and advertisements of specific kinds are considered to foster that unwanted behaviour, only then is it the job of the self-regulator to prevent this, they argue. They do not police the industry for sexism in advertising if they do not think the general public will be offended by it in a widespread or serious sense, or find it demeaning to women. There are codes, but these are very general and have to be applied from case to case. How the codes are implemented depend on how the decision-makers think the image is most likely to be interpreted by the public. A former chairman of the ERK council says that the meanings of their criteria cannot be fully understood until they apply them to a specific case and that this is not as easy as it may seem from the outside: "Those who think that this is very easy and that it is just a matter of striking

them down should try it themselves for a while, so to speak, to apply this [in practice]". [98]

What decision-makers do is to frame the problem and decide if there is a specific evaluative logic—in this study conceptualized as a world of worth—to deploy or a compromise between evaluative logics to make. These decisions are not necessarily consensus decisions, but rather compromises between value logics or the argument for a specific value; "the reality test" or "the compromise" ends a dispute, according to Boltanski and Thévenot (1999:375).

I have argued that the decision-makers are reflexive. I will now describe how this is the case at the ASA and ERK. Starting with the ASA, I will take examples primarily from one interview to illustrate this point, but I think it mirrors the way that the decision-makers reflect on their work, taken generally. The decision-making is described as mainly detached and time efficient. Council members of the ASA are supposed to say what they think but not be dogmatic, I learned from the interviews. Discussions at the council meetings tend to be short, so members who are accustomed to a slower pace need to adjust to this more *industrial mode* of its decision-making culture. Getting stuck on specific issues and worrying about something too much makes one look "bizarre" in the eyes of the other staff, management and council members, some of the informants tell me directly or indirectly. The council members, as well as the everyday staff of the ASA, have developed a pragmatic stance towards the decision-process. They want to fit in by being professional in the eyes of their colleagues. Council members do not want to suggest things that seem too strange to the management and the members of staff do not want to suggest things that seem out of place to the council members. One council member's comparison with his usual job within the academic world illustrates this. At the ASA, people easily accept losing an argument, he tells me, as opposed to his experiences from academia, where "everybody gets very ANGRY", appearing to allow expressions of the *inspired world of worth*. He adjusts to the ASA logic in a pragmatic way. It seems to have become the way of doing things, because as he says you would "look odd", if you get too emotionally involved, too attached to the case in point. As a consequence, the inspired world of worth of emotional involvement is downplayed amongst the council members and the staff. As the previous quote from the secretary of ERK shows, ERK stresses on the contrary the importance of devotion amongst their council members. These stances of the two organizations represent different relationships with the inspired world of worth, in which emotions and engagement are measures of worthiness, and the industrial world of worth, in which detachment and efficiency are measures of worthiness.

This aspect of detachment reappears in the various interviews among both everyday staff and council members of the ASA. In other words, the norm is to

[98] ()=my comments; []=first order meaning, sometimes not said but implied and understood, sometimes replaced because names of people are mentioned; …=a few words have been taken out; […]=longer sequence of talk has been taken out. All quotes from interviews with Swedish decision-makers, as well as the text-documents from ERK that are quoted, have been translated by the author.

be reflexive, not to be too dogmatic. To present one's own work as just described may, of course, mirror how the organization wants to present itself through its staff and council members, i.e. *as efficient* first and foremost (the industrial world of worth). We see in figure 4.5 how the ASA stresses its efficiency in its Annual report. The staff member in the image presents one of several written mottos and descriptions of their work in this annual report, which reads: "Managing caseloads promptly and efficiently". In the same annual report, others placards of interest state: "Responding to public policy debates on sensitive issues" and "Acting in the public interest at all times".

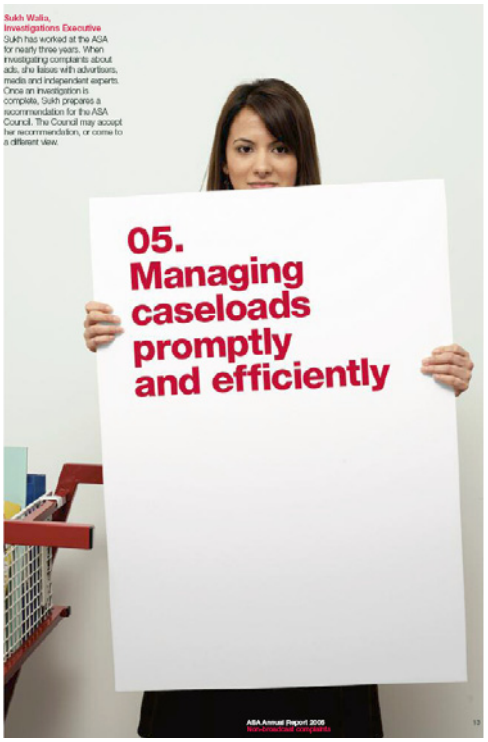


Figure 4.5. *The ASA advertising themselves*[99]

An unwritten code of behaviour for ASA members seems to tell them that even if they feel strongly about something, they should formulate their opinion in a clear and efficient way, argue for it, but then drop it. Members say that they do not worry about decisions the council makes in opposition to their own positions.

This has consequences for how members look upon the processing of views. When the council makes a decision as a group, members can put aside a part of their own views and support the majority opinion. One council member

[99] Source of image: *The ASA Annual report 2005*, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx.

of the ASA stresses at the end of the interview that the decision-process is important and that everyone is able to express his or her view but that she is content when a decision has been reached collectively, regardless of the outcome:

> I think when you listen to what I have to say, sometimes I am expressing a personal view and and, if my personal view is not the one that the council [has reached] that doesn't necessarily mean that I am not content with the view that has been reached...I wouldn't want anyone to think that although sometimes I disagree with, I haven't supported or been part of the mainstream support group decision, that I don't actually support the decision when it is made.

In spite of this image of how things work at the ASA council, I was interested in how strong opinions were handled, so I asked in one interview:

> Caroline: Are there some sorts of advertisements that upset you more than others? That you find more important to discuss, from an ethical viewpoint?
>
> CM: Well for me it's more of a, the question of nationalism is a big issue. […] There is this particular type of English humour which is about, you know it is about the war, it is about "Europeans are stupid" or they are bad people or the French are very suspicious or the Germans are crazy, and I think quite often you will have advertisements for beer or something like that which are deliberately appealing to that very conservative mentality, and personally I don't like them, but of course the difficulty is that it is impossible to show that they cause widespread and serious offence. Cause most British people would just say, "Oh, well that is just British humour", nobody is offended by it. They might think "well, it is wrong", but nobody cares about it. So it is very hard to say "well, you know showing, referring to the war, or showing the Germans as Nazis, is, is wrong!" We all would say that's wrong if we were in the University or the ASA, but for most people in the pub or on the bus or whatever it's quite normal.[100] So what's the problem?
> […]
> As somebody who is in education I would like to see a stronger code to do something about some of the worst aspects of nationalistic advertising but I don't think that they will, because it's too good a thing for the industry; you know you can sell beer by appealing to the mentality of the people who drink a lot of beer. And you and I might like a beer and we go and have a beer, you might have one beer you might have two beers, these are people who have eight beers, ten beers, twelve

[100] There are two examples of ASA adjudications from 2006 where advertisements for the beer Spitfire have received complaints. Although the council member does not mention them by name, their features and the decisions of the ASA council are exactly in line with what the council member tells me in this quote: http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2006/3/Shepherd-Neame-Ltd/CS_40975.aspx, http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2006/9/Shepherd-Neame-Ltd/TF_ADJ_41708.aspx, 18 March 2010. Yet another previous example of the beer Spitfire can be found in the ASA's complaint handling history. An advertisement with the text "No Nazi aftertaste" received 66 complaints in 2003, for being offensive and xenophobic, according to the ASA Annual Report from 2003. The decision not to investigate was built on previous examples of decisions on related advertisements. These examples show that the ASA has a history of either not investigating this type of advertisements because it is not seen as justified, or of investigating but not upholding the complaints.

> beers. And it's a, it's a mentality. And in Britain not many people find that offensive. You know, if you ask most people they will say, "Well, but the Germans were Nazis weren't they, so", and you sort of think: no, no: the Nazis were Nazis, the Germans were Germans.
> …
> Caroline: And you would never argue that the effect could be, could cause serious harm in some ways because of these stereotypes?
>
> CM: I would argue that, but I wouldn't win the argument. You know, [the managers] would say, "Well yea but nobody is offended". That's the problem. […]
> I mean, at the moment the code is designed to stop what *is* offensive, not what *should be* offensive.

This quote shows other aspects of the council member's reflexive stance towards decision-making, apart from the mentioned acknowledgement of the *industrial* nature of the decision-making of the council (on the organizational level). The informant makes a distinction between, for example, the logics of the University and the ASA council as well as the ways that he feels about much of the nationalism in advertising images and the way that the ASA, including himself, handles nationalism in relation to the public. The ASA acts on what they think the public thinks and feels. On the personal level, he feels strongly against and does not want to conform with a general attitude towards stereotypes of ethnic groups in advertisements (the integrity of the *inspired world of worth*) and he also believes these images could foster inequality (*civic world of worth*). He acknowledges, however, that the general public (the public level), have a more traditional stance (*domestic*) towards such types of images. If the industry targets people at the bus or at the pub, the evaluative mode of the university or at the ASA cannot rule, according to the council member. Stereotypes of ethnic groups in advertisements for beer, for example, have become a part of the media tradition and the visual heritage of the country. In order to make a justified decision in the eyes of the public and the industry, this general view has to be taken into account. This time the general public is defined by the supposedly entrenched humour tradition that builds on national stereotypes. What the public thinks, whether it is something that is related to the domestic world of worth or any of the other worlds are also sometimes supported by statistical information or expert advice, at the ASA; this strengthens the argument to take a specific world into account in the decision-making. This creates a compromise with *the industrial world of worth*. The point is, for the decision-makers, to create a legitimate interpretation and evaluation, not to mirror the content of what viewers of the public think *per se*. Moreover, in the above quote, the council member talks about the unlikelihood of regulating against some commonly used stereotypes, because from the point of view of the industry they increase sales (*market world of worth*) and are popular (*world of fame*).

This shows that the decision-makers reflexively use different modes of evaluation: one from their position of experience from a personal level, being socialized by education and a profession. This is illustrated in figure 4.6 under the heading "Personal". Another position is of the organization, which is also

seen in the figure. A third position is from the advertisers/industry. The fourth is the position of the public. This means that decision-makers relate to different types of others, some about which they have less first-hand knowledge than others. Figure 4.6 shows the particular worlds involved in the foregoing example, but the point is to illustrate that all of the worlds of worth can potentially be part of the reflexive process of deciding how to picture the public that is viewing and evaluating the advertisement under scrutiny. That is a general point applicable to the decision-makers of ERK as well.

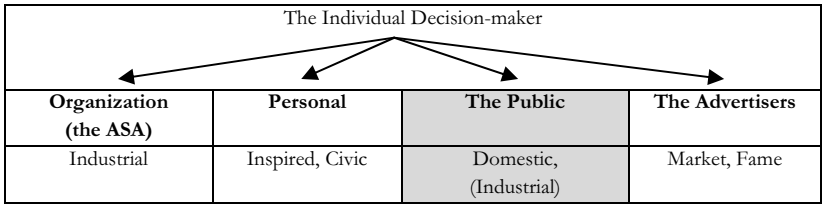


Figure 4.6. *The Reflexive individual decision-maker*. The worlds of worth in this figure are only examples, although the worlds of worth will often occur as supportive of these various others to which the decision-makers relate. The depiction of the viewers of the public is decisive, i.e. the worlds of worth that are claimed to represent it or which support that claim. But before the decision is reached, the decision-maker moves back and forth in his or her interpretation and evaluation between the four types of others described.

This means that all of the worlds of worth can be detected in the micro organization of the decision-making individual, as illustrated in figure 4.6, which summarizes the way one decision-maker relates to a range of different worlds of worth in his reflexive decision-making. Similarly, all of the worlds of worth may be relevant within the organization, personal identity, the public or the advertisers. Knowing the positions of the others does not mean knowing their evaluative modes. This description thus provides an example of the reflexive way that decision-makers may reason. As I argue in this thesis, the viewers of the public are what decision-makers need to take into account, first and foremost, but that does not mean they completely disregard the other aspects. Conflicting evaluative modes appear in the same person; it is the process of decision-making, in which the decision-makers relate to others, which decide what compromises are made between different evaluative modes. Figure 4.6 is supposed to show that there are conflicting worlds of worth in the reflections of the individual decision-maker. That there is a dissonance in terms of types of evaluative modes between the different others is only natural for the decision-makers, (cf. Stark 2009), and to handle it as a resource is part of the professionalism of the decision-makers. The academic can abandon the views he may hold at the university and in other circles because in collaboration with other interpreters in the decision-process, he will develop another view of *relevant others* when he interprets the situation and the effects of a particular advertising

image. In other words, personal dispositions and positions are not decisive in the decision-processes.

The councils argue that they try to adjust to the public mood in their decisions, as this is something that may change. I ask how a decision-maker at ERK reaches the conclusion that the general public view has changed:

> Caroline: But if you experience that [attitudes amongst the public] have changed, is that a feeling that you build that notion on, that the moods are that way or?
>
> CM: Yes, definitely, that is my interpretation, which is highly subjective of course and also marked by 'Who am I?', and I am a gender oriented type myself who has started a leadership education for women, so I will of course read more into this than will [name of other council member] from [stakeholder's name]. That is for sure. But that is the way it should be, that we have different types in ERK, because that is what society looks like. And I experience other things than he does, and in his world there are no new winds blowing. But he could agree with me that obviously there are, because there are new *bills* and they will appoint new *investigations* (to produce an official report), and so on, and so forth, which means it is taken more seriously and that is because more people react negatively (my emphasis).

Putting together a council often builds on the idea of representing different interest groups. But in spite of this prevailing idea, also shining through in the quotes from the council-members—in the above quote the council-member talks about this—it is clear that the council-members can be reflexive and transcend specific views. This shows on the one hand that people influence each other with their interpretations and that they support their views by referring to things such as, in this case, current propositions and upcoming official reports. What the public thinks can be defined in a justified way by entities of the civic world of worth, such as bills and investigations.

An important conclusion from the examples above is that people make compromises with themselves, not only with others, by relating to the situation. They "edit" their evaluative modes in relation to an audience, which may be defined in various ways. But they cannot base this "editing" on the knowledge from a specific field alone, as the artists in Howard Becker's *Art Worlds* mainly do (Becker 1982:202). Although a part of the "editing", i.e. reflexive shaping of a decision is based on experiences from the culture of the self-regulatory organization into which they have been socialized, this is not enough to understand what motivates the editing. One of the council members of the ASA revealed that when she started working at the ASA she began to actually look at the advertisements on television rather than going out to make a cup of tea. She also began to read the advertisements for e.g. sex services at the back of news papers instead of only reading the editorials, as she had done before. In her daily life, she would often cycle past posters, but she had avoided these other types of advertisements: "I've realized that I have lived a very protected life so (laughing) I must get a bit more accustomed to seeing it so I, you know, see what other people see". Decision-makers also realize that it is the societal role of the images that are to be judged. Because of this, the self-regulatory bodies

justify their decisions in relation to human values as captured by the worlds of worth. In these cases, aesthetic values depend on morals. However, in what ways they do this depend on the type of viewers amongst the public they relate to. As they do not justify their decisions in terms of mere aesthetic values of the image, such as if it is of a high standard in terms of technical professionalism, innovative qualities or a style of high status, they do not think the general public will build their evaluations on such grounds.

I will now move back to the discussion on whether the ASA and ERK try to affect the viewers of advertisements amongst the public or if they adjust to them. I will discuss further the relationship between social engineering and conceptualizing the public. It is clear from the interviews, documents, as well as more official talks—such as at a consumer conference that the ASA organized—that the ASA does not aim to act as social engineers in order to improve *the moral standards* of the public. They strive 'merely' to adjust to the public, as they interpret it. The legitimate focus in the decision-making is on whether the public *is* offended. Various aspects of British culture persist in advertising images because they do not cause *widespread* offence, even though they are offensive to some people or violate specific moral principles. In other cases, however, the harm of the product is such that the regulations have become stricter. As a consequence, advertisements have been banned, because their offensiveness is seen as very severe, although they were well-established in the British culture and generally loved. Such areas of concern are junk food, violence and alcohol.[101]

ERK has a stance similar to the ASA towards the general public. The following quote from one of ERK's former chairs makes clear that the council tries to envision how the general public will perceive the advertisements and how interpretations that are related to e.g. art history are likely to lead in a direction counter to the purposes of the organization:

> That is also something that ERK has been criticized for, because none of us are trained image analysts…but the risk is that one goes too far in the analysis, I think. Perhaps this is a layman perspective, but what we should judge, we think, is how this looks to the majority of a pretty average audience…I mean one cannot take as a norm a very easily offended person, who cannot at all stand seeing any part of the body naked. No, we take as a norm some kind of average person, it is through that person's eyes that we will look…but of course one is influenced by [the personal experience], one should never think that one is very good at being objective, but,

[101] Much of advertising for tobacco is now forbidden by law in the UK, but there are exceptions within certain contexts and when advertising to certain audiences, while alcohol advertisements are restricted in the following way: "Reflecting the Government's concerns that were expressed in its Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, the Advertising Code was strengthened in four main ways so that the new, 2005, restrictions were stricter on: the general appeal of alcohol ads to young persons, especially under-age drinkers, and references to 'youth culture'; linking alcohol with sex, sexual activity or sexual success; linking alcohol with aggressive, anti-social or irresponsible behaviour and the depiction of irresponsible handling or serving of alcohol",
http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/reports/alcohol_advertising/, 12 August 2009.

> image analysis, they often go very deeply, see different levels of things, and I think that even if the language of images, I mean maybe it is so imprinted in the Western culture the objectifying view on women and that men are seen more as subjects, but it cannot be the task of ERK to put right a language of images inherited from the Renaissance (laughs) at least…so, we may perhaps work more on the surface and deal with the more flagrant, that which is offensive to the majority of people.

This is, however, not the full picture in the case of ERK. They do often act more explicitly against traditional gender role *depictions*. They do this even if they are not always convinced that the general public cares about them. Another chairman says the following about the general public:

> I think that what the general public is most offended by, it is that which concerns people being lightly dressed, I notice that in the coffee room here, sometimes I can raise issues myself, but that women are depicted with kitchen utensils and men with tools (i.e. gender stereotypes), I do not think engage people as much, there are some, but people being lightly dressed on the other hand, that I think engages much more people and one can see that too on the complaints we receive.

Despite the latter chairman's view on what the general public thinks, ERK will nevertheless ban the types of advertisements that they think depict gender stereotypes, as they are seen as offensive to men or women—as types—amongst the general public. Since ERK incorporates ideals of gender relations in their decision-making in an explicit way, they can be described as more of social engineers than the ASA. But at the same time, the ERK chairman argues: "You look at an image casually, you glance at it, you, if you made a proper image analysis you may see something else, but you should not have to do that." The decision-makers at ERK do not take for granted that other people know what *they*—the decision-makers—know and see what *they* see. Decision-makers cannot rely on their own personal everyday cognitive outlook. As one council member of ERK said, in relation to her reasoning when deciding about an image depicting tennis player Björn Borg, known to her and many others but not necessarily all people: "Okay, I am not the only one consuming this, others are as well, and what do they see?" These quotes mean ERK is focusing on offence, just like the ASA, and think of themselves as interpreters of the general public's idea of what is right and just. What people in general think is right and just is also something that the decision-makers define as a phenomenon open to change. An image can be seen as objectifying and thus offensive at one occasion, even though a similar depiction was not seen in the same terms in a previous decision by ERK. If a council member believes that the council should acknowledge that viewers have become more sensitive to a type of image, she or he may occasionally argue for this and the council may thus sometimes deviate from its usual procedure.[102]

[102] This happened in the case of an H&M swim-wear advertisement from 2004, which showed a very large advertising image on the wall of a house close to a very central square in Stockholm. Even though the image was cut in an objectifying way, had it not been so large the complaint would probably not have been upheld. See decision from the 21 of December

Because ERK has a significantly smaller budget than the ASA, they do not take into account resource-demanding contextual aspects such as targeted audiences, media context, and whole campaigns, related to an image that has received complaints. To investigate who constitutes the targeted audience is too resource demanding for ERK, as is finding a complete campaign to which a single image belongs. They take campaigns into account only if the whole campaign has actually received a complaint. The ASA, on the other hand, always checks the publishing and/or the broadcasting context of the image and their target groups and/or potential viewers. One of the council members of ERK says the following, when I ask if taking target groups into account would change their evaluation of an image:

> Caroline: So if this had been in a magazine for a specific target group it would not have mattered?
>
> CM: It would not have mattered, no. But it is often the case that the advertiser replies: 'This advertisement is only for deadly pale women in the magazine for red headed', you know, 'and they identify with this'. But one can buy this magazine and it may be men with black hair who buy it, or it may be lying at the hairdresser available for all to see. Even if it is sent directly to your home, perhaps your children or your husband or your grandmother who is visiting, I mean, even if your name is on the envelope this advertisement may be spread, you know.

If ERK had the economic resources to do so, they might nonetheless have decided not to take target groups into account, in the way that the ASA does. Having said this, ERK discusses target groups, but in a different manner. Some of the decision-makers at ERK, either council-members or chairmen, point out the importance of letting advertisers direct themselves to specific target groups, because the products are shaped in a specific way. But that means, they argue, *the products* are the source of gender discrimination and not *the advertisement*. Sometimes the advertising images enhance the differences between men and women, girls and boys, such as in an advertisement for children's clothes in a catalogue from the company Ellos that will be shown and discussed in chapter 6. In that case, the copy text emphasized the gender differences of the images. ERK would likely consider such images offensive, which it also did in this case. If the images had not included the copy text or any other enhancement, but in this case, just blue and pink clothes or clothes gender-styled in other ways, ERK might have found the advertisement acceptable. How to judge these types of images and where to draw the line appear to be very difficult for ERK.

> Caroline: You said you have to distinguish between the sexualizing and the stereotyping advertisements. Are there some types of advertisements or when specific products are advertised which are more forgiving, which allow more?

2004, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html. I discuss the case in an article about the decision-making of ERK when dealing with cases they themselves labelled as difficult (Dahlberg 2007).

> CM: Yes, it is exactly when one has a target group, then you have to be allowed to direct yourself to that target group and then you might say that that target group indicates a stereotypical role division but one has to be allowed to do that. One has to be able to choose as a company. And we have had example of that, when women…got some invitation from a car brand and they had made it into a fashion show and we received complaints about this because it was seen as gender discriminatory, because 'why can't women come and see cars?' and all of that. But if you have women as your target group, you have to, of course, direct yourself to the women, with things that appeal to women and then the principle cannot be that throwing a fashion show is gender discriminatory. I mean, at the same time it can at first be the case, of course. I mean, one can perceive it that way. That is actually quite interesting.

One must note that the council member speaks of the target groups of the products here, rather than target groups of certain media. This means ERK makes a distinction between whether the gender discrimination is due to the product, in which case they do not ban the advertisement because it merely mirrors the product, or if the gender discrimination appears in the advertising image (or text), in which case they do ban it. Despite this, there have been cases where such advertisements, directed toward a target group because the product has a target group, have been banned, as the advertisement was seen as *enhancing* gender stereotypes, even though this just mirrored the product. One such case will be discussed in chapter 6.

Even if the ASA makes decisions based on what the general public or targeted groups may think, the origins of their discussions are always specific complaints, which they have interpreted in relation to the CAP codes. In most cases, they do not consider other issues that could be raised if the complainants have not mentioned them. There have been a few cases in which the ASA has raised their own concerns, however, but that is unusual. ERK works differently. They do not have to follow the complainants' specific concerns, apart from acknowledging an advertisement as potentially problematic. When an image or a campaign has received a complaint, council members of ERK check if they can interpret the image as being acceptable or not, in relation to their codes. ERK is not bound by the type of complaint that has been made, as opposed to the ASA. Just like the ASA, ERK does not often *initiate* a complaint against an advertisement, however, which is a different matter.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Sweden and the United Kingdom make a good combination for the study (see figure 4.1). The main argument is that they provide different, but not too different, contexts. The contextual differences are needed to acknowledge what could otherwise be taken-for-granted by an outsider, such as a researcher, as the way of doing things in a particular practice. Different contexts also provide the means to look at similarities that exist despite the apparent differences. Secondly, this chapter has given an overview on

previous research on the effectiveness of advertising self-regulation. I have argued that, as this depends on how justified the decisions are, justification is a more important focus than effectiveness. Thirdly the chapter illustrates the sequences of decision-making at the two organizations, which also show that the ASA has a more complex structure and a more professionalized routine. Fourthly, this chapter has provided some empirical proof of the aspects to which a decision-maker relates, as illustrated in figure 3.4 in the previous chapter. One important implication of the findings in this chapter is that subjective interpretation does not have to be tied to positions and dispositions, as is often assumed, but is rather moulded into decision-processes. By analysing the decision-processes with the worlds of worth, we can see that the individual decision-maker can use different cognitive frames to interpret and evaluate the cases. This also means that interests are established in settings rather than inscribed in people because of group belonging.

The chapter has also shown some of the similarities and differences in how ERK and the ASA make decisions, in terms of how they relate to the general public and perform social engineering. The council members of both the ASA and ERK focus on the members of the general public as they perceive them. At the ASA, the general public can be divided into target groups, when relevant. The complainant does not have to be as directly offended according to the decision-makers of ERK, as for the ASA. The ASA deploys the tool "widespread or serious offence" to decide whether an image is not acceptable. The self-regulatory bodies try to adjust to the level that people in general find justifiable, which means finding the right level of visual expression to adjust to. ERK tries to balance this view with the policy that advertisements which depict outmoded gender roles are not justified, even if they mirror the actual practices of men and women and even if many people will not actually be upset about them. General moral attitudes, how things should be, are not always the same as what people do, so there need not be a contradiction in ERK's policy to incorporate two ideas: 1) the idea of relating to what the average person thinks and 2) supporting a gender politics of equality in assumed effects of advertisements. This double rationale of ERK could be a pragmatic adjustment to suggestions from members of Parliament to form stricter laws on gender discriminatory advertisements, or to launch investigations of whether a law, or an extension of the laws, is preferable; it could be seen as social engineering; or it could be seen as a way to adjust to what the public thinks is justified, even if they behave differently. What is seen as passé gender roles is also a question of interpretation and evaluation in relation to a general audience, a topic to which I return in chapter 6. When it comes to gender-related advertisements, there might be different expectations among the decision-makers in Sweden and the UK of what they think their respective general publics will tolerate, because of the contextual features of the country context as described in this chapter. As a result, the ASA and ERK may want to adjust to the public mood in different ways.

This chapter has shown that the *individual* decision-maker shifts between relevant others—evaluative modes—showing how they push aside some as-

pects of their own experiences and preferences in favour of the mode of the self-regulators' as a collective, the advertisers and what viewers of the public may think. In the next chapter, I explore how decision-makers as a *collective* relate to complainants and advertisers. I also analyse how decision-makers relate to other decision-makers. The following chapters also shift focus and explore how the self-regulatory decision-makers deal with *specific cases* of complaints about advertising images.

5. Reflecting on Complainants, Advertisers and Other Decision-makers

This chapter discusses how decision-makers at the ASA and ERK relate to concrete complainants, advertisers and other decision-makers, and how they picture whether the public will find the images offensive or not. In cases of offence, decision-makers take into account whether images are highly stylized or objectifying, or relate to traditions of some sort, such as a humour tradition or traditional gender roles. All of these things can be seen as good or bad, depending on how the setting of the image is interpreted and evaluated and affects the conceptualization of the viewers amongst the public. I have grouped all of these aspects under the theme *Offence and Stylization* in this chapter. A high degree of stylization can lessen the risk of offence, when decision-makers can assume that viewers will not interpret the image as intending to depict 'real' violence, or sexist relations, but may sometimes also enhance the risk by being objectifying. The chapter discusses how such aspects are weighed by decision-makers and shows what is decisive. I have chosen cases that show the difficulties of defining the moral borders and which also paint a fair picture of various ways of making decisions, given the restricted focus of this study.

By analysing how decision-makers collectively relate to different parties, complainants and advertisers, this chapter deals with the analysis of the type of conflicts and compromises that are shaped amongst the decision-makers in the decision-processes. Conflicts between ways of interpreting and evaluating the images appear in all cases of complaints, and these are analysed in relation to the worlds of worth to show what the evaluative conflicts consist of and how decision-makers arrive at a justified decision. One may also speak about compromises between different moral logics in the interpretations and evaluations that are made. Such compromises may be made within a claim by a complainant, advertiser or decision-maker, as well as when the decision-makers weigh together the 'producer' side, in the shape of advertiser claims, and the 'consumer' side, in the shape of concrete complaints and abstract viewers of the public. In the examples that I give in this chapter, both upheld and rejected cases of complaints are included. I also give an example of an ASA case that was investigated by the Independent reviewer after decision. The initial decision was then overturned by the council. That example shows particularly well, I argue, how the decision depends not on the image *per se* or an objective context, but on the way that the decision-makers frame the cases collectively, as a part of a moral logic or a combination of moral logics, to reach a justified decision. I conclude by describing the major differences between ERK and the ASA, in

terms of what worlds of worth underpin their decisions. The pattern of evaluative modes that are established as justified by the decisions will also indicate what types of claims can be made by viewers of the public.

Offence and Stylization

One very important distinction that the council members of the ASA have to make, I'm told, is between advertisements that are offensive and those that are merely provocative. The ASA does not regulate against provocations. The general stance of the ASA is that if the advertisements are "deliberately metaphorical" they can be provocative, but are not normally offensive because they are obvious stylized versions of reality. When the image is easier to confuse with something real, it is more likely to offend. It is common that the ASA receive complaints about provocative advertisements, such as images using symbolic versions of Jesus Christ. People who complain are offended, but the great majority are merely provoked, I am told. In other words, complaints about images that are realistic, but which depict things that can be seen as unworthy in everyday practice, are more likely to be upheld by the ASA.[103] What is important for the decision-makers of the ASA and ERK is how the images appear to the public eye.

Sometimes the staff members speak unofficially to advertisers in order to remove advertisements from inappropriate locations. Such sensitive advertisements would be those containing guns. Especially in areas where gun crime is common, such complaints are likely to be upheld. The ASA held a seminar on violence in advertising, in November 2007, a year after my interviews. The organization had invited various organizations related to crime, violence, children and education to attend. In an event report, they wrote:

> An ASA staff member explained that, when considering complaints about the appearance of weapons in ads, the positioning of the weapon was a key factor. Guns and knives pointing directly at the viewer are more likely to cause offence or unnecessary fear and distress than those pointing away from the viewer.[104]

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[103] See e.g. the arguments used by the ASA for not upholding the following complaints; one image of Jesus Christ is seen as non-realistic, because there is no cross: http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2007/10/Jemella-Ltd/TF_ADJ_43323.aspx, http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2006/8/Chariot-(UK)-Plc/TF_ADJ_41680.aspx; one is seen as a light-hearted depiction of Christ as a Prawn: http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2007/1/The-Big-Prawn-Company/TF_ADJ_42179.aspx. There are also examples of when imagery of Jesus Christ has been upheld: http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2006/1/Paddy-Power/CS_40740.aspx. The latter case was not as unrealistic or light-hearted, judging by the written adjudication, last downloaded 23 March 2010.

[104] *Event report: What You Looking At? Drawing the line on violence in advertising. Park Plaza, Nottingham, 21 November 2007, ASA*: 9, http://www.asa.org.uk/General/Search.aspx?s=event%20report%20violence.

In advertisements for films, exceptions are justified to make when a figure such as James Bond is depicted holding his gun as *decoration*. If Bond had been pointing the gun at the audience, into the camera, the complaint is more likely to be upheld.

The decision-makers also take into account whether it is the advertisement or the product that causes the offence. If it is the product, the ASA will not uphold the complaint. For example, if someone had complained about the posters for the James Bond film, Casino Royal, which opened in the UK on the 16th of November 2006, because he or she thought that the images glamorized guns, the staff member would argue that the complainant was actually targeting the whole Bond phenomenon, which glamorizes guns; it is not the advertisement that created the problem. The James Bond movie also contains what the advertisement depicts. The advertisement is acceptable because it is clearly fictitious and related to a product.

Decision-makers at ERK may similarly claim—but not always win that argument—that an image is acceptable as it is in line with the product it advertises, although it is a product that may be seen as sexist in itself. One decision-maker says: "This is advertising for what it [the product] is and the activity [advertised] in itself is questionable, but the advertisement is not more dubious than the product." ERK would also argue that an advertisement may be gender discriminatory even though the product it advertises aims at reducing gender differences. It does not matter what kinds of effects the product is claimed to produce. A charity campaign may also be seen as offensive, even if it is advertising a so called good cause. Because of this stand, ERK does not deal with advertisements for pornography, as it is a product that is seen as sexist in itself. There are of course possibly grey zones, such as clubs advertising their drinks. As the council members may not know much about the clubs, what they judge is what they can understand about the product from the advertisement.[105]

In this chapter, we discuss cases related to violence, underwear, private places, humour tradition, blunt language and charity, as they point to specific aspects in the decision-making that decision-makers of ERK and the ASA regularly encounter. This means they have an idea about how to handle these cases, because of previous practices. At the same time, such guidelines are not taken-for-granted as relevant, but have to be evaluated and put to the test in each case.

The Famous Role Model

I will in the following discuss some advertisements that are about violence and offence. When I conducted interviews in 2006 at the ASA office, violence was an area of increasing interest and concern, as there had been many complaints

[105] An interesting example without a clear-cut outcome is the complaints case of an advertisement for the club Oxid, which was, however, banned by ERK, 2 December, 2005, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html.

about some advertisements containing violence. This was reflected in the interviews, as many of the staff as well as council members brought up such examples. One of the staff members at the ASA told me about an advertisement for Reebok from 2005, when I asked him about cases of offensiveness that have been difficult to decide on. This was a broadcast advertisement, featuring the rap artist called 50 Cent. Before we move on to this advertisement, I should mention a general point about broadcast advertisements. After a decision is reached to ban an advertisement, the main difference to the advertiser is that remaking a broadcast advertisement is far more expensive than a non-broadcast one. This is something that makes the decision-makers at the ASA put extra thought into considering complaints about broadcast advertisements. This way, the market world of worth *can* be taken into account when considering the position of the advertiser. That type of market logic, that caters to the advertising industry, was however not decisive in this case.

This particular advertisement received 57 complaints from the public. People were offended partly because they connected the advertisement to the gun crimes that had been happening, particularly in Nottingham, just before the advertisement was shown. The ASA summarizes the look of the advertisement and the concerns of the complainants in the following way, in its published adjudication[106]:

> Two advertisements for Reebok, one 60 seconds long and the other 30 seconds, featured the rapper 50 Cent. In both versions he was shown sitting in a large darkened room whilst various sounds were heard including rap music, sirens and different voices saying that he had been "gunned down" and "taken to Jamaica hospital" and later that he was "best male hip hop artist". Water was seen dripping which appeared to flash red. The voiceover said "shot nine times" and 50 Cent slowly counted from one to nine. Towards the end another voice asked 50 Cent "who do you plan to massacre next?" He laughed briefly then stared towards the camera.
> 1. Some viewers complained that the advertisements glorified or glamorised gun culture and could encourage violence or make it appear acceptable. Some added that it was particularly inappropriate in view of 'rising gun crime' in some areas of Britain.
> 2. Other viewers said the advertisements could influence younger viewers who might think the violent background of 50 Cent was 'cool' and something to aspire towards.

This broadcast advertisement already was restricted to showing after 9 p.m., I was told. The BACC (which is now called Clearcast) had cleared the advertisement, according to the ASA adjudication, because it interpreted the advertisement as giving a positive message "about overcoming the odds and not being quite what you are perceived to be". It was not the images but the voice over which gave the viewer connotations of violence. The ASA contacted Reebok and the advertiser pulled the advertisement while it was investigated. It was

[106] Broadcast report, 18 May 2005, Pdf, http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/Old-Broadcast-Rulings.aspx, Last downloaded 18 March 2010.

possible to ask them to withdraw it before the decision was made, in order to lessen the harm. This can generally be done if it is needed. According to the ASA, there was nothing that made gun crime problematic in the ad; instead, it was presented as quite cool, making violence look sexy. If the violence had been presented in a cartoon-like manner, stylized in a humorous and exaggerated way, it would have been acceptable. But in this case it was not.[107]

The advertiser said, according to the ASA adjudication: "the 'I am what I am' campaign was intended to be a positive and empowering celebration of the right to freedom of self expression, individuality and authenticity". This can be seen as adhering to the inspired world of worth, as this world among the six that Boltanski and Thévenot theorize is defined by just that: authentic and unrestrained individuality. The advertiser of the campaign for Reebok used many celebrities, from the sport and music world. They argued, according to the ASA, that 50 Cent represented rappers and their often less-privileged backgrounds. The campaign was also supposed to show that "you can achieve by believing in yourself". This was an attempt to combine the inspired world with the worthiness of other worlds, i.e. a person can achieve some kind of success by relying on herself and her inspiration and does not have to rely only on the opinions of others.

The complaints could be seen as pointing out a failure in the advertisement to live up to, or a lack of compromises with, the domestic world of worth. The main point is that the complainants thought the advertisement glamorized and encouraged violence and that it might be emulated by young people, particularly since it ended with the phrase: "Who do you plan to massacre next?" The advertiser tried to justify the advertisement by saying that the viewer is supposed to connect this question with the title of 50 Cent's album and that he had sold better than his colleagues. In other words, the advertiser wants the audience to interpret and evaluate the image in accordance with other logics. As an audience, we were supposed to know about 50 Cent's album and appreciate his sales success, a combination of the world of fame and the market world of worth.

The ASA states in the adjudication that it was not clear in the advertisement that violence was unacceptable, which the executive I spoke to also pointed out. It was also an advertisement that could be connected to various recent gun crimes in Britain. These aspects made the advertisement seriously offensive, according to the ASA, and consequently they banned it. The ASA wrote a quite elaborate statement on why in their adjudication, but its key content was:

> ...the overall effect was to suggest that 50 Cent's life was inspirational for the wrong reasons. We believed it appeared to condone his violent background...We further

[107] The 30 seconds version can be viewed at YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5VJJ7Iaz18&feature=related, 2010-02-17; the extended version http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PZdJc8x6Dc&feature=PlayList&p=47313A9CFAC12CDB&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=47 also at YouTube, last downloaded 17 February 2010.

> considered the subject matter of the advertisements to be inappropriate in view of the recent high profile of specific gun-related crime in various areas of Britain as highlighted by the complainants. No attempt was made by the advertiser to condemn or express disapproval of the violence portrayed...We considered that through the portrayal of 50 Cent as a 'cool' survivor of gun crime the advertisements had the potential to encourage or condone violence; particularly among vulnerable or younger viewers.

According to the theory of the domestic world of worth, a group leader should be a good role model and take care of his or her inferiors. The image of 50 Cent in the advertisement showed him as a bad rather than good influence on people, especially youngsters who could suffer harm. This was pointed out by complainants in line with the values of the domestic world of worth. They also pointed out the importance of taking everyday life experiences or concerns of violence—i.e. current events in various areas—into account. Such accounts of personal experiences also built on the values of the domestic world of worth.

Thus, there existed a clash between the inspired world of worth, supported by the advertiser in the claim it made, and the domestic, supported by the complainants, because the individualistic slogan of the right to self-expression and authenticity was seen as too irresponsible; nor was it clearly connected to anything considered appropriate in the domestic world. There was also a clash between the combination of the world of fame and the market world with the domestic word of worth, because the viewers of the public were not conceptualized, by the ASA, as able to make the connections that the advertiser claims to have intended (the combination of the world of fame and the market world of worth).

Interpreting the various statements involved in the decision-process through the theory of worlds of worth, the ASA regarded the advertisement as a violation of the worth of trust represented by the domestic world. If analysed in relation to the worlds of worth, 50 Cent, is no longer the underdog he once was, which might have justified his following the inspired world of worth. He must now live up to the higher demands put on superiors within the domestic world. The reason the complaint was upheld was that, according to the ASA's interpretation, not enough compromises were made between the three worlds on the left in figure 5.1—inspired, fame and the market—and the conflicting domestic world of worth.

DECISION-MAKER (DM)	
Advertiser	**Complainants**
Inspired Fame (Opinion) Market	Domestic
General Public (according to DM)	
Domestic	

Figure 5.1. *The worlds of worth in the decision-process of a broadcast advertisement for Reebok*

Figure 5.1 shows this, as well as the logic on which the decision-maker defined the general public. The ASA council thus evaluates these broadcast advertisements in line with the domestic world of worth, according to which it also formulates the critique of the image.

A poster advertisement by Universal Records, which also featured 50 Cent, received complaints less than a year later. It was advertising a forthcoming album, the soundtrack of a film. The name of the film, as well as the soundtrack, was *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*. The artist's debut album had the same name, which was released in 2003, and sold very well.[108] Another staff member told me about this advertisement which received complaints because this too was seen as likely to enhance the glamorization of violence. The poster features 50 Cent from the back, holding a baby. He has a gun stuck down his trousers on his back and you can see bullet holes in his body, as well as his large tattoos.

[108] Article from 29 December, 2003,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/3354695.stm, last downloaded 25 March 2010.

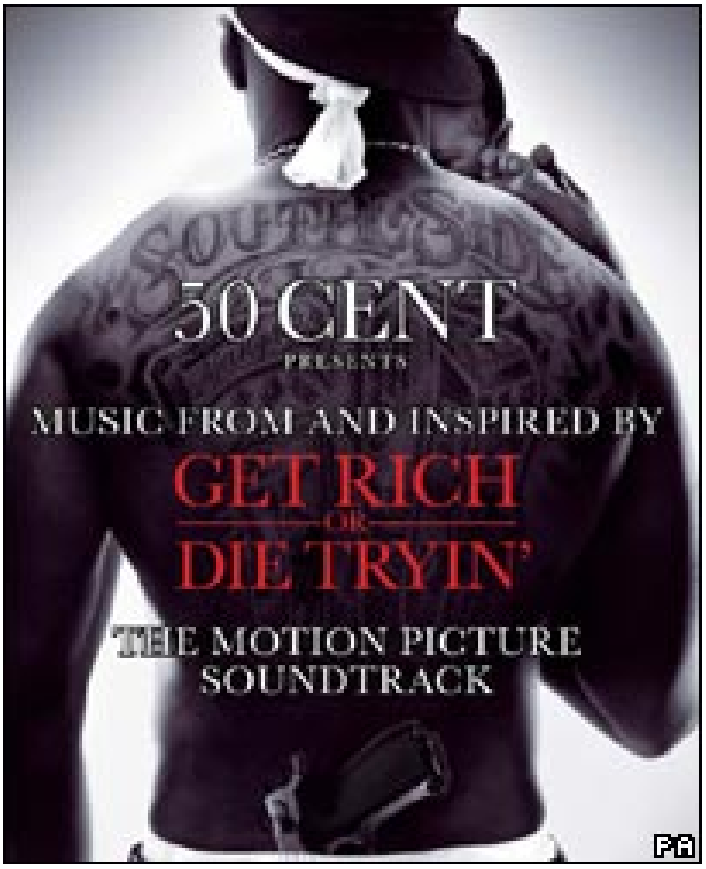

Figure 5.2. Poster Advertisement with the musician/actor *50 Cent*, advertising the soundtrack of the motion picture in which he also features: *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*.[109]

The complaints are similar to the ones of the previous example and are formulated by the ASA in the following way, in the published adjudication[110]: "The complainants objected that the ad was offensive and irresponsible because it glamorised and condoned gun crime. Several complainants were especially concerned that the ad had appeared in an area, which had recently been associated with gun crime that involved children." Again, the complainants make claims in line with the domestic world of worth, as the placement of the advertisement in an area where people had been personally affected was a concern, as well as the image violating the care for children. The advertiser, Universal, makes claims in

[109] Source of image: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4578818.stm, publishing a handout of this poster from the ASA in an article from 4 January 2006; http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/41180000/jpg/_41180592_poster203.jpg, latest downloaded 25 March 2010.

[110] http://asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2006/1/Universal-Music-Group/CS_40722.aspx, adjudication published 4 January 2006, latest downloaded 25 March 2010.

line with the world of fame for why their image is acceptable. This is how the ASA summarizes the advertiser's claims in the adjudication:

> Universal Music Group (UMG) said the image chosen for the album ad was taken from the promotional material created for the film of the same name and was designed to communicate the narrative of the main character's struggle to escape the ghetto in which he grew up. They maintained that the image was intended to show the choice that Curtis '50 Cent' Jackson's character had to make between the child and the violence represented by the gun. UMG said the poster was no longer in use.

What the image shows is supposed to be understood in relation to a film character and his history. The advertiser argues, in line with the world of fame, that it requires of the viewers to make a specific connection that justifies the image. Symbols with clear meanings are worthy in the world of fame, but are not always understood according to that semiotic ideal. The ASA explicitly acknowledges that there is a connection between the image and the biography of the character of the movie. As this depiction was not as fictitious as the James Bond depiction, the ASA argues that the rapper must be seen in the context of the domestic world of worth, because of his impact on young people as an artist. This puts other kinds of demands on him, such as caring for his 'subordinates', his young audience, which is worthy behaviour in the domestic world of worth. The advertiser has to take responsibility for the authoritative figure that 50 Cent is considered by viewers. Rather than supporting a cognitive moral frame based on the world of fame for the image under scrutiny, as the advertiser suggests, the ASA argues for a cognitive moral frame based on the domestic world of worth. Although the ASA acknowledged that the image could be interpreted in line with the advertiser's position, it argues that the domestic world frame is more legitimate in this case, as I deduce from the ASA's verdict:

> We noted the relationship between the image in the poster and the narrative of the film. We considered, however, that Curtis '50 Cent' Jackson had such *cultural credibility*, especially among *young people*, that his association with gang culture and criminal behaviour was likely to be seen as glamorising and condoning the possession and use of guns. We also considered the combination of the title, "Get Rich or Die Tryin", and the image of Curtis '50 Cent' Jackson carrying a gun could give the impression that success could be achieved through violence. We concluded that the image *was likely to cause serious or widespread offence and was irresponsible*. We told UMG not to repeat the approach. The poster breached CAP Code clauses 2.2 (Social Responsibility); 5.1 (Decency); 11.1 (Violence & Anti-Social Behaviour) & 47.1 (Children), (my emphasis).

The staff and the council members told me that if the image had been stylized in a more cartoonish, unrealistic fashion it would not have been so offensive. In relation to the worlds of worth, it means that 50 Cent would then not be so authoritative and the depiction of him would not have the same responsibility. That 50 Cent is well-known among young people is important, but in this case it is rather how this puts him in an authoritative position vis-à-vis his

audience that is decisive for the verdict. As a consequence, he belongs to the evaluative mode of the domestic world of worth. This is illustrated in figure 5.3.[111]

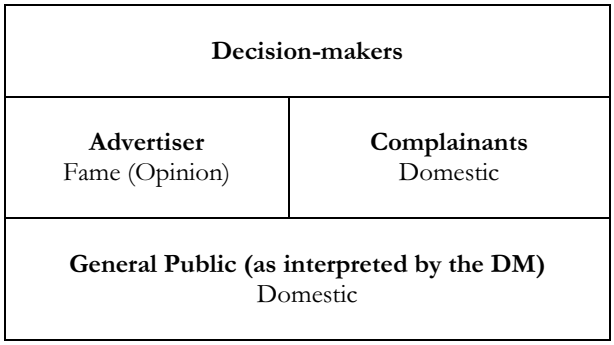

Figure 5.3. *The worlds of worth in the decision-process of the poster with 50 Cent*

The complaints about these advertisements involving 50 Cent were upheld. The advertisers wanted the audiences to interpret and evaluate the images according to the world of fame in both cases.[112] The ASA argues with the complainants that the advertisements should be evaluated and interpreted according to the domestic world of worth, which puts the depiction in another frame of responsibility.

When the images are clearly fictitious and related to an established symbol or figure entrenched in the general culture, it is less likely that the general public will be offended, the ASA argued. The previous examples were not stylized *enough* to lessen the possible harm and offence of glamorizing violence in images with a well-known person, interpreted as a role model and as someone who has to take responsibility for that position. Moving the frame of responsibility from a personal domestic setting to a symbolic setting of the world of fame is thus difficult. In some cases, a clear stylization and unrealistic setting is recognized by the ASA, but the image is nevertheless seen as unjustified in their decision. Despite their general principle about stylization, exceptions are common in the decision-making, because it is the definition of the situation that is most important. That definition depends on other things than the image itself, such as media context and current events, as we have seen. I will now turn to an advertising campaign which *can* be seen as even more stylized in nature.

[111] The staff member says he doubts that any of the Council members knew who 50 Cent was before this case went to the Council. There is a great age difference between the staff and the council members. My guess is that the staff is *mainly* in their 30's while the council members are in their 50's or 60's.
[112] In the broadcast case the world of fame was combined with the inspired world and the market world of worth.

Stylized and Reality Knife Violence Juxtaposed

The previous images with 50 Cent were not stylized to make them unrealistic enough, and instead, the famous person was seen as representing violence. Images may, however, be clearly stylized to make them unrealistic, but still cause offence as they become associated with real life violence and with glamour. The following case is such an example. Taking advertisements about violence as an example is interesting because according to the executive, more of the complaints are from pressure groups when it is about violence than when it is about race or gender. The example can also say something about how the ASA takes the context of the advertisement into account.

At my request for an advertisement that had received complaints about taste and decency (i.e. offensiveness),[113] an Investigation team executive at ASA showed me two advertising images they were currently evaluating. They were for Dolce and Gabbana and under investigation, considered more complicated than normal.[114] The images received complaints because they were seen as offensive and irresponsible. The executive's colleague across the table showed me the images and I received a photo copy of them. One copy includes the whole news paper spread on which one of the advertising images was put, the image to the left in figure 5.4, because *the context of the spread* was seen as important. The context of the other image was not important in the same way. The campaign is, according to the advertiser, based on references to art history or theatre; thus, the advertiser justifies the images based on the world of fame. The executive wondered if people in general were familiar enough with these connotations.

According to the executive, there had been some press coverage about the campaign and its content.[115] If there is press coverage of any of the cases, the press office at the ASA circulates this coverage to the appropriate staff. Such articles do not have to affect the decisions. But when external stakeholders contact the ASA, such as letters from Members of Parliament or various policy departments, this makes the executive more careful in the decision-making process. Members of Parliament have actually had opinions about adverts that show knives. They have claimed that the ASA is too lenient/relaxed on knives in ads. The executive also told me that there was no clear policy on knives in adverts and he thought perhaps a more defined policy might be necessary in the future. How to deal with guns (shot guns) depicted in advertisements is clearer, as we have seen, in terms of stylization.

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[113] Taste is not an issue that is discussed on an aesthetic level in the decision processes.
[114] I usually asked about complicated cases.
[115] I found the following example: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-408790/Dolce-Gabbana-slammed-violent-fashion-ads.html, published in the Daily Mail 5 October 2006. A spokesperson of an interest group that represented some of the complaints, Mothers against murder and aggression, is briefly quoted in the article about the Dolce and Gabbana campaign, which she says glorifies weapons. She argues in the article that this is a problem because the fashion industry is a role model for the young.

Figure 5.4. *Advertisements for Dolce and Gabbana featuring knives*. The first image to the left was published in *The Times* with a news article about knife violence on the same double spread. The image was also published in *The Daily Telegraph Supplement*. The advertisement is a part of the image below and changed a bit, as a leg has been erased. The lower image is only included here for comparison; it has not been discussed by the involved parties of the case, whereas the other images have been. The image depicting a woman with a knife, to the right on the top row, was published in *The Daily Telegraph Supplement*.[116]

[116] Source of images: The images to the left on the top row and to the right were handed to me by staff of the ASA. These photo copies were replaced by digital images from the inter-

When the complaints had been handled and adjudication had been published, in January 2007, I could also turn to that written source of information.[117] There were two advertising images for Dolce and Gabbana, placed in *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph Supplement*, for which the ASA had received complaints. The images were described by the ASA in the following way, (ad a is in the image to the left in figure 5.4, and ad b, the image to the right):

> **Ad:** a. An ad in the Times and the Daily Telegraph magazine supplement for Dolce & Gabbana featured four men dressed in Dolce & Gabbana clothing. Two of the men were brandishing knives in an aggressive manner towards a third man who was sitting on a chair. A fourth man was lying on the floor with a wound to his forehead. b. An ad in the Daily Telegraph magazine supplement for Dolce & Gabbana featured two men supporting a woman who was holding a knife and had a wound on her chest.

In the same adjudication, the complaints were summarized as follows:

> **Issue:** 1. 157 complainants, including Mothers Against Murder And Aggression ("MAMAA") and Media March were concerned that ad (a) was irresponsible because it condoned and glamorised knife-related violence in the UK; 2. 47 complainants objected that ad (a) was offensive in the Times because of the recent knife amnesties and the proliferation of knife-related crime in the UK; 3. 26 complainants believed ad (a) was offensive in the Daily Telegraph supplement magazine because of recent knife amnesties and the proliferation of knife-related crime in the UK; 4. One complainant believed that ad (b) was irresponsible because it condoned and glamorised knife-related violence in the UK; 5. One complainant was concerned that ad (b) was offensive because of recent knife amnesties and the proliferation of knife-related crime in the UK and 6. One complainant objected that ad (b) was inappropriate and irresponsible because it linked self-harm with fashion and could encourage self-harm amongst impressionable young people. **CAP Code:** 2.2, 5.1, 10.1

The advertiser defended the images by saying that they were *stylized* and *unrealistic*, that the violence depicted in the images should be seen as harmless (not irresponsible or offensive). *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph Supplement* also made statements about the advertisements. The images, they stated, were supposed to make the viewer relate them to theatre and art, as the executive had already revealed.

> D&G argued that: 1. ad (a) was highly stylised and intended to be an iconic representation of the Napoleonic period of art, emphasising the theatrical effects of that genre. They insisted that the men in the ad were not brandishing the knives in an

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net:
http://newyorkguide.blogs.com/.shared/image.html?/photos/uncategorized/picture_3_6.png; http://adweek.blogs.com/.a/6a00d8341c51c053ef0120a4c94924970b-450wi; http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/42903000/jpg/_42903899_dandg1.jpg.

[117] http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2007/1/Dolce--Gabbana/TF_ADJ_42118.aspx, 18 March 2010. Date of adjudication, 10 January 2007.

> aggressive manner and did not give the impression that they were going to stab each other. 2. & 3. the background in ad (a) did not represent a realistic scene that could cause offence and there were no words or expressions used to suggest violence or any offensive act. 4. ad (b) was deliberately designed to be out of focus, so that it gave the appearance of a canvas of a painting. They explained that the models make-up was designed to give a theatrical effect to the scene and the wound on the woman's chest was made-up to be unrealistic. 5. ad (b) showed the models in rigid poses, in order to concentrate the reader's attention on the advertised clothes they maintained for that reason the ad could not cause offence. 6. ad (b) was photographed to reflect the Napoleonic period and to appear theatrical and highly stylised. They asserted that for those reasons the ad did not represent any act of aggression or self-harm.

Both of the newspapers in which the advertisements appeared had also received complaints directly, but reacted differently. The Times understood the complaints and were going to speak to the advertiser about it, according to the ASA adjudication. The Daily Telegraph had argued that the theatrical context of the picture and the style of the people created a "surreal appearance", which meant the audience was unlikely to be offended. The Daily Telegraph had also argued that: "Most readers of the supplement in which the ads appeared were educated, professional, fashion-conscious people who would recognise the ads heavy stylisation."

It is clear from the quotes above that the advertiser as well as The Daily Telegraph believed that stylization and non-realism was a good argument against the problem of offence and social irresponsibility. The advertiser argued that the audience should understand the images according to what I would label a semiotic logic, in this case in relation to a specific set of historical images, and understand them accordingly. The Daily Telegraph stated that their target group would understand the images in a way that did not offend them. This argument was also based on semiotics, in the sense that they claimed to know what the audience or target group would recognize, which is in line with the world of fame. Worthiness in the world of fame depends on creating a clear image of oneself. This is useful in relation to target groups, which are assumed to relate to certain symbols in expected ways. This may, however, be questioned, and thereby a critique of claims made in line with this world is made. In this case, the ASA did not choose to take these ideas of audiences as a decisive part of their decision.

The ASA also acknowledged and agreed that the images were stylized. But because of various aspects of the images—several men appear aggressive holding knives in one and wounded persons in both—the images were seen as glamorizing violence. The contexts of the advertising images were likely to make people associate them with violence in their everyday lives. The articles appeared in the daily press and one image appeared on a spread next to an article about knife-related crime in Britain. The headline of the article opposite the advertisement was: "BBC chief's son is stabbed by robber at family home". Therefore, the advertisements could cause serious or widespread offence, according to the ASA. Analyzing this decision in relation to the worlds of worth,

it was made because the ASA thought the public would evaluate the image on the basis of the domestic world of worth. Glamorizing violence and condoning and glorifying it were also seen as socially irresponsible. The complaints were upheld on these points. Point 6 in the quotes was the only complaint that the ASA did not uphold.

Thus I argue that the worlds of worth can explain the advertising self-regulators' decisions, even if the decision-makers were unaware of this. They did not relate to the worlds explicitly, but discussed the images, values and people in ways that can be related to these worlds. The images for Dolce and Gabbana were stylized but too glamorous. Stylization per se is thus not sufficient to negate the violence and similar offensive or harmful areas in advertising images. According to the advertiser, the images were supposed to be related to theatre and art. However, if the interpretative context for the people who view the images is knife crimes, which they read about in the paper or experience in real life (such as the mothers represented among the complainants in the shape of an interest group), that particular context outweighs the intended interpretation of such images, according to the ASA,[118] since the latter is not seen as an important part of the everyday life of the viewers.

According to the ASA, the values represented by the domestic world of worth should have been taken into account as well. To be proper, and act according to one's rank are virtues of the domestic worth that are violated if violence—the image of violence, not violence in itself—is made into a glamorous feature of people's personal relationships. Figure 5.5 contains my interpretation of how the world of fame and the domestic world of worth relate to each other in an evaluation situation, building on Thévenot's figure previously quoted. This is applicable to the case of Dolce and Gabbana in which the complainants interpret the image/advertiser and find it improper (offensive), because it violates the domestic world of worth.

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[118]Generally, the decision-makers at the ASA focus on the citizen group as a whole or on the specific target group when advertisements are placed in specific media. They seldom take contexts such as the communities where the citizens live into consideration, however. Although media types can be earmarked, it is difficult to earmark specific residential areas as one decision-maker among the staff at the ASA told me. The ASA is cautious, for example, about making the complaints from *some* Muslims, about images outside buildings of worship, the rule for the community of Muslims and/or the general public. CAP has help notes, however, that advise advertisers to avoid placing potentially offensive images outside places of worship, although these are not binding for the ASA. The ASA does, however, sometimes discuss what people pass the poster and what group is depicted in the advertisement to decide if the image could cause widespread or serious offence. For example, in 2004, the ASA received complaints about two different posters advertising *TESCO*, a large food store chain in the United Kingdom, in the SOHO area. One pictured a person in sadomasochistic clothing chained outside a store; the second showed a group that looked like the Village People standing in line inside a *TESCO* store. The first advertisement was also placed in the underground station. Because of where it was placed, the ASA found it "likely to cause serious or widespread offence on a poster in those locations" (written adjudication, ASA, 17 March 2004), i.e. the complaint was upheld. In the case of the latter advertisement, depicting the Village People, the complaint was not upheld because the ASA argues that it was playing on the "reputation of the SOHO area" (written adjudication, ASA, 17 March 2004).

		Actor	
		Fame	***Domestic***
interpreter	***Fame***	successful	Provincial/ dominant
	Domestic	**improper**	Appropriate

Figure 5.5. *When the world of fame and the domestic world of worth clash*

The advertiser tried to justify its actions using the logics of the world of fame. In this case, the ASA found the complainants more persuasive and there was no compromise between worlds of worth. The stylizations of the images were not enough to counter the points made from the domestic world of worth, which sometimes happens.[119]

Stylized in Underwear—Product, Model, Scenery

How does ERK take highly stylized images into account? It depends on what the self-regulatory body believes the audiences perceive. ERK mentions, in interviews as well as their written decisions, that humour and stylization may sometimes lessen the offence or harm, but also points out that in some cases, high stylization may increase objectification of the depicted. It depends as always on the type of image and how its viewers may be interpreted.

> What is often subjected to discussion is the argument: 'Yes, but we just wanted to, in a *humoristic* way, imply' (laughs)…that is usually a sly way to try to get away with

[119] I would like to add a comment on the domination of the domestic world of worth in the decisions of the ASA. There are, of course, many examples of complaints that are not supported that are built on this world as well. The advertisement from 2005 that garnered the most complaints (1671) was for *Kentucky Fried Chicken*, and the advertiser was *Yum! Restaurants (UK) Ltd.* The broadcast advertisement shows people singing with their mouths full of food. The complainants believed this could ruin their children's table manners. The ASA did not agree. They saw table manners as a gradual learning process that cannot be influenced by one advertisement (see Broadcast Report 1 June 2005, Pdf on http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/Old-Broadcast-Rulings.aspx, see also ASA Annual Report 2005, http://www.asa.org.uk/About-ASA/Annual-Report.aspx, both last downloaded 14 April 2010). Analysing the adjudication and annual statement, the ASA did not see the advertisement as a threat to the domestic world of worth, in terms of table manners. This meant there was no sufficient clash between evaluative modes to mitigate. The decision was made in line with the domestic world of worth, as the ASA argued that the advertisement would not influence upbringing much in this respect. According to the Director General the reason for not upholding the complaint was that the ASA is not "the nation's nanny" (statement from Consumer Conference 2006). It was an issue for parents to deal with, the ASA seemed to say in this case.

> sitting between two chairs…and sometimes a stereotype depiction is so obvious and silly that it is inoffensive, and then one can perhaps not ban it, as a consequence of that, so to speak…one can have a lot of presuppositions, but what will matter or not will not be made clear until we apply our criteria on a specific case (my emphasis).

An advertising campaign from Hennes & Mauritz from 2000 featuring Claudia Schiffer, as shown in figure 5.6, provoked complaints to ERK from interest groups and from the public in general. ERK published their decision in 2001. The complainants thought that the depiction of Claudia Schiffer made her look unnatural and like a Barbie doll, that these images objectified women as the depicted appears to be more like a thing than a human being, according to the written verdict.[120]

[120] http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, still viewable 25 March 2010.

Figure 5.6. *Christmas serial.* One of H&M's many Christmas campaigns (1993-2003, 2006-) featuring women in underwear; these have never been banned by ERK. This one from year 2000 features the German 'super model' Claudia Schiffer.[121]

ERK found that the images were acceptable, however, and that women in general would not find them offensive. For this determination, they had previous decisions to rely upon. In 1993, ERK did not uphold complaints about the Christmas campaign with Anna-Nicole Smith, see figure 4.4. At that time, ERK wrote in their adjudication: "H&M must of course have the right to show, on living models, the underwear that are for sale in the shops…Although the im-

[121] Source of images: The images were published by ERK on their website, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 25 March 2010.

ages associates to pin-up girls, this is not enough to regard the advertisements as gender discriminatory". This text is quoted on their website so that the public as well as professionals are able to know their stance on the H&M underwear advertisements.[122] Secondly, ERK relies on their practice to give freedom to advertisers of underwear to use living models for their items. ERK has had recurring complaints about the H&M underwear advertisements, as they have been running every Christmas for a long period of time, albeit with some interruption in 2004 and 2005.

It is hard for the decision-makers at ERK to pin down what would be wrong with these images. The complainants saw a lack of natural appearance and humanness in the image, which may be defined as a critique in line with *the inspired world of worth*. The advertiser states that the demand for underwear around Christmas justifies their recurring campaigns at that time of the year. This can be seen as a justification in line with the *market world of worth*, because the "purchasing power" is seen as met (see figure 3.2). They also argue that their choice of the model Claudia Schiffer is a good role model as she appears as "self-confident, strong and with a mature attitude", according to ERK's written adjudication. They also point out that she was "ambassador of UNICEF" at that time. These are aspects of *the world of fame* in compromise with values from *the domestic world* of worth because we are as audiences of the images supposed to recognize a celebrity and what she stands for (fame) and find her trustworthy as a person because of the position she has (domestic). The world of fame implies the aspect of *recognition*, not that the images depict a famous person *per se*. Claudia Schuffer is however claimed, by the advertiser, to embody specific values that the viewers are supposed to recognize.

ERK weighs objectification against the right of advertisers to show underwear on living models. The lack of inspired worth in the advertisements is not seen as remarkable enough to uphold the complaint. The secretary, with great experience and overview of their work, said the following:

> The complaints for Hennes and Mauritz' advertisements for underwear have never been upheld by the council, ehm…one can however say that the campaign from 2000 or 2001 with Claudia Schiffer was criticized by the council, as it agreed with the complainants that she was Barbie like, that the images were retouched and the scene or background was very stiff, in other words she looked more like a doll than alive, so to speak. But in the end, we thought that the freedom to show underwear on live models was more important. But one could say that it is in the borderland, when it comes to underwear advertising.

The complainants' argument that the images objectify women is understood as based on the *civic world of worth* combined with the *domestic*. These types of images, underwear advertisements, and especially H&M's Christmas campaigns,

[122]http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html. A third written justification can be found on their website, for the H&M 2003 Christmas underwear advertising campaign. There are, however, examples of underwear campaigns from other advertisers when complaints have been upheld by ERK.

are often the subject of complaints, I am told in the interviews. Nowadays, a former chairman says in 2005, people often complain about the way the model looks, as they are seen as either enhancing the sexualisation of public arenas or as generating a greater risk of anorexia nervosa amongst women or girls. Sexualisation of public arenas can be seen as a violation of the domestic world of worth, which fosters values of trust by guarding things such as the personal relationship. By placing sexuality on a non-personal level, it becomes vulgar and demeaning to the type that is depicted, women in these advertisements, according to the domestic world of worth. Pointing out the risk of illness amongst girls as a concern for everyone is a way of lifting this question to the political realm; and it is thus a combination of domestic and civic. It is however difficult for council members to judge the depictions of Claudia Schiffer as gender discriminatory because she is too beautiful, or because she is too unrepresentative of how women in general look. Nor is ERK against sexualized images *per se*, they claim.

H&M and any other company should, according to ERK, be able to advertise their products to consumers (market) on real models (inspired) and hence, the model's acknowledged unnatural look can be accepted (a violation of the inspired). If the unnatural look is too enhanced, however, the depictions may tip over and be seen as objectifying. The unreal look of the woman is not argued to be cartoonish and thus harmless. The unnatural features are instead seen as enhancing the risk of offence. This is pointed out by ERK, as they recognize that this is an important moral stand amongst at least some of the viewers.

The civic world of worth builds on the idea of equality and the domestic world of worth places the woman in a hierarchical and less worthy position in relation to men. These two in combination point out a gender unequal situation. ERK is supposed to investigate violations of gender equality, i.e. violations of the civic and domestic world-combination. As they do not detect one in this case, they see a sufficient compromise between advertiser claims (market/inspired) and complainants' claims (civic/domestic). The offensiveness was not strong enough to take away the right for H&M to show their underwear on living models. The following example shows when ERK judged that the advertiser did cross the line, in a similar type of advertisement.

Objectification of women and men may also be depicted in a stylized fashion by allowing the viewer to see a part of the private sphere. Goffman argues that this is one of the defining aspects of advertisements (1979 [1976]). An advertisement depicting the famous Swedish tennis player, Björn Borg, for the brand with the same name, exemplifies this. ERK received complaints about two images in an advertising campaign by Björn Borg, one of them depicting an image of the tennis player lying in his underwear on a chaise lounge or something similar, in a room that appears to be a dressing room, among several women who are changing their clothes. Some of the women have bare breasts. Björn Borg is surrounded by a group of women but appears to be somewhat blasé; he does not look at them, but lies in bed, talking on the phone while touching one of the women on the behind. According to the adjudication from

ERK, the advertisement also has the written text: "If you´ve seen one changing room, you´ve seen them all".[123]

Figure 5.7. *Advertisement for Björn Borg clothing brand,* featuring at least the head of the tennis player in his younger years.[124]

The complaint is summarized as follows by ERK in the published adjudication:

> The complainants argue that the advertisement is gender discriminatory and that both women and men are portrayed as objects and that they do not have enough motivated connection to the advertised product. The women in the advertisement depicting a dressing room (figure 5.7) appear to exist for the man and are portrayed as if it is okay to touch them without their consent.

The complainants argue that the depiction should be more connected to the product, i.e. underwear, which means they think it violates the world of fame. They also point out what they see as an objectification of the women in relation to the man in the image. According to this critique, the image violates both the civic world of worth and the domestic world of worth, because the woman is not treated as an equal, or with respect. The relationship between Björn Borg and the women is, however, also a mirror of the hierarchy between women and men in the domestic word of worth, so it is also a critique against that world of

[123] http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, Adjudication for World Wide Brand Management/Björn Borg.
[124] Source of image: This picture was taken from the website http://www.bjornborg.nl, downloaded 2005, and shown and discussed with some of the council members and thus confirmed to be the right image, even though it was not published on the ERK website.

worth. But it is the objectification and sexism rather than the gender stereotypes (traditional roles) that are pointed out. The advertiser (World Wide Brand Management, WBM) explained that Björn Borg in the image should be understood in the context of his life as a famous tennis player. That was supposed to make the image humorous, as the images are supposed to imply glamour, while the captions imply that Borg is actually quite bored. This was meant to be seen as a comical juxtaposition. The advertisers say they have tested the images on consumers with good results. Thus, the advertiser justifies the depiction in line with the *world of fame*, in combination with the *industrial world of worth*, as they argue that people will connect Björn Borg to a certain lifestyle (fame) and that the audiences will accept the image, based on some type of audience research (industrial).

ERK writes in their written decision:

> In the case in point WBM…has enhanced the objectification depicted in the image and the sexual tension which is normally allowed to be present in this type of advertisements [for products used on the skin]…by allowing the viewer to step into places they normally cannot be at and which can be seen as part of the private sphere, the dressing room. In [the ad] the impression is enhanced by the models posing in unusually alluring ways and the objectification is enhanced by the touch that appears to occur in [this ad].

One of the council members of ERK says the following about this image:

> It looks as if he is consuming the girls, by just lying there looking at them. And above all, everyone does not know who he was and will not think as far as [to understand] the irony of the image; that he was dead committed [as a tennis player] and that this is far from the reality he had then. So it, it is a clear case of upholding the complaint.

The self-regulatory body, ERK, did not rule that Borg should act as a role model because he was so famous, as in the case of 50 Cent we discussed above. Instead, the argument was that his fame could not be taken-for-granted. In the case with 50 Cent, a younger audience would know 50 Cent, according to the ASA, but not make the elaborated associations about him that the advertiser claims they intended audiences to make. In the case of Björn Borg, the self-regulators have audiences in mind that will not necessarily recognize Borg and who will see him as representing *men in general*. He is seen as a man, in a room with women, acting in a derogatory way towards the women. This, too, is a violation of the domestic world of worth. Even if there is an unequal hierarchy subordinating women in the domestic world of worth, it is not worthy to act it out in such a blunt way. In addition, it violates the worth of equality of the civic world of worth. The decision-makers do not support the advertiser's claim in line with the world of fame, which the council member in the quote also criticizes. The type of stylization of the image, a humorous depiction of Björn Borg's life, was not enough to judge it acceptable. The worlds of worth that

were used by ERK to evaluate and justify the complaint, the advertisement from the advertiser's point of view and the decision are shown in figure 5.8. The image was banned as it violated the civic and domestic world of worth. There is also a critique of parts of the domestic world of worth in the decision, the hierarchical relationship between the man and the women.

Complainant	**Advertiser**	**Decision-maker (ERK)**
Fame Domestic Civic	Fame (Industrial)	Civic Domestic (in a critique of the Domestic world of worth)

Figure 5.8. *Worlds of worth in the decision-process of Björn Borg*

In the next example, we see how the domestic world of worth can also be adhered to in order to *deny* a complaint.

Carry on, it's Culture

A general practice of both of the self-regulatory bodies is to discuss in the decision-process whether the image is relevant to the product. A member of staff at the ASA told me that there is no *rule* that the images in adverts have to be connected to the product. However, in practice, the ASA takes this into consideration when judging a case, as does ERK as we saw in the H&M case. If the image has no clear connection to the product, the complaint will probably be upheld, but there are exceptions, as we discuss below. The following case can be seen as another type of stylization connected to gender depiction as judged by the ASA. When I asked about gendered advertisements and how they dealt with these, a member of the staff told me that adverts that uses humour similar to that in so-called Carry-On films, are often seen as a part of the British humour tradition and something that people are familiar with and therefore, should not cause offence. Carry-On films, such as the film *Carry on Henry*, were produced in the 1950's and 1960's and their humour is somewhat similar to the Benny Hill Show theme of elderly men who like young women with large breasts. Basically, this type of traditional British humour, even if it carries with it objectifying gender roles, will not be banned by the ASA. The decisive point is if the advertisement can be seen as humorous by a wide audience. This is something that the ASA Council decides. In the following section, I give an example of how an advertisement was judged by the ASA, which could be seen in the light of their stance towards traditional Carry on humour.

An advertisement from the British airline company EasyJet with the caption "discover weapons of mass distraction" provoked 190 complaints to the ASA in 2003. It is shown in figure 5.9.

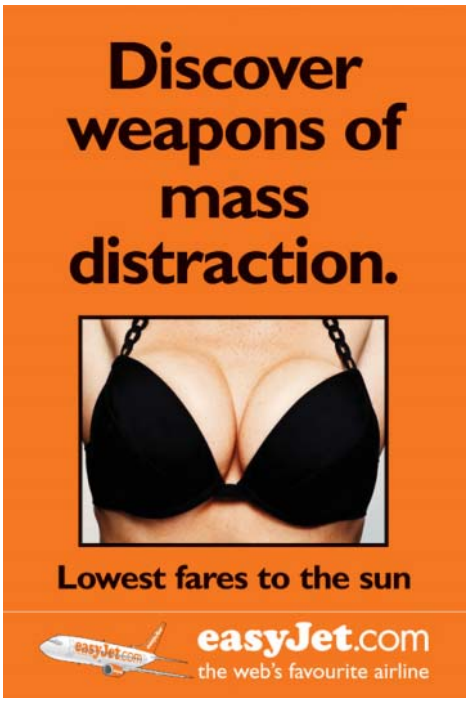

Figure 5.9. *Advertisement for EasyJet Airline*—a pun on the justification of warfare and example of British Carry On humour according to some.[125]

The advertisement was published as a poster as well as in the national and regional press. In the published adjudication from the ASA it is stated that it was seen in: *Metro*, *The Daily Express*, *The Daily Star*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Independent*, *The Independent on Sunday*, *The Mail on Sunday*, *The Sun*, *the Sunday Express*, *The Sunday Mirror, The Sunday Telegraph, The Sunday Times* and *The Times*.[126] The complaints boiled down to two types of claimed offensiveness: that the image was "offensive and demeaning to women" (the ASA judges these things in terms of widespread or serious offence) and "offensive because

[125] The image was reproduced in *The Advertising Standards Authority Annual Report 2003,* leaflet and as Pdf on website.
[126] From the ASA Adjudication for EasyJet Ailine Co Ltd, published on their website 30 July 2003, http://www.asa.org.uk/. The adjudication is also referred to in the *Advertising Standards Authority Annual Report 2003*, as one of the ten most complained about advertisements that year.

it trivialized the recent war in Iraq".[127] The advertiser did not agree with the complainants. According to the ASA adjudication, they also said: "the term 'weapons of mass destruction had been in the news for several weeks and they had changed the last word to 'distraction' to highlight one of the attractions of being on holiday in the sun. The advertisers explained that they had thought of the phrase first and had sourced a picture to support it". Most of the publishers of the advertisement saw the advertisement as humorous and the Telegraph and the Sunday Telegraph referred to it as "traditional 'Carry On' humour", according to the ASA adjudication. The Times and the Sunday Times were a bit more cautious and said they had not intended to publish it, while the Sun reported "very positive response" on the part of their group of readers. The ASA did not uphold the complaint because they saw it as "light-hearted and humorous", and thus not likely to cause widespread or serious offence, and that the reference to the war was "distasteful" but not trivializing.

In an interview, I asked one of the council members to compare this EasyJet advertisement with the Björn Borg advertisement. The council member was not part of the decision of the EasyJet Airline advertisement, but said:

> I thought it was funny. No I agreed, I didn't think it was likely to cause widespread offence. I mean it is interesting, why didn't I? Cause actually, it is actually quite an objectification of women. But in the grand scheme of things compared with a lot of the stuff that we see it's not very, it's a pair of boobs.

Comparing the image with the Björn Borg advertisement, as I had asked her to do, she concluded that the EasyJet image with exposed breasts was not at all relevant for the product, and was *not* banned, while the Björn Borg image *was* relevant for the product, and this complaint *was* upheld. She was thereby pointing out the inconsistency of both of these decisions in relation to the self-regulators' usual stance of building their decisions, at least partly, on whether the expression of the image is relevant for the product. In the Björn Borg advertisement, it is not the lightly dressed people in themselves that are problematic, but the way the only man in the image relates to the women in the image. The general stance of both self-regulators is that nakedness in itself is not problematic but becomes so if combined with objectification or undue sexualization.

The EasyJet advertisement was not seen as offensive, and thus not banned by the ASA, because people in general were not understood as offended. Although exaggerated and funny depictions of violence or objectifications may lessen the offence, stylization is not decisive, nor is the general guideline of connection to the product. What matters more is the kind of justification that is made and that this is in tune with the idea of audience context. When the decision-makers consider the complainants' and advertisers' justifications, what they evaluate is the relevance of their interpretations for the general public. The complainants interpreted and evaluated the advertisement in line with the combination of the civic world of worth and domestic world of worth, which in

[127]ASA Adjudication for EasyJet Ailine Co Ltd, published on their website 30 July 2003.

their compromise criticizes the traditional gender roles that the domestic world represents. In this case, the image was seen as funny, a harmless example in line with the humour tradition of the country, and thus in line with the domestic world of worth.

An Extreme Case with Typical Features

In my interviews with the ASA staff as well as the council members, I tried to understand the different steps of a specific campaign that had received one complaint.[128] This contained an advertisement for gay sex education with what was seen as explicit language, such as the word "fuck". I began this dissertation by describing how this case provided examples of the various aspects that decision-makers reflect over, when they try to decide whether an image is offensive. How they relate to complainants and advertisers has been discussed in the earlier cases. This case also sheds light on how decision-makers relate to other decision-makers. As the staff is ordered into different stages of decision-making, they may also come to different conclusions. The case is both extreme and typical. It is an extremely long process, but it contains typical features of the decision-processes at the ASA, and can thus be defined as an information dense case in terms of how the reflexive process of the decision-makers works.

The example that I discuss here follows the decision-process from complaint to decision to review of the decision, by the Independent reviewer, which then resulted in a revised decision. *The Gay Men's Health Charity* (GMFA), formerly called *Gay Men Fighting Aids* ran a campaign during spring 2006. The advertisements appeared in the gay magazine *Pink Paper*. The charity had run campaigns in the past with the same purpose as this campaign: to raise awareness among homosexual men in order to decrease HIV in this group. The charity was officially recognised by gaining support from the Government's Department of Health. As I wrote at the beginning of the introduction chapter, two of the images in the campaign received one complaint to the ASA, in the shape of a letter from a woman who had read the paper at a public library, apparently by mistake, without knowing the target group of the paper. She became very upset about the explicit formulations in the campaign. The complainant found the texts offensive and the advertisements obscene. She stated that she had complained to her local library about the fact that they provided these papers so that anyone could see this campaign. The images, shown in figure 5.10, appear in the Pink Paper on page 11 and page 21. One depicts a couple holding a sign with the text "We'd rather fuck than watch T.V.". The other of the two advertisements in the same paper contains text advertising sex tips for homosexual men, such as learning techniques for masturbating and blow jobs, information about HIV and safe practice of bondage.

[128] We discussed many other cases, but I discussed this case with more people who were also involved in the decision process.

Figure 5.10. *Advertising safe sex with catchy or offensive language.* Two advertising images from a charity campaign from The Gay Men's Health Charity.[129]

[129] Source of images: Pictures reproduced in report written by the Independent reviewer of the ASA.

The paper had a clear target audience. But since it had been found in a public library, the type of audience to take into account in the decision was unclear and needed to be established.

One of the council members told me about her memories of former AIDS campaigns in the country, which gave me an understanding of the background to her approach to the Pink Paper advertisement. In my interpretation, she highlighted the importance of being able to be explicit about some things and not having to connect certain groups and illnesses with disaster:

> [W]e've got quite a tradition of looking at that sort of advertisement, which is very explicit…In the eighties I was on the advertising advisory committee for the ITC [The Independent television Commission, one of the regulators later replaced by OfCom]. It was at the start of the AIDS crisis …it was about 1986, and at that time you couldn't advertise contraception on television at all, it was banned, and there was a proposal because of the AIDS crisis that we needed to change that rule, and I remember sitting in a committee where we had no language (for condoms) […] The first television campaign that was one around AIDS was a terrible campaign done by the Government: it had…cliffs falling into the sea…, so you know: 'this is disaster happening'. But it gave people no information whatsoever, because they didn't know how to. And interestingly…it was somebody like Princess Diana coming along and giving somebody with AIDS a hug that changed a lot of people's attitudes that made people realise that actually we need to be more practical about this issue. So I mean that's a really interesting example of how attitudes towards something people felt very offended by because it was linking sex, sexuality, and homosexuality with death, terrible disease and disaster, all those things which for me [were] really very difficult. It is very interesting how we have overcome that.

According to this council member, the general attitude towards AIDS and talking about the disease changed over the last 20 years. Getting a message across for the sake of health (a combination of the world of fame and the civic world of worth) was more important than fostering the domestic worth of etiquette. But there was still an apparent clash in the evaluation of the situation between the use of certain expressions that offended some people and the value of being explicit about certain illnesses and risk groups. In the decision-process surrounding the complaint about the Pink Paper advertisement, was it the remnants of the old unwillingness to express overtly sensitive issues relating to AIDS and/or sexuality that clashed with a new openness? What evaluative logics were involved?

I visited the ASA office in London when the complaint arrived in May 2006 and spoke to the complaint executive of the Complaints team, who wrote a recommendation for the council. He had to decide whether to recommend that the complaint should either be denied or investigated further. He showed me the letter that they had received and the Pink Paper in which the ad had appeared. He said that the ASA researches what words the British population finds most offensive and "fuck" is one of them, as stated in the introduction of this dissertation. This type of reasoning is based on the *industrial world of worth* in

combination with the *world of fame*, according to which knowledge about people's opinions can be justified on the basis of opinion research. Opinion research about target groups—often related to by both advertisers and the ASA—is also conducted based on the combination of these worlds. The members of staff contemplated if they could use such opinion research in an unproblematic way in this particular case. The ASA always takes into consideration whether the target group may differ from the general public. In this case, there might have been a legitimate reason to use explicit language, but on the other hand, it was not certain that the gay population, which was the target audience of the paper, liked the expression any more than the general public. Maybe the widespread offence caused by the word *fuck* amongst the general public was equally applicable to gay people. Understanding the viewers as a collective with equal ability to be offended, meant taking the *civic world of worth* into account. The complaints executive merely points out that there are a few evaluation principles in conflict at this stage of the decision-process. He does not, however, have to solve them. That decision devolves upon the investigation executive. The ASA council agreed with the complaint executive that the case needed investigation. This means that they also recognised the conflict between different evaluation logics and that the framing of the advertisement could not be taken-for-granted.

The investigation executive then took over the case. Before writing his recommendation, he received justifications for the advertisements from the advertiser. According to the summary made by the ASA, the advertiser claimed in the published adjudication:

> GMFA said they were a gay men's health charity and their mission was to improve gay men's health by giving them the knowledge, skills and confidence to negotiate in sexual situations. They did that via media campaigns and group work for gay men. They asserted that 80% of new HIV infections acquired in the UK were as a result of sex between men and their research suggested that the best way to communicate effectively with gay men, particularly in sex related matters, was to use the same frank language used by gay men. They said the 'Relationtips' campaign had recorded the second highest recognition of HIV health promotion campaigns evaluated in the last three years by an independent company and had been pre-tested with gay men: the responses showed that men were more inclined to read the ad because of the 'attention grabbing' headline. They said the second ad was designed to promote workshops for gay men and argued that it was important for the ads to reflect the nature and style of the workshops. They did not believe the target audience would find the ads offensive and they were relevant to the subject being addressed. They pointed out that the Pink Paper was a national publication for gay and lesbian adults and any ads that the publishers considered to be of an explicit nature were placed after the first eleven pages to ensure they were not stumbled across by people unaware of the publication's nature.[130]

[130] http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2006/11/GMFA/CS_41952.aspx, last date of downloads 28 March 2010.

The investigation executive recommended the ASA not to uphold the complaint, in line with the advertiser. Judging by what he wrote in the recommended decision to the council, he did not want the council to uphold the complaint because a) the content of the adverts mirrored the services that was advertised: good sexual practices for gay men b) the advertiser had put the adverts in medias directed to the relevant target group, and thus had acted responsibly. The advertiser had also checked the response to the ads on a sample of the group and the publisher of the ads, c) The Pink Paper explicitly states that it is a gay magazine on the front page. They were basically distributed at gay-oriented venues, so the number of people from the public that would see the advertisements in the paper, outside their target group, was probably low. Even though the paper could be found in public libraries, those who read it were unlikely to be surprised by its content, and those who would be offended could easily avoid it, because the Pink Paper had put the adverts after page 11. This meant that compromises had been imagined between these conflicting values, amongst imagined viewers, for the executive to make this decision.

Figure 5.11. *The front page of The Pink Paper.* At the bottom of the front page one can read: "Britain's biggest ABC certified gay publication".[131]

[131] Picture reproduced in report written by the Independent reviewer of the ASA.

The council members went against the executive's recommendation and voted 8:3 on their website, Council online, to uphold the complaint, which meant the advertisements were seen as unacceptable. As this was a clear vote, the case did not go to council discussion. The reasons that some of the council members gave to uphold were in line with the complainants' claims that the advertisements could be seen as offensive to people in general, because the paper was placed in public libraries. People who were not used to the content might see it by mistake. In this case, there was a great divide between the recommendation that the investigation executive formulated and the council decision. A clash thus appears between recommendation and the actual decision within the ASA.

A point made by the complainant that may have worked in her favour was the argument that the gay population might not like crude language any more than others. This argument was built on the civic world of worth, as was the argument of promoting health in a targeted group. If this was the decisive point, the council disregarded the advertiser's claim to have checked the campaign content with representatives of the presumed target group before publishing it. Normally, such an argument has an impact on the decision-makers of the ASA. In this first adjudication, by the ASA, the civic value to take the general public into account fosters domestic values or correctness, i.e. the idea that the gay population should not be separated out from the general public who will understand the advertisements as offensive. The advertiser and publisher wanted, the ASA to take the target group, not the general public, into account and use the civic world a bit differently, as they connect it to the importance of statutes and equality in terms of health.

If we focus on how the council evaluated the advert in their first decision, the council did not compromise between the mentioned values. Their decision can, however, also be interpreted as an expression of the values of authority of the domestic world, in which the word "fuck" would be seen as vulgar (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:176). According to the advertisers, the use of the word evokes the right feeling among the target group. Good relationships are made in different ways, which causes a tension from within the domestic world. This tension exists because forming a good relationship with the audience in a campaign about preventing HIV is not built on traditional etiquette, but instead on a certain jargon directed toward the targeted audience. Of course, the advertisement makes its impact by comparison to a more rigid etiquette; that is what makes the gay jargon appear as *avant-garde*, in line with the inspired world of worth, but it may also be seen as a violation of domestic propriety, of which vulgarity is an example. The adverts embody a compromise as well as a conflict between the domestic world on the one hand and the inspired world in combination with the world of fame, depending on how they are evaluated. This is stated more clearly in figure 5.12 below.

Chronological order of steps of decision process

REFLEXIVE POST	TYPE OF WORTH (base of evaluation)	Justifications in the material (expressions on empirical level)
1. Complaint of advertisements ↓	Domestic/Civic	Offensive words, exposed publicly, obscene, equally offensive amongst citizens
2. Advertiser ↓	Inspired, Fame, Industrial	Frank language key, "attention grabbing", targeted audiences, pre-testing
3. Publisher ↓	Fame, Civic, Industrial	They are a known publication, targeted, advertising guidelines, diversity policy at library, controlled distribution of the paper
4. Draft Inv. Exec. ↓	Industrial/Opinion/ Domestic/Civic create compromise =not upheld is recommended	Advertisement relevant for the product, advertiser targeted audience by various means, general public knowledge of publication content, previous decision and placement in paper acknowledged.
5. Council Online ↓	Domestic/Civic, Fame/Industrial =Upholds the complaint	8:3, for upholding the complaint. Could be offensive inside but especially outside targeted group, as the target group is seen as not necessarily different. (Offensive words for general public acc. to ASA survey.)
6. Complaint of decision ("request for review") ↓	Industrial, civic	ASA could not provide expert advice on amendments; ASA did not use expert advice to understand target audiences; public health reasons had been ignored in the decision; possible hidden agenda of complainant against homosexuals.
7. Indep. Reviewer ↓	Industrial/Fame can make a compromise with the Domestic/Civic =recommending revising the decision	Reminding of decision and image of similar case; target group knowledge; general public able to avoid place of advertisement because of placement in paper.
8. Council Meeting (members, decision)	Industrial/Fame can make a compromise with the Domestic/Civic	Relevant for product, placement in paper responsible, the paper and its nature is known to the general public. 9:2 for not upholding.

Figure 5.12. *Clashes and compromises between worlds, within and between stages.* The decision-process moves in the vertical direction from top to bottom of the figure in the decision-process of the GMFA campaign

The complainant and the council were not willing to make the compromise—compare step 1 and 2 in figure 5.12—while the Investigation executive and the Independent reviewer were. There was reluctance in the first decision by the ASA council online to go along with the idea that what is offensive for many may serve a higher purpose, for the common good, or that offence is not caused at all in the target group.

When the decision had been made and transmitted to the advertiser, the advertiser complained to the independent reviewer. In a letter to the independent reviewer, the advertiser raised three reasons for the decision to be reviewed; 1) they claimed they had been using similar expressions in similar campaigns for 14 years and that it was important that everyone understood what the adver-

tisements said.[132] For them, it was unclear what kind of language to use in future adverts in order to connote sexual acts; 2) they claimed they acted in the interest of the public and that the ASA council disregarded this by being overly sensitive about words. Instead, the ASA should have sought expert advice, according to the advertiser, in order to learn more about the target group, for which the advert was intended; 3) the complaint was false, because behind it was another dispute, according to the advertiser. The advertiser believed the complainant was complaining on behalf of people against the publication in itself and its circulation. There was, however, no evidence of this the ASA or the independent reviewer could find; 4) The representative of GMFA also stated in a letter to the independent reviewer that other gay- and lesbian-related media used cruder language in their adverts and that these had not been banned by the ASA.

The advertiser argued that the self-regulatory body should have taken into consideration their generalisation of the target group: homosexual men. The target group of the magazine was broader than the advertiser's in this sense, but according to the editor of the Pink Paper they had not received any complaints from their readers about this or similar adverts. According to the ASA, generalisation of the target group is also a justified base for the ways adverts are shaped, an evaluation that belongs to the world of fame. In the world of fame, for actions, people or things to be worthy, adjusting to what the public wants in the shape of target audiences, is crucial. In this world, it is justified to do what you need to be seen, to garner attention and to persuade. Blunt language in an advertisement is seen as justified if the target group members of the advertisement and/or the paper are thought to approve. In untargeted media, that would not normally be sufficient to justify an advertisement. Seeing the worth of fame as a value in itself requires a targeted media.

However, the generalizations needed to create a conception of the target group—and to justify this idea of them—require the evaluation logic of another world as well: the industrial world. The generalisations are thus given force because they are based on a variation of public opinion surveys (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:180-181). This was also an argument that the advertiser successfully used in his critique of the first decision to the Independent reviewer. The advertiser claimed that the ASA had failed to collect information about the target group from expert or external sources as the advertiser thought they should have done and as he had seen that the ASA claims to do, in the description of their general complaints procedure.

The independent reviewer stated in his report that the main reason for the review was wrong in principle; according to the principles of the ASA, there must either be a flaw in the decision-process or new information about the case to initiate a review. Based on his belief that the investigation executive had not

[132] The advertiser thought the language use was culturally appropriate for the target group and that the word "fuck" was needed in order not to be ambiguous, because they were not speaking of just any sexual act but of intercourse. Expressions such as "make love" and similar would not do and difficult terms would exclude less educated parts of the target group.

told the council that the advertisements were placed after page 11, the independent reviewer decided to review the case. In fact, the investigation executive *had* mentioned this and clearly writes it in the draft recommendation/adjudication. However, the independent reviewer claims he did not realise this until he had already begun his review.

He wrote in his report that he thought it was "remarkable" that one of the underlying reasons for the council to uphold the complaint could have been that a gay magazine, with such advertisements, was available in public libraries. He was surprised that the council made the evaluation they did despite their knowledge that the advertisements had been placed after page 11. In other words, he had expected the council to make compromises between evaluative modes, i.e. fame and domestic in this case, given that information. Before voting online, the council members had also been informed about another campaign for the GMFA services from the year 2000, which was explicit in much the same way and had received complaints to the ASA. That campaign had not been judged as offensive by the ASA council.

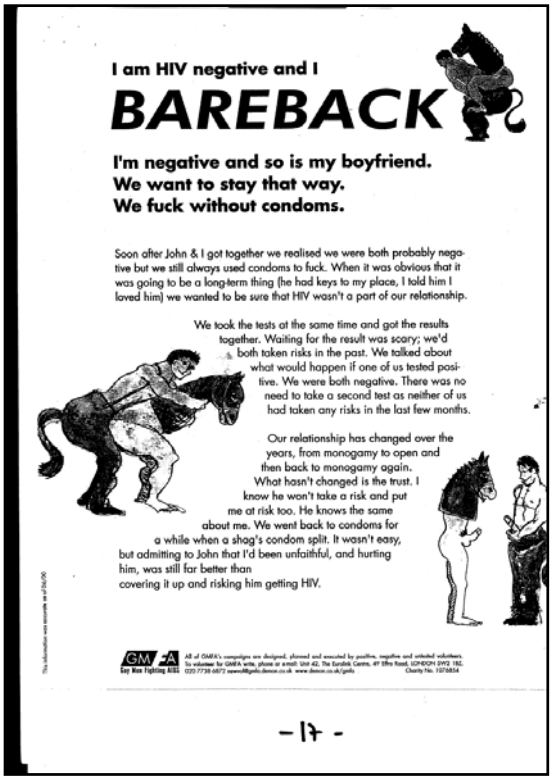

Figure 5.13. *Former similar cases.* Picture involved in former decision made by the ASA, about a GMFA campaign.[133]

[133] Picture reproduced in report written by the Independent reviewer of the ASA. The written adjudication from 2000 was not included in my material, so I could not analyse that text.

The council was not provided with an image of the 2000 campaign when voting online, but had been given a description of it in words in the adjudication then made by the ASA. The independent reviewer decided it was a good idea to show the council the old campaign images, which are all in the style of figure 5.13. These images as well as the speculations about the complaint being deceptive, cloaking anti-gay motives were basically the only new information. The Independent reviewer acknowledged that he had not reviewed the case for the right reasons according to the ASA statutes; however he *did* ask the council to consider the case again, because the motives of the GMFA to fashion their adverts as they had could be seen as justified, according to the *industrial world of worth* and the *world of fame*. The independent reviewer ended his report by writing: "I set out the text of the revised 'not upheld' verdict which I recommend the council to adopt. I must acknowledge that the text does not differ significantly from that which the Council earlier voted by 8 to 3 to reject."[134] However, the case was now packaged in a different way for the council to consider, and this time, they had a real face-to-face meeting. A 'new' recommendation not to uphold the complaint was then written for the council meeting after the independent reviewer presented his report. In the process, the complainant also sent letters to the independent reviewer that challenged the view that she was complaining for the sake of any people against the publication itself.

Summarizing the Independent reviewer's points in his report, *Submission to council from Independent reviewer*, he argued that the complaint should not be upheld because the Pink Paper had placed the advertisement on a late page, and thereby decreased the risk of offence amongst those outside the group of gay men, who would realise by then what kind of paper they were reading; that the ASA had not upheld similar cases and that the advertiser knew its target audience. He also pointed out the good cause of the GMFA. In addition, there were no known cases of offence among the targeted audience. He recommended not upholding the complaint. The preparatory steps in relation to the audience in order to create predictability were a part of the industrial world of worth, as was the systematic relation to former decisions.

One of the Investigation team managers presented the revised recommendation to the council and according to the executive who wrote it, who was also in attendance, the manager asked the council to consider whether the complainant was against gay people and the publication in itself, as the advertiser had suggested. Although this could never be proven, this appeared to have been a suspicion that was crucial for the new decision. This time, the complaint was not upheld and the votes were 9:2 for not upholding the complaint. The

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The important point is however that it was not upheld and that it was judged by the independent reviewer as being of comparable nature to the 2006 GMFA campaign under scrutiny. It was a case dealing with the potential offense of the advertisements, it was from the GMFA and the media context was similar—another gay targeted magazine.

[134] Both the chairman of the ASA and the AsBof chairman found the advertiser's argument persuasive. The AsBof chairman also supports the independent reviewer's recommendation that the council should reconsider.

council members of this decision were the same who had voted the first time. Apparently, now they had made compromises between values that they were not willing to do previously or which had not even been apparent the first time around. I illustrate this in figure 5.12. Two council members did stick to their previous opinions, while the rest changed sides, apart from those who already thought the images were justified. One of the council members told me in an interview the reason he was against the advertisement and wanted to uphold the complaint, which points to the complexity of generalizing about target groups:

> CM: I felt it was unacceptable even in that magazine…we accepted what [the Independent Reviewer] said but I was still against…I thought that irrespective of the context I thought it was beyond acceptable.
>
> Caroline: because of?
>
> CM: The language and I don't think that language should be used in a public newspaper. But it wasn't a long debate because I was in the minority (he says this is unusual for him because he is normally in the majority), I think there was two of us, [a council member's name] and I, but everybody else didn't, and the argument was lost.
>
> Caroline: and was it that the rest thought of it as a targeted magazine and you thought of it as a more general?
>
> CM: yea, that is exactly right. [The same council member's name as above] raised the point that just because you are homosexual, gay, why should it be assumed that you are more happy to accept words that if you weren't homosexual you would be offended at […] I was against it all way through.

The quote shows that even though this particular council member was certain about what he thought in the case, what is good for the general public and/or target group is not always easy to decide.

Who the public is, or which public to be concerned of in this decision, is of primary importance here. The ASA was faced with several questions: Do we focus on the health of a smaller target group or on the general public's potential feelings of being offended by words such as "fuck"? Do we include or exclude the target group ideas in ideas of the general public? In the end, the discussion on the location of the advert created the possibility for a solution and a way to combine the different modes of evaluation represented by the complainants and the advertiser/paper. When the advert was placed a few pages inside the paper, the reader who was not a part of the target group would be able to prepare for what might appear later or at least realize that this was a paper for the gay population and conclude from other ideas of this group that crude words could appear.

One council member who voted *against* upholding the complaint the first and the second time commented the following way on the behaviour of the woman who had read the Pink Paper and complained to the ASA: "You silly

women! (laughingly) You know, just close it! Just close it, it is not for you! If she had seen it on a big poster I would say "okay that's fine, yea" (then she would probably support the complaint).

The strategies used by the ASA to predict how people in general interpret situations are often based on the idea that they like the status quo and if they are not surprised by the images in their surroundings, they will be content (cf. Bourdieu 1984 [1979]; Durkheim 1992 [1897]). So we have here a combination of the world of fame, in terms of target groups, and the industrial world, in terms of creating predictability, which seems to create a stabilizing aspect to the self-regulatory work, because through this compromise the decision-makers may control the uncertainty of what the public thinks.

Looking at a long process such as this one makes clear that different evaluations are made by different people in the process and in different situations by the same people. Furthermore, when the council looked at the campaign a second time, they were given a different chance to choose among values and evaluate which ones to put first. Even though the context was not changed since there was almost no new information, the setting was framed differently. Perhaps it was also more difficult for decision-makers to justify their first decision when they met face to face. Another explanation is also possible: In the first decision made by the council online, the *civic world of worth* justified the claim of the domestic world of worth, as people should thus be met as *equally* able to be offended. The compromises made with the domestic world of worth in the end, meant that a modification could be made concerning what the domestic world means when it was related to a specific target group; when such compromises were made, the advertisements could be viewed as *providing good role models* for their target groups and for a good cause. When this is the way the advertisements and their context were interpreted, the original complaint could be overturned. During the decision-process, we could see how the civic world of worth used as justification in several different ways: 1) relating to the entity of the "general public" on equal terms, rather than separating out a group from the general public as if it looked at the advertisements in accordance with a different cognitive outlook, 2) guidelines of openness, and 3) public health.

To sum up, in order to justify the chosen expression for the advertisements, the advertiser used the industrial world of worth, claiming to have *tested the image* on the target audience. Direct words, which are *not predictable*, were needed and they also had to be *attention grabbing;* this combination of the inspired world of worth and the world of fame justified the advertisements. The directness that can be seen as a sign of worthy non-conformity according to the inspired world of worth was seen by the complainant as a violation of the domestic world of worth, in which this was unacceptable behaviour. The inspired world of worth represented the avant-garde nature of the gay community, according to the advertiser and acknowledged by one of the council members as quoted at the beginning of the dissertation. It was this attitude which was used to grab the reader's attention. As a *certain group* is claimed to *recognize* (a targeted group, a worth of the world of fame) *the avant-garde attitude* (an attitude of being innovative, a worth of the inspired world of worth) this means that the inspired world

of worth is in a compromise with the world of fame. A link could thus be established between the advertisement and an audience. The independent reviewer asked the ASA how they could have missed that the advertiser and the publisher had made a compromise between the industrial and the domestic worlds of worth (combined with the civic since the general public is also taken into account) and thereby made the offence more predictable and thus avoidable for readers/viewers. In the second council decision of this case, the decision-makers focused on a different type of audience, which shifted the way they framed the case to evaluate and interpret it. That change made it possible for them to arrive at a different decision.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on how decision-makers relate to the advertisers, complainants, and other decision-makers. I started the chapter by looking at various ways decision-makers relate to stylization. It is interesting to see how stylization can be decisive in judging whether an image is offensive or not. The dividing line is whether they are seen as stylization of the unreal or stylized reality. When an image can pass as a part of everyday life, like a violent act, or as something we should not be able to see at all, like a dressing-room, we are much more vulnerable, the reflexive reasoning of the decision-makers implies. That is in line with Goffman's discussion on gender advertisements (1979 [1976]), which I described in chapter 2. If we do not take the images for reality, the offence will not be so severe in terms of influencing the ways we make sense of the world. At the same time, the decisions show that this is a criterion that may take different shapes. The aesthetics of the fashion and poses of the models in the Dolce & Gabbana advertisements were clearly stylized, removed from the reality of today, but as they were placed in a media context and a time and place connecting them to recent violent events, they still had a possible resonance in people's everyday lives, the decisions suggested. In the H&M case, the high stylization was pointed out as something that increased the risk of offence. This was not mirrored in the decision, but put the case in a grey zone which needed justification.

According to Howard S. Becker, art worlds have different types of audiences, some with very good knowledge of its conventions (initiated), subgroups (also initiated) that find the traditional of less interest but favour innovative elaborations of conventions, as well as the less initiated audiences with general knowledge (laypeople) (Becker 1982:40-67). Becker argues that it is the most initiated of art audiences that speak from the most justified position. Self-regulators of advertising cannot only relate to initiated audiences of advertising. They cannot take for granted that justification is granted by building the logics of their decisions on the type of viewers with knowledge of the more specialized conventions of an art world. They must rather be able to relate to what is more *generally* recognized as good, by lay-people. Such considerations may, however, vary with setting.

And even if the decision-makers take a specific target group with specialized interests and knowledge into account, such as 'the gay population', this must be done according to a conventionalized morality which provides a justified frame for taking this specialization into account. In the case of the GMFA campaign, decision-makers considered the effect of the advert on the general public, an uninitiated audience, in their first decision, because they were possibly exposed to the advertisements. In their second decision, council members took the specific target groups into account. In both cases, however, decision-makers defined the most relevant audience by logics that have resonance in the worlds of worth.

We detected two major differences between the organizations in this chapter. One can see a difference in how the domestic world of worth is deployed. ERK tends to criticize aspects of the domestic world of worth using the civic, while relying on *some aspects* of worthiness in the domestic world of worth nevertheless, such as *respect* for others regardless of their status. In the Björn Borg case from 2005 as well as in the justification of the denied complaints for the H&M campaign, they discussed the objectified nature of the women, which implied their subordinated position in relation to men. The ASA supports the complete logic of the domestic world of worth to a much greater extent, as explained in the following. The ASA fosters culturally entrenched values of the country and is thus supportive of the domestic world of worth. This means that when the ASA takes the popularity and entrenchment of a humour tradition into account when judging the appropriateness of an image, as was done in the EasyJet example, the people who interpret and evaluate the image *differently* have no influence in the regulation of such an image. That way, the decisions taken together have an influence over what kinds of evaluative modes are given room in the public sphere. To understand the values that are important, one thus also needs knowledge about how worlds of worth are related to each other, what aspects of the worlds are stressed in the evaluation and if they critique or support a particular world of worth.

Secondly, the world of fame is also often related to different things, comparing the two organizations. The ASA conceptualizes target groups while ERK analyses the nature of the products and whether the depiction is in line with it. As seen in the GMFA case, the issue of target group versus general public is crucial, in the decision-making of the ASA. The ASA argues that a poster may potentially be viewed by anyone, while a magazine directed towards a specific target group will be judged in relation to that audience type. Having said this, even if the advertising media is targeted, the public space of a library creates an uncertainty of what public to take into account. This means it is justified for complainants to raise issues, and they will be considered seriously, even though they would not be if the ASA could define a restricted and justified target group. As we saw above, it is not always easy to decide whether to take only the target group into account or the general public; it depends on how the decision-makers collectively conceptualize the audience.

The assumptions made about the different worlds of worth in chapter 3, about their relevance in advertising self-regulation, have been demonstrated

through the examples in this and the previous chapter; I will develop the connections more fully in the following chapters. This chapter has also shown that the decision-makers reflexively put the advertising images in various cognitive frames—evaluative modes, conceptualized as world of worth—in order to evaluate relevant audiences. These frames are often combined. From the GMFA case, it is also clear that different aspects of the worlds can be used to justify a decision, by the same people in the same context. In the next chapter, I focus specifically on cases about gender, as the two organizations have dealt with them. This will allow me to more fully discuss the similarities and differences in how the organizations rely upon different evaluative logics in their decision-making.

6. Dealing with Complaints of Gender Ads

In this chapter, I analyse how the ASA decides if images cause serious or widespread offence in cases of gender-related complaints and how ERK decides if images are gender discriminatory or not. This means I will restrict the analysis of cases dealt with by the ASA to those that are about offence in relation to gender based *objectification* or *traditional gender roles* (gender stereotypes), as these are the cases that ERK also considers. Since all gender depictions are not seen as offensive, discriminatory or objectifying by the self-regulators, it is of interest to ask where the line is drawn in cases that receive complaints. My purpose is to show what is decisive in the decision-making. The gender-related cases create a common denominator between the countries to analyse similarities and differences in how the organizations make decisions. My analysis is based on Boltanski and Thévenot's theory of worlds of worth. The second purpose of the chapter is to show how gender can be understood in relation to the worlds of worth.

So how is gender conceptualized in this study? Since justification is seen as key in the decision-processes, the conventions that influence the types of justifications that are made will also influence the decisions of what gender depictions are seen as acceptable. The doings of gender is thus intrinsically bound up with how a situation may be interpreted and evaluated and a decision justified. The ways complainants or advertisers argue for their interpretations, whether in a semiotic vein, a market mode, or other, does not mean that that evaluative mode in itself should be seen as an explanation for how gender is handled as a whole, but that it is *one format of justification* for gender expressions, but one which may also be *contested,* or combined with other modes.

How the decision-makers evaluate depictions of gender that have received complaints has an impact on the type of gender norms *they* shape through their decisions, in the light of evaluative modes. Studying the processes in which images are interpreted can give us insights about how gender is conceptualized by the decision-makers, as well as by complainants and advertisers whom the decision-makers relate to. I argue in this chapter that gender does not have an autonomous logic, it is not its own institution or so-called world of worth, but depends on how social relations and types of objects and subjects are valued in general. As the decision-makers relate reflexively to different evaluative modes—here conceptualized as worlds of worth—this affects their evaluation of gender in advertising. By making decisions they will also do gender themselves.

As already mentioned, Thévenot, Moody and Lafaye (2000) have suggested a green world of worth as an evaluative logic in addition to the original six

worlds of worth. In a comment on a previous publication of this idea in French, Bruno Latour (1998) argues that ecology should be viewed as a worth that actually intersects with (at least some of) the six worlds of worth, rather than seeing it as a world of its own. This is because the justification of ecological values, and critique thereof, are very much bound up with human values (represented by the original six worlds of worth). When we are dealing with justification, gender, too, moves in and out of the worlds of worth, I argue. This is perhaps more obvious than in the case of ecology. The worlds of worth are obviously about human values. Ecology *could* be seen as a value on its own, focusing on the environment, but it could also be seen as a justifiable basis of action and politics only when it is compatible with human values. Gender is clearly a part of human values and the worlds of worth may help us analyse the patterns of evaluation that are related to men and women, masculinities and femininities. Gender issues do not form their own world of worth, but gender is justified as well as criticized through the six worlds of worth. It is not clear *a priori* if gender-making is good or not as it can be justified, as well as criticized, in various ways. As gender relies on various social complexes, I argue it is more meaningful to conceptualize gender not as an independent convention but as depending on the interplay of other conventions, in this case conventionalized moralities, which come into conflict or are reflexively combined, depending on what is at stake.

I argued in chapter 2, when comparing the image as text approach and the image as practice approach, that the meaning of images should be seen as a practice of people who relate to an image in a situation. Both the image and the situation are interpreted simultaneously and collectively by the people who are in it. Gender is part of this. Complainants point out what the advertisements mean for them and what they believe the impact of the images may be on *other people* in terms of gender. Self-regulators evaluate whether these accounts on gender impact are relevant to how they picture the moral make-up of the public. The *pattern* of decisions by the self-regulators also produces a pattern of how self-regulators relate to complaints about gender differences and inequalities and how they formulate their decisions about them. The interpretations and evaluations of gender in images and other people's relations to the images are hence made in this practice, as this is where it gains its meaning and impact.

In this chapter, I will analyse what evaluative logics that are used in the decision-processes concerned with gender-related complaints of advertising images. Secondly, I analyse what this means in relation to gender. I use a variety of cases from each country in order to compare the settings of the two organizations. Theoretically, this chapter is concerned with how gender aspects intersect with or are related to the six worlds of worth in the decision-making of the advertising self-regulators at the ASA and ERK, respectively. I argue that this reflexive decision-making steers their interpretations and evaluations of gender images.

Complex Gender Formations and the Source of Endurance

One could not argue that group formation based on gender, such as men and women, or types of masculinities and femininities, are morally wrong or offensive *per se*, although gender formations are often associated with structures of inequality. There are including and excluding patterns of relations attached to gender formations, which also explain their endurance. Gender-making can shape things evaluated as good such as a shared experience among women or among men, which can foster politics of opportunity for those groups. Gender relations also postulate rules of etiquette, sometimes regarded as the foundation of pleasant co-existence with others, while also sanctioning those that cannot follow such rules of etiquette. Gender may also help fostering family and company spirits. At the same time, gender undermines equality in families, work places and other fields and spheres of activity. There is this double-sidedness of the good, which also shapes gender.[135] That gender is bound up with aspects of life that we think are worthy explains its enduring capacity.

I think if we are to understand the origin of gender in terms of its inequality which leads to women being less valued than men, or some men less valued than other men and women, or how evaluations of certain men and women are different in different settings, we should understand this through what we have come to think of as 'good'. This is especially clear in relation to the so-called domestic world of worth where loyalty, consideration and trust are crucial values, but people are hierarchically ordered. Raewyn Connell[136] discusses hegemonic masculinity and other types of masculinities in her seminal work *Masculinities* (1995). She argues that there are *some* aspects even of hegemonic masculinity worth preserving, although not only amongst men. She mentions "ethics of sacrifice on behalf of others" (1995:233). This is a clear aspect of worthiness in the domestic world of worth. According to Boltanski and Thévenot, these are worthy ways of being historically related to fathers and leaders. But their theory does not say those actions of worthiness have to be connected to men. This means their theory includes a space for variations of gender relations.

The domestic world of worth, as theorized by Boltanski and Thévenot, includes a clear hierarchical relationship between women and men, whereas the other worlds of worth are not hierarchies, although people and thing may be more or less worthy in relation to them.[137] The domestic world of worth in-

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[135] In the same vein it has been shown that love and "discrimination" go hand in hand in men's attitude towards women and women tend to "show deference" towards "paternalistic" men (Jackman 1994; cf. Wharton 2005:221-224). Mary R. Jackman writes in her study on deference amongst the subordinate in race, class and gender relations that: "Paternalism implies that dominant groups fuel their discriminatory positions towards subordinates, not with negative feelings, but with positive ones […] In the way gender attitudes are compounded, the snug duo of paternalism and deference holds sway" (Jackman 1994:291, 374). She also shows that deference and non-conflict attitudes are the strongest in gender relations compared to class and race relations. Women may also strive towards equality and still have "inclusive feelings towards men" (Jackman 1994:293).

[136] The books I refer to are written in the author's earlier name, Robert W. Connell.

[137] When evaluating depictions and the social impact on viewers, types of people become more or less worthy depending on if they are evaluated using one world of worth or an-

cludes unequal relationships between superordinate and subordinate as well as specific demands on the superordinate to take care of the subordinate, the typical example being the gender relationship. This is an example of the two-sidedness of family relationships. On the one hand, they create loyalty and enduring bonds, socialization into proper manners, respect and personal ties, while at the same time, they create inequality between superior and subordinate (cf. Walzer 1984:227-242), the same being true for other organizations where these values are also fostered, according to Boltanski and Thévenot's theory. The double sidedness of love relationships, desire, pleasure and courtesy has also been discussed in studies of gender (see e.g. Butler 1999 [1990]; Connell 2002; Goffman 1977; Goffman 1979 [1976]; Miller 1998), but by using the theory on justification logics, we can make the analysis of evaluations *more specific*. The logics of evaluation could be said to be historically related to gender in different ways, but may also be combined to specify new gender relations.

People may postulate a critique of features of an image because it either fosters inequality or they may try to justify the same image because it depicts friendly or loving family relationships, based on the same logic of evaluation: the domestic. The ways that gender can be seen as related to all of the worlds of worth will be shown below. As there is this double sidedness of the worth of the worlds, this also creates an explanatory value to them, how inequalities can be created in the name of the good. This chapter deals with if and how this happens in decision-making.

In sum, gender in images is not *justified* by being unequal *per se* but by means of justification that can be seen as good in general. Critiques of gender depictions, it is assumed in this study, are also justified by various means, for violating an evaluative mode or not including another. This is why it makes sense to relate such disputes to the worlds of worth, as it is a question of what type of gender relations can be justified. But what is the argument for using the theory of worlds of worth to understand gender formation in the practices of people, rather than gender theories that exist, which also take variation and complexity seriously? I explain this in the following section.

Gender Complexity beyond Intersectionality Theories

If we consider that individuals may move among various modes of evaluation depending on setting and how the setting is defined collectively in relation to other people, this means that the moral meaning-making of people is not based solely on group affiliation, such as gender. My argument is as follows. In gender studies, categorizations have been a key focus, such as the relationship between sex and gender as well as gender, class and ethnicity. Scholars have pointed out the social character of the biological 'sex', in addition to the obvious social

other, as the logical structures that are related to the different worlds give different values to subjects such as women, leaders, citizens, consumers, target groups, children, individuals or groups.

character of 'gender' (Butler 1993; Delphy 1993; Grosz 1994; Laqueur 1990; Rubin 1993 [1984/1992]; Rubin 2006 [1975]; West and Zimmerman 1987).[138] Connected to the discussion on the social shaping of sex, sexuality and gender is a broader discussion on so called intersecting categories. Gender is the practice of dividing people into male and female, and the social shaping of masculinities and femininities (see also e.g. Connell 1987:140). But there is more to it. Scholars have pointed out various types of femininities and masculinities, where the so-called hegemonic masculinity oppresses both men and women (e.g. Connell 1995; 2002), creating a hierarchy amongst men as well as between men and women. Other relations such as sexuality, class and ethnicity thus complicate the division between men and women in terms of power.[139] By looking at various femininities and masculinities, scholars have been able to point out how various group belongings intersect in the lives of people. The social impact of group belongings and gender expressions may however vary with interpretations amongst people, which make the social meaning and effect of gender differences more complex. The need for a more complex view on intersectionality has also been called for by scholars of intersectionality (McCall 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006).

As can be deduced from previous chapters' discussion on the supragroupial[140] nature of Boltanski and Thévenot's theory, if it is used in relation to gender, it creates another kind of gender complexity than the additive version of intersectionality, which looks at intersections of group categories based on e.g. gender, class and ethnicity trying to add up what it means to be a working-class, white woman, as opposed to a black, working-class woman, middle-class white woman or working-class white man. Making such analyses risk cementing the

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[138] The scholars referenced all discuss the social character of sex and the relationship between the categories of sex/gender and sexuality as all socially shaped, i.e. gender precedes sex. Grosz and Butler however build their arguments on the semiotic idea of systems of signs, while the other accounts are more practice based. Many scholars have moved away from a distinction of sex and gender in which sex is seen as biological while gender is seen as social, as also the biological sex is recognized as socially constructed. This has called for a fusion between the categories of sex and gender as they are both gender. However, acknowledging the social sex, a distinction between sex and gender has been called for—again but for different reasons—because the social making of sex is seen as a specific type of gender-making. The same type of arguments have been made for the distinction and/or fusion of race/ethnicity (cf. Eriksen 1993), not to make the distinction biological/social, but to make the distinction social'/social.

[139] The idea of power is however questioned as an explaining factor in this thesis and also in relation to gender. The concept of power, regardless of whether it is seen as centralized or dispersed (cf. Connell 2002:58-59) does not, I argue, explain why power is created and granted. As I have discussed earlier, the idea of justification in terms of the worlds of worth explains why power can be shaped (taken aside forced power through violence, there is no justification for such force amongst the worlds of worth, but violence is on the other hand something that is not conventionally seen as good in itself). Power cannot be an explanation, only an effect. I see power explanations as black box explanations, i.e. something that cannot provide an explanation in themselves.

[140] Cf. the word supranational. We are not speaking of intra- or intergroupial, but beyond group level, or above, so to speak. I use the word supragroupial to describe this relationship, coined for this purpose.

idea of group categories, instead of looking at value formations that transgresses these types of groups. The use of a supragroupial theory, such as Boltanski and Thévenot's, can be seen, I argue, as one way of taking people's complex worlds and cognition seriously. It means studying settings and the ways people define them collectively at specific instances, which in turn may influence gender doings and what they mean in terms of power. The analytical units are then settings in relation to conventions rather than group affiliations. Using the worlds of worth helps us understand how gender, in terms of how people and images are evaluated, depends on the collective interpretation and evaluation of a setting. Thereby we can explore what things we have come to see as justified. We can also explore how it is renegotiated and why people try to stop some motion of gender equality, because they can justify this on the basis of other values or evaluative logics.

A Reprise of the Cognitive Argument in Relation to Gender

This view supports the idea that gender is socially constructed in practices rather than systems of signs, just like any other cognitive meaning, as discussed in relation to images. In line with Connell, I think that both socio-biological and semiotic accounts of gender are problematic (Connell 1995:50-52). For many critics of the semiotic accounts of gender, (such as e.g. Jackson and Scott 2001; 2002), the bodily social experience is of crucial importance. I agree with this, and build on this, but I would like to take the argument further. To clarify, semiotic accounts of the doings of gender—how gender is enacted in speech or in practice—are e.g. Judith Butler's (1993; 1999 [1990]).[141] Seeing gender as a doing departs in this study from Judith Butler's view on gender as a doing, because our definitions of meaning are based on different premises. Butler's idea of meaning is too static. If we repeat an utterance or a bodily expression, we repeat the meaning of gender, she argues. According to her gender theory, power structures predefine what our utterances and bodily expressions mean. This means even her idea of change is static, as it is taken-for-granted that change will happen if chain-patterns such as man-masculine-heterosexual (which make up the semiotic idea of meaning) are broken up and replaced with man-feminine-heterosexual, in the way that a person performs his self, to give an example (cf. Butler 1999 [1990]:179-180). I argue it is not at all given, how people will interpret these traditional or subversive expressions. In other words, whether they are traditional or subversive cannot be taken-for-granted.

[141] It is language and its rigid grid for the construction of gender that creates gender meanings, according to Judith Butler. This means that the system of signs has certain chain combinations of signs, which can be utterances or specific practices that are the correct ones for doing gender. For a good account on the importance of speech acts, interpellation and other aspects of what I label as semiotic in Butler's conceptualization of gender, see Sara Salih (2002).

Gender in this study is defined as made within different practices, in relation to various sorts of institutions.[142] The institutions are e.g. the family, the church, the state, work, the market and the public.[143] Gender is not confined to the mentioned institutions and practices; as Connell writes:

> We cannot understand the place of gender in social processes by drawing a line around a set of 'gender institutions'. Gender relations are present in *all* types of institutions. They may not be the most important structure in a particular case, but they are certainly a major structure of most.
>
> (Connell 1987:120)

As has been argued by symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists, gender is a means for us to make sense of our everyday interaction with people (Goffman 1977; Goffman 1979 [1976]; West and Zimmerman 1987), and this is what makes it such an entrenched feature of all situations; gender can be found in all known societies (Connell 1995:72). Structuring our encounters with others in terms of gender makes our doings comprehensible for others and other's doings comprehensible for us. That gender is routinely acted upon makes it a recurring separating category, which when it has been established can be used in various ways. Howard S. Becker points out (1982:40-66) that although specific conventions are developed in the art world, known only by the initiated, gender roles as the less specialized conventions that they are, play an important role in art. This is because the idea of for example heterosexual romance will have a resonance in all audiences, even outside the socialized art world audiences. Things such as gender can be used as "skeletons", as Becker calls them, in all sorts of communication, on which the parts for more specialized and subtle meaning making can be planted, but may not be perceived. The audience does not have to have a specialized knowledge of any sort to relate to gender

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[142] Studies that analyse gendered practices or gender institutions (conventionalized ideas) have for example looked at consumer practices, the family, socialization practices, connections between institutions, the practices of gender within institutional frames, how the advertising industry is gendered as well as the everyday life practices of people (see Auslander 1996, on the gendering of consumption; Bulbeck 1998, on gender norms in cultural contexts; Connell 1987, on gender in various institutions such as the family, state and the street; Connell 1995, on the makings of gender in interaction practices and institutional practices; Delphy and Leonard 1992, on gender and the family; Garfinkel 1984 [1967]:116-185, on the gender process of an intersexed person; Glucksmann 2000:52-79, on the relationship between home, work and gender; Goffman 1977, on gender in various institutions such as work, sport, courtesy and dating; Goffman 1979 [1976], on ritualizations and hyper-ritualizations of gender in advertising images and everyday practices; Hebdidge 1988, on how gender depends on the changing chain of production, consumption and advertising practices; Martin 2003, on gender practices at work; Martin 2004, on gender as institution in itself; Nixon 2003, on the gendered nature of creative jobs at advertising agencies; Scott 1999:44-50, on gender and politics; West and Zimmerman 1987, on various levels of doing gender in everyday practices).

[143] I mention these as they are also the areas that Boltanski and Thévenot describe as imbued with different logics of evaluation (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]), but the values are not confined to certain areas as discussed in chapter 3, but can be reflexively combined within a specific organization, such as the family or a company.

relations; they need only be socialized into ordinary society. This, I believe, is also what makes gender such a popular feature of advertising images.

How we do gender in everyday life, and if we perform our roles well, are things that are *evaluated* by others. Are we for example good mothers or fathers? Are we good male or female leaders? This means we can be sanctioned for doing wrong, in relation to various gender norms that are shaped in different social settings. The ways we do gender, and the evaluations of the doings, are, however, dependent on situations and how they are interpreted. Gender relations and expressions are also questioned by people, not just acted upon (see Connell 2002, for some examples). Critique may however also be contested, as there are different ideas of what is good for women and men. Individuals may also, in line with this, develop different directions of their personalities and gender strategies (see Connell 2002:76-96).

Given that gender is regarded as a practice, the practice in which gender is made in this study is the evaluation of advertising images in the process of self-regulation. In this practice decision-makers relate to several so called institutions, namely the evaluative modes conceptualized in terms of the worlds of worth, involved in a reflexive play of justification. What is seen as worthy and unworthy, in terms of gender in images and their implications, sheds light on gender formations, critique thereof and patterns of possible negotiations between value logics, in the context of self-regulation.[144] This means that it is relevant to relate interpretations and evaluations of the doings of gender in advertising images to a plurality of conventions of what is seen as worthy. The worlds of worth as theorized by Boltanski and Thévenot are useful for this, given that the worlds of worth can also be reflexively combined.

Gender and Value in Fields and Spheres

How are gender and evaluation connected and how does this view differ from previous descriptions of gender patterns that cause men and women and what they do to be evaluated differently? Relating to the previous theoretical discussion in this thesis on the basis of values, as either shaped in social groups that gather in specialized fields, or as shaped in terms of autonomous spheres, it is suitable to mention that some classical and current sociologists have explained gender differences by the division of labour between men and women, as well as in terms of different expectations and classifications. They show that men and women have been assigned either different spheres of activity (such as the private or the public sphere), fields of professional specialization (for example the field of science and the field of ballet) or different tasks and statuses when they act in the same sphere (for example in the home) (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]:72, 217, 293 n8; Engels 1978 [1884]; Glucksmann 1990:269-279; Goff-

[144] Connell questions the socialization model of gender as people do reflect over gender relations and question them in practice (2002:77-78), but at the same time points out that we learn about and relate to various types of femininities and masculinities—some with higher status than others depending on setting—as we grow up (2002:84).

man 1977; Parsons 1954: e.g. 80, 94; Parsons 1999 [1960]:117-118; Simmel 1971 [1908]-a:126).

With industrialization, women were connected to the private sphere of the home/reproduction and men to the public sphere of paid labour/production. This division as analytical tool has also been questioned and developed. The labour market has often been segregated in terms of what is suitable work for men and women respectively, as women generally have been doing the less skilled and cheaper work. This has been justified by things such as women's "nimble fingers and high turnover", as shown by Miriam Glucksmann in her study of female factory workers in the inter-war period of Britain (Glucksmann 1990:277). Such justifications create a kind of worthiness for women that decrease chances of their formal education and skilled jobs, as they are seen as being efficient by nature in certain types of work. That women have been less skilled has also been explained by their historical bonds to the domestic sphere and that they have been seen as a less available work force because of childbirth (Glucksmann 1982:168-169). Higher wages for men cannot fully be explained by level of skills (see e.g. Glucksmann 1982:83), as women's work is often paid less even compared to men's work requiring no previous skills.

In the Western world, women's level of education has, as we know, changed radically. And when it comes to women as a part of the workforce, Connell writes:

> By the end of the century [20th] adult women's workforce participation was over 90 per cent of the men's rate in Cambodia, Ghana, Tanzania, Vietnam, Malawi, Rwanda, Mozambique, Burundi, Guinea, Benin and Sweden—and not far behind that in other parts of Scandinavia, eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, China, central and west Africa.
>
> (Connell 2002:72)

But gender differences prevail. The justification of divisions of labour and tasks or male and female roles have been and are made along evaluative lines such as: instrumental/expressive, heavy/light, dirty/clean, skilled/unskilled, aggressive/caring, controlled/hysterical, competitive/giving, and so on, following the pattern of masculine/feminine in each distinction (as shown by e.g. Benhabib 1992:153-158; Connell 2002:123; Glucksmann 1990:277; Goffman 1979 [1976]:68-70). How they are linked to gender, class, ethnicity or other groupings in terms of whether they are seen as valued is an empirical question and may vary with settings. The examples given of contrasting gender divisions are as a consequence not cast in stone or always relevant.

Connell points out (2002:61) that different values have been connected to the reasons for work done in the economic realm (connected to men) and the home (connected to women); the work in homes has been done "for love" and the job in the economic sphere has been done "for money". But I argue that because the driving forces of families are not only love and the driving forces of employees are not only money, but that a variety of values intersect these organizations, as the theory on justification shows, the latter theory may also

help specifying the values that are involved in making certain gender doings worthy, less worthy or unworthy. It is more fruitful to use the notion of justification to understand why varieties exist in different settings when it comes to these production relations and why, for example, men's roles in households will sometimes be seen as more worthy than women's and sometimes not. So how can we relate gender to the six worlds of worth more specifically, rather than to fields or spheres?

Gender and the Six Worlds of Worth

In this section I describe how gender is related to the various worlds of worth in the practices of people. I also give some examples of how the worlds of worth are compromised in the evaluations of gender doings. I have created the examples by putting previous gender studies in the light of world of worth.

The **civic** world of worth concerns itself with group solidarity issues and citizen rights. The worth of equality itself can be used to criticize other worlds of worth that foster inequality, such as the domestic world of worth and the effects of the industrial worlds of worth. Bringing women's issues (domestic) or worker's issues (industrial) into the civic world of worth, to claim them as citizen rights as has been done, means that the civic world of worth has to form a compromise with these worlds of worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:310). The issue of, for example, the right to form homosexual marriages also means a combination of the domestic world of worth and civic world of worth. One may as a consequence argue that the civic world can be gender blind while also being the source of equality.

In families and similar constellations, such as work places and other organizations, hierarchies between women and men as well as other positions between persons are established and men (as "fathers" or "kings") are seen as more worthy according to the **domestic** world of worth in the theory on justification.[145] But worthiness is not confined to men in this world. If a woman is a leader, a parent or a boss, she is worthy too, given she behaves the way she should according to this world. A father who is not behaving properly is not seen as worthy, so there is a dynamic within the world in relation to gender. The unworthy are however defined as those outside the establishment, usually "women", "children", "foreigners" and "unmarried" people (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:167-168), although they can gain some kind of worthiness by staying in their place, i.e. acting in accordance with what is expected given their position, such as following the directions of the leader, aligning with a group, listening to the parents.

Various groups such as women or men may, of course, also be seen as merchants or customers, which are worthy subjects in the **market** world of worth.

[145] One could easily argue that royalty nowadays are defined by the world of fame, rather than having the authority of the domestic world of worth. But there is bound to be a moral tension for people of such positions. Consider the Swedish king in 2010—in relation to what worlds of worth do people judge his character/deeds?

Laura Auslander (1996) describes how women in nineteenth-century France consumed in order to build up their families' identities, which they represented, while some men consumed as dandies and flâneurs. This means that in relation to the worlds of worth, women fostered the domestic world of worth in a compromise with the market world of worth, as their practices were beneficial to their entire families, while some men fostered values of the **inspired** world of worth in compromise with the market world of worth, as they broke with contemporary moralities of productive masculinity and focused on 'making life an art' and the idea of 'art for art's sake'. Although these are historical examples, this means that the various worlds of worth can be useful to understand the types of consumers women and men are supposed to be in order to be seen as worthy, and the types of values that are fostered in certain societies and times. In addition, as the market world of worth is about understanding what people desire, the services that people perform may also be gendered in ways that imply a compromise between the inspired world of worth of spontaneous emotions with the market world of worth (the making of profit), as well as the domestic world of worth (loyalty to the company), seeing the results of Arlie Hochschild's study of female flight attendants (1983 [2003]) through the worlds of worth. Whether emotions are worthy or not may however change by making compromises with other worlds of worth. Boltanski and Thévenot write that women are often seen as those people who are amongst the "inspired" (together with, among others, children, artists and madmen), in the inspired world of worth, which includes values such as irrationality, emotionality and creativity that, viewed from other worlds of worth, are classified as unreliable (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:160). As we saw in the example of the dandy, men, too, can take on the odd worth, in the eyes of other worlds of worth, but would then break with hegemonic masculinity. That some so-called 'creative jobs' such as in advertising are often dominated by men (see e.g. Nixon 2003), may perhaps be explained by the compromise being made between the inspired world of worth and other worlds of worth that exist within such professions. A creative job does not necessarily have the inspired logic as its dominating feature, although it will be a part of it. That other values become crucial is often true for advertising practitioners, as we saw in chapter 2.

Moving on to the world of **fame**, one can easily imagine that target groups for attention and opinion-making (fame) are often based on ideas of gender differences. Following the example above, if women are seen as the makers of homes, they will be targeted in advertisements for such products (Friedan 1963:181-204). In her study of the production of femininity, especially in the shape of the American housewife, Betty Friedan quotes a man who conducted motivational research for advertisements, who says: "we have helped [the housewife] rediscover the home as the expression of her creativeness…We help her think of the modern home as the artist's studio, the scientist's laboratory" (1963:199), and so on. In other words, the idea is to make women interpret their situations as housewives as worthy, in line with the inspired world of worth and the industrial world of worth, so that they will continue being housewives and good consumers. Friedan showed that the strategy was explic-

itly not to make them look for creative expression in jobs. The target group with a steady opinion, which is so appreciated in the world of fame, is fostered this way. Yet a change may occur if this conception becomes seen as morally inappropriate, for example, when people start to see it as unacceptable to view *women only* as the target groups of vacuum cleaner manufacturers and their advertisements. The strategies to create worth, as well as possible tensions, can then be described and explained, I argue, by using the worlds if worth as analytical tools. The conventions are more or less the same, but the ways that they are deployed, and whether they are relevant, change.

Last of all, much of the **industrial** world of worth has historically been a male-dominated one, as men have dominated educations, science and qualified professions. Educational and job segregation between women and men is still evident (see e.g. Acker 1990; cf. Magnusson 2010, on work characteristics and gender wage gap), although not to the same extent as before, at least not in the Western world. What is valued in work-places cannot easily be described in terms of gender norms, I argue, as there may be a combination of the worlds of worth, each having values that may sometimes be seen as feminine and other times as masculine. Thus, the theory of worlds of worth may be useful for understanding this.[146]

Outline of the Remainder of the Chapter

The examples given in this chapter of cases that the ASA and ERK have judged have been chosen among cases that have to do with offence *and* gender, because I think they give a *good range* of the types of decisions that the organizations make: a) the contexts they consider, i.e. imagined audience context or context of the characters in the image; b) cases that deal with what self-regulators label as objectification; c) cases that deal with what they see as traditional gender roles, variations within those themes such as different types of gender roles for women and men that are not acceptable; d) differences and similarities between the self-regulators of the two countries. Analysing this range gives a reasonable idea about the types of conflicts and compromises between the worlds of worth that I use as an analytical tool.

I will first discuss the issue of media context in terms of targeted magazines. In making decisions about targeted audiences, the ASA makes certain generalizations about people, which they justify by the world of fame. Targeted viewers amongst the general public are seen as natural counterparts to specific media. If the form of the targeted media is clear, targeted viewers are not ex-

[146] The explicit worthiness of 'male subjects' or 'women' (no female subjects as such) are however only mentioned by the theory of worlds of worth in the domestic world of worth and the inspired world of worth ("husband", "father"; "madman", "woman"). Other subjects of worthiness are not gendered in themselves. One can show an empirically found connection to gender differences in relation to all of the worlds of worth and the worlds of worth can be useful when analysing the shapes of other empirically found gender relations.

pected to be offended by advertising images that follow a chain of similar expressions. Secondly, it is shown that ERK is not only scrutinizing the inequality between men and women. They also evaluate the way people appear to evaluate each other in depicted relationships, regardless of gender. Thirdly I discuss four cases of gender role depiction of traditional types that are judged as obsolete by the self-regulators. This is an evaluation typical for ERK but not for the ASA. These show also what is valued in men, women and children, or perhaps rather what is not valued; images should not show possibly inadequate people, decisions seem to conclude. People have different ideas about whether the people depicted in advertisements should really be fulfilling certain ideals or if it is better if they do not. I also analyse why some depictions of gender criticism are not taken into account. I discuss how not only the media context of an image can be important, but also the context of the character in the image, where the deciding issue is whether the specific context in which the character is in is expected in everyday life. Last, I discuss unjustified as well as justified images of women as eye catchers, and what underpins these evaluations.

The Question of Objectification in Magazines

When it comes to the common critique of women as aesthetic objects of vision and thus passive depictions of beauty or desire (cf. Boltanski 1999:126-132), this can potentially be criticized from any of the worlds of worth, because aesthetic aspects lie outside of justification in Boltanski and Thévenot's theory, unless the aesthetic value is justified in terms of any of the other worlds of worth. A painting will according to such a logic be worthy not because it looks good but because it is creative; a woman is not objectified because she is too beautiful, but because she is made into an instrument of sales and thus depersonalized and not an equal citizen. So the question is then if what is seen as objectification by some can be justified by any of the worlds of worth. The ASA takes the context, including targeted audiences, of where the image is published into account. It is, however, difficult to decide if the context is appropriate. If we take the context of a magazine as an example, with its often targeted readership, as we saw in the example of *Pink Paper* in the previous chapter, the target group is of interest. To decide what type of people to take into account when judging if the image is justified, the decision-makers of the ASA ask themselves if the target group is defined by its gender, interest in the content of the magazine, or both. Target group considerations are in their pure form related to the world of fame, as that is the logic that justifies the idea of target group. I will show when the logic of fame is used to underpin why an image is or is not acceptable.

Lads

Can an image with the text "win a boob job for your girlfriend" with an image of a woman before and after she had a breast implant be seen as acceptable, when considering if it is offensive and degrading to women?[147] Complaints about an advertisement exactly like that, which appeared in *Zoo magazine*, were not upheld by the ASA. This is because of the nature of the magazine hosting the campaign, which is a men's magazine with a tone similar to the advertisement. The idea is that the audience is used to similar images and texts.

The advertisement in *Zoo magazine*, concerning a competition, was described in detail in the ASA's adjudication. I quote some of the description here, but it also contains a description of the before and after image of a woman known as a glamour model and also from television in the United Kingdom, Katie 'Jordan' Price, with a made up story about how miserable she was before the implant and how happy, and more friendly, she became afterwards:

> A front-page flash on the cover of the magazine stated "WIN a boob job for your girlfriend!" Text in the double-page spread stated "WIN A BOOB JOB FOR YOUR GIRLFRIEND WORTH £4,000. Make your lady a more rounded individual with our feel-good, selfless, world-first competition. ZOO is giving away a £4,000 boob job for your partner, and a £1,000 cash prize for you! How much do you love your girlfriend? Enough to give her the ultimate gift? […] Within a panel on the right-hand side of the double-page spread were photos of eight pairs of breasts ranging from a size "A" to a size "G". The panel had the heading "CHOOSE YOUR CHEST" and text beneath it stated "Which type of tits do you want for YOUR girlfriend?"

In this case, there were three types of complaints, as summarized by the staff of the ASA. One of these addressed deception (which they call cases of misleadingness), so we will not deal with it here. One of the other two complaint types concerns social irresponsibility. It is stated in the adjudication that: "The complainants objected that the ad was irresponsible because it could coerce women into having a serious and unnecessary surgical procedure that could cause physical and psychological damage". This is a complaint from the domestic world of worth, as it is argued that the advertisers use their position to influence viewers in an irresponsible way. The advertiser argues in the statement summarized in the adjudication by the ASA that the winner may actually use the money in other ways as well. The ASA did not see this as obvious in the advertisement and this type of complaint was upheld.

The second type of complaint concerns offensiveness. The adjudication summarizes the complaints of this type in the following way: "Some complainants objected that the ad was offensive, because it insulted and objectified

[147] Non-broadcast Adjudication from the ASA for EMAP Elan Ltd t/a Zoo, published at the ASA website, http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2005/10/EMAP-Elan-Ltd/CS_40411.aspx, published 26 October 2005, last downloaded from website 26 April 2010.

women". The insult is a violation of the domestic world of worth, while objectification can be seen as a complaint from the civic world of worth since women are not seen as equal to men and no longer share fundamental human rights. The critique of objectification can also be seen as based on the domestic world of worth, as it is a world that sees people as persons rather than objects and is concerned with the personal relations between people. In truth, objectification of people can mean a violation of any of the worlds of worth. The worlds have that in common that strive towards worthiness must not make people into instruments or objects. But depending on how the image is interpreted, the look of the person may also be justified by various means, which means that even types of objectification can find a form in which to be justified. The depiction of the mouldable woman can apparently find its justifiable forms.

The advertiser justified the look of their advertising image by using their idea of target group to get a good idea about how their audiences would react, an example of justification based on the world of fame. They also used humour, they claimed, which also worked within the given target group. Thirdly, they used statistics to show that it was an issue, breast surgery, which was relevant and popular on a broader level, a combination of the industrial world of worth and the world of fame.

> Zoo said the magazine was targeted at men aged 18-30 years. They said the competition was written in a tongue-in-cheek style that their readers would find humorous; it was intended to be a parody of the view that men objectified women and of society's obsession with cosmetic appearance. Zoo said a recent survey showed that more than one in 10 British women had had cosmetic surgery and more than half were planning to have cosmetic surgery in the future. They believed cosmetic surgery was, therefore, a relevant subject matter for readers of Zoo Magazine and was unlikely to cause widespread offence.

The quote gives the impression that the advertisement is a parody, yet not at all critical, but on the contrary, supportive of cosmetic surgery. The ASA followed the logic of the world of fame in their decision:

> We noted Zoo Magazine was targeted at young men and written in a humorous style. We considered that the ad reflected the style and content of the magazine. We concluded that the ad was unlikely to cause serious or widespread offence to readers of Zoo Magazine. We investigated under the CAP Code clause 5.1 (Decency) but did not find the ad in breach.

This case shows how the ASA takes the idea of predictable target groups into account, when judging the degree of offence. This is summarized in figure 6.1.

Complainant	Advertiser	ASA Council
Domestic/Civic	Fame/Industrial	Fame

Figure 6.1. *The worlds of worth in the decision-process of Zoo Magazine advertisement*

Of course, one must remember that the decision-makers are not a homogenous group but that they have to coordinate reflexively to each other. The idea of target group, however, settled the question of offensiveness. That type of reasoning departs from the approach generally taken by ERK, which would not consider (or even visualize) the specific viewing habits of target groups.

Sports

In another magazine, the target group was also important, but gave a different ruling to an image that was seen as an objectification of women. The following example is similar, but makes target group considerations a bit more problematic. As in the first round of the GMFA campaign discussed in the previous chapter, the staff and the council did not agree upon how to interpret the relevant audience of the advertising image. I learned about the following example from one of the staff members of the ASA, according to whom the Council of the ASA wanted to investigate the complaint while the complaints team executive thought it needed no investigation because of the context. The complaints executive thought it was acceptable because the readers were mainly men. It was advertised in a magazine for cyclists with a primarily male readership. However, in this case the Council thought the advertisers had crossed the line. If the advertisement had appeared in an adult magazine (i.e. with pornographic content), or a men's magazine similar to *Zoo Magazine* (which is not equated with an adult magazine), it would have been seen as acceptable. In other words, if the context had fitted with the image it would have been acceptable. The logic is that audiences are only justifiably offended if they see something that surprises them. But as this was a magazine for cyclists, it was judged unacceptable.

The image of concern advertised a bicycle test station (but arguably also the bicycles themselves) and appeared in a monthly cycling magazine called *Cycling Plus.*[148]

[148] Non-broadcast Adjudication from the ASA for Cannondale Europe BV, given to me at my visit at the ASA office in London, November 2006. Published on the ASA website 24 September 2003. This advertisement also received complaints at ERK and was banned according to a statement from 11 mars 2004, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

Figure 6.2. *"Test ride, then decide"—two versions*. Advertisements for Cannondale test stations/bicycles.[149]

[149] Source of images: copies given to me by an ASA staff member 2006.

The advert copy reads: "Test ride then decide" and shows an image of two scantily-clad women, one on, one leaning against, a small wooden horse in a meadow with grass and dandelions. On the bottom of the page it is written "Sometimes it's hard to pick the right model..." According to the adjudication "[t]he complainant objected that the advertisement was offensive, because it contained sexual innuendo and the image was irrelevant to the product". This was investigated under code 5.1 (non-broadcast advertisements). The argument of offence combined with sexual innuendo may be seen as a complaint from the *domestic world of worth* in combination with the *civic world of worth*. The women are seen as sexual objects. The way people should relate to each other in the personal sphere is violated, as it is only women who are depicted as sexual objects, while the viewers are men. This is at least how the ASA Council interpreted it, analysing their decisions. The complaint about the depiction's irrelevance for the product is more clearly connected to the world of fame, as it concerns the possibility of making clear associations. The women bear no relevance to testing a bike.

The advertiser's argument for using the image was in short that sex is natural, based on the inspired world of worth, and that the readers are mainly men (target group, world of fame). This was their reason for using women in the images. They seemed, however, not to be convinced by their own arguments, as they changed the image to a picture of a wedding couple, with the same text "Test ride then decide". They did this: "to avoid their campaign being seen as sexist", according to the adjudication text. The underpinning *idea* of the second image could be seen as not very different, although the sexual explicitness is not there and both the man and the woman are given the ability to test before getting married—or testing by getting married, depending on how the image is interpreted—instead of having to live with a bad choice. There is the caption "Make the wrong choice and you'll have to live with it for years" on the bottom of the advertisement. The revised image appears as less problematic to the advertiser (and perhaps to the ASA, as they did not comment on the new image) in terms of justification.

But let us return to discussing the decision about the original image. In the decision by the ASA council, the target group composition, consisting mainly of men, was irrelevant. The type of magazine did not provide a context with a similar attitude towards women, as in the case of Zoo Magazine. According to the ASA:

> The Authority noted the advertisement was in a magazine with readers who were predominately men. It nevertheless considered that the advertisement was likely to be seen as demeaning to women because it implied that women were sexual objects that could be tested. The Authority concluded that the advertisement was likely to cause serious or widespread offence...

The ASA does not consider the acceptance of objectification of women as so widespread that it can appear in any magazine. As a result, they disregarded the advertiser's arguments from the *world of fame*, to take into account the fact that

the audience was mostly *men*. The ASA saw the advertising image as a violation of the domestic world of worth with its domestic values. Although women are per definition traditionally valued less in the domestic world of worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:168), women should according to this world act in a respectable way and be treated with respect. When women but not men are seen as sexual objects, women are seen as unequal to men, which violates the civic world of worth. Judging by the ASA adjudication, the second image including both a woman and a man was seen as acceptable. The second image is not as sexually explicit as the first, and is more in line with the domestic world of worth. Marriage is valued in the domestic world of worth, while being unmarried and vulgar is unworthy (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:168). In the second image *both* the man and the woman are also potentially subject to "testing", which indicates a kind of equality (civic worth). This way we can see how the advertiser compromised with the image, adjusting it to the worlds of worth addressed by the complainant and supported by the ASA Council. At the same time, the advertiser actually kept the basic idea of the advertisement, to *try a person out* in an activity referred to as a ride, before you decide whom to choose, as this is what you can do with bicycles on the test station for Cannondale bicycles. One could argue that the potentially vulgar idea of the advertisement, that people are testable objects, is *not explicitly shown* in the second image and, as a consequence, acceptable. Figure 6.3 below shows how the different parties justified their claims. The domestic world of worth is thus no longer visually violated in the second image, nor is the civic world of worth.

Complainant	**Advertiser**	**ASA Council**	**(Advertiser, revised image)**
Domestic/Civic Fame	Inspired Fame	Domestic/Civic	Domestic/Civic

Figure 6.3. *The worlds of worth in the decision-process of the Cannondale case*

We see in that image how the advertiser reflexively adjusted to the complainant's view, which the ASA council found to be justified. The latter image is not the focus of attention in the self-regulatory decision-process, but it is mentioned in the adjudication and the ASA comments that it: "welcomed the advertiser's assurance that [the original image with the two women] would not be used again". By putting the man and the woman in the same objectified—as in testable—position, and depicting them as a married couple, the image could be seen as acceptable.

Fashion

In the next example, I analyse how context is taken into account at the ASA when dealing with a fashion advertisement in a fashion magazine. One of the executives at the ASA showed me the images and some other files concerning a Calvin Klein case, when I ask, as usual, about a case concerning offence and gender.[150] The advertisement received complaints because the complainants interpreted it as "glamorizing sexual assault". They argued that the woman's dress is stained in a way that suggests this. They believe the image is "disturbing, offensive and irresponsible". The advertiser, *Calvin Klein*, says in a letter to the ASA that the image is part of a series of images displayed on buses and various fashion magazines, and was shot by Mikael Jansson, the Swedish fashion photographer.

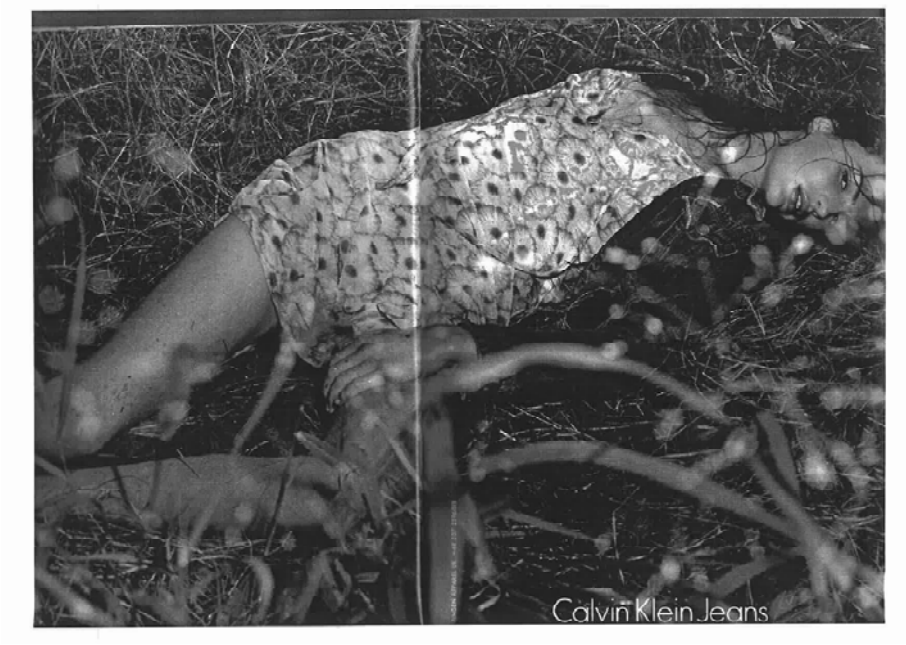

Figure 6.4. *Advertisement for Calvin Klein Jeans in fashion magazine*[151]

The images depict young men and women in a lake as well as lying wet in the grass, wearing sometimes more and sometimes less clothes. The advertiser points out that there are no traces of any kind of violence in the image, seen in figure 6.4, but that the model is sexual. Sensuality and alluring expressions are

[150] Non-broadcast Adjudication from the ASA for Calvin Klein Jeans, given to me at my visit at the ASA office in London, November 2006. Published on the ASA website 20 April 2005.

[151] Source of image: ASA staff member, 2006.

to be expected in fashion advertisements, the advertiser argues. The advertiser stressed the suitability of the images for the readers of *Glamour Magazine* by giving examples in a letter to the ASA, which I was shown, of seven other "sexually alluring" images with, for instance, women showing their breasts. The advertiser also stresses that from the images seen on buses, it is clear that the men and women are swimming in a lake and hence their wet look in the other images. The advertiser also stresses that the articles of the magazine contain adult features, in this case an article referring to a sex video. This should be understood in the context of what was seen in the previous example, of the advertisements in *Zoo Magazine*. It is, in other words, important to be able to show the appropriateness of the advertisement's context and this is why the advertiser wants to stress, rather than hide, the pornographic features in the magazine. If the context is on the same level or higher level of offence, compared to the image under scrutiny, the advertising image will be allowed if it is judged on the basis of the idea of target groups of the world of fame.

The ASA summarized some if these arguments in the adjudication that the advertiser, Calvin Klein, makes in the letter, and states also that the publisher thought the image was "suitable for their readers". The ASA thought it was enough that the image was in a fashion magazine, as this apparently justified the style of the image. In such a context, readers would be accustomed to this type of advertisement. Fashion magazines allow a higher level of what would often otherwise be seen as offensive in advertisements. The ASA also pointed out that the stain on the dress was just a shadow. As a consequence, they did not uphold the complaint. This time, the advertiser justified the image and the ASA justified their decision to accept the image in accordance with the world of fame, as the context of the image in a specific media is such that the audience should be expecting this type of image and should as a consequence not be offended by it. The complaint can be interpreted as pointing out a violation of the domestic world of worth. It was, however, not seen as justified.

Equally Objectified and Obsolete

It is not always the case that just because both women and men are given the same place in an image, as we saw in Cannondale's second version of their advertisement, that there is no risk of offence on the basis of gender. The following example from ERK demonstrates this. ERK's focus is to judge whether advertising images, about which they have received complaints, are gender discriminatory or not. They do not worry about target groups, as does the ASA, as we have seen in the previous cases. But they may worry about what certain groups amongst the general public may think, such as young people, when they discuss the justification of an advertisement, as we saw in the Björn Borg advertisement in the previous chapter. They are not dependent on how the complainant(s) formulate(s) the complaint, although the ASA is. The reason is that ERK operates within a very restricted area of concern, namely gender discrimination. The written code formulation must be implemented in relation to what

appears to them to be the current standard of acceptability amongst the general public. But to what extent do they take into account the advertiser's arguments? One of the council members of ERK answered as follows when I asked him if they take the advertiser's justification of how an image looks into account:

> Well, it depends. Often, often the advertiser does not understand the problem, you know, if we just send them a complaint and tell them 'make a statement!' Then they will say: 'but what do you mean? We took a picture, the girl in the reception thought it was great so I have gotten a woman's point of view'. Or they will reply: 'I am a woman myself and marketing director and I think this sells our product'. Yes, but it is still gender discriminatory (we will argue), you know, 'Well, I don't think so', they will reply. Or they will say: 'Well, the model agreed to take part, so it cannot be, we have paid her to take part'. (We reply) Yes, but perhaps it is not offensive (or demeaning) to her, but it is offensive for society, or it is not within our ethical norms. And sometimes some advertisers decide to call 'The Large Law Firm' and ask them to write something. Then they will write: 'According to the ICC rules number 17 we argue that the implementation of', you know, and that is not what it is about either. It is not about right or wrong but it is about the public's view on advertisements. On the other hand, it happens that the complainant has not understood the product. It can be the case that 'We sell silicon breasts so we wanted to show two really nice boobs here'—and sometimes they will write that, which makes you embarrassed—and that can be okay, given the nature of the product. But the consumer (complainant) has perhaps not even understood the product.

A complaint to ERK can only be justified if it is reasonable in relation to the product. If the product is the source of the offence, rather than the image, the advertisement is often justified. The main point is that sometimes the advertiser has not understood why their image is problematic and sometimes the complainant has not understood the nature of the product. ERK is trying to impose another way of thinking about what is acceptable in an advertising image. On the one hand, viewers of the images need to understand that the selling of the product (market) is something to take into account, while advertisers have to acknowledge that whether the advertisement is acceptable is not only about following a code by its wording, or identifying with a type of woman, or paying models for their jobs, but more complex than that. The examples given by the council member in the quote also offer a map of different types of advertisers they relate to (and one type of complainant), as he sees it. It also gives an indication of their direction towards the general public's evaluative mode(s). In sum, it illustrates the type of reflexive stance the decision-makers take. ERK also worries about *obsolete gender roles* on top of objectification, which is not a major concern of the decision-makers of the ASA. The following example includes both objectification of women and men *and* obsolete gender roles.

Materialistic Love

An advertising campaign for Bianco shoes received complaints to ERK in 2003. ERK judged it as being objectifying for women and men and as depicting obsolete gender roles between couples in a relationship.[152]

Figure 6.5. *Gold-diggers and fortune-hunters* advertising Bianco shoes, a budget shoe brand.[153]

The complainants argued that: "the campaign is strongly stereotyping and offensive to men as well as women as it depicts young women and men as mate-

[152] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for Bianco Footwear Sweden AB, published 14 November 2003, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.
[153] Source of image: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

rialistic and willing to satisfy economic needs by having a relationship with an older partner." Analysing this through the logics of the worlds of worth means that the complainants argue that the images violate the idea of love as free from *monetary economic interests*, values that represents the market world of worth. Emotions are an asset in the inspired world of worth, but according to that world logic, it should not be a desire for shoes, money or looks, they should rather be spontaneous and natural emotions directed towards others than yourself and not towards worldly things. Desire for consumer goods is, however, seen as something good in the market world of worth. The advertiser tries to justify the looks of the images by arguing that they were supposed to be seen as mockery. ERK summarizes some of their statement in the following way:

> The purpose was to in an obvious way make fun of the cliché 'to take a person for the money'. Bianco tried to avoid stereotypical gender roles by incisively indicating that both men and women are so fond of Bianco's shoes that they are willing to 'take a person for the money' (to be gold-diggers or fortune hunters). The intended message of the images was that the older people in the images would have had the time to save up more of their earnings than the younger persons.

Interpreting these justifications in light of the world of worth, the advertiser wanted to mock the values represented by the market world of worth (interest in money and desire for goods) in combination with the domestic world of worth (the submission to others of authority). They created a depiction that acknowledged that there are people who make the moral compromise between domestic and market world of worth, rather than domestic and inspired world of worth, as marrying for love is the morally correct basis of a relationship in the Western world. The interpretation by ERK was that the younger persons in the images were interested in the elderly persons because of their money, which could be used to fulfil their own desire for shoes. ERK made the following statement in their written and published adjudication:

> The council (ERK) establishes that Bianco in the campaign in question has used images that doubtlessly imply that younger men and women would choose partners for *economic benefit* and that older women and men would choose partners on the basis of *looks*. The campaign has thereby in its different versions depicted women as well as men as objects and thereby preserved an old-fashioned view on the relation between the sexes. The campaign is offensive (kränkande, in Swedish) for women as well as men in general and the advertisements thereby breach the basic principles of the ICC code of advertising practices (my emphasis).

This shows that ERK extended their judgement of the images to include other worlds of worth than the complainants addressed, at least if we judge by the written summary of the objections voiced by ERK in their adjudication. ERK also makes a statement about the elderly men and women appearing to choose a partner for their looks. The additional aspects are possible for ERK to include in their decision because of how they have formulated their codes, as well as the custom of ERK not to base their considerations on the exact wording or

specific concerns of the complainants. The council can associate freely, but within their given limit. They wrote that the images represented an obsolete image of relationships between women and men, as couples. This is a critique of the values represented by the domestic world of worth, with its traditional gender roles in which *the man* is more worthy than the woman and/or *the superior* is more worthy than his/her subordinates. Their statement also supported the inspired world of worth with regard to relationships between women and men; these are supposed to be built on love as a *genuine* feeling for the sake of the person, rather than looks and money. As the latter objectifies both men and women, they are not seen as equal in the relationships, which also violated the values represented by the civic world of worth.[154]

Comparing this judgement with the ASA's judgement of the Cannondale campaign, ERK focuses more on objectifying aspects depicted in the images. When both men and women are seen as testable objects in the wedding photograph from Cannondale—even if we need to remember that this was not the image that was judged by the ASA, but the advertiser's revision—this appears to be acceptable, whereas ERK claimed men and women were not supposed to be seen as objects of money or beauty in the Bianco campaign. It is a negotiation of human value in different situations, related to money, sex and looks, and what is a justified way of depicting the relationship between men and women in advertising images. But what explains that the first Cannondale image was seen as demeaning to women as they were testable objects, while the second was not, although both men and women were then testable objects? The objectification is a more important issue for ERK, than for the ASA. But the idea of testing each other out, if on an equal basis and one party is not the clear sex object, is generally morally acceptable in everyday practices, while choosing someone primarily for money or looks, is not.

Outmoded and Unworthy Stereotypes

Complaints about advertisements depicting outmoded, traditional, gender roles are often upheld at ERK. If women are depicted as passive and men active; stereotypes of men as being lazy while women are socializing; women as taking care of the household while men are interested in technical gadgets; these are some typical juxtapositions which are often seen as reproducing outmoded traditional gender relationships. ERK does not always ban such advertisements, however.[155] When depictions of women and men in advertising images can be

[154] The two images from the Bianco campaign show ritualized poses of submission in line with Erving Goffman's examples in *Gender Advertisements* (1979 [1976]:40-45). The subordinated leans against the socially superior; the subordinated is either a child or a woman in most cases, according to Goffman, or it could also be based on class. This is mirrored in the images from the Bianco campaign and the image with an older woman and a younger man stresses the relationship by even putting the man on his *knees*.

[155] There are advertisements in which ERK recognizes and points out a gender stereotype, but which they do not ban, because the depiction is not offensive enough. They present some of these cases on their website. An example of this is an advertisement for a detergent,

interpreted as stereotypical in terms of gender roles, ERK has a specific strategy. The secretary said the following about their policy in my interview with him:

> When it comes to (gender) stereotypes, the council has said that it will take part in moving the boundaries…even if an advertisement, or marketing practice, shows (mirror) a reality it can still be stereotyping, since there is then something wrong with reality. I mean, to show a situation where, the typical example is, the woman takes care of the children, only, takes care of the home, very one-sidedly, that may still be reality, that the woman takes more responsibility, but it can still be stereotyping advertising, even if it shows reality. But then we have said that we will try to influence, so one then has to show something that is not reality, but more gender equal than it is.

A former chairman of ERK, who wants to balance their critique of traditional gender roles with a reflexive stance that incorporates the advertiser, says that the producers and retailers must have the right to focus on groups that buy the products. If Barbie dolls are for the most part bought by parents of girls, advertisers should be able to target them through their advertising campaigns. This may justify why images look as they do. She does, however, acknowledge that ERK has banned advertisements that show clear differences in what girls and boys play with and do. And because many people have complained about those types of images, she believes that these types of bans will be the road taken by ERK: "...shall we accept the reality as it is? Or should we foster change? I guess it is something in between, somehow. One has to be aware and help, perhaps make people open their eyes, but at the same time one cannot change the world..." The first quote shows that ERK partly builds on the civic world of worth in this question, while the chairman's statements show that they will also try to take into account the world of fame combined with the market world of worth. Not that long ago complaints about traditional gender roles were not as common. The secretary of ERK contemplated the notion of objectification and gender stereotypes:

> When it comes to views and sets of values, they will change over time, but when it comes to the aspect of objectification I think that is more stable than the stereotyping aspects. I think the stereotype is a new notion, or well, stereotypes have proba-

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VIA, which was seen as acceptable, as justified in a statement from 23 March 2005. This case should be compared to one of a similar idea for Santa Maria, a spice brand advertising spice mixes for meat balls and similar dishes. Both advertisements build on the idea that men cannot do certain things in the home, do laundry and cook. The Santa Maria advertisement is interpreted by ERK as 'men cannot cook', and thus it reproduces old fashioned gender roles, as written in a statement from 1 November 2004. The product advertised helps men cook on a less qualified level. The VIA advertisement is interpreted as 'men often do not do laundry but can and should do laundry', and even if it is built on obsolete gender models, and ERK states that they see this in the depictions, the advertisement's message was that men could change. See both statements and images on http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, VIA under "motiverade frianden" and Santa Maria under "Fällningar 2004", last downloaded 1 May 2010.

> bly always existed, but the fact that we react to them today in a completely different way than people did ten to fifteen years ago, or even less time really, because I suppose it is the gender equality work that has progressed, amongst other things. I do not think that people (in general, I think he means) reacted to the fact that women did more work in the home or took a greater responsibility for the children or the family, which they still do, but today we are at least aware that perhaps this should not be the case, or it is at least not as taken-for-granted. I think it was more taken-for-granted ten to fifteen year ago (1990-1995). This means the complaints have risen too, when it comes to stereotypes and stereotyping advertisements.

The views of ERK and the ASA differ on this point of how they conceptualize the public's interpretative mode to the images we've discussed. ERK relates to an audience which they believe is increasingly aspiring to be gender equal, while the ASA pictures a general audience that find a degree of gender stereotypes in advertisements natural and funny.

> Caroline: You would never say that it is wrong for ads to enhance gender differences, because that is too much of social engineering perhaps?
>
> CM: Exactly. Most British people won't be offended by that. There'll be some, but not most people. For example, at the moment, you know there are adverts on TV for Burger King, which are advertising the double whopper or something. There's a man, you know 'men like to eat meat and women don't'. That sort of thing is regarded here as just very gentle. That's just, that's just funny [for most people he means]. I mean feminists might get upset about it but it's not, it's never gonna cause serious offence, because that's not where England is. I imagine in Europe, in Sweden, it would be different, maybe there's a greater awareness of women's issues.

In the following section, I discuss some of the cases in which complaints about gender role issues were upheld and show what types of worlds of worth they represent.

Unworthy Masculinity

The first example of depictions that have been judged as unworthy femininities or masculinities is an advertisement for IKEA from 2003.[156] The image is seen in a catalogue from IKEA and advertises a sofa bed. Women are depicted socializing in the background while a man is watching television in a sofa bed, ERK states in their adjudication. There is also a caption accompanying the image, quoted by ERK in their text: "'eight out of ten women cultivate couch potatoes"'. According to ERK's summary, the complainant's view is that: men are portrayed as listless, unshaved, beer drinking people and the women as talkative, social and as cultivating this type of men". Judging by the summary,

[156] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for IKEA Svenska Försäljnings AB, published 21 May 2003, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

the complainant is of the view that several aspects of the catalogue are gender discriminatory. It is however only this image that is judged by the self-regulatory body and it is the only image on which the advertiser, IKEA, comments.

Figure 6.6. *"Couch potato" advertising IKEA sofa*[157]

According to ERK's written decision, IKEA stated that it did not want old-fashioned or gender discriminatory depictions of the relationship between women and men in their advertisements and they did not find this image gender discriminatory. IKEA did not defend the image except to state that that the man was able to be in the same room as the woman and her female guests without socializing, because of the sofa bed. This product from IKEA allowed the man to do other things. IKEA also stressed that the depiction was light-hearted. They did not defend the man's behaviour, perhaps because there is no world of worth that could justify his behaviour. ERK stated:

> In the advertisement in question the man is portrayed as uninterested in social intercourse and only interested in watching T.V. with snacks and beer. Despite the fact that the advertiser stated they intended to depict a life situation in a humoristic manner, it must be pointed out that portraying the attitude of the man in this way, in line with the stereotype that is used, is strongly devaluing. According to the

[157] Source of image: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

> council, the advertisement is thereby an example of stereotyping advertisements in which men are portrayed in a prejudiced and offensive (kränkande, in Swedish) way.

Their critique of the male stereotype was not necessarily a critique of the traditional relationship between women and men as it was in line with the domestic world of worth. The male stereotype rather depicted a less worthy type of man than represented by the values of the domestic world of worth. Boltanski and Thévenot write that to be worthy in the domestic world is to be: "*Attentive* to *intimates* (for example, a *spouse*), to whom one owes *thoughtfulness, attention and propriety*, the worthy person is [also] *cordial* with *visitors*"(2006 [1991]:166).[158] The stereotype of the man of the IKEA catalogue was interpreted by ERK through the evaluative mode of the domestic of worth, I argue, according to which the man was not worthy as he did not live up to a typical type of test in that world, a social gathering where one is supposed to show hospitality to guests, to be social. The woman was the one in the picture doing this. That is why ERK judged the image demeaning to men, unjustified and thus offensive.

To depict men as a stereotype that does not live up to the domestic world of worth is seen as unjustified by a majority of the council members of ERK, taking part in this decision. In addition, the man's activity is unjustified because he was seen as *less social than the woman* of the house. This could either be seen as his not fulfilling his role as the father of the house, in line with the domestic world of worth, in which the man has the greatest responsibility for this. It could also be seen as a way of depicting the man as unequal to the woman in the duties of social gatherings and thus violating the civic world of worth in combination with the domestic world of worth. The latter interpretation means that the advertiser failed to create a justified combination of the domestic world of worth and the civic world of worth in the depiction of family life.

One could also argue that the male stereotype that ERK finds unjustified is so because it violates the industrial world of worth, with its ideal of productivity, efficiency and competence, but now within the sphere of the home. The woman is productive, has arranged the dinner party for her friends and this nourishes their friendship, as does the activity of making conversation. This would mean that the domestic world has created an alliance with parts of the industrial world of worth, although it is clear that the most important thing that the man lacks, according to ERK's statement, is sociability of the type valued high in the domestic world of worth. The woman gains worth in the domestic world for her behaviour because she represents the family and their reputation in a creditable way, while the man does not.

ERK did not interpret the image as being offensive towards women, only towards men, even though the man is clearly uninterested in what the women are doing. This reasoning could be compared to Erving Goffman's analysis of genderisms in advertisements, as described in chapter 2; by not taking part in

[158] The domestic world includes a hierarchical relationship between men and women, in which men are the superior, so a worthy man in the domestic world is not gender equal *per se*, if not also supporting the civic world of worth.

the social activities of the home, men avoid being seen as feminine (cf. Goffman 1979 [1976]:36-37). Whether that is *interpreted* as being offensive to women or men is an empirical matter. And as we have seen, ERK did not discuss the image in line with Goffman's analysis, but rather in line with how worthiness and unworthiness are shaped. The critique from ERK fits better with the value of the domestic world of worth, as the man violated the rules of social etiquette in the family home.

Unworthy Upbringing

The traditional depiction of men in advertising images has been that women are passive and men are active, as Berger wrote (1972), and Goffman shows examples of this in various ways (1979 [1976]). How boys and girls should look and act is something that is negotiated in societies in order to foster the values of the domestic world of worth. The clothing industry sometimes uses predictable concepts for girl attire and boy attire. The following example shows how ERK handled the complaints about the clothing catalogue Ellos' images of children's clothes, shown in figure 6.7. The complainant wants the self-regulator to consider the images of the catalogue in relation to each other and pointed out the contrasting ways that boys and girls are depicted in the catalogue. The complainant argued that the depictions of the Ellos clothing catalogue showed girls who dreamed about being pretty, who loved to shop, and to party, while boys are depicted as cool, tough and preferring clothes that are practical.[159] This is shown not only in the images, but also in the captions on the pages. One example of such a caption quoted by the complainant and reproduced by ERK in their written decision was: "'Garments that the kids like will not be left unused"'. The complainant argued that all of this in sum enhanced these stereotypes about girls and boys, as the advertiser made use of obsolete stereotypes of how children should be and their strategy was to serve audiences with these simplistically recognizable images of girls and boys. The critique of the complainant was thus directed toward the domestic world of worth as well as the world of fame. One could also see the critique as representing the inspired world of worth as it called for less conformist ideals and as representing the civic word of worth, as it also questioned inequalities. This is shown in these two quotes from the complainant, from the adjudication: "An old belief is that 'women love to shop…' This we are 'taught' to love from when we are children. Ellos think we should boost that stereotype further with the caption 'How about some serious shopping?'" The complainant also states: "'Can girls who are not pretty sleep well anyway? In the (copy) texts, girls' looks are called attention to, but not boys'…'" The images below are the seven images that were discussed. The captions, some in Swedish and some in English, say: "Cool guys

[159] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for Ellos AB, published 15 April 2002, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

sleep best in tough pyjamas"; "Pretty girls sleep well in neat pyjamas"; "Tough and heavy for the cool guys" (boys on skateboards); "Garments that kids like won't be left unused"; "This is what little girls dream of…"; "Now it's time for a real party girls!"; "How about some serious shopping…".

The advertiser, Ellos, stated that their children's clothes were different for boys and girls because this was the current fashion. They thought that captions such as the one related to shopping were positive ones, as many people spent their free time shopping. The other differences between how girls and boys were depicted and the different type of captions were reflections, they argued, either of the actual differences of how these clothes looked (there are no options) or differences in actual interests between boys and girls. Boys *like* skateboarding *more* than girls and girls *were* called pretty *more* and at older ages than boys, the advertiser argued. In total, the depictions and captions mirrored the fashion of today and other differences that existed, the advertiser argued. This is a justification in line with the world of fame, as it is built on the fact that people will recognize themselves as target groups in the advertisements, as they represent popular styles of dressing and being. It is also in line with the market world of worth because of the advertiser's claim to know what people desire as consumers. Their justification was also in line with the domestic world of worth as they saw nothing wrong in the traditional divide. This means that there exist several evaluation logics that support these types of advertisements as something good.


Coola killar sover bäst i tuffa pyjamasar.
149,-
169,-


Söta flickor sover gott i fin pyjamas.
179,-
www.ellos.se


Tufft & tungt för de coola grabbarna
149,-
169,-
179,-


Plagg som ungarna gillar blir inte liggande...
TUFFER
249,-
99,-
ELLOS INFO

Figure 6.7. *Pretty or Cool.* Ellos catalogue advertising children's clothes.[160] Many of the clothes on the girls shown in these images are pink. "This is what..." and "Now it's time..." are also written on pink backgrounds.

[160] Source of images: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

So how did ERK judge this complaint? This time, they decided to look at the whole campaign, all of the images that the complainant addressed. The images, which they considered traditional and unequal, violated the type of upbringing of children that the self-regulatory body wanted to see. One of the council members said: "Since one does not direct oneself to the children but to the parents, the effect is really to impute the tendencies of gender differences already from childhood." They did not support the advertiser's justification that they were merely adjusting to how they thought parents and children acted and thought, i.e. in line with established target group tastes. The decision that ERK made and formulated in their statement was a critique of the domestic world of worth from the civic world of worth, which in this case meant that the domestic world of worth should develop a more civically influenced version. ERK was critical of traditional gender role upbringing; at the same time, they thought parents should take responsibility for a more gender equal upbringing. It was also a critique of the justification that the advertiser made from the world of fame, combined with the market world of worth, which justified building advertisements around ideas of inequalities between genders. ERK stated the following:

> The council first wants to acknowledge that advertisements that mirror a factual situation in terms of gender roles can still be judged as gender stereotyping…in this particular advertisement the boys have been given traditional male characteristics. They are portrayed in situations which are generally of a more *active* nature, while the girls are portrayed as more *reticent* (avvaktande, in Swedish) and in situations of more traditional female art. To depict girls in relation to boys in this way must—especially when children are involved—be seen as preserving old *obsolete* gender roles and must therefore be seen as offensive towards women as well as men (my emphasis).

ERK's critique was in line with the inspired world of worth, as they believed the depictions of the children were too old-fashioned and conservative, and also with the civic world of worth, as the children were not depicted as equally active. For the decision-makers at ERK, it does not matter that the images mirror society; they were still obsolete and offensive to women and men alike. In sum, the final judgement was justified by a combination of the inspired world of worth and the civic world of worth, which ERK thought should influence aspects of the domestic world of worth, such as the upbringing of children.[161] Such images would not be banned by the ASA, judging by the fact that

[161] The depiction of traditional and obsolete gender roles have had the same outcome in other cases, such as a depiction in a Fonus advertisement, which some of the council members of ERK mention as an example of when the advertiser switched the depicted tasks of women and men in a changed version, to make them less stereotypical; see statement on Fonus, from 29 april 1998. Other similar cases that have been banned by ERK spread over the years 2004-2009 are e.g.: Lego Sverige AB, 15 April 2009; Lego Sverige AB, 23 May 2008; Manpower, 13 March 2008/22 August 2008; Forskarpatent, 13 March 2008; Bon' a Parte, 15 March 2007; Studiefrämjandet Stockholm, 5 March 2007; Jysk AB, 19 October 2006, Sveriges reklamförbund, 21 June 2004; in which boys and/or girls, women and/or

the ASA does not regulate against what they think people find acceptable (cf. the quote about Burger King above).

At ERK, the advertiser can make a product for a specific target group and create an advertisement that mirrors the product. But if the *advertisement* can be seen as enhancing traditional gender roles, it will not be accepted. With regard to this Ellos advertisement I asked one of the council members at ERK, who represented the agencies, if she had an idea of why these stereotypes were used in advertising images. She replied:

> It is because one thinks it evokes sympathies amongst the target group, mothers and fathers who are supposed to buy. Which it does, unfortunately. I mean, it works. But if one supports this gender discrimination we will not be able to change it and that it why we want it to stop. We are so shaped by this gender order that mothers and fathers think about their girls as so cute (her voice turned childish and soft) while the boys are much tougher, 'you will come on!' (illustrates with more forceful voice). And then the target group will think that this is great. A good copy text can work wonders, you know. So, that's why it is important. And the target group is just as gender discriminatory as the advertisements and the companies, so they will endorse it.

But as discussed in chapter 4, the depictions in the Ellos catalogue could have been seen as acceptable if they had only reflected the way the clothes looked, separated into blue and pink colours; it was the enhancing copy texts and the impression that girls are soft and boys are tough that ERK evaluated as problematic.

In the IKEA advertisement, there was a depiction of a male cliché, which was judged as derogatory toward men by ERK. In the Ellos advertisement, there was a depiction of traditional gender roles amongst children, which was seen as offensive to women and men. In the next two examples, I discuss a depiction of a female cliché in an advertisement and how this image was judged by ERK, namely an advertisement for Brother International.[162]

men are seen as depicted in a stereotyping way by ERK. There are exceptions however, such as an advertisement for Renault, in which two cars are shown parked outside a home. On one of the cars the words "Bosse's Pipes" can be read and on the other car "Bosse's Wife". In that case the traditional gender roles were seen as acceptable, although it is implied that Bosse is the owner of his wife as well as his company; see statement from ERK from 11 March 2004. These mentioned statements can be found on ERK's website http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, under the headlines of convictions for each year or under the headline of motivated acquittals (some chosen examples of not upheld complaints), last downloaded 26 April, 2010.

[162] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for Brother International Sweden AB, published 16 December 2002, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

Unworthy Femininity

The advertiser Brother International AB advertises: "printers, multifunctional machines and network machines", with a picture of a woman in her professional role in which she is also a customer. ERK published a decision on their website 16 December 2002, which stated that this image was unacceptable. The statement begins with a description of the advertisement. They describe the woman in the picture and how she is dressed and made up. They also quote the caption of the image, which is the following: "'Okay, let's order 60 colour laser. What colour should they have?"' In addition, a large caption is written over the woman as we can see: "Dream Customer".

Figure 6.8. *A female professional/consumer* in an advertisement for Brother's machines.[163]

The complainant claimed, according to ERK's statement, that this depiction was demeaning to women because: "the advertisement depicts the woman as a secretary who is easy to fool and naïve". This complaint can be seen as based on the evaluative logic of the industrial world of worth, according to which the woman was depicted as unworthy. According to the industrial world of worth, a worthy being is efficient and professional, but in this case, the depicted per-

[163] Source of image: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

son is not interpreted as the informed customer that she should be. An image that depicts a woman as unqualified in her professional consumption, according to the professional standards of the industrial world of worth, is thus offensive.

The advertiser intended people to interpret the image as ironic/humorous. They also argued that the image of the secretary was fictitious. But according to the ERK statement, they realized that the image could also be seen as realistic, and this would be fine because people do not always act according to gender equal standards, the advertiser argued. The audience either recognized the image as irony or as reality which in this case, I argue, was a play with the industrial world of worth, and the market world of worth. Brother argued that both outcomes concerning how the general public would interpret this advertisement were not to be seen as gender discriminatory, but should be seen as acceptable.

ERK judged that the depiction reinforced gender stereotypes, as the advertiser also called the type of costumer "ideal", albeit perhaps with irony. They wrote:

> The way the advertisement in point is shaped gives the impression that women do not understand what they are ordering and that this is something the supplier prefers. Even if the stereotype is exaggerated the council thinks that there is a clear risk that reoccurring stereotypes of this kind will cement prejudices in an insidious way.

ERK continued by stating that sometimes humoristic and/or ironic depictions can justify a depiction even if it is stereotypical, which is a common formulation in their statements, just as we saw the ASA reason in their cases of offence. But in this case, the depiction was nevertheless seen as offensive, because depicting a woman as if not being worthy according to the logic of the industrial world of worth was "clearly outmoded" and "stereotypical".[164]

Gendered Compromises: A Case of Unrecognized Critique in the Ad

I continue with an example of the depiction of women in relation to the industrial world of worth, in which ideas about equal positions of women clash with a critique of women's situation. *The Swedish Advertising Association* (*Sveriges Reklamförbund*), which recently changed its name to *Swedish Association of Communication Agencies*, advertised a course in leadership for women in 2004. The advertisement consisted of words but no image. ERK received one complaint about the formulations in the advertisement made about female leaders in relation to

[164] Stereotype of women that was recognized as such but not upheld by the ASA: http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2005/5/Channel-5-Broadcasting-Ltd/CS_39767.aspx; male and racial stereotype which was not upheld http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2008/3/R-Twining-and-Company-Ltd/TF_ADJ_44187.aspx; traditional stereotypes of genders but not seen as offensive or harmful and thus not upheld http://www.asa.org.uk/Complaints-and-ASA-action/Adjudications/2009/5/HomePride-Ltd/TF_ADJ_46259.aspx.

the course.[165] The complainant interpreted the formulations as "derogatory" and "preserving and stereotyping gender roles". The course was called "Inner Beauty". The complainant argued, according to the written decision by ERK and published on their website, that some particular formulations in the advertising text made women appear as "victims" unable to stand up for themselves, unless they took this course. This part of the text is quoted in the decision: "'Inner Beauty is for women who have the difficult task to make strategic thinking, creativity and production work—without damaging important relations...'" Analysed in relation to the worlds of worth, the advertiser could be described as pointing out the difficulty of combining three worlds of worth: the industrial world of worth (production, strategic thinking), the inspired world of worth (creativity), and the domestic world of worth (important relationships, whether at home or at work). The problem raised by the complainant was that women more than men are seen as occupied with combining the different aspects mentioned. Furthermore, the advertisement says the course would be "inspiring", "increase the joy of work", which both represent the inspired world of worth, as well as being "supportive", which represents the domestic world of worth and its focus on personal relationships. The complainant pointed to these aspects as being gender stereotypical as well, implying that women needed these aspects more in their work than do men, and hence the course.

The advertiser of the course stated that the course in itself was not preserving traditional gender roles as it was meant to educate female leaders. The advertiser did not mean that any of the formulations they used were typical of women or women's leadership; they just happened to provide a course for women and they thought these aspects were important for leaders. All of it applied to men as well, the advertiser claimed. I spoke to an ERK council member from The Swedish Advertising Association, which created the advertisement. This particular council member was also directly involved in making the advertisement. Consequently she can discuss this particular advertisement from the viewpoint of the advertiser as well in relation to what she knows about the decisions made by the ERK council. She said:

> In our world all leaders are exposed to this problem. But our course is intended for women. So that is why we directed ourselves to women. I mean the purpose was not to make men understand both the analytical and the emotional. So I thought the complaint missed the point, looking upon the course as something it is not, namely a course for both men and women. We have chosen a target group very clearly. One could argue that it was formulated in a bit of a tactless way, which could have been done better, and also was. But it also shows the differences in what can be seen as gender discriminatory depending on context (she reflects over how decisions are made in the council), I mean…some images, when breasts are shown in abundance but it happens to be advertising bikinis it is definitely not gender dis-

[165] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for Sveriges Reklamförbund, published 21 June 2004, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

> criminatory, but a course that specifically deals with the gender order and how to cope with it as a woman, that is seen as very scary and provocative.

The advertiser addressed the purpose of the course, which should not be seen as gender discriminatory, as it supported female leaders. ERK explicitly states, however, that they do not include the *effect of the product* in their decisions. They focused on the *effect of the advertisement*. The advertiser also emphasized that the advertisement was targeted at a specific group. This is something that ERK does not usually take into account.

> The advertisement at hand includes formulations that according to the council suggest that female leaders have specific needs because of their gender. The sentences acknowledged by the complainant mediate the view that women are particularly keen to avoid conflicts and gain support. The invitation is thus an example of advertisements that preserves an outmoded view on gender roles and thereby portrays women in an offensive way. The advertisement therefore breaches the basic principles of the ICC code of advertising practices.

ERK interpreted the advertisement as giving the impression that only women were interested in creating a compromise between the three worlds of worth in their leadership, to avoid a situation in which they were in conflict with each other, being strategic, creative, productive as well as fostering social bonds. This is something that ERK judged to be unacceptable in an advertisement. The portrayal of how women and men related to the worlds of worth, made compromises between them and/or were able to handle conflicts between them was seen in this decision-process as a competence that had been gendered, but should not be depicted as such. People's stance towards the various modes of evaluation should not be seen as based on gender, as I understand the decision that ERK made. In this decision, there was a tied vote between the council members and thus the chairman's vote was decisive.

In conclusion, we can see from these decisions made by ERK that are about stereotypes and outmoded gender roles in advertising images, that men should not be depicted as unworthy in relation to the domestic world of worth, and women should not be depicted as unworthy in relation to the industrial world of worth. Cliché attitudes are not seen as something the general public would like to support. It is also unacceptable according to ERK if women are depicted as more disposed to avoid conflicts between the worlds of worth, i.e. the values that they represent. ERK was critical toward advertising images that depicted existing gender inequalities as a means to sell a product, as if women have specific needs other than men. The nature of the product did not matter in the decision. Moreover, boys and girls should both have access to the inspired world of worth, to be able to grow up as spontaneous individuals. The decision of the Ellos depictions called for a more civic formulation of the domestic world of worth, in the shape of a more equal upbringing of boys and girls. Similarly, it does not matter if the advertiser claims to have feminist intentions with their advertisements. The following case gives an example of yet another advertiser with claimed feminist intention. The case shows how feminist cri-

tique can be formulated in relation to a campaign, but in which different worlds of worth dominate the justification of three different interpretations and evaluations of the images.

Unrecognized Criticism 2: Staying in one's Place

In this case, the self-regulator (ERK) took into account the context of the depicted characters.[166] The following images were used in an advertising campaign for Twilfit, a chain of stores that sell underwear, including swimwear as seen in the advertisements. The images were seen as posters in the streets and in underground stations in Stockholm. All of the images have the text: "Do not disturb", with different additional text: "chillin' rest of the day"; "too relaxed to talk"; "busy doing nothing"; "enjoying my own company".

[166] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for Twilfit AB, published 12 December 2001, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

Figure 6.9. *"Do not disturb"*. Advertisement for Twilfit bikinis.[167]

ERK received one complaint about this campaign. The complainant argued that the woman is depicted as "passive", and that this is an unfair depiction of women in general. The complainant found this "sexist and degrading" for women, according to ERK's written summary in their published statement. The complainant also justified her argument by saying that women *are* not in reality this *lazy*. This appears as a critique of the inspired world of worth from the industrial world of worth. I argue this because, according to the industrial world of worth, the unworthy person is unproductive and inactive.

According to the statement from the advertiser, the idea of the images was to deliver a *critique* of what I interpret as the values of the industrial world of worth, as well as roles connected to the domestic world of worth. The advertiser stated: "The purpose of the campaign was to show that we think women should say stop to all the stress of today's society—because today one is supposed to be the perfect career woman, mother, wife, daughter-in-law, friend, etcetera, etcetera." They also argue they show a Modesty Blaise inspired figure, which is normally connected to strength, a woman who does what she pleases regardless of what other people think of her. This is in line with the inspired

[167] Source of images: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

world of worth and a critique of the world of fame, in which other people's opinions are everything.

> In our campaign we wanted to show our Modesty figure (which is the name of our brand for underwear and jersey and which comes from the cartoon character Modesty Blaise) which is normally strongly related to action and strength, who now without caring about what people think sits down and takes a break wherever she feels like. Under the campaign theme "Do not disturb" we encourage women to stop and take care of themselves for a while.

ERK's general stance is that advertisers are allowed to show more naked skin and use women's and men's bodies as eye catchers and with a certain amount of sexual tension (but not too much), when the product that is advertised is used on the skin and may call for close to naked illustrations of the product. Underwear and swimwear are typical of such products. But in this case, the council members argued that the woman in the images was too objectified, was photographed in places too unusual for dressing in a bikini, and that she was too sexually alluring. They thought that the model should have been situated in more predictable places in which we normally see people in bikinis. This was a critique of the character's inspired mode of being, from the horizon of the domestic world of worth. Rather than touching upon the point that the complainant made about the woman being inactive, a critique based on the industrial world of worth, the council members criticized aspects in the image that represent the inspired world of worth. They built their critique on the logic of the domestic world of worth, with its standards of what is proper behaviour in relation to people and places. For a comparison of the evaluative logics of the complainant, advertiser and ERK, see figure 6.10. From the viewpoint of the domestic world of worth, the woman in the images does not stay in her place, which is unworthy in the domestic world of worth. Boltanski and Thévenot write:

> Instability and precariousness characterize the most deficient beings. In the unworthy state, beings do not stay in place. Their *character* incites them to act with *ostentation*, by *attracting attention*, by *speaking in a loud voice*, that is, louder than their worth would warrant, by acting in such a way as to *be noticed*, by showing themselves to be *uninhibited, impolite, familiar, excessive*: "Girls and women will avoid *excessive* makeup, *flashy* jewellery, and *glaring* colours."
>
> (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:176)

Although clearly the depictions do not show a woman that is too loud verbally, one can draw a parallel to how her body postures and the placing of her body in the city-landscape are judged.

Complainant's justification	Advertiser's justification	Self-regulator's (ERK's) justification
INDUSTRIAL Critique of inspired	INSPIRED Critique of industrial, domestic and fame	DOMESTIC Critique of inspired

Figure 6.10. *The worlds of worth in Twilfit's campaign from 2001, depicting a version of Modesty Blaise*

I have not included in the figure the combination civic and domestic world of worth, as all of the parties claimed different versions of what was good for women as a group. The argued feminist intention of the advertiser was not acknowledged by the complainant or self-regulator. In the next two examples women are more literally made into objects as they are portrayed as possible to steer by the man.

Women as Marionettes

Some images are judged as clearly and severely sexist. One example is an advertisement for a party at Juristernas hus (the Law Students' House), arranged by the Law Students' Association (at Stockholm University, Stockholm).[168] The organizers of the party also produced the advertisement, a poster with a woman wearing only high heeled shoes and bikini panties. Next to the woman is an image of a remote control, the digits of which have been given new headings such as: "diet", "work", "fetch beer", "bake", "do laundry", "tidy up", "shop", "hurry", "think", "park", "massage", "take off clothes", "give head", "swallow", "fuck", "strip", "anti-bitch-mode". The advertisement also stated that there was a dinner for men at a certain cost and that women were welcome after dinner, at a lower price. Most of this information about the image was also written in the statement given by ERK, as it started with a description of the advertisement.

[168] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for Juristernas hus (at Stockholm University), published 21 May 2003, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

Figure 6.11. *Dinner for male Law students.* Advertisements for event hosted by The Law Students' Association.[169]

ERK wrote in their statement that the complainants found the advertisement "severely degrading of women and sexist". The critique focused on the inequality of the woman in the picture and this is justified by the civic world of worth but could also be seen as coming from the domestic world of worth as it is an unworthy behaviour according to that logic, even if it encompasses unequal gender roles. According to the advertiser, The Law Students' Association, they were trying to criticize precisely what the complainants found offensive. They argued they used extreme irony to do this. The strong words would have a clear ironic meaning for the audience, according to the advertisers. Having a clear idea about what their target group thinks about the picture is a justification in line with the world of fame. This means that the Law Students' Association (at Stockholm University) used the same argument as Zoo Magazine did in an earlier example. They wanted to criticize unworthy behaviour according to the domestic and civic worlds of worth by combining them with the world of fame. They did not see their poster as an advertisement at all, according to ERK, as it was only for a student party, and argued that the expression of their poster

[169] Source of image: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 26 April 2010.

must be "protected by the Freedom of Press Act". This is a justification in accordance with the civic world of worth in which certain laws will grant you fundamental rights as a citizen, whereas the basis of the law in itself comes from the inspired world of worth, granting individuals the freedom to express their opinions freely.

ERK did not agree that the depiction was not an advertisement. In this case, it was judged an advert because its purpose was to attract paying guests to a dinner, a combination of the market world of worth and the world of fame. As a consequence, the civic world aspects of the freedom of press act could be ignored in the decision. Nor did ERK find that the justification in line with the world of fame was valid, since they did not think it was clear that the image would be seen as ironic or sarcastic. Nor does ERK consider only target groups, but a more general audience. ERK focused on the advertisement's stereotypes, which implied a specific relationship between women and men. They wrote:

> The council believes that the woman through the advertisement—despite the alleged humour—is portrayed in a clearly outmoded, stereotyping and thereby offensive way. The advertisement also displays a stereotypical image of men and their presupposed way to look upon women as objects.

The effect was that both women and men were degraded, according to ERK, and that women were objectified. Interpreting the evaluation by ERK through the theory of worlds of worth, the image violates the domestic world of worth because it makes men into beings that treat and look upon women as objects, and do not act according to what could be expected of them. One of the council members commented on this advertisement:

> The advertisement in itself is directed to law students. But it is also viewable to other people. If you are a law student you would perhaps know this as a jaunty joke, as it were, you make joke about the masculine and feminine in a sexist way. But the general public who pass from the tube to [the university buildings on the other side of Campus] will not be amused.
>
> Caroline: no. Would it have been all right if only [the law students] had seen it?
>
> CM: No it would still not be acceptable...We hardly discussed this at all. We said instantly that 'this is wrong!'We should not have these, this is not what our society thinks is all right. And even more so because, my God, lawyers, they are supposed to be involved in, some of them will actually become judges and prosecutors and whatever, defence layers...these are people who at least think of themselves as some kind of builders of society with a high moral standard.

The image at the same time depicted traditional but outmoded gender roles, according to ERK, in a critique of the domestic world of worth. This means that the relationships within the domestic world of worth *can* be worthy but not

when depicted like this; ERK also delivered a critique in line with the domestic world, as described above.

The audience type that ERK took into account is not a specific but a general one that wanted to see women and men as equals. They conceptualize the viewers in line with the civic world of worth. In their statement, they wrote: "To portray women and men in the way that is done in the poster must be seen as demeaning and thereby offensive for women and men in general". The judgement becomes in sum a negotiated version of the domestic world of worth combined with the civic world of worth.

The idea that men can direct women as in the advertisement from Juristernas hus above, is analogous to an advertisement for an adult television channel called Playboy TV t/a Climax 3, which appeared in two different magazines in the United Kingdom, Sky TV Magazine and Loaded Magazine.[170] The product advertised is of pornographic nature, but what the ASA judged was the advertisement *in its context*. By looking at how this advertising image was judged, we are able to analyse some aspects of how the context is taken into account by the ASA. As already explained, this type of advertisement would not have been handled by ERK, as they argued that pornographic commodities in themselves are gender discriminatory. If they judged the advertisements for pornographic products they would justify that type of product, they argued. Following the logic that advertisements that are good illustrations of a product should be seen as acceptable, as they usually do when judging advertisements, they would have to accept any images that are in effect a good depiction of the product.

[170] Non-broadcast Adjudication from the ASA for Playboy TV t/a Climax 3, in Sky TV Magazine, given to me at my visit at the ASA office in London, November 2006. Published on the ASA website 28 July 2004; Non-broadcast Adjudication from the ASA for Playboy TV t/a Climax 3, in Loaded Magazine, given to me at my visit at the ASA office in London, November 2006. Published on the ASA website 18 August 2004.

Figure 6.12. *A woman as string-puppet.* Advertisement for Playboy TV t/a Climax 3.[171]

In this case, four advertising images for an adult television channel went beyond being acceptable, even though they were published in a men's (monthly) magazine, a publication called *Loaded*. The ASA investigated complaints about the advertisement. In the adjudication published on their website, they stated that the complainants thought the images "were offensive and demeaning to

[171] Source of images: obtained from ASA staff member, 2006.

women". A female complainant also made clear that although it was a men's magazine, it "was delivered free to her workplace". This means that the distribution also violated the idea of a secluded target group, violating the idea of the world of fame, because women could also see the advertisements.

According to the advertiser, as it is summarized by the ASA in their adjudication, they targeted their magazine towards young men and their content is mainly "sex, women and humour". As this should be apparent to those who saw the magazine, they argued that the advertisements must be acceptable in that context. The look of the advertisements merely described the product, they argued further. The advertiser stated that the relationships between media context and target group as well as image and product were clear, in line with the world of fame; these justifications are sometimes completely valid when the ASA makes decisions on offensiveness in advertisements, as we saw in the Zoo Magazine case. This time however, the ASA found reasons to judge otherwise. The ASA knew that Loaded had a group of women as readers, about 15 percent, as they stated in the adjudication. In addition, they stated: "The Authority considered that the text "Like this?" and "Whatever you like, you pull the strings" with the images of a woman as a puppet being controlled by a man were likely to cause serious or widespread offence to some readers of Loaded or be seen to demean women." The ASA thought these images would have been justified if the media had been *more clearly pornographic.*[172] In other words, they did not argue against the world of fame per se, in which target audiences would be a way to help gain a steady public opinion to rely on and relate to, which is seen as worthy in the world of fame (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006 [1991]:183), but they did not find the argument applicable when interpreting these images. The context would have required an even more sexually explicit context to make the images acceptable, because the medium would then have had a more prepared and reliable audience. The acceptability hence relies not on a specific morality from the start, but on whether all aspects of the case combined can make the world of fame a valid basis for their judgement. This is, of course, a general conclusion. Other worlds may become relevant in other cases.

The aspect of context violated the combination of world of fame and industrial world of worth, as the ASA required a more foreseeable reaction from the audience for that type of image. The ASA now had to take another type of audience into account, since the test of making the world of fame valid did not hold. Judging by the quote from the ASA adjudication above, to treat a woman as in the images is a violation of the domestic world of worth, a world in which to be worthy, a woman is unequal but nevertheless respectfully treated. The unequal relationship between men and women in the domestic world of worth is misused and has turned into an unworthy relationship. In these advertisements, the woman is controlled by strings and denigrated. That the ASA took

[172] This can be compare to the Calvin Klein advertisement, the case in which the advertiser justified their image by describing the adult—sexually explicit—nature of the magazine in which it was placed.

the offence amongst *some* of the readers into account indicated that they disregarded whether readers were accustomed to the tone of *Loaded*. The ASA evaluated the case according to the civic world of worth, in which the audiences were assumed to be citizens rather than targeted readers in accordance with the world of fame. That the images were demeaning to women, and thus not justified, were arguments based on the justification grounds of the civic world in combination with the domestic world of worth.

The last of these images in which the text "You pull the strings" appeared, could also be seen in *Sky TV Magazine*. Complainants to the ASA saw it as "offensive and demeaning to woman". The Authority concluded that, in the context of a family magazine, the text "You pull the strings" with the image of a woman as a marionette being controlled by a man's hand—the hand is defined as a man's hand in the adjudication—was likely to cause serious or widespread offence and to demean women. The ASA's judgement was that this type of advertisement could not be shown "in media that were not specifically identified as having 'adult' content", as they write in the adjudication. In the Loaded case, the ASA asked the advertiser to make sure the media was "tightly targeted", which did not mean merely that a men's magazine with sex and women as main subjects was justification enough. The images clearly went too far in non-pornographic media. In the latter case however, the question of specific target group standards was not even discussed. The domestic and civic worlds of worth applied to this judgement as well.

The Eye Catching (Female) Body

The Easy Case

As we have now seen, people may be depicted as objects, what ERK calls "eye catchers". It is more common for women to be used for this purpose in advertising images, judging by the decisions made by ERK and published on their website. Most of the advertisements that have been banned by ERK are of the type in which women are used as eye catchers, which involve objectification. It has been common to advertise e.g. clubs and motor products by using a lightly-dressed woman as decoration. These are not addressed as being about stereotypical gender roles, but as using women merely to attract attention, such as in the next example with a lightly-dressed woman.[173] The woman is decoration rather than user or illustrator of the product. [174]

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[173] Statement (Adjudication) from ERK for OCL Brorsson, published 22 August 2008, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 2 May 2010.

[174] See http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html for the following examples of advertising images in which women are used as eye catchers without having anything to do with the product: Blueride/Gränslöst Väst AB, statement/decision published 15 April 2009 (car products); Dealy Sweden AB, 22 August 2008 (mopeds); Ridetech, 22 August 2008 (car products); LTD Däckservice, 13 March 2008 (rim catalogue); MTeknik, 18 January 2008 (tele-

Figure 6.13. *A woman as decoration.* Advertising rims for OCL Brorssons 2008.[175]

When the person in the image can be defined as an eye catcher rather than being naturally involved with the product, this is normally not seen as justified. For ERK, these are fairly easy cases to decide. The image shown in figure 6.13 is typical of this type. These decisions are based on the world of fame, because the images violate the idea of a connection between the way people look and

phone accessory); Låsteam i Borås, 18 January 2008; Farbror & Co, 18 October 2007 (night club); Motorola, 25 May 2007 (mobile telephones); Vildsvinsbutiken, 25 May 2007 (telescopic sights); Racecar, 20 October 2006 (toy cars/aeroplanes/helicopter for adults); Interpoker, 19 Obtober 2006 (poker service on the Internet); Håkans symaskinbutik i Norrköping, 22 September 2006 (strore for sewing machines); Stjärnurmkarna och Ketonic, 19 October 2006 (watches); Kungsgårdsgymnasiet, 24 May 2006 (high school); Multipoker, 3 March 2006 (Internet poker); Mystar Computer BV/MSI, 1 June 2005 (computer products); JC AB, 16 December 2004 (jeans); Twilfit, 21 December 2004 (sale underwear); Muse the Store, 1 November 2004 (clothes store). These have all been banned by ERK and are a selection of similar types from 2004-2009, last downloaded from the website 3 May 2010. When there is some connection to the product the decision can be less clear, such as in a case concerning an advertisement for a night club, Oxid, depicting two women that appear to be the hostesses of the night club, in sexually alluring poses. It was banned, 2 December 2005, but half of the council members thought it was acceptable.

[175] Source of image: http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 2 May 2010.

act in the image and the product. In such cases, the person is not using the product or sometimes using it in such an uncommon way as to suggest that the person in the image is really an "eye catcher". The depiction also violates the domestic world of worth, as the woman is too sexually provocative/alluring. This is usually seen as offensive to women in general, a combination of the civic and domestic world of worth. As we saw in the example of EasyJet in the previous chapter, images of female body parts unrelated to the product may be judged as justified by the ASA in the context of British popular culture, because of the depiction's connection to what is considered their humour tradition.

The Difficult Case

It is not always easy to decide whether the person in the image should be interpreted as an eye-catcher. Such an example, according to ERK, was an advertisement for a bra from Triumph in 2004, as shown in figure 6.14.[176] It is usually permissible to show women and men in whatever clothes can be purchased, which sometimes means without much clothing. It is allowed to include some sexual tension/allure as well as some nakedness. This image was such an advertisement, but was nevertheless only one vote from being banned by ERK. The council members themselves defined it as a difficult case in the interviews. The complainant thought the woman was used as an eye-catcher and that the depiction was pornographic. The council members discussed whether this was crossing the line, since the bare breast could be seen as unjustified. Even though it is just on the border of being banned, in the end, the council members decided to approve it as an example of an advertisement to sell underwear. According to the council members, the woman in this image was not judged to be too sexually alluring, she was rather seen as flirty in an innocent way, and as a consequence the depiction of her did not violate the domestic world of worth, in spite of the exposed breast.

[176] Statement/Adjudication from ERK for Triumph International AB, 12 March 2001, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, last downloaded 2 May 2010. They did not uphold the complaint but found the advertisement justified. It was, however, clearly on the verge of being banned.

Figure 6.14. *Soft underwear.* An advertisement for Triumph underwear.[177]

When advertising products used directly on naked skin, the interpretations of the decision-makers at ERK are generally in line with the world of fame and the market world of worth. The council argued that advertisers of these products should be able to show the product to consumers in ways that correspond to how targeted users would ware them. In this case, ERK performed a balancing act between on the one hand: the world of fame combined with the market world of worth, and on the other hand: the domestic world of worth combined with the civic world of worth. The council was split between these two sides. Although the collective majority decision was that the depiction did not violate the civic/domestic worth, four out of nine members thought it did.

Conclusion

The genderisms that Goffman calls "function ranking" and "families", discussed in chapter 2, are addressed by ERK in terms of depictions of what

[177] ERK website, http://www.etiskaradet.org/erk.html, and then current fashion magazine.

women and men do in the home and their level of activity, as well as children's upbringing along these lines. When it comes to what he calls "ritualized subordination", such depictions have to be clearly objectifying to be banned. The idea that Goffman developed of the image as naturalizing what it depicts is something that ERK sees as a problem, while the ASA does not, when it comes to traditional gender roles. When it comes to children, the ASA argues differently, but with a focus elsewhere. We need another theory than Goffman's to show how advertisements are evaluated in this study. As stated earlier, the more subtle genderisms appearing in Goffman's compilation of advertising images are not evaluated.

This chapter shows first of all that the worlds of worth are relevant evaluative modes when judging whether gendered images are acceptable or not; they apply both for evaluating the images, their relevant social context(s) and possible relevant effects, and for justifying the complaints, on the part of the complainant, the image expression on the part of the advertiser and the decision on the part of the advertising self-regulatory decision-maker. The chapter also shows that decisions do not eliminate gender formations but point out which ones are acceptable and unacceptable, depending on what the self-regulators believe the general public or targeted groups will think about the images.

The second important conclusion from this chapter and the previous one is that the idea of expectation in relation to audiences is two-faced, and makes it possible for us to develop an idea of audiences that takes Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's theory on justification—including the idea that the individual is reflexive in her interpretation and evaluation of what she sees—as an overall frame. This frame can encompass ideas from standpoints as different as semiotics and practice-based group theories such as Pierre Bourdieu's and Howard S. Becker's. On the one hand, theories of conventions as entrenched within groups (as with Bourdieu and Becker) are important in the decision-processes. But in the context of worlds of worth, self-regulators rely upon either the world of fame, when the idea of target group in itself is taken into account as *an organizing principle* of their decision, regardless of the content of what a possible audience thinks is good. Or they take other worlds of worth into account, depending on what the self-regulators assume the relevant audience think is morally right in relation to the image. This means they take into account either specific conventions related to a specific target group or more generally held conventions. Though we acknowledge the critical capacity of the self-regulators and people in general, the self-regulators may nevertheless often focus on the conventions they believe to be generally held, or that they may disregard generally held critique because it is not valid in a targeted group. To give a reoccurring example of this: the romantic love relationship between a man and a woman is both used as a convention and mocked in advertisements, both criticized and defended by complainants and self-regulators.

So what is it that makes some gender images acceptable and some not? When looking at gender depictions and how they are handled, this chapter shows that decisions are driven by ideas of what can justifiably be seen as good. I will discuss the worlds of worth to clarify how they become aspects of accept-

able types of viewers of the public, as these determine what the decisions will be:

As we are dealing with the non-legislative practice of advertising self-regulation, the equality of the **civic** world is nevertheless part of the decision-process. It is pushed aside in terms of gender when e.g. advertisers try to argue that a specific target group will not make such evaluative claims. The civic world of worth is, as we have seen, typically combined in compromises with the domestic world of worth, to create a more equal gender relation. This combination often poses a critique toward images built on the world of fame.

The self-regulators are not initially clear on what evaluative grounds the image should be judged. This is established in the decision-process. For this, the ASA may perform something equivalent to a test of reliable target group (cf. figure 3.2 and the discussion below on what Boltanski and Thévenot calls a test), which may be backed up by opinion research, a procedure that makes up a combination of the world of **fame** and industrial world of worth. If this does not hold sway, they often apply domestic and civic values. ERK does not consider target groups, but they do focus on the connection between image and product; this is also a test of the world of fame, but of a different kind.

ERK's decisions are for the most part about negotiating the traditional gender roles of the **domestic** world of worth by making compromises with the civic world of worth. The ASA uses more of the domestic world of worth in its original shape. This is due to the fact that the two organizations differ in terms of their willingness to foster change. The ASA does not want to act as social engineer, but tries to adjust to what general audiences think, and sometimes this is in line with the traditional relations of the domestic world of worth. One may say they relate to folk tradition. ERK fosters the ideal of gender equality *in images* to a greater extent, and does this by regulating what type of world the images *reflect and advertise*, rather than taking into consideration whether the images foster consumers (Ellos) for the advertising industry or more female leaders in society (Reklamförbundet). In cases that ERK dealt with, if depictions were not creating a fulfilling compromise between the domestic and civic worlds of worth but merely mirrored a domestic relation in terms of gender inequalities that ERK argues exist, this may be judged as unacceptable. One may say that ERK relates to a tradition of gender equality politics and policies in Sweden, but also a supposedly increasing entrenchment of such political ideas amongst people in general, at least as an ideal. The ASA would instead argue that people would not be offended by advertisements that merely mirror existing traditional relationships between women and men. The domestic world of worth is not *only* criticized by ERK, but aspects of it are also supported, such as unselfishness in social relationships and behaving properly at social gatherings. These are *aspects* of hegemonic masculinity which Connell argued worth fostering. ERK may also focus on the context of the characters in the image, in line with the domestic world of worth.

Behaving like a dandy, whether man or woman, being unproductive and living off others, is considered an unworthy depiction, an improper combination of **market** world of worth and **inspired** world of worth (e.g. Bianco). Being

able to create a compromise between the inspired and market worlds of worth is, however, important knowledge amongst practitioners at agencies, as previously discussed. In such a compromise, the industrial world of worth also becomes a central feature. Although advertisements directed towards housewives are not a dominating feature amongst the cases that the self-regulators deal with, there are connections to this type in the decision-process. An advertisement relating women to domestic work rather than men would be banned by ERK; however, women socializing in the home would in itself be seen as worthy, while not being at all active in the home or elsewhere is problematic (IKEA). The dandy also violates the **industrial** world of worth, and although historically this has been the worthy shape of femininity, depicting women as violators of the industrial world of worth may be seen as unjustified (Twilfit), in line with more modern gender ideals; in the case of Twilfit, this clashed with the advertiser's claim that it wanted to create images in support of women's integrity against societal demands. As discussed in chapter 2, it is not always clear what is a critique and whether it will be recognized.

The woman of the Twilfit advertisement e.g. symbolizes an unworthy woman for the complainant—as she is depicted as lazy—a type that as a consequence should not be advertised, while the advertiser argues she should be seen as professing values of worthiness that the everyday woman lacks. The types of gender relations that are produced by specific images cannot be stated simply. We can see that market worth and fame are evaluative modes that advertisers use to support their arguments more often than complainants or self-regulators, but this is not necessarily the case. It is clear that the power of the image lies in its interpretation, evaluation and justification. Character types or specific messages in advertising images are not seen as unacceptable in themselves, as self-regulators make a distinction between proper and improper sex objects as well as proper and improper feminist messages. The types of reactions that have impact have resonance in the worlds of worth that self-regulators decide are relevant. The power of the image lies in this type of process. When it comes to depictions of the traditionally gendered spheres of home and work, it is not possible simply to explain the decisions by claiming that when women are related to the sphere of the home and to love and men to the public and economic sphere that these images will be banned. In the examples in this chapter, women are related more to the home and socializing. Sometimes it is banned, building on a compromise between the domestic world of worth and the civic. There are, however, also social duties and bonds of loyalty that are fostered, that are a part of the domestic world of worth, and can explain the evaluation of some advertisements better (IKEA; Cannondale), such as the fact that the man's inability is seen as offensive to men in the IKEA example. How symbols are understood in relation to gender is negotiated in the decision-processes, potentially related to all of the worlds of worth—worlds in which the aspects of emotions and productions at work or in homes are also included.

The decisions keep legislation at bay, but do not create any recognizable trajectory of change in gender relations, when it comes to the types of images that receive complaints. In the decisions of the ASA and ERK, values that are im-

portant features of the settings in which the images are seen as belonging to, depending on how the viewers are defined, are preserved. This affects the gender forms that are seen as acceptable (see the EasyJet and H&M advertisement of the previous chapter, and Zoo Magazine, Bianco and Ellos in this chapter). What the self-regulatory decisions show are that it is impossible for the decision-makers to fully know or predict what the images of gender relations mean to people, but that they nevertheless can reach justifiable decisions because they can shape them around conventions of what people find worthy in their settings. In the Swedish setting, the civic is important in relation to the domestic world of worth, as a critique of the domestic, while in the United Kingdom the domestic world of worth and the idea of target groups from the world of fame are often decisive, in support of the domestic. Though such constellations may change, this is the clearest pattern. This is the clearest cultural difference in how the worlds of worth are deployed. However, when looking at the material, the evaluative logics of specific worlds are used in different ways, such as the domestic and fame, in the different country settings. In addition, while feminist critique of advertisements are given more weight in the decisions of ERK compared to the ASA, it is often not mutually understood among complainants, advertisers and decision-makers what a valid criticism consists of. This is true also amongst decision-makers. It is clear that what sometimes is seen as symbolic power is negotiable (cf. Bourdieu 1991). Where it is not recognized, or rather shaped in the moment, it has no power. What is given power depends on, as argued, what is justified.

As has been shown, moral logics tend to cluster in certain ways. Such combinations create some patterns that are of a more stable kind and will thus recur in the decisions of the organizations. In the next chapter, I will further explore such clusters and also draw on the previous chapters to clarify the conclusions of this study.

7. A Justified Depiction of the Public

In this study, I have analysed the decision-processes of advertising self-regulators, with the purpose of showing how and why they decide if advertising images are acceptable or not. I have shown that a decisive feature of the decisions is to conceptualize the general public in a justified way. This means that decision-makers picture the public as types of people who hold one or a combination of moral logics, and assume that they use these to interpret and evaluate specific advertising images. These publics about which they make different generalizations are abstract constructs; the constructions must be seen as justified amongst the existing and real public. How these publics are defined depend on how the settings of the different advertising images are collectively interpreted by the decision-makers.

I have argued that neither semiotics nor the practice-based approach, as they were described in chapter 2, can fully explain the cognitive patterns of the decision-makers in terms of interpretations and evaluations of images and settings. Such approaches do not encapsulate the truly critical capacity of people, or their reflexive stance on a *supragroupial* level.[178] This is connected to the fact that a society or a group cannot build that group morality alone and be fostered by one authoritative voice, in contrast to what Emile Durkheim argued (Aron 1999 [1967]:103-104; Durkheim 1984 [1893]) and which is an idea that runs through the theories of many of those criticized in chapter 2.[179] And even if one argues that people in some practices are able to justify their actions by referring to what is taken-for-granted in a group which they identify as homogenous and stable, and the group members find this justified, this will not be enough in many situations. For instance, interaction on a grander scale such as via the media will necessarily call for different moralities to be taken into account and to be combined. For communication types, such as advertising, in the public domain to be justified—morally acceptable—its producers and viewers (consumers) must include the *unknown other* (cf. Boltanski 1999; see also Silverstone 2007).

Activities such as advertising self-regulation make up a type of condensed evaluation setting, into which images and moral critique are brought by the public. Decision-makers sort out acceptable critique through their way of interpreting and evaluating the images. Hence, at the same time as they evaluate the advertisements, they evaluate the public's evaluations, not according to the

[178] Morals are formed beyond the communities of groups and reaches wider.
[179] According to Durkheim, morality equals group solidarity and individual cognition depends on collective consciousness established in a group.

logics of an autonomous production field, but according to public morals. When they interpret and evaluate advertising images that have received complaints, advertising self-regulatory decision-makers take the temperature of *a* society, confined to media viewers more or less restricted by national borders. Decision-makers use the images and other information they obtain—such as statements from advertisers, complainants and former decision-makers—related to specific advertising images, to analyse the moral states of the public. According to my analysis, the public becomes defined by the moral logics that the worlds of worth represent; these stand for different structures of subjects, objects, relations and values. Thus, Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's theory of worlds of worth has enabled me to point out the type of moral conventions that become crystallized in the claims made in the analysed decision-processes. This study puts the focus on a type of regulation that brings together the production side and consumption side of advertising in moral regulation. The decision-makers relate to complainants, advertisers and other entities by grouping them into evaluative logics which they then weigh against each other.

The study shows that although the advertising self-regulatory bodies speak about and stress the importance of efficiency—especially the ASA—the driving force behind the decisions are justification, i.e. what is seen as good and just on a general level. I argue that what is justified should be understood in terms of moral conventions, shaped on a level that transcends the interest of individual groups. This is the level I have called *supragroupial*. The analysis, with the help of Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot's theory, has clearly demonstrated how this is done. By using their theory of moral conventions, the study also shows that the individual decision-makers are reflexive in terms of how they make evaluations. Reflexivity is central in the process, as this is necessary to account for the different alleged values and interests amongst people. But reflexivity is also about acknowledging and possibly questioning what is normally taken-for-granted.

My definition of reflexivity accounts for these two aspects: Reflexivity, in my usage, means that a person reflects consciously on a *situation* and her own *thinking* in the evaluation of something, in this case advertising images. It is a reflexivity that does not mean that a person aligns with the evaluative logic established within a specific group.[180] The definition accounts for the practice when actors combine different logics established on a supragroupial level, historically. This reflexivity means that people have a critical capacity. The critique relies on established conventions, but their relevance cannot be taken-for-granted in each setting. People must connect to the setting, to perform justified deeds. In the processes analyzed in this study, the critical capacity amongst decision-makers is facilitated by the triggers of thought entailed by the complaints—which are themselves examples of critical capacity—but also by the whole decision-process relating to concrete and abstract people and objects that

[180] As described in chapter 2, this definition differs from some other definitions, including those found in ethnomethodology, by Harold Garfinkel (1984 [1967]; Pollner 1991) as well as in the frame-based symbolic interactionism by Erving Goffman (e.g. 1974), to name two.

are involved in pinning down a relevant interpretation of what the public thinks; regulators cannot rely on assumptions taken-for-granted. If they did, why would there be regulation? A consequence of this pragmatic view that puts forward the situational logic is that it can unleash creativity. This means that new roads can be taken, new thoughts can be developed, and that cognition is not determined by position or disposition. There are, at the same time institutional constraints; regulators relate to conventions and they establish their decisions collectively with other decision-makers. This definition of reflexivity is inspired not only by the empirical material, but also by the theory on justification of Boltanski and Thévenot. Acknowledging, in this pragmatist way, how moral conventions are applied in specific settings, where other conventions also play a role, is arguably useful in all areas of research where people have to picture others in making sense and evaluating aspects of the world. What is, for example, offensive in the various worlds on the internet, and how is that decided? How do media corporations, such as newspaper editors, take moral issues into account and weigh concrete offensive commentators against what they sometimes assume are more sensible readers? This definition of reflexivity is an especially useful approach as it recognizes that conventions are not building blocks that have to be accepted in their complete form; they can be partly dismantles and reassembled in irregular ways, which shape compromises.

This study, furthermore, gives support to the notion that individuals incorporate different types of evaluative logics and bring their ability to shift between moral logics and combine moral logics into one and the same activity context, which may change the interpretation and definition of a context depending on what is put in the moral foreground and what is put in the moral background, so to speak. Hence, the composition of logics may compose unique settings—i.e. the moral meaning of a situation—although the contextual features, including those involved in the decision, the institutions for making decisions, are to a large extent identical. The combination of a more or less stable personal-institutional framework with changing moral meanings because of how the contextual features were interpreted and made relevant, is also apparent in the collective decision-making of *The Gay Men's Health Charity* (GMFA) case, discussed in chapter 5. The individual decision-makers are also reflexive on a collective level and have to relate to each other in the decision-making process.

The decision-makers of ERK and the ASA respectively, perceive their work somewhat differently. While the ASA staff is very clear about them trying to grasp the level of offence amongst the general public or target groups, the council of ERK tends more clearly to sometimes steer in the direction of what can be seen as social engineering. In the case of ERK, there is a tension between conceptualizing the general viewer of the public, and making decisions that also point out what *should* not be acceptable, although such pictures are seen as acceptable amongst the public at large.

Patterned Moral Logics

Looking at the concrete decision-making of the two organizations, the study shows that there are crucial differences in how decisions are made in terms of interpretations and evaluations. It has been possible to show this by deploying the theory of worlds of worth. Important differences in how the two organizations make decisions are the following: ERK and the ASA relate differently to the domestic world of worth. In none of the country settings is that evaluative logic obsolete, but the organizations elaborate on it in different ways. In the decisions of ERK, the domestic world of worth is mainly combined with the civic to formulate *a critique* of the domestic world of worth that they argue to be a feature and effect of the advertising image in question. A good example of this is the Björn Borg case of chapter 5 and the Ellos case of chapter 6. Both of those cases also show the general pattern that ERK is not *only* critical of the domestic world of worth, but wants to preserve some of its features, while restructuring others. This mirrors the tension previously described in how ERK both wants to relate to what the general public thinks—a public seldom seen as particularly progressive in itself by the decision-makers—and also cater to the culturally entrenched *idea* of gender equality, supported by a historical string of political ideas and deeds that have aimed to modernize traditional gender roles.

The ASA, in contrast, is generally supportive of the domestic world of worth and the values and relationships it represents. This is exemplified by the advertisements depicting gender violence in chapter 5. They show the large engagement that the ASA perceives the British viewers of advertisements to have in terms of influence on children and young people. The authority of a family fosterer is embodied by *some* characters of the images. The ASA embraces in their decisions the more *traditional* features of the domestic world of worth. This is especially clear in their support of a folk humour in the EasyJet campaign discussed in chapter 5. Such advertisements, also exemplified by some nationalistic advertisements for beer, are seen as part of the national humour tradition. They are expressions of legitimacy because of that and the chain of denied complaints decisions that have been produced by the ASA. As the ASA does not want to be the nation's nanny, as they say, they mainly use this world of worth to reject complaints, except in sensitive issues such as advertisements with associations to violence. Like ERK, the ASA often sees the general public as not being very progressive in terms of whether they find stereotypes to be offensive. As this often steers the decisions, this study gives support to Amy-Chinn's arguments (Amy-Chinn 2006; Amy-Chinn 2007) based on her study of the ASA that advertising self-regulation is not very good at adjusting to changing societal moods, at least not the ones often seen as of a more radical nature. There are exceptions of course in both countries, where decision-makers focus on such changes however. The reflexivity of the complainants that criticize advertisements on the basis of the domestic world of worth are also endowed with a critical capacity, so it is at the same time difficult to clearly judge if self-regulators are good or not at adjusting to a societal mood.

Another important difference between how ERK and the ASA relate to moral conventions is how they deploy the world of fame. The world of fame values recognition, which only others can give you. Attracting attention and having a clear message are worthy attributes in the world of fame. Target audiences are relevant subjects as they can help promoting attention and specific opinions. The ASA takes target groups and media contexts into account when judging whether seeing the advertisement as offence is justified, whereas ERK does not. ERK, however, nurtures the idea of the images' connection to the product to a greater extent than does the ASA. This is especially apparent in how ERK handled the Hennes and Mauritz' (H&M) Christmas campaigns, which provide an interesting paradox. These annual advertising campaigns receive a lot of media attention, but also plenty of complaints, yet they have never been banned by ERK—complaints about those campaigns have never been upheld. In such cases, ERK emphasizes that it is important that the advertisers have the right to show their products in a natural way. This means being able to show underwear on women and men as well as to show products as they are, even pink dresses for girls, if such images are not unduly combined with features that enhance gender differences in the images. Other aspects of the world of fame can be seen as supporting the decisions not to uphold the complaints about the H&M campaigns. As ERK's success was relying on media attention they were depending on the world of fame. But the more apparent reason for the decision to reject the claim was the precedents of never banning these campaigns, as seen in the Anna-Nicole Smith campaign from 1993 and the Claudia Schiffer campaign from 2000.

In both countries, *advertisers* often refer to the world of fame when they justify the look of their advertisements, in the statements they are asked to make when they have received a complaint about an advertisement. They argue they know how viewers appreciate specific symbols or that they acknowledge the humour of the advertisement. Such arguments on semiotic grounds are sometimes acknowledged by the ASA, when they think that it is appropriate to relate to target groups or what the general public thinks, but otherwise they do not find such arguments justified. The ASA would deploy the world of fame differently from ERK, as the ASA stressed people's possible recognition of media setting, and what it usually involves, which they argued would influence the risk of offence. It is seen as slighter when images have been targeted and thus adjusted to a specific media setting, to which a particular target group is assumed to be familiar. This is due to the fact that types of images reappear in a media context such as a magazine and its editorials, and other advertising images tie the particular image under scrutiny to the logic of that whole, according to the decision-makers' reasoning. ERK will take humour into account in cases when they think it is generally recognized, but they do not take target groups into account. The issue of whether the depictions are connected to *the product* may benefit the advertiser but not the idea of target groups. ERK evaluates the connection to the product when relevant, regardless of the claims made by the advertiser. Moreover, ERK stresses target groups of *product,* that they are made

for certain types of *consumers,* while the ASA discusses target groups of various media.

Deploying the worlds of worth in the analysis of the decision-making has also made clear that although decision-makers relate to various concrete things, such as written codes, established practices of how to relate to the stylization of images, and so on, as illustrated in figure 3.4, it is the *established use of the worlds of worth* that are decisive. This is also why we can see a pattern within the countries in how they are deployed, as shown in figure 7.1.

ERK/Sweden	**ASA/United Kingdom**
Civic-Domestic (Critique of domestic)	Domestic (Critique of failure to live up to it or in support of folk tradition)
Fame-market (related to things)	Fame (related to targeted viewers)

Figure 7.1. *Patterned differences between the organizations*

Gender Complexity through the Worlds of Worth

In chapter 6 of this dissertation, similarities and differences between the organizations were more easily explored, as the chapter focused on gender issues alone. The chapter argued for understanding gender formations through the evaluative logics of the worlds of worth, instead of seeing gender formations as a logic of its own. The study supports this idea which also provides means to make sociological analyses of gender with another type of complexity than the more established intersectionality theories. The difference is that the combination proposed in this study is able to show the complexity on a supragroupial level, coming together in individuals and collectives who act in settings that they interpret and evaluate.

The study shows that gender formations that can be spotted in advertising images are not eliminated through advertising self-regulation, but often only regrouped—by which I mean that they are interpreted and evaluated on the basis of other worlds of worth than used by the complainant or the advertiser—through the decision-makings of the organizations. As shown in the *Twilfit* case of chapter 6, it is not evident what a feminist interpretation of an advertisement is, or whether it will be acknowledged as a feminist critique. To regulate against offence is thus more or less an impossible task. Boltanski and Thévenot's theory helps us point out this important unpredictability. We may predict specific decisions because of culturally patterned uses of the worlds of worth, but we cannot predict the result in terms of moral evaluations of the public. Will there

e.g. be a more gender equal society with fewer sexist images or do images that display unequal relationships also help viewers amongst the public to actually reflect over their lives? A Swedish media scholar, Hillevi Ganetz, recently argued that the television series Mad Men, about an American advertising agency in 1960's New York, could be the most feminist current series, as it is so sexist.[181] This also supports the argument I made in chapter 2 as well as in chapter 6 on how to understand people's conceptualizations of images and gender in relation to critique. Considering a critical image, it is not always certain what it is critiquing and will not necessarily be perceived as critique or has such an effect. The same could be said with depictions of what is held as good. The use of the worlds of worth makes it possible for decision-makers to slide from justification principles on a level of framing—*how* will people look at this?—and the level of content—*which* good values are supported? The outcomes of the decisions are therefore intrinsically unpredictable.

Ways of Seeing

The worlds of worth, or combinations of them, that dominate the decisions mirror what types of viewers of the public are taken into account—and thus seen as justified—and as a consequence given more power in terms of definitions of what is offensive. This is due to the fact that different evaluative logics value different types of people and ways of thinking. This does not, however, mean that advertising self-regulatory decision-makers cater, in their decisions, to particular *groups* in society. Instead, I argue, the decisions may cater to certain ways of *thinking*, *ways* of interpreting and evaluating, *ways* of making moral claims. These can be incorporated in the same individuals. Thus, we could perhaps use the work done by moral regulators of advertising images as a way to measure what is legitimate in societies, as did Durkheim with the law (1984 [1893]). But contrary to Durkheim's group-bound study—that types of values were tied to the shape of groups and that specific values develop in specialized groups such as professions—this study provides means to understand values as conventions on a more general level, as an individual's solidarity is not confined to the groups to which she belongs in a concrete sense. This means we relate to things we see in relation to their context, which may consist of an advertising image, written statements and the opinions of the other staff members, but also to various moral conventions that we bring to the context when we interpret and evaluate it to be able to take into account how other people see the image. The decision-makers have to imagine what are worthy settings and whether the viewers of the public are put in an unworthy outlook in relation to the advertisement. It is important to recognize that the evaluative interpretation is a process in itself, just like Blumer's idea of self-indication, which means it is not given by the context and will not automatically result in value consensus or

[181] Statement quoted in the daily national newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, "Hur påverkar tv-serier våra könsroller?"/"How do television series affect our gender roles?" 12 October 2010.

alignment with one and the same value. This is something we have seen in the examples of chapter 5 and 6.

Autonomous morality?

Last of all, are these decision-makers also producers of morals by the way they order the moral conventions and do they create a moral independence for the industry through their decisions? It is clear that they do not help form a single autonomous logic. What they do in their decision-making is to define what moral logics to take into account. The organizations adapt to—but also help to establish by their decisions—cultural icons such as Hennes & Mauritz in the Swedish context and the British humour tradition as a folk morality, entrenched via the media through the years, in the British context.

Thus, the study shows that understanding cultural economies, as related in chapter 2, is not only about how economic values produced in an industry such as the advertising industry are entrenched with the cultural values of status, class and gender of the production field. Nor is the cultural economy only about how the viewers—consumers—of advertising images create and mould status orders, class, gender and other group values. Instead, the decision-makers combine these interfaces and create justified decisions disconnected from group-specific values and related instead to evaluative logics on a more general level. This is not an argument for an individualization of sociological analysis just because it is critical of the idea of group values that are taken-for-granted. It is an argument for acknowledging other value conventions of collective making than those established on what is usually seen as group level, such as in Bourdieu's habitus-based theory (see e.g. 1984 [1979]).

According to scholars on rule-setting, people who are involved in developing new rules do not only shape the rules as an effect of the surrounding, which they incorporate and adjust to, but also by the rule making try to influence the surroundings (Tamm Hallström and Boström 2010:7). People who make and implement rules are called "moral entrepreneurs" by Howard Becker (1973 [1963]: 147-163). This is a doing that partly separates into so-called "moral crusaders" and "rule enforcers" (see also Becker 1973 [1963]:121-146). The moral crusaders initiate a moral rule while the rule enforcers make them institutionalized.

The self-regulators' role is different from being moral crusaders as they do not formulate the moral problems themselves. This is rather done by members of the public and, as a response to this, the industry has often shaped self-regulatory bodies to prevent other types of rule enforcement, such as by courts. The decision-makers of the self-regulatory bodies are also different from rule enforcers, as they cannot just implement rules as if they were bureaucrats and thus institutionalize the rules the crusaders want to implement in society. Since decision-makers have to interpret what kinds of morals are justified amongst the public at the moment, their enterprise is not to enforce the morals of a crusader.

I argue firstly in relation to the theories just mentioned that advertising self-regulatory decision-makers are both influenced by and themselves influence the public and the industry but in a morally reflexive way, rather than by simply adjusting to or influencing a setting. Secondly, advertising self-regulators do not just implement rules, nor can they be seen as moral crusaders themselves. This is because interpretations and evaluations of complaints and of codes are made in relation to moral conventions.

We have seen in this study how the worlds of worth help us analyse the variety with which the public can be conceptualized in legitimate ways. Its viewers' cognitive outlook can be framed differently. As the advertising self-regulators connect such logics that are justified on a general basis with their organization's ways of doing things, this provides means for them to control what moral logics to take into account. This is why I argue that in order to understand how people relate to what is sometimes taken-for-granted we should turn to theories that move beyond the group level. People are thus driven in the decision-making by moral logics or combinations among them. To explain the reflexive cognition of people, we need, however, to focus not only on the content of these logics, towards which viewers are directed, but on their forms and the interplay of these logics.

Just as Durkheim used the law to investigate the underlying values of societies (Durkheim 1984 [1893]), looking at specific practices in relation to images, we may analyse what values are actually established as relevant in specific settings. This can be described as a photo-elicitation on the societal level where the advertising self-regulatory decision-makers formulates a legitimate decision, by looking at images and discussing complaints and advertiser's arguments.

Decision-makers, as well as complainants and advertisers, use the conventions of market logics and clear viewer identities, as tools to justify the look of advertisements, criticize them and make decisions. But at the same time, it is clear that these logics do not describe reality in themselves as people are more reflexive and critical. It is by shaping an idea of the audience/viewers of the advertising images amongst the public that the self-regulators create a frame for how they can justify their interpretation, evaluation and decision. The conceptualization of the public is made at various stages of the decision-process and may also change. The worlds of worth represent different ways of framing the advertisements, i.e. when decision-makers relate to different worlds of worth, they interpret them differently and evaluate them according to different moralities.

By analysing the decision-making of advertising self-regulators we understand better how offensiveness is negotiated in relation to a common heritage of grounds for justification. It may, of course, be argued that the self-regulators make all these justifications only in order for the industry to make money on the advertisements. This is probably true to some extent, but it does not diminish the importance of the worlds of worth as bases for justification. The advertisers or the self-regulators could never justifiably argue that they should be able to publish anything in the name of the market world of worth alone, although

they may argue without dispute that a component of making money must always be accepted.

Value Conflicts as the Foundation of Moral Meaning Making

David Stark argues (2009) that while Boltanski and Thévenot show how people aim at reducing uncertainties by creating compromises from conflicts between worlds of worth, there are also organizations that create conflicts/dissonances and thrive on these uncertainties. Both aspects are true with the self-regulatory bodies discussed in this dissertation. The self-regulatory organizations exist because of these dissonances in society, so the organizations that perform this type of regulation are dependent on them this way. They must also reduce some uncertainties to justify their existence, either by ordering the conflicting worlds of worth or creating compromises. Order, however, is only fixated momentarily.

The short answer to the question of whether the activity of advertising self-regulation creates an autonomous reality is "no", but advertising self-regulators publish their evaluations, which the general public cannot. As self-regulators must communicate the moral logic of their decisions for them to have a point they will create, I argue, hyper-versions of existing moralities. These are comparable to Erving Goffman's notion of hyper-ritualized gender depictions which he claims advertisements display, in his work *Gender Advertisements* (1979 [1976]). They mirror actual gender practices as well as simultaneously being distortions of them, by being hyper-versions. Goffman argues that producers of advertisements need to know how people in general perceive the world, in order to stage the advertisements in a way that will benefit their purposes. There will, however, always be a mismatch between generalizations of the gender doings in images and reality. The same is true for the way decision-makers picture the public. There is bound to be a mismatch between how they conceptualize public morals and what people actually think. This is because people do not walk around with clear interpretations and evaluations of complex settings, before they find themselves in the middle of them. Conflict situations are useful as they force us more often to clarify our standpoints. People in general do not always know beforehand what their "ends and purposes are" (MacIntyre 1984:164). But as the claims made by the decision-makers are shaped in relation to generally-held morals they can still be justified. By being the ones that steer the collective interpretation of morals, the self-regulatory bodies do have power to some extent, but it is a power depending on conventions of justification developed on a more general basis than their own practice and the practice of the advertising industry. What we learn from studying advertising self-regulation is how two such organizations picture the public, and thereby enhance or shadow certain types of moral conventions that are shaped in public.

How then shall we picture the morals of the public? To understand societal morals we cannot look at advertising images or other visual expressions in a semiotic or Durkheimian fashion, as social facts that reveal structures in them-

selves. Nor can we take for granted that group belongings reveal peoples values. Instead we must look at conflict situations in which current morals surface, for example as they appear in relation to advertising images.

Method Appendix: Collecting, Classifying and Concluding

The purpose of this appendix is to explain how my empirical material (mainly interviews, documents and images) was generated, with what means I analysed the material, i.e. how it was coded, and on what bases I reached my conclusions. Given the focus on images in this study, I will, however, start with some remarks on analysing images, which I relate to interpretative processes rooted in the thoughts of the Pragmatist school.

A great deal of human expression is visible to other people, and interaction may be based on what we show rather than what is communicated in words. The visual aspects of social life are, as a consequence, crucial for sociologists. What people say about what they see may stabilize for the moment their own and other people's interpretation of what is seen. There may, however, always be a gap between what is seen and the spoken interpretation. In addition, because people interpret and reinterpret things they see around them all the time in relation to what goes on inside them, what they think and feel, we cannot, as scientists, reach the full context. The reason is that when we observe something we have only our own perception to rely on. We cannot, as scientists, illuminate a situation in its full sense through, what Clifford Geertz called, thick description, as Geertz also points out (Ball 1998; Geertz 2000 [1973]:3-30). Geertz writes in a very insightful way about the researcher's problems of understanding her subjects of study and that making an ethnographic description of a setting always involves many levels of interpretation. Regardless of this uncertainty that we cannot reach the full context, the best thing to do is to analyse the descriptions of interpretations made by the subjects of one's study by the use of relevant theoretical tools, and to clarify what these tools are. How will our theory help us understand the way people make interpretations? In this study, people's continuing interpretations of settings are seen as building on different evaluative frames that have developed through human history. This is a theory that has been established as relevant by analysing how people make decisions at the self-regulatory bodies.

When studying practices where a person's verbal statements about her doings are rare, it may make more sense to focus on the visual expressions themselves, rather than arguing that what people say about something would be easier to access in its true meaning than what remains silent. Douglas Harper writes: "Sociology we believed ought to include a new kind of epistemology, based on knowledge represented in imagery rather than words. (Harper 1996:69)" (quoted in Prosser 1998:100). But in this study of advertising self-

regulation it is the verbal statements about image interpretations, in spoken or written form, that drive the discussions forward among the decision-makers. Since they need to justify and publicize their decisions, these statements are of crucial importance in the analysis. The theoretical framework that is related to the informants' statements gives us an explanation as to why they argue as they do.

As I have already described, the decision-makers of the self-regulatory bodies reflexively consider the general public's interpretations of advertising images, sometimes in relation to various media. They picture themselves a likely social context for particular images that they judge. The phenomenon of self-regulation illustrates that it is not possible for a scientist or a lay person to say that they know the effects of an image because they have seen that type of image before and that they know what types of relationships it has had to other images and human relations (cf. Ball 1998). New feelings may have arisen and new associations may have been made, amongst audiences. The meaning of the image is always related to how the context of the image is perceived, which is not something that is objectively given (cf. Berger 1972:9; Blumer 1998 [1969]:183-194). Nor can we say that we understand people's cognitive patterns by mapping their social positions or dispositions (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]; Bourdieu 1993), because in many situations the way we see and interpret an image, and its situation, is negotiated in relation to the people and things that become important in that situation. Connecting this study of advertising self-regulation to the theory of *worlds of worth* means that people negotiate what things and types of people to connect to the image and as a consequence what kind of worth to deploy. When we analyse decision-making as a *process*, it is easier to understand what contextual circumstances at times causes people to *define* where they stand but also *chang*e their minds, about meanings and evaluations.

Interpreting the world around us

I take an idealist stance, but it is compatible with realism in the sense that the situations that people are in are collectively interpreted, and depend on conventionalized notions of people and things and their relationships. In other words, there is an interplay between people and their social "environments" (see e.g. Shalin 1986, on idealism and pragmatism), but not in a straightforward sense. We encounter a social situation but we also *interpret* the people, things and the relationships (the interactions between the people and things) of a situation. The meaning of a social situation depends on those who come together (face-to-face or in imagination) and interpret it. As pointed out by Shalin (1986:10-12), pragmatists have a lot in common with idealists but give more weight to action than thought and argue that it is the need to communicate with each other that makes people establish socially temporally fixed notions of meaning. My idealist stance is in line with these thoughts within pragmatism. Complaints

of advertising images to advertising self-regulatory bodies may as a consequence lead to an interactive process of deciding what the images' meanings are for the people involved and in relation to each other. This is also in line with pragmatism's view on this, as described by Shalin in the following quote:

> [A] thing in itself is indeterminate, its identity as a class member is emergent, and it has no logical status apart from the inquirer and the process of inquiry where it is transformed into a definite self-same object...whatever rationality and consistency one finds in the world is of our own making, and...no matter how successful we are in transforming—theoretically and practically—the world of indeterminacy into the world of law, the gap between the immaculate rationalities of reason and empirical reality never disappears entirely.
>
> (Shalin 1986:20)

This includes all processes of classifying things and understanding the world. But we do this in our everyday practices as well as in science anyway, because we need to.

Generating theoretical ideas in interaction with the field

I have approached my empirical material in a way that combines the inductive and deductive method, which have been described as the ideal way of doing ethnographic research, i.e. qualitative research with a focus on the study subjects' points of views that also looks at social group dynamics of some sort (Aspers 2007; Becker 1998a:10-66, on imagery; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:23-36; Harper 1992; Walton 1992; Wilson and Chadda 2009). This is a good way of doing this type of qualitative research because it means that while you go into the empirical field with sociological tools in terms of knowledge about sociological theories in general and ideas about what theories can be useful in your study, you do not take this for granted, but let the empirical material guide your way towards the most enlightening concepts and combination of and relations between concepts. This is how your "imagery", as Howard Becker calls it, of the complex that you are studying takes shape through the study.

I started out with the vague idea that I was studying something that had to do with ethics in relation to a professional area, the advertising industry. This led me to believe that studies and theories relating *culture and economy* as well as *professional ethics* would fit well. These ideas belong to central theories within sociology such as Émile Durkheim, Pierre Bourdieu as well as Howard Becker. Advertising has been studied in sociology for quite some time, relating the phenomenon and the images to the *conventions* they produce and uphold in society, e.g. of gender. However, looking at my material, I realized that *reflexivity* was a key issue when it came to understanding the ways that audiences interpret advertisements and how the decision-makers at the self-regulatory bodies relate to them in their decision-making and how they relate also to the audiences amongst the public as well as to the industry. And this was the type of reflexiv-

ity not captured by the mentioned theories about group ethics, cultural industries and conventions in advertising. Conventions were not always reproduced among audiences but seemed to be ignored or contested. My material showed examples of that. It was also evident that the self-regulators were not only adjusting the decisions towards the industry. People's positions seemed more complex than that.

Because I was looking at organizations that repeatedly made decisions, but in a reflexive way, I looked deeper into the ideas of "institutionalized reflexivity", from Lash and Urry (1994). It seemed like a combination of concepts that captured what I was after. That idea could, however, only give me a description of the movement of reflexivity through organizations and does not really say that much more, although it is probably a fairly accurate description of what happens when the self-regulatory bodies that I study make reflexive decisions in relation to attitudes about advertisements. They must deal with varying types of complaints from the public and a changing general public mood, which is of course more difficult to capture for the decision-makers. The complainants are often against certain conventionalized stereotypes that they argue are fostered by the advertisements. Conventionalized stereotypes are also seen in sociological theory as an established, albeit to some extent, changing function of societies for the simplification of interactions between people. I realized conventions could not be ignored. So in order to be able to analyse the decisions and what they mean in terms of content as well, I needed a theory that combined conventions and reflexivity, preferably applicable to decision-processes in which "others" are taken into account, and was also consistent with my method. My method was that I asked about the decision-processes in interviews, read decision-makers' descriptions of their practices as well as the written statements that came out of their practices, in order to learn what people and ideas were relevant when making a judgement about a particular advertisement and how such relationships may change during the course of a decision and look different in different cases. I realized during the course of the study that the theory should not be focused on aesthetics or culture in general in relation to the economy, but on ethics/justification. I realized this because of how the decision-makers related to different types of audiences of the advertisements and to the industry when they spoke about how they made decisions and when I read about their decisions. The theory that incorporated all of this—reflexivity, conventions and the morals—was Boltanski and Thévenot's theory on worlds of worth (e.g. 2006 [1991]).

Learning more about the theory and thinking about it in relation to advertising self-regulation gave me more insights into how the material could be further coded. Most importantly, I developed codes for the six worlds of worth, which I used to analyse the material. This means that I found a relevant theory inductively, although I started the study with similar ideas, with which I could analyse the material in a more deductive way. However, what kinds of worlds of worth are relevant are always empirically defined, so the theory in itself provides no ready-made answers of how societies work in general.

Boltanski and Thévenot's theory was incorporated into the study after all of the interviews had been made. I could not have done this if their theory was not in line with my interpretative approach, with which I shaped my study design, in terms of how the interviews were conducted. It fit well with this. The theory did, however, push the analysis a bit from a more phenomenological and everyday world focused analysis to a focus more oriented towards pragmatism, because of my shift from ideas like Bourdieu's and Garfinkel's to a *more* interpretative stance where a *plurality* of taken-for-granted conventions of ethics can be relevant and possibly combined depending on the interpretations that are made of the situation by those people who are involved in it. I built my interviews around themes such as a) complaint cases (advertising images) about offensiveness, especially difficult cases amongst these, b) the decision-process in practice, trying to cover all steps, and c) how the decision-makers relate to other people in their decision-making, including colleagues, audiences and industry.[182] I made interview guides for each interview with similar themes, but updated them between each interview, so that I could ask about things that had appeared important and interesting in the previous interview, such as specific cases of advertisements that I wanted to know more about and gather different views. I brought such images, and the written decisions related to them, with me to the next interview if relevant. I also updated the types of questions depending on the profession of the council members and looked up, if possible, some cases that I knew they had been involved in. The idea was always to look at the relationship between self-regulators, industry, general public and, if possible, legislators and the advertising images. All of this goes well with a pragmatist agenda, and Herbert Blumer's ideas were there all along, so there was no problem to use Boltanski and Thévenot's theory on that type of material. Text documents and images that are involved in the analysis were either linked directly to what we discussed in the interviews or have been the adjudications about potentially offensive cases including gender issues that I have chosen from official documents during a specified time period.

[182] From my interviews with the ASA staff I have quite an extensive material on cases of misleadingness. These are however outside the focus of this study.

The Material

The table below (figure A.1) summarizes the empirical material of this study.

INTER-VIEWS	**Position**	**Number of individuals interviewed in given position**	**Interview occasions**
	ASA staff[183] *	17	2006
	CAP staff (part of the ASA system and office)	4	2006
	ASA council members	5	2006
	ASA Chairman	1	2006
	ASA Head of communication	1 (plus informal conversations on a number of occasions)	2004 , 2004-2006
	ERK council members	5	2005
	ERK stakeholder, manager of one of the council members	1	Interviewed together with a council member
	ERK chair	2	2005
	ERK secretary	1	2005
	ERK former council member	(1)	Part of other interview, the interviewed person had this background as well
	MER	1	2005
	MER former council member	(1)	Part of other interview, , the interviewed person had this background as well
PARTICI-PANT OBSER-VATION	ASA	Office party, 2 hours	Interaction with some of the above, some observation
	ASA and CAP (organizers)	Consumer and Industry conference, day conference	Interaction with some of the staff and representatives of the public, observation
OBSER-VATION	ASA	Staff meeting, 30 min	11 participants
'(participant) observation'	ASA	Open office landscape	While doing interviews

Figure A.1. *Interviews and (participant) observations.*

Summarizing the table, I spoke to 38 people (10 from ERK and 28 from the ASA). The shaded interviews were recorded and transcribed (17 people). Field notes have been made for the rest of the interviews as well as in participant observations and observations. Text documents have been analyzed as well such as those related to interview discussions as well as other documents from the self-regulators' websites such as adjudications/written statements of decisions, annual reports and debate articles/reports. Se figure A.2 below.

[183] In this table, the *ASA staff* does not include the ASA council members, the ASA chairman or the ASA head of communications or any of the CAP staff members.

TEXT DOCU-MENTS	ASA[184]	Adjudications	2004-2008 (some earlier and some later)
	ASA	Annual Reports	2001-2008
	ASA	Website material, debate articles/reports	
	ERK[185]	Adjudications	2004-2008 (some earlier and some later)
	ERK	Website material, debate articles/reports	

Figure A.2. *Text Documents*

Meeting Informants

When generating the empirical material, I had hoped to be able to participate in council meetings at ERK and the ASA. Neither organization let me do this. The ASA did, however, let me visit their office on four occasions. My first visit to the ASA was in 2004, at an office in London from which they moved shortly after. I interviewed the head of communications and was guided around the office. My second time was at the new and current ASA London office in May 2006, when I had the opportunity to interview three people amongst the ASA staff, three hours in total, excluding a short discussion with the head of communications. The third time I came to the office I was supposed to meet one of the council members for an interview after one of their council meetings in November 2006. The meeting ended much earlier than he had expected so he went home and I was invited to participate at an office party instead, a goodbye party for two of the CAP employees, at the ASA office. The following week, I came back in order to study their work during a 40 hours week, during which I

[184] These cases were about 4-500, 2004 to December 2008. In 2006 only 36 of the 99 cases of offence that were published on the website were upheld (or partly upheld). The ASA receive many more complaints however on these cases. There are many more complainants on each case in offence cases compared to those about truthfulness, as mentioned in chapter 4. In addition, many complaints never reach the council and are not published. I have, however, also taken into account cases from before and after these years, because they have been relevant in relation to the interviews or been able to exemplify some important aspects that are also part of the pattern of 2004-2008, or key aspects of the way of making decisions. Some of them are also part of important previous decisions. I went through the cases of 2004-2008 systematically (starting from August 2004—some of the cases from that year was judged by Ofcom, as the ASA became responsible for broadcast advertisements later that year).

[185] 220 upheld cases of complaints, 2004-2008. I have, however, gone through all of the cases on the ERK website. This means I have also taken into account cases from before and after these years, because they have been relevant in relation to the interviews or have exemplified some important aspects that are also part of the pattern of 2004-2008, or key aspects of the way of making decisions. Some of them are also part of important previous decisions. I went through the cases of 2004-2008 systematically, (starting from August).

conducted interviews with 18 people (14 of the ASA staff members and four of the CAP staff members, which means the 17 members of the ASA staff mentioned in the table include the previous three interviews with ASA staff members). Because I first thought that my visit to the ASA would be more similar to participant observation, I had decided to only take notes. It turned out that what I did was conduct interviews at their desks for one to three hours with each person, the average time being 90 minutes. Two interviews were however only 30-40 minutes long, and one occasion was a follow up of 15 minutes with a person I had already interviewed. A few interviews were, however, several hours in length. It would have been better in many ways had I recorded all of these interviews. On the other hand, my conversations may also have gained from not being recorded in terms of a more relaxed atmosphere; it is hard to tell. I wrote almost constantly while we were talking and transcribed the notes afterwards. Given the fact that the person I was talking to showed me things at the computer screen while being interviewed, this did not greatly affect the eye-contact that would otherwise be an important part of interviews.

The staff that I spoke to appeared to me as very open and willing to speak to me. Often, colleagues heard the interviews because they were working at a desk close to us in the open office landscape, although I doubt that they were always interested in listening. The head of a particular group of executives could hear me ask an executive what he thought about and had done in a particular case and of course this may have influenced the person to formulate a more cautious answer as well as making her- or himself appear as professional as possible. Another aspect that probably influenced many of the interviews was that many of the employees were used to presenting their work process, how they make decisions, to other people, either new employees or people from the industry whom they educate about their activities. However, both of these aspects that may have influenced the interviews did not present a problem because of the nature of my research question and how I have chosen to frame the study. Given that the study is about justification in relation to other people, the interviews were not flawed in a problematic way if they sometimes followed a routine when presenting the work process or if they to some extent were adjusted to colleagues, because that is what staff members have to do in their decision-process all the time.

I also interviewed council members—apart from the daily staff that I just spoke about—at ERK and the ASA and all of these interviews (with 17 people) were recorded and transcribed. These interviews were mostly between one and three hours long. Two of them were only about half an hour. Compared with the staff interviews, all of the interviews followed the mentioned themes, trying to cover the relevant aspects of the decision-process. It was easier to ask the staff about current cases as we were sitting at their desks. With the council members, I asked them to describe cases and/or showed images of cases they had and had not been involved in.

I had intended to study as much as possible of the decision-process in itself. I wanted to do this at the council meetings. When I interviewed some of the council members at ERK, in Sweden, they suggested I participate in order to

follow the process. Since I had already intended to ask, I was of course happy that some of them seemed to embrace that idea. Other council members said no. It is clear that the reason for not letting me participate was at least partly that I would influence their normal way of talking about the complainants and the images and they did not see this as positive. Their policy was also that if anyone of the council members said no, the answer would be no.

At the ASA, I had the same intention to follow the decision-process in practice at the meetings. At least one staff member and one council member suggested spontaneously that I should participate. It was in their case up to the chairman to decide, as opposed to ERK where it was up to the council members. The chairman, Lord Borrie, said no immediately and with no hesitation. Following the work of the executives at the office was not in line with what I had intended at the beginning of the study, either. The idea was to conduct participant observation at the office. I participated in one staff meeting at which the difficulty of making decisions about specific cases was discussed. What I did otherwise was spending time at the office following a schedule that the ASA, through the head of communication, had made for me, enabling me to speak to a great variety of the staff at length. This was very fruitful and I did feel that I gained insights about their work practices. The time I spent there was no failure in itself; I am just pointing to the fact that my intentions were to conduct more of a participant observation study than the interview study that was the result. As mentioned, I can imagine that some of the staff felt observed by others while talking to me and that people in some ways observed what I was doing. I am under no illusion that I was participating under fully natural circumstances.

I spoke to some people of the ASA council, most of which were not industry representatives. Some of the industry representatives did not want to participate. I think I made the mistake *not* to contact these people via the head of communication at the ASA. My idea was that my independence of any kind of interests would be more secured if I contacted people myself. This had worked well in the Swedish case in which all of those whom I had contacted to participate by writing a letter about my research called me on the phone almost immediately. This was sometimes a mistake in the British case however, when it came to some of the industry members, who would have preferred contact via the ASA. But on the other hand, most people I contacted of the ASA council members contacted me via e-mail (or phone) straight away and agreed to see me. It turned out that all of the people I interviewed amongst the council members of the ASA had checked with the ASA if they could participate, by speaking to the management. And how could it have been otherwise? They are all paid by the ASA for their work. The ASA had told them that they could not talk about or reveal too much detail concerning specific cases that had not yet been decided. I know this because some of the council members I interviewed stated this. Cases that I already knew about could be discussed briefly and cases that were already decided upon could of course be discussed. With the staff, it was easier to speak about ongoing cases, as mentioned. I did not ask all of the council members to participate and in total two Swedish council members and

two British council members of the ones I asked to participate turned me down. My impression is that all of the people I interviewed tried to be as open as possible. They were all partially constrained, of course, and in many interviews openness may have been staged as well.

Codes and Examples of Central Importance

The empirical material was coded manually in the software programme Atlas-ti, although much of it was coded literally by hand first. I have coded things such as 1) name of advertising image/advertiser, enabling a connection to be made between images and everything that has been said or written about the image in the material, 2) type of complaint, 3) product type, 4) type of decision-maker (staff, council member, chairman, etcetera), 5) background and recruitment process of council members, 6) the decision-process and its various stages, from complaint to decision, 7) stakeholders they relate to, such as concrete complainants and advertiser statements, ideas about what is important for the industry, conceptualizations of viewers amongst the public (cf. figure 3.4), 8) the relevant written codes of advertising practice (see chapter 4) and interpretations of them. These various parts of the material were also coded deductively with the various worlds of worth, including the relevant components of the worlds of worth, such as target audiences, equality and specific experiences of types of people. I have taken into account not simply the words used, but tried to capture the actual evaluative modes related to them. The idea was to be able to follow the decision-processes in the analysis of the material, breaking it up into pieces in relation to the theoretical framework. When analysing parts of the material, I have focused on different things such as difficult cases, easy cases, common practice and exceptions. When looking at exceptions, these often rather seemed like rules and I think this is almost inevitable when analysing an activity that is built upon the idea of adjustment to change in societal evaluative modes. As a consequence, I have not ignored these aspects of the material but rather looked upon them as key. But patterns of similar ways of making decisions were also distinguished. Parts of the material were coded before acknowledging the theoretical framework in its totality, while most of the material was coded afterwards. In other words, the relevant codes have developed gradually in parallel with making synthesis, drawing conclusions, as has been described. This means that interview transcriptions, documents of various sorts, voice files and images have been read, listened to and looked upon several times, both in full and in parts.

In chapter 4, I described why I chose to look at advertising self-regulation in Sweden and the United Kingdom. I will now describe how quotes and examples were chosen for the presentation of the empirical material. I have sometimes used only one council member's reflexions to exemplify the general pattern of council members. Moreover, I discuss cases that council members have often pointed out as important in the interviews. In such cases, I have compared them with the decision documents of 2004-2008, to make sure they are

fairly good representatives of a type of decision-process and the points that are made about how decision-makers relate to violence, target groups or other aspects that I have pointed out as important. In some examples of how the organizations make decisions, I have chosen an advertisement, complaint and decision from the text documents, published on the websites of the organisations, because I think they help provide a fuller description of the varying ways in which the organizations have made decisions. All in all, I have used particular cases to show general tendencies. At the same time, the particular cases have been controlled against the total horizon of evidence of the empirical material. I have thus practiced the principle of the hermeneutic circle, relating the parts to the whole and clarifying the relations between them.

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