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Ulla Hakala

***ADAM IN ADS:
A thirty-year look
at mediated masculinities
in advertising
in Finland and the US***

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*To accomplish something
we must first dream,
then visualize, then plan...believe...act!*

Alfred A. Montapert, American author

As a mother of three children, I'm tempted to say that having a child and writing a doctoral dissertation share certain similarities. Both are long processes and the longer it takes the more anxious you become. The last few weeks prior to the final acceptance of my dissertation were as lengthy and unnerving as those during which you are waiting for your baby to be born. But once it is over, you forget all the pain, uncertainty and distress. This process has shown me, again, the importance of dreams and goals in life. Writing this book was my dream but I needed a lot of people to fulfil it.

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I dedicate this book to my own Adam, my beloved husband Jussi, who believed in my work even at those times when I had difficulty in believing in it myself.

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Turku, 16th October 2006

Ulla Hakala

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N.B.

Due to the format (all issues from the same year were bound together in a book) and quality of the original material, particularly concerning the years 1973 and 1988, some of the ads are imperfect.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Is this where we have come upon the new millennium: advertising men's underwear in a Finnish general-interest magazine in 2003 (see Figure 1)? Three muscular, young, determined, semi-clad young men, obviously getting ready to play American football, the written text suggesting in clear English '*Stay cool men!*' The men, in their full bodies, gazing at the readers as if challenging them into the game.



Figure 1. Advertising men's underwear in Finland (Seura 2003).

The ad depicted above is one example of contemporary advertising and the use of men as endorsers of a product. If the ad exemplifies what advertising can be like at the beginning of the new millennium, a number of interesting questions arise: Is this the prevailing way of mediating masculinity today? Have men been featured in similar ways earlier, too, or have the portrayals perhaps changed over the course of time? And has the Finnish man in print ads become more like the American? In this study, we take a look at the ways men and masculinity have been depicted and represented in advertising in Finland and the United States during the last 30 years.

A number of academic studies relating to cultural gender portrayals in advertising have been conducted over the past decades, but most have dealt chiefly with female portrayals (e.g. Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 174). The portrayals of men have been virtually ignored. Besides, the majority of the gender portrayal research has been conducted in a single country, and primarily in the United States (e.g. Ford, LaTour & Clarke 2004, 42; Mooij 1998, 11). Obviously, there is a call for empirical research that illustrates and compares gender portrayals, and especially portrayals of men, in different cultures.

Gender is the most employed social resource and format of cultural expression in advertising (Jhally 1990, 135). This is no wonder because gender is an issue that strikes at a very basic characteristic of human beings; our understanding of ourselves as males or females is the most important aspect of our individuality, affecting also the way we interact with one another. In every place and culture, people immediately identify others by their gender. (Leiss, Kline & Jhally 1986, 168; Salzman, Matathia & O'Reilly 2005, 7.) Traditionally and in accordance with the dualistic gender structure, the use of gender in advertising has stressed difference, defining masculinity in opposition to femininity (Katz 2003, 351).

Thanks to their easy recognizability, human models – male and female – are used to sell anything from matches to machines. Images of attractive human models can transfer positive values to products, thus, together with other elements of the ad, assisting in the mediation of the advertiser's intended message to the audience. At their best, they can provide a social setting for the product and evoke emotional responses from the consumers, attracting attention towards the ad and the product. The particular version of the social setting, the 'media reality', is tailored to fit the attitudes and values of the target audience, making the ad an expression of the 'social reality' (the lifestyle and values) and, eventually, attaching the desired identity to the product. (cf. Chung & Ha 2004, 97; Vestergaard & Schröder 1985, 71–73.)

In doing this, advertising has been accused of misrepresenting 'ordinary' people and fostering stereotypes of young, unrealistically thin and good-looking people only, thus providing culturally sanctioned ideal types of the two genders (e.g. Pollay 1986, 28; Kilbourne 1995, 122; Arens 2004, 68). These stereotypes are increasingly concerned with ideal appearances in general and also ideal physical qualities e.g. body. For a number of people, it is not a question of plain concern, but rather, an obsession¹. This refers to the

¹ Kinnunen (2001; cf. Turner 1997, 23) goes as far as naming the concern for one's body *religion*. Eating disorders – anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and a new one, orthorexia nervosa (obsession with eating 'right') – as well as muscle dysmorphia (an extreme preoccupation with becoming more

notion of bodies having, besides physical capital, also economic and social capital. In order to maximize this capital and customize their bodies to cultural expectations, people have made their bodies projects to work on and malleable ‘material’ that can and should be moulded according to current trends (Berger 2004, 66). Within contemporary culture, this is manifested by cosmetic surgery, body implants, exercise, and dietary regimes. (Barker 2004, 15; Connell 2002, 38; Patterson & Elliott 2002, 233.)

The concern for looks, appearance, is not just a phenomenon of today. Every period of history has had its own standards for the ideal physical attributes of people. These standards have mainly concerned women and their appearance. But from the 1980s, more and more men have been bombarded with images of the ideal face, hair and body, and hence, today’s criteria of appearance also apply to men. This has to do with the attitudinal changes towards appearances and consumption among men and women during the last two decades. The postmodern consumer society invites both men and women to live in a world of appearances. Today, appearance can even be regarded as a competitive tool, as part of an individual’s capital resource, and advertisements are helping to legitimise the use of beauty products and interest in fashion and interior design also among men, so constructing new masculinities (Barthel 1988, 170, 183; cf. Kinnunen 2001; Crewe 2002, 42–43; Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 22, 44).

According to McCracken (1988, 33), there has been a movement from face-to-face societies, in which the status of each individual was based on common knowledge, to anonymous societies where status is often inferred from an individual’s possessions. This has led to ‘*We are what we have or what we consume*’ kind of thinking (cf. Firat 1994, 217; Jhally 1995, 80). Consumption has become a social act where the image of a person is increasingly manifested on the basis of what they consume and how they look (cf. Firat & Venkatesh 1993, 235). Consequently, narcissism – foregrounding the pleasures associated with dressing and grooming oneself – is growing (Nixon 2000, 294). In a way, it is no wonder that we are concerned about our looks: substantial empirical evidence supports the benefits of physical attractiveness; attractive people are believed to live happier and more successful lives; physically attractive people are perceived to be stronger, more sociable, more interesting, and more successful; they are considered to have an overall societal advantage in various fields of life – in marriage, getting jobs, and earnings (Singer 1983, 33; Caballero, Lumpkin & Madden 1989, 16; Mishkind, Rodin, Silberstein & Striegel-Moore 1987, 39).

muscular) are examples of trying to control one’s body, and hence, trying to fulfil the criteria of an ideal body (Ängeslevä 2004b; Law & Labre 2002, 700).

The growing fascination with appearances, encouraged by advertising, has led to a feminization of culture, increasingly putting men in the classic role of the female (Barthel 1997, 151; cf. Law & Labre 2002, 698; Salzman et al. 2005, 124). According to Salzman et al. (2005, 3), men are from a business perspective more important than ever. They are a growing consumer segment in many areas, such as grooming products, home furnishing, and clothing. In order to meet the challenge, advertisers have to think of new strategies for approaching men.

For a company, a good-looking model in an advertisement is regarded to work as a means of promoting the product and creating imaginary links between the product and the desired outcome. For a customer, the product can represent a way of becoming better looking and socially more appealing. Upon buying the product, the customer may think of buying better looks, success, love, respect and social approval. In this, advertising works as a platform on which the expectations are created. The product works as a means of meeting the expectations. And according to advertising, everybody has room for self-improvement (Featherstone 1991, 86; Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 46).

Media content, including advertising, is a powerful source of meaning about the social world. It is of interest not only in its own right but also as an indicator of underlying phenomena. By investigating media content we can make inferences about the cultural environment of a particular medium. (cf. Devereux 2003, 116; Gerbner 1958, 95.) For instance, by analysing how men and women are depicted in advertising in different cultures, we can learn about gender roles and gender interaction, and gender issues in general (Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh 2001, 472; Goffman 1979). This is the premise of this PhD study as well. The way gender, herein masculinity, is portrayed in communication can help us draw inferences about different cultures, in this case Finland and the US² (cf. Ford et al. 2004, 42).

The motivation for this study arises from the desire to contribute to the limited body of *cross-cultural*³ research on *men* in advertising (cf. Skelly & Lundstrom 1981, 52; Wiles, Wiles & Tjernlund 1995, 41; Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 4). Besides, analysing advertising content can assist us in understanding more about the reception of ads, as well as help us to predict potential impacts of the media on its audience (cf. Devereux 2003, 132; Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 27). Furthermore, examining the depictions and representations of men in advertising over time can add to the picture of gender codings in adverts and their amendments in general (cf. Wernick 1991, 48).

² In spite of the fact that 'culture' is not necessarily defined by a nation's boundaries, herein, the term culture refers to nation (see Schiffman & Kanuk 1997, 406).

³ To be cross-cultural, a piece of research must be conducted across nations or culture groups (Malhotra, Agarwal & Peterson 1996, 7; Samiee & Jeong 1994, 206).

Altogether, the study aims to stimulate research related to the portrayal and representations of men in advertisements and marketing communications in different cultures. It is a question of finding elements of masculinity, uncovering changes in masculinity over time as well as bringing out differences and similarities in the depictions of men and representations of masculinity between the United States and Finland. Furthermore, the study aims to enrich the meanings of masculinity via advertising. As to managerial implications, the research will hopefully augment advertisers' understanding of how the use of human models, herein men, assists in mediating the intended messages to the audiences.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This research is about studying media content – masculinity in advertising – in two cultures, Finland and the United States. Media content can be a powerful force in the construction of masculinity (Salzman et al. 2005, 47). By studying portrayals of men in advertising, we can learn about the ways masculinity is constructed and represented in different cultures. Furthermore, advertising content can provide us with access to the cultural ideals and expectations regarding men. The focus of this study is on masculinity and the ways advertising *mediates* masculinities. Mediated masculinity refers to the depictions and representations of masculinity provided by media, herein advertising (cf. Tissier-Desbordes & Kimmel 1998; Beynon 2002, 64). When we analyze media content, it is actually a question of analyzing *media* reality. This is based on the general assumption that ads and media overall cannot represent social reality as such (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 4). However, they can produce powerful, persuasive simulations of the real world as well as images of an ideal world.

Upon doing so, advertisements construct convenient selections from the social reality, thus telling their own 'truth'. The visual settings of ads are usually arranged and staged, and despite their 'natural' appearance, the models in ads are – by and large – posed, paid and visually manipulated (Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 30). Media reality, herein the ways men are depicted in advertising, can operate as role modelling among boys and men. Together with other means of media, advertising provides material out of which we forge our notion of what it means to be male or female. Advertising images help us shape our view of the social world. (Kellner 1995a, 5.) What is manly in different countries? What kind of ideals and expectations are there and how does advertising possibly create them? How is masculinity mediated? Overall, can an ideal archetype of manliness be found?

The purpose of this research is to examine *how masculinity has been mediated in print advertising in Finland and the United States over the last 30 years*. Thus, the study is longitudinal in nature. The thirty year time span will make it possible to examine changes with regard to masculinity in the countries as well as similarities and differences between the countries. The decision on the time span is based on the presumption that a shorter time period would reveal no significant variation between or within the countries (cf. Royo, Capliure & Miquel 2001). Besides, the number of studies conducted on particularly female role portrayals has been on the increase during the last three decades, since the second wave of the feminist movement, and these previous studies have been used as important building blocks for the theoretical framework of this study. One might expect changes in the mediated masculinity as there have been societal changes between men and women in real life (Romani, Soddu & Masserini 2005).

Since access to the data covering the last 30 years was one of the major concerns, print media turned out to be the best alternative among the many media options (see Royo-Vela, Aldás, Küster & Vila 2001). Because attitudes towards the appropriate roles and appearances of men and women differ among cultures (cf. Gilly 1988, 75), differences between the countries under research can be expected in the portrayal of men and masculinity in advertising. The following figure delineates the setting of the study. Basically, it is a question of studying masculinity in advertising in two cultures.



Figure 2. The focus and context of the study.

The purpose of the study can be divided into the following research questions, each of which is studied over the thirty year time span:

- 1 How does masculinity manifest itself?
- 2 How has masculinity changed over time?
- 3 What similarities and differences in masculinities can be found between the countries?

The basic assumption in the study is that there is no universal or complete foundation to masculinity as such. Secondly, the understandings and meanings of masculinity can vary from time to time and culture to culture. Related to this, the meanings are considered to be contingent upon individual and social interpretation. (cf. Edwards 1997, 4.)

In order to get a deeper understanding of masculinity, this study combines evidence from different sources by mixing methods, i.e. using quantitative and qualitative methods in sequence (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 5; Creswell 1998, 202). In the first phase, a quantitative analysis will be conducted using the *content analysis* method. The photographic imagery of adverts where men are depicted will be analysed. In the content analytical stage, ads in pre-selected magazines are categorized according to their size and product categories, and ads without any male images are eliminated. After that, ads including one or more men are categorized and analyzed according to ten predefined variables. The content analytical phase is mainly descriptive in nature yet essential for the second phase since, in the analysis of advertising, description is the starting point for interpretation (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 166).

According to Bell (2001, 13), content analysis alone might not be a sufficient method for answering questions about advertising images; dependence on a purely quantitative method may neglect their social and cultural construction (see Silverman 2001, 40). Uncovering representational implications of gender requires interpretive techniques (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 174). Consequently, and in the second phase of this study, advertisements with a male image are selected for a deeper analysis, where the representations of men in Finland and the United States are studied among representatives of their respective cultures. In this phase, the method employed is *focus group interviewing*. The focus group discussions operate as cultural lenses for the researcher, adding to the cultural concept of masculinity and enriching the meanings of masculinity in these two cultures. In the study, the focus groups are extended in the sense that before the actual discussions, there is a written part where the focus group discussants comment in writing on a selection of illuminating ad images representing each year (1973, 1988 and 2003).

The following figure (Figure 3) summarizes the basic setting of the research. The thickness of the arrows refers to the value of the data with regard to the three research questions.

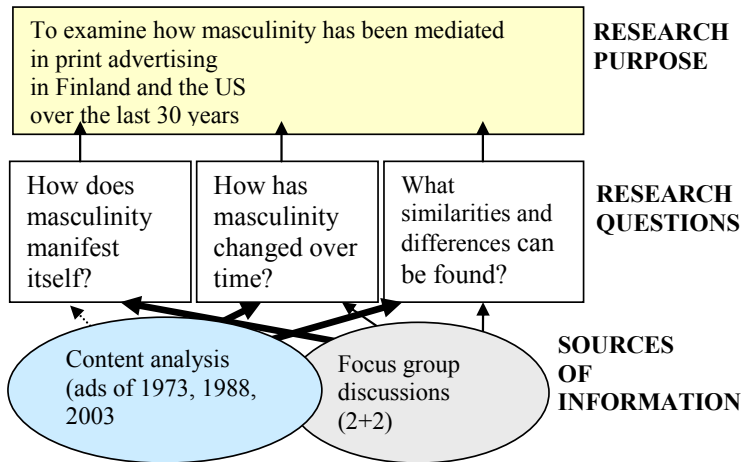


Figure 3. Basic setting of the research.

In order to understand the complementary nature of the two methodological properties, it is crucial to make a distinction between the terms ‘depiction’ and ‘representation’. A *depiction* of an object is based on the similarity between the motif and the depiction – it is something that is portrayed in an advert, for instance. However, an object can *represent* much more than what is depicted in the picture: for example, a man in an advert can represent manhood, humans or even gender⁴ in general, i.e. be representative of men or gender in that culture (cf. Rakow 1986, 22). In reference to the title of this study, advertising, among other media, mediates masculinity in particular ways, thus helping to construct representations of gender (herein, masculinity) among the audience.

Hence, as well as being able to depict objects, a picture can represent something outside the picture and produce meaning outside the realm of advertising (Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 24): it can convey and express feelings, it can symbolize or stand for something, it can be a specimen of or a substitute for something in the outside world. Representation emphasises choices made during the meaning making processes: choosing the elements of representation as well as choosing what is left out (Sarpavaara 2004, 32). Hence, representation is never neutral: the perspectives and values of those who make signs (herein, advertisers) are realized in the signs (i.e. ads) (Kress & Mavers 2005, 173). Through signs, advertisers have a powerful weapon for artifice; they have the capacity to represent the social world in any way they desire,

⁴ According to Lacey (1998, 131), it is often men who do the representing of gender.

even in misleading ways (Danesi & Perron 1999, 45; see also Straubhaar & LaRose 2002, 52).

In this study, the interest lies, first, in depictions of men and secondly, in the representations of the depictions. Of the empirical phases, the content analytical study concentrates on the depictions, whereas the second phase, focus group interviewing, will discuss the underlying meanings i.e. the representations of men. As will be discussed later (see Subchapter 3.1), content analysis – according to the quantitative approach – must be confined to the manifest content of the message. Thus, the analysis is limited only to the items which actually appear in the advert (cf. Holsti 1969, 12) i.e. counting frequencies, letting numbers talk (cf. Silverman 2001, 35). In order to gain a deeper understanding of the depictions, the content analytical phase is complemented with an interpretative phase, focus group discussions, i.e. letting people talk. A study can be both quantitative and qualitative, and it is even advisable to use the two approaches methodologically in combination to ensure analytical enrichment and triangulation of research findings (e.g. Daymon & Holloway 2002, 9, 99; Silverman 2001, 35–36, 233).

The empirical data for the content analytical phase were gathered from three general-interest periodicals: *Reader's Digest* in the United States and *Valitut Palat* and *Seura* in Finland. All adverts of one page or larger in the issues from 1973, 1988 and 2003, featuring at least one male character, were coded by two female coders, a Finn and an American, according to predetermined variables and values. For the written part of the focus group discussions, illustrative examples of ads representing each year were purposefully chosen. These ads were also cited during the discussions. A total of four focus groups were put together, each comprising six members. The first two were run in Turku, Finland in November 2004 and the second two in California in the US in February 2005. The subjects were a convenient sample of 6 Finnish and 6 American men, as well as 6 Finnish and 6 American women. The ages of the respondents varied from 20 to 61 years.

The research setting is divided into studying two 'realities': the media reality investigated by content analysis, i.e. analysing how masculinity is depicted in advertising; and the social reality grasped by the focus group discussions, i.e. asking members of a culture how they perceive masculinity (see Figure 4 below). In practice, the two realities interconnect and overlap. Some (e.g. Jhally 1990, 135) see media reality as part of social reality. However, in this study, they are separated for research purposes. In fact, to be precise, the social reality consists of as many individual 'realities' as there are representatives of that culture (herein, participants in the focus groups) (cf. Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 39).

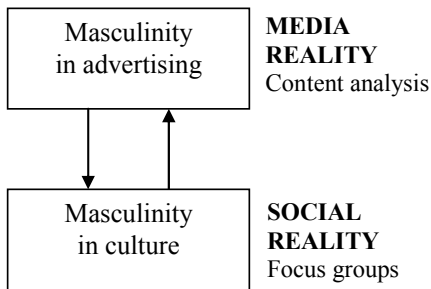


Figure 4. Interconnectedness between social reality and media reality.

By examining how masculinity manifests itself both socially and in media, and how these two realities relate to each other, we can open new perspectives into the research on advertising, as is the general idea of cultural studies. Combining qualitative audience reception studies with quantitative analysis of cultural texts, as is the case in this study, contributes to how audiences actually interact with cultural texts.

One has to keep in mind, however, that the mere presence of an image does not constitute evidence for an advertising effect. Accordingly, the research at hand is not designated to determine the impact of advertising on a society and the values concerning appropriate portrayals, but to examine how masculinity has been mediated in advertising in Finland and in the United States during the period 1973–2003. Furthermore, examining the intents of advertisers is beyond the scope of this research. The trajectory is approached from a retrospective angle: the adverts and the potential factors influencing them are viewed from the [Finnish] present (2004–2006).

The reason for choosing Finland and the United States as research countries is mainly based on the fact that very few prior studies have been conducted on this topic between Europe (and Finland, in particular) and the United States, whereas within the US there has been abundant research on gender. As countries, Finland and the United States differ in many political, social and cultural aspects; however, they also share similarities. They are both free enterprise market economies, the standard of living is high, and both have a high advertising share and considerable experience with advertising. On the contextual continuum of communication, both countries are considered low-context cultures in reference to the explicitness of messages (see e.g. Pelsmacker et al. 2001, 473–474). Also, many of the new ideas originating in the US have been easily adopted by Finnish people; Finland has sometimes even been called ‘The Little America of Europe’ or ‘The 51st state of the US’ (Rantanen 2004). Rantanen (2004, 24–26) lists a number of examples of American traditions, brands and phenomena that have been adopted by the

Finnish people: Halloween, Saint Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, riverdance, basketball, American football, Hollywood films, TV series, computers, cars, hamburgers, Coca Cola, and many more. Alongside the easy adoption of cultural issues, there has been, however, a lot of criticism of the American political system and the way international relations have been dealt with during the last few years. According to an international survey, 56% of the Finnish people regard the United States with suspicion. (Rantanen 2004, 26.) That suspicion is manifested in the Finnish consumers' attitudes; according to RISC Monitor (2005), one out of five Finns (22%) boycotts American products.

1.3 Advertising in the United States

Representing and being a part of human communication, advertisements reflect the culture of their origin and the target market's values and beliefs (Dyer 1982, 76; Kellner 1995c, 126; Lerman & Callow 2004, 507). They play a part in creating, modifying and transforming cultural meanings and norms for the consumer (cf. Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 24). On the other hand, advertising takes and represents cultural values and meanings from the consumer's world and invests them in the advertised product. (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998, 136.) Thus, advertising not only reflects the values it uses, but also processes and shapes them (Wernick 1991, 42; Elliott, Eccles & Hodgson 1993, 314; also Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996, 57–58; Borgerson & Schroeder 2002, 572); whether the role is more reflective or more adaptive depends, according to Michell and Taylor (1990, 48), on the product being advertised⁵.

In order to examine cultural portrayals of gender, herein masculinities, it is necessary to review the cultures of the countries under research and the role of advertising in them (Gilly 1988). In the United States, advertising is big business; the US population is exposed to more advertising than are people anywhere else (Berger 2004, 26). In the US, the GNP share of media advertising is over double that of Finland; for instance, in 2004, the share of the value of media advertising in the US was 1.82% of gross national product compared to 0.82% the same year in Finland, (European Advertising & Media Forecast 2004).

Indeed, the United States has been considered the advertising capital of the world (Khairullah & Khairullah 2002, 50). As is typical to a low-context

⁵ According to Michell and Taylor (1990, 49), clothing ads, for instance, aim to influence the reality.

culture, Americans are known for their directness in speech, and, accordingly, Frith and Wesson (1991) have separated rhetorical styles into ‘direct speech’ and ‘indirect speech’, where direct speech includes command, information, and label. Ads in the United States are employed as important sources of information in addition to entertainment (Al-Olayan & Karande 2000, 73). Referring to the directness of speech, Fowles (1976, 73) considers American advertising to be ‘nonassociative’; in a nonassociative advert, all the elements refer to what is being sold.

Americans are considered to be straightforward, self-assured, and easy-going; fast in decision-making and good at executing decisions (Rantanen 2004, 26). In reference to this, American advertising is reputed to try to prove the merits of a product clearly, logically, and reasonably, by directly presenting information, facts and evidence about the product’s merits and reasons for purchase (Hong, Muderrisoglu & Zinkhan 1987, 56–57; Lannon 1986, 6). This notion has been supported by the Biswas, Olsen and Carlet study (1992, 79) on print advertising in the United States and France. In addition, according to Al-Olayan and Karande (2000, 73–74), price information in ads appeals to American buyers.

American ads place more emphasis on individual determinism, which arises from the belief that an individual has control of and is responsible for his or her own life. Along with individualism, enjoyment and saving on costs are important themes in American advertising. (Alden, Steenkamp & Batra 1999, 76.) Furthermore, competition is encouraged in different spheres of life, which, in advertising, is reflected in the use of hard-selling tactics: American ads often demonstrate how the sponsor’s product differs from that of the competitors (comparative advertising; puffery), provide more informational cues and precise details, as well as focus on tangible product features. (Hong et al. 1987, 56–57; Alden et al. 1999, 78; Al-Olayan & Karande 2000, 72–73.)

According to Mooij (1998, 165), Americans conceive communication from the process school perspective: they see communication as a means to persuade others, to change attitudes, and to influence or condition behaviour. Hence, also advertising is regarded as mainly persuasive in nature. The transformational or persuasive power of advertising is called ‘Strong theory’ by American businessmen, i.e. believing that the strongest and longest running advertising achieves the highest sales (Wardle 2002, 26).

1.4 Advertising in Finland

Advertising has a distinctive role in the Finnish economy as well. However, its history is shorter than in the United States. The word for ‘advert’ in Finnish,

i.e. ‘mainos’, only became part of the language in the 1920s. Up until that point, ‘reklami’, a word with its origins in Swedish, had been in common usage. Other countries, particularly Germany, England and the United States in the early years, have had a great impact on Finnish advertising: for instance, in the 1920s, adverts were foreign copies that had just been translated into Finnish. In war time, the amount of advertising declined and its content changed: patriotism, national defence, perseverance, and heroism were commonly repeated themes in the scarce adverts that existed. (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001, 303–304; see also Malmelin 2003, 21; Hovi 1990, 120, 128.)

In the 1960s, many new ideas were again imported from abroad, particularly from the US. The US was an emblem of affluence, easy living, and freedom, symbolizing happiness and all the good things in life. And happiness was supposedly achieved through consumption. At the time, cinema and magazines were important mediators of the ‘American dream’. The role of Valitut Palat as one of the most active promoters was vital. (Kortti 2003, 199, 204, 207.)

However, during the decade that followed, the forthcoming oil crisis and the economic recession as well as the growth of consumerism and the implementation of the Consumer Protection Act of 1978 affected advertising: Finnish ads of the 1970s contained a lot of information. In the economically healthier times of the 1980s, the amount of information diminished and product image format became more typical. Moreover, lifestyle ads started to become popular alongside the rise of the yuppie culture. As in practically every area of economic life, most of the 1990s was an era of recession for the advertising business. However, the economic situation started to improve towards the end of the decade, and the new millennium manifested itself as more optimistic; at the same time, the media culture had become more international, yet more fragmented than before. (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001, 300–301, 307–309.)

Largely speaking, the Finnish culture as such has not affected advertising strategies in the country; in principle, many ideas have been adopted from American advertising. The culture has rather manifested itself at the tactical level – in creative implementation such as the settings (lakesides, Midnight sun, snowy hills), the models (‘Finnish looking’ people), and the texts.

1.5 Theoretical positioning of the study

This study is on masculinity in advertising in Finland and the US. Focusing on masculinity in advertising makes the study a representative of gender research in advertising which has a recent history concerning women’s portrayals in

particular. By examining ads as artefacts in a cultural context, the study represents cultural studies. In the following, these two areas will be discussed from the perspective of this study. The aim of the discussion is to position theoretically the study at hand amid the fields and the earlier research. We commence with cultural studies.

1.5.1 Cultural studies

The study at hand complies with the ideas of *cultural studies*, observing such issues as advertising, gender, culture, postmodernity, globalization, and the active role of audiences and their cultural background in the reception of messages (see Barker 2005, 7–11, 19–20). In compliance with the fundamental ideas of cultural research, culture must be studied within the social relations and system through which it is produced. By not making a distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultures, cultural studies allows the examination of practically any artefact of culture. Accordingly, media, including advertising, can be regarded as a profound source of cultural pedagogy. They educate us how to be and how not to be; for instance, how to be men and women. The values of a given culture, for example related to gender, can be examined by examining media. (Kellner 1995a, 5–7.)

Gender is a matter of culture: it is an important form of codified behaviour in all societies, and every culture has accepted customary forms for communicating gender identity (Leiss et al. 1986, 166; Goffman 1979, 8). Representations of men and women are, by and large, a steady diet of cultural studies (cf. Barker 2005, 314). The way gender, herein masculinity, is represented in advertising can tell us about the cultural values of that country.

Focusing on visual images [pictures] of ads actually makes this study a representative of *visual* cultural studies. The challenge of examining visual material lies in its polysemic nature; in practice, it is on one hand difficult to verbalize what is in a picture. On the other hand, all texts are subject to multiple readings depending on, for instance, the gender, age, class, and home country of the members of the audience. (Seppänen 2005, 28.) The importance assigned to meaning and to the mediation processes are central within cultural studies. Cultural studies aims to uncover the way in which everyday and social life are mediated through meanings. (Alasuutari 1996, 23, 25–27; Lister & Wells 2001, 61–62.)

Kellner (1995a, 8) has divided cultural studies into three multiperspective approaches: (1) analysis of the production and political economy of culture; (2) analysis of cultural texts; and (3) analysis of audience reception of those texts. In the study at hand, the second and third modes of analysis are adapted.

Often, as also here, content analysis has been used as a method of quantitative textual analysis (2). The analysis of audience reception (3) is based on focus group discussions. In fact, according to Kellner (1995a, 12), it is one of the merits of cultural studies that they have focused on audience reception in recent years.

1.5.2 Research on gender in advertising

The interest in gender and gender roles has increased during the last three decades. Scholarly books, articles, and basic research concerning gender issues are appearing. Many journals have recently dedicated a special issue on gender, arguing that research on economy, business, management and organization has been gender-blind, both concerning theoretical frameworks and empirical studies (e.g. Katila, Kovalainen, Meriläinen & Tienari 2000, 319). However, according to Katila et al. (2000), researchers are gradually starting to take gender seriously as a constitutional element of social ordering.

Parallel to the rise of gender issues in general, research on gender in advertising has proliferated at an even pace. Gender research concerning advertising can be categorized as follows (cf. Wolin 2003, 111.):

- (1) research on role portrayals,
- (2) gender response research,
- (3) spokesperson gender effects research, and
- (4) gender positioning research.

According to a recent overview by Wolin (2003), the majority of the gender research in advertising has been performed on gender roles and role stereotyping (1), especially using content analysis as a method. Three quarters of the studies up to this point have been conducted in print advertising. Besides, particular attention has been given to the depiction of women in advertisements; another body of role portrayal research has examined depictions of men and women together in magazine advertisements (Goffman 1979; Klassen, Jasper & Schwartz 1993; see also Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 1). Less attention has been focused on men's print ad images (Kolbe & Albanese 1997, 814). Surprisingly, the role portrayal studies have been conducted almost solely in the United States even though there has been criticism about the portrayals of women in most developed countries (e.g. Milner & Collins 2000, 67; Zotos & Lysonski 1994, 28).

Gender has been considered a major reason for differences in reader responses (Stern & Holbrook 1994, 19). Accordingly, findings premised upon the second category above, the gender response research, suggest that there are differences between men and women in processing advertising (e.g. Orth &

Holancova 2004, 86); for example, females are more likely to regard advertisements as sexist (Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia 1977, 75). On the other hand, they are more accepting of male nudity in advertisements than are men (Simpson, Horton & Brown 1996). However, Elliott, Jones, Benfield and Barlow (1995, 209–210) found that both men and women disfavoured sex-role stereotyping and objectification of women, but approved of sexuality when the ad is categorised as art.

Leigh, Rethans and Whitney (1987) used the cognitive response approach to investigate reactions to traditional and modern female role portrayals; women's role portrayals were found to influence advertising effectiveness strongly. According to Shani, Sandler and Long (1992, 382), women require fewer attention-getting devices and more information compared to men. Overall, it seems important for communication with women that the portrayals of men and women in gender-related advertisements are realistic (Elliott et al. 1993, 314; cf. Solomon, Bamossy & Askegaard 1997, 186). Females are considered to be comprehensive information processors and men selective information processors. Men look for ways to simplify the route to a conclusion, so they seize on the most obvious evidence and ignore the rest (Wolin 2003, 113; Meyers-Levy & Sternthal 1991, 93; also Gladwell 2000, 185). Recently, Elliott and Elliott (2005) adapted the response theory to their interpretative analysis of idealized images of the male body in advertising. Their study focused on men's responses to representations of male bodies, particularly when men were portrayed in a sexual or naked pose. The respondents felt it is more reasonable to use 'average' men with realistic bodies in advertising.

Evans, Nairn and Maltby (2000) studied differences in how men and women process direct mail information and claimed that some of the differences may be explained by the different parts of the brain between the sexes which deal with speech. Due to the differences in the location of the part of the brain controlling speech, men are less able to talk about their feelings. As to advertising, men may encode fewer advertising claims than women and elaborate advertising claims less extensively. According to the authors, for a man the most important thing is the overall clarity of the message, bold headlines, bullet points and graphs.

Findings in the third research category, the spokesperson gender effects research, suggest that the gender of the spokesperson does indeed affect consumer attitudes towards products. For instance, Kanungo and Pang (1973) found support for increased effectiveness in terms of perceived product quality and the gender of the model. Similar findings have been concluded by Debevec and Iyer (1986). In an example from the latter study, a dishwashing liquid was perceived as more masculine when endorsed by a male

spokesperson. However, there have also been controversial findings with respect to spokesperson gender effects (e.g. Frieden 1984).

Findings in the fourth category – gender brand positioning research – suggest that many products are sex-typed i.e. they take on masculine and feminine attributes. Hence, consumers, associate them with one sex or another. (Solomon et al. 1999, 185.) The gender of a brand can be communicated by the use of, for instance, colour, shape, packaging, logos, graphics, sound, and names. Products with masculine images include a pocket knife, tool kit, shaving cream, cuff links, and a briefcase. Products with feminine images comprise a scarf, baby oil, hand lotion, bedroom slippers, gloves, and sandals. (Debevec & Iyer 1986, 211.) Females tend to prefer feminine brands and males masculine; however, women also show approval towards masculine products, whereas men do not readily accept feminine brands. (Wolin 2003, 117, 124.)

This study relates to three of the approaches reviewed above, the content analytical phase representing the gender portrayal research (1) quite strictly, and the second phase (focus group discussions) acceding to the gender response research (2) and the spokesperson gender effects research (3). However, in the focus group discussions of this study, the interest does not primarily lie in the responses of men and women in processing advertising per se. Rather, the focus is on *cultural* (Finnish, US) differences and similarities. In the content analytical phase, the interest lies in the male images embodied within the ads, whereas in the second phase the interest is in the views of the people the ads target (i.e. men and women representing two cultures) concerning male images.

As the role of the gender portrayal research is of major significance in this research, we will next conduct a retrospective review of related studies. Table 1 summarizes the major portrayal studies from the 1960s to the present day. Interestingly, and in spite of the fact that men and women have appeared in roughly equal amounts in advertising (Gilly 1988, 76), the research on gender portrayals has mostly considered female portrayals⁶ as can be discerned from the table. According to Artz and Venkatesh (1991, 618; also Skelly & Lundstrom 1981, 52; Kerin, Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia 1979, 37; Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia 1977, 72), the preoccupation with portrayals of women has to do with the increased participation of women in the labour force, the changing family role structure, a heightened awareness of women's contribution to society, and the rise of the women's movement in the 1960s. Moreover, a reason for the lack of attention paid to men in advertising may have been the

⁶ Reviews of the studies have been made e.g. by Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund (1995), Kolbe and Albanese (1996), Milner and Collins (2000) as well as Chung and Ha (2004).

prevailing power of hegemonic masculinity (cf. Patterson and Elliott 2002, 236). In general, Betty Friedan's (1963) publication, *The feminine mystique*, has been considered the groundbreaking text and source of inspiration for later interest in gender issues (Busby 1975, 107).

Within media, of particular concern have been the depictions of women as sex objects, themes of women's dependence upon men, and underrepresentation of working women (Courtney & Whipple 1983). According to previous studies of gender portrayals in advertising, male characters are likely to be shown as more active, aggressive, adventurous, individualistic and rational and less sensitive and emotional than their female counterparts. Also, boys and men are more often featured away from home, and outdoors, whereas a girl's and a woman's place is in the home. (Fowles 1996, 201–208⁷; Bretl & Cantor 1988, 606; Busby 1975, 112.)

⁷ Based on studies by Barcus (1983), Umiker-Sebeok (1979, 1981 and 1986), Kolbe (1991), and Peirce (1989 and 1990).

Table 1. Examples of studies concerning gender portrayals in advertising.

Author(s)	Focus of the study	Main research findings
Friedan (1963)	US female portrayals; women's social role	Motherhood and care of home and husband the ultimate goal of a woman's life → the medium of print a critical moving force in creating for woman a view of her ideal self.
Courtney & Lockeretz (1971); also Wagner & Banos (1973)	Working roles of men and women in the US	A woman's place is in the home Women make minor decisions Women are dependent Men regard women as sexual objects
Sexton & Haberman (1974)	US female sex roles in 1951–1971	Women continue to be shown as domestic, alluring and decorative.
McKnight (1974)	Women in US trade magazines	Adverts show women as passive, silly, or incompetent; naked female bodies are used to attract attention.
Kilbourne (~1975)	Visual sexual imagery	The reward for buying a product is sexual access to the female.
Millum (1975)	Images of women in British magazine advertisement	The most common images of women are: mannequin; narcissist; hostess; and wife/mother.
Venkatesan & Losco (1975)	Women in US magazine advertising in 1959–1971	The portrayal of women as sex objects decreased during the study period; women still appear as dependent upon men.
Dispenza (1975)	US women in advertisements in 1900–1975	Six major themes in women's life: facial beauty; domestic matters; relationship to man; motherhood; body and shape; and health.
Pingree, Hawkins, Butler & Paisley (1976)	Developing a scale for sexism	The most frequently shown role of a woman is a housewife.
Belkaoui & Belkaoui (1976)	Portrayal of women in US print advertisements in 1958, 1970 and 1972	In non-working portrayals, women's images changed from family roles (1958) to decorative ones (1972).
Goffman (1979)	Gender in advertising: Stereotyped portrayals of men and women (the use of hands, facial expressions, relative sizes of people in the ads)	Advertisements are a good representation of the way it is thought men and women behave; advertisers conventionalise what already exists in the society.
Wolhete & Lammers (1980)	Working roles of men in print advertisements in 1958–1978	From business leaders and military men (1950s) towards entertainment and sports figures (1970s). Men also portrayed in non-working and decorative roles.
Skelly & Lundstrom (1981)	Male sex roles in US magazine advertising 1959–1979	Men are increasingly portrayed in decorative roles.
Posner (1981)	Explicit and implicit sexual messages (facial expression, setting, body language, clothing)	Advertising often portrays women as seductresses, and often uses erotic imagery to sell products.
Lysonski (1985)	Female and male role portrayals in British magazine advertisements 1976 vs. 1982–83	Advertisements have not responded to the changing careers and roles of women.
Gilly (1988)	A comparison of male and female sex roles in TV commercials in Australia, Mexico, and the US	Australian commercials are the least stereotyped; sex role stereotyping is not much greater in Mexican than US ads.

Soley & Reid (1988)	The dress of adult male and female models in US magazine ads in 1964 and 1984	1984 ads contained more nudity than 1964 ads.
Massé & Rosenblum (1988)	Depictions of gender [male and female] in traditional men's and women's magazines	A man is a self-made businessman, successful professional, factory worker – for the most part depicted employed outside the home. A woman is a contented housewife, mother, or elegant socialite – defined by the approval of others.
Ferguson et al. (1990)	Female sex-role portrayals in <i>Ms.</i> (US) advertising in 1973–1987	Social values have influenced the sexism construct (what was sexist in the past may not be today).
Wiles & Tjernlund (1991)	Roles of men and women depicted in Swedish and US magazine advertising in 1988–89	Cross-country differences in depicting men and women in recreational and decorative roles.
Shani, Sandler & Long (1992)	Sports marketing targeted at women	Sports marketing is more likely targeted to traditional male sports fans.
Klassen, Jasper & Schwartz (1993)	Images of male and female relationships in magazine advertisements	
Zotos & Lysonski (1994)	Female and male portrayals in Greek magazine ads in 1982–1983 and 1987–1988	Both women's and men's portrayals tend to be stereotypical.
Wiles, Wiles & Tjernlund (1995)	Female and male role portrayals in Dutch, Swedish and US magazine advertising in the 1990s	Role portrayals depict cultural biases and stereotypes. Recreational roles for both men and women surpass working roles.
Kolbe & Albanese (1996)	Sole- male images in US male-audience magazines in 1993	Men are often depicted as muscular by body type, conventional by appearance, upscale lifestyle by clothing. Objectification of men was not common in the sample ads.
Piron & Young (1996)	Sexual explicitness in German and US magazine advertising in 1986, 1989 and 1992; the nature of physical contact between men and women	A trend towards less overtly sexual message elements.
Wiles, Wiles & Tjernlund (1996)	Values portrayed in magazine advertising in Sweden and the US in 1994	Values were similar for both countries and included: a life of leisure, youthfulness, individualism, and ideal body shape.
Zhou & Chen (1997)	Men and women in Canadian consumer magazine advertising	Men portrayed more favourably than women.
Ford, Voli, Honeycutt & Casey (1998)	Male and female role portrayals in Japanese advertising in 1992–93	Women portrayed as younger and being more concerned than males with physical attractiveness.
Milner & Collins (2000)	Sex-role portrayals in Japanese, Russian, Swedish and US TV commercials in 1996–1998	Feminine countries featured more depictions of male-female relationships than masculine countries (cf. Hofstede 1980).

In spite of the feminist movement, the studies show that, in advertisements, a woman's place has been in the home, and that women in adverts have often been shown as sex objects. The studies prior to the 1990s mainly concern print (general-interest or specially targeted magazines) as a medium, and content analysis has been the primary means of assessing the portrayals. Also, the emphasis has been largely on visual imagery, not the verbal content of the adverts. Most of the studies have been conducted in the United States. According to Steeves (1993, 33), an important reason for Americans to study gender issues is to develop a sense of responsibility for US and other Western influences on the rest of the world. Studies where other cultures have been explored do so by comparing the other culture to US culture; for example, the Arab world (Al-Olayan & Karande 2000), Germany (Piron & Young 1996), the Netherlands and Sweden (Wiles et al. 1995), and India (Griffin, Viswanath & Schwartz 1994). Individual studies, focusing on gender role portrayals in one country only (outside the US), have been conducted in Japan (Ford, Voli, Honeycutt & Casey 1998) and Greece (Zotos & Lysonski 1994), among others.

Gradually, the images of men and male representations in adverts have raised more interest. However, in most studies the interest has been in both men *and* women. One of the seminal studies on men only was conducted no earlier than 1980 by Wolhete and Lammers. Their study focused on working and nonworking roles of men in ads, and it was designed to reflect closely the procedures of an earlier study by Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) on corresponding roles portrayed by women. According to the findings by Wolhete and Lammers (1980, 761), men were increasingly depicted in nonworking roles. They categorized 'decorative' as one of the nonworking roles and found an increase in that 'role' during the study period (1958–1978).

A year later, Skelly and Lundstrom (1981) carried out a longitudinal study on male sex roles in US magazine advertising, covering the years 1959–1979 and using a scale designed by Pingree, Hawkins, Butler and Paisley (1976) to measure the degree of sexism in advertising. Also according to their findings, men were increasingly portrayed in decorative roles, appearing less frequently in traditional manly activities.

A few years later, Lysonski (1985) conducted a study on female and male role portrayals in advertising in various British magazines. The author developed separate categories for women's and men's stereotypes. The women's stereotypical categories were premised upon previous studies, whereas the male categories were developed by the researcher. The categories for men's stereotypes were: the theme of sex appeal (macho, womaniser); dominant over women; authority figure (product representative); family man; frustrated male; activities and life outside the home; career oriented; non-

traditional role (shown performing non-traditional activities, such as washing dishes or changing a baby's clothes); neutral (man shown as equal to woman); and lastly, none of the above. According to his general findings (Lysonski 1985, 47), men were stereotyped in terms of sex appeal and career orientation. However, there were variations depending on the type of magazine.

Extending and modifying the pioneering framework developed by Goffman (1979) for analysing gender in advertising, Massé and Rosenblum (1988) analyzed advertising images in six traditional men's and women's magazines in the US for the ways the ads depicted objects and figures, sex segregation, and sex differentiation in the posing of figures through size, stance, smile, touch and gaze. Massé and Rosenblum's analysis provided some valuable insights for the coding protocol of this study, particularly the variable concerning face-ism.

Wiles and Tjernlund (1991) also conducted their study on both female and male portrayals, comparing the situation in Swedish and US magazine advertising of late 1988 or early 1989. On the basis of their findings, men were more likely to be depicted as workers in the US advertisements. The nonworking category included family, recreational and decorative roles, of which the recreational role was the most typical in both countries; however, the Swedish men outnumbered the Americans by 15 percentage points (Wiles & Tjernlund 1991, 263–264).

Also drawing on Goffman's (1979) seminal classification system, Klassen et al. (1993) conducted a study on the images of relationships of both men and women depicted together in ads. The study included five types of subtle messages: relative size (poses in which the social weight of a person is expressed by magnitude), the feminine touch (when the person in the ad gently caresses the product), licensed withdrawal (a person is psychologically removed from the social situation), function ranking (one of the people in the ad is portrayed as performing an executive role), and the ritualization of subordination (a person in an ad is positioned to show deference to others). Categorizing the ads into three types – traditional, reverse-sex, and equality ads – and combining the results from the types of poses, the authors found equality portrayals to be on the rise.

Wiles et al. (1995) made a cross-cultural comparison of gender role portrayals in magazine advertisements in the US, Sweden and the Netherlands, flavoured by Hofstede's (1984) original dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. According to their findings (Wiles et al. 1995, 43–44), Swedish and Dutch advertisers portrayed men in greater numbers at high-level executive positions compared to the US. As to the nonworking roles, the recreational role of men was dominant in all three countries.

A foundational study for the content analytical phase of this research has been that conducted on sole-male images by Kolbe and Albanese in 1996. Also using content analysis as the research method, their study investigated body type, hairstyle, facial hair, body and head positionings, dimensions of eye contact, clothing styles, and types of adornment of men appearing alone in magazine ads. Unfortunately, since 1996 hitherto, comparable studies on men in advertising have been infrequent; a study by Law and Labre (2002) focused on images of male bodies, however not in advertising. Recent studies on male portrayals in advertising seem to have adapted qualitative methods (Alexander 2003; Boni 2002; Elliott & Elliott 2005).

However, the issues addressed by the studies of female ad depictions also have relevance to male roles, providing the context within which studies of men and masculinities can be conducted (Morgan 1992, 6). Likewise, and due to the fairly scarce number of studies focusing on men in advertising, many of the categorizations used in the content analytical phase of this study are based on categorizations of the previous studies on female portrayals. For the second empirical part, the focus groups, particularly the studies by Elliott et al. (1993) and Elliott and Elliott (2005), provided valuable insight.

By focusing on men in advertising, by mixing methods as well as by examining masculinity cross-culturally, this study will bring a focal complement to the earlier research within the field. With men increasingly taking the active consumer role in areas previously considered feminine, it is increasingly important to study men and their aspirations as consumers. At its best, the study at hand can offer direction and suggestions for future studies on masculinity in advertising, as there will always be new research territories to explore.

The research proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background, featuring aspects of gender and masculinity in particular, as well as the role of advertising in culture. Chapter 3 describes the methodology; the two methods (content analysis and focus group interviews) to be employed in this study will be presented. Chapter 4 is devoted to the findings of the empirical research. Finally, chapter 5 provides the summary and conclusions of the study, theoretical and practical implications, as well as suggestions for future research.

2 ADVERTISING AND GENDERED CONSUMER CULTURES

Gender is the most commonly used format of cultural expression in advertising. In order to understand masculinity in advertising from a cultural perspective, the elements of gender, advertising and culture are reviewed in this chapter. The aim of the chapter is to build a theoretical framework for the empirical phase of the study. First, as this study represents cultural studies, the notion of culture is explored. Secondly, the concept of gender, with the emphasis on masculinity, is clarified. Finally, the role of advertising as a cultural mediator is reviewed.

Beynon (2002, 4–5) has raised interesting questions concerning masculinity that also relate to the basic assumptions of this research:

1. What is the relationship between biology, gender, and sex?
2. How is ‘masculinity’ normally understood?
3. Can only men be ‘masculine’?
4. Does a man’s sense and expression of masculinity change as he ages?
Has masculinity changed throughout history?
5. Are there continuities of masculinity across cultural boundaries? Does a deep structure of masculinity, an archetype of manliness, exist across different cultures?

These issues will be covered in the pages to come. It should be noted that the emphasis herein lies on masculinities in the Western world. Therefore, some of the explanations are not necessarily in synch with definitions of masculinity in other societies. The Western version of masculinity is actually fairly modern and geographically limited compared to some ancient cultures. (Salzman et al. 2005, 45.)

2.1 Culture as the multi-level playground for advertising

The study at hand represents cultural studies. The field of cultural studies would not justify its name without a focus on and exploration of culture. Cultural meanings are embedded in objects, images, books, magazines and the like, and also in ads. (Barker 2005, 7; Barker 2004, 42, 45.) In the postmodern image culture, advertising is one important mechanism of cultural socialization; for instance, individuals draw their gender identity from the

human models and cultural symbols, heroes, rituals and values that are used in advertising (Kellner 1995b, 248). Moreover, it is generally presumed that the gender roles portrayed in a country's advertising reflect the values and gender-role orientation of that country (Huang 1995, 82). In that sense, advertising has been said to both influence and reflect cultural values (Odekerken-Schröder, De Wulf & Hofstee 2002, 408). In order to understand these processes and the stock of cultural meanings, we need to examine the foundations of culture.

2.1.1 The circuit of culture

Although **culture** is as old as human history, the first scientific definition of culture was introduced only in 1871 by a British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture*. Since then, there have been hundreds of definitions. Tylor defined culture as “*a complex whole including knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, any other capability or habit acquired by human beings as members of society*”. Tylor's definition represented a monolithic perspective of culture. Yet, according to later definitions, culture has been defined as a dynamic yet ambiguous multi-level phenomenon (e.g. Schein 1985).

Cultures can be manifested in different ranges: global, national, subcultural. Therefore, it is often difficult to define a culture's boundaries. When we talk about US culture, in particular, we have to remember that the United States is culturally not one coherent nation. In the past, it was referred to as a melting pot of cultures, which emphasized the idea of people from different cultural backgrounds melding together, newcomers adapting the US values and lifestyle. Today, to the contrary, culturalists suggest using the term ‘mixed salad’ which means cultural pluralism rather than homogeneity. The US culture is enriched by the cultures immigrants bring with them. (MacDonald 1991; Rubin 1995.) This notion coincides with the postmodernist idea of fluidity and flexibility in cultures in general. This study, however, is based on an idea that there is a dominant US culture that is adopted by the people living in the US, whether born there or having moved there. Interestingly, the effect of the US culture is often related even to the global order, assuming that the consumer culture on a global scale parallels the expansion of the power of the US over the world economy. It has been anticipated that, gradually, US culture will become a universal culture, destroying each country's own national culture. (Featherstone 1991, 127.) Also in this study, it is hypothesized that masculinities in Finnish and US cultures have converged during the last three decades.

There have also been debates about the contents of ‘culture’. Some refer to culture as a synonym for ‘the arts’, especially the high arts. In accordance with this definition, popular culture has referred to what remains below the elevated high cultures (Barker 2004, 147). However, according to postmodernism, there is no such distinction between the ‘elite culture’ and the ‘popular culture’. Following the postmodern ideology, cultural studies understands popular culture as the everyday consumption of media and other cultural products. Thus, popular culture may be understood as the interaction between commonly mediated texts and the everyday meaning-making and practices of the common people. (Berger 2005, 114; Lewis 2003, 31–32.)

How does advertising relate to these? Some see advertising as subordinate to popular culture (e.g. Danna 1992, 19), whereas others (e.g. Fowles 1996, 11) consider advertising and popular culture categorically different (for an extensive discussion on popular culture and advertising in contrast, see Fowles 1996, 9–17). In this study, advertising is regarded as part of popular culture. The assumption is that together with films, television, books, sports and music, advertising acts as an ingredient that men draw upon to construct their masculine identity (cf. Holt & Thompson 2004, 427). Accordingly, all cultural objects – not just art and high culture – reflect society. Thus, magazines – the source of part of the empirical data in this study – are cultural objects just as is serious literature.

Hofstede (1991) defines culture as the collective mental programming of the people in an environment, which is expressed at different levels: symbols, heroes, rituals and values (Figure 5). *Symbols* represent the most superficial manifestations of culture, consisting of words, gestures, pictures or objects, which carry a particular meaning within that culture. Culture is made visible by symbols, and together with other means of popular culture, advertising uses the symbolic stock of a culture in order to appeal to the audiences. *Heroes* are persons, living or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture. Thus, they function as models for behaviour. In advertising, the endorsers of the products – particularly celebrities – can be referred to as ‘heroes’. The task of advertising is to transfer the positive associations linked to heroes onto the products and to carry them further to the customers (cf. Fowles 1996, 11; Goffman 1979, 11). *Rituals* are collective activities that are considered socially essential: forms of greeting, social and religious ceremonies. In rituals, there is an embedded idea of the proper way of behaving and doing things. Consequently, they reflect the dominant value system in a given society. (Dubois 2000, 205.) Advertising employs various, often culture bound, rituals. A wider discussion of rituals is presented in the next subchapter.

Values lie at the heart of a culture; they represent broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others: evil vs. good, ugly vs. beautiful (Mooij 1994, 123–124). In advertising, there is a constant battle between the basic, universal, human values: the good (our product) and the bad (a competitor's product) or the ugly (before using the product) and the beautiful (after using the product), to give some examples. Moreover, specific cultural values can be encoded in the visual imagery of an individual advertisement. Consequently, it is necessary for advertisers to take culture-specific values into account, and make the advertisements consistent with the value system of the culture concerned. (Hirschman 2003, 9; Al-Olayan & Karande 2000, 70; Scott 1994, 252.)

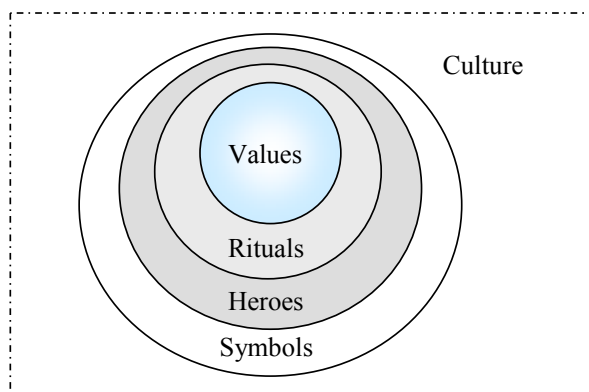


Figure 5. Expressions of culture at different levels (adapted from Mooij 1994, 123).

Communication mainly operates at the symbols level but, simultaneously, reflects the values, rituals and heroes of a culture. According to Mooij (1994, 131), a country's cultural values are embedded in its communications, i.e. the social reality is manifested in the media reality of a particular culture. People of a specific culture become committed to that culture's style of transferring values and rituals (cf. Hong et al. 1987, 55). Hence, communication can be regarded as the product of a culture's deeper level. Culture is also regarded as a means to offer order, direction and guidance to its people (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997, 407); and herein, communication functions as a guide or mediator⁸ of the idealized forms of behaviour. By studying communication we

⁸ Mediatization refers to the extension of the influence of media into spheres of social life (see Rowe 1999, 174).

can understand how culture operates. (cf. Leeds-Hurwitz 1993, 17; Deacon, Pickering, Golding & Murdock 1999, 1.)

The above mentioned leads us to a model that Johnson (Acosta-Alzuru & Kreshel 2002, 142⁹) developed in the 1980s: according to his model, culture is a process or circuit of production, circulation, and consumption. The original model has been reworked by a group of British scholars who emphasize the relationship between culture and meaning. (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay & Negus 1997.) Meaning is constructed – transferred, produced – through cultural practices of which advertising is an example. The circuit of culture, as du Gay et al. named their model, depicts different levels: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation (see Figure 6). Cultural meaning is produced and embedded at each of these levels. Furthermore, each level is linked with the next. (Barker 2005, 74.) In the circuit of culture, advertising has a two-way role: on one hand it produces meanings, for instance, new ideas and ideals of gender. On the other, through advertising, members of a society learn about their culture (Ji & McNeal 2001, 80). People forge their identities through the cultural images of advertising. Thus, we can say that in the circuit of culture advertising not only mediates but also takes part in the production of new meanings and consumption of represented ideals.

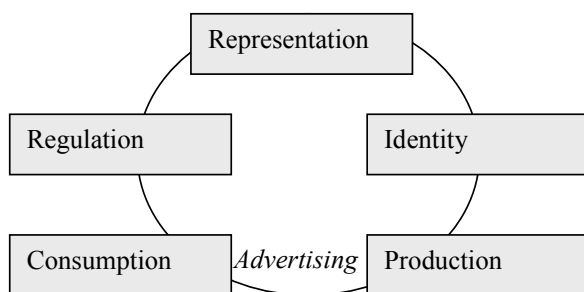


Figure 6. The circuit of culture (adapted from du Gay et al. 1997, 3).

Representation refers to the production of meaning through language, connecting the meaning and language to culture. It uses language to say something meaningful to other people about the world. (Hall 2000, 15.) In advertising, the term ‘language’ can refer to both the written text and the visual elements, even though visual communication lacks some explicit devices compared to verbal language (Messaris 1997, xi, xvii–xviii).

⁹ Original source Johnson R. (1986–87). What is cultural studies anyway? *Social Text*, 16, 38–80.

Photographs are used in ads as images that shape the worldview (Messaris 1994, 25).

Identity refers to how a cultural product, e.g. an advertisement, can act as a marker to identify a particular group, that is, to create an identity. Identity can be viewed as a dynamic concept based on symbolic characters that attempt to differentiate in order to identify¹⁰. The meanings in advertising can be employed as symbolic resources in the process of the construction of people's identities (Cronin 2000, 1). For instance, an advert can tell us how the consumption of a particular product influences our identity or how it can make up for our deficiencies. (Acosta-Alzuru & Kreshel 2002, 143; Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 43.) An ad can create an association between the product and the socially desirable and meaningful traits in order to produce a particular impression of a certain type of person. For instance, if one wanted to be a 'tough guy' in the 1980s in the US, then one should have, for instance, bought Hanes underwear (see Figure 7). *'We are what we consume.'* And through consumption we satisfy both material and social needs (Vestergaard & Schröder 1985, 9). The images of a desired self are conveyed through one's consumption patterns (cf. Thompson & Hirschman 1995, 151).



Figure 7. Advertising underwear in the US in 1988 (Reader's Digest).

¹⁰ This way of thinking represents the so called '*Nonessentialist view*' (see more e.g. in Acosta-Alzuru & Kreshel 2002, 143).

Hence, besides utilitarian character, the use-value, consumer goods have the ability to carry and communicate ideological values and cultural meanings, i.e. they have sign-value (McCracken 1988, 71; Featherstone 1991, 67, 85; Fiske 1989, 27; Baudrillard 1998, 76–77); to put it simply, *a commodity is ideology made material* (Fiske 1989, 14). For instance, a television serves as a home appliance and acts as a signifying element of prestige (cf. Baudrillard 1998, 77). A similar conception is shared by Campbell (1997, 341): consumer goods possess both instrumental and symbolic meanings, framed by advertising. However, the problem is to what extent the symbolic meanings are shared; this places pressure on communication.

Products are encoded with meanings in their production process, and the encoding processes comprise the instant of *production* in the circuit of culture. Advertising plays an important role in the production process; for instance, it can function as a device for the production of new gender ideologies (such as the New Man in the 1980s). Moreover, human models in ads can assist in attaching the desired identity to a specific commodity. Related thereto, in the circuit of culture, *consumption* looks at what the product means to the consumers. At the same time, people's identities are partially constituted by their consumption practices. For instance, a particular subculture can use products to signify its identity. (Acosta-Alzuru & Kreshel 2002, 143; du Gay et al. 1997, 43–44, 52.) This can be perceived, for instance, among young people who want to create an identity that attempts to be oppositional to the mainstream, e.g. punks and hip-hoppers.

Lastly, the circuit of culture suggests the need to examine how a cultural product *regulates* cultural life (Acosta-Alzuru & Kreshel 2002, 143). The regulation can lead into normative assumptions of e.g. people's looks, behaviour, social norms. Advertising can be regarded as one of the regulators; the elements that are explicit in an ad can direct thinking, while those that are omitted can also produce meanings (Panula 1997, 249; Burton 2005, 241) and in that sense operate as regulative.

2.1.2 Culture and consumption

As stated in the previous chapter, goods can carry and communicate cultural meaning. This meaning is in constant transit – there is a flow to and from its locations in the social world. (McCracken 1988, 71.) According to McCracken (1988, 71–72), there are three locations of meaning: the culturally constituted world (the social reality), the consumer good, and the individual consumer. Besides, there are three moments of transfer of meaning: world-to-good, good-to-world and good-to-individual. Advertising is one of the meaning producers

and transferors, taking and representing cultural meanings from the consumers' world and investing them into the advertised products. Often referring to rituals, products are then used as symbolic resources for the construction and maintenance of consumers' identity, including gender identity. Accordingly, Schroeder and Zwick (2004, 21–22) call advertising aptly '*the engine of consumption*': for instance, using iconic masculine activities, such as shaving the face and driving fast cars, ads draw their imagery from the stereotyped iconography of the dualistic gender structure. By loading goods with meanings, advertising simultaneously enhances learning and promotes new trends (such as the use of male grooming products). (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998, 132, 136.) The following figure explains these relations.

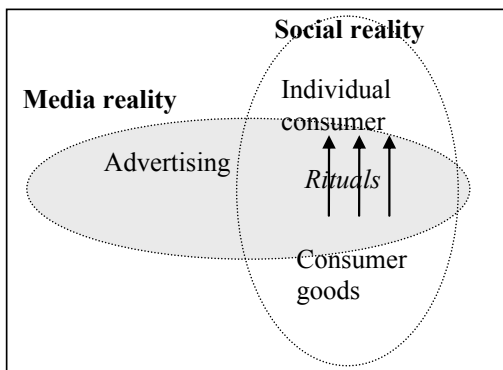


Figure 8. The movement of meaning (based on McCracken 1988, 72).

Culture is the lens through which phenomena are seen. It determines how these phenomena will be apprehended and assimilated. (McCracken 1988, 73.) Thus, culture is *learned*; people are not born with it (Hall 2002, 12). Secondly, according to McCracken (1988, 73–74), culture is the output of human activity: it determines how the world is fashioned. Thus, in accordance with the idea of the circuit of culture, cultural elements both construct the world by supplying it with meaning and are constituted by the members living in it. Following the same logic, goods are both creations and creators of the culturally constituted world (ibid., 77). They represent an opportunity to construct cultural material and categorize people according to age, sex, class, and occupation (ibid., 75). For instance, the so called *nouveaux riches* monitor the cultural environment to make sure that they wear the 'right' clothes, are seen in the 'right' places, and so on (Solomon et al. 1999, 346).

In the process of moving meaning, advertising operates as a way of bringing together consumer goods and representations of the culturally

constituted world, the social reality. Advertising can be said to be a conduit through which meaning is transferred from the world to consumer goods. Among its audience, advertising is one of the ‘teachers’ of culture, and by studying advertising we can learn something about that specific culture. Likewise, we can observe the transformation of new ideas into cultural values by examining the diffusion of new concepts in advertising (Rochon 1998, 17). In a particular advertisement, there are elements of the culturally constituted world that can be evoked in the ad: place (a fantasy or a naturalistic setting), cultivated vs. untamed environment, time, people (their age, gender, class, status, occupation, clothing, body postures, and affective states). The advertised products speak for their time and culture, too. Through advertising we are kept informed of the present state and stock of cultural meanings that are attached to consumer goods. As McCracken (1988, 79) has nicely put it: “*Advertising serves us as a lexicon of [...] cultural meanings.*” (ibid., 77–79.)

Meanings are transferred from goods to individuals through rituals. According to Rook (1985, 252: cf. Hall 2002, 83, 84), a ritual is a type of symbolic activity consisting of a series of steps occurring in a fixed sequence and repeated over time; for instance, singing or listening to a national anthem at a sports event. Besides, rituals tend to be related to ritual artefacts that are associated with the performance of the ritual, such as the celebration of Christmas with the Christmas tree and its ornaments, various items of food, candles, elves, etc. (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997, 412). McCracken (1986, 78–80; 1988, 83–88) lists four types of ritual:

- 1 *Exchange rituals* are concerned with gift giving: the gift-giver chooses a specific gift because it possesses the meaningful properties they wish to transfer to the gift-receiver. Thus, the recipient of the gift is also the recipient of the symbolic properties that the gift holds.
- 2 *Possession rituals* have to do with personalizing the object: possessing a good says something about a person. According to the possession ritual, goods are used as symbolic resources for the construction and maintenance of identity (Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998, 132).
- 3 *Grooming rituals* refer to the ‘going-out’ rituals: advertisements describe how confidence, better looks, and social attractiveness can be imbued by particular make-up, hair styling goods, fragrance etc. Grooming rituals help draw the meaning out of these products and invest it in the consumer.
- 4 *Divestment rituals* concern goods that a person has previously owned or that have been owned previously by someone else. In divestment rituals, it is a question of emptying the good of meaning before passing it along or erasing the meaning associated with the previous owner. This can be the case for instance when buying a house:

cleaning and redecorating work as efforts to remove the meaning created by the previous owner.

Rituals serve a cohesive function: they reveal the values that people share and that hold them together as a people (see Hall 2002, 92). In a way, rituals represent patterned behaviour, thus, helping make people feel safe and secure. By employing and referring to rituals, advertising appeals to these common values and feelings of familiarity. According to Goffman (1979, 84), ad images are ritualizations of social ideals: the images draw upon rituals and situations in real life but they are exaggerated, simplified and standardized.

Like rituals, sequences in advertising mark moments of change and transition: from unsuccessful to successful, from grey-haired to brunette, from obese to slim, etc. Rituals show the worth people place on, for instance, appearance, its care and cultivation, and the social approval resulting from it. (cf. Barthel 1988, 151, 154.) It has been argued (e.g. McCracken 1986; Otnes & Scott 1996, 33) that advertising influences consumption during rituals. On the other hand, used in advertising, ritual symbolism creates messages about products and services, thus, helping transfer meanings from goods to individuals.

Rituals take on several forms in advertising. Of the three above-mentioned rituals, advertising mostly has to do with exchange (1), possession (2) and grooming (3). As already mentioned, (1) gift exchange allows the gift-giver to pass certain symbolic meanings on to the gift-receiver via the symbolic properties of the product (McCracken 1986, 78). A typical example of an exchange ritual is a man giving a diamond ring to his woman (see Figure 9). Through the bestowal of a ring, the giver [traditionally a man] demonstrates his superior position toward the recipient, at the same time, tying her more closely to him. Thus, the ring becomes a representative of a power contract and a reward for feminine virtue. Often, jewellery has been considered as a gift from the more powerful to the less powerful. (Barthel 1988, 161.)



Figure 9. Examples of exchange rituals (Reader's Digest and Valitut Palat 1973)

The second ritual, the possession ritual, is linked to aspirational materialism. Often, successful masculinity is defined in monetary and personal terms of possession: a man is what a man owns. (Edwards 1997, 50.) A car ad operates as an example: Besides their function as a means of transportation, cars have been regarded as an extension of a person's identity and as symbols of their owner's social standing (cf. Wernick 1991, 70). Cars, motorcycles and other vehicles have been said to be the man's domain; they are considered to serve as status symbols of male success, and are regarded as a part of the masculine appearance (Alexander 2003, 550; see also Wood 2003, 137). According to Barthel (1988, 171–172, 182), cars allow the man to demonstrate his taste and his affluence, to extend his control: a car enables him to demonstrate power over other men and make an impression on women (see Figure 10). It has even been claimed that men can equate their first car owned as a young man with the onset of their sexual freedom. (Solomon et al. 1999, 114). Besides being a necessity for Americans¹¹, a car can certainly be considered an extension of freedom and individualism (Hirschman 2003, 17). A sports car has even been considered a substitute for sexual gratification for

¹¹ Thanks to the public transportation system, a car has not been a necessity in Finland. For Finnish people, having a car to move from A to B has however become more relevant since the 1980–1990s, due to the deterioration of public services.

men. Some men spend hours washing and polishing their cars. (Solomon et al. 1999, 113.)



Figure 10. A Finnish ad based on a possession ritual (Valitut Palat 1973)

Third, the grooming rituals can be perceived in the foregrounding of physical characteristics and emphasis on looks in advertising. They aid in the transition from the private self to the public self and back again. Traditionally, women have spent a lot of time ‘putting on their face’ and getting ready to bear the watchful eyes of other people. (Solomon et al. 1999, 386.) Due in part to advertising, grooming the body has become legitimate for men as well; advertising has aided in the dissemination of new customs among men (cf. Schiffman & Kanuk 1997, 414). Markets in menswear and men’s grooming products and toiletries have grown, especially in the US (Nixon 2000, 294; Ora 2004, 15; Ridder 2005). Ridder (2005) uses the spa industry as an example of the fast-growing male grooming market: increasing numbers of male-oriented spas are opening around the United States to offer men haircuts, massages, facials, pedicures and waxing. In the US, sales of male specific cosmetics and toiletries rose by 37.3 percent between 1998 and 2003 (Ridder 2005). According to Candace Corlett¹², partner at WSL Strategic Research in New York, only 10 percent of US men use skin-care products as yet. Thus, the growth potential for the stagnating cosmetic industry could lie in men’s increasing use of facial washes, hair products and personal grooming

¹² Cited in Ridder (2005).

kits (Ridder 2005). However, the taboo that only women use moisturizer, hair spray or perfume must first be overcome (Barthel 1997, 148). In Finland, young men aged 18–30 in particular are more concerned about their appearances than the corresponding age segment earlier (Kähkönen 2004). If men are seen as an expanding market for grooming products, the products will be given different, ‘manly’ qualities in advertising, making references to masculine symbols and imagery, even in the names of the products: for instance, Lumene skin tech for men, and L’Oréal Men’s Expert.



Figure 11. Referring to a grooming ritual (USA 2004)

The use of the famous soccer player David Beckham (see Figure 11) as an endorser in the US is worth noting for at least two reasons: first, Beckham is not a household name in the US and thus it is curious for Gillette to use him in their American ads. Secondly, soccer as a sport has not to date generated a big fan base in the US; companies use American football, basketball, baseball or golf celebrities.

As mentioned earlier, advertising modifies and transforms cultural values and meanings for the consumer. Consequently, it can be regarded as one of the

forces in the process of learning the norms and values endorsed by one's culture, known as *enculturation*. (Solomon et al. 1999, 106, 381.)

2.1.3 From Apollonian to Dionysian times

During the last few decades, Western societies have been undergoing a shift from the modern to postmodern culture¹³ (e.g. Firat & Venkatesh 1993, 227; Bouchet 1994, 405; Alexander 2003, 536). Alongside the shift, other changes have been observed, now considered typical to the postmodern era. People no longer produce what they consume but buy goods produced by others; accordingly, production activities historically performed at home – gardening, weaving, knitting, sowing, baking – have diminished (Schroeder 2002, 32; Firat & Dholakia 2003, 17–18). Work, overall, and discipline have lost their status as primary values (Turner 1997, 24). Furthermore, people no longer consume products just for their material utilities but also increasingly for the symbolic meanings derived from the use of the products, as communicators of their selves and their identity (Percy, Rossiter & Elliott 2001, 24; Featherstone 1991, 84). Short-spanned superficiality has become a prevalent theme in many areas of life.

The urge to consume is, according to Brown (1993, 50), the characteristic symptom of postmodernity. Turner (1997, 23–24) and Sarpavaara (2004, 54–56) describe the shift from modernity to postmodernity metaphorically by referring to ancient Greek mythology; the modern – ‘the Apollonian time’ – was characterized by harmony, order, work, discipline, asceticism, and rationality, whereas the postmodern – ‘the Dionysian time’ – is typified by wild action, freedom, disorder, leisure, hedonism, and strong feelings. The Dionysian ideal stresses sensuality, sexuality, and the importance of one's appearance (Sarpavaara 2004, 56). And advertising is playing an important role in furthering this ideal.

In postmodernity, advertising is no longer considered subordinate to production; instead, it acts as a mirror to the consumers' world (Boutlis 2000, 11). Advertising normalizes consumption as a way of life (Dines & Humez

¹³ According to Lewis (2002, 218; also Featherstone 1991, 7), the term ‘postmodernism’ was introduced by Frederico de Onis in the 1930s to indicate a reaction to modernism. It was first used by a loose collective of musicians, writers and artists in New York in the 1960s. According to Brown (1997, 174–175), however, due to its ambiguous nature, there is no such thing as ‘the’ postmodern; consequently, there are as many postmoderns as there are postmodernists. Edwards (1997; see also Barker 2004, 156–159) draws a distinction between the terms postmodernity and postmodernism. According to Edwards (1997, 33), the term *postmodernity* is used for the social and economic perspective in order to understand developments in society particularly since the Second World War; whereas *postmodernism* refers to a series of artistic developments in the arts, literature and architecture.

2003, 245). It consequently focuses on the social meanings of consumption: how the product in the ad can improve one's physical attractiveness or enhance one's social success (cf. Schroeder 2002, 28, 33; Firat & Dholakia 2003, 75). Ever more often, the importance attached to appearance and consumption applies to men as well. According to Alexander (2003, 551), masculinity is increasingly defined by what a man consumes, not by what he produces. She refers to her concept of 'branded masculinity' which leans on, at first, the idea of generating insecurity about one's looks and body, and then, showing how brands can solve the problems. According to postmodern thinking, all phenomena, including people, are increasingly commoditised, i.e. made into commodities (Wood 2004, 298); or to put it in Alexander's terms, people are branded. Advertisements no longer simply inform about products and services; they show us ways in which we can become better looking and more socially successful, and images of people who have succeeded in doing so with the help of the brand.

According to Brown (1993, 53), postmodernity prefers disorder to order, ambiguity to certainty, surface to depth, heterogeneity to homogeneity, differences to similarities, individuality to universality, consumption to production, past to present, and present to future. Many postmodernists seem to be concerned with retrospect rather than prospect. And postmodern marketing is characterized by a 'retro' orientation, nostalgically styled retro products and advertisements. (Brown 1997, 167, 169; also Boutlis 2000, 13.) The retro orientation has been extended to images of masculinity as well: a retrosexual is a man with an undeveloped aesthetic sense, as opposed to metrosexuals who are overwhelmingly concerned with their looks. A retrosexual man spends as little time and money as possible on his appearance. (McFedries 2004.)

The following table lists some of the differences between modern and postmodern views.

Table 2. Differences between modernity and postmodernity (cf. Bouchet 1994, 406; Ransome 2005, 159).

Modernity (from 1760)	Postmodernity (from 1985)
Tomorrow	Today, yesterday (“retro”)
Laws	Changing norms
Written word	Visual images
Discipline	Seduction
Labour	Leisure
Demonstration	Persuasion
The adults	The young
The citizen	The consumer
Goods-market	Symbol-market

The shift towards postmodernity has loosened the traditional, narrowly¹⁴ defined gender roles and affected the role of men as members of the consumer culture. Upon the entry of women into the workforce, men of all classes have become involved in everyday consumption activities (also men as consumers). Furthermore, as the dual earner families are becoming the generality, men are gradually being forced to take responsibility for household chores and childcare (also men as homemakers). The number of men living apart from women has also increased due to a variety of social changes: the growth in the size of the student populations, the rise in the age of a first marriage, the increase in divorce rates, and the emergence of gay households. Accordingly, men also have to be considered as potential buyers, and advertisers have to adjust their marketing operations to compensate for these changes. (Wernick 1991, 48–49; Jaffe & Berger 1994, 32.) This has brought about new definitions of masculinity, such as advertising’s New Man (Elliott et al. 1993, 313–314), which are premised on dual gender positioning: targeting products that used to be gender specific at both genders (see also Bellizzi & Milner 1991, 72; cf. Mort 1996, 16; Nixon 1996, 183; Hirschman 1999, 162–163).

To summarize, alongside postmodernity Western cultures have become more tolerant of the different roles and meanings of both sexes; and the meanings originally attached to the feminine and the masculine are intermingling, for instance, in advertising. As an example, the historically completed objectification of the female body is being extended also to images of the male body (e.g. Edwards 1997, 5). Thus, the idea of representing oneself as attractive, marketable and consumable, and customizing one’s looks

¹⁴ According to Lewis (2002, 187), modernity tended to resolve tensions between men and women through a high degree of gender specialization.

according to the ideal standards – the social will – is growing among men as well. Consumption has become an acceptable, active endeavour for men also, and according to Schroeder and Zwick (2004, 44) shifting the hegemonic masculinity from the realm of work, competition and physical skill to the domain of discernment and appearances. (Firat 1994, 216–222; Costa 1994, 3.)

2.2 The cultural nature of gender

This study is representative of gender research in advertising in two cultures. What is gender? According to Connell (2002, 7), the word ‘gender’ originates in the Indo-European word-root meaning ‘to produce’ (cf. ‘to generate’). The term has been borrowed from Latin and Greek grammar where ‘gender’ refers to the distinction between classes of nouns: masculine, feminine, and neuter (Hodge & Kress 1988, 98). When discussing gender in Western societies, the third category (neuter) is dropped, and gender is considered a dichotomy¹⁵. There are, however, societies that have three genders: male, female and berdaches (also called hijras or xaniths¹⁶) (Lorber 2001, 21). Moreover, in spite of the bipolar gender structure, there are variations between individuals, as well as between different assemblages of individuals, in Western cultures, too (Lewis 2003, 328).

Different languages engender concepts and words in different ways; however, English and especially Finnish are relatively un-gendered languages (English makes a distinction between the pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’ whereas in Finnish a person is always ‘hän’). Moreover, there is a word for both ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ in the English language¹⁷, whereas in Finnish there is only one word, ‘sukupuoli’. (cf. Connell 2002, 7–8.) However, to bring out the sociocultural aspect of the term ‘gender’, some in Finland call it ‘sosiaalinen sukupuoli’ (socially based) but the term has not been established.

There has been a debate within gender studies and social studies as to whether a gendered sense of self is ascribed by in-born characteristics (*nature*) or achieved through social construction and socialization (*nurture*). With regard to this debate, Oakley (1972) has made a foundational distinction between the biological and physical divisions of people into females and

¹⁵ Depicting masculinity and femininity as opposing extremes is called the *polarization theory* (Stern 2003, 223).

¹⁶ Berdaches are biological males who are socially treated as women (Lorber 2001, 21).

¹⁷ The terminological distinction between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ was made in the 1970s by a number of theorists (Connell 2002, 33).

males, that is 'sex'¹⁸, and the socially constructed division into femininity and masculinity, that is 'gender'¹⁹. The latter emphasizes the role of culture in the 'making of men and women': like other abstract concepts, gender is socially constructed and maintained in discourse. (Wicks & Mills 2000, 329, 333; Lacey 1998, 107; Fowles 1996, 199; Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 39; Rakow 1986, 12–13.) And as Corrigan (1997, 98; see also Rakow 1986, 21) has aptly put it, gender refers to the ways in which sex is transformed into meaningful cultural entities.

From childhood on, boys and girls are enculturated into their gender roles through a learning and adjusting process. (Fowles 1996, 199–201; Craig 1992, 2; Karppinen 1989, 83–84.) The social notion of 'gender' embraces the ways boys/men and girls/women are *expected* to behave (Costa 1994, 5; also Gunter 1995, 1). People are exposed to an assemblage of gender depictions and characteristics as seen fit by the society. Hence, the expected gender-based behaviours vary from one society to another. (e.g. Kramer 2005, 2; Wood 2003, 21–22; Peoples 2001, 10; Fowles 1996, 201; Costa 1994, 1, 5.)

Similarly, Brannon (1985, 300–301) refers to being 'masculine' or 'feminine' as a social role that fulfils the norms and expectations of a society and that a person learns to play. Courage, competitiveness, fraternal camaraderie and a sense of fairness are often considered important manly virtues. The qualities of strength, independence, competition and success are reinforced in boys (Wood 2003, 22; Moore 2003; Hofstede 1991, 81.) Boys are not allowed to cry. Through advertising and other popular culture elements, maturing individuals – young boys and girls – learn what behaviours and attitudes are gender appropriate. These are observed repeatedly, and once learned, the images and ideals are said to be resistant to change later on. (Fowles 1996, 199–201; Zhou & Chen 1997, 485; cf. Dyer 1982, 109.)

As to norms and expectations, media exposure has been found to have a significant impact on men as well as women, for instance on men's perceptions of personal thinness and dieting (Law & Labre 2002, 699). What in fact is the role of advertising, among other means of communications, in nurturing gender? (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997, 408; cf. Rakow 1986, 12). If advertising has the ability to influence people, it is an instrument of socialization. By creating ideas and ideals about masculinity and femininity, it has an impact on the social construction of gender. (Salzman et al. 2005, 47;

¹⁸ In addition to the sex roles of male and female, Brannon (1985, 302–303) lists examples of cultures where there are three or even four roles; for instance, that of *nadle* (an ambiguous role) among the Navajo of Western North America, and the roles of *hwame* (a man but not a warrior) and *alyha* (a male dressed like a woman) in the Mohave culture.

¹⁹ The majority of marketing gender studies evaluates gender as a binary variable, masculinity and femininity – as opposed to sex (Wolin 2003, 112–113).

Kramer 2005, 40). It is this specific role of advertising that this study deals with.

From the social constructionist perspective²⁰, masculinity or femininity is an achieved status: you learn to be a man or a woman (e.g. Jokinen 2003, 10). Accordingly, gender is socially constructed in interaction, and can take different forms at different times (Herek 1987, 72). Thus, masculinity is not an inborn property and simply a matter of being male or reaching a certain age. Rather, it is a sustained act which is not always easy to follow. According to Moore (2003), it is as difficult to become a masculine man as it is to become virtuous. Moore refers to the origin of the word ‘man’: the word ‘virtue’ stems from the Latin word ‘virtus’ a derivative of ‘vir’, i.e. ‘man’ – to be masculine is to be virtuous.

The following figure (Figure 12) delineates the connections between the key concepts discussed above. We must note that masculinity and femininity are relative, not absolute: they can both have male and female versions. A man can behave in a feminine – sissy – way and a woman in a masculine – tomboyish – way. (Hofstede 1991, 80; Stuteville 1971, 10.) Besides, men and women can represent the masculine and the feminine in different situations and at different moments in their lives (Firat 1994, 219). Beynon (2002, 7–8) gives a few examples to illustrate the diversity: a tomboy²¹, transsexual, high-flying female executive, and male nurse. These are further closely related to androgynous individuals who have internalised both masculinity and femininity and are capable of behaving in either way according to the situation. Accordingly, the word ‘androgyny’ stems from the Greek words ‘andros’ (man) and ‘gyne’ (woman). (Karppinen 1989, 78.)

²⁰ According to social constructionism, reality is a consensus worldview that develops through social interaction. This notion also allows for the possibility of change. Accordingly, gender is socially constructed in interaction, and it can take different forms at different times. (Herek 1987, 72.) The social perspective on gender relates to the social learning theory of gender identity, other theories being the cognitive development theory, the psychoanalytic theory, and the theory of ego development. (For a review of these theories, see e.g. Karppinen 1989, 83–86.)

²¹ A masculine identity temporarily adopted by mostly young girls, who favour manly activities (hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, climbing, backpacking, camping, mountaineering).

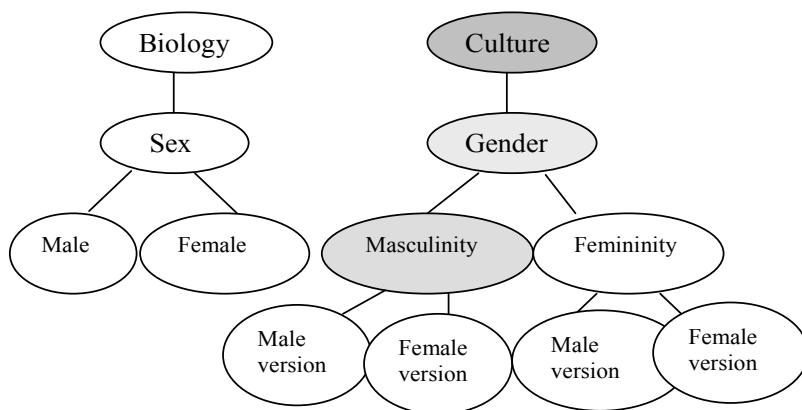


Figure 12. Versions of sex and gender.

Thus, it is possible for a man to be feminine. Also, not only men can be or are allowed to be masculine. However, in this study, men (or rather the depictions of men) represent masculinities. Furthermore, following the social constructionist view, the assumption is that *men are not born with masculinity*. Instead, masculinity is something into which *men* are enculturated, something acquired through interaction in a social world. (cf. Kimmel & Aronson 2004, xxiii; Wood 2003, 21; Beynon 2002, 2.) Men *learn* to be masculine. And advertising is one of the forces in the learning process.

2.2.1 Masculinity

Brannon (1985, 298; also Franklin 1984, 4) gives credit for the discovery and development of the concept of masculinity to the second wave of the women's liberation movement, particularly to radical feminism (for an extensive introduction to women's movements, see Wood 2003, 61–83). Women conscious of the phenomenon started to challenge the stereotypic constants of womanhood – the blueprints for what a woman was supposed to be and not to be²². Most feminist research centred its attention exclusively on women (Fischer & Gainer 1994, 84–85). At some point, however, some feminist writers began to question the male gender role, the cultural blueprint for men, which would correspond to the female role. Masculinity had been defined by

²² The idea was, after the male-dominant present to be able to live in a gender-neutral future where both sexes have equal rights. (see Alexander 2003, 551; Wood 2003, 65–68.)

simple contrast with what was female or as an opposite of femininity²³: what is not feminine is masculine, i.e. masculinity is anything that women are not (see Hirschman 1999, 161). Defining masculinity in terms of absence is described as exclusionary masculinity (Penttilä 1999, 22). If women are passive, men must be active; if women lack confidence, men must be confident (Franklin 1984, 4). Likewise, female models in adverts have been considered to provide direction for what is not masculine (cf. Gunter 1995, 2²⁴).

However, it soon became evident that men cannot simply be inferred by looking at women; i.e. something more than a mirror image was needed. Hence, the interest in defining masculinity from its own premises gained ground. But what is masculinity? Why do some men appear more masculine than others? What different styles, actions, and forms of activity result in the perception of masculinity? (Brannon 1985, 299; see also Stern 2003, 216.)

Supposedly, defining masculinity can be quite a difficult task. Until the second half of the twentieth century masculinity was defined as a socially accepted way of being a man (and femininity of being a woman), i.e. referring to masculinity as if it were fixed and stable and mainly sex based: a male must be masculine (and a female feminine). Since then, the definition has become far more amorphous. (Beynon 2002, 3, 5.) Today, masculinity is understood as a fluid, time-related and variable across cultures and eras as well as subject to change over the course of a person's life, and within any given society at any one time (Wood 2004, 261; Kimmel 2004, 503–504). As times change, the realms of definition grow.

Connell (2002, 33, 35) bases gender differences, besides on sexual distinctions, on social norms and differences between men's and women's personalities. For instance, in American society, neatness, nursing, tactfulness, gentleness and talkativeness have been considered traditional feminine features, and correspondingly, activeness, aggressiveness, competitiveness, dominance, independence and self-confidence to be masculine²⁵ (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997, 464; Connell 2002, 40; Gunter 1995, 2, 53; Franklin 1984, 5). Furthermore, femininely charged symbols and values related to femininity, such as domestic life, children, verbal ability, and relationships, have been devalued among men's men whereas the values of work, independence,

²³ Depicting masculinity and femininity as opposing extremes is called the *polarization theory* (Stern 2003, 223).

²⁴ Original source: Maccoby, E. E. – Jacklin, C. N. (1974) *The psychology of sex differences*. Stanford University Press: Stanford.

²⁵ However, the beliefs of personal differences are now mostly considered myths (Connell 2002, 41).

strength, power, action, control, and self-sufficiency have been appreciated (Barker 2005, 301).

All human beings are biologically of the same species, *Homo sapiens*, and have basically the same blood chemistry and body parts (Brannon 1985, 302). However, history and culture are considered to have affected the characteristics of what it means to be a woman or a man, and what is considered 'feminine' or 'masculine'. Kimmel (1987, 14), among others, has suggested that masculinity and femininity vary over the course of time and in different contexts. Thus, they are fluid: they are subject to change over time and place; we might expect to find differences, for instance, in the form of masculinity in different cultures at different times²⁶ (cf. Strate 1992, 79; Devereux 2003, 131; Sarpavaara 2004, 48; Wood 2004, 282). As an example, the ideal American masculine gender role in the 1970s, as identified by Brannon (1976²⁷, cited in Alexander 2003, 537), contained four themes: first, No Sissy Stuff – a real man never resembles a woman, avoiding the use of cosmetics and paying minimal attention to clothes and hygiene; besides, real men devalue traditional female activities, such as childcare and domestic chores. Also according to Barthel (1988, 169), a real man avoids things that could be considered effeminate: for instance, concern about one's appearance and interest in fashion. Male beauty has mainly been associated with homosexuals. Even in the 1960s, according to Vestergaard and Schröder (1985, 78), men could not use fragrances without being labelled gay. In order to expand sales to men, the cosmetic industry had to dress up fragrances as health products such as medicated hair lotion, and after-shave lotion.

According to the second element of Brannon's (1976) typology – The Big Wheel – a man is a person who has the ability to obtain wealth, success, and status. According to this theme, a man is determined by his occupation, or other achievements e.g. in sports, which is often used as the bedrock for manly endeavour (see Moore 2003; Tiihonen 1994, 229–230). The third type, The Sturdy Oak, is a man's man: confident, physically stout, invulnerable, and self-reliant; a sturdy oak is to be relied upon but not to be reliant on others. According to Carroll (2004, 499), John Wayne and the Marlboro Man are the two leading symbols of the 'sturdy oak' form of masculinity. For instance, the

²⁶ The accepted, prevailing, patriarchal form of masculinity – "what it means to be a man" – at any given time and location is termed 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 1995, 77; Beynon 2002, 16; Hanke 1992, 190). Hegemony relates to cultural dominance in the society, for instance the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men as well as the dominance of the white over the non-white (Connell 1995, 78; Dines & Humez 2003, 246; Schroeder & Zweick 2004, 28; Edwards 1997, 44).

²⁷ Original source: Brannon, Robert (1976) *The male sex role: our culture's blueprint of manhood and what it's done for us lately*, in: D. David – R. Brannon (eds) *The forty-nine percent majority: the male sex role*. Random House: New York. 1–14.

Marlboro Man – the rugged cowboy – is recognized worldwide as a symbol of freedom, independence, and adventure (Pickton & Broderick 2005, 49). Finally the fourth type, The Give 'Em Hell: according to this theme, men use aggression and violence to dominate women and to obtain sex from them. The potential of the physical male body provides a concrete means of achieving and asserting 'manhood'.

According to Beynon (2002, 1–2), due to its culture-bound nature, masculinity is a diverse, mobile construction, and thus, there are numerous forms of and expressions of being masculine. Besides, the influence of feminism and the gay movement has affected the concept so that today, instead of speaking of 'masculinity', we should rather speak of 'masculinities' (e.g. Jokinen 2003, 11; Barker 2004, 74; Dyer 1989, 42). The use of the plural – masculinities – recognizes the variation in how different groups define masculinity; there can be differences even in the same society at the same time, as well as individual differences. (Barker 2005, 300.) Far behind us are the times when Goffman (1963, 128²⁸) described an American ideal of masculinity: *"There is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. Any male who fails to qualify in any of these ways is likely to view himself [...] as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior."*

However, the prominence of heterosexuality seems to hold fast: according to Herek (1987, 72–73), heterosexual masculinity even embodies personal characteristics such as success and status, toughness and independence, aggressiveness and dominance. Heterosexual masculinity can also be defined according to what it is not, i.e. not feminine and not homosexual. Accordingly, being a man means not being compliant or submissive, not being effeminate in physical appearance, not having relationships with men that are sexual or too intimate, and not failing in sexual relationships with women.

What, then, are the factors that comprise masculinity? Jokinen²⁹ (2003, 8–27) categorises masculinity on the grounds of: (1) personality and physical features (being active, rational, and competitive, having power); (2) how well a man fulfils the masculine ideals and prevailing norms; (3) time and place (masculinity is time- and context-bound, a result of a social process and discourse); (4) historical development (throughout history, members of a particular culture have labelled some act, gestures and phenomena as

²⁸ Cited in Kimmel (2004, 504). Original source: Goffman, Erving (1963) *Stigma*. Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs.

²⁹ Jokinen (2003) bases his definitions on the writings of various authors (e.g. Connell 1995) but he (Jokinen 2003) is cited here due to the fact that there are very few other perspectives on masculinity written in Finnish and adapted to the Finnish context.

masculine). We can find similar features, in part, in Beynon's (2002, 10) definition of the principal features that shape masculinity: historical location, age and physique, sexual orientation, education, status and lifestyle, geography, ethnicity, religion and beliefs, class and occupation, as well as culture and subculture. Referring to Saco (1992, 25) and her theory of masculinity as signs, these can also be seen as symbolic categories ascribing a human being's gender and social identity. Where sex is an innate characteristic – based on genetic differences – gender is socially and culturally constructed (see Figure 13). Adapting Simone de Beauvoir, cited in Lorber (2001, 22): *“One is not born, but rather becomes, a man. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature which is described as masculine.”*

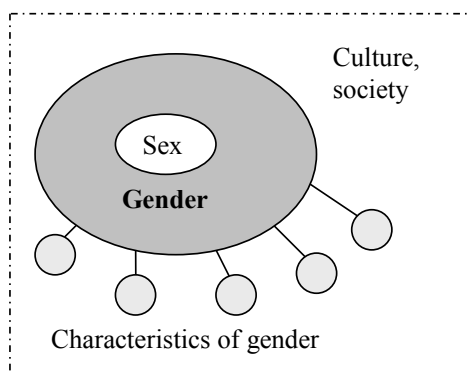


Figure 13. Gender as a social and cultural construct

Furthermore, referring to the above figure as well as to Saco (1992, 25), particular signs or characteristics mark a person as a gendered subject. Thus, masculinity as a form of gender is the manifestation of the cultural regulation of characteristics that are regarded as socially appropriate to men (Barker 2004, 73). When we say that someone is masculine, we categorize the person according to some subjectivities. We will now proceed to discuss those features.

2.2.2 Images of masculinity

As already stated, the definition of masculinity can vary across time as well as from one country and culture to another, bringing about different

categorizations, archetypes³⁰ or images of masculinity. Categorization helps us group items – herein masculinities – according to points of similarity and allows us later, in the content analytical phase, utilize the categories in analyzing images of masculinity.

Besides geographical and cultural factors, generational similarities and differences have been found strong in differing images of masculinity (see Rakow 1986, 23). While adult men identify “*Be like your father; be a faithful husband; love nature; be a good technician*” as expectations for men, a younger generation underlines such ideals as “*Be big; be strong; be (hetero)sexual; be young*”. (Alexander 2003, 537–538³¹). Even long before, wealth, power and status were considered manly characteristics. As early as the 1830s, the ideal of manhood was an urban entrepreneur, a businessman who derived his identity from his success in the capitalist marketplace. (Kimmel 1987, 12.)

In spite of the changing role of men and masculinity in societies, there are elements that have traditionally categorized, for instance, the North American man, and still do: namely, business, science and military (Wernick 1991, 50–51). From the social relational perspective, a nuclear, role-divided family (he works, she nurtures) represented the ideal, particularly in the 1950s and 1980s (ibid., 51–52). However, the sexual uproar of the 1960s and 1970s affected the masculinity ideal, changing men’s promotional imaging in regard to their social environment, and sexuality. According to Wernick (1991, 52), along with the change in and loss of familial status in real life, men were shown more often alone – not (yet/anymore) married, single, successful executives. However, in the new millennium, seeing men in the nurturing role of fathers as childcarers is likely to become more customary (Uusitalo, Martin & Saari 2003, 13, 18).

The study of ‘multiple masculinities’ has produced different categorizations, archetypes of masculinity. The following table summarizes some types that have been renowned mainly in the sociological gender literature of the last three decades. One has to remember that these images are stereotypic and exaggerated, obscuring individual differences, and they are reviewed only for the further analytical purposes of this study. Chronologically the first typology, that by Brannon (1976), was reviewed in

³⁰ Herein, the terms categorization and classification of masculinity as well as archetypes and images of masculinity are being used synonymously.

³¹ Original sources: Harris, Ian M. (1995) *Messages men hear: constructing masculinities*. Taylor & Francis: London; Hollander, Jocelyn A. (2001) Doing studs: the performance of gender and sexuality on late-night television, in M. S. Kimmel – M. A. Messner (eds) *Men’s lives*. Allyn & Bacon: Needham Heights. 477–493.

more detail in the previous subchapter, and consequently, is now only mentioned in the table.

Table 3. Images of masculinity.

Brannon (1976)	Gerzon (1982)	Brannon (1985)	Connell (1995)	Fuller (1996)	Hirschman (1999)	Uusitalo et al. (2003)	Holt and Thompson (2004)
No Sissy Stuff	Soldier	Football player	Hegemonic masculinity	Sporting man	Prince	Polished triumphant	Breadwinner
The Big Wheel	Frontiers-man	Jet-set playboy	Conservative masculinity	Macho man	Public warrior	Samurai man	Rebel
The Sturdy Oak	Expert	Blue-collar brawler	Subordinated masculinity	Businessman	Rogue adventurer	Don Juan	Man-of-action
The Give 'Em Hell	Breadwinner	Dynamic big-shot businessman		Working-class man	Father figure	Daddy	
	Lord	Don Juan		Middle-class man	Scientist	Woman's assistant	
		Working man		Homosexual man		Low-paid worker	
		Great leader		New Man		Equality advocate	
						Woman's imitator	
						Minority advocate	
						Eros	
						Trimmer	
						Fool	

Gerzon (1982, 13–45, 121–153, 217–229), who drew upon folklore, history, politics and personal experience for his classification, identifies five archetypes of American men: soldier (symbolizing strength, security, courage, and responsibility), frontiersman (Buffalo Bill type, courageous fighter and explorer of new territories), expert (a man who uses his mind to pursue power and new knowledge), breadwinner (provider), and lord (a symbol of divinity and heroism who seeks service over domination). According to Fuller (1996, 228), there are as many as seven extant forms of masculinity – Sporting man, Macho man, Businessman, Working-class man, Middle-class man, Homosexual man, and New Man. Around a decade after his first typology (Brannon 1976), Brannon (1985, 305) also categorized the American man into seven images: (1) the football player (emphasis on good shape), (2) the jet-set playboy (featured with fast cars and beautiful women), (3) the blue-collar brawler (a temperamental sports spectator), (4) the dynamic big-shot businessman (a leader with a firm handshake), (5) the Don Juan (sexy, smooth, irresistible to women), (6) the working man (strong, simple, sweaty, and honest), and (7) the great leader (a genius, an idol of the masses).

Connell (1995), however, classified different types of Western masculinity simply into three: hegemonic masculinity, conservative masculinity, and subordinated masculinity. The first category, hegemonic masculinity, refers to masculinity that is intended to dominate. This type of masculinity manifests itself in the traditional hypermasculine ideals of strength and toughness, as well as the patriarchal form of masculinity. According to the theme of hegemonic masculinity, the most admired men are those who are the most capable of dominating others, for instance in political and economic life. Hegemonic masculinity is thus often associated with employment (Riley 2003, 100). For instance in advertising, men have often been depicted as successful executives (Wernick 1991, 52). Hegemony also relates to cultural dominance in society, for instance the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men, as well as the dominance of the white over the non-white. (Connell 1995, 77–78; Dines & Humez 2003, 246; Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 28; Edwards 1997, 44; Hanke 1992, 190.) Fuller (1996, 234–235) adds to these the aim ‘to not be feminine’ and to not express emotions of vulnerability, as being at the core of hegemonic masculinity. According to Giles (2003, 169), hegemonic masculinity is most likely represented in the form of Superman; Superman represents power, control, success, strength, and aggression. ‘Supermen’ are also likely to appeal to women.

Connell’s (1995) second type of masculinity, conservative masculinity, represents notions of changing masculinities, moving from the hegemonic virtues of toughness and strength to a sensitive, nurturing ideal, embodied by images of men engaged in childcare and domestic chores. The third type,

subordinated masculinity, representing a kind of alternative or outcast masculinity, slips even further away from hegemonic masculinity. Homosexual men are considered to fall into this class. (Giles 2003, 169–170.)

Mort (1996) and Nixon (1996) have examined visual representations of masculinity and consumption in Britain and termed the, then, most recent type the ‘New Man’, which had started to become popularized in the 1980s. The New Man is an eroticized remaking of the male body in which certain features (lips, hair, shoulders) are dwelt upon on camera in a manner traditionally both masculine and feminine. The ‘ideal’ type of masculinity is, according to both Mort (1996, 16) and Nixon (1996, 183), shifting away from the typically English facial features of thin lips, light skin, and rectangular jaw towards fuller lips, darker hair, darker eyes and skin. The authors suggest that the new look may be due to the more open expression of homosexuality.

Contrary to this view, Hirschman (1999, 162–163) sees significations of femininity and the female, rather than homosexuality, in the New Man. She goes as far as to call the New Male ‘*a masked feminine figure*’, because traditionally women have been associated with vanity and attractiveness, and now that there is growing interest in male looks, the New Man is a female sign. Furthermore, she criticizes Mort’s (1996) and Nixon’s (1996) definitions of masculinity for being too narrow and tries to construct a wider understanding of the meaning of men and masculinity. The five categories discerned by Hirschman (1999, 163–176) are: (1) the prince (young man of royal or noble birth; handsome; brunette; medium built; square jawed; rectangular face), (2) the public warrior (honourable; courageous; selfless; tall; big; muscular build; large, prominent jaws), (3) the rogue adventurer (independent; clever; resourceful; selfish; id-driven; manly in appearance; physically robust), (4) the father figure (a moral guide; physically not very strong or handsome; older-wiser advisor), and (5) the scientist (valued for his intellect rather than muscles or looks; brain power [eyeglasses, calculators, computers]).

Mort and Nixon are both men and have done their research in the British culture, whereas Hirschman is a female, representing the American culture. She has examined archetypal images in the most popular American motion pictures and television shows of the past six decades and encountered recurrent types of male character. In her research, she is trying to construct a more detailed understanding of the meanings of men than did Mort and Nixon.

Only one study (Uusitalo et al. 2003) was found that was specifically focused on the archetypes of men in advertising. Furthermore, the study represents one of the rare studies made on the subject in Finland. Based on a dataset of print advertisements, the authors identified twelve archetypes of men that are present in today’s advertising. According to the authors, the high

number of various types shows that today men are portrayed in a greater variety of roles than was the case earlier.

Also Holt and Thompson (2004, 427) categorize American men; they have found three models of masculinity – the breadwinner, the rebel, and the man-of-action – where the first two represent ultimate ends; the first of the two emphasizes respectability, organized achievement, and civic virtues, and the second emphasizes rebellion, untamed potency, and self-reliance. These two competitive models are resolved in a third model: the man-of-action.

According to Holt and Thompson (2004, 427, 429), the breadwinner masculinity is grounded in the American myth of success: individuals from all backgrounds can achieve anything (and climb the socio-economic ladder to a position of status), if they just work hard enough and devote themselves to their careers. Breadwinning men are represented as paragons of economic power, family values, responsibility, and good fatherhood. Rebel masculinity represents the opposite: adventure, anarchism, autonomy, courage, physical skills, and cunning. The rebels are warriors and seducers rather than fathers and husbands, thus, lacking the ability to take responsibility and to work on behalf of others. The rebel is an equivalent of Hirschman's (1999) rogue adventurer. But according to Holt and Thompson (2004, 428), most American men battle between these two, and consequently, the most potent masculine model for American men is the synthesis between breadwinning and rebellion: the man-of-action hero. Men-of-action challenge institutions through their rebellious feats, yet maintain the sense of caring and responsibility. James Bond and Indiana Jones are examples of man-of-action characters who do not always follow the rules, but eventually, turn out to be right. At the root of the man-of-action ideal hero lays the all-American ideal of vision, guts, and a can-do spirit. Theoretically, Holt and Thompson (2004) contribute to the analysis of masculinity and consumption and the postmodern view of constructing also the male identity through consumption. (see also Alexander 2003.)

The role of men as consumers is heavily implicated in another new image of the man in the 21st century: the 'metrosexual'³², who bears some resemblance to Hirschman's (1999) New Man. A metrosexual man has been defined as a sensitive, well educated, heterosexual urban dweller who has effeminate features and lifestyle elements: he likes to shop³³, he may wear jewellery, and he is interested in fashion. He is willing to push traditional

³² The word 'metrosexual' is a new word in the English language. It was voted 'The word of the year' in 2003 in the US (Turun Sanomat [a Finnish daily newspapers] 2004).

³³ Shopping has been considered a feminine activity to the extent that even now when men form a significant proportion of shoppers, they are considered 'feminized' by participation; shopping is still a feminine matter. (cited by Fischer & Gainer 1994, 101. Original source: Firat, Fuat A. (1991) Consumption and gender: a common history. In: Costa, Janeen Arnold (ed.) *Gender and consumer behavior*. University of Utah Printing Service: Salt Lake City, 378–386.)

gender boundaries, still thinking – despite his indulgences previously being considered solely female – of himself as nothing but a ‘real man’. (Trubo 2003; Koskinen 2003, 83.)

Snellman (2003) lists a few examples of famous metrosexuals – Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Robbie Williams – but according to her, soccer player David Beckham is the king of them all. Beckham is a master at combining different roles: on a soccer field, he is a professional, even aggressive athlete, whereas in his private life he may wear diamonds, polish his fingernails, and even wear a skirt. He has altered the public image of athletes as well as the overall image of masculinity. According to Cashmore and Parker (2003, 219, 221, 225), Beckham portrays a multi-faceted masculinity: he is a combination of the New Man and new lad (soccer hero, husband, father, consumer), still demonstrating features of old industrial man (dedicated, stoic, breadwinning). His commoditised persona represents diverse elements of gender, sexuality, identification, and style.

As to gender blending, similar views have been ascribed by other scholars as well: men are becoming more woman-like and women more man-like. It has even been argued that masculinity is facing a crisis. Masculinity and the male body are changing, reflecting men’s changing gender relations and self-identities (for a wider discussion of masculinity studies³⁴ over time, see Beasley 2005, 177–185). The male body has become subject to a continuous scrutiny – the body is objectified, exploited, and monitored. (Boni 2002, 467.) And the breadwinner role of a man is being questioned (see e.g. Gerzon 1982, 143–134).

In spite of the versatility in the titles of the archetypes as displayed between the authors, there are congruent themes. Interestingly, Spranger’s (1966³⁵) typology of men provides common dimensions for the categorizations. According to Spranger (1966, 109–246) (see also Jalilvand 2000, 28), there are six basic ideals of individuality: the economic attitude (a stereotype of an American businessman, his decisions being dominated by the expected and practical results), the theoretic attitude (an intellect with empirical, critical and rational inclinations, a scientist or a philosopher), the aesthetic attitude (interested in the artistic aspects of life), the social attitude (a kind, sympathetic and unselfish people-lover), the political attitude (interested in power in all activities, seeking personal power, influence and recognition), and

³⁴ Masculinity studies is a subfield of gender/sexuality studies which focuses on the critical analysis of gender in social life (Beasley 2005, 177). The field of study is quite new: only in the last two decades have the nature and effects of social views of masculinity begun to be questioned (Wood 2003, 83).

³⁵ The original, German edition was published in 1928.

the religious attitude (interested in creating the highest and most satisfying values of experience).

First, in many categorizations there is the economic attitude or business perspective involved: The big wheel (Brannon 1976), Dynamic big-shot businessman (Brannon 1985), Hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) and Business man (Fuller 1996). Secondly, there is the theoretic attitude or scientific perspective in Hirschman's Scientist (1999). Thirdly, the aesthetic attitude in Brannon's (1976) No sissy stuff [in fact, anti-aesthetic], in Hirschman's (1999) Prince and in Uusitalo et al.'s (2003) Polished triumphant (a wealthy, well dressed, fashionable and successful man with a masculine appearance). Fourthly, the social attitude is reflected in Brannon's (1985) Jet-set playboy and Don Juan, as well as in Uusitalo et al.'s (2003) Don Juan. Fifthly, the political attitude in Brannon's (1985) Great leader and in Connell's (1995) Hegemonic masculinity. And finally, the religious attitude is manifested in Brannon's (1985) Great leader and in Gerzon's (1982) Lord.

Spranger's (1966) original typology is over 75 years old and, quite naturally, does not cover the changes in images of masculinity. One that is missing is the sensitive, nurturing ideal that manifests itself, for instance, in Connell's (1995) Conservative masculinity. Another is the submissive masculinity; according to Uusitalo et al. (2003), men are more and more often being portrayed in dependent or feminine roles as well as in subordinate occupational positions. This is shown by the categories Daddy, Woman's assistant and Low-paid worker. Connell (1995) also identifies this type in his Subordinated masculinity. As the above discussion indicates, masculinity is an ambiguous concept, and the fragmented, multiform media world does not make it any easier to hold together. The mass media, including advertising, have become an increasingly powerful influence on the construction of masculinity by mediating the subjective characteristics (Saco 1992, 25).

2.2.3 Masculinity and consumption

A lot can be learned about masculinity by looking back at the history of the relationship between gender and consumption. In order to understand the relationship, we must first look at the distinction between consumption and production that also partly explains the traditional, bipolar conception of gender. According to Firat (1994, 206–209; see also Costa 1994, 6), the division between consumption and production stems from modern thought: it depends on the meaning of value in classical modern economics and the development of the capitalist system. The value was created by the producer, e.g. the worker in a factory, who also represented the public domain. The

private domain, home, was where consumption, non-work, play, and other ‘insignificant’ things were located (cf. Solomon 1990, 110; Corrigan 1997, 97; Firat & Dholakia 2003, 15–16).

Due to physiological and historical events, women became the representatives of the private domain (mothering and unpaid homemaking), whereas men represented the public domain (paid work), providing the wages of survival (Turner 1997, 66; Kimmel & Aronson 2004, 109; see also Mosse 1996, 9). And it was the masculine qualities that were respected in the culture that developed. Consequently, categories of gender were built on the meanings generated from the roles attributed to the public and private domains. These kind of bipolar categories were typical of modernism; modernity was keen on establishing norms for an order through being poles apart (see Table 4), one pole representing the good and sacred and the other regarded as inferior.

Table 4. Significations of gender (based on Firat 1994, 210; cf. Turner 1997, 66).

Feminine	Masculine
Private	Public
Home	Workplace
Consumption	Production
Woman (female)	Man (male)
Consumer	Producer
Passive	Active
Body	Mind
Emotional	Rational
Passion	Reason
Property	Owner
Object	Subject
Profane	Sacred

In a modern society, the woman’s life was not, however, private at all: women were orchestrated by men, being the private property of men. The feminine – the consumer – was consumed, commoditised, and objectified by men. Women were bombarded with demands regarding how they should look and behave. (Firat 1994, 212–213; Firat & Dholakia 2003, 18–19.) According to Barthel (1988, 1–2, 6–7), advertising is about creating a relationship between subjects and objects, where the subjects (e.g. the creators of advertising) have traditionally been men but the objects (i.e. the targets, the consumers) have been women (see also Gunter 1995, 4–5; cf. Mort 1996, 113;

Lazier & Kendrick 1993, 206). Particularly in American society, the process of consumption [especially of household goods] has been considered women's duty.

Since the 1960s – after the rebirth of the women's movement, gay liberation movements, and changed economic and social conditions in family life – gender issues have been in flux. Gradually, the relation of men to advertising and male representations in adverts have attracted more interest. In part, this is thanks to the feminist research that has provided the context within which the current studies of men and masculinities are being conducted (Morgan 1992, 6; Kramer 2005, 28).

Upon the entry of women into the workforce, men have become increasingly involved in everyday consumption, and have also been forced to take greater responsibility for domestic chores. In addition, the number of men living apart from women is growing for a number of reasons: the rise in the age of first marriage, the increase in divorce rates, the increasing numbers of students; overall, the number of single households is proliferating. Advertisers have, thus, increasingly had to take also men into consideration as potential buyers, as the 'yous' they address in their adverts. (Wernick 1991, 48–49.) According to Edwards (1997, 132), there *is* an increasing number of men who define themselves through consumption, but there are also those whose masculine identity is based on more traditional values, such as work. Accordingly, today's consumer society is confronted with various images of men with opposing ends: the young, single, affluent, and narcissistic at the one end, and the older, with a family and little time or interest in investing in his appearance at the other.

2.3 Advertising as a cultural mediator of masculinity

The role of this subchapter is to discuss the role of advertising as one of the mediators of culture. By influencing social constructions and enhancing cultural learning, advertising, as a form of communication, operates as an instrument of socialization. (Kramer 2005, 40.) Advertising permeates cultural ideals, values and attitudes among people towards, for instance, gender. In advertising, visual depictions of men act as codes of masculinity: male models are often presented as an idealized form of masculinity, which can either be adopted or rejected. Gendered subjectivities are created and maintained through discursive, cultural practices. (Wicks & Mills 2000, 337; see also Burton 2005, 240.) And advertising represents one discourse type, as stated by Cook (1996, 5): “[...] *advertising can tell us a good deal about our own society and our own psychology.*”

Franklin (1984, 4) brings supportive evidence to his statement of the socializing role of advertising and popular culture in general: the more adolescents view television, the more stereotyped their gender perceptions tend to be (cf. Lazier & Kendrick 1993, 214; also Wood 2004, 247). Franklin's statement refers to the general idea of cultivation theory. The foundational idea of the theory is that media, television in particular, cultivate beliefs about social life, transmitting cultural ideals and offering a view of social reality that may be inaccurate; however, the viewers may assume that the view reflects real life. The attachment to the ideals is particularly high among young people, who seek out role models as part of the process of growing up and learning how to behave. (Wykes & Gunter 2005, 148.)

2.3.1 The use of people in advertising formats and the change over time

In an advert, the seller of the product and a potential buyer are linked (Schudson 1986, 210). Buyers, i.e. consumers – the respondents of the ads – and sellers, the advertisers, want different things from advertising: consumers want to be informed, while manufactures and retailers want advertising to serve the interests of industry and business, that is, to persuade, impart information, remind, provide reassurance, and eventually to promote sales (e.g. Ehrenberg 2000, 417; Nowak 1990, 408; Raninen & Rautio 2002, 22–23). Different formats and devices are being used to achieve these ends. Keeping in mind the focus of this study, the following review discusses the formats and devices in relation to the use of human models. At the end of the subchapter, some ethical considerations concerning advertising will be raised.

Celebrities are often used in advertising, e.g. to reassure potential users of a brand. The endorsement of a well-known individual transfers his or her values to the brand. For the consumer, seeing the ad and buying the brand can lead to thinking of themselves as more successful, popular, beautiful. Commonly used devices are *metonymies* (substituting one aspect of the object for the object itself [a part standing for a whole]) and *metaphors* (transferring the meaning contained in the referent to the brand by drawing a parallel). (Wardle 2002, 16–18; Shimp 2000, 125; Mooij 1998, 244–245; Vestergaard & Schrøder 1985, 38; also Berger 2004, 52; 54.) Often, strong looking men are used metaphorically to connote the power of the product, as is the case in the following deodorant ad (see Figure 14).



Figure 14. An example of a metaphoric link between a male human model and the capacity of a product (Reader's Digest 1973).

Where a metaphor is based on analogy between the elements, a metonymy relies on association. As to human models, a way of adapting the idea of metonymy is cropping, i.e. letting a part of a person's body – a head, hand, eye or leg, for instance – represent the whole person. Besides the clearly perceivable devices, advertising has also been said to use subliminal messages: means that we are not conscious of. According to Berger (2004, 63), this statement has never been proved; however, people should in theory be susceptible to influences of advertising beyond their consciousness.

Appearance is considered the key to success in advertising; as already adduced, human models in adverts are likely to be flawless (Fowles 1996, 14). Consequently, advertising has been accused of creating and perpetuating *stereotypes*, especially among minority groups and women; according to Giles (2003, 174–175), the less visible a group in the media, the more likely it is to be represented by a stereotype. According to Brannon (1985, 300), stereotypes are widely shared beliefs about how people usually behave. With the tendency to overgeneralize characteristics of a group of people, stereotypes are often

false and not easily altered (Zhou & Chen 1997, 485³⁶; cf. Mosse 1996, 13). According to Hall (2002, 198), stereotypes ascribe particular characteristics to an entire group of people, and thus, obscure individual differences among people as well as reduce them to a set of exaggerated, often negative character traits (Barker 2005, 307). These characteristics are mostly to do with outward appearances, and, in turn, the internalized visual image of a person relies upon the perception of the outward appearance. *“How we see others affects the way we treat them.”* As an example, being overweight is often associated with self-indulgence and laziness. Thinness, to the contrary, is associated with nervousness and a shy disposition. (Wykes & Gunter 2005, 193, 220.)

As in other areas, stereotypes are often produced and used in advertising to make the abstract more concrete or to invoke familiar sets of values amongst the audience. (Mosse 1996, 5; Burton 2005, 137.) According to Spence and Van Heekeren (cf.) (2005, 54), stereotyping is inevitable in advertising due to time and space constraints: one has to deliver the message in a limited time (for instance, most TV commercials run for 30 seconds) or in a limited space (most ads in magazines are one page or smaller). In terms of these limits, stereotypes can perform a useful function by conveying an image quickly and clearly, providing a shared knowledge base of identification for the audience. However, there is a danger that limited and demeaning stereotypes can result in undesirable social consequences, as has been the case with gender stereotypes. (Lazier & Kendrick 1993, 200, 202.)

Gender stereotyping involves general beliefs about masculinity or femininity: characteristics and behaviours characterizing men and women as well as gender roles [activities considered appropriate and/or typical for men and/or women] (Browne 1998, 83). Traditionally, advertising has stereotyped women as homemakers or sex objects. Harker, Harker and Svensen (2005, 252–253) list a selection of studies from the last 30 years that have examined gender stereotypes in advertising. As expected, most of them focus on female stereotypes. Because of the power and ubiquity of advertising, gender stereotypes [whether concerning women or men] can produce negative consequences for people, especially young people (Spence & Van Heekeren 2005, 59; Franklin 1984, 40–42; Courtney & Whipple 1983, 45). Besides, they can make it more difficult for men and women to be accepted in non-stereotypical ways (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 60).

Archetypes are universal images that can apply across cultures: myths, tales, tunes, and the like. For example, the phallic symbols that cultures incorporate

³⁶ Original sources: Mackie, M. (1973) Arriving at “truth” by definition: the case of stereotype inaccuracy. *Social Problems*, Vol. 20, 431–447. Williams, J. E. – Best, D. L. (1982) *Measuring sex stereotypes: a thirty-nation study*. Sage Publications: Beverly Hills.

into their rites of passage are recognized instinctively in approximately the same way by all humans, because these symbols constitute an archetype of male sexuality that is buried in the collective unconscious of the species. (Danesi & Perron 1999, 15–16; Wardle 2002, 18; Shimp 2000, 71.)

Over the years, the use of human models has varied in form depending on the dominant advertising format of the time. Leiss et al. (1986, 189–215) have categorized the basic formats into four: the product information format, the product image format, the personalized format, and the lifestyle format. As the name implies, in the *product information format*, the product, brand name, and, frequently, the package are the centres of attention. These types of ads emphasize the merits of the product rather than its social value (Rohlinger 2002, 72). Little reference is made to the user or the context of the use of the product. Supposedly, this format relies heavily on text. The relative absence of people in product information ads, i.e. people being subordinate to the products, may indicate more stress being placed on materialistic values in the society (Nowak 1990, 402). The absence of people can also place the audience in front of the image and make it possible for members of the audience to insert themselves into it (Vestergaard & Schröder 1985, 78).

Also in the *product image format*, brand name and package play an important part, but the product has an image imparted to it special qualities by means of symbolic relationships. The product becomes embedded in a symbolic context. Thus, the ads work by fusing two systems of signs or codes in a message: the product code and the setting code. The fusion formulates the basis of the product image and relies largely on narrative techniques such as metaphor, implied use, and allegory. (Leiss et al. 1986, 190–194.)

The *personalized format* emphasizes the relationship between the world of the product and the people using or informing about the product is. The meaning of an ad is conveyed by the relationship between the people in the advertisement and the product itself. Social admiration, pride of ownership, or satisfaction in consumption, are embedded in the ad. The personalized format has different variants, testimonials being one of them. Another variant is a person standing for the product, not testifying for it. In this format, the person conveys a range of attributes to be associated with the product according to the personal prototype he or she represents. In the third variant, the self-transformation ad, people ‘improve themselves’ through the possession or use of the product. This kind of format is often employed in cosmetics advertising. The fourth variant weaves the product into the web of social interaction: romance, friendship, social status. The common ground in all these variants is the personalization of the product; the product being displayed as an integral part of human existence and interaction. (Leiss et al. 1986, 194–210.)

Fourthly, in *lifestyle ads* the cohesion is established by combining the aspects of product image and personalized formats, by emphasizing the role of the social setting. Herein, one possibility is to convey the idea of social identity through the display of the product in a social context, the occasion providing the unifying idea. A product promoted in a social context gives the consumer a feeling of social approval and success (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001, 308). Another variant of the lifestyle format is a reference to an activity, like leisure activities, rather than to consumption directly. (Leiss et al. 1986, 210–215.)

With the rise of postmodernity (see Subchapter 2.1.3), advertising has shifted towards more versatile and *mixed formats*, i.e. using many different ways of promoting the product. Postmodern advertisements appeal to consumers through a jigsaw collage of multiple representations of selves, and hence are more tolerant of different ways of being: instead of one ideal type, there can be multiple ideals. However, tolerance³⁷ may be created at the cost of clarity: it has been argued that postmodern advertising is abstruse, ambiguous, and difficult to grasp; there are implicit messages without a clear structure, and form is valued over content. To stand out, companies can show ‘ugly’ things and use ‘ugly’ people in ads. (Vuokko 1997, 696.) Its obscure nature is one reason why postmodern advertising is also called oddvertising (i.e. odd advertising) (Karvonen 2003).





Typical to postmodern print ads is to break the expected schema by placing unexpected content in the ad (Rossiter & Bellman 2005, 145). In addition, postmodern advertisements present little information about the product or the use of it; instead, a mood or atmosphere is created and the product associated with that mood. This can cause confusion in the mind of the consumer. (Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 25; Proctor, Proctor & Papasolomou-Doukakis 2002, 33; Boutlis 2000, 14, 16; Firat & Schulz 1997, 190–191.) It is said that postmodern ads work best on postmodern consumers, i.e. among those in the 18–34 age group, or the so-called Generation Y (18–23) and Generation X (24–34) consumers (also called the baby bust generation). These generations are preoccupied with material possessions and shopping, and are said to be more receptive towards ‘different’ approaches, for instance, in advertising. This is to do with the fact that as generations age, they are replaced by younger generations who usually have new and different attitudes and values. And this transition then shapes society. (Rossiter & Bellman 2005, 145; Roberts & Manolis 2000, 482.) As an example, the use of beautification

³⁷ Tolerance can also mean that people seek validation of self through consumption, trying to construct their identities by adopting brands as symbols of self. However, the proliferation of ‘permitted’ styles does not necessarily mean that people feel more confident inside. (cf. Boutlis 2000, 18; Elliott & Wattanasuwan 1998, 131).

products is at its greatest among men representing these age cohorts (Ridder 2005; Kähkönen 2004).

The following table (Table 5) illustrates the development of advertising formats, for the most part based on Leiss et al. (1986, 189–215, 234). Heinonen and Kontinen (2001, 308; also Raninen & Rautio 2002, 14–15) have dated the same formats in the Finnish context. Interestingly, the formats seem to follow the same order of appearance, Finland following the United States with a slight lag.

Table 5. Phases in the development of advertising formats.

1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
<i>Product information</i>										
Utilitarian value of the product										
			<i>Product image</i>							
			Symbolic values of the product			<i>Personalized format</i>				
						Transfer of values (from the person in the ad)			<i>Lifestyle format</i>	
									Social value of the product	
										<i>Mixed format</i>
										Ambiguity

Along the time span, the development and the potential of the media have affected the character and appearance of adverts. Radio, television and the Internet have all left their footprint in advertising. (e.g. Malmelin 2003, 26; Raninen & Rautio 2002, 14–15). For instance, the role of differentiation and personalization as well as visual elements is emphasized in television, which is characteristic of speed, evanescence and visual flamboyance (Raninen & Rautio 2002, 274–275; Malmelin 2002, 28). Television has also had an influence on visual design in print advertising (Leiss et al. 1986, 218).

Similar basic ingredients of advertising can be found in the development of a famous mnemonic invented by Rosser Reeves in the 1940s: USP, unique selling proposition. USP emphasizes the unique characteristics of the product, similarly to the product information format. As the role of images and emotions in advertising has grown, USP has changed into ESP, emotional selling proposition. With regard to the arrival of lifestyle ads and the emphasis on story telling, some people speak of UTPs, unique telling propositions, or USSs, unique signifying styles. In the latter, the aspect of signification is embedded. Similarly, accentuating the role of meanings and signifying practices of recipients, there is, again, a new USP: unique signifying practice. (Malmelin 2003, 63, 105.)

Over the decades, there has been much discussion as to whether advertising plays a beneficial or negative role in society. Those in favour of advertising consider it, among other means, an efficient way of distributing information. By contrast, critics think that advertising can raise the price of goods and create inefficiency. It has also been claimed that the imagery and symbolism of advertising replaces real people with artificial types³⁸, and transforms people into things, purchasable and exchangeable in the marketplace. (Leiss et al. 1986, 13–14; 24.) Andrén, Ericsson, Ohlsson & Tännsjö (1978, 120; 152) refer to the idyllic world presented in ads as *'the Hollywood set'*: according to them (1978, 64–65, 152; also Pollay 1986, 26, and Goffman 1979, 22, 26), advertising conceals the negative aspects of life, informing people only about the merits of the product. Products are often situated in luxurious settings (Straubhaar & LaRose 2002, 412). Also Barthel (1988, 5–6) refers to advertising as *'a world of fun and adventure'* where every adversity is overcome. Advertising appeals to the child in us who looks for excitement and pleasure.

Alongside this discussion, there are some *ethical concerns* to be considered (Cohan 2001, 324–325): advertising is accused of making people believe that happiness depends on the possession of material things (see Pollay 1986, 21); of playing on physical appetites, the body, and the pursuit of pleasure; of giving people illusions rather than telling the *'truth'*; and of presenting an unrealistic or idealized picture of people³⁹, leading to negative social comparison and body dissatisfaction – particularly among women – as well as contributing to psychological distress, eating disorders and the urge to become as thin and flawless as the models in the ads (see Richins 1991, 71, 75–76; also Law & Labre 2002, 698, 700; Clow & Baack 2004, 211; Ängeslevä 2004b; Wykes & Gunter 2005, 216). Being obsessed with one's weight is often made in ads to seem normal and even appealing (Kilbourne 1999, 136). Paradoxically, the advertising of fattening foods has of late become a matter of intense discussion in Finland. The advertising of food products that contain a lot of fat, sugar or salt has been blamed for the increasing obesity among adolescents. The Finnish Consumer Office and National Public Health Institute have issued recommendations aimed at restricting this kind of advertising. (Lapsia lihottavan... 2005.)

Another ethical concern has also been and still is the role of pornography and sex in advertising; particularly [young, good-looking, semi-clad] women have been used as a means of attracting attention and boosting sales (cf. Pollay

³⁸ Boorstin (1962) refers to these as *'pseudo-ideals'*. (Leiss et al. 1986, 27.)

³⁹ In a sense, advertising can be related to genetic engineering: it creates the kind of people it prefers, neglecting the unwanted characteristics (cf. Pollay 1986, 27).

1986, 28). Typified representations undermine people's dignity and cast a demeaning light upon their physical and intellectual characteristics (Borgerson & Schroeder 2002, 578). According to Cohan (2001, 327–330), ethics in advertising using women is becoming a popular topic, and standards concerning the portrayals should be set higher: a shift in standards would allow room for inner beauty as well.

Accordingly, Poe (1976, 185; also Aaker & Myers 1982, 493) demands a discussion of advertising's role⁴⁰ in society: in moulding opinions, attitudes and behaviour advertising can function as an instrument of social control, having an influence parallel to school and church. Yet advertising lacks social responsibility. Also Zhou and Chen (1997, 485; also Borgerson & Schroeder 2002, 572; also Soley & Reid 1988, 965; Singer 1983, 32, 36) refer to the dilemma of advertising as both a selling tool and a means of social communication: advertisers have a social responsibility as corporate citizens to ensure that the values and images conveyed in the medium can be identified by the potential buyers. However, advertising often hits people when they are at their most vulnerable: for instance, when they are too young to impugn its promises, or when they have problems with their own state of being or doing (cf. Barthel 1988, 5). The cosmetics company Dove has chosen to address to this problem and launched a campaign for 'real beauty' by starting to use ordinary-looking women in their advertising. According to the company's web-site (Dove 2006), their customers had made the initial approach and asked the company to intervene in the narrow stereotypic image of beauty most often presented. The idea of the campaign is to show that real beauty comes in many shapes, sizes and ages. Referring to young people's self doubt with regard to their looks, the following ad exemplifies the campaign (Figure 15). The headline states "*She thinks she is ugly*", the strapline "*Let's help her change her mind*". Working together with the Syömishäiriöliitto – SYLI ry (Eating Disorder Association Finland), the company aims to support adolescents' self-confidence.

⁴⁰ In reference to Bauman (1996, 43), we can call this the '*ethic paradox of advertising*'.



Figure 15. Building social responsibility towards adolescents (Me Naiset 14/2006).

For the moment, the campaign concerns girls and women only, but there is surely a foreseeable concern about appearances among men, too, and boys and men will also be models and targets of similar campaigns. Given the differences in age, gender and cognitive processing abilities of their various audiences, advertisers should not seek to mislead or create false perceptions (Fill 2005, 820).

2.3.2 The 'look' of a man and other visual images in advertising

In connection with postmodernity, the study of advertising has led to attention being focused on visual aspects of advertisements (Scott 1992, 596), and visual images constitute the emphasis in this study, too. The basic assumption is that advertising, like any other form of human communication, is socially conditioned: the environment in which we live affects the ways advertisements are created and interpreted (cf. Panula 1997, 318). Thus, an advert is not only the textual composition of the advert itself but also the social setting of the viewer (Percy et al. 2001, 29). Moreover, media use is embedded in the routines of social action, and people interpret mediated messages by

accommodating them into the practices of their everyday life (O'Donohoe 1994, 53). Accordingly, audiences are not an undifferentiated, passive mass but active producers of meaning from their own cultural context (Barker 2005, 325).

At their best, pictorial elements can have persuasive powers that impact people's behaviour. However, often it is a question of the 'little' things; for instance, altering the order of the individual elements in the ad. Decisions as to whether or not there is a man or a woman in the picture and whether they are looking at the viewer and smiling or not smiling, can lead to a greater or lesser impact. Visual perception is not altogether straightforward. Besides, one's cultural background adds a nuance to the interpretation. (Dyer 1982, 95–96.) In the following, some principles of visual persuasion are discussed, focusing on iconic elements, i.e. eliciting emotions through the use of real people in ads, and the 'look' and gaze in particular. The male gaze has raised abundant interest in the academic research (see e.g. Schroeder & Zwick 2004; Patterson & Elliott 2002).

Since visual elements have grown in importance compared to text in advertising, advertising needs to be eye-catching in order to capture attention. Nonverbal elements are not only a means of drawing attention to the verbal elements, but they can also be the message itself. (Hecker & Stewart 1988, 3; Leiss et al. 1986, 180–181.) According to Schroeder and Borgerson (1998, 178), analysing visual elements is the key to understanding how ads create meaning. Messaris (1997) outlines three major roles that visual images can play in an ad:

- 1 Visual images can *elicit emotions* by simulating the appearance of a real person or object.
- 2 They can serve as *photographic proof* that something really did happen.
- 3 And, they can establish an *implicit link* between the product being sold and a certain image.

In reference to these roles, Messaris (1997, xiii) uses three properties of images as starting points for his analysis of the distinctive attributes of visual persuasion: iconity, indexality, and syntactic indeterminacy. These properties are summarised in the following table (based on Messaris 1997, 5–203).

Table 6. The role of visual images in advertising (Messaris 1997).

Eliciting emotions by simulating the appearance of a real person (ICONITY)	Serving as a proof of something having happened or is going to happen (INDEXALITY)	Establishing an implicit link between the product and the signifieds of the ad
Attracting attention Violating reality Surrealism Visual metaphors Visual parodies Eye gaze Rear views Viewing distance Subjective camera Eliciting emotion by Camera angle Look of superiority Identification Sexual appearances	Photographic proof Visual deception Staging Editing Selectivity Mislabelling Alteration	Causal link (between the product and the outcome) Contrast (product comparisons; before-and-after juxtapositions) Analogy (acting as a partial substitute for adjectives and adverbs) Generalization (using a number of images simultaneously to imply success, glamour, prevalence)

Interestingly, these properties have a pronounced resemblance to Peirce's terminology (see e.g. Danesi & Perron 1999; Cobley & Jansz 1997; Nöth 1995; Nadin & Zakia 1994; Fiske 1990). In iconity, according to Messaris (1997, 3, 5), it is a question of capturing and then conveying the distinctive features of reality – e.g. a picture of a person or a product – to our eyes. However, since one of the main purposes of advertising is to attract attention, an efficient way to do so is to violate that reality⁴¹.

When human models are used in an ad, one way of attracting attention is the 'look' (cf. eye gaze in Messaris' typology). 'Looking' is a two-way phenomenon: by 'the look' we mean, first, the way the ad (or preferably the model in the ad) looks at the viewer (the gaze), and secondly, the way the viewer looks at the ad. A direct eye gaze of the model in the ad has been considered a good way of attracting the viewer's attention. In relation to Messaris' (1997, 21–24) observation, Kress and Leeuwen (1996, 122, 124, 186) use the terms 'Demand image' and 'Offer image'. The former refers to a direct eye gaze: represented participants look directly into the viewer's eyes, as if demanding something from the viewer. Bordo (1999, 188) calls this kind of image 'face-off' or 'never reveal weakness' masculinity: the male model

⁴¹ As an example of visual deception, Messaris (1997, 7) offers the technique of 'morphing', i.e. using a computer to bring about a smooth transition between two different images, e.g. the face of a man, and a car.

stares coldly at the viewer, presenting himself as powerful, confident, and tough.

In an 'Offer image', the participants address the viewers indirectly. Herein, the viewer is not the object but the subject of the look. In an 'Offer image', the model looks either off or up. According to Dyer (1993; also Dyer 1989, 44), looking *up* suggests spirituality; the model is there to be looked at but his mind is on higher things, and this upward striving is supposed to please the viewer. Furthermore, when the model is looking *off* camera, the look suggests an interest in something that the viewer cannot see, or at least the model is displaying no interest in the viewer. It can also suggest some kind of hardness and toughness. According to Messaris (1997, 45), male models have traditionally not looked into the viewer's eyes. However, it is predicted that the situation will change. Even given such a change, according to Dyer (1989, 44), the way men look at the camera will still be different from how female models look at the camera. Rather than giving a "*I'm here for you*" look, male models give a harder, staring look suggesting "*I might do something to you*".

The models in an ad can be looked at either voyeuristically or in a narcissistic way. Voyeurism means that the person in the ad is looked at objectifyingly. The voyeuristic gaze is controlling and subordinating: the person in the ad may be looked at without fear of getting caught. Traditionally, men have looked at women in this way; according to a traditional sexual myth, women are made to be looked at and men are made to do the looking. The myth is related to the belief that the male sex drive is more active than that of the female (Solomon 1990, 50, 198; cf. Burton 2005, 93). This implies a psychological relationship of power in which the gazer dominates the object of the gaze (Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 30). Overall, an objectifying look has been quintessential to the Western cultures where possession and dominance over others have been considered important, particularly among men. (Norrena 1989, 21; Rose 2003, 110, 115–116; cf. Saco 1992, 28.) Besides, this kind of look is considered to signal activity, whereas being looked at signals passivity (Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 33). Examples of a contemporary ritual, still reflecting the cultural belief that women are born to endure the active gaze of men, are the Miss America and Miss Finland contests. In spite of the fact that, today, men also compete in equivalent arenas, the interest in female beauty competitions is clearly greater. (cf. Solomon 1990, 198.)

However, some recent studies (Schroeder & Zwick 2004; Patterson & Elliott 2002) indicate a change in the traditional male gaze in advertising. Schroeder and Zwick (2004) conducted an interesting analysis of the male gaze and shifting images of men in contemporary ads. Their analysis of three unrelated ads presents ways of representing the consumer gaze; identification, commoditisation and looking. They conclude their analysis by stating that

with the changes in advertising, the traditional conventions of the male gaze are being disrupted, and men can be eroticized, passive subjects as women have traditionally been. This opens up new possibilities for male identities that adduce aesthetics, emotion and, overall, men's role as consumers. (Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 45–46.)

Patterson and Elliott (2002) argue that the change in the male gaze in Britain has been caused by the emergence of men's lifestyle magazines from the 1980s onwards. In launching the concept of 'inverted gaze', the authors claim that images of men and their bodies in these magazines have made the male body the object of gazes from men themselves: By confronting images of men's bodies in advertising targeted at them, young men are stimulated to look at themselves, and other men, as objects of consumer desire. This refers to the narcissistic look which has previously been branded as feminine.

A narcissistic look implies identification: wanting to identify with the person in the ad. Typically, when a woman looks at a woman in an ad she has a narcissistic look: she wants to become as perfect as the model. (Norrena 1989, 21.) Williamson (1978, 60–64) refers to this as 'the mirror image technique': the model in the ad is looking back at the viewer as if the model were a mirror, becoming identified with the image of the product: '*You can become like this if you use the product.*' (also Ball & Smith 1992, 52.)

The above-mentioned concepts are combined in the following table, presenting four different relationships between the model in the ad and the viewer.

Table 7. Different types of the gaze and the look.

		<i>Person in the ad</i>	
		Demand image	Offer image
<i>Viewer of the ad</i>	Voyeuristic look	Direct eye gaze <i>Possession</i>	No eye-contact <i>Availability</i> <i>Subordination</i>
	Narcissistic look	Direct eye gaze <i>Mirror technique</i>	No eye-contact <i>Subjectivism</i>

First, when the look is voyeuristic and the person in the ad is looking directly at the viewer, it is a question of possession: '*I want you.*', '*You are*

mine.' Secondly, the mirror technique refers to a situation where the viewers identify themselves with the model who is looking them in the eye, as if to say: '*You will be like me if you use the product.*' Thirdly, in a situation where the model is not looking at the viewer but the viewer has an objectifying look, it is a question of subordination: '*I am available.*' Often, women are positioned lying down on beds, as an expression of sexual availability. Floors are another place of subordination: often, women have been portrayed scrubbing floors which can be associated with the less clean parts of a room, a place to keep dogs. (Sivulka 1998, 325; Leiss et al. 1986, 168; Goffman 1979, 68.) Finally, a narcissistic look at the model in the ad with no eye contact brings about a feeling of subjectivism in the viewer: '*This could be me.*'

An ad's meaning is constructed not only by the discrete signs but also by the ordering of events and/or the location. In a way, an ad is a frozen moment, but with a 'before' and 'after' (Dyer 1982, 129). Therein, visual images can function in the ad as evidence of something having happened or that is going to happen (cf. indexality in Table 6). Messaris (1997, 132–160) lists ways of indicating indexality in advertising. Basically, there are two: telling visual 'truths' (using photographic images as proofs), and telling visual 'lies' (visual deception by means of staging, alteration, editing, selection, and mislabelling).

As indicated before (see Table 6), visual images can establish a link between the product and the signifieds in the ad in four different ways: (a) causal connections; (b) contrasts; (c) analogies; and (d) generalizations. Implying a causal link between the product and a positive outcome, by juxtaposing the product and an appealing visual portrayal, is a typical example of (a). Contrasts (b) are used in product comparisons and before-and-after juxtapositions. Analogical juxtapositions (c), e.g. displaying the product in conjunction with images of lions, tigers, and the like, act as partial substitutes for adjectives and adverbs. Lastly (d), we can generalize, for instance, the popularity of a product by conveying it in one picture, e.g. a picture of the globe. (Messaris 1997, 5–203.)

Keeping in mind the purpose of this study and the method to be employed in its first phase, i.e. content analysis, we need to construct a rigid framework for analysing masculinity in advertising. Dyer (1982, 96–104) provides a checklist of elements that can operate as sources of information when human models are used in ads. Many of these elements will later be used in building the categorization of masculinity for the content analytical phase of the study (see bold typeface).

- 1 **representation of bodies (age, gender, race, hair, body type, size, looks)**
- 2 representation of manner (expression, eye contact, pose)

- 3 representation of activity (touch, body movement, positional communication)
- 4 props (additional elements, e.g. books symbolizing sound educational taste) and **settings** (outdoor, indoor, fictional).

Aside from human models and the product, there are usually other visual elements in an ad, i.e. props, which can convey cultural meanings. The size, shape, colour and other features of the objects are rarely accidental. Additional elements can be used metaphorically to convey special meanings. The following ad (see Figure 16) has managed to capture the pressure and pain caused by allergy, using a quite simple but illustrative additional element.



Figure 16. Props starring (Reader's Digest 2003).

Similarly, Fowles (1996, 171–174) reviews guidelines for deciphering adverts. Many of them resemble the above mentioned as is discernible in Table 8. Again, some of these guidelines will be used for building the coding sheet for the content analytical phase of this study: product category, gender and age of the human model(s), setting/location, as well as the nature of the relationship between the people in the ad.

Table 8. Guidelines for deciphering adverts (based on Fowles 1996, 171).
(Bold typeface by the author.)

Context for the ad

- **Product category**
- Medium
- Intended audience

Looking at the ad

- Aesthetics of the composition (layout, fonts, colours; shooting distance; focus; foreground/background)
- Symbolic elements and their meanings (regarding status, leisure/work, gender, disposition, attractiveness, responsibility, domesticity, **age**, vitality, personality, mood) [also in regard to their earlier use]
- Missing elements
- **Setting/location** in space and in time
- The ad as a narrative (a story ‘behind’ the ad)

Implications of the ad

- **The nature of the relationship between people**
 - Gender identity
 - Social status
 - Cultural beliefs
-

Both Dyer’s (1982) and Fowles’ (1996) ideas for analyzing ads provide ideas for the categorization and study of masculinity in ads. However, considering the rigid nature of content analysis as a research method, and the multi-level nature of advertising, we need to construct a framework which takes the versatile dimensions of masculinity and advertising into account. Consequently, our interest lies not only in the men in the ads, but also in the products they are promoting, who men are depicted with, as well in the setting. A framework for such analysis is provided by the paradigmatic and syntagmatic sign relations, which will be reviewed next. In order to be able later to make an objective analysis of the similarities and differences between the two countries concerned here, Finland and the US, the aim is to construct a culture-neutral categorization.

2.3.3 Manifestation of masculinity in advertising

This subchapter discusses elements of advertising that are considered focal when we study gender, herein masculinity, in ads. In order to understand how masculinity is manifested in advertising, we need to take a more extensive look at the components of an individual ad. Herein, the concepts of paradigm and syntagm are adapted. The idea is that both the syntagmatic and

paradigmatic choices generate an understanding of the ways in which masculinity has been mediated in two cultures during the last three decades. The choices are premised upon earlier studies on gender in advertising.

2.3.3.1 Ads as paradigmatic and syntagmatic sign relations

Advertising, like language, is a system of signs. A sign is made up of a material vehicle (in semiotic terms: the *signifier*) and a mental concept (the *signified*). For instance, a man in an ad is a signifier but his age, race, clothing etc., can refer to deeper levels of meaning. Through the use of signs, advertisers make their products stand out from those of their competitors. (Dyer 1982, 118, 123.) Signs and the ways signs are organized can be examined with the concepts of paradigm and syntagm⁴². These represent the two main types of relationship that a sign can form with others (Fiske 1990, 57; Panula 1997, 246). According to Saussurean linguistics (see e.g. Nöth 1995, 56–63; Copley & Jansz 1997, 8–17; Panula 1997, 246), a text, herein an ad, is constructed as a combination of a vertical and horizontal movement.

A paradigm is a vertical set from which a choice is made; it is the category of the signs. The members of the category must have something in common: they must share characteristics that determine their membership or non-membership of that paradigm⁴³. (Panula 1997, 246–247; Mick 1986; 197; also Dyer 1982, 127.) Paradigmatic relations reveal the oppositions and contrasts between signs in a set. Consequently, each unit must be clearly distinguished from the others and, thus, have enough difference for comparison and contrast. Culture operates as a limitation on how particular signs can be interpreted and how signs, within that culture, can be distinguished in relation to each other (cf. Panula 1997, 250).

Every time we communicate we select from a paradigm. Letters of the alphabet are a paradigm, and they are further categorized into more specific paradigms, words. When words are combined into sentences, we have a syntagm. All messages involve selection from a paradigm and combination into a syntagm. For example, in advertising, potential scenes or background settings form a paradigm from which a selection is made in the development of advertising messages (e.g. home, office, hotel, garden, beach). A paradigmatic choice conveys meaning through the similarities and differences between the sign selected and the ones not selected. (Fiske 1990, 56–57;

⁴² Originally defined by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), a Swiss linguist and the founder of semiology (see e.g. Nöth 1995, 56–63).

⁴³ For instance, people in an ad is a paradigm: the choice is made between the sex, age, race.

Deacon et al. 1999, 141; Mick 1986, 197.) Paradigmatic choices can reinforce the desired meanings; for instance, in advertising, the models in the ads are not chosen at random; they often represent ideal types of appearance, age and body type (Seppänen 2001, 181–183). Accordingly, paradigms operate culturally: there are certain models or norms from which one selects in order to fall into line. As in linguistics, there are paradigmatic cultural registers just as there are linguistic ones. These registers are, then, combined syntagmatically. (Deacon et al. 1999, 142.)

A syntagm is a horizontal chain in which elements, the paradigmatic choices, are linked with each other, succeeding each other in a chain of discourse. In advertising, an individual advertisement is an example of a syntagm of choices from the paradigms of the background setting, people, products, headlines, and so on. (Deacon et al. 1999, 141–142; Mick 1986, 197.) One has to keep in mind, however, as is the case with paradigmatic choices, the importance of the decision *not* to choose a particular element. Both choosing and not choosing an element is a choice which creates meaning. (Panula 1997, 249.) The following figure functions as an example of the concepts of paradigm and syntagm.

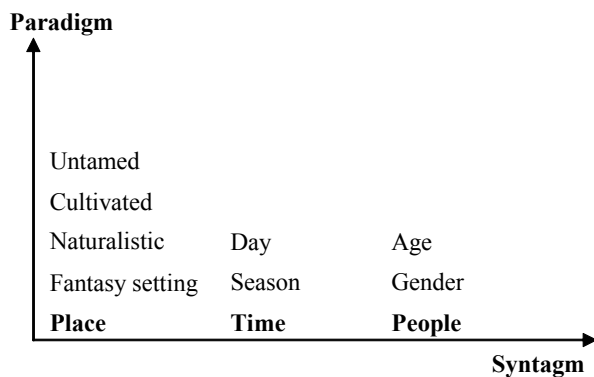


Figure 17. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic elements in an ad.

Thus, it is not only the contents of the individual elements but the *relations* between them that determine the meaning of an advertisement. The production of meaning is built on codes. Knowledge of these codes is produced culturally and socially. Varying interpretations of the same ad content can therefore occur across members of an audience. (cf. Gunter 2000, 83; 85.) The medium in which the message has been published also matters: different media carry different meanings regardless of the content of the message (Crow 2003, 9). For instance, the same advert in a business-oriented magazine and a general-

interest periodical can be encoded differently by the readers. Some media are simply considered more trustworthy than others.

2.3.3.2 Syntagmatic elements of masculinity in advertising

For the first phase of the empirical analysis of this study, the syntagmatic structure of each ad under analysis is divided into three elements: product, people, and the setting, the emphasis naturally being on people, herein men, in the ads.

Product category

One of the reasons for using human models in advertising is to attract attention to the product. Furthermore, the product the model is speaking for in the ad can create gender-specific meanings. According to earlier studies (e.g. Courtney & Lockeretz; 1971, 93; Whipple & Courtney 1985, 4), men have traditionally been depicted in vehicle, home appliance and furniture ads. By using manly products, men can supposedly extend their masculinity and be ‘true’ men. Thus, a product itself can evoke general or stereotypic images, depending on its features and the associations it brings to mind. Some products are perceived as predominantly masculine or predominantly feminine. Supposedly, the gender image of a product is related to the gender of the human model in the ad.

Schiffman and Kanuk (1997, 464–465) claim that besides selecting the sex of the target market in the development of their advertising campaigns, advertisers should also consider the perceived sex of the product category. In reference to this, according to Whipple & Courtney (1985, 4), effective role portrayal decisions call for an appropriate match between the gender of the depicted model and gender image of the product. In spite of the fact that the gender identification of products is, according to Bellizzi & Milner (1991, 72), waning, and advertisers have begun to target previously gender-specific products at both genders (dual gender positioning⁴⁴), gender is still an important positioning variable, and it is difficult to conceive of many products without specifically male or female target markets (Debevec & Iyer 1986, 212; Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 47). According to Pennell (1994), the use of colour in advertising and packaging sends gendered messages: as an example, toys for boys have been associated with bright, bold colours (compared to pastels

⁴⁴ For example, repositioning traditionally female-dominant products, such as household cleaning products, towards men (cf. Elliott, Eccles & Hodgson 1993, 313). The process of adopting opposite gender roles is called cross-gender typing: an individual adopts the traditional roles of the opposite sex, i.e. men adopt femininity (Karppinen 1989, 79).

for girls) in the United States. With regard to cars, Stuteville (1971, 5) lists examples of the subtleties of colours: white and light pastels relate to femininity, whereas strong, bold and dark colours tilt a car heavily towards masculinity.

The findings of Kanungo and Pang (1973, 177) also suggest that the congruity of a product–model match results in an increased favourable attitude towards the product. Often, cars function as external attributes which create ‘the real man’ (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985, 75). Kanungo and Pang (1973) found that an overall favourable attitude toward the product was created among all subjects when a male model was used to endorse a car. Besides cars, men have been depicted as being responsible for major household buying decisions – home appliances and furniture – whereas women have been shown taking care of themselves⁴⁵. Also, men tend to buy instrumental and leisure items impulsively, projecting independence and activity. (Solomon et al. 1999, 12, 185; Courtney & Lockeretz 1971, 93.)

According to Vestergaard and Schröder (1985, 75), the products offered to men are not meant to transform them (as they are considered to be meant to in women) but to enhance their manliness. Thus, according to Barthel (1988, 182), men can extend their masculinity through cars, motorcycles, stereos, and sports equipment: with the right products a man can be a true man. For instance, a car is considered an extension of a man’s power and sexual drive (Dispenza 1975, 264). The power of the car is his power, and through that power he can seduce women and outpower other men (Barthel 1997, 146). Studies of British television advertising (cited by Fejes 1992, 15⁴⁶) report males being portrayed as objective and knowledgeable when it comes to reasons for buying particular products, and as being concerned with the practical consequences of product purchases, thus, possessing expertise and authority.

Can a stereotypically feminine product, then, be perceived as acceptable to men as a result of a man promoting the product? Furthermore, to what extent, by means of the gender of the person in the ad, can marketers alter the gender image of a product? (cf. Debevec & Iyer 1986, 212.) An example of a more likely feminine product that has been accepted by men is hair spray. According to Morris and Cundiff (1971, 374), who studied male attitudes towards the use of a previously feminine product (hair spray), males with a

⁴⁵ However, an increasing amount of fragrance and cosmetics advertising is targeted at men.

⁴⁶ Original sources (i.a.): Harris, P. R. – Stobart, J. (1986) Sex-role stereotyping in British television advertisements at different times of the day: An extension and refinement of Manstead & McCulloch (1981). *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 25, 155–164; Livingstone, S. – Green, G. (1986) Television advertisements and the portrayal of gender. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 25, 149–154.

low feminine identification and a low anxiety level expressed favourable attitudes towards the use of hair spray by men. However, in order to put the potential of the the favourable attitudes into practice, a few product changes were needed: hair spray for men was re-scented with masculine aromas such as pine and leather. The can was changed from a flowery pink to a bold red or red and black, emblazoned with shields, crossed swords, cannons, and other war-related symbols. The advertising featured supermasculine idols, such as well-known athletes. A generation earlier, a similar transition from a feminine to a masculine product was followed through in the case of deodorant. Well-known athletes were employed to assure men that the use of personal deodorant was perfectly acceptable. (Stuteville 1971, 8–9.) In general, according to Stuteville (1971, 11), changing a product’s status from feminine to masculine requires heroic efforts; through the deployment of masculine-charged symbols, men are assured that a previously feminine product is, after all, masculine.

One more example of the image alteration of a sex-typed product is Marlboro cigarettes: the brand, in a white package with its ivory tip and a red ‘beauty tip’ (to conceal lipstick traces), was originally perceived as a ‘women’s cigarette’: “*To match women’s lips and finger-tips.*” Leo Burnett, a famous American copywriter, was given the challenge of changing the image of Marlboro into a brand a man would smoke. In the advertising business, Burnett was known for drawing on American history and folklore to create universal archetypes that helped to humanize the product. He redesigned the package and introduced a character that was to become a cultural icon: the Marlboro Man. (Sivulka 1998, 279; Hawkins & Coney 1976, 425⁴⁷.)

Since 1962, all ads for Marlboro have featured the American cowboy, symbolising freedom, independence, masculinity, adventure, and the outdoors life. Furthermore, the image has become a universal example of a so called ‘hero shot’ (see Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 33⁴⁸); the cowboy image – the lonely rider who controls the world around him – seems to appeal to men in general. During the time when cigarette advertising was still legal, the cowboy was famous in Finland as well (see Figure 18). The ad is also an early example of global branding (cf. Kortti 2003, 345).

⁴⁷ Original source: Brink, Edward L. – Kelly, William T. (1963) *The management of promotion*. Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs.

⁴⁸ The image of a lone man in an ad (Schroeder and Zwick 2004, 33).



Figure 18. A Finnish cigarette ad (Seura 1973).

The cowboy's rugged image works by providing a simple way for the consumer to decode the brand and distinguish it amongst other brands, as well as to remember it. (Pickton & Broderick 2005, 49–50.) According to Carroll (2004, 499, 501), the Marlboro Man evokes two forms of traditional American masculinity: the sturdy oak (Brannon 1976) and the frontiersman (Gerzon 1982). The popularity and persuasiveness of the Marlboro Man campaign indicates, according to Carroll (2004, 501), that the types of masculinity he portrays remain salient conceptions of what constitutes a 'real man'. Rather than a piece of real estate, the frontier of today's Marlboro Men is an office or a sports event (Gerzon 1982, 23).

Men *not* endorsing certain products may also reveal something about male identities that advertisers want to elicit. As an example, men have rarely been seen in ads promoting household cleaning products. Kanungo & Pang (1973) found that using male models to promote a sofa resulted in unfavourable attitudes towards the sofa.

Despite the frequency of the appearance of human models in adverts, a great deal of advertising relies heavily on objects alone. In the Massé and Rosenblum (1988, 129) study, object-only ads were, in fact, the most or the second most frequent type of advertising. These object-only ads – ads with no human, drawn or animal figures – can be referred to as product-information ads or product image ads, as termed by Leiss et al. (1986, 189–194).

People in the ad

Basically, the presence or absence of people in adverts may relate to the societal value system: when people become symbolically subordinated in

favour of products, the emphasis might be considered to lie on consumption-oriented ways of life (Nowak 1990, 402). One reason for not endorsing products by deploying human models may be to try to avoid creating a particular image of the potential user of the product. A stereotypic image may alienate important customer segments.

The use of human models has traditionally, however, been quite prevalent; one reason for this might be the fact that human models can provide a more meaningful social context for the product in the advertisement, arousing emotional and attitudinal reactions regarding the product (Kanungo & Pang 1973, 172; Chung & Ha 2004, 97; cf. Burton 2005, 225).

Where people are present in adverts, there are differences between the number of and interpersonal relationships of the people in the ad (see 'Relation to others in the ad' on page 106). As to the number, ads generally tend to show pictures of individuals, particularly where men are concerned. The fear of homosexuality may have something to do with this. Furthermore, the loners (see Edwards 1997, 171) are able to reinforce images of masculine power and individualism. This idea is in line with Barker's (2005, 301; see also Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 33) notion of distance and men 'controlling their own space and territory' being central features in contemporary masculinity. According to Barker, however, 'distance' can mean, besides physical distance from other people, also distance from emotions, and imply the suppression of feelings. According to Biddulph (1994; cited in Barker 2005, 302⁴⁹), emotional timidity and loneliness are central worries in a man's life.

The presence of children in advertising has been mostly related to the presence of women (Sexton & Haberman 1974, 45). When someone is shown taking care of a child, it is seldom the father (Wood 2003, 266).

Setting

Many previous content analyses of advertising have focused on the role stereotypes of the human models, neglecting the context in which the model is depicted. According to Artz and Venkatesh (1991, 621), it is important to look at the totality of an ad – not just the focal character – when studying the portrayals of gender in advertising. Therefore, in this study, the setting of the ad is included in the categorization.

Settings are rarely value-free. The setting may play a significant role in contributing to the gender identity: the depiction of a man at home, or in the office, or at a sports event, speaks to masculinity. However, the setting can also be neutral, i.e. the model is depicted in a non-specific environment, in

⁴⁹ Original source: Biddulph, Steve (1994) *Manhood*. Finch: Sydney.

which case the people and the product personalize the picture. The less defined the background setting, the less it affects the purpose of the ad. (Dyer 1982, 105.)

Traditionally in ads, a woman's place has been in the home, in domestic settings, whereas men have been portrayed in activities outside the home. (e.g. Burton 2005, 139; Lysonski 1985, 45; Courtney & Lockeretz 1971, 94; Courtney & Whipple 1974, 116). However, depending on the product advertised, there are exceptions: according to the Sexton and Haberman study (1974, 44), cigarette ads portrayed women as social companions, rather than as housewives or mothers. Strate (1992) studied men in American beer ads and according to his findings, a number of beer ads are set, besides outdoors or in a bar, in a living room with the television on.

An important 'activity outside the home' and a part of advertising's ideology is its idea of working life (Andrén et al., 1978, 156); men in particular have been associated with employment in advertisements (Wiles et al. 1995, 40). Traditionally, work has been considered a major feature in the shaping of masculine identities (Morgan 1992, 80); men constantly proving their worth through work (Spangler 1992, 94). In terms of occupations, men have been shown as employed in higher status jobs compared to women (e.g. Wiles et al. 1995, 43–44; Fejes 1992, 11).

Another typical activity and a setting for men in ads is sports. Ever since the nineteenth century, sporting activities have been associated with health and masculinity (Beynon 2002, 42). Masculinity was already being displayed through athleticism, strength, speed, fitness, and muscularity then. By contrast, women were regarded as being too weak to engage in sports (Tiihonen 1994, 243). In the twentieth century, more women became involved in sports, but according to Poe (1976), advertising still failed to reflect the social reality of highly skilled women competing seriously with each other in the world of sport. Surprisingly, the frequency of representations of women in sports decreased during the study period (1928, 1956 and 1972) (Poe 1976, 192).

Today, sport is still regarded as one of the main arenas for the acquisition and expression of socially approved and desirable masculinity (Beynon 2002, 51; Rowe 1999, 16–17; Fischer & Gainer 1994, 88; Tiihonen 1994, 229–230). Messner (1997, 458–459) sees sports events as rituals where the aim is to maintain the ideology and values of a competitive and hierarchical culture. The connection between sports and masculinity is distributed to young men by their fathers, older brothers, or other role models; according to Fischer and Gainer (1994, 88–89), sports provides one of the rare common playing fields for boys and their fathers, as well as the possibility to create close, albeit often hierarchical, bonds with other boys. Moreover, active participation in sports is

a way for boys to differentiate themselves from the female caregivers and to define themselves as ‘not feminine’⁵⁰.

Sports ranks high in Western cultures, especially in the United States. Americans believe that sport is a training ground for life (Sabo & Jansen 1992, 181); if one succeeds in sports, one succeeds in life. Sports reflect the skills needed for success in real life, where elements such as determination, skill and discipline, the will to strive for achievement and success, to think strategically, and obey rules are highly prized in, for instance, the arena of work. Consequently, sports can be regarded as an articulation of the values of a meritocratic system, i.e. an analogue of the capitalist ideology. Sports rituals are considered sources of achievement, ideology and gender imagery: hard work, activity, hegemonic masculinity. (Sabo & Jansen 1992, 183; Tiihonen 1994, 242; Rowe 1999, 135–137.) According to Tiihonen (1994, 230), there is a symbiotic relationship between real manhood and sports: you become a man by training and succeeding in sports. When a male model is depicted in a sports setting in an advert, the overall impression is likely to be dynamic and active (cf. Rowe 1999, 125).

2.3.3.3 Paradigmatic elements of masculinity in advertising

In this study, the main male character is further analysed on the basis of his apparent age, marital status, image of masculinity, role, race/skin colour, facial prominence, body type, clothing style, the man’s relation to other people, and finally, the man’s relation to the product. These elements represent the paradigmatic dimension of the ad. In the following, the choice of each element is justified.

The apparent age of the model(s)

According to Hearn and Melechi (1992, 216), age is part and parcel of men and masculinities. Age is implicated in the construction of masculinities; in the distinction of older men from young men and boys, and in the construction of particular masculinities – avuncular, mature, fatherly, and so on. Referring to age and masculinity, the authors draw an interesting inference of the role of America. They identify America as the world of modern cultural images and representations where youth and men have distinct roles. From the historical standpoint, and to Europeans, America is about youth (newness) and men

⁵⁰ Cited in Fischer and Gainer (1994, 89.) Original source: Messner, M. A. (1992) *Power at play*. Beacon: Boston.

(explorers). The frontiersmen and pioneers were the young men of their times, whereas Europe was the world of old men.

According to earlier studies, the stress is on youth in advertising, especially where women are concerned (e.g. Courtney & Whipple 1974, 116; Andrén et al. 1978, 121; 154; England, Kuhn & Gardner 1981). The emphasis on youth should come as no surprise if we follow Fisher's (1968⁵¹) line of thought: "*Youth equals popularity, popularity equals success, success equals happiness.*" According to Andrén et al. (1978, 134), the ideal, in regard to age, is 16–30 for women, whereas for men it ranges as widely as 16–65. This partly coincides with Berger's (2004, 4) notion of most advertising being aimed at the 18–49 cohort. Whether men are depicted young, middle-aged or older can relate to the prevailing ideals in society in general and create imaginary links between the potential target segment and the product.

In her comparative study of three countries, Australia, Mexico and the United States, Gilly (1988, 80) also found differences concerning age: in all three countries, women were portrayed significantly younger than men. Furthermore, the findings of the Ford et al. study (1998, 118) mirror the same trend in Japan as in the international gender literature: women were stereotypically portrayed as younger more often than men (ibid.). England et al. (1981) conducted a content analysis of 2,200 US advertisements, concluding that there is a contrast between the ages of people in ads and in the US population, especially concerning women: according to their study, only 4% of the women in the ads were judged to be 40+, in spite of the fact that at the same time 57% of US adult women were at least 40. The same disproportion also applied to men in the ads. However, in general, men are depicted older than women: according to England et al. (1981), men are more likely to be portrayed in their 30s and 40s.

In spite of the fact that the spokespersons and models are mostly young, the elderly are used as well. According to Tellis (1998, 204–205), the elderly are often stereotyped, and in two different ways: in a negative way, portraying the elderly as weak, senile, incompetent, or suffering from deafness, dentures and insomnia; and secondly, in a positive way, showing them as grandfatherly, authoritarian, wealthy, or learned. According to Ursic, Ursic and Ursic (1986, 132), there are great age differences in the casting of endorsers across product categories. For instance, clothing ads tend to cast their spokesperson as young, although consumers of all ages use the products (Tellis 1998, 205).

⁵¹ Cited in Pollay (1986, 27). Original source: Fisher, John (1968) *The plot to make you buy*. McGraw-Hill: New York.

Marital status

Whether the man in an ad is depicted married or not can speak of his sexual orientation. Traditionally, heterosexuality has represented the taken-for-granted ‘normality’; however, alongside the gay movement, people have become more tolerant of gay and lesbian rights. Nevertheless, homophobia still exists among heterosexual men. (Beynon 2002, 15.) Therefore, advertisers may be careful and purposefully relate to the prevailing straight norms.

Being married reproduces gender relations by assigning different rights, duties, and expectations to men and women (cf. Coltrane 2004, 269). Besides, ‘married’ fits the patriarchal codings of gender roles (Hanke 1992, 192). However, according to some earlier studies, (cited by Fejes 1992, 11⁵²), men are less likely to be shown as being married. In contrast, Gilly (1988, 80–81) found no differences in the marital status of men and women in television advertisements in Australia, Mexico and the United States. In fact, she hardly found indications of marital status. On the other hand, characters were rarely portrayed as obviously single.

Kolbe and Albanese (1996) studied, among other issues, the type of jewellery worn by men in print advertisements in the US. According to their findings (Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 14), wedding rings were worn by 26.5% of men wearing jewellery in *Business Week* (a leading weekly US business magazine) ads. The percentage was lower among the other five magazines in the study. Surprisingly, no other studies were found to have examined the marital status of men in adverts.

Endorsing roles

The endorsing role occupied by the model in an ad tells about his status and influence value as well as his relation to the audience. Typically, the following sources of influence are used: (1) celebrities (representing reference groups), (2) authority figures and experts (as representatives of opinion leaders), and (3) “typical users” (lay endorsers representing “one of us”). (e.g. Moriarty 1991, 44, 46.)

Celebrities – well known television stars, movie actors, famous athletes, pop stars, nowadays even business personalities (e.g. Bill Gates) and politicians (Bob Dole) – are widely used in advertising to endorse products. According to Cashmore and Parker (2003, 215; also Solomon 1990, 226), celebrities are commodifications of the human form: famous people are turned into things to be adored, respected, idolized, and eventually, consumed. For

⁵² Original sources: Manes, A. – Melnyk, P. (1974) Televised models of female achievement. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 365–374; McNeil, J. (1975) Feminism, femininity and the television series: A content analysis. *Journal of Broadcasting*, Vol 19, 259–269.

instance, images of soccer player David Beckham can be objects of desire for commodities. According to Ratneshwar and Chaiken (1991, 60), trustworthy celebrity endorsers enhance message comprehensibility. Celebrities affect consumers' attitudes and perceptions of quality. (Shimp 2000, 335, 338; Tellis 2004, 180.) If a star athlete, such as David Beckham, uses the product, the product must be good!

In spite of the wide usage of celebrities in advertising, several weaknesses in this strategy have been pointed out. First, a celebrity might endorse multiple brands and thus lack unique brand identity. Besides, consumers might have a higher awareness of the brand than the actual celebrity. And since hiring celebrities is in most cases costly, the money can be spent in vain. Finally, celebrities can hurt brands through inappropriate conduct; there is a risk of the celebrity getting caught up in a scandal which can also tarnish the product image. Besides being famous, a celebrity – in order to endorse a product successfully – should match the product being advertised. (Tellis 2004, 179; Clow & Baack 2004, 249.)

Experts can be utilised as authority figures to demonstrate the quality or high technology of a product. They are easily recognized because they either wear white coats and glasses or dress and act like 'mad professors' (Fill 2002, 514). For instance, toothpaste brands are often promoted by inference to a dentist's opinion. A car mechanic can be used to build credibility and believability towards the car in the ad. (Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh 2005, 118; Moriarty 1991, 46.) The metaphorical analogy between an expert and a product relates to the idea of conveyerism (Rossiter & Bellman 2005). The goal of conveyerism is to increase the overall effectiveness of an ad by using elements that consumers attend to and which they regard as possessing the key benefit. Experts represent one type of conveyer. An object (other than the product itself), an animal, a situation or a benefit illustrating distortion can function as a conveyer. The idea behind using an expert is to convey expertise to the product and thus to attract attention to the ad and increase its effectiveness. (Rossiter & Bellman 2005, 132–136.)

Non-celebrities, i.e. regular people or lay endorsers, are initially unknown or fictitious individuals also frequently shown using or endorsing products. Eventually, clever and sustained use may make them celebrities (e.g. Betty Crocker). (Tellis 2004, 180–181.) Singer (1983, 34–35) gives examples of significant success achieved using ordinary looking people in campaigns: for instance, Canadian Westin hotels showed real people – 'Westin Women' and 'Westin Men' – with whom the audience could identify and about whom they

could say “S/he is someone like me”. Thanks to the campaign⁵³, company awareness increased sharply.

However, in spite of the fact that real people can increase the trustworthiness and credibility of an ad (for instance, when a sick looking person is promoting a medicine for a cold), the attractiveness and likability of the source may be lower, especially among the young (15–24 year-olds) (Clow & Baack 2004, 247, 250). Still, according to Clow and Baack (2004, 247), the use of real people in ads is on the increase.

Instead of one typical user, ‘real people ads’ often show many people. Portraying more than one person might increase the persuasive role and effectiveness of the message. (Shimp 2000, 339–340; Clow & Baack 2004, 250.) Typically, advertisers show a group of smiling, satisfied customers: “*If so many people use the product why wouldn’t you?*”

Ads can employ endorsers in different modes: the explicit mode, “*I endorse this product*” (and in order to capture some of my fame, you should use it, too); the implicit mode, “*I use this product*” (and therefore, you should use it, too, because you are like me); the imperative mode, “*You should use this product*” (because I say so), and the passive or copresent mode (where the celebrity merely appears with the product). (McCracken 1989, 310.) The mode is determined by the type of endorser and the endorser’s role in the ad. Experts easily adopt the imperative mode because of their authority, whereas celebrities can adopt the passive mode, thanks to their general fame. Since lay endorsers lack the credibility of experts and the notoriety of celebrities, they use the implicit mode. (cf. Tellis 1998, 193.)

The following purposes have been proposed for endorsers: creating *attractiveness* and *likability* towards the source⁵⁴ of the message, adding *credibility* to the source, and transferring meanings between the products and particular types of people. According to Clow and Baack (2004, 247), attractiveness comprises both physical and personality characteristics; a physically good-looking endorser is unlikely to develop an emotional bond between the individual and the product, if he or she is considered to have a sour disposition. The more attractive (in regard to these characteristics) the source, the more acceptable its message, especially among respondents of the opposite sex. In general, attractive sources are liked more because people

⁵³ At the same time (1981), the company changed its name from Western International Hotels to Westin Hotels.

⁵⁴ According to Tellis (1998, 188), the *source* includes the endorser appearing on behalf of the advertiser, or the advertiser itself. For Fill (2005, 533), however, endorsers are only messengers who carry the message and represent the true source, and advertisers (manufacturers or retailers) are the source.

become socialized by the media which tend to associate more positive values with physically attractive endorsers (Joseph 1982, 17).

However, the effect can be moderated by the type of product: Baker & Churchill (1977) tested the effects of physical attractiveness, product type, and subjects' sex on evaluations of the ad and purchase intentions. When the product was attractiveness unrelated (e.g. coffee), a female model produced higher intention scores among male subjects when she was unattractive than when she was attractive. Yet, an attractive female model produced higher intention scores when the product was attractiveness related (e.g. cologne). (Baker & Churchill 1977, 552; also Joseph 1982, 20; Kahle & Homer 1985, 959.) It has also been claimed (Phau & Lum 2000, 46) that a model's physical attractiveness is unimportant if the product already has a strong brand image. Moreover, age does not necessarily seem to inhibit source attractiveness [where male models are concerned]: when the model is considerably older than the members of the audience, he can be considered a potent source of influence (Joseph 1982, 19⁵⁵).

The concept of similarity is closely linked to attractiveness: consumers are more readily influenced by a message delivered by a person who is similar to themselves. Similarity and attractiveness can create identification, i.e. make the receiver identify himself/herself with the endorser, making the consumer feel that the source shares similar beliefs, values, attitudes and preferences as themselves. (Clow & Baack 2004, 247–248; Tellis 1998, 188–189; McCracken 1989, 311; Baker & Churchill 1977, 547.)

Also closely related to attractiveness is likability, i.e. the audience's positive attitude and affection towards the source. According to earlier studies (see e.g. Clow & Baack 2004, 247; Baker & Churchill 1977, 553), the physical attractiveness of the model in the ad influences people's evaluations of the aesthetic qualities of the ad, so increasing its attention-getting value and likability. Overall, consumers respond more positively to endorsers they like, and models who rank positively on attractiveness and likability are assumed to excel in other characteristics, too. Such an assumption is called the halo effect⁵⁶: what is beautiful is good. (Solomon et al. 1999, 155.) Accordingly, we can assume that an attractive model in an ad increases the likability of the product.

⁵⁵ Original sources: Horai, J. – Naccari, N. – Fatoullah, E. (1974) The effects of expertise and physical attractiveness upon opinion agreement and liking. *Sociometry*, Vol. 37, 601–606. Snyder, Mark – Rothbart, Myron (1971) Communicator attractiveness and opinion change. *Canadian Journal of the Behavioural Sciences*, Vol. 3, 377–387.

⁵⁶ According to Schiffman and Kanuk (1997, 170), it is a question of a halo effect when the evaluation of a single object with a multitude of dimensions is based on the evaluation of just one or few dimensions.

Sometimes, an endorser may be likable or attractive but is not considered trustworthy. Along with expertise, trustworthiness is a property of the overall credibility of the source. Trustworthiness refers to honesty, integrity and the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions. Moreover, expertise refers to knowledge, experience or skills possessed by the endorser. According to earlier studies, customers will accept the claims of a source they perceive to be more knowing than themselves. (McCracken 1989, 310–311; Tellis 1998, 188, 193; Shimp 2000, 343.) And a credible source is considered believable (Clow & Baack 2004, 248). In ads targeted at men, according to Gladwell (2000, 189), the male model has to be believable, and credibility is established by avoiding excess hypocrisy: a man is no longer a man if he is too gorgeous (whereas a woman in an ad can never be too gorgeous).

Images of masculinity

In advertising, images are often conveyed using stereotypes, generalizing people who belong to a certain social group. Gender stereotypes create expectations about the desirable behaviour of men and women; for instance, depicting women as wives and mothers, or as submissive sex objects who exist solely for the pleasures of men (Evans et al. 2000, 44; Solomon et al. 1999, 188; Zhou & Chen 1997, 485–486; Karppinen 1989, 79). Fortunately, this line of thought is changing, and along with the changes in society, the range of images has become more diverse and versatile with regard to both genders.

In line with the idea of multiple masculinities, today's men can fall into various categories of images of masculinity. The conception of the ideal male as the tough, aggressive, muscular man still exists; however, contemporary men are also allowed to be softer and more sensitive as well as more 'feminine' (as to their looks and clothing) than before (Solomon et al. 1999, 189; Trubo 2003; Koskinen 2003, 83). The prevalence of a particular image in advertising can tell us something about values in real life, for instance whether work, women or children are prioritized.

An overview of various archetypes of masculinity, mainly socially constructed definitions, was given in Subchapter 2.2.2. These archetypes are concerned largely with the social status of men, i.e. their activities (work, housework, childcare, sports etc.), personality traits (e.g. the above-mentioned characteristics of men: courageous, tough, aggressive etc.), looks (physical build, face, clothing), or with relationships to other people and social institutions (spouse, father, colleague, and so forth) (Brannon 1985, 302).

Herein, however, the interest lies in images of masculinity in *advertising*, using content analysis as a research method in the first phase of the study. Consequently, the aim is to construct a categorization whose values can be

coded and analyzed systematically and objectively in advertising. As earlier categorizations of images of masculinity in advertising seem to be scarce, Uusitalo et al. (2003) being one of the rare exceptions⁵⁷, prior cultural categorizations will operate as a premise for development.

Race/Skin colour

According to Carr (2004, 656), *race* and masculinity are inseparable in the sense that what counts as ‘masculine’ is dependent on the historically specific ways in which race and racism have been understood. For instance, there has been discussion as to whether race is a biological conception or a social phenomenon, just as there has been similar discussion with regard to masculinity. Often, societies containing racial differences and distinctions are also those with racial hierarchies and class divisions; people of colour have generally occupied subordinate positions in social, economic and political lives. (Kramer 2005, 175, 181–182; Gaines 2004, 654; Barker 2004, 170.) The racial distribution of men in ads connotes to the prevailing ideals of colour.

Ethnic and racial identity is significant to a consumer’s self-concept, and members of minority groups consider advertising spokespersons of their own ethnicity more trustworthy. (Solomon et al. 1999, 429.) In spite of this and the notion that racial and ethnic differences should explicitly be taken into account in advertising, the race distribution depicted in ads is often disproportionate to the that in the population of the country concerned (e.g. Andr n et al. 1978, 134; Wiles, Wiles & Tjernlund 1996, 61). This has been proven to be the case in the United States as well (ibid.), where the issues of race and ethnicity are important particularly since practically all Americans are descended from different backgrounds. In a racially homogenous country such as Finland, little diversity in skin colour is expected among the men portrayed in adverts.

Facial prominence

According to Schroeder and Borgerson (1998, 177, 180), the face is the cornerstone of identity and individuality. The essence of a man is thought to reside – from a visual perspective – in his face and head (cf. Barker 2005, 301). Previous studies have indicated that face-ism – the relative prominence of the face in a photograph, drawing or other depiction of a person – plays a consistent role in the depictions of gender (Archer, Iritani, Kimes & Barrios 1983; Schwarz & Kurz 1989; Fejes 1992, 11; Lammers & Lammers 1993; Schroeder & Borgerson 1998). High facial prominence in media has been associated with intelligence, rationality, ambition, and attractiveness.

⁵⁷ Hirschman (1999) has also examined archetypal male images in media, but her study concerned American motion pictures and television shows.

According to earlier studies (e.g. Archer et al. 1983; Schwarz & Kurz 1989), men have been more likely than women to be portrayed in terms of their heads or faces. Furthermore, visual depictions that are higher in face-ism are supposed to elicit impressions of higher power and vice versa. Facial prominence can supposedly be related to racial issues as well. According to Zuckerman and Kieffer's study (1994), face-ism was lower among blacks than among white people, and due to their higher facial prominence, white people were perceived as more dominant.

The essence of a woman, on the other hand, is thought to reside in her body, as the locus of heart and emotions; stereotypically, women have been considered more emotional than men (Gunter 1995, 15). Thus, women have often been depicted by their bodies – in full length – conceptualized in nonintellectual terms like weight, physique, and attractiveness. (Archer et al. 1983, 726; Fejes 1992, 11.) Parallel to face-ism, this phenomenon reflects body-ism (Archer et al. 1983, 733). Body-ism can sometimes take submissive or demeaning forms by eliminating the female head altogether (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 177–178). According to the authors (ibid.), women who are depicted without heads not only suffer the connotations of actual violence implied by the decapitation, but also those of symbolic violence by erasure of identity and intelligence. She is only a body, and it is the body that serves as an object of male attention (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 172, 185). According to some researchers (e.g. Bordo 1997, 124), even the notion of women as objects embodies the reduction of women to mere bodies.

The same applies to close cropping techniques, i.e. letting any other part – a hand, eye, or leg, for instance – represent a whole person: there is not much more left to consider (Massé & Rosenblum 1988, 132; Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 172). According to Goldman (1992, 121), such advertisements perpetuate a pattern of seeing people as collections of body parts, erasing the person's identity by means of cropping (see also Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 173).

Contradictory views to face-ism exist: according to Rohlinger (2002, 62), masculinity proceeds from men's bodies, and it is often expressed physically through muscles. Edwards (1997) suggests that lately the male body has replaced the male face and head in advertising. Whether or not this proves to be case in this study will be interesting to see.

Body type

One global measure of the physical qualities of people is body type (Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 11). Besides physical capital, bodies possess social and economic capital: a person's body has a great impact on their appearance and thus, self-image and image among others; which can in turn lead to a better

exchange value and currency rate in the ‘market’. (cf. O’Neill 2004, 22; Patterson & Elliott 2002, 233). By portraying images of models with idealized bodies, advertisers try to transfer some of the body capital to otherwise neutral products (Uusitalo et al. 2003).

Through its representation of bodies, advertising also creates and reinforces gender identities (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 164). The male body has traditionally been associated with dominance, power, and self-mastery. Within a certain limit, body type or body build is an innate characteristic, e.g. males are, on average, larger [and considered stronger] than females across all cultures (Hawkins & Coney 1976, 420–421; Hofstede 1991, 80). Throughout history, physical strength and gender have been interlinked for varying reasons. In pre-industrial times, it was important for a man to be physically strong; physical fitness was directly related to military readiness and commercial success. (Beynon 2002, 47.)

The effects of the Industrial Revolution lessened the importance of physical strength. This did not, however, mean that men became soft and weak, but led to a new kind or aspect of sport – physical training or physical culture. As early as 1898, the typical images in the popular *Magazine of Physical Culture* were of young men, statuesque and sculptural, bare-chested and muscles flexed. To neglect the body was considered a sin against nature. A healthy male body was regarded as one of the most powerful symbols of the time. (Beynon 2002, 43–44.) In Britain, men were expected to be fit for military service for the British Empire, which had brought with it the concept of an ‘Imperial man’: physically fit boys and men, ready to die for the good of the Empire (Beynon 2002, 47–48.)

After the First World War, the Imperial man and the ‘soldier and hero’ became the ‘soldier and victim’. Little of his masculinity still remains, although Imperial man’s desire for a hard, muscular, ‘warrior body’ can be found among contemporary men as well. (Beynon 2002, 50–52.) In the classic categorization of body types⁵⁸, Imperial man represents the muscular mesomorphic (well-proportioned, strong and hard, V-shaped body), the other types being endomorphic (soft and round), and ectomorphic (thin and lightly muscled) (Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 11; see also Law & Labre 2002, 697; Stern 2003, 222). This classification has also been used within a strand of psychological research to explore the desirability and role of body form. For an American collegiate male, mesomorphic represents the ideal body type. (Watson 2000, 40.) Unsurprisingly, the strong and muscular type was the most frequently portrayed according to the Kolbe and Albanese analysis of sole-

⁵⁸ Sheldon, William H. (1954) *Atlas of men: a guide for somatotyping the adult male at all ages*. Harper: New York.

male images in US magazine advertising (Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 17). As to personal traits, mesomorphic individuals have been associated with positive characteristics, such as smartness, strength, happiness, healthiness, popularity and dominance; whereas the endomorphic type has been typified as being nervous, submissive, and socially withdrawn (Wykes & Gunter 2005, 139⁵⁹; for a review of earlier studies on associations of body types, see Mishkind et al. 1987, 49). However, a large body size can also be regarded as a symbol of strength (Kramer 2005, 73).

In a study by Law and Labre (2002), covering a thirty-year span (1967–1997) of the editorial content of three magazines (Sports Illustrated, Rolling Stone, and GQ), muscularity was found to have increased progressively over the years, reaching its highest level in the 1990s. In their study, an eight-category body-fat/muscularity scale, in reference to mesomorphic, endomorphic and ectomorphic body types, was used in coding a total of 409 images of men.

According to Mishkind et al. (1987, 47–48; see also Penttilä 1999, 22), given that cognitive, occupational and lifestyle differences between men and women are being eroded, body image remains one of the few areas in which men can differentiate themselves from women. Kimmel (1987, 16) regards the increased body awareness among men as an artefact of the decline in the breadwinner masculinity image and a reflection of men's role as autonomous consumers.

Clothing

We utilise goods not simply for their utilitarian value, but also for their social value. Goods can extend our power and communicate our sense of self to others, and this certainly applies to clothing. "*Clothing makes a man*" is an old adage that may have some truth to it. Due to their highly visible role, clothes can operate as status symbols and help people climb the social ladder, as well as assist in creating an impression of competitiveness and assertiveness. Clothes are also an example of goods that define and reinforce definitions of what is masculine and what is feminine. In Western cultures, men's clothing is and has historically been different to women's. Thus, the role of clothing in defining the genders has been quite evident. (Lorber 2001, 22; Edwards 1997, 14; Barthel 1992, 138–140; McCracken 1988, 71.)

In spite of the communicative function of clothing, readers and viewers are seeing more and more nudity and eroticism, i.e. sex appeal, in advertising (Soley & Reid 1988, 960; Reidenbach & McCleary 1983, 444; Kerin et al.

⁵⁹ Original source: Dibiase, W. J. – Hjelle, L. A. (1968) Body-image stereotypes and body-type preferences among male college students. *Perceptual & Motor Skills*, Vol. 27, 1143–1146.

1979, 39). The idea of sex appeal arises from the use of traditionally and mostly semi-clad or even nude women as a means of drawing attention to the message; there is, however, a danger of customers attending only to the ad and not remembering the brand (Coleman 1989, 12). The presence of a woman is very often only decorative, the woman being pictured primarily for display or aesthetic purposes, with no functional relation to the product being advertised. (Kerin et al. 1979, 39; Clow & Baack 2004, 209–210.) According to Fill (2005, 543), sex appeal works best for sex-related products such as fragrance, clothing and jewellery, but not in situations where the product is unrelated, e.g. cars, photocopiers and furniture⁶⁰.

Despite their wide deployment, sexual components and nudity can, as previously mentioned, distract from the claims of a message. According to a study by Piron and Young (1996, 212), ads using nudity were even perceived as offensive, and brand names were recalled less faithfully when the ad contained sexual or erotic components. Similar results have been concluded by Alexander and Judd (1978; cf. Fill 2005, 543). In spite of this, the use of males in sexual or provocative roles has increased in recent years (Simpson et al. 1996, 257); the authors' findings (Simpson et al. 1996, 261) on the use of male nudity in advertisements suggest that advertisers may use seductively dressed or even undressed males to enhance ad appeal in women, especially when the product is congruent with nudity, but should avoid male nudity in ads targeting men. Also according to Clow and Baack (2004, 211), if and when nudity is used, it should be an integral part of the product, not just an element to attract attention. According to Reidenbach and McCleary (1983, 452), the only way to assure liking or belief in an ad [using nudity] would be to copy test them prior to exposure.

Relation to others in the ad

Social roles, herein masculinity, often function in matched combinations; i.e. the way masculinity is represented in an advert is dependant on the other people in it. There cannot be husbands without wives, fathers without children. (Brannon 1985, 301.) Particularly the relation between men and women in adverts has been of interest among scholars. Wood (2003, 272–279) lists four different themes which demonstrate how media reflect and promote traditional relations between the sexes. Traditionally, media have depicted women as dependent on men, and men as caretakers of women yet independent.

⁶⁰ However, semi-clad women have often been used obtrusively in car ads. A few years ago, there was controversy concerning an ad campaign in Finland where a former Miss Finland was promoting items of furniture while wearing a small bikini.

According to Wood (2003, 272), this theme is still the dominant portrayal of power between the sexes, but no longer the only one.

A second still prevalent theme is to depict men as competent authorities who rescue women from their incompetence. A typical example of this in advertising is the abundant use of male voiceovers, reinforcing the view that men are authorities who can tell women what to do and what to buy. (Wood 2003, 274–275; Fejes 1992, 14; Courtney & Whipple 1974, 117.)

A third theme suggests women as caregivers and men as providers, breadwinners. Women have appeared in nurturing roles, whereas men have been depicted as ignorant of housework and childcare. Looking good and doing things to please others have been stressed in magazines aimed at women and girls. Men, to the contrary, are typically depicted outside of the home, focusing on achievements and pursuing their careers. (Wood 2003, 276–277.)

According to the fourth theme of relationships between men and women, women are depicted as victims and sexual objects, and men as aggressors. This theme portrays men as dominant and strong actors whereas women are depicted as objects of men's sexual desires. The qualities that ads encourage women to enhance (e.g. beauty and sexiness) in order to meet cultural ideals of femininity, contribute to objectifying them even more. (Wood 2003, 277–278.) However, looking at today's adverts reveals that objectification can apply to men, too.

As to relationships between men, according to Spangler (1992, 93–96, 109), male relationships are goal-oriented, depicting men rather *doing* than *being* together. Men are not emotionally intimate with each other; rather their friendships are marked by shared activities. This might be to do with homosexual panic, a fear of appearing homosexual. However, as target audiences change, representations of gender are expected to change in this matter (Spangler 1992, 94).

According to Sayre (1992, 18), when depicting relationships, advertisers should be sensitive to the gender implications. Based on their findings, Klassen et al. (1993, 38) note that advertisers who are sensitive to the way men and women are portrayed together and show both sexes in 'equality poses', may have a competitive advantage over those advertisers who are not. According to the authors, consumers continue to be concerned with the depictions of men and women in advertisements.

Relation to product

According to earlier studies (e.g. Belkaoui & Belkaoui 1976, 171; Kerin et al. 1979, 39), particularly women have been depicted in decorative roles in relation to the product. Interestingly, the idea of women as sex objects arises from the use of women as attention-getting means when their presence adds

little but decoration to the product. However, according to Sayre (1992, 17), a visualization of product consumption is important for products that are used in social interaction. When a product has little or no meaning on its own (in Sayre's study, the sample product was a fragrance which is distinguished only by aroma), meaning can be created through visual association with a person or object that has value to the consumer.

At their best, the above discussed syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements can provide a detailed and comprehensive basis for examining masculinity in advertising. The premise for the elements is that the way masculinity is mediated in print ads can be appraised by delving into the product he is promoting, the ad setting, his age, his marital status, the endorsing role, the image of masculinity, race/skin colour, facial prominence, body type, clothing, his relation to others in the ad as well as his relation to the product being advertised. How well these elements feature masculinity is to be seen after they have been tested in advertising in Finland and the US.

2.4 Conclusions

Masculinity is an intricate, elusive concept, and only relatively recently has the construction of masculinity become the subject of respectable academic research (Salzman et al. 2005, 32). The focus of this study is on mediated masculinities that presumably stem from the social construction and concept of masculinity. The challenge is to apply the concept instrumentally in order to discover how masculinity has been mediated in general-interest magazines in Finland and the United States during the last 30 years. In the following, I shall conclude with a theoretical conceptualization of masculinity which is further linked up to the indicators of masculinity, i.e. the syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements. At its best, the conceptualization makes it possible to study masculinities in different cultural contexts, in this case Finnish and American.

In the Western world, masculinity is in a state of flux, and the contemporary definition reflects some traditional elements as well as showing the influences of recent social changes. The conventional elements speak to the avoidance of anything feminine (Cohen 2001, 5). Traditionally, the idealized man has been considered to be active, work oriented, emotionally and economically independent, physically powerful, and heterosexual (Kramer 2005, 28). An ideal Western man has been regarded as a rational decision maker, preferably white, self-confident and with an interest in technical matters, as well as possessing expertise and demonstrating authority over 'manly' issues. However, as culture and media have begun to respond to the increasing

independence of women, ideas about masculinity have changed accordingly. One of the changes has been men's increasing interest in their appearance.

The following table delineates the concept of masculinity as it is understood in this study, and the relations to the paradigmatic and syntagmatic elements that are used in the content analytical phase of the study. In the table and in this study, masculinity is divided into nine dimensions: individualism and independence; authority and expertise; work orientation; heterosexuality; activeness; physical power; race/ethnicity; rationality; and appearance.

Table 9. The concept of masculinity and elements of measuring its manifestations.

	Individualism, Independence	Authority, Expertise	Work orientation	Hetero-sexuality	Activeness	Physical power	Race; Ethnicity	Rationality	Appearance
Product category									
Number of men									
Number of women									
Number of children									
Setting/location									
Age									
Marital status									
Role									
Image of masculinity									
Race/skin colour									
Facial prominence									
Body type									
Clothing style									
Relation to other people									
Relation to product									

Individualism and independence are features often affiliated with masculinity (e.g. Wood 2003, 22; Morgan 1992, 43). The concepts are close to each other, but literally the former refers to difference from others and the latter to self-confidence and ability to work alone (Collins 1987, 740, 742). Striving for individualism is linked to independence, i.e. it is better to rely on oneself than on others (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997, 427). In an individualistic cultural environment, independence, achievement, freedom, and high levels of competition, are emphasized, people being motivated by self-interest and the achievement of personal goals (Zhang & Neelankavil 1997, 135–136). In an ad, independence and individualism can be indicated by the number of people; herein, particularly whether the man is depicted alone, as well as by his relation to other people. Further, the kind of product he is promoting can infer to these features; for instance, a car can be considered an extension of independence and individualism (Hirschman 2003, 17). High facial prominence is also considered to relate to individualism (Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 177, 180).

A masculine man is supposed to be an authority figure which, in this study, is indicated by his role in the ad as well as the degree of facial prominence. In addition, the male model's age can relate to authority and expertise: the older the man in the ad, the greater an authority figure he may be (Tellis 1998, 205). In an ad, work orientation relates to the setting of the ad, i.e. whether the man is depicted in an occupational setting. In addition, the image of masculinity and the man's clothing style can be related to his dedication to work.

The social construction of masculinity has placed high priority on heterosexuality (Kramer 2005, 88; Connell 2002, 62). As with other dimensions, the challenge is how to indicate a complex feature through quite simple manifest indicators. In this study, heterosexuality is indicated by marital status, the number of men and number of women in the ad as well as the man's relation to other people in the ad. Being active is also considered a masculine feature (Connell 2002, 40). Herein, activeness is indicated by the setting/location of the ad, the man's relation to the product as well as by his clothing style.

For a man, physical power is often related to his muscles (e.g. Virtanen 2004, 22). Muscular, strong and hard, V-shaped men have been found to be the ideal in previous US studies (Alexander 2003; Law & Labre 2002; Kolbe & Albanese 1996). Herein, physical power is related to the male model's body type as well as to his age. Besides, the advertised product can subliminally relate to the man's power. For instance, in a car ad, the car's power is juxtaposed with his power (Barthel 1997, 146).

In the US, where race and ethnicity have been a fragile issue, whiteness has traditionally been considered the masculine norm (Hanke 1992, 186).

However, the share of white people is gradually and steadily declining as new immigrant groups enter the country. What kind of racial ideology are advertisers in general-interest magazines practising? In this study, partly due to the limitations of content analysis as a method, this question is captured by the male model's skin colour.

According to earlier studies of gender portrayals in advertising, male characters are likely to be more rational and less sensitive and emotional than their female counterparts. In this study, the challenge of how to examine rationality was amplified by the degree of facial prominence.

In addition to the afore-mentioned dimensions, anxiety over one's appearance is an area that increasingly concerns men as well. Also men must spend time and money in order to meet the standards of appearance for occupational and social success. Furthermore, as we age, changes in the body – wrinkling, gaining weight, greying – take people farther from the cultural ideals of attractiveness. Consequently, with the aid of cosmetic products, also a growing number of men try to diminish and hide the signs of aging. (Kramer 2005, 73–74.) In the study at hand, the elements of age, image of masculinity, body type and clothing style as well as the product category, are all concerned with this dimension of masculinity.

Along with the changes in the fabric of culture, the way masculinity has appeared in the media is expected to have changed throughout the study period. In relation to this, four tentative hypotheses regarding how masculinity in ads might be expected to have changed and differ between the two countries are proposed. No comparable analysis of advertising in Finland is known to have been conducted that would aid in hypothesizing how masculinities may have changed and how they may differ from those in the United States. Therefore, the hypotheses stem from suggestions and expectations based on the earlier literature on gender issues in general.

First, due to globalization and the way the world is becoming a smaller place, advertising as well as communication in general has abandoned cultural limits, and, therefore, it can be argued that (H1) *the mediated masculinity has converged in Finland and the US during the last 30 years*. According to Andrén et al. (1978; see also Mooij 1998, 6), marketing and advertising permeate with a uniform ideology, and often, this ideology originates in the United States. It will be interesting to examine how uniform the ideology concerning male portrayals between Finland and the United States has become over the past three decades.

It is a prevailing assumption that the time we are living in is postmodern. The postmodern ideal stresses sensuality, sexuality, and the importance of one's appearance (Sarpavaara 2004, 56). It is further assumed that sexual equality between men and women has increased in the Western world since

the 1960s with the emergence of the second wave of feminism. Not only are women objects of men's voyeuristic gazes in advertising; but today, also men can be gazed upon (Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphou & Zavoina 1999, 16). Consequently, a second hypothesis is proposed (H2): *The objectification⁶¹ of men in advertising has increased during the last 30 years, and there is more sexploitation involving men now than in earlier years.*

Moreover, it is women who have traditionally been concerned with their appearance. The preoccupation with looks seems to have been a central feature of femininity. (Mishkind et al. 1987, 37.) However, considering the importance attached to appearances along the course of postmodernity, it is argued (H3) that *an increasing trend of feminization concerning men in Finnish and US advertising can be discerned during the last 30 years.* The feminization is also related to the more caring and nurturing role of men, as a result of second-wave feminism (Edwards 1997, 39). It is anticipated that we will see men depicted with children and in homely settings more often now than three decades ago.

The fourth hypothesis is concerned with the prevailing accusation made against advertising for creating and perpetuating flawless stereotypes of people, especially women (Fowles 1996, 14). However, as the significance of appearances increasingly concerns men as well, it is expected that across the time span of the study, (H4) *men are increasingly depicted as flawless – young and well-built.*

⁶¹ In the literature, this is referred to as 'reverse sexism', where males are depicted as sexual objects for women (e.g. Piron & Young 1996, 215). However, objectification can also mean men being objects of other men.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodological foundations of the research at hand. The first method, content analysis, is widely used in cultural and communication studies, representing quantitative techniques. It is a method that aims to produce a macro level ‘big picture’ of the phenomenon under investigation, and as such, is not well suited to studying ‘deep’ questions about communication. Hence, it has been accused of providing description of data rather than their interpretation, meanings, uses or effects (Tonkiss 2004, 368; Holbrook 1977, 176). Consequently, it is recommendable to use quantitative and qualitative approaches methodologically in combination to ensure analytical enrichment and triangulation⁶² of research findings (Leiss et al. 1986, 175; also Cronin 2000, 56).

Along the course of the research process of this study it soon became evident that an additional method was needed to answer the research questions fully. In order to explore wider connotations of the ads and to enrich the meanings of masculinity, the content analytical phase was supplemented herein by focus group discussions, representing qualitative techniques.

To answer the first research question “*How does masculinity manifest itself?*”, it was initially necessary to build a categorization of masculinity which was used in the content analytical phase of the study. The categorization was built upon the concept of masculinity and previous studies concerning gender portrayals. Prior to the actual coding process, the variables and values were refined on the basis of the comments made by the coders during the pre-coding process. Since the focus group interviews were conducted after the content analysis, the discussants added valuable new information concerning the manifestation of masculinity. Consequently, on the basis of the focus group discussions, the original elements were revised for potential subsequent use. As to the empirical data, the focus groups occupied a major role concerning research question one. Conversely, upon answering research questions two “*How has masculinity changed over time?*” and three “*What similarities and differences in masculinities can be found between the countries?*”, the data gathered by the content analysis were in pole position but the focus group discussions brought in valuable information and the

⁶² It is a matter herein of *methodological triangulation*: i.e. using two or more methods in the same study. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 99.)

cultural perspective to the issue. The content analytical phase will also make it possible to test four tentative hypotheses that are concerned with mediated masculinity in the two cultures over the thirty-year period.

By using multiple methods and combining evidence from different sources this study attempts to make an in-depth understanding of masculinity in advertising. Besides, the fact that the focus group discussions were conducted among representatives of both Finnish and US cultures, adds a cultural flavour to the data. In the following, both methods – content analysis and focus group discussions – will be, at first, reviewed separately. Secondly, the methods are juxtaposed and thirdly, the value of mixing them is discussed.

3.1 Empirical research design for phase 1: Content analysis

Studying media content across cultures presents a challenge to the researcher, who needs to be able to analyse the content in a way that can be treated as more than arbitrary and subjective musings. The study findings need to be grounded in methodological controls that can justify a particular reading, and that can approach the content with enough consistency to allow comparability and generalization. Furthermore, the method used should be able to permit other researchers to replicate or disprove the findings. (Slater 1998, 233.)

Content analysis is one such method and will be used in the first empirical phase of this study. According to Krippendorff (1980, 21; 1991, 127), content analysis is a research technique for drawing replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, *a method for seeing in context what is mediated in public*. As a matter of fact, the term *content analysis* itself describes what the method basically does: it analyses the content of something (Berger 2000, 173). In doing so, it is founded on indirect evidence, thus providing only vicarious knowledge, information about something not directly observed and not influencing its subjects (Berger 2005, 134). This is one of the reasons why content analysis has been called a ‘nonreactive’ or ‘unobtrusive’ research technique (see e.g. Holsti 1969, 16). Moreover, content analysis is a directive method: it only gives answers to the questions the analyst poses. Thus, what is counted is determined by the research questions. (Krippendorff 1980, 25–28; Deacon et al. 1999, 117.)

Having been developed in the social sciences, content analysis has over the years spread to numerous disciplines: psychology, anthropology, history, and international politics (Krippendorff 1980, 18; see also Wheeler 1988, 35). Within marketing, it has been applied to marketing research studies, including advertising and international marketing (Cutler, Javalgi & Erramilli 1992, 11). Content analysis is said to be useful for monitoring ‘cultural temperatures’; it

can be used, for instance, to determine elements of culture through systematic analysis of its words and pictures, e.g. within advertisements, and thus, to demonstrate trends across advertising messages (cf. Fullerton & Kendrick 2000, 132; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold 1998, 92).

According to Deacon et al. (1999, 116; see also Krippendorff 1980, 25, and Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken 2002, 587), the natural domain of content analysis is precisely communication and cultural studies. They (Deacon et al. 1999, 116) list a selection of communication studies where content analysis has been used as a method, including news and current affairs, cartoons, television dramas and talk shows, music videos, situation comedies, sports reporting, the Internet, magazines, and advertisements. Content analysis has become an important research methodology for understanding the ways advertising depicts value-laden subjects, such as age, gender, and social status. It is said to be particularly useful when data are limited to documentary evidence and when the objective is to study the message, like an advert, in itself. (Berelson 1971, 22; Carney 1972, 27–28; Wheeler 1988, 34; Shani et al. 1992, 384–385.) The abundance of journal articles⁶³ applying content analysis reveals its widespread use in analysing advertising (Riffe & Freitag 1997, 873).

In general, to conduct a content analysis is to try to describe salient (in relation to the research questions) aspects of how certain images depict some kinds of people, events, processes, and/or interrelationships between these. In order to be able to draw inferences from the findings of a content analysis, the researcher makes a prediction about the salience or priority by going ‘beyond the data’. (Bell 2001, 24–25.)

3.1.1 Conceptual foundations of content analysis

Before proceeding, we must take a look at some of the inconsistencies that exist in using the term content analysis (see Holsti 1969, 5–14; Rosengren 1981, 9–19; Deacon et al. 1999, 115; Krippendorff 1991, 128–130). First, whether content analysis represents *qualitative* or *quantitative* research has been a matter of considerable debate⁶⁴, and secondly, whether or not content analysis must be limited to the *manifest* content of communication. Both of these issues concern the objectivity of the research, as will be discussed later.

⁶³ Kolbe and Burnett (1991) conducted an empirical review and synthesis of 128 studies, published between 1978–1989, that had used content analysis. The authors regard content analysis as an important method for facilitating different types of analysis within communications studies.

⁶⁴ Interestingly, the quantitative-qualitative aspect has been a central concern amongst those who practise content analysis, ever since the 1955 Allerton content analysis conference (Holsti 1969, 109).

Often, objectivity and reliability have been equated with quantitative methods⁶⁵ (Slater 1998, 235; Rose 2003, 55).

According to Toivonen (1999, 125–126), the traditional way⁶⁶ of conducting content analysis is qualitative by nature, i.e. to examine the contents of a text or picture without strict rules or measures, as has been commonly done in historical research. Yet, according to Toivonen (ibid.), content analysis is not only qualitative but also quantitative. He refers to the quantitative content analysis as examining denotations, e.g. counting the frequency of words, pictures etc., whereas the deeper meanings, connotations, are examined via qualitative content analysis.

Contrary to this, Berelson (1971, 17, 20, 114–134) regards content analysis as a purely quantitative research technique “*for the objective and systematic description of the **manifest** content of communication*”. Also Neuendorf (2002, 10) conceives content analysis as a quantitative analysis, yet, not being as rigorous in the requirement of the manifest content. According to her, also latent or deeper meanings of messages can be studied, but not measured directly via content analysis. Instead, deeper meanings can be measured by other indicators. For example, the latent construct ‘sexism’ has been measured by 27 manifest variables that tapped stereotypic images of women, extracted from a variety of theoretic works and critical, qualitative analyses of films⁶⁷. Also Leiss et al. (1986, 174) consent to the qualitative aspects: *Content analysis allows us to treat qualitative data in quantitative terms*, thus helping ground the analysis of images and words in rigorous, systematic classification rather than in individual interpretations. By citing Fearing (1954⁶⁸), Kassarian (1977, 8) seems to approve of the idea that “*latent as well as manifest content may be examined by content analysis [...] by judges trained in the use of objectively defined criteria*”.

The quantitative nature of content analysis in mass communication studies comes out in the findings of Lombard et al. (2002, 597): in 80% of the 200 content analytical studies [in the years 1994–1998] covered, content analysis was used as a quantitative method. Also in this study (phase 1), content analysis is applied as a quantitative method. The aim is to examine the

⁶⁵ In reference to this, Smith and Taffler (2000) call the quantitative approach a form-orientated, objective analysis, whereas the qualitative approach, according to them (Smith & Taffler 2000), represents meaning oriented, subjective analysis.

⁶⁶ Krippendorff (1969a, 6; 1969b, 70–71) refers to traditional content analysis as a technique for *intuiting* content rather than analysing it. According to him (1969a, 12), it has been the use of computers that has developed content analysis towards a method based on explicit, rigorous rules.

⁶⁷ Original source: Smith, Ann Marie (1999) *Girls on film: Analysis of women's images in contemporary American and "Golden Age" Hollywood films*. Unpublished master's thesis, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH.

⁶⁸ Original source: Fearing, F. (1954) *Towards a Psychological Theory of Human Communication*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles.

depictions of men in advertising in two cultures, Finland and the US. The analysis is focused on the manifest content of the ads.

However, as Seppänen (2005, 155) brings out, a content analytical study is never 'purely quantitative': quantitative content analysis always rests on qualitative and theoretical assumptions, i.e. the variables and values chosen are determined by individual choices which, from a validity perspective, can be questioned. Here, the variables and values used in the content analytical phase were based on the theoretical concept of masculinity and previous studies, mainly on gender portrayals.

Neuendorf (2002, 2–9) refers to the misconceptions about content analysis by eliciting and dispelling common myths about the method. According to her, the term content analysis applies only to such analysis of message content that meets the rigorous definition (systematisation and quantification). In her definition (2002, 10), she emphasizes the importance of meeting the standards of a scientific method (objectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing). Interestingly, content analysis has also been criticised for some of these features: for its quantitative nature, fragmentation of textual wholes, positivist notion of objectivity, and for its lack of theory of meaning (Hansen et al. 1998, 91).

Pietilä (1976, 24–25; see also Gunter 2000, 61) emphasises the role of comparison in performing content analysis; e.g. the following comparisons can be made:

- Trend analysis: e.g. describing patterns or trends in media portrayals by investigating media content at different intervals
- Production based analysis: documents by different producers are compared
- Media based analysis: documents produced in different media are compared
- Content analysis in regard to what is reported and what has actually happened.

According to Toivonen (1999, 128), comparison makes content analysis more interesting and, in an implicit way, brings an aspect of causality into the analysis. In this research, ads of two cultures are being compared along a thirty-year time-span. Hence, it is a question herein of culture based trend analysis (cf. Pietilä 1976).

3.1.2 Potential uses of content analysis

According to the quantitative approach, the basic technique of using content analysis in communication studies literally means counting the number of

times preselected words, themes, symbols, pictures or images appear in a given medium (e.g. Kassirjian 1977, 11–12). In this study, content analysis is used to count the number of times particular elements of masculinity appear in print ads in preselected general-interest magazines. To begin with, masculinity is categorized into different variables that are further divided into values. Thereafter, every ad in the data is coded according to the predetermined coding sheet.

Content analysis has been extensively used since 1975 in analysing advertising content especially in the United States (Wheeler 1988, 34). The knowledge of how advertising operates in different cultures has largely been based on content analyses of the end product (advertisements) rather than studies of the process itself (Al-Olayan & Karande 2000, 80⁶⁹).

According to Berelson (1971; see also Toivonen 1999, 126–127), who has adapted content analysis in communication research, content analysis has three objectives:

1. receiving information on the content of communication (e.g. adverts)
2. receiving information on the producer of the communication; for example, by counting the frequency of particular words and lengths of sentences in a story we can draw conclusions about the author.
3. receiving information on the respondents and effects of communication; by examining celebrities who have appeared in magazines during different time periods we can draw conclusions about the focus of people's interests.

In my earlier publications (Hakala 2003), I have studied the use of content analysis in communication studies and advertising during the last two decades and found evidence of its wide usage especially concerning the first objective: receiving information and analysing the content of advertisements, i.e. 'what has been said'. The majority of the studies reviewed were descriptive in nature and gave a macro perspective on ad images. In most studies, the method as such had not been questioned. Many of the latest studies have been based on previous research and attempts to replicate, update, limit or extend their findings; consequently, the use and applicability as well as the limitations of the studies have rather been ascribed to the size of the sample, the context and timing of the study, and cultural factors. (Fay & Currier 1994)⁷⁰. Besides, the representativeness of the sample has been difficult to ascertain (Berger 2005, 134). In this study, content analysis is used in order to receive information on

⁶⁹ Original source: Taylor, Ronald E. – Hoy, Mariea Grubbs – Haley, Eric (1996) How French Advertising Professionals Develop Creative Strategies. *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1–14.

⁷⁰ One of the most widely used approaches is that by Resnik and Stern (1977), which has been applied in almost 60 studies to measure the information content of advertising (Abernethy & Franke 1996, 1).

the content of US and Finnish magazine ads, the focus being on mediated masculinities, in 1973, 1988 and 2003.

3.1.3 Empirical data for phase 1

In the content analytical phase of this study, a total of 223⁷¹ issues of Reader's Digest, Valitut Palat and Seura were covered during the thirty-year period. The final sample contained 948 advertisements, Reader's Digest alone contributing 459 ads and the Finnish magazines together 489 ads. In the case of Reader's Digest and Valitut Palat, the trend in the number of ads with male characters was clearly downward during the thirty-year period (as was the case with the number of ads overall), whereas in Seura, the number was practically even in 1973 (93) and 2003 (89), with the year 1988 being advise the most dense. The following table (Table 10) delineates the number of content-analyzed advertisements in the study. The total number of all ads in Reader's Digest and Valitut Palat is also presented. The proportion of ads using male models ranged from 17% (in Reader's Digest in 1988) to as high as 29% (in Valitut Palat in 1988). On average, the percentage is slightly higher (25%) for Valitut Palat than for Reader's Digest (22%). The idea of counting the total number of ads was to see if the three years would yield sufficient data, i.e. enough ads with a male character.

Table 10. The number of content-analyzed advertisements.

	1973	1988	2003	
Reader's Digest	221 (766)*	128 (750)*	110 (547)*	459 (2063)*
Valitut Palat	90 (365)*	59 (205)*	26 (139)*	175 (709)*
Seura	93	132	89	314
Total	404	319	225	948

* The total number of ads in the magazine during the year.

Of the three magazines used in this research, Reader's Digest has been employed in a number of previous gender portrayal studies, e.g. Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), Wagner and Banos (1973), Venkatesan and Losco (1975), Poe (1976), Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976), Wolhether and Lammers (1980),

⁷¹ Of which 36 issues represented Reader's Digest, 36 issues Valitut Palat, and 151 issues Seura.

Skelly and Lundström (1981), Lysonski (1985), Wiles and Tjernlund (1991), Wiles et al. (1995), Wiles et al. (1996), Zhou and Chen (1997). Due to the scarce amount of similar studies in Finland, the Finnish magazines, Valitut Palat and Seura, were found not to have been represented in any earlier academic studies.

Both Finland and the United States have wide availability of magazines. An average Finn (between 12–69 years of age) regularly spends 33 minutes per day reading magazines, and the amount of euros spent on advertising in magazines is 16.5% of all media costs (Mainonnan neuvottelukunta 2004). Correspondingly in the United States, a large proportion of the media advertising expenditure is taken up by print (17% in 2003). An average US reader spends 45 minutes reading a magazine. (The magazine handbook.)

Of the three magazines, two (Reader's Digest and Valitut Palat) represent the same publishing and direct-marketing company, the Reader's Digest Association. The Association was founded by DeWitt and Lila Wallace in 1922. Their vision for the company was based on a notion that people did not have enough time to read all that was being published, and that people needed a reading service that selected editorial⁷² material to inform, enrich, entertain and inspire. The result of the Wallaces' vision was a pocket-sized magazine, sold at an annual subscription that would provide an article a day of lasting interest – and enduring significance – in condensed form. Today the magazine offers a mix of engaging original and republished content to appeal to contemporary tastes. The subject matter ranges from health and fitness to home and garden, food and recipes, as well as family issues (Reader's Digest 2005). The editorial content of every national issue, such as Valitut Palat in Finland, is adapted to the customer needs, language and cultural elements of the particular country. Media space is sold nationally; thus, the advertisers and adverts differ from country to country. Reader's Digest is the largest-selling magazine in the world, published in 48 editions and 19 languages, and sold in more than 60 countries. (Kallionpää 2005.)

Besides magazines, the Association produces and distributes books, music, videos, and other products. The business is world-wide. *Reader's Digest* is the flagship of the company: it is the world's most widely read magazine, reaching nearly 100 million readers worldwide each month. In the US, it is the fourth most famous magazine for men (20.5 million readers) and the third most famous for women (26.7 million readers) (Straubhaar & LaRose 2002,

⁷² Actually, the Finnish name of the magazine describes the original idea quite nicely: 'Valitut Palat' stands for 'selected scraps' in English.

93⁷³). The first Reader's Digest was published in 1922 in the United States. (Reader's Digest 2005.)

In Finland, the corresponding magazine *Valitut Palat* has been issued since 1945. According to Snellman (2005), *Valitut Palat* opened the door to the West for Finnish people. Both Reader's Digest and *Valitut Palat* are published 12 times a year, whereas *Seura* comes out every week. By circulation, *Seura* is the biggest general-interest magazine in Finland. The subject matter covers education, parenting, health issues, food, travelling, and world affairs. (*Seura* 2005.)

3.1.4 Successful realisation of content analysis

In this study, as in other communication studies in general, content analysis is regarded as a quantitative research method, producing numerical information on mediated masculinities in Finland and the US during a thirty-year period. There are particular requirements that a successful realisation of such content analysis generally calls for: content analysis must be *systematic*, *quantitative* and *objective* (Kassarjian 1977, 9–10). In the following, the requirements will be reviewed one by one. As to how well the study at hand supposedly fulfils the requirements, this will be discussed after each requirement.

Systematization means that all the content is to be analysed in terms of relevant categories and consistently applied rules, to eliminate partial or biased analyses (Berelson 1971, 17). Also, the findings must have theoretical relevance, and be generalizable⁷⁴. Merely descriptive information about content is of little value unless the results are used to indicate a trend or for comparison or some other generalization. (Kassarjian 1977, 9.) Besides, the findings must be generalizable to the larger population from which the study's sample has been drawn (Neuendorf 2002, 12).

The content analytical phase of this study is systematic, first, in the sense that the units of analysis have been thoroughly chosen and the categories (variables) systematically classified (cf. Gerbner 1958, 97). Secondly, the analysis has been designed to provide data for a scientific problem, and the findings have theoretical relevance. Thirdly, being elucidated by and compared with earlier studies as well as theoretical background, the results are used to indicate a trend and for comparison. Fourthly, the findings are generalizable to general-interest magazines in Finland and the United States.

⁷³ Citing MediaMark Research, Inc. TopLine Reports, New York. Available at <http://www.mediamark.com/mri/docs/TopLineReports.html>

⁷⁴ Original source: Holsti, O.R. (1969) *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*. Addison-Wesley: Reading, Massachusetts.

The population was general-interest magazines and since it was a question of a longitudinal trend analysis, three years (at 15-year intervals: 1973, 1988, 2003) were chosen to be representative of the time period. During the years studied, all ads with at least one male character were included in the research. (For a discussion of population and setting a sample, see e.g. Neuendorf 2002 74–76.)

The next requirement, *quantification*, is, according to Kassirjian (1977, 9–10; also Berelson 1971, 17), the most distinctive feature of content analysis but he is not as strict with the frequency count as some of his antecedents⁷⁵. What he implies by the quantification requirement is that the data be amenable to statistical methods not only for a precise summary of findings i.e. to produce counts of key categories, but also for inferences i.e. to make interpretative conclusions of the phenomenon based on the numbers. (See also Neuendorf 2002, 14.) The call for quantification brings with it a requirement concerning the size of the sample: according to Fiske (1990, 136), content analysis works best on a large scale. The larger the sample, the more accurate it is. As to the means of media, content analysis can be performed on printed material (magazines, newspapers, books) or on virtually any medium with verbal and/or visual content. As to this study, the requirement of quantification is fulfilled in the sense that the findings are based on a large amount of data (in all 948 ads), which makes it possible to use statistical methods and make generalizable inferences.

The requirement of *objectivity* provides that the categories of analysis be defined so accurately that different analysts may apply them to the same body of content and arrive at similar results (Berelson 1971, 16). In his definition, Krippendorff (1980, 21) emphasizes the role of *replication* as an analogue to objectivity: “*content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context*”. Replication as a requirement calls for identical results if and when other researchers apply the same technique to the same data. To establish reproducibility, one of the most employed methods is to use two or more individuals independently on the same set of data (see Krippendorff 1980, 131).

The more accurate the categorization, the higher the intersubjective agreement, i.e. intercoder reliability, between the coders rises. This calls for explicit rules of categorization and coding formulated in advance. Accordingly, objectivity is related to the complexity of the study: the less complicated the categorization procedure, the stronger the intercoder reliability (Mooij 1998, 263). As to the fulfilment of the requirement of

⁷⁵ Kassirjian (1977, 9) refers to e.g. Janis, I.L. (1933) Meaning and the Study of Symbolic Behavior. *Psychiatry*, Vol. 6, 425–439.

objectivity in this study, the variables of analysis were defined as accurately as possible. This is verified by the fact that the coders were able to apply the same set of variables and arrive at similar findings. On average, the coefficients of agreement, and, accordingly, the intercoder reliability, were quite high (see the coefficients concerning each variable in Table 13 on page 144). There were, however, some inconsistencies which will be dealt with in Subchapter 3.1.

According to Kassarian (1977, 9), it is the requirement of objectivity that gives scientific standing to content analysis. Also Neuendorf (2002, 10–11) regards objectivity as the most distinctive characteristic of content analysis compared to more qualitative and interpretative message analyses. She (Neuendorf 2002, 11) points out, however, that there is necessarily no such thing as objectivity – ‘knowledge’ can often be based on social agreements. Besides, the claim for objectivity can lead to ignoring interesting aspects, and making categories too obvious and superficial (Slater 1998, 237). Also Hansen et al. (1998, 95) discuss the requirement of objectivity; according to them (see also Tonkiss 2004, 373), one content analysis cannot cover everything in a text. The choice of determining what dimensions or aspects to study is always more or less subjective. In that sense, even quantitative content analysis is somewhat qualitative and interpretative by nature.

Objectivity also refers to the need for every step taken in content analysis to be connected with the research questions. The researcher may not subjectively change the objectives of the study during the coding process. (Content analysis 2002.) In this study, the coding sheet was, from the very beginning, planned in accordance with the purpose and research questions of the study. However, after the pretesting, some minor changes were made to individual variables and values.

As seen above, there is a connection between the concepts of objectivity and reliability. According to Holsti (1969, 135), research measures and procedures must be reliable if the research is to satisfy the requirements of objectivity. Also, according to Andrén (1981, 46), an objective result is independent of the subject who conducted the research. Furthermore, Andrén discusses reliability in content analysis, identifying it with ‘truth’. According to him (1981, 49), truth is the most important requirement of reliability, and ‘true’ results make the results of a study scientific.

This brings us to a fourth requirement that Krippendorff (1980, 155–156), among others, notes as one more requirement for the successful realisation of content analysis, namely *validity*. Methodologists usually make a distinction between different ways of assessing validity in a study. In general, validity refers to the consistency of the results with the established knowledge, the ‘empirical truth’: Can we say whether or not the reported results are true?

Validity is reached by using measuring instruments that measure what they are designed to measure. This is often referred to as *internal validity*.

The measuring procedure of this study is internally valid in the sense that it represents the intended theoretical concept: masculinity. The concept of masculinity was divided into nine dimensions of masculinity and the indicators, the syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements, were matched to the dimensions. Furthermore, the individual variables were operationalized, i.e. provided with operational definitions and measures. Hence, the content analytical phase measured what it was proposed to measure. The internal validity of the study was also improved by pretesting the coding schedule among the coders before the actual coding.

A content analysis is externally valid when its inferences are accordant with the obtained evidence, and when the results of a measure can be extrapolated to other research settings (cf. Neuendorf 2002, 115). This is called *external validity*, which is also referred to as generalizability; external validity is ensured by representative sampling. (Seale 2004, 73–74.)

Due to the polysemic nature of advertising messages, there is a risk for a content analytical study to be low in validity. Sexton and Haberman (1974, 42) take up particularly the question of internal validity: there can be high variation among observations of the same ad. Different individuals may classify a given ad differently. This, consequently, calls for a carefully planned coding schedule and accurate definitions of the variables and values.

Hirsch (1967) has touched on the validity issue by stating that the only valid form of objective analysis is to establish the intentions of the sender of the message. Thus, in order to be able to make valid inferences, we should, according to Hirsch (1967), know the intentions of the text producer. (Lindkvist 1981, 24⁷⁶.) This, however, is in many cases not possible. Holsti (1969, 15–16; see also Kassarian 1977, 10–11) lists situations where data accessibility from the text producer can be a problem and, consequently, documentary content analysis may turn out to be one of the only options to study the question at issue. Also herein, the access to the data was one of the major concerns. Since the phenomenon is studied over a long period of time, it would have been practically impossible to study the intentions of the producers of the ads.

In his classic article, Kassarian (1977, 10–11) refers to the validity issue also, being far more optimistic about the potential of content analysis. According to him, content analysis can add a dimension of validity in consumer research, especially when used as a supplementary source of data.

⁷⁶ Original source: Hirsch, E. D. Jr. (1967) *Validity and interpretation*. Yale University Press: New Haven.

However, we have to keep in mind that even if descriptive studies (as content analyses often are) mostly have high validity, the research results can be quite obvious and predictable (Carney 1972, 27).

Using Kassirjian's article (1977) as a catalyst, Kolbe and Burnett (1991) conducted an empirical review and synthesis of published studies (128 articles) that used content analysis between 1978 and mid-1989. One of the objectives of their research was to investigate whether researchers had conducted and reported studies in accordance with the critical method areas for content analysis, as presented in Kassirjian (1977). According to the results, there were a number of gaps in the areas of objectivity and reliability, e.g. in reporting the use and training of judges, as well as selecting the coefficient for intercoder reliability and reporting the rates separately for each variable. Similar findings have been made by Hughes and Garrett (1990), Riffe and Freitag (1997) as well as by Lombard et al. (2002). Kolbe and Burnett (1991, 250) regard methodology reporting as critical for discerning the quality and usefulness of content analysis studies.

3.1.5 Procedures in content analysis

The process of adapting content analysis is based on counting the frequencies of certain visual elements in a clearly defined sample of images, and then analyzing those frequencies. After formulating the research topic and focus of the study, the relevant population of interest is defined and an appropriate sample drawn from it. During the process, the most critical parts are the selection of the medium from which the content will be obtained, the units to be analysed and the conceptualization or categorization of the focus of the study. Neuendorf (2002, 50–51) has illustrated the process in a flowchart (see the following figure).

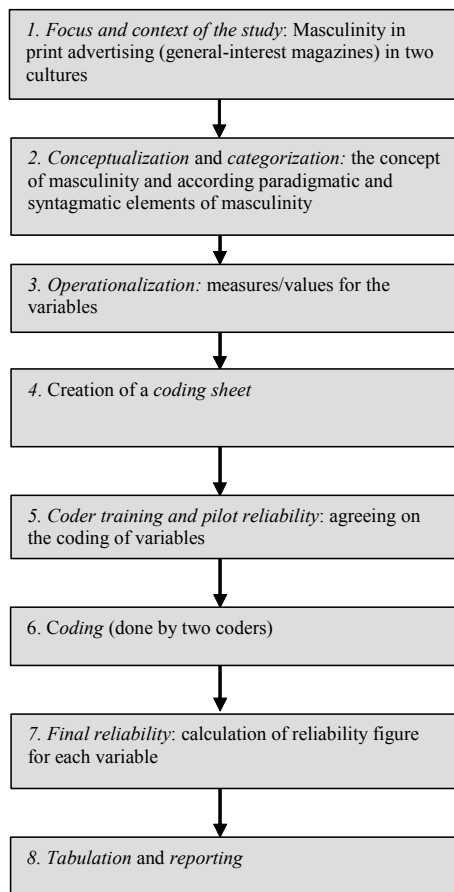


Figure 19. The process of the content analytical phase of the study (adapted from Neuendorf 2002, 50–51).

Subsequently, the way content analysis was adapted in this study will be reviewed following the stages of the above illustration.

3.1.5.1 Focus and context of the study

In any content analysis, the starting point is to decide what images and items to study and in which medium (cf. Leiss et al. 1986, 170). This, furthermore, is in direct relation to the research question(s): only the items that are relevant to answering the research questions may be included in the study (Hansen et al. 1998, 99, 105).

In the earlier studies concerning gender portrayals, print advertisements (mainly in magazines) have received greater attention than those in the

broadcast media (television). This is partly due to the fact that single pictures are considered easier to analyze than a series of moving pictures. (Courtney & Whipple 1983, 15.) As television commercials make use of the combined effect of sound, motion and picture, it is possible to render an incomplete reproduction of them in a book, whereas printed ads can be reproduced as they are. (Vestergaard & Schröder 1985, 10.) Besides, in many of the early studies of television advertising the commercials were analyzed as they were broadcast, without recording. This resulted in greater potential for errors. (Gilly 1988, 76.)

In this research, magazines (Reader's Digest representing the US, and Valitut Palat and Seura representing Finland) were the medium of study. Print media was chosen for its ease of measurement (cf. Law & Labre 2002, 700). The selection of the magazines was also based upon their historical permanence and availability, i.e. in this case being able to get access to every issue from 1973, 1988 and 2003. The magazines were further chosen due to the similarity in their editorial profile and the demographic profile of their readership (cf. Lerman & Callow 2004, 513). The selection was, thus, not randomized. According to Samiee and Jeong (1994, 210), this is a common approach in cross-cultural studies in advertising; however, they express some criticism towards the representativeness of such samples.

According to Leiss et al. (1986, 179), thanks to its national perspective and openness to influences from other media, magazine advertising provides a good indicator of changes in advertising in general. At their best, magazines can reach large audiences (Pelsmacker et al. 2005, 141). Furthermore, magazines provide enduring images, high quality, and a strong visual impression (Wiles et al. 1996, 60). Thus, magazines usually live longer than other media: they are re-read and often stored for a long period; besides, particularly general-interest magazines are circulated among neighbours and family members of varying ages (cf. Raninen & Rautio 2002, 120). Thanks to their book-like format, Valitut Palat and Reader's Digest are often kept longer than magazines in general. All three magazines selected for this study represent general-interest magazines.

As mentioned above, a critical factor was the access to the historical data (particularly to the 1973 ads). Another important criterion was the nature of the magazines. Herein, the choice was made between special-interest and general-interest magazines, in favour of the latter. General-interest magazines were chosen for their gender neutral nature: readers of general-interest magazines are evenly men and women. Furthermore, the choice was based on an assumption that general-interest magazines would give a more comprehensive picture of masculinity whereas in the case of special-interest magazines, directed at a specific target group, the picture would have been too

narrow. Besides, the selected general-interest magazines are dominated by national advertising, which is an important issue concerning the US data (cf. Leiss et al. 1986, 179). Specially targeted magazines were considered but, unfortunately, well-matched magazines that would have been published during the thirty-year period were not found.

The reason for choosing the particular years (1973, 1988 and 2003) was the thirty-year-time span; the empirical phase finished in 2003, and hence, it was natural to start off with issues representing the year 1973. In order to be able to identify potential trends of masculinity on the basis of the data, a point in time in between the start and end dates had to be decided upon, and the year 1988 was chosen. When referring to the data, we are talking about changes along a thirty-year- time span, measuring them at 15-year intervals. It was presumed that 15 years would provide a sufficient period for analysis of changes in the depictions.

In analysing visual images, it is necessary to avoid seasonal fluctuation. Ad images and products advertised can vary depending on the month and season. (cf. Seppänen 2005, 150.) Consequently in this study, all issues from the particular year were chosen for the analysis.

Each issue was perused to identify the following inclusion criteria in regard to the ads. First, only ads that were of sufficient size to provide useable information were chosen; in accordance with past research (e.g. Al-Olayan & Karande 2000; Wiles et al. 1996; Piron & Young 1996) and due to the small page-size of Reader's Digest and Valitut Palat, inclusion of ads was restricted to those of one page or larger. Secondly, only ads with one or more discernible male image⁷⁷ were included in the sample. Thirdly, the advertisements had to represent an adult (18+) human. Fourthly, ads that appeared multiple times in the same magazine were included only once in the sample. (cf. Ford et al. 1998, 116; Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 5.) The male portrayal information was collected only for the principal male character in the advert.

Once the medium has been chosen, the selection of the units to be analyzed follows. A unit is an identifiable message or message component on which variables are measured, i.e. what is being studied and what is being counted (Neuendorf 2002, 13, 71; Gunter 2000, 64–65). Krippendorff (1980, 60–63) divides the units into five types: *physical units* (books, issues of a newspaper, letters, poems, posters), *syntactical units* (e.g. words), *referential units* (objects, events, persons, acts, countries or ideas to which an expression refers), *propositional units* (linguistic units that possess a certain structure), and

⁷⁷ Herein, the 'image' was understood as full body or parts of the body shown. Thus, cropped male images, such as hands and feet, were also included in the data. In fact, cropping turned out to be quite a typical method of advertising.

thematic units (correspondence to a particular structural definition of the content of narratives, explanations or interpretations). Also Berelson (1971, 136–143; Kassirjian 1977, 11–12) presents five units, words being the smallest unit. In Berelson's typology an entire advertisement represents the item. Holsti (1969) has criticized this unit for being too extensive for content analysis; Kassirjian (1977, 10; 12), however, brings out many examples of studies having used ads as units of analysis.

Neuendorf (2002, 13–14; see also Seppänen 2005, 151–152) makes a useful distinction between the unit of data collection (the element on which each variable is measured) and the unit of analysis (the element on which data are analyzed and for which findings are reported), a distinction that also serves the purpose of this study. The unit of data collection and the unit of analysis can be and often are the same. However, in this study they are separate; individual print ads are the unit of analysis⁷⁸ (the context of the study) while depictions of men (masculinity) are the unit of data collection (the focus of the study). For a study to be deemed a content analysis, either the unit of data collection or the unit of analysis or both must be a message unit. Herein, the units of analysis (print ads) are message units, but the unit of data collection (masculinity) is not. But most importantly, the units to be analysed must always be determined in the research objectives (cf. Deacon et al. 1999, 120–121).

What the units of analysis are in a content analytical study depends on, for instance, the communication media. When one is studying particular elements in print advertising, the individual advertisements are the units (as in this study). (Berger 2000, 182–183.) Many different kinds of material⁷⁹ may be analysed: visual images, written text, transcribed speech, verbal interactions, graphic and oral material (Bell 2001, 14–15; Neuendorf 2002, 24). Herein, the units of analysis are ads of one page or more with an adult male character⁸⁰ in the selected magazines of 1973, 1988 and 2003.

As the idea was to look at mediated masculinities during three decades, the years of analysis, i.e. the points in time, were not chosen randomly. Instead, choosing the particular years had to do with the overall aim of the research: looking at the changes as well as similarities and differences of masculinities in Finland and the US. Therefore, the 15-year intervals were deemed appropriate.

⁷⁸ In reference to these, Berelson (1972, 135–136) uses the terms 'a recording unit' (the smallest body of content in which the appearance of a reference is counted) and 'a context unit' (the largest body of content that may be examined in characterizing a recording unit).

⁷⁹ The material is usually referred to as 'texts' whether or not they are verbal (Bell 2001, 15). In fact, 'text' is used to stand for any creative work (Berger 1999, 47).

⁸⁰ Herein, the male character can be depicted by a full body, a face or other parts of the body (e.g. a hand, without connecting it to the body as a whole; cf. *cropping* techniques).

After deciding on the unit of analysis, the population to be studied has to be decided. Defining the population is important because the generalizations can only be applied to concern issues within that particular population. (Leiss et al. 1986, 172; Neuendorf 2002, 74.) As it is unlikely that the whole population is examined⁸¹, one has to define the sample of the study. The population of the research at hand was Finnish and US general-interest magazines out of which magazines were selected by judgment sampling (for coverage of various sampling methods, see Neuendorf 2002, 83–88).

The sampling choice can be judged by the relevance of the sample in answering the research questions (cf. Krippendorff 2004, 113). In this case, judgment sampling turned out to be the best option due to the retrospective perspective and time frame (as discussed above) as well as the accessibility and availability of research material (Hansen et al. 1998, 101). It proved to be difficult to find comparable magazines in the two countries that would have been published for 30 years. Also, in the United States the range of magazines is more fragmented and Reader's Digest is one of the few general-interest magazines, whereas in Finland general-interest magazines have traditionally been popular. However, the market is fragmenting also in Finland (SanomaWSOY 2004).

3.1.5.2 Conceptualization and categorization

Next, it must be decided how to conceptualize the unit of data collection, namely masculinity. Consequently, the concept has to be broken down into categories or variables⁸², and furthermore, into respective dimensions or values⁸³ that measure the concept (operationalization) since the concept (masculinity) in itself is not measurable. Berelson (1971, 147–168; see also Kassarijian 1977, 12) emphasizes the role of categorization, i.e. herein breaking down the concept of masculinity, in content analysis: content analysis stands or falls by its categories. According to Berelson, the categories contain the substance of the research and, thus, *a content analysis can be no better than its system of categories*.

None of the studies reviewed in Subchapter 1.3 were alone able to provide an applicable categorization manual for this study. Consequently, the

⁸¹ In the case of a small population, there is necessarily no need to draw a sample. If all units in the population are included in the study, it is a question of a *census*. (Neuendorf 2002, 74.)

⁸² Instead of the term 'variable', e.g. Krippendorff (2004, 130) and Leiss, Kline & Jhally (1986, 171) use the term 'dimension'.

⁸³ Instead of the term 'value', some researchers use the term 'measure' (e.g. Neuendorf 2002, 50) or 'category' (Krippendorff 2004, 130; Leiss, Kline & Jhally 1986, 171).

categorization to be used in the empirical phase was constructed connecting elements of various previous studies on portrayals of gender and the insights of the author.

Neuendorf (2002, 97–106) lists four techniques for selecting variables for a content analysis: (1) A consideration of universal variables; (2) Using theory and past research for variable collection⁸⁴; (3) A grounded or emergent process of variable identification⁸⁵; and (4) Attempting to find medium-specific critical variables. In this study, the variables were defined on an a-priori basis, i.e. prior to the analysis, based upon the body of gender portrayal research literature to date⁸⁶. However, the original variables were modified upon preliminary examination of the data and, consequently, some of the variables can be said to have been partly established on an emergent basis, particularly the variable concerning images of masculinity. (Stemler 2001; see also Wheeler 1988, 36.)

As well as the individual variables, it is important to consider the interrelations between them; i.e. the variables and values must relate to each other (cf. Hansen et al. 1998, 120). Thus, it is important not only to provide data on the distribution of, for instance, the age distribution of the men or the body type of the man in the ad, but also, whether it is mainly the young adults that are mesomorphic.

3.1.5.3 Operationalization

Operationalization is the process of developing matching values (measures) for the variables of the study. The values should be as exhaustive as possible and mutually exclusive. In order to ensure this, they have to be developed carefully: there must be an appropriate code for each value. This means that the categories ‘other’ and ‘indeterminate’ should frequently be included. (Neuendorf 2002, 118.)

Each variable should be measured with categories that are at the highest level of measurement. Of the classic four levels of measurement by Stevens (1951⁸⁷), those used in this study are of nominal scale and of ordinal scale. A

⁸⁴ Stemler (2001) calls this *a priori coding* (the categories are established prior to the analysis based upon theory).

⁸⁵ Stemler (2001) calls this *emergent coding* (the categories are established following some preliminary examination of the data).

⁸⁶ According to Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold (1998, 99–100), the categories should always be anchored in a review of relevant literature and related studies.

⁸⁷ Cited in Neuendorf (2002, 120). Original source: Stevens, S.S (1951) Mathematics, measurement, and psychophysics. In: Stevens, S. S. (ed.) *Handbook of experimental psychology*. John Wiley: New York. 1–49.

nominal scale consists of values that are distinct from each other, and the use of numbers is for labeling⁸⁸ only. The order of the values is arbitrary. (Neuendorf 2002, 120; Krippendorff 2004, 161; Leiss et al. 1986, 173.)

In fact, according to Krippendorff (2004, 162), the term nominal scale is a misnomer since nominal variables exhibit no ordering. An ordinal scale, however, consists of variables that are rank ordered on some continuum. Numbers are used for maintaining proper ordering of the values; however, they cannot be ordered, added, subtracted, multiplied or divided, and consequently, arithmetic manipulations cannot be performed on them. (Neuendorf 2002, 120; Deacon et al. 1999, 84.) In this study, one of the four common ordering of values – chains – is used. Chains are linearly ordered sets of values which can be open-ended (as the values concerning the number of women and children in the ads).

The variables and values used in the content analysis and their sources are reviewed in the following table (see Table 11). The table also illustrates the variables or individual values that were used for testing the hypotheses. As is discernible, the first hypothesis is tested by all the variables due to the fact that it deals with overall convergence of masculinities between Finland and The United States. As the second hypothesis is related to objectification of men, the variables to test it are concerned with body type (particularly the mesomorphic ‘ideal’), facial prominence (full body in particular), clothing style (nudity or semi-cladness), and relation to the product (decorative role). The third hypothesis is concerned with presumed feminization of men which, in this study, is understood as men’s increasing interest in fashion and grooming rituals as well as men’s partaking in domestic activities (childcare, cooking and the like). Consequently, the variables that are to test hypothesis three consist of product category (personal hygiene, food and drinks, health/medicine, household cleaning, clothing/shoes, furniture), setting (house/home/garden, store) and image of masculinity (daddy, homemaker, metrosexual). The fourth hypothesis is concerned with the anticipated perfection of human models in ads in general. Whether, according to this study, men are depicted as flawless – young and well-built – relates to the age and body type of the male character.

⁸⁸ The adjective nominal suggests the “by name only” nature of the nominal variables (Krippendorff 2004, 161).

Table 11. Variables, values and related hypotheses tested in the content analytical phase of this study.

Variables and values coded for each advertisement with a male character			
	Operational definition	Hypothesis tested	Source
<i>Product</i>	What is the product category being advertised? (see table 2 for categories.)	H1; H3	Wiles et al. (1996)
<i>Number of men</i>	(1) one (2) two (3) three or more	H1	cf. Sexton & Haberman (1974)
<i>Number of women</i>	(1) none (2) one (3) two (4) three or more	H1	Sexton & Haberman (1974)
<i>Number of children</i>	(1) none (2) one (3) two (4) three or more	H1; H3	cf. Sexton & Haberman (1974)
<i>Setting</i>	What is the setting/ location of the ad: (1) house/home/garden, (2) store, (3) occupational setting,(4) fictional/blank, (5) leisure, (6) sports, (7) other	H1; H3	cf. Ford et al. (1998)
Variables and values coded for the main male character			
<i>Age</i>	(1) young adult (18–35), (2) mid adult (36–50), (3) older adult (>50); (4) indeterminate	H1; H4	Ford et al. (1998)
<i>Marital status</i>	(1) married, (2) not married, or (3) not identified	H1	Schneider & Schneider (1979)
<i>Endorsing role</i>	(1) celebrity, (2) authority figure, (3) typical user, (4) other	H1	
<i>Images of masculinity</i>	(1) daddy, (2) spouse/ partner, (3) homemaker, (4) farmer/rancher, (5) businessman/salesman, (6) scientist/inventor, (7) working man, (8) Don Juan, (9) metrosexual, (10) other	H1; H3	
<i>Race/skin color</i>	(1) white, (2) non-white	H1	cf. Wiles et al.(1996)
<i>Facial prominence</i>	(1) only the face/head shown, (2) face and parts of the body shown, (3) parts of the body shown, excluding face, (4) full body without head shown, (5) full body including head, excluding face, (6) full body shown, including face and head, (7) other	H1; H2	cf. Archer et al. (1983)
<i>Body type</i>	(1) mesomorphic, (2) endomorphic, or (3) ectomorphic	H1; H2; H4	Kolbe & Albanese (1996)
<i>Clothing style</i>	(1) nude, (2) half-nude, (3) underwear/swimsuit, (4) uniform, (5) work/career, (6) casual, (7) outdoor recreational, (8) sports	H1; H2	cf. Wiles et al.(1996); Kolbe & Albanese (1996)
<i>Relation to other people</i>	(1) family, (2) lover, (3) friend, (4) professional, (5) impersonal, (6) no others in ad	H1; H3	cf. Sexton & Haberman (1974)
<i>Relation to product</i>	(1) participating in the product's use, (2) decorative, (3) other	H1; H2	Sexton & Haberman (1974)

The products being advertised were coded according to the following categorization (Table 12). A similar classification has been used by e.g. Wiles et al. (1996) and Wiles and Tjernlund (1991).

Table 12. Categories of products advertised.

Product category	
<i>Personal hygiene</i>	<i>Construction materials</i>
<i>Food and drinks</i>	<i>Photographic equipment</i>
<i>Health/medicine</i>	<i>Entertainment</i>
<i>Household cleaning</i>	<i>Public good/charity</i>
<i>Travel/transportation</i>	<i>Financing/insuring</i>
<i>Clothing/shoes</i>	<i>Jewellery</i>
<i>Home appliances/electronics</i>	<i>Tobacco</i>
<i>Vehicles and accessories</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Furniture</i>	

As to variables and values, it must first be ensured that the variables are exhaustive; that is, they must cover the concept of the study (masculinity). Secondly, the values must be mutually exclusive; that is, any occurrence should fit into the variable only once. (cf. Leiss et al. 1986, 171.) In the following, the line of thought behind the categories and values related to the main male character is justified.

Age

In accordance with Ford et al. (1998), also in this study the age of the main male character was grouped into three bands: young adults (18–35), mid adults (36–50) and older adults (over 50). There was further the variable indeterminate for vague cases. This categorization was planned to offer a wide enough range between the values since it was presumable that, in many instances, it would be difficult to code the man according to his ‘true’ age.

Being married

In this study, marital status was judged by a ring on his left ring finger. The man was also considered married if he was depicted with a woman in a couple-like relationship and *she* was wearing a ring on her left ring finger; or if they were depicted in a homely setting. As in Schneider and Schneider (1979), the values were divided into three: (1) married; (2) not married; (3) not identified.

Endorsing role

A message is considered more reliable when someone credible and influential delivers it. Herein, and in accordance with the three sources of influence (see e.g. Moriarty 1991, 48), the roles were divided into three categories, depending on whether the main male character in the picture represented reference groups (i.e. was depicted as a celebrity), opinion leaders (i.e. was depicted as an expert) or peers (i.e. was depicted as a lay endorser). For cases where it was not possible to determine the role, the value 'other' was included.

Images of masculinity

As none of the extant classifications of images of men seemed feasible for this study as such, the images for the content analytical phase were partially drawn from the previous literature and partially based on the precoding of the empirical data.

The actual images were divided into nine categories. Placed according to Spranger's (1966) typology, there is the economic attitude (Businessman/salesman), the theoretic attitude (Scientist/inventor), the social attitude (Spouse/partner and Don Juan) and the aesthetic attitude (Metrosexual). On the basis of a pretest covering 20 Finnish and 20 US ads, political and religious attitudes were excluded and categories related to work (Farmer/rancher and Working man) as well as those related to domesticity (Daddy and Homemaker) added. Thus, the images of masculinity used in this study were the following: (1) Daddy; (2) Spouse/partner; (3) Homemaker; (4) Farmer/rancher; (5) Businessman/salesman; (6) Scientist/inventor; (7) Working man; (8) Don Juan; (9) Metrosexual; (10) Other. The category 'other' was reserved for images that did not fit into any of the aforementioned categories.

In many cases, the images come out of the social context and other people in the ad; for instance, the appearance of children signifies the Daddy image (1). Herein, 'Daddy' is a common term for a father or grandfather. 'Spouse/partner' (2) can be a husband or lover. In most cases, however, it is difficult to discern what the 'true' relationship between a man and a woman in the picture is like.

Besides images that are defined in terms of the relationship to others, there are images that are defined independently of others (cf. Gilly 1988, 138). A Homemaker (3) is a man who takes care of or part in household chores. Elliott et al. (1993; also Evans et al. 2000, 45) refer to this type as the 'New Man'. However, the term 'New Man' has also been used to refer (e.g. by Solomon et al. 1999, 189) to a similar image as Metrosexual (9). Farmer/rancher (4) is a countryman; he can be a cowboy, he may farm or breed cattle. Type (5) can be

a businessman or a salesperson, and (6) a scientist or an inventor. Type (7) is a working man – industrious, tough, and energetic. Don Juan (8) is a lady killer – sexy and smoldering. (cf. Brannon 1985, 305). Obviously, not all men in the ads can be categorized according to the aforementioned images; therefore, there is the value other (10). One has also to remember that in real life these roles and images can coincide: a businessman can be a father, a metrosexual, a household man etc. What is of interest here is the predominant role of the main male character in the advert.

Skin colour

As it would have been practically impossible to examine accurately the racial or ethnic background of the men depicted in ads, the racial aspect was compensated with *skin colour*. In some other prior studies (Andrén et al. 1978, 134; Wiles et al. 1996, 61), the racial distribution of the models in the ads has been grouped into three: white, black, or other. Herein, the categorization was made according to a simple dichotomy: white or non-white.

Since advertising tries to add prestige to products by showing them in contexts that are supposed to have status, it is presumable to see more white models in ads. This also has to do with the fact that most readers of general-interest magazines are white. (Andrén et al. 1978, 122.)

Facial prominence

Only on the basis of the pretest did the values concerning facial prominence find their place. Eventually, facial prominence and possible use of cropping techniques was investigated by the following values: (1) only the face/head shown, (2) face and parts of the body shown, (3) parts of the body shown, excluding face, (4) full body without head shown, (5) full body including head, excluding face, (6) full body shown, including face and head, and (7) other. During the pretest, the coders understood the first two values differently, the first one including shoulders in (1), and the other one including them in (2). Consequently, a common agreement was reached on the procedure: shoulders were included in (2), i.e. face and parts of the body shown. The initial values were inspired by Kolbe and Albanese (1996) and Archer et al. (1983). However, Kolbe and Albanese (1996, 7) categorized the face-ism issue under 'portion of body shown' where the values were head only, head and full shoulders, waist up, knees up, full body, legs only, waist down, torso less head, full body less head, buttocks only, hands only, arms only, and finally, feet only. Archer et al's (1983) findings were based on a face-ism index where the denominator was the distance from the top of the head to the lowest visible part of the subject's body.

Body type

In this study, as in the Kolbe and Albanese study (1996), the body type of the man in the ad was coded according to whether he was: (1) strong and hard, i.e. mesomorphic; (2) soft and round, i.e. endomorphic; or (3) thin and lightly muscled, i.e. ectomorphic. However, for coding situations where it was difficult to categorize the man in accordance with any of these three values, there was the category 'other' (none of the three) as well as the category 'indeterminate' (not discernible, for instance due to baggy or thick clothing). Also cases where cropping techniques had been implemented (i.e. only minor parts of the body shown) did not provide enough information about the model's physical build.

Clothing

Clothing styles can reflect social status, profession, activity involvement, and so on (Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 11). In this study, the actual clothing styles were divided into underwear/swimsuit, uniform, work/career, casual, outdoor and recreational, and sports. Inspired by the findings of previous studies (Soley & Reid 1988, 960; Reidenbach & McCleary 1983, 444; Kerin et al. 1979, 39), wherein semi-cladness and nudity had been found to be on the increase in advertising, the values 'nude' and 'half-nude' were included in the 'clothing' variable. A similar categorization has been adapted by Wiles et al. (1996).

Relation to others in the ad

In this study, the man's relation to other people in the ad was categorized according to the following values: (1) family, (2) lover, (3) friend, (4) professional, (5) other, (6) no others in the ad. The categorization was partly based on Sexton and Haberman (1974) where the values were family, social, business, and impersonal or unrelated. Also as herein, there was the value 'no others in ad'.

Relation to product

The final element according to which masculinity was categorized in this study was the main male character's *relation to the advertised product*. The values were adapted from Sexton and Haberman (1974, 43) who studied women in magazine advertisements. Likewise, the potential relation to the product was categorized according to whether the person in the ad was (1) participating in the product's use, (2) being in a decorative or an ornamental role in relation to the product (i.e. the person having no functional relation to the product, being pictured primarily for display or aesthetic purposes), or (3) other. Traditionally, women have been depicted in passive, decorative roles,

i.e. being pictured primarily for display or aesthetic purposes, having no functional relation to the product being advertised whereas men have been found to have a more active, functional role in relation to the product. (Kerin et al. 1979, 39; Fowles 1996, 201–208; Clow & Baack 2004, 209–210.) However, dissimilar findings have been registered by Kolbe and Albanese (1997, 824–825), who studied sole-male images in magazine advertisements.

3.1.5.4 Formulation of the coding sheet and coder training

Categorization and operationalization go hand in hand with coding. For the coding, a schedule has to be produced. The coding schedule means a sheet where the analyst enters the values for each variable. The coding schedules should be ‘road-tested’ or piloted to see how easy the variables and values are to operationalise. (Deacon et al. 1999, 124–128.) If the categories are formulated and articulated clearly, the next phase – execution – is much more easily implemented. For this study, the coding sheet was created in relation to the above reviewed variables and values (for the coding sheet, see Appendix 1).

After creating the coding schedule, the categories should be pretested on a small sample of material and revised if necessary. The pretesting and redefinition of categories enhances the reliability of the coding protocol. (Leiss et al. 1986, 171.) For this study, two pretests were conducted before the actual coding. The first, a very preliminary pretest, was conducted by the author to help build the coding instrument before it was submitted to the coders. All issues of the representative years were pre-examined according to the product category, number of men, women and children in the ad as well as the colour (colour ad/black & white) of the ad.

The product categories were pre-examined in order to be able to construct appropriate values for the actual coding. Due to a small number of observations, some of the values were eliminated or merged into other values. For instance, there were only a few underwear ads in the data and so the value was merged into ‘clothing’. As the number of ads in *Valitut Palat* was not equivalent to the number in *Reader’s Digest* during the years under examination, the Finnish data were supplemented with those of another Finnish general-interest magazine, *Seura*. In this way, the total number of analyzed adverts amounted to 948; 489 in Finland⁸⁹ and 459 in the US. The number of people in the ads was pre-examined in order to foretell the number

⁸⁹ Out of which 175 ads in *Valitut Palat* and 314 ads in *Seura*.

of ads where a man was depicted. Information on the colour of the ads was not used further since the variable is not directly related to the focus of the study.

The second pretest was conducted by the coders after they had been trained and instructed by the researcher. The training involved three sessions in May–June 2004, lasting 10 hours in all. For the pilot test, both coders coded the same set of 20 American and 20 Finnish ads (as to the size of the sample in the pilot testing, see Lombard et al. (2002, 601) for a rule of thumb). The pretesting clarified the coding categories, key terms, and operational definitions for the two coders, one Finnish and one American⁹⁰, and provided familiarity with the coding process. The trial run also revealed overlaps between variables and values as well as elements not covered by the values.

Three major changes were made as a result of the pretest: first, a variable concerning the occupational role of the person in the ad was removed. In spite of the fact that many previous gender studies, for instance Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976), Wolhete and Lammers (1980), Skelly and Lundstrom (1981), and Lysonski (1985), have examined the occupational roles, this variable was considered too vague and difficult to code. Secondly, a variable concerning employment (whether the character in the ad was portrayed in a work situation and what his working role was) was removed. Again, this was done due to the anticipated difficulty of coding the values, and accordingly, the anticipated unreliability of the codings. Another decisive factor for the removal was that, after all, the information value of the variable was considered low. And thirdly, based on the recommendations of the coders, four new values were added to the initial three concerning the variable of facial prominence. Moreover, minor revisions were made in variables concerning clothing style and relation to other people in the ad, in order to fulfil the requirements of content analysis coding. (cf. Rose 2003, 62.)

3.1.5.5 Coding

After reaching consensus on the coding procedures, the coders worked independently of each other and the researcher, and separately [manually] coded all the advertisements with an adult male character. The coding started in June 2004 and was finished by mid-September 2004. Each image was carefully examined and the relevant codes attached to it. Both the Finnish and the US ads were, eventually, evaluated twice. Disagreements between coders were resolved through discussions from late September through early October

⁹⁰ The first coder is American-born and has been living in Finland for 15 years, and the second is a native-born Finn.

2004 (cf. Schneider & Schneider 1979; Gilly 1988). Once the manual coding process was completed and after resolving the disagreements, the numbers were entered into the SPSS for Windows computer program.

It has been noted that the ethnicity or race of coders may be a significant factor biasing observations (Wilkes & Valencia 1989, 23–24). Consequently, coders should be members of the medium's natural audience (Ferguson, Kreshel & Tinkham 1990, 43). For this study, two female coders, aged 38 and 51, were trained to recognize the manifest content variables and to code them according to the measures of each variable in the coding sheet.

The execution phase involves collecting the data and analysing results. According to Deacon et al. (1999, 128–129), the key principle is to be as consistent and systematic as possible in applying the research instruments. The issue of consistency is particularly significant when more than one person (as there often is) is involved in the coding. This can be tested through intercoder reliability, i.e. getting the participants to code identical pieces of content and then comparing the degree of fit in the values designed.

3.1.5.6 Final reliability

Reliability, in a content analytical frame, refers to the degree of consistency among the coders in classifying the data according to the specified categorization. When human coders are used in content analysis, it is essential to calculate the intercoder reliability, i.e. the degree of agreement among the coders (Neuendorf 2002, 141). In order to achieve reliability, (1) the variables and values must be defined clearly and precisely (so that more than one individual can use the same coding scheme as a measurement tool, with similar results); (2) it must be ensured that the coders understand the definitions in the same way; (3) the coders must be trained in applying the criteria for each variable and value; (4) the intercoder consistency must be measured (Bell 2001, 21; Neuendorf 2002, 142; see also Seppänen 2005, 154–155).

Consistency between the coders, i.e. intercoder reliability, is often considered the standard measure of research quality in content analyses. High levels of disagreement suggest poor operational definitions, failure in defining variables and values, as well as insufficient coder training. (Kolbe & Burnett 1991, 248.) Whether coders agree on the values of a given variable is of particular concern with regard to categorical measures (i.e. nominal) where agreement by chance (hit or miss) increases as the number of values increase. (Kolbe & Burnett 1991, 249; Neuendorf 2002, 149.) There are various methods of reporting intercoder reliability, and they all have their pros and

cons (for the discussion, see e.g. Kassirjian 1977; Kolbe & Burnett 1991; Riffe & Freitag 1997; Lombard et al. 2002).

While the success of the coding sheet is a paramount factor in assessing reliability, the reliability of a content analytical study is also a function of two other elements: the particular units rated and the judges making the ratings (Neuendorf 2002, 145). In reference to these, Neuendorf (2002, 145) lists several threats to reliability: (1) a poorly educated coding scheme; (2) inadequate coder training; (3) coder fatigue; and (4) the presence of an unreliable coder. Reliability can also be affected by the coders' lack of understanding of the relevant cultural issues (Lerman & Callow 2004, 510). As has been recommended by Lerman and Callow (2004, 511), both coders were bilingual; however, that applies to the Finnish coder in only a linguistic sense. The fact that only visual images were coded lessened the importance of bilingual coding in a linguistic sense, but did not eliminate the need from the cultural perspective. Only the American coder, after having lived in Finland for 15 years, can be regarded as bilingual in a cultural sense. Unfortunately, such a Finnish coder was not available. (For a discussion of the importance and problems of using bilingual coders, see Lerman & Callow 2004, 511–512).

In order to overcome these threats, the coders were given detailed instructions regarding the coding sheet, and after the pilot test changes were made in the sheet. At this point, it must also be emphasized that the pilot test data were not included in the final data analysis, noting the forewarning by Neuendorf (2002, 146; also Lombard et al. 2002, 600).

The coding schedule was made reasonable in order not to overtax the energies of the coders and the coding sheet was kept to a decent length (two pages). A final intercoder reliability figure, the so called Holsti's (1969) method, i.e. the coefficient of reliability, was calculated for each variable. Holsti's method was chosen due to the fact that it takes into account the individual number of agreements of coders, and in this study, the final number of coded ads was, surprisingly, quite different. The US coder found, in all, 113 more ads to code than did the Finnish coder. However, this difference was compensated during the final discussions; the majority of the 'lost' ads was added to the data after they were discussed between the coders and the researcher. In most cases, it was simply a question of human error: the editorial content and ad content were sometimes difficult to distinguish. This was the case particularly concerning the 1973 ads which contained a lot more written material than the 2003 ads.

The formula for the coefficient of agreement used here is as follows:

$$PAo = 2A/(n^1 + n^2)$$

where PAo stands for the proportion of agreements, observed, A is the number of agreements between the (two) coders, and n¹ and n² are the number of units coded by coders 1 and 2, respectively. The statistic ranges from 0.00 (no agreement) to 1.00 (perfect agreement). (Neuendorf 2002, 149.) However, the acceptable level of intercoder reliability is still under debate (Neuendorf 2002, 143; Lombard et al. 2002, 593); consequently, Kassarian's (1977) recommendations for sufficient levels are being employed herein: coefficients of 0.85 or greater are nearly always acceptable; reliabilities below 0.8 should be treated with suspicion. The following table shows the levels of agreement for each variable in the content analytical phase of this study.

Table 13. Intercoder reliability of each variable (i.e. coefficients of agreement [PAo]) in the study.

Variables coded for each advertisement with a male character:	
(1) Product category being advertised	<i>PAo = 0.9</i>
(2) Number of men in the ad	<i>PAo = 0.9</i>
(3) Number of women in the ad	<i>PAo = 0.9</i>
(4) Number of children in the ad	<i>PAo = 0.92</i>
(5) Setting/location of the advertisement	<i>PAo = 0.85</i>
Variables coded for the main adult male character:	
(6) Age	<i>PAo = 0.85</i>
(7) Marital status	<i>PAo = 0.9</i>
(8) Role	<i>PAo = 0.87</i>
(9) Image of masculinity	<i>PAo = 0.84</i>
(10) Race/skin colour	<i>PAo = 0.93</i>
(11) Facial prominence	<i>PAo = 0.87</i>
(12) Body type	<i>PAo = 0.83</i>
(13) Clothing style	<i>PAo = 0.84</i>
(14) Relation to other people in the ad	<i>PAo = 0.81</i>
(15) Relation to the product	<i>PAo = 0.83</i>

As indicated, the coefficients of agreement were higher for the more 'manifest' variables, such as the product category (1); number of people in the ad (2), (3) and (4); marital status (7); and race/skin colour (10). Interestingly, in spite of the presumption that the number of people in the ad would be practically self-explanatory, there were inconsistencies between the codings. This was because it was sometimes difficult to count the exact number and gender of the people when the picture was small (as was often the case in Reader's Digest and Valitut Palat) or when there were many people in the same picture.

However, for variables where agreement by chance was more prone – particularly body type (12), relation to other people in the ad (14), and relation to the product (15), the coefficients were lower. During the discussions between the researcher and the coders it also came out that age and the image of masculinity were difficult variables to judge. There was a 13-year age difference between the coders which obviously affected the judgements: the older coder had a tendency to judge the men younger.

In the data analysis, the researcher will describe the findings and interpret their significance (Deacon et al. 1999, 129). The sources of unreliability have to be located. These, as well as an explanation about what was done, why it was undertaken, what was accomplished and what the contribution was, will be aggregated in the research report. (Krippendorff 1980, 177–179.)

In summary, content analysis can be used to provide a background chart of the domain of interest. According to Sayre (1992, 19), the information obtained through content analysis is useful only when combined with interpretation of the results. Thus, having conducted a content analysis, the researcher can interpret the imagery in qualitative ways. Typical or salient examples can be further analysed to add the qualitative description of what the data mean. For instance, having shown how frequently and in what settings images of men appear, a researcher can discuss the significance of the images in terms of metaphors, photographic style, and historical or cultural context. (Bell 2001, 27.) According to Bell (2001, 34), research adopting content analysis should supplement and extend its findings by means of detailed analysis of typical examples. Herein, this was achieved using extended focus groups and this is covered next.

3.2 Empirical research design for phase 2: Focus group interviews

The content analytical phase was supplemented by *extended focus group interviews*⁹¹ to enrich the meanings of masculinity and explore the wider connotations of the advertisements. Originally, the idea was to use semiotics for this purpose but as it turned out during the methodological exploration, the meanings of media texts could not have been established simply by one person's decoding of the text. This is due to all texts being to some degree open and polysemic, and because the study is cross-cultural in nature. (cf. Dines & Humez 1995, 3.) Consequently, in order to bring diverse experiences and identities to the process of 'reading' ads as well as to yield a cultural perspective to the interpretations, focus groups were utilised as the method in

⁹¹ See e.g. Gunter (2000, 43).

the second phase of this study. Focus groups are often employed alongside other methods of data collection [as is the case in this study], but they can also be used as a stand-alone method (Johnson & Turner 2003, 309).

Focus groups⁹² represent qualitative methods; in most cases, the generic goal of qualitative research is to develop insight into how people think and feel; thus, to understand the world of lived experience⁹³ from the perspective of those who live in it (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 12; Flynn 1991, 280; cf. Leininger 1994, 109). As Devereux (2003, 49) has aptly put it: “*Focus groups help capture real-life data in a social environment.*” This refers to a *holistic view* which is considered one of the fundamental features of qualitative methods: seeking understanding of the phenomenon in its entirety in order to develop a complete understanding of the situation. Besides, according to [e.g.] Rudestam and Newton (1992, 32; cf. Ruddock 2001, 24), qualitative methods generally apply *an inductive approach*, starting out with specific, accurate observations and moving towards the development of general patterns. However, Daymon and Holloway (2002, 232) as well as Rossman and Rallis (1998, 19) criticize this view, arguing that eventually all inquiry proceeds through a nonlinear process of induction, deduction, inspiration, and hard thinking and working. Due to the constant interplay – moving back and forth between the analysis and data collection – qualitative research is often described as iterative (ibid.).

In the study at hand, the aim of the second empirical phase is to develop insight into masculinity in print advertising, assessed by the focus group participants. Herein, the ads are used as projective stimuli to elicit and draw out the feelings and reactions of the participants. The study is iterative in the sense that topics of the written elicitation stage as well as the discussion topics were partly drawn from the content analytical phase (phase 1) and partly from the previous literature on gender and advertising. Of the three approaches⁹⁴ which Calder (1977) delineates, this study represents the phenomenological approach⁹⁵, i.e. the idea is to understand the everyday experiences of the consumers (see also Rudestam & Newton 1992, 33–34; Patton 2002, 104). Supposedly, the group arrangement will bring a deeper perspective to the adverts and the discussion of the representations of masculinity because, in

⁹² Originally called *focussed interviews* (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 9; Merton 1987).

⁹³ According to Calder (1977), this particularly applies to the phenomenological approach of qualitative research.

⁹⁴ In his article, Calder (1977) looks at focus groups from a philosophy of science perspective, pointing to three different approaches: the *exploratory* approach, the *clinical* approach, and the *phenomenological* approach.

⁹⁵ Phenomenology stems from the Greek word ‘phenomenon’, i.e. to put into light something that can become visible in itself (Ray 1994, 118). According to Patton (2002, 104), the foundational question of phenomenology is what the meaning, structure and essence of a lived experience is for a person or a group of people.

general, adverts are not consumed alone but depend on interactions with other people, thus creating socially shared meanings (cf. Percy et al. 2001, 27; Flynn 1991, 281). In order to clarify their own opinions, people often need to listen to others (Rossman & Rallis 1998, 135).

As the name implies, focus groups are a research technique that collects data through *group* interaction and group dynamics: answers and ideas are produced by members of the group themselves, inspired by the group setting – the ultimate goal being to see the topic from the participants' point of view. It is the group dynamics and interaction that are considered the main attractions of focus groups over e.g. individual interviews (Hansen et al. 1998, 261–262; Carey 1994, 225; Morgan 1988, 18). Also, as distinct from group interviews (which might have alternative purposes: for example, therapy or decision making), focus groups are devoted to data collection where the group interaction can also be seen as a source of data (see Hansen et al. 1998, 276–277). In fact, focus groups are a social process through which participants co-produce ideas about the phenomenon under study. Typically, these ideas are specific to the time and place of the discussions. Consequently, a tendency towards consensus can appear. (Barbour & Schostak 2005, 43.) Taking this into consideration, the moderator has an active role in facilitating the discussion as well as using the group as a device for eliciting information. (Morgan 1996, 130; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 10.) Herein, as often in the social science research, the researcher is the moderator (see Morgan 1988, 9–10; Chrzanowska 2002, 9). However, within commercial marketing research projects the moderator is typically an experienced external party who represents the client in the group.

Also, the topic under discussion is determined by the researcher. According to Daymon and Holloway (2002, 186–187; also Deacon et al. 1999, 65; Calder 1977, 362), it is preferable to concentrate on one or two clear issues and discuss them in depth. In fact, as the name implies, focus groups are designed to focus; a focus group is not a forum for freewheeling, haphazard discussion – there has to be a clearly identifiable agenda for the sessions. (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 18, 51.)

Not all topics are as such suitable for group discussions; sometimes groups can inhibit discussion when they deal with private matters (cf. Morgan 1988, 20). In this study, the focus of the study (masculinity) is a social construct; hence, supposedly, the group arrangement will lead to a collective generation of ideas.

The use of focus groups as a technique for gathering qualitative data has boomed during the last couple of decades, but the method is not new: focus groups have been employed since the 1920s (cf. Morgan 1996, 129, 147; Daymon & Holloway 2002, 188; see also Hansen et al. 1998, 258–259).

According to Lunt and Livingstone (1996, 79; cf. Brierley 2002, 37), the upsurge in interest is part of the move toward qualitative methods. In addition, the 1980s shift in communication research from questions about media influence and effects toward concerns with how audiences interpret visual and written material, increased interest in focus groups as a research method (Hansen et al. 1998, 258). Interestingly, according to Calder (1977, 353; also Flynn 1991, 281), focus groups are the form most often associated with qualitative research: some actors in the marketing business even use focus groups as a synonymous term for qualitative research.

Focus groups have been used as a self-contained method or in combination with other methods as is the case in this study. Morgan (1996, 133–136) researched the combinations of focus groups with other methods, finding the most frequent pairings to be with either in-depth individual interviews, or surveys (see also Hansen et al. 1998, 260). The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods add value to research (Rudestam & Newton 1992, 39; Devereux 2003, 121); for instance, when used in combination with surveys, focus groups can produce more in-depth information on the topic at hand (Morgan 1996, 136; see also Lunt & Livingstone 1996, 96). There has been discussion as to whether focus groups might be conducted before or after the deployment of a survey; according to Calder (1977, 356), it is just as appropriate to conduct focus groups after a quantitative project as before it. Using focus groups in combination with other methods can also diminish the problem of subjectivity that has been related to focus group research (cf. Calder 1977, 353).

3.2.1 Critical stages of focus group research

The basic issue in specifying research designs for focus groups is to ensure that the research procedure delivers the desired data. Daymon and Holloway (2002, 190), among others⁹⁶, provide a list of the critical stages in focus group research: (a) planning, (b) recruiting, (c) moderating, (d) analyzing, and (e) reporting. Herein, the stages are compressed into four as discernible in the following figure.

⁹⁶ According to Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold (1998, 265–265), one of the clearest expositions has been offered by Stewart, D. W. and Shamdasani, P. N. (1990) *Focus groups: theory and practice*. Sage Publications: Newbury Park.

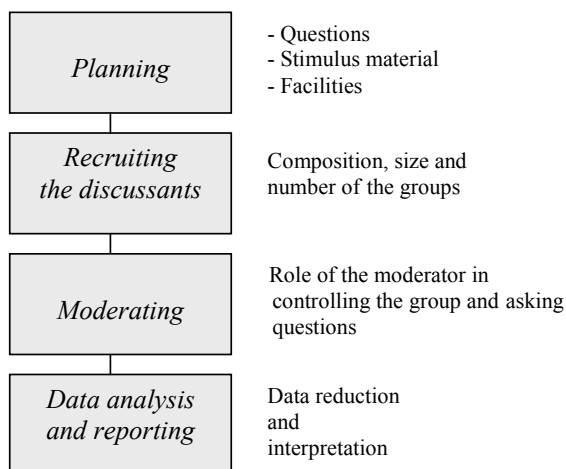


Figure 20. Critical phases of conducting the focus group discussions.

The following discussion is structured in accordance with the phases (see Figure 20). Within focus group discussions, the moderator, i.e. the researcher in this case, is the principal data generating tool. Active engagement throughout the whole process is important, while still leaving room for individual musings.

3.2.1.1 Planning the discussions and choosing the stimulus material

The interviews should be planned carefully; an important issue to be decided is the level of standardization with regard to the questions. The decision as to whether to use fixed questions (standardization) or open topics (emergence) should be based on the goals of the research. According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1990, 75), the volume of data forthcoming increases with the openness of the questions. In this study, the questions were semi-open and open: before the actual focus group interview, the participants were first asked to comment on 2 + 2 + 2 (1973, 1988, 2003) ads in writing. Thus, the starting point was at the individual level of analysis (see Elliott et al. 1993, 315–316).

The advertisements were chosen as illustrative stimulus material so as to allow the examination of responses to different advertisements across a thirty-year period of time. Using stimulus materials in generating interest and reflection to the issue is recommended by, e.g., David and Sutton (2004, 97). In order to be congruent with the cultural theme, the ads for the discussions in

the US were selected from Reader's Digest⁹⁷, and likewise, the ads for the discussions in Finland were chosen from Valitut Palat⁹⁸ and Seura. After conducting the content analysis, it was possible to choose the most relevant examples for the focus group discussions (see Bell 2001, 34). Thus, the ads were chosen purposefully as was done, for instance, in the Elliott and Elliott (2005) and Schroeder and Zwick (2004) studies. Each stimulus advertisement contained a portrayal of at least one man (for the advertisements, see appendices 2 and 3).

For the second empirical phase of the study, the extended focus group discussion phase, a selection of illuminating images was made representing each year (1973, 1988 and 2003). The emphasis was on the visual elements of the ads (cf. Mick & Politi 1989, 88). It was not the idea to find images that are statistically representative, as was the case in the content analysis. Besides the written protocols, data were gained from the discussions themselves. Each discussion was videotaped and recorded. Afterwards, the tapes were transcribed and further analysed according to major themes and previously mentioned guideline questions. Altogether, the transcribed material contained one hundred pages of written data.

For the discussions in Finland, the first 1973 ad (Vuorivilla) was selected because the man was participating in the product's use; the functional role of the human model was typical for 1973 Finnish ads. The second ad, North State, a brand of cigarettes, was chosen because cigarette ads were still quite typical in print advertising in Finland in 1973. A few years later, cigarette advertising was banned. Another reason for choosing the North State ad was that it showed manly comradeship and manly ways of expressing togetherness. According to Gladwell (2000, 182), a good way to appeal to men in advertising is through a sense of conformity and fraternity. The first 1988 ad, Philips (consumer electronics), was chosen because it represented face-ism – a phenomenon that seems to concern particularly men in advertising (see Subchapter 2.3.3.3) and in terms of the content analysis, turned out to be dominant in this study as well. To adduce the increasing decorative role of male models in advertising, ad number 4 (Ahlström, specialty papers and nonwovens) was chosen. This ad offered a nice contrast to the 1973 Vuorivilla ad (as they were both mineral wool ads). Ad number 5 was interesting in the sense that it contained cultural elements typically known as American. Even though the ad was published in Finland, the copy was in English. Besides, the

⁹⁷ In the United States, Reader's Digest has the third highest circulation of any magazine: 12.2 million (Belch & Belch 2004, 402).

⁹⁸ Valitut Palat is the Finnish edition of Reader's Digest, with its culturally adapted editorial content and national advertisements. A number of US based consumer-oriented magazines have international editions (Belch & Belch 2004, 687).

overtly sexual nature and gazes of the men were expected to provoke emotive responses. The last ad, HK (HK Ruokatalo, meat products), was chosen due to the way the man was exploited and forced between the tongs. It was anticipated that these ads would stimulate discussion and besides, embed the discussion in the era in question.

For the US discussions, the first ad (Man-Power) was chosen due to the presence of the woman. In the 1970s, if there were another person in the ad besides the man, it was typically a woman. However, the tendency to depict children together with men in ads increased during the time period of the study time period, and therefore, ad number 6 (NicoDerm) was chosen for 2003. In the 1970s, men were most often in 'vehicles and accessories' ads and consequently, ad 2 (Spark Plugs) was chosen. This ad also represented face-ism and strong cultural connotations (cowboy hat, truck). Ad number 3 was a car ad (Chevy) using puffery which is quite typical in US advertising. Ad number 4 (Beltone) was an example of face-ism and using a celebrity (Eddie Albert) to testify to the product. It also served as an example of using an older man. Finally, ad 5 (OxiMagic) represented an example of postmodern, odd advertising. As expected, this ad caused the most confusion among the US focus group discussants.

The stimulus material was presented to the discussants in the form of A 4-sized colour transparencies one at a time, and the discussants verbalized their responses in a one-page information sheet in silence. After writing down their responses and returning the information sheets, the discussants were free to talk about and refer to the ads in the order they chose.

The procedure using a questionnaire prior to the group session is called the *extended focus group*. The information from the questionnaire assists the focus group discussions; the employment of the questionnaire enables the moderator to diminish the group effect as well as draw out minority opinions. (Gunter 2000, 43–44.) Every session commenced with a short introduction by the researcher, covering some background to the research, the purpose of the research, the role of the discussants, and the progress of the session.

The questions prior to the group sessions were:

- 1 What are the observable features of the ad that stand out?
- 2 What does each one suggest?
- 3 What overall impression does the ad suggest?
- 4 What do you think the advertiser is trying to communicate with this ad?

A similar method and similar questions have earlier been used by Mick and Politi (1989) as well as by Lerman and Callow (2004). According to Scott (1994, 464), advertising can be read in various ways (e.g. as artwork and aesthetic objects or as ideology), but when we read ads as ads (considering the

economic value) we must incorporate the intention to sell (see also Elliott et al. 1995, 192, 210). Thus, reading ads as consumers means understanding the ad as an effort to sell.

Of the four above-mentioned questions, the first was intended to uncover the denotations, the second entering into the connotative meanings of the ad. Question three combined these two levels, whereas the fourth one related to the economic value of the ad and the potential intention of the advertiser.

Following this elicitation stage, the groups were led into a contemplative discussion on masculinity in advertising in general, drawing out the participants' perceptions of masculinity in print advertising in Finland and in the US. However, one has to note that the perceptions do not necessarily concern only print advertising; people are steadily exposed to many types of media and defining definite effects of individual media would be practically impossible. Rather, it is the accumulated exposure of various media that is of concern. (cf. Morgan & Signorielli 1990, 20.) The discussions covered below listed issues. The majority of the questions related to the discussants' views of masculinity and advertising in general; only the first question was directly related to the stimulus material.

1. What aspects of masculinity do the ad elements highlight? What aspects of masculinity do they ignore?
2. How have the representations of masculinity in advertising possibly changed over time?
3. What is the role of advertising in moulding gender stereotypes? Does it mirror reality or does it create it?
4. Some say that the use of human models in advertising may link the product too heavily to a particular gender or particular features of the person. How do you feel about this?
5. It has been said that effective role portrayals are a function of an appropriate match between the gender of the depicted model and the gender image of the product, the setting of the portrayal, and realism of the portrayal. What do you say about that?

The first interview question was directly related to the purpose of the study and it was asked in order to find out how, according to the discussants, advertising possibly mediates masculinity. The second question was related to Research question 2 (*"How has masculinity changed over time?"*) and the ways masculinities have possibly changed over time, again, according to the discussants, in Finland and the US. Question 3 had to do with the relation between media reality and social reality and how the discussants felt about the relationship that has been discussed a lot during the last few decades and that is of major concern in this study. Questions 4 and 5 were asked in order to

yield information concerning the relevance of reconciling the gender of the human model, the setting as well as the general gender-image of a product.

In order to break the ice and relax the discussants, each interview began with two general questions “*What defines a man [in general]?*” and “*What particularly defines a man in your own culture?*”. These questions were related to Research question 1 of this study, i.e. “*How does masculinity manifest itself?*” Thus, in the end, the answers to the ice-breakers turned out to play a major role in the whole study.

The preparatory topics served as a practical structure for organising each group’s discussion around the same set of topics and comparing the discussions. Later on, they also help to organise the analysis of the discussions. (see Morgan 1988, 56, 66.) However, the topics were not supposed to form too rigid a framework (cf. the emergent nature of qualitative research; Rossman & Rallis 1998, 9–10). Furthermore, questions were not necessarily asked in the same order in each group but rather depending on the flow of the discussion. Each discussion proceeded in its unique way and thus some groups were also asked additional questions. However, throughout the discussions, questions that called for a direct, one- or two-word response were avoided as the objective of focus group sessions is to stimulate discussion. (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 63, 65.)

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990, 66), among others, recommend pretesting, i.e. trying out the questions on a few individuals before the actual focus group discussions. Pretesting provides an opportunity to determine whether the questions have been pertinently formulated and can be easily understood, and whether they elicit discussion. For this study, the pretesting was done two weeks before the first proper focus group session among a pilot group in Finland.

Finally, the facilities should be planned carefully. A neutral, comfortable environment for the focus groups is important. The room should be big enough for everybody to be seated. Also the spatial arrangement has to be considered: according to Daymon and Holloway (1996, 194, 199; also Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 48), circle or semi-circle arrangements have proved to be the best seating arrangements. The participants have to be contacted well in advance; from the beginning, it is important to establish ground rules so that everybody knows what is expected of them. As to this study, the facilities fulfilled the above-mentioned criteria. The first two focus group sessions were held in a university setting: at Turku School of Economics in Finland (autumn 2004). The other two focus groups were conducted in a business office in Escalon, California (spring 2005).

3.2.1.2 Recruiting the discussants and composing the groups

Upon using focus group discussions as a research method, the composition, size and number of the groups are important factors to be decided. The choice of the participants should be based on well-defined criteria determined by the aims of the research. As to composing the focus groups, Daymon and Holloway (2002, 190–191; also Deacon et al. 1999, 56) name two possibilities: preconstituted groups (social or professional groups that already exist) and researcher-constituted groups (created by the researcher for his or her own purposes) [convenience samples; Stewart & Shamdsani 1990, 53]. For this study, the groups were created by the researcher.

Once this decision has been made, the next choice is between homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. The former are characterized by people with similar interests or experiences, positions or roles, ages or gender. The kind of homogeneity that Byers and Wilcox (1991, 65⁹⁹; also Krueger 1988, 18) refer to should be included in any focus groups: namely, homogeneity in relation to the topic under discussion. Heterogeneous groups comprise people with different social, cultural, political and economic characteristics. If the group is too heterogeneous, there may be members who will feel inferior and not contribute fully (Carey 1994, 229). Besides, according to Lunt and Livingstone (1996, 92), groups consistent in composition are easier to run.

As to group composition, gender and age are factors that need to be considered carefully since they can affect the quality and level of interaction in the groups, and consequently, affect the data. According to Stern and Holbrook (1994, 16), gender influences interpretation and interaction in a group on many levels. Previous research (e.g. Smith-Lovin & Brody 1989, 432; Devor 1997, 419; Deacon et al. 1999, 56) suggests, for instance, that men interrupt women more than other men, and hence tend to dominate conversations. Besides, both genders have a tendency to perform for each other (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 191). According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1990, 37), stereotypical gender differences in terms of aggressiveness (men being considered more aggressive), dependency (women conforming more to group pressures), social orientation (women being more anxious than men), and emotionality (women being more sensitive and better able to interpret emotions than men) can influence the discussions. Thus, according to Morgan (1996, 143), especially when gender issues are of interest, it is advisable to have single-gender groups, and one of each.

⁹⁹ Original source: Axelrod, M. (1975) 10 essentials for good qualitative research. *Marketing News*, Vol. 8, 10–11.

In order to minimize gender influence, separate groups of men and women were used in this study. In addition, groups were homogenous in the sense that all the participants had been exposed to the topic of the study (cf. Byers & Wilcox 1991, 65). On the other hand, to ensure the widest possible age distribution, the participants were invited from three different age segments: young (18–35), mid (36–50) and older adults (50+). In each group, there were two representatives of each segment. According to Krueger (1988, 28), focus groups are ideally composed of complete strangers; in this study, most of the participants were unfamiliar with each other before the sessions. As to social, political and economic characteristics, the groups might also have been quite heterogeneous among themselves but these features are not of interest in this study.

The size of the group has a direct effect on the group dynamics: the larger the group, the more formalized its structure needs to be (Chrzanowska 2002, 47). Lunt and Livingstone (1996, 82) consider a group of six to ten participants ideal. In line with this, according to Imms and Ereaut (2002, 17, 81–82), a ‘standard’ focus group consists of six to nine respondents (see also Daymon & Holloway 2002, 192; Deacon et al. 1999, 57; Hansen et al. 1998, 270). Furthermore, according to Quible (1998, 29; also Byers & Wilcox 1991, 65), the common size of a focus group is eight to twelve individuals. However, according to Forsyth (1990¹⁰⁰), even two people can be considered ‘a group’. Thus, the size is variable, and according to Morgan (1996, 146), clearly under the researcher’s control. Smaller groups have been regarded more appropriate for emotionally charged topics, while larger groups can possibly work better with more neutral topics. Smaller groups also make it easier for the moderator¹⁰¹ to manage the discussions, and for each participant to express their feelings fully. (Morgan 1996, 146; Richins 1991, 74.) However, if there are only a few participants, group dynamics might possibly not work as well. On the other hand, large groups can get too noisy, making it hard for the moderator to distinguish the voices. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 192; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 10.) According to Daymon and Holloway (2002, 192), six members is appropriate for most focus group research purposes; it is large enough to provide a variety of perspectives but small enough not to become disorderly.

¹⁰⁰ As cited in Chrzanowska 2002, 47. Original source: Forsyth D.R. (1990) *Group dynamics*. Book/Cole: Pacific Grove, CA.

¹⁰¹ The interviewer is described as a ‘moderator’ when in the context of a group (Chrzanowska 2002, 9). The moderator (also sometimes called a facilitator) can be an outside party or the researcher herself/himself (cf. Daymon & Holloway 2002, 187; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold 1998, 273). There can also be more than just one moderator in a group discussion (cf. Imms & Ereaut 2002, 80).

The number of focus groups used to collect the data depends on the research aims and the complexity of the research topic: the more focused the topic and the simpler the research question, the fewer groups are usually required (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 192; Deacon et al. 1999, 56; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 58). According to Morgan's (1996, 144) rule of thumb, most projects comprise four to six focus groups¹⁰². This range is based on the finding that the data become saturated¹⁰³ after the first few groups. Also, according to Calder (1977, 361), this happens after conducting three or four sessions on the same topic. However, the diversity in the participants or the range of topics to be covered might increase the number of groups necessary to achieve saturation. (Morgan 1988, 144.)

For this study, four focus groups were put together, each consisting of six members. The first two were conducted in Finland in November 2004 and the second two in the United States in February 2005. The subjects were a convenient sample of 6 Finnish and 6 American men, as well as 6 Finnish and 6 American women. The age of the respondents varied from 20 to 61 years. As the US is racially a very diverse country, it would have been practically impossible to form representative groups in that sense. The respondents were a purposive sample of white Americans born in the United States; thus, the group did not constitute a significant racial mix. A demographic profile of the Finnish participants is presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Demographic profile of the focus group participants in Finland.

Female	Age	Education	Occupation	Male	Age	Education	Occupation
A	24	M. Sc.	Assistant	A	26	USS graduate*	Student
B	27	M. Sc.	Research ass.	B	26	USS graduate*	Student
C	37	M. Sc.	Researcher	C	38	M. Sc.	Project manager
D	44	M. Sc.	Researcher	D	42	B. Sc.	Advisor
E	55	USS graduate*	Entrepreneur	E	56	B. Sc.	Unknown
F	59	B. Sc.	Controller	F	61	B. Sc.	Controller

*Upper Secondary School Graduate

A corresponding profile of the American discussants is presented in Table 15. Before the actual discussions, the purpose and intended use of the

¹⁰² However, there are examples of studies where as many as 52 focus groups have been conducted (Morgan 1996, 144).

¹⁰³ According to Lunt and Livingstone (1996, 83), the researcher should continue to run new groups until the last group has nothing new to add.

investigation was explained to all the groups, each participant was assured of full anonymity.

Table 15. Demographic profile of the focus group participants in the US.

Female	Age	Education	Occupation	Male	Age	Education	Occupation
A	20	Undergraduate	Not employed	A	20	HS graduate*	Musician
B	30	AA Degree**	Coordinator	B	21	Undergraduate	Relay operator
C	42	B. A.	Substitute	C	44	Some college	Carpenter
D	47	B. Sc.	Consultant	D	47	Paramedic	Paramedic
E	52	M. A.	Library assistant	E	53	B. Sc.	Sales person
F	53	B. A.	Retired teacher	F	56	M. A.	Administrator

* High school graduate

** Associate of Arts

Individuals were contacted by phone and asked if they would be willing to participate in the discussions. Practically all those contacted expressed enthusiasm with regard to participating in the study. Following a commitment, each participant was assured of full anonymity.

All the focus group discussions were videotaped. The sessions, including the written protocols, ranged from 2–2.5 hours, each session generating verbatim written transcripts of 15–25 pages. The videotapes, the written protocols and the transcripts served as additional data to that gathered by the content analysis.

Thanks to the videotaping, the moderator was able to pay attention to the group (instead of to taking notes) – and the tapes could be further studied later (Wheatley & Flexner 1988, 17). The contributions of individual participants could be identified more easily, and body language, gestures and other nonverbal cues observed directly (Hansen et al. 1998, 278; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 46–47).

In recruiting participants, the matter of the use of incentives must be addressed. Commercial research organizations usually pay focus group participants. In this study, the respondents were offered a small incentive for participation. As Christmas was coming at the time of the Finnish discussions and since all discussants were over 18 years of age¹⁰⁴, a bottle of red wine was given to each participant. In the US, the legal drinking age is 21, and because there were minors in both US groups, every participant was instead given a gift card for a Starbuck's coffee shop. In addition, coffee and cake were served during the sessions in order to relax the participants. (cf. Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 55.)

¹⁰⁴ In Finland, the legal drinking age is 18.

3.2.1.3 Moderating

The presence of the moderator is one of the key features of focus group interviews (Morgan 1996, 144–145; Quible 1998, 30). The higher the degree of control the moderator exercises, the more structured is the discussion. The moderator can control the group with regard to asking questions (e.g. directing attention to the important issues) or managing group dynamics (e.g. trying to get everybody to participate equally in the discussion). However, by no means should they predetermine responses (Gunter 2000, 45). Also Lunt and Livingstone (1996, 88, 90) believe in a neutral, mediatory role for the moderator: an ideal group should more or less run itself, with the moderator occasionally prodding, provoking or reorienting the discussion. Besides, important data often arise unanticipatedly (Carey 1994, 228).

The moderator's ability to develop trust and rapport, as well as to establish relationships with the discussants, is of utmost importance for collecting valuable data. However, in a cross-cultural study such as this one, the researcher's language skills can affect the balance of power and the dynamics of the discussions. Cross-cultural interviews involve data collection in different national, cultural and linguistic environments. (Marschan-Piekkari & Reis 2004, 224–225, 240.) For this study, the interview data were collected in two countries, Finland and the United States. During the focus group discussions in Finland, the language being used was Finnish. After the sessions, the written analyses of the ads as well as the citations of the interviews, were translated into English by the researcher. In the US, the discussions were naturally conducted in English which is a second language to the researcher. Over the course of the US focus group discussions, the researcher spent five months in California which gave her a linguistic advantage.

Researchers often follow a 'funnel-approach' in asking questions, i.e. proceed from the more general questions to the specific (Hansen et al. 1998, 274; Daymon & Holloway 2002, 196; see also Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 11, 76). Herein, the sessions commenced with two ice-breaker questions but as the groups proceeded, the discussions were directed to more specific questions about masculinity in advertising.

After completing the discussion of each question and before going on to the next, the moderator summed up the group's discussion as recommended by Carey (1994, 232). This made the participants aware that the moderator was listening to what they were saying, and also made the group feel that she was part of it. Besides, feedback and summing up provided structure for postsession analysis. (Wheatley & Flexner 1988, 17.)

As recommended by Daymon & Holloway (2002, 193–195, 199), the discussion sessions started by introducing the topic, outlining the objectives of the study and the planned use of the data, as well as making all participants feel at ease by asking them to introduce themselves to the group (see also Quible 1998, 32; Carey 1994, 231). It was also made clear to everyone that there are no correct answers, and that the views of all participants are valued. After all, group outcomes are the consequences of individual actions, and the moderator should be open to contributions that are contrary to previous comments (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 36). Accordingly, this aspect was respected in this study.

3.2.1.4 Analysing and reporting the data

According to Carey (1994, 233), the analysis and interpretation of focus group data is similar to other qualitative data analysis, only with the added dimension of the group context. The analysis is concerned with data reduction (summarizing the data into simplified patterns and categories) and interpretation (bringing meaning and insight to the words of the interviewees). Finding patterns in the data enables the researcher to relate the findings to concepts and themes in the existing literature. On the other hand, theoretical concepts serve to arrange data and to understand them in a new way (Gunter 2000, 91). This, furthermore, helps to generate theory, new models or theory-based generalizations. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 232–240.) In this study, the purpose of using focus groups was not to generate new theory but to make theory-based inferences.

The fact that the interviewees use different words in answering the focus group questions presents a challenge to the analyst: s/he needs to consider how to compare the different answers. According to Krueger (1988, 109), the analysis process is like detective work; primarily, the researcher seeks repeated evidence that is common to several participants. Opinions expressed only once should not form the fulcrum of the report.

Instead of following rigid rules in undertaking the qualitative analysis, the researcher should follow an approach which best fits the overall research design, and take into consideration the differences in group dynamics: the data can differ from group to group (Carey 1994, 233). Moreover, the analysis of the data should be continuous throughout the study. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 232–240.) According to Quible (1998), the key issue in the analysis

phase is coding; Quible (1998, 33¹⁰⁵) recommends the following ICA coding scheme: I for individual/idiosyncratic (statements that are made by one individual or mentioned one time); C for consensus (points of consensus among the interviewees); and A for areas of agreement/disagreement. However, the researcher should not get caught up in counting the number of times something occurs, rather look for patterns (Byers & Wilcox 1991, 75; also Carey 1994, 234).

In this study [as in the Elliott et al. (1993) and Elliott & Elliott (2005) studies], the analysis was conducted in two phases, as the data consisted of both written protocols and focus group discussions. First, the written protocols were examined for emergent themes and relationships with the theoretical background of the study. Then, the focus group transcriptions were used to locate the gender representations and to derive categories of shared beliefs, opinions and attitudes. Also Fischer and Gainer (1994) conducted an extended focus group study; however, the written protocols were used *after* the focus group sessions. Each participant was asked to write a report on what they thought the session had been about and whether the moderator had missed anything relevant to the topic.

Mick and Politi (1989) adopted a similar technique, calling it a protocol technique, according to which, the researchers (Mick & Politi 1989, 86), after capturing the consumers' interpretations, reviewed the transcriptions of the consumer protocols and classified them according to different (a priori determined) themes. A similar approach was adapted by Lerman and Callow (2004). At this point, it should be noted that the focus of analysis in the second empirical phase of this study was not on the ads themselves, but on the discussants' interpretations of the ads as well as on their views of masculinity and advertising within their own culture (cf. Lerman & Callow 2004, 519).

After collecting and analyzing the data, the research is reported. Reporting is an act of synthesising and summarizing what has been said, and drawing inferences from the discussions (Calder 1977, 353). It is furthermore an act of relating the data to the research problems (Hansen et al. 1998, 281). Krueger (1988, 127–132) presents three different styles of reporting: raw data, descriptive summary, and interpretative model. Herein, a combination of the descriptive summary style and interpretative model was used; the reporting begins with a descriptive, interpretative summary of each theme and after that includes illustrative, verbatim quotes. The findings are discussed in the light of the earlier theory.

¹⁰⁵ Original source: Lederman, L.C.: (1989) *Assessing educational effectiveness: The focus group interview as a technique for data collection*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, San Francisco.

In summary, the use of focus groups made it possible to investigate how interpretations were collectively constructed through social interaction, and consequently, the research interest lay rather in socially expressed opinions and discourses than in individual attitudes towards the ads. Whether the respondents liked the ad or not was not the issue. Rather, the interviews attempted to examine consumer perceptions of masculinity and the role of advertising in reflecting it. Moreover, as with Lunt and Livingstone (1996, 88), either diversity or consensus was allowed to emerge¹⁰⁶ during the discussions.

3.2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of focus groups

As a method, focus groups have a number of practical advantages: (a) synergy, (b) snowballing, (c) stimulation, and (d) speed. First, as to synergy, focus groups provide the researcher with evidence from different people on the same subject; the group effect produces a wider range of ideas and opinions than would the sum of responses obtained from an equivalent number of people interviewed individually. Secondly, snowballing means that a comment from one respondent can stimulate responses from others in the group, and also cause other respondents to view things differently. Thirdly, the interactive nature of focus groups can stimulate a greater depth of discussion. As the level of discussion and excitement over the topic increase, respondents become eager to express their opinions. Furthermore, focus groups allow the researcher to interact directly with the respondents. Fourthly, the combined discussions make it possible to collect data from a range of people at the same time, in a relatively short space of time. Hence, focus groups are faster and cheaper to conduct than individual interviews with the same number of participants. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 186–188; Imms & Ereat 2002, 79–81; Morgan 1986, 139; Patton 2002, 386; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 16, 19; Silverman 2001, 160, 268.)

As for weaknesses, the most commonly identified in group dynamics include: polarization (the group decision can be more extreme than the mean of its individuals due to pressure from the majority or more powerful individuals); compliance (responding in ways believed to be expected by the researcher, or rejecting the evidence of one's own eyes in order to conform¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Some researchers require group members to work collaboratively towards a consensual product (Lunt & Livingstone 1996, 88).

¹⁰⁷ Carey (1994, 236–237) discusses two ways of adjusting to the other members of the group: *conforming*, i.e. a person tailors their contributions in compliance with others' views; and *censoring*, i.e. a person withholds their potential contributions.

to the group); and groupthink (making decisions that individual members know to be poor). Furthermore, the responses are not independent of one another, which restricts the generalizability of the results. The convenient nature of most focus group recruiting practices also limits generalization to a larger population. It is the moderator's task to control the effects of these disadvantages by emphasizing the contributory role of every member of the group and by improving the interpersonal relations within the group; to avoid polarization, the moderator should control dominating participants while simultaneously encouraging passive ones (Gunter 2000, 43). However, the moderator should avoid reacting to participants' comments and leading the group in terms of the findings. (Imms & Ereaut 2002, 81; Chrzanowska 2002, 54–55; Daymon & Holloway 2002, 199; Patton 2002, 386–388; Fontana & Frey 2000, 652; Quible 1998, 29; Hansen et al. 1998, 263; Lunt & Livingstone 1996, 82; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 17, 19.)

3.2.3 Successful realisation of focus group discussions

How can the researcher and the audience judge the quality of the research findings and conclusions of a focus group study or whether the research stands up to external scrutiny? There are a number of criteria or tactics that help in assessing the quality of the research. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 277.)

Upon introducing content analysis as a method (see Subchapter 3.1.3), the predominant criteria of positivist science and quantitative research were reviewed, i.e. assessment of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (e.g. Hirschman 1986, 244). However, there has been a lot of discussion as to whether these criteria can be regarded as effective ways of evaluating the quality of qualitative research. Some researchers (see Daymon & Holloway 2002, 88–89) think they are, whereas others (e.g. Hirschman 1986, 244; Leininger 1994, 95) regard them to be inappropriate and confusing. There are also researchers who suggest (see discussion in Miles & Huberman 1994, 277) that it is not possible overall to specify criteria for the soundness of qualitative work.

It is not within the remit of this study to enter into this discussion more deeply; the basic assumption herein is that the quality of the research has to be determined according to some universally applicable criteria. According to Leininger (1994, 99), without the use of explicit criteria, the findings are subject to doubt, questioning, and nonconfirmability. The following paragraphs cover some of the most commonly employed tactics. Many of the tactics overlap which makes reciprocal comparison quite difficult. The topics and groupings are based on Miles and Huberman's (1994, 277–280)

discussion: (a) the objectivity or confirmability of qualitative work; (b) reliability, dependability, auditability; (c) internal validity, credibility, authenticity; (d) external validity, transferability, fittingness; and (e) utilization, application, action orientation.

(a) Since objectivity in an absolute form is considered practically impossible to achieve (see e.g. Daymon & Holloway 2002, 89; Deacon et al. 1999, 132), *confirmability* has been suggested to be more suitable to qualitative research. In qualitative research, the researcher is not presumed to be emotionally neutral or personally distant from the phenomenon of interest. Thus, the interpretations generated by the researcher are not assumed to be value free, as in the positivist approach. (Hirschman 1986, 246.) However, the moderator should avoid bias and as much as possible refrain from contributing to the discussion (Byers & Wilcox 1991, 69). Furthermore, for a qualitative study to be confirmable, the researcher must show how the data are linked to their sources, and that the findings and conclusions are not based on the researcher's prior assumptions and preconceptions. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 94; cf. Leininger 1994, 105.) A good way to improve the confirmability of a study is to have outside auditors review the documentation, field notes, and other supportive evidence to confirm that the conclusions do flow from the information collected (Hirschman 1986, 246). In both Finland and the US, an outside auditor looked over the reports and minor revisions were made based on the comments.

(b) Reliability is an epistemic criterion (originally developed for quantitative methods) thought to be necessary for establishing the truth of an account or interpretation of a social phenomenon (Schwandt 1997, 137; see also Lunt & Livingstone 1996, 92). In quantitative research, that is the extent to which a research instrument¹⁰⁸, such as the coding sheet used in the content analytical phase of this study, will yield the same results or answers (Krippendorff 1991, 125; Ruddock 2001, 18). And as with other 'quantitative' criteria for evaluating the accuracy of a piece of qualitative research, opinion is also divided over whether reliability is an applicable criterion for this purpose (Schwandt 1997, 137).

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the main research instrument, and consequently, a piece of qualitative research can never be wholly consistent and replicable; the background and characteristics of the researcher influence the emphasis and results (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 90; Hirschman 1986, 245). In order to enhance the *dependability* of humanistic inquiry, Hirschman (1986, 245) suggests the use of multiple human investigators. According to

¹⁰⁸ The traditional assessment of reliability examines the temporal stability and internal consistency of measurements (Hirschman 1986, 245).

Daymon and Holloway (2002, 90), one way of achieving dependability is to record the data, methods and decisions made during the research process. In reference to this, Healy and Perry (2000, 125) use the term methodological trustworthiness, i.e. the extent to which a piece of research can be audited by providing detailed information on the procedures of the study. Also Daymon and Holloway (2002, 93–94) adduce trustworthiness as characteristic of good qualitative research. For the findings to be dependable, they must be consistent and accurate. One way of achieving dependability is to demonstrate an audit trail: a detailed record of the decisions made before and during the research and a description of the research process. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 94, 100.)

(c) Validity, at its broadest, is concerned with the degree to which the findings of a study are true and certain: ‘true’ meaning that the findings accurately represent the phenomena to which they refer, and ‘certain’ in the sense that the findings are backed by evidence. (Seale & Filmer 1998, 134; Schwandt 1997, 168; Ruddock 2001, 18). There are several different stances on validity of which internal and external validity are the most common in quantitative research. The corresponding term for internal validity in qualitative research is *credibility* or authenticity (cf. Rudestam & Newton 1992, 38) since there is no assumption of one true value and discrete causal inferences; rather, there exists the possibility of multiple constructed realities (Hirschman 1986, 244; Miles & Huberman 1994, 278). Leininger (1994, 105, 110) regards credibility as the known, experienced or deeply felt truth of the people being studied. According to Daymon and Holloway (2002, 92–93), a study is credible or authentic when the participants’ views and ideas have been reported truthfully, and when the study is fair. In a piece of research, both trustworthiness and authenticity are shown by careful documentation of the research procedures (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 93). In addition, to determine the credibility, the researcher can use peer debriefing (e.g. giving one’s colleagues a draft copy of the report to read); or clarify tentative findings with the participants, i.e. *member checking* (Rudestam & Newton 1992, 39; see also Daymon & Holloway 2002, 93, 95–98; Silverman 2001, 233; Leininger 1994, 108). Herein, a member of each group reviewed the findings. Thanks to careful transcription and documentation of the data, there were no major issues of discrepancy.

(d) The fourth criterion of the good standard of qualitative research is *transferability*, which is analogous to external validity in quantitative research. External validity refers to the generalizability of the research findings across populations, time or conditions (e.g. Rudestam & Newton 1992, 39; Hirschman 1986, 245). The findings are usually considered generalizable when they can be applied to other, similar settings and populations. However,

the kind of generalizability applicable to quantitative research (e.g. using random sampling in order to draw out representative results) is difficult to achieve in qualitative research. (Tonkiss 1998, 259.) This applies to focus groups as well: from a statistical standpoint, the feedback from the subjects cannot be generalized beyond the members of the population from which they were drawn (Byers & Wilcox 1991, 67). Qualitative studies usually involve only small samples or single case studies, and thus, the researcher is instead concerned with the transferability of one manifestation of a phenomenon to a second manifestation, acknowledging that no two social contexts are ever identical. Similarities to another similar situation can contribute to extending knowledge. However, one must always construct an interpretation of the specifics of the second context on a post hoc basis. (Hirschman 1986, 245; Daymon & Holloway 2002, 93; Leininger 1994, 107.)

(e) The last criterion – *utilization* or *application* – has to do with the contributive role of the study: how usable and applicable is the knowledge provided? Do the findings lead to specific actions? (Miles & Huberman 1994, 280.) In reference to this, utilization has to do with the usefulness of the research findings: how do they develop, refine or enhance existing knowledge. (Ereaut 2002, 154.)

There are ways in which a researcher can check and demonstrate the quality of the research. A number of them are adduced by Daymon and Holloway (2002, 95–101; see also Leininger 1994, 108–112). In the study at hand, the following strategies are being used: (a) longitudinal research design (a study is more likely to be valid or trustworthy when the issue is tracked over a longer period of time); (b) member checking (checking the understanding of the data and confirming the findings with the participants in the focus groups); (c) methodological ‘between-method’ triangulation: using a combination of more than one method (content analysis and focus groups); (d) audit trail (providing a detailed record of the decisions made before and after the research and a description of the research process). Overall reflexivity – adopting a self-critical stance to one’s research, personal assumptions and preconceptions as well as to one’s own role in research – is an important procedure for improving the quality of the research, since a qualitative researcher is not an uninvolved bystander in the research process (e.g. Schwandt 1997, 135–136; Daymon & Holloway 2002, 240–241; Bendl 2000, 386).

The above-mentioned criteria and their features are summed up in the following table. Besides, the way they will be accomplished in this study is also presented.

Table 16. Criteria concerning the quality of the phase 2.

Criterion	Features	What was done in order to fulfill the criteria in this study
<i>Confirmability</i> (cf. objectivity)	Data linked to their sources, conclusions arising from them	A self-critical account of each research step; Citations illustrating the major themes
<i>Dependability</i> (cf. reliability)	Consistent and accurate findings	Audit trail
<i>Credibility</i> (cf. internal validity)	Truthful findings	Careful documentation of the use of the research methods; Member checking
<i>Transferability</i> (cf. external validity)	Transferable findings	Comparisons with other studies (in the conclusions)
<i>Utilization</i>	Usable and applicable findings	Evaluation of the pragmatic value of the research (in the conclusions)

Documentation in all phases of the research is critical to the quality of the study. The final report should then enable the reader to understand the whole process of the research: what was done, how it was done, who were the participants, and where the research was done (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold 1998, 282). Being consistent with the use of the terms and systematic in the way the criteria are demonstrated in the study throughout the process are key factors in improving the quality of the research (cf. Daymon & Holloway 2002, 88).

3.3 Content analysis and focus groups compared

The two methods reviewed in this study can be juxtaposed, for instance, according to their nature, perspective and objectives. The following table delineates the features according to which content analysis and focus group interviews can be complementary with, as well as contrary to, one another.

Table 17. Content analysis and focus group interviews in juxtaposition.

CONTENT ANALYSIS	FOCUS GROUPS
The world is external and objective	The world is socially constructed and subjective
The researcher is independent	The researcher is part of social interaction
Science is value free	Science is driven by human interests
Focus on facts	Focus on meanings
Operationalisation and large samples are important	Different views of phenomena are important; small samples are sufficient
Answering questions ‘What?’ ‘How many?’	‘How?’
Quantitative	Qualitative
Etic	Emic

We can approach the methods, first, from their ontological nature: whether the ‘reality’ to be investigated is external¹⁰⁹ – an observable entity – to an individual, i.e. of an ‘objective’ nature (realist worldview), or a product of individual consciousness, a ‘subjective’ product of one’s mind (interpretative worldview). These assumptions have direct implications for the methodology. On one hand, one can identify methodologies which treat the social world like the natural world, as being rigid, real and external to the individual; according to this view, knowledge is significant if it is based on observations of this external reality. On the other hand, there are methodologies which do not perceive the world to be exterior but socially constructed and given meaning by people, thus, as being of a more interpretative, personal and more subjective quality. (Burrell & Morgan 1979, 1–3; Pihlanto 1993, 178–179; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991, 22, 24.) The realist worldview usually implies quantitative research methods, seeking to distance the researcher from the data. Consequently, numbers and statistics are favoured over words. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 8; Rudestam & Newton 1992, 30.)

Within communication research, content analysis treats the social world as if it were an objective reality, whereas focus group research employs the subjective experiences and opinions of individuals in the search for

¹⁰⁹ Realism assumes that reality is an objective, observable entity which is independent of those involved in it (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 8).

understanding. Within focus group research, the researcher can be seen as an ‘instrument’, a social constructor of the data (cf. Pihlanto 1993, 179; Rossman & Rallis 1998, 29). In contrast, content analysis represents an analytical approach, which is based on the quantifications of overt, manifest communication elements (cf. Dyer 1982, 108; 115).

Within content analysis, there is an inbuilt assumption that significance is synonymous with frequency¹¹⁰, and consequently, content analysis is regarded as a quantitative method, answering the questions ‘What’ and ‘How many’. Thus, the data are produced in the form of numbers (Rossman & Rallis 1998, 29). Often, the variables of content analysis are formulated as dichotomous questions that can be answered with a simple ‘yes’ (does exist) or ‘no’ (does not exist) response. To the contrary, focus groups avoid dichotomous questions. (Krueger 1988, 61.) Rather, the goal of focus group research is to ask ‘how’ rather than ‘how many’ (Byers & Wilcox 1991, 69), the emphasis being on interpretation and discovery rather than hypothesis testing (Rudestam & Newton 1992, 30). Consequently, as the content analytical phase of this study focuses on the depictions of men, answering the question: “*What* is the man like in the ads?”, the focus groups yield the representations, finding out *how* his masculinity is represented in advertising.

The above-mentioned feature has also been regarded as a weakness of content analysis: the quantification of isolated elements only gives the ‘big picture’ of, for instance, ads – thus describing rather than interpreting. Hence, content analysis alone cannot reveal what an ad means, nor how the audience interprets it (Dyer 1982, 109, 111; Rose 2003, 67). To address the limitations of content analysis, it has been recommended (e.g. Lerman & Callow 2004, 507) that researchers should incorporate consumer interpretation into their cross-cultural advertising studies. By using focus group interviews, we can add to the results of content analysis and get a ‘deeper’ picture of individual messages and their meanings [in this case meanings of masculinity] to the audience.

The conceptions of the relationship between the researcher and the empirical data can also be juxtaposed with regard to content analysis and focus groups. Content analysis can be seen to represent the *etic*-approach¹¹¹, which emphasises the veracity and sufficiency of the data, and where reliability of the data and reliable instrumentation are regarded as key factors. The task is to look at the data as objectively as possible, from an external, generalizing

¹¹⁰ There are contradictory views of the relation between frequency and significance; according to Ball and Smith (1992, 28; see also Rose 2003, 66), something that is kept out of the picture may, nevertheless, be significant to its meaning. On the other hand, Sayre (1992, 15) argues that there is a relationship between the frequency and the response of the audience.

¹¹¹ Alasuutari (1996, 63) refers to *etics* as the *factist perspective*.

perspective. It is an ‘outsider’s’ (i.e. the researcher’s) ‘objective’ analysis. To the contrary, focus groups represent the emic-approach¹¹², which concedes individual interpretations from the data, i.e. an internal, subjective perspective on the part of the informants (i.e. the participants in the focus group discussions¹¹³) (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 13; see also Hall 2002, 66-67). This refers to relativism to a certain extent. There is not a definitive demand for veracity since no two people experience the world in precisely the same way. (Calder 1977, 358; Alasuutari 2001, 90–124; Neuendorf 2002, 72; Morris, Leung, Ames & Lickel 1999, 781–784; Rossman & Rallis 1998, 28–29; Harris 1976.)

In spite of, and thanks to, the differences between content analysis and focus group interviews, the two methods are not mutually exclusive or opposite alternatives. As is the case with other methods, they can be regarded as complementary approaches, which used in combination can bring analytical enrichment to the analysis and provide more perspectives on the phenomena under investigation; besides, one can serve to compensate the limitations of the other (cf. Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 178; Easterby-Smith et al. 1991, 31; Stewart & Shamdasani 1990, 13). Unfortunately, researchers tend to choose one or the other approach. (e.g. Pihlanto 1993; Deacon et al. 1999, 134–135; Leiss et al. 1986, 175–189.) The challenge and added value of method triangulation will be discussed in the following subchapter.

3.4 The challenge and added value of mixing methods

Every research method has its flaws; therefore, using multiple methods is often to be recommended (Patton 2002, 247, 306). The use of diverse methods in combination has been described with various terms: multiple methods, mixed methods, multi-method research or design (Teddle & Tashakkori 2003, 10–11). The most common term, however, seems to be triangulation (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela (2004, 164). This term is also used herein, synonymously with mixing methods or mixed methods. Notwithstanding the many monickers, triangulation attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question [masculinity] by integrating evidence from different sources (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 5; Creswell 1998, 202). Herein, the idea of the focus group discussions was to develop a more comprehensive and insightful understanding of the

¹¹² Alasuutari (1996, 63) refers to emics as the *specimen perspective*.

¹¹³ It is the researcher’s task to get to the “emic truths” which requires cultural knowledge and sensitivity, respect for the participants, and skills in moderating and observing (cf. Leininger 1994, 109).

phenomenon, to explore wider connotations of the ads as well as to enrich the meanings of masculinity, simultaneously adding a cultural perspective to the phenomenon; not, that is, to provide cross-data validity checks for the content analytical phase (Greene, Kreider & Mayer 2005, 275; Patton 2002, 248). The information garnered from the discussions can help the researcher better understand and interpret the findings of the content analysis. (Johnson & Turner 2003, 309; Holbrook 1977, 176–177.) In addition, the discussions can bring about ideas as to how to improve the coding schedule in future studies. In fact, understanding inconsistencies and limitations in findings across the different data can be illuminative and important for the study as a whole (Patton 2002, 556). Focus groups can often bring to the fore aspects that might not otherwise be anticipated by the researcher (Devereux 2003, 49). In general, a major advantage of mixing methods is that it enables the researcher simultaneously to verify and generate theory in the same study (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2003, 15).

Denzin (1978, 295) has classified triangulation into four basic types, based on the focus of the research: (1) data, (2) investigator, (3) theory, and (4) methodological triangulation. The last mentioned is further divided into within-method and across-method¹¹⁴ triangulation. In this study, the question is one of applying across-method triangulation, i.e. using two methods in combination in one piece of research.

In regard to mixing methods, Hurmerinta-Peltomäki and Nummela (2004, 165–166) raise three important issues. First, the researcher has to consider the order in which the methods are used, whether sequential or parallel. In the study at hand, the sequential mode has been applied: the content analytical phase was followed by four focus group discussions, i.e. the quantitative data were collected before the qualitative. Secondly, one has to make a decision on the role or emphasis of the methods. Herein, the first phase (content analysis) is, on average, the main source of information, and thus, the dominant method. However, in spite of the quantitative method being dominant, the information value of the qualitative data (focus group discussions) is of no less significance. In fact, the role of the focus group discussions was of great significance concerning Research question 1. Thirdly, the purpose of mixing methods has to be considered. Different methods may serve different purposes (knowledge based, topic related, method related). Herein, the idea of mixing methods was to generate new knowledge concerning the ways masculinity is culturally mediated. In order to bring in the social reality perspective, the content analytical phase – representing media reality – was supplemented by the four focus group discussions.

¹¹⁴ Also called between-method triangulation (see Denzin 1978, 302).

In all studies that employ the tool, the mixing of methods should aim at the same end result: that the methods complement each other, inspire the research process, ensure analytical enrichment, strengthen the argument, and validate the research results. Unfortunately, in many combination studies, according to Dreher (1994, 289), methods are treated like two separate studies. This is one of the challenges of using mixed methods. Triangulation should be employed only when it helps solve the research problem (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela 2004, 175). The analysis of the results is related to whether the methods are integrated throughout the study (an integrated design) or whether they are kept separate until the end (a component design) (Greene et al. 2005, 276.). In this study, the latter approach was used, as it was considered important to retain the original character of the two types of data – which were connected only upon making final inferences and conclusions – throughout the research process.

In order to answer the research questions, both quantitative and qualitative data were produced for this study. This was done due to the presupposition that neither one of the methods alone would have provided the full answers. The first method used, content analysis, has been criticized for being descriptive. However, in order to be able to see the changes in masculinity in advertising and to assess the similarities and differences between Finland and the US on a large scale and over a longer period of time, content analysis turned out to be the method in place. Besides, building the categorization of masculinity, which was essential for conducting the content analytical phase, brought valuable new knowledge to the research on gender.

The second method, focus group discussions, has been, as qualitative methods often are, judged on its convenient and purposive nature (see e.g. Barbour & Schostak 2005, 43). However, by no means was the idea of applying focus groups implemented to produce generalizable findings about people's attitudes. The purpose was rather to enrich the concept of masculinity and bring in the cultural perspective as well as discuss the changes as they were projected by members of that particular culture. Consequently, given the pros and cons of the two methods, this study connects both. Naturally, the methods and the data produced by them served the purpose of the study in their own right, eventually comprising a coherent whole.

4 MEDIATED MASCULINITIES IN FINLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

In this chapter, the empirical findings will be adduced in relation to the purpose and research questions as well as the hypotheses of the study. The purpose of the study was to examine *how masculinity has been mediated in print advertising in Finland and the United States over the last 30 years*. This purpose was divided into the following research questions (RQs):

- 1 How does masculinity manifest itself?
- 2 How has masculinity changed over time?
- 3 What similarities and differences in masculinities can be found between the countries?

One of the challenges at the beginning of the study was to gain an understanding of the ways masculinity manifests itself in media and in social life (RQ 1). In order to be able to understand this, a categorization of masculinity for the content analytical phase was first built. Secondly, the discussants in the four focus groups were asked how they perceive masculinity in general and in their own culture in particular. Subchapter 4.1 summarises the initial elements that were used to build the coding sheet for the content analytical phase. Moreover, it brings in the additional, often culture-bound elements that were adduced by the focus group discussants.

Subchapter 4.2 discusses changes in masculinity over time (RQ 2), first based on the content analysis, and thereafter on the extended focus groups, i.e. the written protocol and the actual discussions. Similarities and differences in masculinities between Finland and the United States (RQ 3), on the basis of the content analysis and the focus group discussions, are discussed in Subchapter 4.3.

Based on the theoretical framework, four a priori hypotheses were proposed:

H 1: *The mediated masculinity has converged in Finland and the US during the last 30 years.*

H 2: *The objectification of men in advertising has increased, and there is more exploitation involving men now than in earlier years.*

H 3: *An increasing trend of feminization of Finnish and US cultures can be discerned.*

H 4: *Men are increasingly depicted as flawless – young and well-built.*

The variables linked to testing the hypotheses as well as the results will be reported and discussed in Subchapter 4.4.

4.1 Manifestation of masculinity

How is masculinity manifested in advertising? What elements in an ad can provide us with answers as to the state of masculinity? Adapting Dyer (1985, 28, cited in Edwards 1997, 40¹¹⁵), masculinity is a bit like air – you breathe it in all the time, but when it comes to defining it, difficulties arise. Related to this, the fact that masculinity was, herein, tackled by content analysis in the first empirical phase created quite a challenge. How to define masculinity in such a way that it can be operationalized for utilization in this study and even in studies to come? Previous studies on gender portrayals did not yield an answer to this question as such. However, the earlier studies were used as important building blocks for constructing the coding sheet. In practice, constructing the coding sheet meant a categorization of the elements that would distinguish masculinity, given the fact that masculinity is time related and culture bound, i.e. the elements were to be adaptable in both countries along the thirty-year time span.

The following figure (Figure 21) delineates the elements; the syntagmatic elements are listed on the left and the paradigmatic elements on the right. The elements provided a tool for studying masculinity in the content analytical phase of this study, and may, at their best, offer ideas for future studies on masculinity in advertising.

¹¹⁵ Original source: Dyer, Richard (1985) Male sexuality in the media. In: Metcalf, A. – Humphries, M. (eds) *The sexuality of men*. Pluto: London.

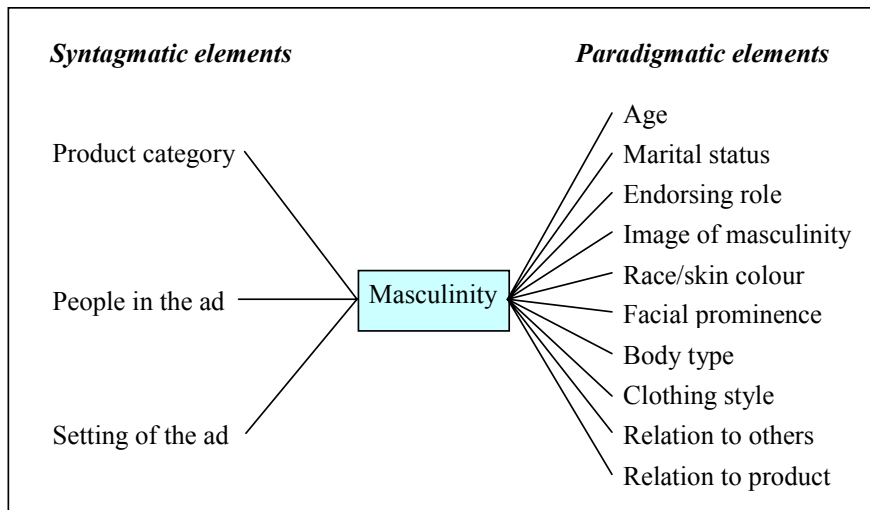


Figure 21. The initial elements of masculinity in this study.

In this study, masculinity was considered to manifest itself via the setting of the ad, people in the ad and the advertised product as well as the age, marital status, endorsing role, image, race/skin colour, facial prominence, body type, clothing style of the man and his relation to the product and other people in the ad. Next, we will proceed to see how the focus group discussants perceived masculinity in general and in their own culture in particular.

The ice-breaker questions to the focus group discussants, i.e. *“What defines a man [in general]?”* and *“What particularly defines a man in your own culture?”*, were related to Research question 1 of the study: *“How does masculinity manifest itself?”* The groups brought valuable insight to the above, initial elements, deepening understanding of masculinity and bringing in additional elements. As the discussions were conducted in two different countries, Finland and the US, cultural views were also elicited. Besides commonalities, there were cultural and gender differences between the definitions. However, the age of the discussants seemed not to be a decisive factor in the alternations.

According to the Finnish female discussants, a true man is one with moral fibre, i.e. one who is trustworthy. As to the looks, ruggedness and roughness are preferred to prettiness: *“Pretty men are just boys.”* (Finnish woman, A) In ads, you can tell a real man by the way he stands: a man with guts has an assertive pose and a serious look on his face. In this sense, a manly man according to the Finnish women is a ‘Sturdy Oak’: confident, physically stout, invulnerable, and self-reliant (cf. Brannon 1976). According to the discussants, the man in the 1973 mineral wool (Vuorivilla) ad (see Figure 22)

still represents a typical Finnish man: a serious, decisive look on his face, and, importantly, doing something.



Figure 22. A typical Finnish man according to the Finnish female discussants.

To the contrary, the man in the 1988 mineral wool ad (Ahlström; see Appendix 2) was considered irritating. Action and being active were considered very important. In Finnish there is a word ‘*äijä*’ that, according to the discussants, best describes what a typical Finnish man is like: a hard worker, a man of action. This coincides with the earlier definitions of men in general: according to Browne (1998, 84), men have traditionally been portrayed as active, constructive, autonomous and achieving. Furthermore, this definition bears resemblance to Holt and Thompson’s (2004, 428–429) ‘Man-of-action hero’: men with a can-do spirit overcome obstructions; or Brannon’s (1995, 305) ‘Working man’: strong and honest. However, a more descriptive name for the Finnish version, based on the women’s comments, could be a ‘Do-it-yourself man’.

Metrosexuals were not favoured among the Finnish women: men who use make-up and dye their hair were not considered real men. In fact, men who are overwhelmingly concerned about their looks can, according to the discussants, take something away from womanhood. *“In order to feel like a real woman, I need a real man beside me.”* (Finnish woman, A) *“I cannot consider a man who uses make-up a real man. A stylish man who takes care of his looks is ok but one that uses make-up – that’s too much!”* (Finnish woman, E) *“I think*

it's even scary if a man starts openly discussing about new clothes and trends, make-up and hair stuff. I consider these kinds of men more like my girl friends." (Finnish woman, A)

On the basis of the first focus group discussion (Finnish women), two elements could be added to those featured in Figure 21 (see page 175): the look on the man's face (for instance, whether he is smiling or whether he has a serious look on his face) and his pose. Actually, including the face in the study could provide information also on the man's personality characteristics, his emotions and interaction signals (for coverage of these, see Argyle 1975, 212–213). Furthermore, his posture could convey information on interpersonal attitudes and emotional states (Argyle 1975, 276). There are three main human postures: 1) standing, 2) sitting, squatting, and kneeling, and 3) lying. Each of these postures has further variations corresponding to different positions of the arms and legs and different angles of the body (see Argyle 1974, 272–275). The values of both suggested variables (the look on the man's face and his posture) could be built upon Argyle's (1975) conceptions. For instance, Goffman (1979), in his seminal analysis of gender representations in advertising, studied both elements. According to his findings (Goffman 1979, 48, 69), a smile on the model's face in an ad is related to a subordinate position. Typically in ads, women have, more often than men, been depicted smiling. Furthermore, women were more often posed lying on the floor or in a bed whereas men were rather standing or sitting (Goffman 1979, 68, 76–80). According to Devor (1997, 419), men often stand or sit with their legs apart, maximizing the amount of space that they physically occupy.

The second focus group discussion, among Finnish men, did not bring out additional factors to the previous mentioned, initial elements of masculinity. According to the Finnish male discussants, genuineness and work – together with action and activeness – are descriptive of a typical Finnish man. Genuineness refers to being himself, not caring so much about his looks or about comments from others. Working hard with his bare hands is considered important; building a house is the most valued project. Traditionally, construction, repair and maintenance, which are typical activities of do-it-yourselfers, have been considered to be free from any implication of gender-role compromise: the man can still maintain his distinct masculine style. However, the attitude towards craftsmanship may vary along economic cycles: in good times, it can be a sign of manly self-reliance, but in bad times it can be a sign of economic impotence. (Gelber 2000, 71–72, 78.) Interestingly, according to Gelber (2000, 85), being handy represented the masculine ideal in the 1950s' US.

According to the group, the man in the 1973 Vuorivilla ad represents (see Figure 22 on page 176) the manly ideal at its best. Besides, the idea and ideal

of individualism – the man not needing any help from others – was highlighted in the comments. These characteristics refer to the features of American rugged individualism and solo performance (see Hirschman 2003, 13; Zhang & Neelankavil 1997, 136–137): tasks should be accomplished alone, dangers met alone, and victory earned alone.

On the other hand, the comradeship that was expressed in the North State ad (Ad 2 in Appendix 2) was considered manly. However, even there the group was not considered that important; in the end, work has to be done alone by oneself. Besides, the number of men is related to the product type: some products just are more social in nature (besides cigarettes, for instance, beer). Typical comments included: [A Finnish man is typically] “... *doing something, with his bare hands.*” (Finnish man, F) The views coincide with the Finnish women’s perceptions: a typical Finnish man is a working man (see Brannon 1995, 305) or a man of action (see Holt & Thompson 2004, 428–429), or rather a do-it-yourself man.

Focus group discussion number three was conducted among six US women in Escalon, California. Interestingly, the US women’s definitions of masculinity had to do with outer appearance, the first immediate comment being “hair”: “...*nice, clean cut hair*” (US woman, E). Another feature, more age-related, was a touch of conservativeness in the man’s clothing and overall appearance: “*Attractive is somebody who looks my age. [...] I’m not all that attracted by piercing and things like that. A little more conservative still.*” (US woman, D) Furthermore, a certain intellectual appearance was considered important: “*To me masculine is a man who appears strong. Leadership-wise. Intellectual-wise. [...] Masculine includes a certain appearance of confidence, intelligence as opposed to simply a tough guy or a lumberjack.*” (US woman, D) What was interesting in the US women’s comments was that practically all the comments were related to outer appearances.

Versatility is a definition that the female discussants gave concerning the American man. According to the group, American men have to be versatile in order to fulfil the expectations of women and the society. “*There are so many demands on men nowadays. I mean you have to be sensitive. You have to be, you know, tough. You have to be smart. You have to be fun. You have to fit into the workplace. You have to fit in on the football field.*” (US woman, B)

Clothing is an element that can feature in American men: however, the opinions varied in regard to what kind of clothing was considered ‘American’. For some, casual clothing represented something that other cultures would not have to the same extent. “*An American man is more relaxed in his attire.*” (US woman, E) However, there was also the Wall Street stockbroker stereotype wearing a three-piece suit; and an agricultural businessman. “*There are so many men who still are involved in agriculture and getting out there*

and providing the bottom line of this country and yet there are so many who are just absolutely at the high end of business, too, you know.” (US woman, D) Here, again, the versatility came in: *“Sometimes they go from one to the other. That’s a man who can get out there and plough the field and then go in and change into his three-piece suit.” (US woman, D)* On the basis of the US women’s comments, it is difficult to categorize American men under earlier mentioned categories (see Subchapter 2.2.2). In the comments, features of Brannon’s (1995, 305) ‘football player’ and ‘the dynamic big-shot businessman’ as well as Hirschman’s (1999, 170) ‘father figure’ could be found. A characteristic that came out during the discussion, but is not actually included in any of the a priori categorizations, is the emotional side of a man. That the emotional life came up of may have something to do with the feminization of culture in general and the emergence of New Man. According to Salzman et al. (2005, 124), Hollywood – as one of the mediating forces – is increasingly tilting towards a more feminine version of masculinity, one that emphasizes sensibility and sensuality over power and bravado. Actors like Tom Cruise, Hugh Grant, Brad Pitt and Orlando Bloom are regarded as representatives of this trend.

What, then, are the new elements of masculinity that the US female participants brought out and that would be worthwhile in adding to the initial elements of masculinity? One element that was emphasised in the comments and that was also included in Kolbe and Albanese (1996) study was ‘hair’. Hairstyles have social meaning that varies over time scale. For instance, in the 1960s and 1970s, long hair was a sign of rebellion, whereas extremely short hair was common among college students in the early 1990s. Conservative hairstyles are typical of businessmen and other professionals. (Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 11.) Besides actual hair, Kolbe and Albanese (1996, 14–15) included ‘facial hair’ (beard, moustache, facial stubble, and sideburns) in their content analysis. After hearing the comments by the American female discussants it became evident that hair-related dimensions would provide an important complement to the categorization.

Interestingly, the importance of hair arose in the US men’s focus group discussion as well. As among the US female discussants, ‘hair’ was the first feature that the men in the US group also brought up as being ‘manly’. In addition, strength and confidence, a macho image, as well as physical differences were mentioned. The Spark Plug ad of 1988 (see Figure 23) seemed to connote the essence of a ‘true American man’: *“Cowboy hat. Beard, fast truck, everything. There’s an image of a man. That’s your stereotype. Just in case you missed it. The man is tough, the truck is tough, and the spark plug is tough. They all go together.” (US man, F)*



Figure 23. The essence of a man according to the US male discussants.

The US men also brought out the importance of work in defining a man, but in a slightly different sense than the Finnish discussants. For the US men, what a man does for a living – his status earned by his job – was considered important. Accordingly, it has been argued that success and high status are one of the four main determinants of masculinity in North America (Devor 1997, 418), toughness, aggression and avoidance of effeminacy being the other three. Traditional North American masculinity requires of its actors that they organize themselves and their society in a hierarchical manner so as to demonstrate the level of achievement and success.

In a number of studies, occupation has been studied as one of the identifiers of masculinity: a man's position of authority in his work communicates his status in life, and one of the central ways of expressing masculinity is through having a paid occupational role. (Ransome 2005, 131–132; Strate 1992, 85). Previous studies (e.g. Wiles et al. 1995, 43) provide categorizations of working roles, ranging from high-level executives to blue collar workers. Also in this study, the idea was, initially, to analyze first of all whether the main male character in the ad was portrayed (1) in a work situation, (2) in a non-work situation but appears to be employed, or (3) without indication of employment. A similar classification has been used by Schneider and Schneider (1979). If employed, the portrayed occupation was then supposed to be classified as follows: (1) professional/high level business executive, (2)

entertainer/professional athlete, (3) sales, middle-level business, semiprofessional, (4) non-professional, white collar (clerical), (5) blue collar, or (6) other. For instance, Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) as well as Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) have used similar categories. However, neither of these variables was included in the final coding sheet since, presumably, the data collected would not have provided relevant, valid and reliable information. Supposedly, the coding would have relied too heavily upon intuition which is hard to validate. Besides, according to the pretests, the men were seldom depicted in occupational settings.

In conclusion, the four focus group discussions brought out variables that had not been included in the original categorization of masculinity that was used for the first empirical phase of the study. Thus, the initial elements of masculinity can be supplemented with the factors found in the discussions. Interestingly, all the new elements add to the paradigmatic elements of masculinity in advertising. The following figure sums up the elements in total.

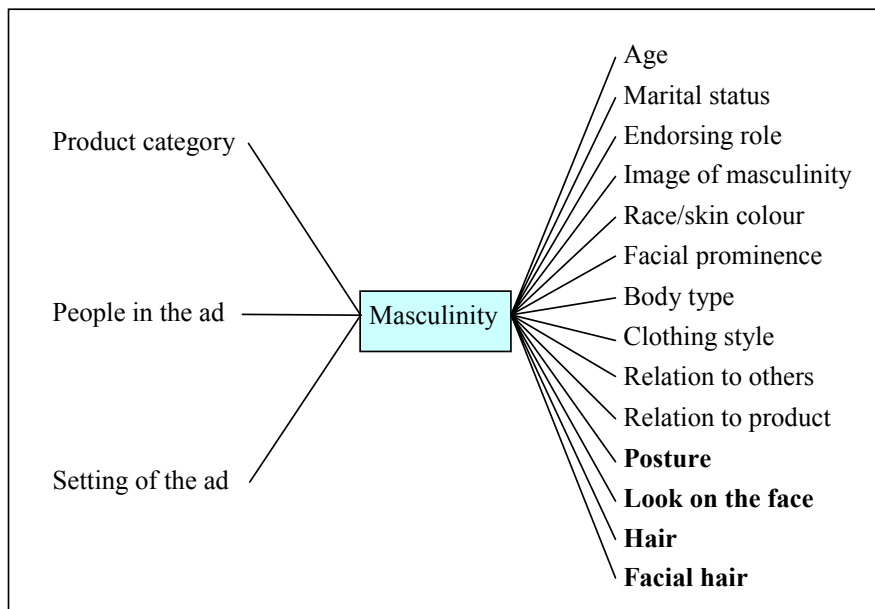


Figure 24. The revised elements of masculinity based on the findings of this study.

According to Whipple and Courtney (1985, 4), effective role portrayals are a function of an appropriate match between, besides the setting [background] of the portrayal, the gender of the depicted model and the gender image of the product, as well as the realism of the portrayal. The issue was discussed in the

focus groups as well, and, in general, the groups considered the matching important.

The US groups were, however, more coherent about the statement than were the Finnish groups, and underlined the importance of linking all these elements. According to both the men's and women's US groups, all the elements are needed in order to hold the ad together and gain attention from the targeted customers. *"All those things. [...] You don't see an old guy with the deodorant or a woman arm wrestling another woman. Or a teenager with a hearing aid."* (US men, 20 and 44)

According to the Finnish men's group, the effectiveness of an ad and the way the above-mentioned factors have effect depends on the product: when it is a question of a brand, the more idealised the picture can be and the bigger the hero there may be in the picture. And the more generic the product, the more 'typical' the model in the picture may be. In fact, many products may have little significance of their own, but can be invested with values that for instance a celebrity in the ad represents in himself, and that the audience considers important (Shields 1997, 85).

However, it has been claimed (Bellizzi & Milner 1991, 72) that gender-identification of products is waning, and advertisers have begun to target previously gender-specific products at both genders (dual gender positioning¹¹⁶). This finding was supported by both Finnish groups. *"Because the barriers between men and women in real life have diminished, a company or a product should not profile itself as a 'man's or a woman's only'. By doing so, they would lose half of their customers."* (Finnish woman, B) However, according to a Finnish male discussant (61): *"Advertising men's underwear on women is possibly not a very good idea."* In spite of the immediate absurdity of this thought, a bikini manufacturer Panos Emporio used a male model in its 2004 bikini catalogue in Finland, among some other European countries. However, the campaign caused a lot of criticism and controversy amongst Finnish people (Talmén 2004). The images of a male drag show artist were considered provocative, and the catalogues were withdrawn from the Finnish market.

One way of eliminating the gender specificity in advertising is to use artificial endorsers. Artificial endorsers are constructed characters; the most common type is an animated character, such as from the Muppets, which Pizza Hut has recently started using in its advertising in the US. (Sutel 2005b; cf. Spence & Van Heekeren 2004, 75.) An animated character that has become almost a mythical hero is Mr. Clean. According to Dubois (2000, 202), the

¹¹⁶ For example, repositioning traditionally female-dominant products, such as household cleaning products, towards men (cf. Elliott, Eccles & Hodgson 1993, 313).

success of Mr. Clean rests on the potency of cleanliness appeal among Americans. In the US, cleanliness is ‘next to godliness’, and those who are dirty or smell run the risk of being treated as social outcasts.

Some of the animated characters are more human-like in the sense that they may have human parts (such as the body) but are partly artificial. For example, Jack [Jack in the Box] has a human body but his head is a physical manifestation of a cartoon. Moreover, people can be substituted by animals. For instance during Super Bowl 2005¹¹⁷, a number of ads featured animals – such as chimpanzees running the office (CareerBuilder.com) – doing things that would normally be done by people (Sutel 2005a). Often, it may be easier for the audience to identify and recall the ads and brands when a company uses an artificial endorser. Besides, artificial endorsers are not likely to be scarred by negative publicity (which can happen in the case of celebrities, for instance), and their longevity is a little more guaranteed. (Spence & Van Heekeren 2004, 75; Belch & Belch 2004, 153.) Furthermore, artificial endorsers do not disclude either gender.

Another way of avoiding gender specificity is to have no human models in the ad. Presenting a mere product in the ad can be deliberate in the sense that the advertiser does not want to identify the product with a particular market segment or gender (Schudson 1986, 213–214). Using a particular representation of the member(s) of the target group can demarcate some consumer groups and affect the image of the product. This came out quite clearly in the written comments, particularly in the cases of the Man-Power 1973 ad (US) and Sloggi 2003 ad (Finland) (see appendices 2 and 3). In both cases, the subjects found it difficult to relate to the models in the ads. This may be to do with the overt sexuality embedded in the models and the settings, and even in the name of the product (Man-Power). As one of the US discussants commented in writing: *“I can fully understand the message trying to be sent but the ad is also directed at a certain type of men, muscular men. You wouldn’t see a skinny man buying this. The company cut their market in half with just their name.”* (US man, A)

¹¹⁷ In the US, the Super Bowl is considered the showcase for advertising. However, due to the high costs [in 2005 a 30-second commercial during the Super Bowl football game cost \$ 2.4 million] of Super Bowl advertising, advertisers use alternative events. One such alternative is the Academy Awards show, which has been labeled ‘Super Bowl for women’. (Belch & Belch 2004, 354; see also Kilbourne 1999, 34.)

4.2 Changes in masculinity over time

The following covers the changes in masculinity in Finland and the US over time. First, the findings based on the content analytical phase are reviewed. Secondly, emergent themes from the written part of the extended focus group discussions will be elicited. Thirdly, the changes are discussed based on the actual focus group discussions. Besides answering the second research question “*How has masculinity changed over time?*”, the results of the content analysis also relate to research question one, providing knowledge of the manifestation of masculinity at different points in time. In the course of the review, the findings are discussed in the light of the literature. We commence with Finland.

4.2.1 Changes in masculinity in Finland

4.2.1.1 Findings based on the content analysis

In the following, the findings based on the content analytical phase of the study will be reviewed according to the order of the variables in the coding sheet. First, the syntagmatic elements: product category being advertised, number of men in the ad, number of women, number of children, and the setting/location of the ad. And secondly, the paradigmatic elements: age, marital status, endorsing role, image of masculinity and race/skin colour of the main male character, facial prominence, body type and clothing style of the man in the ad, his relation to other people in the ad, and finally, his relation to the product advertised.

Syntagmatic elements

With regard to the product being advertised, it is, in general, important to match the product with the type of gender depiction in an advertisement (cf. Kerin et al. 1979, 40). The type of products that male models are promoting can be revealing about the masculine identity (Vestergaard & Schrøder 1985, 74–75). Typically in advertising, cars have been featured as means through which this identity can be enhanced. In 1973 and 1988, the Finnish man appeared most often in vehicle and accessory ads (1973: 15.3%; 1988: 12.6%). However, the percentage of vehicles and accessories decreased to 4.3% in 2003, the largest category being entertainment (18.3%). As to the proportion of adverts concerning health and medicine, the numbers show an increasing trend: in 1973 only 1.6%, then 7.9% in 1988 rising to 16.5% in 2003.

A noteworthy finding is that in 1973 as many as 14.8% of all the ads featuring a male character were for tobacco. Reader's Digest, among some other periodicals in the United States, refused to run cigarette ads after the 1964 surgeon general's announcement (Sivulka 1998, 329). Interestingly, Valitut Palat in Finland did not follow the same principle. There were some tobacco ads in Valitut Palat in 1973; however, the majority appeared in Seura. In Finland, tobacco advertising was legal until February 1978, when the health administration banned it (Heinonen & Konttinen 2001, 244). The following table (Table 18) delineates the product categories with a male character in Valitut Palat and Seura in 1973, 1988 and 2003.

Table 18. Distribution of ads with a male model across different product categories in Finland.

	1973 (n= 183)	1988 (n = 191)	2003 (n = 115)
Personal hygiene	1,6	3,7	0,0
Food and drinks	7,1	8,4	13,0
Health/medicine	1,6	7,9	16,5
Travel/transportation	9,3	7,9	10,4
Clothing/shoes	3,8	8,9	3,5
Home appliances/electronics	3,8	11,5	0,9
Vehicles and accessories	15,3	12,6	4,3
Furniture	2,7	1,0	0,9
Construction materials	7,7	5,8	3,5
Photographic equipment	2,2	1,0	1,7
Entertainment	3,3	9,9	18,3
Public good/charity	2,2	4,2	2,6
Financing/insuring	9,8	5,8	13,0
Jewellery	3,8	0,5	0,9
Tobacco	14,8	0,0	0,0
Other	10,9	11,0	10,4
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Looking at the distribution of the product categories in relation to the age gives us a little different insight into the situation. Both in 1973¹¹⁸ and 1988, mid adults appeared in vehicle ads whereas young adults were portrayed in jewellery (1973) and clothing/shoe ads (1988). Respectively, older men appeared in financing/insuring as well as tobacco ads in 1973. Compared to the year 1973, a dramatic move from smoking towards an emphasis on health issues occurred among older men: in 2003, they were mostly depicted in health/medicine ads. Older men were also frequently represented in

¹¹⁸ Even more often mid adults were depicted in tobacco ads in 1973, but the percentage was not as high as for the older men.

entertainment ads (see Table 19; note that the 'indeterminate' classification is not illustrated in the table).

Table 19. Distribution of the ads across the most frequent product categories by age segments in Finland.

	1973 (n = 148)			1988 (n = 162)			2003 (n = 96)		
	Young (n = 44)	Mid (n = 77)	Older (n = 27)	Young (n = 59)	Mid (n = 72)	Older (n = 31)	Young (n = 27)	Mid (n = 40)	Older (n = 29)
Food and drinks	11,4	6,5	7,4	8,5	12,5	3,2	11,1	20	13,8
Health/medicine	0	2,6	3,7	11,9	6,9	9,7	3,7	12,5	37,9
Clothing/shoes	6,8	5,2	0	23,7	2,8	0	11,1	0	0
Home appl's/electr's	6,8	3,9	0	5,1	13,9	9,7	0	0	0
Vehicles and acc's	9,1	15,5	3,7	11,9	13,9	9,7	0	10	0
Entertainment	6,8	1,3	3,7	15,3	5,6	3,2	14,8	20	24,1
Financing/insuring	11,4	7,8	25,9	1,7	6,9	9,7	11,1	10	10,3
Jewellery	13,6	0	0	0	1,4	0	3,7	0	0
Tobacco	4,5	20,8	22,2	0	0	0	0	0	0

As to the other people in the ads, it seems more likely to see men depicted alone than with other men, women or children (see Table 20). The Finnish man was alone particularly in ads in 1988; in more than eight cases out of ten there was only one man in the picture. The theme persisted in 2003, when also the number of women was at its lowest. Seldom were there two men in the picture. In fact, the number seems to have been on the wane (from 14% in 1973 to 8% in 2003). There was a dearth of children throughout the study period, particularly in 1973: in less than one ad in ten was there one or more children with the man. This coincides with the earlier studies made in the United States, according to which men are rarely portrayed with children (e.g. Sexton & Haberman 1974, 45; Wood 2003, 266).

Table 20. Number of men, women and children in the Finnish ads in 1973, 1988 and 2003.

	1973	1988	2003
	(n = 183)	(n = 191)	(n = 115)
Number of men			
one	73,2	83,2	76,5
two	13,7	8,4	7,8
three or more	13,1	8,4	15,7
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Number of women			
none	57,4	61,8	63,5
one	33,9	27,2	23,5
two	5,5	6,3	7,8
three or more	3,3	4,7	5,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Number of children			
none	90,7	84,8	87,0
one	3,8	7,3	7,0
two	4,4	5,8	5,2
three or more	1,1	2,1	0,9
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

As to the setting/location of the ad (see Table 21), a fictional setting turned out to be the most typical in the case of Finland; in 1988 men were portrayed in a fictional setting in almost half of the ads, and the numbers were high in 1973 (32.8%) and in 2003 (38.3%), too. Quite surprisingly, the home setting was at its most typical [but never very high] in 1973 (16.4%), whereas in 2003 the figure had fallen by four percentage points to 12.2%.

Table 21. Setting of the ads with male characters in Finland.

	1973	1988	2003
	(n = 183)	(n = 191)	(n = 115)
House/home/garden	16,4	8,9	12,2
Store	1,6	0	2,6
Occupational setting	15,8	11,5	11,3
Fictional/blank	32,8	47,6	38,3
Leisure	23	14,7	22,6
Sports	0,5	5,8	4,3
Other	9,8	11,5	8,7
Total	100	100	100

Over the years, the Finnish man in ads was quite often depicted in leisure settings: in almost every fourth ad in both 1973 and 2003, he was he depicted in a leisure-related situation. However, there seems to be no definite trend as the proportion was down to less than 15% in 1988 (see Table 21).

Paradigmatic elements

Next, we will move on to the paradigmatic elements, i.e. the characteristics of the main male character in the Finnish ads. We start off with age.

According to the data, the age distribution of Finnish men among the categories is quite steady: in most cases, men were judged to be mid adults in 1973, 1988 as well as in 2003 (see Table 22). Contrary to the presumption of models in ads being portrayed younger and younger, the results of this study claim the opposite: besides the high amount of mid adults, the percentage of older adults rose during the time period. The amount of young adults was at its highest in 1988 (30.9%). This finding coincides with the 1980s ‘yuppie’ culture: the young, upwardly mobile urban professionals represented a new fad in Europe at the time (Beynon 2002, 99, 105–107, 167).

Table 22. Apparent ages of male characters in Finland.

	1973 (n = 183)	1988 (n = 191)	2003 (n = 115)
Young adult (18-35)	24,0	30,9	23,5
Mid adult (36-50)	42,1	37,7	34,8
Older adult (over 50)	14,8	16,2	25,2
Indeterminant	19,1	15,2	16,5
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

In the cases where the marital status could be judged, men were more frequently married than not married (see Table 23). However, the percentage of married men decreased quite clearly from 1973 (24%) to 1988 (12.6%). Even though the percentage increased slightly in 2003, the amount of ‘not married’ men was higher (12.2%) than in 1988 (9.4%) or in 1973 (10.4%).

Table 23. Marital status among the male characters in Finland.

	1973 (n = 183)	1988 (n = 191)	2003 (n = 115)
Married	24,0	12,6	13,9
Not married	10,4	9,4	12,2
Not identified	65,6	78,0	73,9
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

In most cases, however, the marital status could not be identified (in 1988 the percentage of ‘not identified’ was at its highest, 78.0%; see Table 23). If we leave out the ‘not identified’, the proportion of married men shows a distinct decline (see Table 24). However, since the amount of ‘not identified’ cases was so high, the number of actual cases left remains very low,

particularly in year 2003 (n = 30). The high number of ‘not identified’ cases may be accidental but also purposeful: depicting men married is not something that advertisers consciously think of or want to emphasize. In that sense, the situation follows the trend in real life: men do not necessarily get married as it has become eligible and socially more acceptable to live together (with a woman or a man) without being married or registering one’s partnership. Besides, more and more marriages unravel. In 2003, less than half (43.4%) of Finnish men were married. (Tilastokeskus [Statistics Finland] 2004, 45.)

Table 24. Marital status among the male characters in Finnish ads without the ‘not identified’ cases.

	1973 (n = 63)	1988 (n = 42)	2003 (n = 30)
Married	70,0	57,1	53,3
Not married	30,0	42,9	46,7
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

As to the endorsers, the most frequent ones were typical users (see Figure 25). The amount of lay endorsers was particularly high in 1973: almost 80% of the men in the ads were judged ‘typical users’. By 1988, the amount of authority figures had increased distinctively (from 4.5% to 12.6%), whereas the percentage of celebrities was at its highest in 2003, but still not very high (10.4%). The amount of ‘other’ was also quite high (around 10% throughout the period). This evidently has to do with the considerable amount of body parts only.

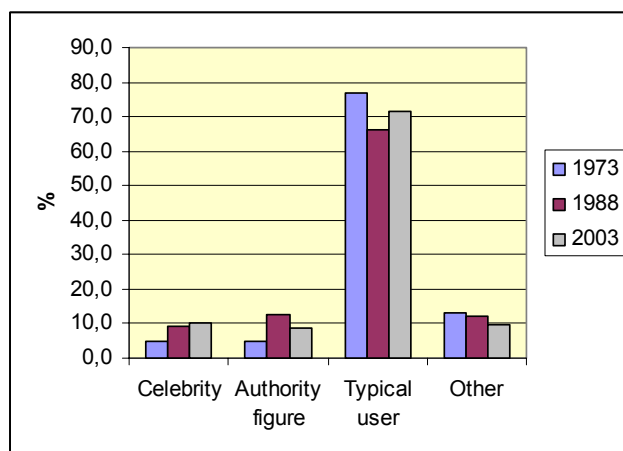


Figure 25. Roles of the male characters in the Finnish ads.

The variable ‘image of masculinity’ was divided into nine values depending on whether the main male character was depicted as a daddy, spouse/partner, homemaker, farmer/rancher, businessman/salesman, scientist/inventor, working man, Don Juan, or metrosexual. In addition, there was the value ‘other’ which included cases where the man represented an image not found on the list. Quite interestingly, the amount of ‘other’ answered for about a half of all the ads both in 1973 and 1988 as well as in 2003 (see Table 25). The high proportion of these cases may have to do with at least two factors: first, due to the frequent use of cropping techniques, it was not possible to identify the image. Secondly, there were images that were not included in the list but which could have apparently been listed, i.e. sportsman. On the whole, however, these images were quite rare (and therefore, it would have been pointless to create categories of their own for these values).

Other than the ‘other’, no image can clearly be considered as ‘the typical image’; except in 1973, when the spouse/partner image accounted for one fourth (25.7%) of the ads. Since then, the spouse/partner image decreased in frequency (see Table 25). To the contrary, the daddy image increased from 9.3% in 1973 to 16.5% in 2003. Quite surprisingly, there were only a few metrosexuals in the data. What is also interesting is the amount of ‘working men’: the number stayed quite steady throughout the whole period whereas the farmer/rancher image disappeared from the picture altogether. The amount of homemakers was almost non-existent in the Finnish ads: only in 2003 were there a few cases.

Table 25. Images of masculinity in the Finnish ads.

	1973	1988	2003
	(n = 183)	(n = 191)	(n = 115)
Daddy	9,3	13,1	16,5
Spouse/partner	25,7	17,8	16,5
Homemaker	0,5	0,0	1,7
Farmer/rancher	2,2	0,0	0,0
Businessman/salesman	7,1	11,5	9,6
Scientist/inventor	0,0	2,1	0,9
Working man	8,2	5,8	6,1
Don Juan	2,2	3,1	0,9
Metrosexual	0,0	1,6	2,6
Other	44,8	45,0	45,2
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

As might be presumed, there was not much diversity in regard to the race/skin colour; in 1973, practically every man in the Finnish data was white. Even though the number of non-whites has increased in Finland during the time period, still today Finland has a highly homogeneous population (99% of

the population are Finnish or Swedish-speaking Finns) (The World Factbook 2004). However, compared to 1973, there was an increase in the amount of non-white men in the ads in 2003 (4.3%).

Face-ism seemed to be an issue in the Finnish adverts as well. However, there seems to be a slightly decreasing trend in the proportion of ‘face/head and shoulders’ ads produced (see Table 26). On the other hand, the amount of ads with full bodies of men shows a slight increase. Cropping, i.e. using metonymies (having a part represent the whole), was particularly common in 1973, hands being the most typical part of the body to represent a man. However, the depiction of men with their full bodies without their heads shown (which has been used in the portrayals of women; see Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 177–178) was practically non-existent.

Table 26. Facial prominence of the male characters in the Finnish ads.

	1973 (n = 183)	1988 (n = 191)	2003 (n = 115)
Only the face/head shown	4,4	6,8	6,1
Face and parts of the body shown	55,2	51,8	45,2
Parts of the body shown, excluding face	4,9	3,1	5,2
Full body without head shown	0,0	0,0	0,9
Full body including head, excluding face	3,3	2,6	5,2
Full body shown, including face and head	25,1	30,9	29,6
Other	7,1	4,7	7,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Concerning the body type, the amount of ‘indeterminates’ was quite high: during all three years in almost half of the cases (in 2003 the percentage was even higher, 55.7%) the coders were not able to determine the main male character’s body type. This was due to the model’s baggy or thick clothing, or cropping (showing parts of the body only). In the cases where the body type was judged, the most frequent type was ‘ectomorphic’ (thin and lightly muscled). The amount of ectomorphic men was at its highest in 1988 (37.7%, n = 72). Surprisingly, the amount of mesomorphic (strong and hard) men, which has been found to be the ideal body type in previous US studies (Alexander 2003; Law & Labre 2002; Kolbe & Albanese 1996), was quite low throughout the study period; however, the number increased steadily during the time period (see Figure 26).

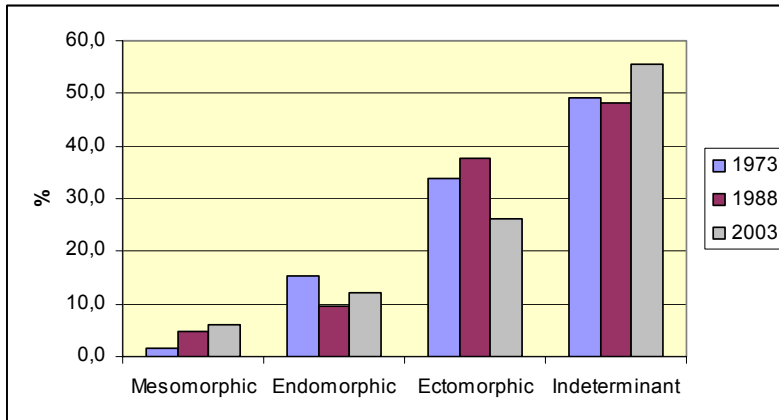


Figure 26. Body types among the male characters in the Finnish ads.

As to the clothing style, the Finnish man in the ads is and has been likely to dress casually. Casual clothing was particularly common in 1973: over 40 percent of the men in the ads wore easy-going outfits. The amounts were also quite high in the two subsequent years (1988: 28.8%; 2003: 39.1%). The second most common type of clothing was ‘work/career’, the amount of which was quite steady throughout the study period. Interestingly, nude or semi-clad Finnish men were practically non-existent. In addition, a Finnish male in the ads was unlikely to be dressed in sports clothes in 1973; however, coming to 1988, the amount increased distinctively. In 1988, also the proportion of outdoor and recreational clothing was clearly higher (see the following table). Overall, the clothing style was more versatile in 1988 than in 1973 or 2003.

Table 27. Men’s clothing styles in the Finnish ads.

	1973 (n = 183)	1988 (n = 191)	2003 (n = 115)
Nude	1,1	1,0	2,6
Half-nude	0,0	0,5	0,9
Underwear/swimsuit	8,7	4,2	7,8
Uniform	4,4	0,5	0,9
Work/career	20,2	23,6	18,3
Casual	41,5	28,8	39,1
Outdoor and recreational	2,7	11,5	3,5
Sports	1,6	10,5	5,2
Other	19,7	19,4	21,7
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

The relation between the male character and other people in the ads was stigmatized by the fact that in many cases there were no others besides the

man (see Table 28). The Finnish man appeared alone particularly in 2003 and 1988: in both years, the amount of ‘no others in the ad’ was almost 50% (1988: 47.1%; 2003: 47.8%). In 1973, the percentage was a little lower (39.3%). But when others were depicted in the ad, the most common relation in 1973 was ‘family’ (19.1%), with ‘lover’ (14.8%) and ‘professional’ (14.8%) being the second most common. The family relation was the most typical also in 1988 (15.7%) and 2003 (21.7%). Interestingly, the professional relation decreased from 14.8% in 1973 to less than 10 percent in 1988 (8.9%) and 2003 (9.6%). Do these changes indicate a change in life values, family values increasing at the expense of work-related values, or is it just coincidental?

Table 28. Relation of the male characters and the other people in the Finnish ads.

	1973 (n = 183)	1988 (n = 191)	2003 (n = 115)
Family	19,1	15,7	21,7
Lover	14,8	14,1	10,4
Friend	8,2	8,4	6,1
Professional	14,8	8,9	9,6
Other	3,8	5,8	4,3
No others in ad	39,3	47,1	47,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

The next variable, i.e. whether the man in the ad was participating in the product’s use or was depicted in a decorative role in relation to the product, revealed similar results as have been indicated by Wolheteer and Lammers (1981, 761) as well as Skelly and Lundstrom (1981, 54) in the US: the portrayal of people in decorative roles is no longer restricted to women. In 1973, the majority (60%) of Finnish men were participating in the product’s use in the ads, but since then, the man in a decorative role in relation to the product has been predominant (see Figure 27).

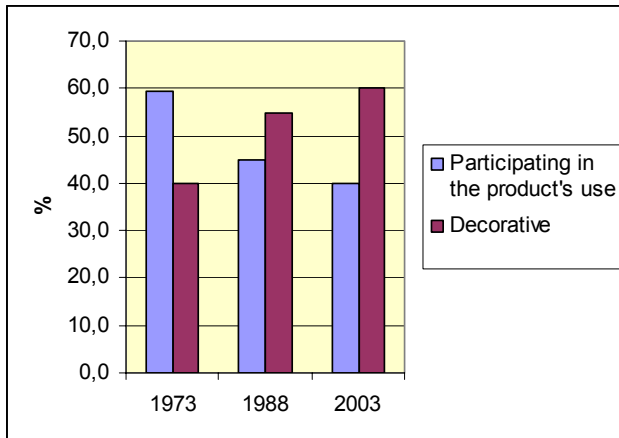


Figure 27. Relation of the men to the product in the Finnish ads.

In all, on the basis of the findings of the study, there have been no dramatic changes in masculinity in Finland over the 30 years. The depictions convey an image of a middle-aged loner who, despite the falling trend, is still today more likely to be married than not married. In the picture, he most often stands for a typical user. He is quite seldom depicted with children. In order to convey expertise, control, intellect and character, he is most often featured by his face. As to his body build, he has been throughout the thirty-year study period more likely to be thin and lightly muscled than strong and hard. He has been and is casually clothed. However, his relation to the advertised product has changed from participative to decorative. In 1973 and 1988, he was most often promoting vehicles and accessories but in 2003 he was portrayed in entertainment ads.

4.2.1.2 Emergent themes from the Finnish written component

As adduced by Mick and Politi (1989, 87, 89), it is in the interests of advertisers to create one 'preferred' reading of an advertisement's message; however, in reality, and based on the theory of reader response (Scott 1994), there is no one reading. Advertisements vary even in their surface structure so dramatically that the range of possible interpretations is practically limitless. This came out quite clearly in the written protocols of the participants in the focus group discussions.

In the following, the emergent themes from the interpretations of the Finnish focus group participants will be reviewed. The idea was to capture the discussants' interpretations of six Finnish pictorial print ads and to see

whether they spontaneously found connotations that would bring new insight to masculinity in advertising. The original interpretations are attached as tables at the end of the study (see appendices 4 and 5). The stimulus material (the Finnish ads) is also presented in the annexes (Appendix 2).

Ad 1: Vuorivilla 1973

The Finnish female discussants regarded the 1973 mineral wool (Vuorivilla) ad as a product ad (cf. product image format: Leiss et al. 1986, 190–194). In spite of the man in the picture, focus lay on the product. According to the interpretations, the ad was a typical Finnish ad in the sense that there was a Finnish man doing something (i.e. constructing). Besides, the product was very culturally oriented: mineral wool is needed in the cold Nordic climate.

Interestingly, Finnish men were more detailed in their interpretations. For instance, they paid attention to the fact that the man in the ad was actually carrying the product, mineral wool, with his bare hands. This can connote, according to the interpretations, two different things: either mineral wool is not dangerous or the man in the ad is not a professional.

Ad 2: North State 1973

According to the Finnish women, the man and the activity (arm wrestling) in this ad produced a clear causal link between the product (cigarettes) and manly features (power, toughness). In this sense, this ad is an example of a causal connection: *“If you smoke North State, you are a tough guy!”* (Finnish woman, B)

The power element was emphasized in the Finnish men’s interpretations as well. *“Strong men smoke strong cigarettes. If you don’t smoke, you are not a real man!”* (Finnish man, F) In addition, the setting of the ad seemed to support the image of the product: smoking is a social habit. This ad represents a typical lifestyle ad where, through the display of the product in a social context, the aim is to convey the idea of social identity, the occasion providing the unifying idea (Leiss et al. 1986, 210–215).

Ad 3: Philips 1988

According to the female subjects, this ad was too packed with elements, and overall, it was considered dull and old-fashioned; old-fashioned in the sense that there is an inbuilt assumption of manly expertise and secondly that men need technical information in order to be able to make a purchasing

decision¹¹⁹. On the other hand, the ad is able to speak to both men and women: *“The left side refers to product development and quality of the product. The right side refers to the benefits of the product. The left side speaks to men, the right side to women.”* (Finnish woman, B)

To the contrary, according to the Finnish male subjects, this ad was targeted at men: *“The elements refer to the functionality and technical values of the product. [...] “You can buy a dishwasher as if you were buying a chain saw.”* (Finnish man, C) Interestingly, the serious look on the man’s face was considered to prove: *“This is true.”* (Finnish man, E) This ad was also considered to be a product ad (see Leiss et al. 1986, 190–194) due to the fact that the product was the star [cf. salience]: *“The dishwasher in front and the man in the background.”* (Finnish man, E)

Ad 4: Ahlström 1988

The other mineral wool ad brought various connotations to mind for the discussants. According to the Finnish women, the ad consisted of many symbolic meanings: the joyful grin on the man’s face, the yellow colour of the man’s suit, and the product. In addition, the age of the man (approximately 30 years) referenced the 30th anniversary of the company. Interestingly, there were no references to the 1980s yuppie era.

The men in the Finnish group also attended to the symbolic link between the age of the male model and the anniversary of the company. Again, however, men noted a practical detail embedded in the setting: the suit refers to the easiness and tidiness of the use and installation of the product. Contrary to the 1973 Vuorivilla ad, the man in this ad was solely in a decorative role.

Ad 5: Sloggi 2003

The codings of the Sloggi underwear ad were very similar between the men and women. The emergent themes of the ad were sportiness, toughness and masculinity as well as decisiveness and courage. Contrary to the assumption that the use of English in the ad could have been considered irritating and improper, it conveyed an image of youthfulness to the discussants. Too youthful an image may, however, alienate ‘usual’ customers: to some subjects, the foreign language and the overall setting of the ad created a feeling that the underwear is meant for well-trained, handsome, and young men only: *“Puts too much pressure on ordinary users.”* (Finnish woman, E) One of the male subjects found that this ad objectifies men: *“Sloggies make men exotic sex*

¹¹⁹ Accordingly, it has been claimed that men’s grooming products should be promoted emphasizing technical performance and rational arguments, for instance, Q: Why should a man use peeling cream? A: Because it makes shaving easier. (Ora 2004, 15.)

objects.” (Finnish man, C) Interestingly, no one commented on the strong Americanism in the ad.

Ad 6: HK 2003

This ad advertising sausage and other barbeque products for summer caused the most confusion of all the ads. A naked man held between barbeque tongs wearing a cowboy hat just did not seem to make sense. However, the general impressions of the ad were quite consistent: *the ad is funny, and the atmosphere is relaxed.* Overall, the ad seemed to bring out the basic summer elements of a Finnish man: *“In summer, the manly world is filled with barbequing.”* (Finnish man, A) The men in particular highlighted the ‘naturalness, healthiness, and lightness’ of meat as food: *“Meat is a natural, healthy, light ingredient. [...] By eating meat you’ll stay healthy and in trim. Meat is a pure raw material.”* (Finnish man, D)

This ad is a typical example of a postmodern odd ad and a representative of a mixed advertising format where tolerance can be created at the cost of clarity: it has been argued that postmodern advertising is abstruse, ambiguous, and difficult to grasp; there are implicit messages without a clear structure.

The polysemic nature of advertising came up in the protocols of the Finnish discussants. However, some congruent themes can be discerned. The Vuorivilla ad of 1973 brought out the do-it-yourself attitude which has been considered a traditional manly virtue. In spite of the man in the picture, the discussants regarded the ad as a product ad. The North State ad of the same year emphasized power, another manly virtue, and fraternal comradeship.

With the engineer’s hat and the facial prominence of the male model, the 1988 Philips ad highlighted manly expertise and technological knowledge. However, the orchids added a feminine touch to the scene. The decorative role of a male model in an ad endorsing a masculine product came up in the 1988 Ahlström mineral wool ad. In his bright yellow suit with a smiling grin on his face the man was considered quite the opposite to the man in the first mineral wool ad, Vuorivilla, of 1973. Supposedly, he was representing expertise but it was left unclear as to whether he was able to convey it. The suit certainly did not strengthen the Finnish do-it-yourself ideal.

Lastly, the 2003 ads – Sloggi and HK – elicited elements of the objectification of men. Featuring three American football players in their underwear only brought in an international, courageous touch to the Sloggi ad. With its odd message structure, the HK ad can be regarded as a typical postmodern ad. No one in the groups seemed either to understand or favour the nakedness of the male model.

4.2.1.3 Findings based on the Finnish focus group discussions

In the focus group discussions, the participants discussed changes in masculinity over time, bringing a cultural and gender-related outlook to the issue. However, it has to be noted that the views do not necessarily concern print advertising alone; people are steadily exposed to many types of media and defining definite changes in an individual medium would be practically impossible. Rather, it is the accumulated exposure to various media that is of interest here. (cf. Morgan & Signorielli 1990, 20.) Furthermore, the retrospective nature of the study certainly has an effect on the discussants' views; for instance, locating the changes and the dynamics over an exact time-scale would not have been possible. Besides, the age factor unquestionably makes a difference; a 20-year-old has no chance to discuss the changes from the standpoint of personal experience whereas older adults have lived through the changes.

According to the Finnish female discussants, it is easier for a man to be different from the mainstream today. "*A man can be traditional if he wants to; he can be a metrosexual – anything he wants to.*" (Finnish woman, A) This coincides with the findings of recent studies (e.g. Holt & Thompson 2004; Alexander 2003; Boni 2002): in the course of the postmodern era, the role of men has changed and become more versatile.

According to earlier research findings (cf. Law & Labre 2002, 697; Reichert et al. 1999, 15; Simpson et al. 1996, 257; Soley & Reid 1988, 963), the use of men in sexual or provocative roles in advertising has increased in recent years. Also according to the Finnish female discussants, it seems to be more common to see men semi-clad in today's adverts. However, as already adduced, there were practically no nude or semi-clad men in the data of this study. This supposedly has to do with the type of media under investigation; a special-interest magazine would obviously have produced different results in regard to the degree of clothing. The effect of the type of magazine was actually given evidence in the study by Reichert et al. (1999). By assessing images of women and men in magazine ads, the authors compared sexual explicitness in 1983 and 1993, and found that there was an increase in sexually explicit dress which was, however, not consistent across the magazine types. According to the findings of their study, the increase in sexual explicitness was most evident in women's and men's magazines, whereas general-interest magazines actually turned out to be less sexual in 1993 when compared to 1983 data. Women were, overall, three times more likely to be dressed provocatively than men.

Furthermore, according to the Finnish women's group, contemporary men are more likely portrayed to be with feminine features. Overall, the discussants

considered the gap between men and women to have narrowed. *“You can’t clearly say what are women’s products and women’s duties, or men’s; it’s quite ambiguous – anything can be found.”* (Finnish woman, C) This coincides with earlier notions (cf. Law & Labre 2002, 698; Hirschman 1999, 162–163; Barthel 1988, 179) of the overall feminization of culture. However, on the basis of the findings of the content analysis, this trend was not revealed.

In the adverts, the Finnish men found a move towards other qualities than just those which are related to doing something with one’s bare hands. The man in the 1988 mineral wool ad seemed to represent a slight shift towards a more functionary Finland: other qualities than just the capabilities related to physical work started coming up. However, the men did not see this as a linear trend: the men in the Sloggi ad were closer to the ‘original’ mineral wool (Vuorivilla) model of 1973 in their physicality. This coincides with the statement by Elliott and Elliott (2005, 4) of muscularity still being perceived as a cultural symbol of masculinity. Traditional masculine roles having eroded, men have become more preoccupied with muscularity. Today, as jobs have become less physical, muscles are developed by training in a gym and doing sports. The man in the yellow suit (Ahlström 1988) represented an ‘official’ – somebody who is alienated from physical work. On the other hand, the yellow suit was seen to represent the easiness of installing the product: any man can do it, without tarnishing his clothes.

Furthermore, the Finnish male discussants raised the withdrawal of the breadwinner role as one of the major changes in masculinity. *“If we think traditionally, men had to take care of the financial issues and be the shelter ... you don’t see that so often [in ads] any more. On the other hand, it is not like that any more in real life either.”* (Finnish man, B) As referred to earlier in this study (e.g. Boni 2002, 467), the breadwinner role is being complemented by the diversification of masculinity.

Contradictory to the findings of the content analytical phase of this study but in line with previous studies (e.g. Simpson et al. 1996, 257), men are increasingly being used as [sexual] objects. Interestingly, the Finnish men shared similar views: [In the Sloggi ad,] *“The men are more objectified, just like women have long been.”* (Finnish man, C) In addition, an international atmosphere in Finnish advertising was recognized: *“The power element is still there but the Finnish man has become more ‘Swedish’¹²⁰.”* (Finnish man, D) *“More international.”* (Finnish man, E)

Overall, the impact of other cultures was underlined. According to the Finnish male discussants, it is even rarer to see a real Finnish man than a

¹²⁰ Finns often call Swedes ‘homo’. One explanation is that the Swedish intonation sounds gay to the ear of a Finn (Everything2 2002).

foreigner in ads. *“The Dressman men are the same in other countries as well.”* (Finnish man, B) Furthermore, according to the discussants, the image of masculinity has become more fragmented over the years: in the 1970s, the image was more homogeneous whereas now it is more diverse; there are different types of men advertising different products. This was seen to have to do with the overall fragmentation of society (e.g. Wood 2004, 295–296). *“[...] Due to fragmentation, I’m more responsive to some ads over others. On the other hand, there are a number of ads that just don’t seem to be meant for me. [...] I don’t even watch programs where they advertise products that are not meant for me.”* (Finnish man, A) The fragmentation of markets and media creates a challenge to the effectiveness of the traditional mass media; for instance print media have undergone major changes – presumably at the expense of general-interest magazines – and new magazines are being launched, each targeted at a special audience. On the other hand, thanks to fragmentation, companies can target their marketing communications better and supposedly reach their audiences more effectively. (Pickton & Broderick 2005, 155, 637.)

How can we, then, on the basis of the focus group discussions, pull together changes in masculinity in advertising in Finland? A generally shared idea was that masculinity has shifted in a more versatile and international direction. The female discussants were likely to see a trend of feminization in advertising in general. The withdrawal of breadwinner masculinity was elicited particularly by the male discussants. Along with the overall societal changes and fragmentation of society, masculinity seems to be fragmenting, too.

4.2.2 Changes in masculinity in the US

4.2.2.1 Findings based on the content analysis

Syntagmatic elements

Next, we will move on to the changes in masculinity in the US, and first, to the changes in the syntagmatic elements based on the content analytical phase. As was the case with the Finnish man, automobiles and the like seemed to be the US man’s domain in 1973 and in 1988; the majority of ads (1973: 26.2%; 1988: 21.9%) with male characters focused on vehicles and accessories. However, in 2003 health/medicine ads amounted to 40.0% of all ads. This finding is in line with consumer spending in the United States: in 2000, health goods and medical services accounted for most (18%) of the consumer spending (Euromonitor 2004). The distribution of advertisements across

various product categories in 1973, 1988 and 2003 is shown in the following table (Table 29).

Table 29. Distribution of ads with a male model across different product categories in the US.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Personal hygiene	7,7	8,6	4,5
Food and drinks	7,7	10,9	14,5
Health/medicine	7,7	7,0	40,0
Household cleaning	0,0	0,8	9,1
Travel/transportation	5,4	2,3	0,9
Clothing/shoes	1,4	2,3	0,0
Home appliances/electronics	7,7	10,2	2,7
Vehicles and accessories	26,2	21,9	5,5
Furniture	0,9	3,1	0,0
Construction materials	1,4	0,8	0,0
Photographic equipment	5,0	1,6	0,9
Entertainment	0,5	1,6	2,7
Public good/charity	2,3	2,3	2,7
Financing/insuring	7,7	3,9	6,4
Jewellery	2,3	1,6	0,0
Other	16,3	21,1	10,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

When we look at the distribution of the product categories in relation to age, there are some interesting notions: first, it seems that it was mainly young and mid adult men that were portrayed in vehicle and accessories ads in 1973 (see the following table; note that the ‘indeterminate’ classification is not presented in the table). Among older adults, the categories were spread more widely; in food and drinks ads in 1973, the models were mostly older. Among older men, food and drinks was the most common category also in 1988, whereas younger men appeared in personal hygiene ads. At the same time, mid adults were most often depicted in vehicle and accessories ads. An interesting finding is that in 2003, six out of ten older men were advertising health-related products.

Table 30. Distribution of the ads across the most frequent product categories by age segments in the US.

	1973 (n = 186)			1988 (n = 99)			2003 (n = 95)		
	Young	Mid	Older	Young	Mid	Older	Young	Mid	Older
	(n = 34)	(n = 108)	(n = 44)	(n = 14)	(n = 42)	(n = 43)	(n = 14)	(n = 49)	(n = 32)
Personal hygiene	14,7	6,5	4,5	21,4	4,8	7	21,4	0	3,1
Food and drinks	2,9	7,4	15,9	0	7,1	18,6	14,3	20,4	6,3
Health/medicine	2,9	6,5	9,1	7,1	9,5	2,3	7,1	36,7	62,5
Vehicles and acc's	26,5	32,4	4,5	14,3	31	14	14,3	4,1	3,1

In all the years, there was mostly only one man in the picture (1973: 71.5%; 1988: 80.5%; 2003: 81.8%). In most instances, the man was also alone in the picture, particularly in 1988 when in almost 60% of the cases there were no women in the ads. However, by 2003 the amount of ads depicting one woman (together with a man or men) had increased from 30.5% (in 1988) to 41.8%. In line with earlier findings (e.g. Wood 2003, 266), men were only rarely depicted with children. Quite as seldom were there two men in the same picture (see Table 31).

Table 31. Number of men, women and children in the US ads in 1973, 1988 and 2003.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Number of men			
one	71,5	80,5	81,8
two	15,4	7,8	7,3
three or more	13,1	11,7	10,9
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Number of women			
none	48,9	58,6	43,6
one	38,0	30,5	41,8
two	7,7	3,1	4,5
three or more	5,4	7,8	10,0
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
Number of children			
none	75,6	80,5	77,3
one	10,9	7,0	11,8
two	7,2	5,5	8,2
three or more	6,3	7,0	2,7
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

As to the setting of the ad (see Table 32), a fictional setting was the most predominant (1973: 34.4%; 1988: 44.5%; 2003: 32.7%). This may relate to an intention to avoid clutter and additional connotations as well as to place more emphasis on the product and the model in the ad (cf. Kujala 2005, 90; Kolbe

& Albanese 1997, 833). As indicated in previous studies and contrary to the situation for women (see e.g. Fowles 1996, 201–208), men have rarely been portrayed in a home setting. However, the data of 2003 shows a remarkable rise in this respect: in almost one third of the ads (28.2%) men were depicted at home or in the garden. There was at the same time a falling trend in the proportion of men depicted in occupational settings.

Table 32. Setting of the ad in the US ads.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
House/home/garden	14,9	11,7	28,2
Store	0,5	0,8	0
Occupational setting	12,2	11,7	7,3
Fictional/blank	34,4	44,5	32,7
Leisure	16,7	16,4	20
Sports	3,2	3,9	2,7
Other	18,1	10,9	9,1
Total	100	100	100

Paradigmatic elements

Concerning the age of the men in the adverts, mid adults seemed to dominate in 1973: 48.9% of the men were considered mid adults (36–50 years of age). In 1988, however, the older adult category accounted for the majority¹²¹ of the men, but again in 2003 the mid adults were the dominant group: 44.5%. Interestingly, the amount of young men was the lowest of all categories (excluding ‘indeterminate’) in each of the years: 1973: 15.4%; 1988: 10.9%; 2003: 12.7% (see Table 33).

Table 33. Apparent ages of male characters in the US ads.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Young adult (18-35)	15,4	10,9	12,7
Mid adult (36-50)	48,9	32,8	44,5
Older adult (over 50)	19,9	33,6	29,1
Indeterminant	15,8	22,7	13,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

¹²¹ In 1988, the age segments were more evenly distributed; thus, even though the amount of older adults was the highest (33.6%), the amount of mid adults was almost the same (32.8%).

Leaving out the indeterminate category yields the proportions comparable with real-world demographics (see Table 34). The above finding concerning apparent ages in the data is disproportionate to the actual adult population in the US: in 2003, the proportion of young adults was 31.5% (MRI 2003) whereas in the data, the amount of ads featuring young men (18–35 years of age) was only 14.7%.

Table 34. Apparent ages of male characters in the US ads excluding the indeterminate category.

	1973 (n = 186)	1988 (n = 99)	2003 (n = 95)
Young adult (18-35)	18,3	14,1	14,7
Mid adult (36-50)	58,0	42,4	51,6
Older adult (over 50)	23,7	43,5	33,7
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Thus, and in contradiction to earlier studies (e.g. Kolbe & Albanese 1996), the segment of young adults was actually underrepresented. This is interesting also in the sense that 17.7% of the readers of Reader's Digest are supposed to represent this age cohort. In relation to the actual US population, in this study the proportion of mid adults was overrepresented at 51.6% compared to 38% in real life. However, the amount of older adults was quite proportionate to the US adult population: in 2003, the proportion of over 50-year-olds was 30% (cf. 33.7% in this study). The advertisers have obviously studied the general demographic characteristics of Reader's Digest. In 2003, the median age of the US adult population was 44 years, and among the Reader's Digest readers it was 50 which is in line with the major age cohort of this study. (MRI 2003.)

Whether the man in the ad was married or not was judged by a ring on his left ring finger. Also, the man was considered married, if he was depicted with a woman in a couple-like relationship and *she* was wearing a ring on her left ring finger or if they were depicted in a homey setting. In most cases, the marital status was not identified (see Table 35). However, when it was possible to judge it, men were depicted married far more often than not married: 1973: 29.4%; 1988: 19.5%; 2003: 30.9%.

Table 35. Marital status among the male characters in USA.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Married	29,4	19,5	30,9
Not married	2,3	5,5	7,3
Not identified	68,3	75,0	61,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Unfortunately, the number of cases where the coders were not able to code the marital status was very high in the data. This was most often due to the use of cropping techniques (only a part, e.g. the head, of the person was shown). Excluding the cases that were not identifiable yields comparable data to the actual US population (see Table 36). According to the findings of this study, in the case where it was possible to identify the marital status of the man in the ad, men were depicted married far more often than is the case in real life. For instance, in 2003, 57% of the US adult population¹²² was reported married (cf. 80.9% in this study), and 43% single, widowed, divorced or separated (MRI 2003). However, the number of unmarried men in the data shows a rising trend: in 1988 and 2003, every fifth man was depicted as unmarried whereas in 1973 less than one out of ten men was identified as unmarried.

Table 36. Marital status among male characters in the US ads excluding the 'not identified'.

	1973 (n = 70)	1988 (n = 32)	2003 (n = 42)
Married	92,8	78,1	80,9
Not married	7,2	21,9	19,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Quite surprisingly, celebrities appeared rather rarely in the data: in 1973, only 3.6% of the men depicted in the US ads were celebrities. In 1988, the percentage was evidently higher (14.1%) whereas in 2003, it was lower again (4.5%). On average, men were depicted more often as authority figures (1973: 5.4%; 1988: 7.0%; 2003: 9.1%). The prevailing role was clearly the typical user: in 1973, almost 80% (78.7%) of the men were considered as typical users, and the situation was quite identical in 2003 (77.3%). In between (in 1988), there was a slight decline (see Figure 28).

¹²² Of whom 48% are male, 52% female (MRI 2003).

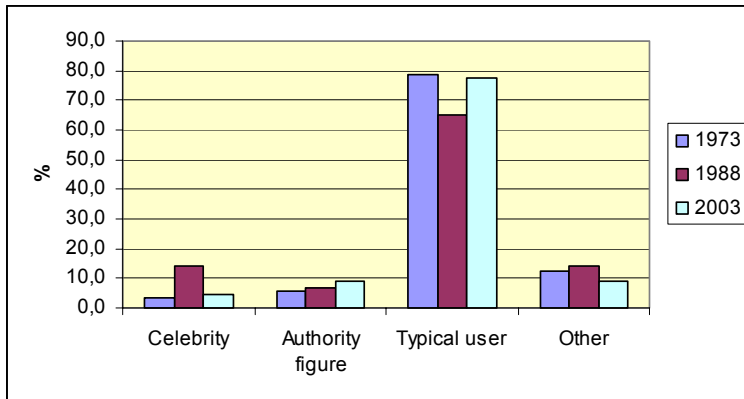


Figure 28. Roles of the male characters in the US ads.

As to the image of masculinity, US men are mostly depicted as spouses or partners¹²³ (in the cases where the image was identifiable). The daddy image was also quite common during the thirty-year period. However, in many cases the coders coded the image as ‘other’ (the proportion of ‘other’ was particularly high in 1988), either due to the fact that only parts (e.g. hands or feet) of the human body were shown or that the man in the ad did not fit into any of the pre-determined categories. One new category could have been ‘an athlete type’. Interestingly, the coders coded no metrosexuals in the US data. Furthermore, the amount of homemakers diminished in 2003 (1.8%) compared to 1988 (3.9%) (Table 37). In this sense, the result opposed the trend forecast in earlier studies (e.g. Elliott et al. 1993).

Table 37. Images of masculinity in the US ads.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Daddy	20,4	14,8	20,9
Spouse/partner	21,7	18,8	23,6
Homemaker	0,5	3,9	1,8
Farmer/rancher	1,4	7,0	4,5
Businessman/salesman	9,0	7,0	10,0
Scientist/inventor	0,0	0,8	0,0
Working man	7,7	3,9	6,4
Don Juan	2,7	1,6	3,6
Other	36,7	42,2	29,1
Total	100,0	100	100,0

¹²³ This coincides with the findings of Bretl and Cantor (1988, 601).

In line with the findings of Andrén et al. (1978) as well as Wiles et al. (1996), the race distribution depicted in ads was also herein disproportionate to the US population. In 1973, 5% of the men in ads were non-white whereas the actual percentage of the non-white population was 12.5% at the time (US Census Bureau 2002). In 1988, an even more disproportionate number of non-whites was portrayed: 3.1% of the men in the ads were non-white (cf. 19.7% of the actual total US population) (US Census Bureau 2002). There is, however, an increase in the proportion of the non-whites in 2003: of all the ads containing male characters, 20.9% were non-white (see Figure 29). This number is proportionate to the actual population today: 23% of the population are reported non-white (The World Factbook 2004).

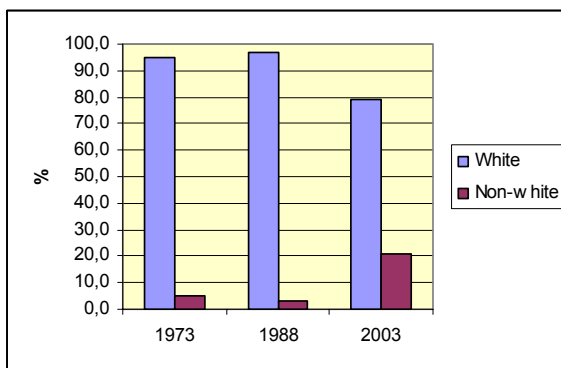


Figure 29. Distribution of race/skin colour of male characters in the US ads.

According to the results of all three years, face-ism played quite a consistent role in the depictions of men: in 1973, ads with only the face/head and/or parts of the body shown equated to approximately 70% of all the ads. The amounts were slightly lower in 1988 (64.1%) and 2003 (62.7%) but still dominant (see Table 38). As indicated by Schwarz and Kurz (1989, 313), persons portrayed with a high degree of facial prominence have been evaluated as more competent than individuals whose full bodies are shown. Reported in the Kolbe and Albanese (1996, 8) study, many of the advertisements in Business Week included head and shoulders photographs of CEOs and other highly positioned officials, lending legitimacy to the company's products. Proportionally not very high but still quite striking was the use of a part – most typically a hand or a foot – to represent a whole person. Cropping, i.e. the use of body parts (coded in 'other') was at its highest in 1988. In semiotic terms, cropping represents the use of metonymies: using a part to represent the whole (see e.g. Andrén et al. 1978, 29).

Table 38. Facial prominence of the male characters in the US.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Only the face/head shown	6,8	3,9	6,4
Face and parts of the body shown	62,9	60,2	56,4
Parts of the body shown, excluding face	3,2	3,1	8,2
Full body including head, excluding face	2,7	3,9	4,5
Full body shown, including face and head	18,6	18,0	20,9
Other	5,9	10,2	3,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Similarly to the Kolbe and Albanese study (1996), the body types were classified according to whether they were strong and hard (mesomorphic), soft and round (endomorph) or thin and lightly muscled (ectomorph). The findings of this study with regard to body type are contrary, however, to the findings of earlier studies: according to this study, in 1973 and in 1988, most men in the ads were ectomorph (33.9% and 31.3%), and the most typical body type in 2003 was endomorph (22.7%). Meanwhile, according to the Kolbe and Albanese study (1996) as well as Law and Labre (2002) and Alexander (2003), men were judged to have strong and tough bodies. However, there was a rising trend of mesomorphic men towards the year 2003 in the ads of this study (but the frequencies were still very low); also the amount of endomorph men was on the rise, whereas there was a downward development with regard to ectomorph men (see Figure 30). Interestingly, the 'indeterminate' category was quite high in all three years (approximately 50%); where only hands or feet were shown as well as in the case of baggy or thick clothing, it was not possible to judge the body type.

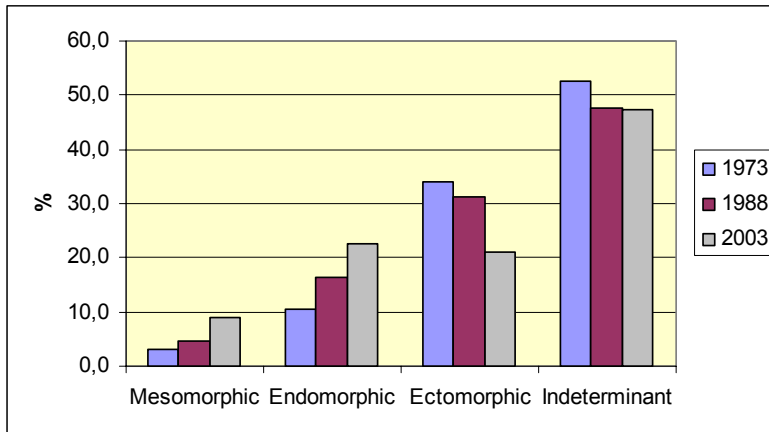


Figure 30. Body types among the male characters in the US.

One has to remember, however, that the selection of media can influence the findings: Alexander (2003) examined a narrow-targeted magazine 'Men's Health', and the sample of the Kolbe and Albanese (1996) study was drawn from six male-audience magazines. Furthermore, the magazines analyzed by Law and Labre (2002) were also targeted at mainly (young) male audiences (Sports Illustrated, Rolling Stone and GQ).

In advertising, the clothing worn can be used to create an image or an atmosphere for the ad (Kolbe & Albanese 1996, 11). In spite of the belief that nudity is prevailing in advertising (see e.g. Law & Labre 2002, 697), the findings of this study argue against it: the amount of nude or semi-clad men was very low in all three years (see Table 39). The majority of men wore casual clothing (jeans; T-shirts; casual pants; turtleneck shirts with or without jacket, no tie) in 1973, 1988 and 2003; in fact, there was a clearly discernible rising trend in the proportion of casual wear. In comparison, according to the findings of Kolbe and Albanese (1996, 11), the most typical style of clothing was 'classic menswear' (classic-styled suit or sportscoat, dress pants, tie, shirt, and shoes). In this study, that style was coded under 'other'. Once the coding process was over, the coders did, however, express the need for the category of 'a suit and tie'.

Table 39. Men's clothing styles in the US ads.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Nude	1,8	2,3	2,7
Half-nude	0	0	1,8
Underwear/swimsuit	0,9	0	0,9
Uniform	4,1	5,5	0,9
Work/career	19,0	18,0	17,3
Casual	36,2	40,6	47,3
Outdoor and recreational	4,1	1,6	6,4
Sports	2,7	3,1	3,6
Other	31,2	28,9	19,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

According to Solomon (1990, 178–179), casual bell-bottom trousers, turtleneck shirts and sweaters can be considered to signify a desire in American men to free themselves from the tyranny of the corporate dress code, and to explore more liberated lifestyles. Besides, casual clothing trends of the 1970s and 1980s were upwardly mobile: by adapting upper-class British icons of casual clothing (e.g. polo shirts and rep ties), men could express their desire to climb to the top of the social heap. The variations in clothing styles can also be seen as related to economic fluctuations: during economically secure times, dressing down may express a moral uneasiness, whereas it is important to put up a good front in a tight economy. (Solomon 1990, 184–185.)

As to the relation of the main male character to other people in the ad, the most frequent was 'family' (see Table 40). In fact, this relation increased quite distinctively from 1973 to 2003 (1973: 30.8%; 2003: 40.9%). The increase may indicate a subtle shift toward family values (cf. Michell & Taylor 1990, 44).

Table 40. Relation of the male characters and the other people in the US ads.

	1973 (n = 221)	1988 (n = 128)	2003 (n = 110)
Family	30,8	26,6	40,9
Lover	11,8	7,0	5,5
Friend	3,6	3,1	4,5
Professional	13,6	9,4	15,5
Other	5,9	7,8	6,4
No others in ad	34,4	46,1	27,3
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

However, in 1988 and at the same time as the amount of ‘no others in ad’ was at its greatest (46.1%), there was a decrease in family relations (the percentage being 26.6%). If we leave out the ads where there were no others besides the man, the proportion of family relations becomes even more distinct, and there is a rising trend throughout the study period (see Table 41).

Table 41. Relation of the male characters and the other people in the US without ‘no others in the ad’.

	1973 (n = 145)	1988 (n = 69)	2003 (n = 79)
Family	46,9	49,3	56,9
Lover	17,9	13,0	7,6
Friend	5,5	5,8	5,1
Professional	20,7	17,4	21,5
Other	9,0	14,5	8,9
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

The second biggest category, the ‘professional’ relation was quite steady during all years: in approximately every two out of ten ads there was a professional relation between the main male character and other people in the ad (1973: 20.7%; 1988: 17.4%; 2003: 21.5%; see Table 41). As to coding the values of ‘family’ and ‘lover’, an interesting cultural perspective came up. For the American coder, a couple alone represented ‘family’ whereas for the Finnish coder, a family consists of both spouse and children. Consequently, the intercoder reliability for this value was the lowest (0.81) of all coefficients.

Finally, as to the main male character’s relation to the product, men seem to be increasingly depicted as decorative rather than participating in the product’s use in the ads. In 2003, as many as three-quarters (75.5%) of the men were in a decorative relation to the advertised products (see Figure 31). This is interesting in the sense that traditionally, it is mainly women who have been featured in decorative roles (e.g. Belkaoui & Belkaoui 1976; 171).

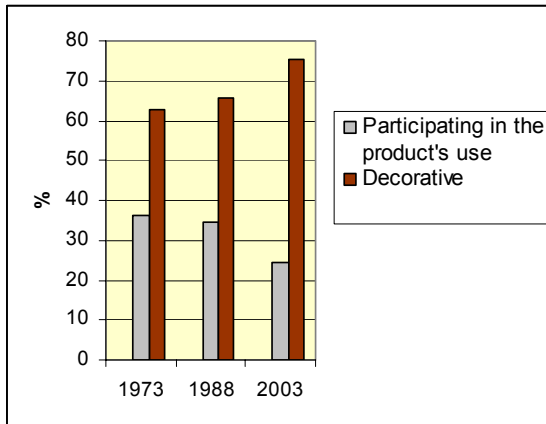


Figure 31. Relation of the men to the product in the US ads.

In accordance with Wolheter and Lammers (1980, 761), the portrayal of people in decorative roles is no longer restricted to women. In their study on male sex roles Skelly and Lundstrom (1981, 54) found a similar trend concerning men. Given increasing sexual equality, advertisers may use portrayals of men in decorative roles to appeal to women, just as women have been the objects of men (Skelly & Lundstrom 1981, 56). Similar thoughts have been shared by Wiles and Tjernlund (1991, 264): US advertisers are turning towards the use of men in decorative roles because of criticism.

Based on the content analysis and the findings concerning masculinity in the US over the thirty-year period, an interesting change can be discerned: still in the 1970s and 1980s, the US man was mostly depicted in car ads whereas in the new millennium he is most often seen in ads promoting health. This finding conforms to the increasing, overall concern about one's physical condition. However, his body build follows the unfortunate fattening trend in real life: he is increasingly portrayed as endomorphic, i.e. soft and round. The US man in general-interest magazine ads seems to be a middle-aged loner. Overall, he is rather depicted elderly than young, and far more often married than not married. In the ads, the US man stands as a typical user. In spite of the wide racial distribution in the US, the US man in advertising is still most often depicted white. He has been and is casually clothed in ads. Throughout the thirty-year study period, his relation to the advertised product has been decorative.

4.2.2.2 Emergent themes from the US written component

As in Finland, the idea of using the written protocols prior to the actual focus group discussion in the US was to capture the discussants' interpretations of six US pictorial print ads and by doing so, tune the discussants into the upcoming discussion. The original interpretations are attached as tables at the end of the study (see appendices 6 and 7). Also the stimulus material is presented in the annexes (Appendix 3).

Ad 1: Man-Power 1973

Strength and power were themes that emerged from this US deodorant ad. Interestingly, the strength dimension elicited different connotations. First, strong men use Man-Power. Secondly, if you are not strong already, Man-Power makes you strong. Thirdly, men have stronger body odor and it takes a stronger deodorant to control it. However, according to both male and female subjects, by overemphasizing the power aspect the advertiser might have discluded some consumers from the ad: *"You wouldn't see a skinny man buying this."* (US man, A) What is considered 'normal' or muscular seems to differ as can be discerned from the following comment: *"I like how they used a regular sized man instead of a man with huge muscles."* (US woman, A) This proves how polysemic signs can be. And who knows, the target segment of this deodorant might actually be women: *"[The product is] Directed toward women to influence a man's buying decision. Could not influence my decision to buy."* (US man, E)

Ad 2: AC spark plugs 1973

Similarly to the previous ad, there was one clear theme that emerged from the AC spark plug ad: *toughness*. *"Tough guys use these spark plugs."* (US woman, B) This ad, again, was considered risky in the sense that it can disclude some consumers. However, this interpretation was not generally shared. An interesting point was raised by one of the young male subjects: *"I feel advertisers are using male insecurities to push the product."* (US man, B) Obviously, he did not like the quite commonly used appeal to refer to people's weaknesses in advertising. But if one already has positive experiences of the product, and accordingly, a positive attitude towards it, the ad is more likely to be approved (cf. dual mediation model, Pelsmacker et al. 2001, 74): *"Knowing the products involved, my opinion is positive. I think the ad is promoting a proven product."* (US man, E)

Ad 3: Chevy Truck 1988

The Chevy truck ad of 1988 used comparison as a strategy and according to the subjects, it made it successfully. The subjects found a number of different ways of eliciting the claimed superiority of Chevy: the look on the man's face, his posture (leaning against the 'winner'), the use of colours and light (red Chevy well-lit on the left, grey Ford in the shade on the right). The self-satisfied look on the man's face reaffirms the myth of masculine independence: in spite of the many competing offers, he knows what he wants.

However, among both the men and women, there was antipathy to comparative advertising in general and putting other brands down: "*Ads that put down other companies to make themselves look better are unoriginal and not creative.*" (US man, A) This is interesting in the sense that in the US, the legislation concerning puffery is not as strict as in Finland (cf. Clow & Baack 2004, 416–417). Perhaps Americans are getting overwhelmed by such advertising.

Ad 4: Beltone 1988

The Beltone hearing aid ad seemed to be very straightforward: there is an older celebrity promoting the product. According to both male and female subjects, the 'familiarity' ("*We've seen him on TV.*") of the spokesperson made the product approachable. However, none of the respondents considered the product targeted at them personally: "*I'd think about the ad more if I was closer to the age of the man or if hearing loss was affecting me.*" (US woman, B)

Ad 5: OxiMagic 2003

The OxiMagic ad of 2003 caused similar confusion among the male and female subjects. One of the most used comments was "*weird*". Whether there actually was a man in the ad or a tub of the product with arms and legs was unclear to the subjects. Furthermore, there was confusion about the product and its use: "*Not sure what is being promoted.*" (US man, E) Some discussants found allusions to snow angel imagery in the ad. The imagery caused confusion ("*Why they gave it arms and legs is beyond me!*" US woman, D) but was also seen as positive: "*Cleaning carpets is fun and easy like playing in the snow.*" (US woman, B) and "*I think that the man and the OxiMagic are one subject and the filth is being "snow-angeled" away.*" (US man, A)

Two of the US women paid attention to the discrepancy between the gender of the model and the product category: "*It's pretty silly. What guy cleans the floor?*" (US woman, F) "*[...] and do men clean rugs?! Ha! I'd buy it!*" (US

woman, D) Similarly to the Finnish HK ad, the OxiMagic ad can be seen as representative of a postmodern odd ad.

Ad 6: NicoDerm 2003

The emergent theme from this 2003 ad seemed to be quite clear: “*Quit smoking for your family.*” (or “*Life is precious. Don’t throw it away.*” (US woman, B) The importance of life and the link between the advertised product and the better quality of life were highlighted by both men and women. The overall impression of the ad was positive; however, according to one male subject, the knives and pots in the background made the environment dangerous. The female subjects in particular attended to the fact that the man was in the kitchen: “*He’s in the kitchen – so he must be a super-dad!*” (US woman, F) Obviously, the kitchen is still considered a woman’s territory: “*Setting (kitchen) is clean – usually a woman’s place but this man is now allowed in because he no longer smokes.*” (US woman, D)

As expected, the interpretations varied from one subject to another. However, there were some emergent themes that were shared by all/most subjects. The 1973 ads emphasized power which has been considered one of the key elements of traditional masculinity. By juxtapositioning the products with images of power they were given additional buoyancy. The 1988 ads brought in the expertise that is also considered as one of the manly virtues. Thanks to the gradual relaxation of role prohibitions (see Rohlinger 2002, 62), the NicoDerm ad of 2003 features a present-day daddy with a baby and in the kitchen. And he seems perfectly happy with the arrangement. The more ambiguous the ad’s message, the more confusion it seemed to cause among the discussants, as can be discerned in the case of the OxiMagic ad of 2003. In this ad, there were slight instances of subordination.

An interesting finding was that the interpretations were quite similar between the US men and women. Similar cultural coherence was not found between Finnish men and women. However, in neither country did the subject’s age turn out to be a decisive factor in the interpretations. For this study, the value added of the written protocols lay rather in the activation and motivation of the group towards the upcoming discussion than in the writings of the individual participants.

4.2.2.3 Findings based on the US focus group discussions

Quite interestingly, the US female discussants found that appearance was more emphasized in advertising 30 years ago and that the ads were more sexist in the past, whereas lately masculinity was seen to have shifted, becoming

more subtle: *“They don’t want to offend anyone in their ads [today]”*. (US woman, D) This view coincides with Gauntlett’s (2002, 75) presumption of advertisers taking their social role rather seriously. They are also aware of the consumers’ purchasing power and thus obviously do not want to risk offending them (cf. Vranica 2003). However, the discussants did raise today’s beer and cigarette ads as examples of ads where sex sells, but there were no beer or cigarette ads in the data as they are not allowed in Reader’s Digest; actually, cigarettes and beer have not been advertised in the magazine at all during the thirty-year study period.

In general, the women saw a shift and change in priorities – from being a sexy boyfriend or lover to being a good and caring father: *“Years ago having your woman by your side was a priority. More recently or currently having your baby is a priority.”* (US woman, E) *“I think that many of us were grateful for the husband that would get in there and hold the baby and do the carpets or whatever. [...] It is definitely a change. But it is more an improvement, you know. It’s more a sense of contributing to the family in a better way.”* (US woman, D) A factor that may have affected the situation is that expectations towards men have changed. According to Evans et al. (2000, 45), the emergence of the New Man – the caring-sharing man who holds the baby – is a manifestation of these expectations.

The fact that men were mostly by themselves in the ads did not arouse many feelings among the group: *“Maybe they are just free.”* (US woman, D) However, the discussants shared a view that ads have been and are targeted mostly at women (US woman, F: *“Before, the man was always working and the woman was at home. And she was the one who saw the commercials.”*), and thus, *“Maybe seeing a man with a woman isn’t particularly attractive to women.”* (US woman, D)

The US male discussants found a number of changes in today’s definition of a ‘manly’ man compared to that of 20–30 years ago: *“When I was growing up, the definition of a man was somebody who generally was quiet, reserved, had integrity, was strong, led the family. A provider. He worked to support the family.”* (US man, D) The breadwinner role was enduring: what the man did for a living was considered essential – the core of manhood – for an American man in the past: *“Often the American man was defined by what he did. [...] for a long period what you did was who you are. And you weren’t necessarily a dad or a family member. You were whatever your job was.”* (US man, F) Changes in these attitudes have partially led to confusion: *“I think men are more confused today about what a man is supposed to be. Masculinity is less defined.”* (US man, D) Gerzon (1982, 132–133) refers to the dilemma by the term ‘breadwinner complex’: despite the proliferation of two-career families, the breadwinner might still expect his wife to be an old-fashioned mother who

bakes bread, while she expects him to be a modern father who shares household chores. Accordingly, the participants considered the role of an American man more blurred than in some other cultures “... *because there are still the cultures where it’s definite that the man is the provider.*” (US man, B) “[*In the past*], men did certain things. Women did certain things. [...] *Equal sharing as far as the provider role is now shared.*” (US man, F)

In spite of the fact that men are increasingly participating in domestic chores and childcare, the importance of what he does for a living seems to persist. “*The man is still defined by his work where a woman might be defined by her work but also how good a mother she is. I think in today’s society, women have a much harder burden because they have to be a good mother just as well as a provider whereas a man, if he is a good provider, there is some slack given on the other part.*” (US man, F) The discussants felt that over the years men have improved in how they deal with women, and in that sense also, men have approached women: “*Societally we are much more tuned in to how we’re supposed to treat women.*” (US man, D) “*I think the American man understands [...] the equality, whether it’s a job or whether it’s a family or whatever, and has managed to be more successful with a partnership.*” (US man, F) One of the discussants expressed the narrowing gap between the sexes as follows: “*I think that like if this is the woman’s role and this is the man’s role and they are firmly defined; nowadays, I think the man is kind of past the midpoint and they kind of meet a little, you know, a little off center.*” (US man, A) Obviously, gender-appropriate qualities that used to be based on binary oppositions (a nurturer vs. a wage earner) are in flux. One need not be either/or; one can succeed in both. Besides being successful at work, a man can be responsible for childcare, just as a woman can. (Kramer 2005, 31.)

The US men were obviously more concerned about the shift from the traditional breadwinner masculinity to the new, more nurturing masculinity; the US women seemed to welcome the shift without hesitation. The women saw the change as an improvement, but among the men, instances of breadwinner complex were found. In spite of this, both groups seemed to subscribe to the view that masculinity and femininity are converging, and the roles of men and women are intermingling. This coincides with Stuteville’s (1971, 12) notion of masculinity and femininity drawing closer together and the hegemonic masculinity having less status relative to femininity.

4.3 Similarities and differences in masculinities between Finland and the US

Having answered to research questions (1) and (2) we will move on to research question (3): *What kind of similarities and differences can be found in the mediated masculinities of the two countries?* What is there, if anything, in the American man in an ad that is not in the Finnish man and vice versa? In the following, the similarities and differences will be reviewed, first, based on the content analysis and the syntagmatic and paradigmatic sign relations of the ads. Thereafter, the findings based on the focus group discussions are reviewed. The two are kept separate since as methods – and accordingly by results – they have produced different data. Thanks to the a priori categorization, the data produced by the content analysis are rigid and structured whereas those produced by the focus group discussions are emergent and more fluid.

4.3.1 Findings based on the content analysis

Syntagmatic elements

Despite the claim (see Wernick 1991, 77) that men driving cars would have become promotionally untenable in the 1970s due to the fact that women started increasingly participating in work and public life, the findings of this study claim the opposite: both the US and Finnish men appeared most often in vehicle ads in 1973 and this was still the case in 1988 (see Table 42). In the US, the percentage in 1973 (26.2%) was distinctively higher than that in Finland (15.3%), but in both countries vehicles and accessories were still the most common category of ads with a male character. At first, the result may sound natural in the sense that men have traditionally been considered more interested in technical issues and cars in particular. However, over the years, many car ads have featured good-looking, semi-clad young women; this has been explained by the finding that the use of a seductive woman in a car ad makes men rate the car superior on a variety of characteristics, even though they do not actually believe that the woman's presence has an influence (Solomon et al. 1999, 70¹²⁴).

¹²⁴ Original source: Cialdini, Robert B. (1984) *Influence: science and practice*. William Morrow: New York.

Table 42. Distribution of the ads across the most interesting product categories in the Finnish and US ads.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
Health/medicine	1,6	7,7	7,9	7,0	16,5	40,0
Household cleaning	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,8	0,0	9,1
Vehicles and accessories	15,3	26,2	12,6	21,9	4,3	5,5
Construction materials	7,7	1,4	5,8	0,8	3,5	0,0
Entertainment	3,3	0,5	9,9	1,6	18,3	2,7
Other	10,9	16,3	11,0	21,1	10,4	10,0

In 2003, the biggest product category in US ads was health/medicine (40%). This was a distinct upsurge from the situation in 1988 (7%). The development might be due to several reasons. First, the United States is one of only two¹²⁵ countries in the world where direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising of prescription drugs is permitted¹²⁶, and many dollars are spent on DTC advertising overall (see Lexchin & Mintzes 2002, 195, for statistics concerning products with top DTC advertising budgets). The majority of the ads regarding health/medicine in Reader's Digest in 2003 were for prescription medicines.

Secondly, thinking in terms of the proportion of ageing people in Western societies and many of the illnesses and diseases that plague them, it is no wonder that there is a high number of health/medicine ads. Illnesses such as high cholesterol, depression, strokes and obesity are, to a large extent, assumed to be the consequence of an unhealthy lifestyle (see Lexchin & Mintzes 2002, 195), and advertising can be regarded as a new means of promoting health. (cf. Fennis 2003, 316.) Besides, the high amount of health/medicine ads might reflect a change in attitudes towards health care in general: the responsibility for taking care of and maintaining one's health is shifting to the individuals themselves. Furthermore, it coincides with the increasing trend of emphasizing the importance of good physical condition and good looks. (Sarpavaara 2004, 113; Patterson & Elliott 2002, 234.)

DTC advertising not being legitimate in Finland, the proportion of health/medicine ads was, quite naturally, distinctively smaller. However, a rising trend can be seen (see Table 42); in 2003, health/medicine ads was the second most common product category featuring men in the Finnish data. In this sense, the Finnish development is accordant with that of the US.

¹²⁵ New Zealand is the other.

¹²⁶ DTC advertising of prescription drugs has been legitimate in the United States since 1997 (see e.g. Lexchin & Mintzes 2002, 195).

Interestingly, however, the category with the greatest frequency in the Finnish data was entertainment, corresponding to almost one fifth of the ads. The proportion of entertainment ads doubled every 15 years in Finland. This trend is in line with the overall 'entertainment' trend in Finland; also the editorial content of magazines has moved toward in the direction of entertainment (Levikintarkastus Oy 2004). However, the low percentage in the US is surprising in the sense that the entertainment business has traditionally been big in the country.

Two interesting differences between the Finnish and the US data come up: first, in the Finnish data, the amount of ads concerning construction materials was in 1973 considerably higher (7.7%) than in the US data (1.4%). The proportion of these ads had diminished rapidly in the US by 1988, disappearing altogether in 2003. However, the Finnish man carried on his construction activities in the ads (1988: 5.8%; 2003: 3.5%). Another interesting detail is that in the Finnish data, there were no household cleaning ads throughout the whole period, whereas the amount of these ads was clearly on the rise in the US in 2003 (9.1%). Is this a sign of gender repositioning and/or of a rise in homemakers in the US (cf. Elliott et al. 1993)? And what does the total absence of these ads reveal about the Finnish situation in 2003? In spite of the fact that everybody uses clothes, the men's fashion and accessories category was practically non-existent in the data in both countries. Such ads typically use images of muscular, sporty, successful, and virile young men (Edwards 1997, 41).

In order to be able to evaluate the statistical difference between the countries and its relation to the portrayals of men in particular product ads, the product classes were regrouped, based on categorical similarity, into seven values (of which some represented the original values): (1) personal hygiene and health/medicine, (2) food and drinks, (3) travel/transportation and entertainment, (4) home appliances/electronics and furniture, (5) vehicles and accessories, (6) public good/charity and financing/insuring, and (7) other (which comprised the rest of the original values). This way, the analysis showed significant differences between the countries during all the years: in 1973 ($\chi^2 = 34.91$, $df = 6$, $p < 0.001$), 1988 ($\chi^2 = 18.99$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.004$) and 2003 ($\chi^2 = 38.50$, $df = 6$, $p < 0.001$). There were statistically significant differences also between scores across the years (Finland: $\chi^2 = 61.68$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.001$; USA: $\chi^2 = 62.92$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.001$).

As to the *number of people in the ad*, and in spite of the claim that men are allowed to have close friendships with even other men (Solomon et al. 1999, 189), men were mostly depicted alone, or if there were others in the ad, there was usually only one man – throughout the whole period in both countries. This can be explained in part by men's fear of appearing homosexual (Barthel

1988, 169). It may also be an indication of reaffirming the myth of masculine independence as well as the values of individualism and self-sufficiency, being a sturdy oak (cf. Wood 2003, 233; Barthel 1988, 175; Wiles et al. 1996, 63). According to Dubois (2000, 47), men in Anglo-Saxon countries tend to avoid close physical contact with each other. Related hereto, cultural values in the US, overall, place an emphasis on individualism and personal independence (Belch & Belch 2004, 665). “*It is ‘I’ who must perform and ‘I’ who will take the glittering prize.*” (Barker 2005, 302) This coincides with Hofstede’s index of individualism, where the United States stands high (IDV 91). For comparison, the index for Finland is quite a bit lower (IDV 62) but still high compared to some South American or Asian countries (e.g. Chile: IDV 23; Taiwan: IDV 17). (Hofstede 1998; Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996, 58.)

Interestingly, most often in 1988 the man was depicted alone in the ads in both countries. This coincides with the notion of calling the 1980s the ‘Me Decade’, i.e. emphasising the individual, his uniqueness and self-pampering needs, rather than a group and the collective good (Solomon et al. 1999, 175). Showing people alone in the ads can also be seen as a device to avoid visual clutter or to foreground the product (Massé & Rosenblum 1988, 131; Wernick 1991, 52). Furthermore, women were rarely seen together with men¹²⁷, particularly in Finland. In accordance with previous studies (e.g. Wood 2003, 266), men were seldom depicted together with children in either country.

As to the *setting* of the ad, a fictional setting was the most frequent in both countries in 1973, 1988 and 2003. Also leisure-related settings were quite typical both in Finland and the US, which was anticipated on the grounds of previous studies and writings (e.g. Barthel 1988, 5). However, where the house/home/garden settings decreased in frequency towards 2003 in Finland, they at the same time increased in the US: almost one third of the men in the ads were depicted in homely settings. The US result is in line with the view (e.g. Alexander 2003, 537) that more and more men are taking greater responsibility for domestic chores. In addition, the number of men living in single households is increasing. (see Wernick 1991, 48–49.)

However, the finding is interesting in the sense that according to the most common myths of gender in American society, a man’s place is in the workplace while a woman’s is in the home (Solomon 1990, 195). Furthermore, in Hofstede’s masculinity index (MAS), the United States is ranked (MAS Score 62) substantially higher than Finland (MAS Score 26), and masculine countries are more likely to embrace a sharp distinction between the roles of men and women (Hofstede 1998, 9; Milner & Collins 2000, 70). To a masculine society, traditional male values – assertiveness,

¹²⁷ Whereas women have mostly been depicted in relation to men (Spangler 1992, 94).

performance, ambition, achievement, and materialism – are important. (Albers-Miller & Gelb 1996, 64.) What then, does the decreasing share of house/home/garden settings possibly tell about the Finnish man? Since the 1960s, the number of women working outside home has been high in Scandinavia and in Finland (Wiles et al. 1995, 37), and in the dual-earner families it has been quite natural for the husband to participate in domestic work. Therefore, it may not have been considered important to highlight the homely settings in the Finnish advertising.

Paradigmatic elements

As to the *age* of the men in the ads, men in the US ads were, on average, depicted older than the Finnish men. In 1973, almost 50% of the American men were judged to be middle-aged (mid adults), and the proportion of older adults (19.9%) exceeded the young (15.4%) (across the years, the US differences were statistically significant: $\chi^2 = 15.80$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.015$). At the same time, the amount of mid adults was the highest also in Finland but the proportion between the young and the old was reversed (see Table 43) (across the years, the differences were not statistically significant in Finland). In 1988, the country differences between the relations were even more significant ($\chi^2 = 26.16$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.05$). Possibly, there was a slight delay in the 1980s yuppie era hitting Finnish advertising.

In spite of the fact that the mid adults represented the majority of the men in the ads (except for the year 1988 in the US), the proportion of older adults was on the increase throughout the study period in Finland. In that sense the Finnish findings follow the US trend. The aging trend is proportionate to the ‘greying’ of Western societies¹²⁸ but contrary to the findings of some recent studies (e.g. Milner & Collins 2000; Ford et al. 1998; Zhou & Chen 1997; Kolbe & Albanese 1996). Obviously, the type of medium under study and its readership have something to do with the differences in findings.

¹²⁸ For instance in the US, those aged 65+ will represent 20.6% of the population by 2030 (Euromonitor 2004).

Table 43. Apparent ages of main male characters in Finland and the US.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
	Young adult (18-35)	24,0	15,4	30,9	10,9	23,5
Mid adult (36-50)	42,1	48,9	37,7	32,8	34,8	44,5
Older adult (over 50)	14,8	19,9	16,2	33,6	25,2	29,1
Indeterminant	19,1	15,8	15,2	22,7	16,5	13,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

In relation to *marital status*, the American man was more often depicted married than his Finnish counterpart. The gap was at its widest in 2003 when 31% of the American men and only 14% of the Finnish men were depicted married. However, one has to keep in mind the number of ‘not identified’ which was higher for the Finnish data that year (see Table 44). An interesting finding is that both in Finland and the US, the number of married men decreased in 1988 rising again in 2003. At the same time, the divorce rate has been on the increase. Of the European countries, Finland has one of the highest divorce rates (3 divorces per 1000 inhabitants) (Dubois 2000, 267).

Table 44. Marital status of main male characters in Finland and the US.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
	Married	24,0	29,4	12,6	19,5	13,9
Not married	10,4	2,3	9,4	5,5	12,2	7,3
Not identified	65,6	68,3	78,0	75,0	73,9	61,8
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

If we leave out the ‘not identified’ cases, the situation looks a little different (see Table 45). The analysis shows a significant difference between the countries for 1973 ($\chi^2 = 11.88$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.001$; across the years, the differences were not statistically significant in neither country). When possible to identify, more than nine out of ten American men were depicted married in 1973 compared to seven out of ten in Finland. This may be to do with the status of marriage; traditionally in the US, the institutional role of being married has been more important than in freewheeling Scandinavia. Besides, the difference may relate to the difference in the age at which people get married; in the Finnish ads, men were depicted younger than in the US ads. In real life, Finnish men marry quite old (Oinonen 2001). The amount of men

depicted as married decreased towards 2003 in both countries; however, in the US ads, the proportion was slightly lower in between (in 1988). In this sense, the mediated situation follows the trend in real life: there is a general decline in the rates of marriage in the Western world, and the traditional family values are in a state of flux (Dubois 2000, 206; Coltrane 2004, 269).

Table 45. Marital status of main male characters in Finland and the US excluding the 'not identified'.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
Married	70,0	92,8	57,1	78,1	53,3	80,9
Not married	30,0	7,2	42,9	21,9	46,7	19,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
	$\chi^2 = 11.88, p = 0.01$		$\chi^2 = 3.57, p = 0.059$		$\chi^2 = 6.29, p = 0.012$	

As to the *endorsing roles*, there were no significant differences between the countries throughout the study period. Both in the US and Finland, men were mostly depicted as 'typical users' throughout the years; for example, in 1973 almost 80% of the men in the ads were judged to be typical users in both countries. In Finland, the numbers of celebrities and authority figures were on the increase throughout the period (see Table 46), whereas the US demonstrated the most celebrities and authority figures in 1988. The differences in USA were statistically significant across the years ($\chi^2 = 19.10, df = 6, p = 0.004$).

Table 46. Roles of the main male characters in the Finnish and the US ads.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
Celebrity	4,9	3,6	9,4	14,1	10,4	4,5
Authority figure	4,9	5,4	12,6	7,0	8,7	9,1
Typical user	77,0	78,7	66,0	64,8	71,3	77,3
Other	13,1	12,2	12,0	14,1	9,6	9,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

In relation to the sociodemographic reality, the deployment of typical users is natural: most consumers *are* ordinary people, rather than glamorous celebrities or authoritative figures with high status (cf. Singer 1983, 36). Yet,

advertising is often accused of delivering narrowly defined values of people as well as their looks and deeds (cf. Wiles et al. 1996, 58).

According to the results, the *images of masculinity* seem to follow no definite trend, except for the spouse/partner image which has been the most prevalent (of coded images) in both countries throughout the years (see Table 47). However, the percentage of spouses/partners in ads was lower in 1988 in both Finland and the US compared to the year 1973. In 2003, the percentage was distinctively higher for the US (23.6%) whereas in Finland the percentage decreased somewhat from 1988 (from 17.8% to 16.5%). In spite of the fact that men were infrequently depicted with children, the daddy image was quite common. It showed a rising development in the Finnish data whereas 1988 proved an exception yet again in the US: the amount of daddies was at its lowest (14.8%).

It must be remembered, however, that the value 'other' was the highest of all values in both countries throughout the years: in many cases, the coders found it difficult to code the image at hand according to the existing categories. Partly due to this, the frequencies of some individual categories were too low for statistical indifference tests. Consequently, the original ten categories were regrouped into five, based on logical closeness. The results showed significant difference between the countries in 1973 ($\chi^2 = 10.79$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.03$) (Table 47). The difference can be explained by the prevalence of the daddy image: in 1973, the frequency of the daddy image in the US was twice that of Finland. Across the years, in neither country was there any statistically significant difference between the scores.

Table 47. Images of masculinity in the Finnish and US ads.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
Daddy	9,3	20,4	13,1	14,8	16,5	20,9
Spouse/partner	25,7	21,7	17,8	18,8	16,5	23,6
Farmer/rancher	2,2	1,4	0,0	7,0	0,0	4,5
Businessman/salesman	7,1	9,0	11,5	7,0	9,6	10,0
Working man	8,2	7,7	5,8	3,9	6,1	6,4
Other	44,8	36,7	45,0	42,2	45,2	29,1

The spouse/partner and daddy images reference patriarchal masculinity and the breadwinner role that has traditionally been ascribed to men (see Ransome

2005, 134). The husband being the breadwinner by providing a wage for the family¹²⁹ created an image of masculinity based on authority, strength, responsibility, security and pride. (cf. Beynon 2002, 12, 14, 20; Crewe 2002, 41.) However, thanks to the more fluid conception of masculinity, men can also be seen taking care of children. Thus, according to Pleck (1987, 93), the distant father-breadwinner concept is partially substituted by the “New Father”, both in media depictions and in real life: the New Father is more present in all spheres of the life of his children. As to mediating masculinities, the daddy image in ads can operate as an important link between generations: it can function as a human bridge into manhood for the son as well as an extension of the future male role model for the daughter (Beynon 2002, 130–131).

An interesting finding is that in both Finland and the United States there were very few metrosexuals in the data. Is it because of the threat of the target groups being stigmatized as homosexual that advertisers are afraid of displaying men who are obviously concerned with their appearance, clothing and style? (cf. Crewe 2002, 42.) Interestingly, in spite of the fact that masculinities in Western countries are heavily based on the status achieved by work¹³⁰ (cf. Beynon 2002, 21), the amount of businessmen or working men in the ads was quite low (but sustainable) throughout the years in both countries (see Table 47).

As to the *race/skin colour* of the men depicted in the ads, the differences in the US vs. Finnish amounts of the white and non-white depictions were not surprising. As predicted, the amount of non-white men in ads was lower in the Finnish data. Due to the low number of non-whites in the Finnish data, it was not possible to run the Chi Square test. In the US, the differences across the years were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 30.76$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$). An interesting result is, however, that the numbers are quite similar in 1988 (2.6% in Finland; 3.1% in the US). Obviously, the proportion is – compared to the actual population – too low for the US.

Based on the results, *face-ism* was highly typical, yet diminishing somewhat towards the year 2003 in both countries. At the same time, the amount of ads showing men in full body profiles increased slightly. This amount was notably higher in Finland through the years: for instance, in 1988 one third of the men was depicted in full bodies whereas in the same year, the figure for the US was only 18% ($\chi^2 = 11.33$, $df = 5$, $p = 0.045$). Other than for

¹²⁹ By providing income for the family, the man was able to keep a housebound wife, which brought about a strict sexual division of household chores (Beynon 2002, 20).

¹³⁰ Unemployment has been proven to be very damaging to men and their sense of masculinity (cited in Beynon 2002, 87; Original source: Willis, P. (1977) *Learning to labour*. Saxon House: Farnborough).

the year 1988, the differences between the countries were not statistically significant. Across the years, the differences were also not statistically significant in either country.

As to the *body types*, quite surprisingly, the amount of mesomorphic men was very low in both countries throughout the whole thirty-year period. In 1973 and 1988, the dominant body type for both US and Finnish men was ectomorphic – thin and lightly muscled. Ectomorphic men were still dominant in the Finnish data in 2003, but in the US, the endomorphic (soft and round) men had become the majority. As the number of cases where it was not possible for the coders to determine the body type was high throughout the years, the category ‘indeterminant’ was left out prior to the Chi Square tests. Between the countries, the differences were not statistically significant in any year. Across the years, there were significant differences in the US ($\chi^2 = 16.22$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.003$) but not in Finland.

The findings of this study concerning body type are in contradiction with the earlier studies (e.g. Alexander 2003; Kolbe & Albanese 1996), where men have mostly been found to be strong and hard (mesomorphic). However, the trend in the US findings seems to be in accordance with the development in real life: obesity is increasing. This is an unfortunate fact also in Finland (see e.g. Lahti-Koski 2001; Ängeslevä 2004a¹³¹), but the findings in the Finnish data do not follow the ‘fattening’ trend (the amount of endomorphic men was at its highest in 1973).

Casual *clothing* seems to be the dominant style for both Finnish and US men. In the US, there is a clearly rising trend (see Table 48); in 2003, almost 50% of the men in the ads were depicted in casual clothes. In Finland, however, men dressed casually in ads most in 1973 (41.5%). Casual clothing may be an indication of men’s changing lifestyles moving towards greater freedom (cf. Solomon et al. 1999, 190). Traditionally, according to Wood (2003, 136), men’s clothes have been designed to be functional, and the relatively loose fit allows men to move quickly and be active. The dominance of casual attire for men may also reflect the increasing influence of American culture upon clothing styles in the twentieth century (Edwards 1997, 17).

¹³¹ Obesity is an unfortunate, increasing fact even among children and adolescents: approximately one fifth of 12–18 year-old boys are obese in Finland (Ängeslevä 2004a).

Table 48. Nudity and the most common clothing styles of men in ads in Finland and the US.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
Nude	1,1	1,8	1,0	2,3	2,6	2,7
Work/career	20,2	19,0	23,6	18,0	18,3	17,3
Casual	41,5	36,2	28,8	40,6	39,1	47,3
Other	19,7	31,2	19,4	28,9	21,7	19,1

For both countries, work/career clothing was the second most common category. In reference to this, an earlier study by an NPD group on employers and workers raises a dilemma: according to the study, casual clothes were the most usually worn clothes to the office (Van Hoof 1994, 17). Hence, there may have been ads where the man was dressed casually yet the clothes were related to his work.

In spite of the claim that nudity is prevailing in advertising (see e.g. Law & Labre 2002, 697; Simpson et al. 57), the findings of this study argue against it: the amount of nude or semi-clad men was very low in all study three years (see Table 48). This again is related to the type of magazine under investigation; investigating a special-interest men's magazine, as was done by Alexander (2003), would supposedly have resulted in different findings concerning nudity and semi-cladness.

Concerning the clothing styles, the number of original values was quite high. Consequently, in order to be able to measure whether there were significant differences between the countries or across the years, the values were regrouped. On the grounds of logical categorical closeness, the original nine values were regrouped into five: (1) nude, half-nude and underwear/swimwear; (2) uniform, work/career; (3) casual; (4) outdoor and recreational as well as sports; and finally (5) other. The analysis showed significant difference for the years 1973 ($\chi^2 = 15.54$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.004$) and 1988 ($\chi^2 = 23.49$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$). Across the years, the analysis showed significant difference in Finland ($\chi^2 = 34.19$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.001$) but not in the US. If yuppiedom was at its height in advertising towards the end of the 1980s (Heinonen & Kontinen 2001, 307), that could partly explain the lower proportion of casual clothing in Finland in 1988. Yuppies dressed mostly in suits and ties (Beynon 2002, 105).

As to the relation between the man and other people in the ad, the family relation was the most common in both countries throughout the years. However, the proportion was distinctively higher in the US during all years, particularly in 2003 when approximately 40% of the men were depicted in

family relations (the corresponding proportion in the same year was only 21.7% in Finland) ($\chi^2 = 16.92$, $df = 5$, $p < 0.001$). Similar cross-cultural differences prevailed in 1973 and 1988, too (see Table 49). Across the years, there was no statistically significant difference in either country. One has to remember, however, that the proportion of ‘no others in ad’ was the most frequent in both Finland and the United States throughout the years. There were, nevertheless, differences between the countries: for instance in 2003, the amount of Finnish ads depicting ‘no others in ad’ was almost 50% of all the ads, whereas in the US, the equivalent amount was only one third. One other interesting difference between the countries is that the amount of ‘lover’ relations is clearly higher in Finland than in the US. In fact, in 1988 and in 2003, the percentages in Finland are double those of the US. This can indicate the prevalence of traditional values in the US; in spite of the fact that family life is unravelling in both countries, traditional values and a façade of happy family life are still more important in the American culture than in the Finnish (cf. Goldman 1992, 87).

Table 49. Relation of the main male character and other people in the ads in Finland and the US.

	1973 (n = 404)		1988 (n = 319)		2003 (n = 225)	
	Finland (n = 183)	USA (n = 221)	Finland (n = 191)	USA (n = 128)	Finland (n = 115)	USA (n = 110)
Family	19,1	30,8	15,7	26,6	21,7	40,9
Lover	14,8	11,8	14,1	7,0	10,4	5,5
Professional	14,8	13,6	8,9	9,4	9,6	15,5
Other	3,8	5,9	5,8	7,8	4,3	6,4
No others in ad	39,3	34,4	47,1	46,1	47,8	27,3

Finally, to man’s relation to the product in the ad: quite surprisingly, the men were mostly depicted in a decorative role, except for the year 1973 in Finland when the Finnish man was more likely to be participating in the product’s use in the ad. In the US, there was a rising trend in the depiction of the decorative role throughout the thirty-year period. As many as three out of four men appeared in a decorative role in the US in 2003, which is distinctively higher than in Finland in the same year (60%). Between the countries, there was a statistically significant difference in 1973 ($\chi^2 = 21.77$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$) and in 2003 ($\chi^2 = 6.13$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.013$). Across the years, the difference was statistically significant for Finland ($\chi^2 = 13.54$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.001$) but not for the US.

In some earlier studies (Venkatesan & Losco 1975; Wee, Choong & Tambyah 1995), the characters in the ads were viewed as sex objects if they

served no other function than decoration; but in this study, men were regarded as sex objects if they were, besides being decorative, only partially clothed. Consequently, the high amount of men in a decorative role in the ads does not automatically imply that men were presented as sex objects.

4.3.2 Findings based on the focus group discussions

In spite of the strong media influence beyond borders, there were more similarities among the male and female discussants' views within the countries than across them. First, based on the discussions, a Finnish man was defined by his deeds whereas his American counterpart was defined by his status and looks. Secondly, the role of advertising seems to differ between the countries: whilst for Finnish people advertising seemed to represent a platform of entertainment, in the United States advertising was considered a source of information, particularly among the US women discussants. Thirdly, to what extent advertising actually affects people's purchasing decisions was discussed avidly and consensus seems to exist between Finnish and US men: according to the male discussants of both countries, advertising hardly has an effect on their buying behaviour. Fourthly, all the groups elicited a shift from traditional 'breadwinner' masculinity to more diversified roles; masculinity seems to be in transition in both countries. In the following, these issues will be examined more thoroughly.

Looks count for men, too, and according to the findings of this study, particularly so in the United States. The definition of a typical man was largely related to his appearance. Apparently, in American culture, hair is important since both US men and women mentioned 'hair' first when defining features of a typical US man. Hair seems to be important for an American man; the respect shown for a full head of hair came up in the US men's comments with regard to Eddie Alberts and his portrayal in a 1988 Reader's Digest ad: "*I may be old but look at me: I still got all my hair, I look good.*" (US man, D)

Interestingly, hair has been considered one of the image factors leading to a victory in the US presidential elections. In fact, the last elected bald president was also the last 'non-television' president – President Eisenhower (in 1952 and 1956). Since then, in every case except George H. W. Bush vs. Michael Dukakis (in 1988) and George W. Bush vs. John Kerry (in 2004) the candidate with the fullest head of hair has won. In American culture, a good head of hair is associated with power and virility, whereas baldness is often thought of as a sign of weakness. (Walton 2004.)

And according to the findings of this study, projecting a strong and confident image is important for a US man. Both US women and men

discussants used the terms ‘strength’ and ‘confidence’ to define a typical US man. In general, however, the groups found it difficult to define a typical US man since there are so many versatile roles and expectations concerning men. Besides, the United States as a country is highly heterogeneous.

Both US groups did highlight the importance of work: *“The man is still defined by his job, by what he does for a living.”* (US man, F) In spite of the fact that men are increasingly participating in domestic chores and childcare, the importance of what he does for a living seems to persist. *“The man is still defined by his work where a woman might be defined by her work but also how good a mother she is. I think in today’s society, women have a much harder burden because they have to be a good mother just as well as a provider whereas a man, if he is a good provider, there is some slack given on the other part.”* (US man, F)

Work was considered important in Finnish culture as well but from a slightly different aspect. Where the US discussants emphasized ‘work’ from the occupational and status perspective, Finnish men and women looked at it from its physical side: a typical Finnish man is a hard worker, always doing something with his bare hands. Besides, according to both Finnish men and women, a typical Finnish man has a serious, decisive look on his face. In general, the Finns – not just men – are known for their seriousness (see Carbaugh 2005, 51–53). According to Santonen (2003), the seriousness can be a result of long, dark winters, and tough living – particularly in the past. Finns tend to take their job, their education, their friendships, their love, and life in general quite seriously. Sports is regarded as one of such arenas as well. According to Tiihonen (1994, 236), who has studied masculinities in Finnish sports, even the classical, ideal male sportsman is serious and taciturn, such as the long-distance runner Paavo Nurmi.

However, from ads, the Finnish groups highlighted entertainment, and smart humour was considered more important than having a person in the ad. *“I think the best adverts are the ones where there is intelligent humour. It doesn’t really matter if there is a man or woman.”* (Finnish woman, A) In that sense, the product information and the product image formats, distinguished by Leiss et al. (1986, 189–194), could still apply.

According to the Finnish female discussants, today’s advertising is smart and effective; and the worse the programmes, the better the adverts: *“Sometimes you want to switch the channel when the programme starts.”* (Finnish woman, C) In fact, humour has been considered one of the best techniques for getting attention and holding it. In recall tests, people most often remember humorous ads. However, the fact that the ad is remembered does not necessarily mean that people remember the product; a humorous

situation can distract people from the product and its attributes. (e.g. Clow & Baack 2004, 205; Belch & Belch 2004, 186.)

Furthermore, there may be a danger that humour is produced at someone's expense. For instance, the US 'OxiMagic' 2003 ad as well as the Finnish 'HK' 2003 ad (see Figures 32 and 33) were making fun of manhood in general. These ads are typical examples of postmodern odd ads: the link between the message and the product is obscure. *"I didn't even know what they were advertising."* (US man, C) *"My first impression was that a guy got smashed by a big old tub of detergent or something."* (US man, A) *"A man being crushed by the society."* (US man, F) The scarcity of elements may have been a reason for the confusion among the groups. This coincides with a paradox in advertising design: on one hand, an ad should provide as much information as possible, but with too many elements and too much clutter the message may easily be lost. On the other hand, too few elements can be too little, i.e. if too much is left out (and too many elements are missing) the audience does not understand the message. And people do not want to spend time trying to figure out what an ad is trying to say.



Figure 32. Advertising a stain remover in the US (Reader's Digest 2003).

The ad that caused similar confusion in Finland as the OxiMagic ad in the US was one promoting products for barbequing. The ad was published in Seura magazine in summer 2003.



Figure 33. Advertising barbecue products in Finland (Seura 2003).

Contrary to their Finnish counterparts, the US discussants regarded the information that advertising provides to be important. *“Ads for me, it’s like information. It tells me there is a product out there. [...] But if I choose, it has either been recommended to me or I’ve tried different ones.”* (US man, F) Related to this, the general belief that price is an important decision factor for American consumers was shared among the US female group. *“[...] it would be nice if they had the price in there.”* (US woman, A) However, the fact that prices are not fixed from one store to another, or from one state to another, was considered a mitigating factor concerning the ‘pricelessness’. *“Every store is different. [...] And what it costs here and what it costs in the Midwest or the East Coast is so different.”* (US woman, F)¹³² *“We expect the businesses to compete. And usually it’s the price. And so I would never want this to be a fixed price that couldn’t change.”* (US woman, D) A price-related tool is also the use of coupons – and the discussants seemed to be in favour of them: *“Every week the Proctor & Gamble coupons come out. And there’s always something in there that I need that I use all the time. I’m happy to find a coupon for that particular brand.”* (US woman, B)

¹³² Herein, one has to note that in the United States, Reader’s Digest is published in 10 geographic editions, yet covering the whole country. The editions range from New England to Pacific, Alaska and Hawaii, and the inland in between. (Arens 2004, 491.)

All the members of the Finnish male discussants' group seemed to think that advertising does not affect them, i.e. does not make them buy products. The claim of non-existent influence of advertising, interestingly, coincides with the findings of Phillip Zimbardo, a psychologist who studied persuasion in the context of cult groups. Zimbardo termed his finding the 'illusion of personal invulnerability'¹³³, i.e. the tendency to think that media influence is stronger for other people than it is for oneself. (Sparks 2002¹³⁴, 140.) Similar results have been concluded by Elliott and Elliott (2005, 11); according to their study, several male respondents refuted the role of consumption in their lives.

However, the Finnish male discussants admitted that in situations where one has to choose between different brand names, the most advertised brand is usually chosen, obviously unconsciously. *"If I've seen a Tupla [chocolate bar] ad many times enough, I presumably choose Tupla over Mars, for instance."* (Finnish man, C) This refers to the assumption that consistent exposure to advertising gradually creates attitudes and beliefs that ultimately have an impact on buying behaviour (Wright-Isak, Faber & Horner 1997, 7–8; also Kilbourne 1999, 67); these impacts are not always 'seen' or accepted because the absorption happens cumulatively, little by little and often subconsciously.

Among the US men, there seemed to be a degree of similar illusion of personal invulnerability as among the Finnish men: none of them admitted that advertising would have an effect on them personally: *"I'm not influenced. [...] I'm not a creature of habit. Not a perception."* (US man, C) *"They [ads] don't influence me. I enjoy watching the exposure. However, it's not going to improve my decision of buying the product."* (US man, E) One reason for ignoring the ads was considered to be the abundance and ubiquitous nature of advertising: *"I think we get so many ads everywhere. [...] I don't look at ads in the newspaper because I'm looking for the articles, and they totally bypass me. Same thing on the Internet. [...] I might be less influenced by advertising than a lot of people because I'm not looking for particular things except when I'm looking for something, and then I'm going to places that I think I can get that information."* (US man, F)

In reference to this, the participants did not feel any pressure from the ads as to how they should portray themselves as men or what kind of products they should use. For the men in the group, it seemed that their wives and girlfriends affect their product usage more than advertising: *"If your wife*

¹³³ The phenomenon is also called 'the third-person effect' (Sparks 2002, 140).

¹³⁴ Original source: Zimbardo, P.G. – Ebbesen, E.B. – Maslach, C. (1977) *Influencing attitudes and changing behavior*. Addison-Wesley: Reading.

brings something into this home, you know, that's the product we're using, well, then, you know, I'm affected." (US man, F) In accordance, a study by Goldhaber Research Agency found that women have a significant impact on the spending habits of men (Clow & Baack 2004, 139). Therefore, to boost the sales of men's products, advertisers should, and often do, market the products to women. Even today, men are obviously not always very selective in regard to their brand choices: *"I could use any old deodorant, as long as it works."* (US man, D)

The following figure (Figure 34) illustrates the idea of using women as opinion leaders (OL) upon targeting the eventual message to men, i.e. the actual target group (cf. multi-step model of communication, Fill 2005, 47).

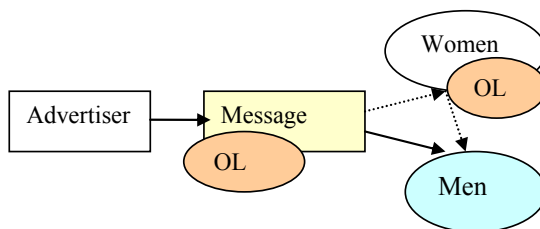


Figure 34. Targeting men via opinion leaders in advertising.

As discussed earlier in this study, women have traditionally (to a greater extent) been the targets of advertising, and they are 'used to' looking at ads as sources of information. Besides, women have the tradition of using beautification products. Thus, they can be targeted and used as opinion leaders; women can exert their personal influence on men, and gradually, affect men's buying behaviour. This strategy would presumably work particularly where older men are concerned (as became evident in the US example above). Another opinion leader group for older men could be the younger generation; according to a youth barometer, particularly boys of 15–19 years of age are interested in their looks. After being informed by the options, they could diffuse new ideas to their fathers. (Salo 2005, 32.)

Furthermore, celebrities and experts can operate as opinion leaders used in the messages themselves. A few decades back, personal deodorants were introduced to the male market via the use of supermasculine symbols and heroes, assuring men of the 'permission' to use deodorant without losing any of their masculinity. However, due to men's powerful motivation to avoid femininely-charged symbols, it can be difficult to assure men that previously feminine products can be masculine as well. (Stateville 1971, 11.)

Even in the case of a traditionally masculine product, using well-known male athletes and other celebrities to promote a product to men does not necessarily always appeal to men. The findings of this study indicate that men do not want to be controlled by other men and they do not want other men to tell them what to buy and wear: “*If Freddie [Swedish soccer player Fredrik Ljungberg] uses the brand, I don’t want to use it – I don’t want to reveal that I can be manipulated by advertising.*” (Finnish man, B) [A Calvin Klein underwear ad (see Figure 35) was shown to the Finnish discussants as an incentive. The ad did not appear in the content analyzed data.]

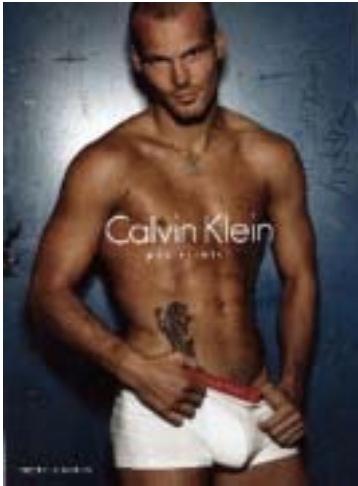


Figure 35. Advertising men’s underwear in Finland in 2004 (Exclusive 2004).

In spite of the gradual changes in men’s consumption patterns, statistics show that men still do not shop to the extent that businesses would like them to; for instance in the US, in 2004 the sales of men’s pants (i.e. casual trousers) decreased by 2.1 percent from 2003. Even today, men seem to buy pants mainly because they wear out or old ones do not fit. The challenge for pant makers is to try to make men buy another pair of pants for some other reasons and do it so that they feel comfortable about it. (Halkias 2005; Gladwell 2000, 181–182.) Supposedly, the situation can be alike for other products, and companies are faced with a similar marketing challenge.

As to the changes in representations of masculinity, according to the discussants in all four groups, today’s men have versatile roles, whereas still in the 1970s men were mostly considered as breadwinners and providers. Besides, there has been a change in priorities; nowadays men can be depicted as fathers: “*Years ago, having your woman by your side was a priority. More recently or currently, having your baby is a priority.*” (US woman, E) However, even though in the depictions the breadwinner type may have been

substituted by the new, more sensitive children-centered “New Father” type, the values that both are based on are the same. There still seems to be a portion of warriorism in the definition of masculinity: it is a man’s duty to take care of his ‘troops’. (Mosse 1996, 181, 192; cf. Holt & Thompson 2004, 428.) However, not everybody has to conform to that role. Today, it is permissible for a man to look after his appearance without fear of being considered homosexual.

The versatility in today’s roles can be considered a disadvantage: men themselves feel lost. *“I think men are more confused today about what a man is supposed to be. Masculinity is less defined.”* (US man, D) This coincides with Barker’s (2004, 115; also Barker 2005, 302) notion: in Western culture, now that the changing nature of masculinity has been expressed, the current period may be the first time in which some men are seeing themselves as possessing a problematic masculinity. Some of the problems obviously have to do with men’s incompatibility before the ascendant notions and requirements of new masculinity (tenderness, domestic life, being a caring father, and fulfilling the criteria of exterior features). At the same time, the traditional masculine values – reason, control and distance – may no longer be serving men well. In both countries, the discussants saw the gap between men and women as having narrowed, and the convergence may make men feel themselves lost.

There may be an advertising and popular culture footprint in this change. However, according to Moore (2003), radical feminism – by undermining the relations between the genders – is to blame. Besides feminism, Barker (2005, 305) reproaches unemployment, the general downsizing of men, and even the Vietnam and Korean wars for the contemporary problems of masculinity. Furthermore, where the social order in modern societies was based on traditions, providing people with clearly defined roles, in today’s postmodern world identities are fluid and flexible. (cf. Gauntlett 2002, 96–97; Wood 2004, 294.)

Women have traditionally been concerned with their appearance. The preoccupation with looks seems to have been a central feature of femininity. (Mishkind et al. 1987, 37.) And as already discussed (see Subchapter 2.3.2), women typically look at female models in ads with a narcissistic attitude: they want to become like them. They compare themselves with the models, and the gap tells them what product(s) should be used in order to undergo the transformation (cf. Vestergaard & Schröder 1985, 75). In all likelihood, women have been more apt to set standards concerning men’s appearances as well. According to the findings of this study, seeing handsome men in ads may raise women’s standards concerning men: *“Seeing good-looking men in adverts makes me expect more of men also in real life. Looks do count.”*

(Finnish woman, B) Furthermore, the way advertising depicts men may make women want to change according to that image: *“If he has 30 jars of face cream, I have to have more!”* (Finnish woman, A) Commonly (see e.g. Elliott & Elliott 2005, 3), idealized images of women in advertising have been known to raise comparison standards for attractiveness among women and lower satisfaction with their own attractiveness. Now, according to the findings of this study, images of *men* in advertising can raise comparison standards for *women* and their femininity.

4.4 Discussing the hypotheses

Based on previous studies on gender in advertising, four tentative hypotheses were proposed for this study. Each hypothesis was examined by using particular variables in the content analytical phase. In the following, the results will be reviewed.

Hypothesis one

The first hypothesis had to do with the potential convergence of mediated masculinities between Finland and the United States:

H1: *The mediated masculinity has converged in Finland and the US during the last 30 years.*

The hypothesis was based on the idea that in the course of globalization, advertising has abandoned cultural limits, and towards the 21st century, mediated masculinity in Finland and in the United States have become kindred. The hypothesis was tested by all the variables used in the content analysis. Based on the results, there are elements that are common to both countries: in both the Finnish and the US ads, men were mostly depicted alone in a fictional setting, middle-aged, as a typical user, and as a spouse/partner. Furthermore, as to body type, the number of mesomorphs (strong and hard) was low in both countries, and metrosexuals – the new emerging image – were practically non-existent. In 1973 and 1988 in both countries, the man in the ad was most often endorsing cars. However, in 2003, the US man appeared in health-related adverts whereas the Finnish man was most often depicted in entertainment ads. Obviously, the difference has to do in part with the legislative restrictions concerning the advertising of prescription drugs in Finland. In spite of the fact that the number of mesomorphs was low in both countries, and that in 1973 and 1988 ectomorphic men accounted for the majority, the situation was disparate in 2003: in Finland, the men in ads were still mostly ectomorphs, whereas in the US, endomorphic men (soft and round) were the most typical in ads. Consequently, the findings of this study

do not support hypothesis one in full. In fact, the elements that were similar for both countries were similar throughout the whole study period, and elements that differed, did so in 2003. In that sense, the mediated masculinity in Finland and the US rather diverged than converged.

Hypothesis two

The second hypothesis was related to the potential objectification of men:

H2: *The objectification of men in advertising has increased, and there is more exploitation involving men now than in earlier years.*

In postmodern times, ideals stressing sensuality, sexuality, and the importance of one's appearance have surfaced (Sarpavaara 2004, 56). Supposedly today, people pay more attention to their physical and emotional health, and also the male body is subject to scrutiny – it is objectified, exploited and monitored (Boni 2002, 467). Furthermore, sexual equality between men and women has grown in the Western world since the 1960s with the emergence of the second wave of feminism. Not only are women objects of men's voyeuristic gazes in advertising, but today, men can also be depicted in sexual and provocative roles and, accordingly, gazed upon. According to Rohlinger (2002, 62; also Edwards 1997, 73–74), the gay liberation movement has also made its mark in this change. The variables to test the hypothesis were concerned with body type (frequency of the mesomorphic ideal), facial prominence (full body in particular), clothing style (nudity or semi-cladness), and relation to the product (decorative role).

First, according to the findings of the content analysis of this study, men were rather depicted ectomorphic (thin and lightly muscled) or, particularly in 2003 in the US, endomorphic (soft and round) rather than mesomorphic. Secondly, in spite of the slight increase in the showing of men in full bodies, men were typically depicted by their faces throughout the study period. Interestingly, men were more often depicted in full bodies in Finland than in the US. Thirdly, the amount of nude or semi-clad men was very low in both countries throughout the study years. However, a slight increase was discernible in nudity in both countries but on a broader scale nudity was still a minor factor. Fourthly, in relation to the advertised product, men were most often depicted in a decorative role, except for the year 1973 for Finland when the Finnish man was more likely to participate in the product's use. However, being depicted in a decorative role did not alone explain the objectification. Consequently, we can say that on the basis of the findings, the objectification of men has not increased in the sense that it is understood in this study.

Hypothesis three

The third hypothesis was concerned with presumed feminization of men. This has to do with the overall claim that in Western societies, men are becoming

more woman-like (and women more man-like) (Boni 2002, 467–468). With the increased number of women working outside the home, men are supposedly more likely to be shown in traditional female roles, such as in homely settings together with children (Wolhete & Lammers 180, 760). Besides, men are increasingly encouraged to use beauty care products that have been primarily associated with women (Barthel 1992, 149).

H3: An increasing trend of feminization of Finnish and US cultures can be discerned.

In this study, the feminization was understood as men's increasing interest in fashion and grooming rituals as well as men's partaking in domestic activities (childcare, cooking and the like). Consequently, the variables that were to test hypothesis three consist of product category (personal hygiene, food and drinks, health/medicine, household cleaning, clothing/shoes, furniture), setting (house/home/garden, store) and image of masculinity (daddy, homemaker, metrosexual).

Based on the findings of this study, the feminization trend concerns rather US than Finnish men. First of all, there was a distinct upsurge in health/medicine products in 2003 in the US. An increase could be discerned also in household cleaning products. However, the frequency of products related to personal hygiene, clothing/shoes or furniture did not grow. Thirdly, the US man was increasingly depicted in a daddy role. The daddy role was on the increase in Finland also but the other two developments did not come out.

Hypothesis four

The fourth hypothesis was concerned with the prevailing accusation made against advertising of creating and perpetuating flawless stereotypes of people, particularly women (Fowles 1996, 14). However, as the significance of appearances increasingly concerns men as well, it was expected that

H4: Men are increasingly depicted as flawless – young and well-built.

Whether, according to this study, men were depicted as flawless related to the age and body type of the male character. The empirical data of this study reveal that men both in Finland and the US have rather been depicted middle-aged or even older than young. In both countries, the proportion of the young remained approximately the same over the years, except for the year 1988 (yuppie era) for Finland. As to the body type, the mesomorphic body (muscular, well-proportioned, strong and hard, V-shaped) has represented the classical ideal. However, the men in this study most often represented the other two types, ectomorphic (thin and lightly muscled) or endomorphic (soft and round).

In conclusion, the findings do not lend support to most of the hypotheses. The mediated masculinities have rather diverged than converged between the

two countries; the objectification of men has not increased; men are not necessarily portrayed as perfect. There were, however, signals of the feminization trend in the US, but this was not increasing in Finland.

5 DISCUSSION

This final chapter summarizes the study and discusses the findings. Both the theoretical and practical implications are assessed. The chapter ends with a discussion of study limitations and suggestions for future research.

5.1 Summary and conclusions of the study

This study discussed two critical issues in the field of advertising: gender role display and cross-cultural issues. The purpose was to examine how masculinity has been mediated in print advertising in Finland and the United States over the last 30 years. The purpose of the study was divided into three research questions:

- 1 How does masculinity manifest itself?
- 2 How has masculinity changed over time?
- 3 What similarities and differences in masculinities can be found between the countries?

The study complied with the ideas of cultural studies, and accordingly, the theoretical background of the study was built upon three key issues in the field: gender, advertising and culture. Gender is a matter of culture: every culture has accepted customary forms for communicating gender identity. Gender is also one of the most commonly used formats of cultural expression in advertising. Human models – male and female – have been and are being used in advertising to transfer meanings to the advertised products, people drawing their gender identity from these models. It is generally presumed that the gender roles portrayed in a country's advertising reflect the values and gender-role orientation of that country and its culture. This study focused on the ways *masculinity* has been mediated: how it has been depicted and represented in media. The phenomenon was studied by applying two quite commonly used methods in communication studies.

First, a quantitative content analysis was performed, and secondly, two focus group discussions were conducted in each country. The idea of using focus groups alongside the content analysis was to enrich the research findings gathered in the first phase. The empirical data for the study were gathered from three general-interest magazines: Reader's Digest in the US, and Valitut Palat and Seura in Finland. In the content analytical phase, all ads from the

years 1973, 1988 and 2003 with a male character (altogether 948 ads) were coded by two female coders, one Finnish and one American. In this first phase the emphasis lay on the manifest content of the ads. From the content analytical data, six ads – a selection of illuminating ad images representing each year (1973, 1988 and 2003) – from each country were purposefully chosen as stimulus material for the second phase, the extended focus group discussions. Prior to commencing the discussions, the participants commented on the ads in writing. This turned out to be a good decision: the discussants were introduced to and motivated for the topic under discussion.

In order to be able to analyse the manifest content of the ads, a categorization of masculinity (elements of masculinity, cf. Research question 1) was constructed; this categorization was mainly based on the theoretical concept of masculinity and previous research on gender in advertising. First, there were the syntagmatic elements: product category, people in the ad and the setting of the ad, and secondly, the paradigmatic elements i.e. age, marital status, endorsing role, image of masculinity, race/skin colour, body type, facial prominence, clothing style, relation to others, and relation to the advertised product. However, the focus group discussions brought in valuable additional information to the categories. Consequently, four elements were added to the initial elements: look on the male model's face, his posture, hair, and facial hair. Since the focus group discussions were conducted *after* the content analytical phase, it was the initial elements that were used in the content analysis.

As to the changes in masculinity over time (cf. Research question 2), the results of the content analysis and the focus group discussions lend support to each other: slowly but surely, masculinity is in transition in both countries. In the 1970s and 1980s, the US man was mostly depicted in car ads, whereas in the new millennium, he is most often seen in ads promoting health. However, the build of his body follows the unfortunate fattening trend in real life: he is increasingly portrayed as endomorphic, i.e. soft and round. Also the Finnish man promoted cars in 1973 and 1988, but in 2003 was mostly seen in entertainment ads. The Finnish man's relation to the advertised product changed from participative in 1973 to decorative in 1988 and 2003.

The shift from the provider role – breadwinner masculinity – to more diversified roles was elicited in the focus group discussions in both countries. However, in the United States in particular, masculinity is still constructed largely in terms of the successful performance of a paid occupational role whereas in Finland it is, overall, important for a man to work hard, no matter what his occupation.

The US women brought out a change in priorities: in ads, men have shifted from being sexy boyfriends or lovers to being good and caring fathers.

However, this change did not come up in the content analysis. In fact, throughout the study period, men were mostly depicted alone in the ads in both countries. The US man was alone particularly in 1988, whereas the Finnish man was most often depicted by himself in 2003. Being depicted alone coincides with the physical [and emotional] distance and loneliness that have been considered central features of masculinity (see Barker 2005, 301–302). Understanding men as individuals is part of the process of construction of masculinity; particular emphasis has been laid upon the individual achievement of men (Morgan 1992, 43).

If there was another person in the ad, it was most often a woman. Very seldom in either country were there just two men in the ad. This may relate to homophobia which can prevent men – homosexual and heterosexual – forming close relationships with other men (Wood 2003, 87). The number of US ads where the man was depicted with one child, however, increased, towards the year 2003; these ads were most common in Finland in 1988. As to the images of masculinity, however, there was a steady increase in the Daddy image in Finland, the Daddy image being as common as the earlier prevailing Spouse/partner image. Related to this, in the US, men were increasingly depicted at home in 2003 (28.2% in the US vs. 12.2% in Finland).

As to the similarities and differences between mediated masculinities in Finland and the US (cf. Research question 3), the findings based on the content analysis adduce similarities but also interesting differences. In both countries, the findings on average reveal quite a conventional image of a white, heterosexual, middle-aged man who, in the 1970s and 1980s, was mostly depicted in car ads. Supposedly, this highlighted congruent interaction between the gender of the model, and the product. Furthermore, men in car ads may have adduced the intended image of men as rational and responsible decision makers as well as being knowledgeable in technical matters. However, in 2003 the US man was mostly depicted in health/medicine ads, whereas his Finnish counterpart was most often portrayed in ads related to entertainment. The high proportion of health-related ads in the US is partly explained by the fact that the advertising of prescription drugs is permissible there. The finding also conforms to the increasing, overall concern about one's physical condition; there seems to be a growing interest in health issues and taking care of oneself. As people age, and the supply of health-care services is limited, they have to take responsibility themselves for their own well-being. This is evidently the case also in Finland. In fact, a distinctive increase in health/medicine ads was discernible on the basis of the Finnish findings as well. To a larger degree, advertising could be seen as a means of promoting health and wellness in the future.

In the content analytical data, the amount of muscular mesomorphs was small, and the amount of metrosexuals practically non-existent. Furthermore, men were mostly depicted as typical users. In all likelihood, this finding pleases the focus group discussants who favoured lay endorsers over celebrities in ads. Presumably, it is easier for a consumer to identify with a “typical user” rather than a perfect looking model or a celebrity, as came out in the focus group discussions: *“There might be a danger that if Freddie [Swedish soccer player Fredrik Ljungberg] uses the brand, I don’t want to use it – I don’t want to reveal that I can be manipulated by advertising.* (Finnish man, B) This may have to do with the male attitude towards other men in general: there is ongoing competition for dominance, and it may be difficult for a man to receive ‘advice’ from another man. (cf. Wood 2003, 117, 167, 199). In general, using an expert as a voice-over in advertising towards men has its risks; it can reveal something about the advertiser’s attitude towards the consumer: *“We tell you what to buy and how to use it.”* The customer is placed in a subordinate position. If we are to believe Clow and Baack (2004, 247), the use of real people as endorsers is, in general, becoming even more common.

The portrayal of people in decorative roles, as it was understood in this study, seems no longer to be restricted to women. According to the findings of the content analysis, men were mostly depicted in a decorative role in the ads, except for the year 1973 in Finland when the Finnish man was more likely to be in a participative role in relation to the product in the ad. In the US, there was a rising trend in the decorative role throughout the thirty-year period. As many as three out of four men appeared in a decorative role in the US in 2003, which is distinctively higher than in Finland during the same year (60%). Decorative models can facilitate recognition of the advertisement but, according to previous research (cf. Kerin et al. 1979, 40), do not improve brand name recognition.

Based on the previous studies, four tentative hypotheses were proposed for this study. The hypotheses touched on the issues of potential convergence of mediated masculinities in the course of globalization, potential objectification of men in advertising, potential feminization of men in advertising, and finally, potential flawlessness of advertising images concerning men. Contrary to the presupposition, the findings of the content analytical phase of this study show that the mediated masculinities between Finland and the US have rather diverged than converged (H1). However, had we looked at the ads one by one, we would have found some examples of Americanization in Finnish adverts (cf. Sloggi ad 2003). On a large scale this was not manifested. This is due to the limitations of content analysis as a method: content analysis only answers the questions the researcher asks. Herein, it was used to analyse the manifest

content of the ads according to a pre-planned coding sheet. None of the variables examined, for instance, the level of Americanization in the ads as such. Including props, i.e. additional elements, other than the advertised product, such as the US flag, use of English language, elements related to American movies and sports (for instance, football or baseball) as well as the use of American celebrities, could have provided some information on this. However, as the focus of this study was on mediated *masculinity*, props were purposefully precluded.

The findings of the content analysis also refute the claims made in the other three hypotheses. Based on the findings, the objectification of men has not increased (H2) during the thirty-year study period in the sense that objectification was understood herein; i.e. being depicted first, nude or semi-clad; secondly, mesomorphic by body type; thirdly, rather by full body than head and face; and fourthly, in a decorative role. Furthermore, in the US data there were slight instances of increasing feminization (H3); feminization was related to men's interest in fashion and grooming rituals as well as men's partaking in domestic chores. Lastly, the men in the ads seemed to have their flaws (H4): in both countries, they were most often depicted middle-aged and thin and lightly muscled or soft and round, rather than young, muscular and V-shaped.

According to the findings, certain values, such as individualism (being mostly depicted alone), tradition (conventional roles), health (caring about one's wellness), and achievement and success (work ethic), were emphasized over others. The general conventionality of the mediated masculinities based on this study might be partly due to the media chosen: a general-interest magazine does not allow as selective marketing strategies as would have been the case with a special-interest magazine. In that sense, the editorial content and the content of advertising seem to go hand in hand. The conventional advertisements are logically associated with the quite conventional editorial philosophies of the magazines. Furthermore, since the average readership of the magazines under study is 50+ years of age, looks are obviously not their main concern any more (cf. Vestergaard & Schrøder 1985, 75). More specific and detailed targeting, and thus, more varied depictions of men may have been found by choosing more narrowly targeted magazines. Television would obviously have produced different results, too: through the use of sight, sound and motion television can convey evocative messages more easily than is possible in print (Piron & Young 1996, 222). However, the aim here was to provide as gender-neutral, mainstream and comprehensive an analysis of the mediated masculinities as possible, and general-interest magazines were considered the most appropriate for this purpose. But whatever magazines or

media were selected, they would not collectively represent the population of all advertisements (Kolbe & Albanese 1997, 835).

We must further note that advertising images are not reality as such, and what is shown in ads has not *really* happened; thus, any man is likely to possess a greater conflux of characteristics than a simplified gender portrayal will depict (cf. Fowles 1996, 225; Schroeder & Zwick 2004, 30). Related to that, it is not appropriate to think of men as members of a single monolithic market segmentation target. With differing values, lifestyles and roles amongst men, further refinement is necessary in order to communicate properly with appropriate segments.

To recap, the findings of the content analytical phase and the focus group discussions of this study suggest that masculinity is manifested in different ways, depending on the forum. Obviously, a general-interest magazine offers more traditionally oriented images; however, general-interest magazines are not the only source of image-building¹³⁵. Images of masculinity may stem from various agents of socialization; people are constantly exposed to messages from a number of different sources, and their views are based on a potpourri of those images. Print advertising is just one among a number of factors that shape people's views of men and masculinity (cf. Courtney & Whipple 1983, 45). Consequently, it would be practically impossible to specify which views and images are based on which media. The findings of previous content analytical studies where men – as has traditionally been the case for women – have been found to be depicted flawless: young, muscular, and successful, are as true as the findings of this study. The results have to do with the media studied. Furthermore, because of the potential for a multiplicity of readings of any text, every view expressed in the focus group discussions was as worthy and correct as anybody else's view. As Alasuutari (1996, 175) has aptly put it: every answer is always a partial answer, only part of the truth per se.

5.2 Theoretical and practical implications

This study was motivated in part by the scarce amount of research on masculinity in advertising. The previous content analytical studies known to have examined masculinity had mostly focused on both men and women and their reciprocal relationship, particularly in the US context. No previous studies on mediated masculinities between Finland and the United States were

¹³⁵ In reference to this, Sparks (2002, 37) talks about third variables and their potential effects on media representations.

found. Consequently, the premise for this study was challenging but the process turned out to be eye-opening.

Theoretically, the major contribution of this study was the construction of a categorization of masculinity which made it possible to examine masculinity in advertising cross-culturally. Evidently, the categorization will aid in conducting content analyses on masculinity in the future. According to the findings of the content analytical phase of this study, advertising concerning mediated masculinities is still somewhat conservative and seems to reproduce expected images. In that sense, advertising – and here we are talking about advertising in general-interest magazines – has matched the manifestations of social reality, and with a few exceptions, tends to portray men in a realistic way. This obviously has to do with the media context under study. In spite of the fact that there were ads in the data that did not represent the mainstream, the overall view was quite conventional. Does this indicate that men, on a large scale, are still conventional or does it mean that advertisers in general-interest magazines have not been able to portray changes in masculinity?

To some degree, this study provides support for findings by earlier studies that advertising is reflective of culture, echoing a society's views and values (Chung & Ha 2004, 99). However, in order to establish a firmer statistical link between cultural character and gender in advertising, we would have needed a larger sample from more nations in the content analytical phase. It has been argued (e.g. Hirschman 2003, 9) that members of a given culture tend to prefer advertising consistent with that national culture. Consequently, it is important to reconcile the cultural images, including gender images, with the society's expectations.

On the basis of the focus group discussions, however, it would be too risky to associate particular cultural traits with advertising and assume that the findings recorded in this study would be typical of the cultural reception of ads. More likely, the study findings give an idea of the national character and special features in regard to advertising and masculinity in advertising in Finland and the United States. There were cross-cultural similarities between Finland and the US that seem to be gender related (cf. illusion of personal invulnerability). Based on the findings of the focus group discussions, changing ideas of masculinity indicate that a transformation of the social construction is underway. All four groups underlined the change in representations of masculinity during the last few decades: today, as opposed to a more fixed and restricted role in the past, men are portrayed in versatile roles in advertising. This coheres with the 'reality' of the postmodern society; the roles of men [and women] are evolving and, in a way, becoming more diverse. The diversification might be seen to reflect wider changes in society.

How can, then, the findings of this research be put into practice and what advice can be offered to advertisers? Whether there is a human model in the ad or not seemed not to be of interest to any of the discussants in either country. However, when people are present in ads, 'real' images – average people – are preferred. It is easier for a consumer to identify with a "typical user" rather than a perfect-looking model. And the more generic the product, the more typical the model in the picture may be. Seeing ordinary looking people in ads can help consumers think that the product is right for them as they are (cf. Elliott & Elliott 2005, 14). Recently, in fact, some advertisers have tried to make their advertising more inclusive through more diverse depictions of gender (Straubhaar & LaRose 2002, 414). For instance, the cosmetics company Dove uses lay endorsers to promote their products. According to the findings of this study, the use of this kind of strategy can be worthwhile.

The findings of the written protocols suggest that if the message strategy is too complicated (as may often be the case in postmodern advertising), the recipient will not attend to the ad. This came out particularly in the cases of two of the 2003 ads (HK, Finland and OxiMagic, US). As with other persuasive communication, advertising is often regarded as unwanted communication: people do not actively seek out exposure to advertising, and obviously, they do not want to put too much time and effort into trying to understand it.

Due to the ubiquity and socializing nature of advertising, there has been discussion of the importance of visual literacy and the need to create a common language that would assist the audience in deciphering advertising messages and being aware of the potential visual manipulation (see. e.g. Clow & Baack 2004, 200; Messaris 1994, 3, 29–40; Bourgerly & Guimaraes 1993). Given the importance of visual images, also Kellner (1995c, 126) and Rose (2003, 15–16), obviously being overwhelmed by the persuasiveness and potential negative side-effects of advertising, refer to the need to engage individuals in reading images critically. This kind of reading is particularly important where young people are concerned; they often lack scepticism about advertising techniques that appeal to desires for perfect looks and body image. A common language – tentatively christened visual Esperanto – would also assist advertisers in creating images that convey the intended meaning or message in a proper way. Particularly international advertisers have to be aware of different connotative meanings, for instance related to gender issues, which can arise in various countries (Belch & Belch 2004, 664–665).

Moreover, advertising has been accused of promoting a materialistic way of life where the acquisition and possession of goods is the foundation of societal values, pleasures and goals (Straubhaar & LaRose 2002, 412). It has been said that in the postmodern image culture, the importance attached to consumption

ever more often applies to men as well (Edwards 1997, 132). Consequently, advertisers have increasingly to consider men as potential new buyers, particularly in the areas of fashion and beauty care. Within the traditionally feminized consumption, the challenge is how to represent men as consumers without diminishing their power and making them feel less of a man.

5.3 Future research and study limitations

Research never ends – the end of one project usually leads to the beginning of another (Alasuutari 1996, 175). This will hopefully be the case also with this study and it will serve as a catalyst for further research examining masculinities in advertising.

By mixing methods it was possible to generate ideas concerning how to develop the coding sheet for the content analytical phase of the study. In the future, it would be interesting to apply the elaborated scheme in various media contexts, for instance television. As a medium, television differs from other media in some important ways. People spend more time watching TV than they do other media. Unlike print media, television does not require literacy. Unlike radio, television can both show and tell¹³⁶. (Morgan & Signorielli 1990, 14.) All these versatile channel characteristics create possibilities for different shades of advertising on TV. Another interesting media context would be narrowly targeted men's and women's magazines. Supposedly, as indicated earlier in this study, they mediate masculinities differently from general-interest magazines.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate consumer responses to sexual appeals and expressions in advertising, e.g. the effects of sexual overtones on consumer brand recognition and recall in advertisements. Also, more attention needs to be paid to how audiences use the gender images in the construction and maintenance of their own notions of masculinity and femininity (cf. Fejes 1992, 22). Because each generation (baby boomers, baby busters and so on) has its own character, it would be enlightening to make the investigation in separate groups among representatives of different generations, and thus learn how attitudes towards advertising vary and consumer behaviour differs, particularly concerning "new" product groups (e.g. men's beautification products) across generations.

As to the limitations of the study, the findings are confined in the sense that first, only print media and general-interest magazines were represented in the

¹³⁶ All these features, however, challenge the coding sheet. A moving picture supposedly requires different coding variables and values.

empirical phase. Secondly, the choice of the issues under study was not randomized. This was due to the challenges involved in obtaining the magazines. Even once the choice was made as per the years, it was difficult enough to get access to all the magazines and be able to hold on to them until the coding process was completed. However, given the differences in target segments and editorial content of magazines in general, it would be practically impossible to build a universally representative sample of [magazine] advertising (see Kolbe & Albanese 1997, 834–835). To establish a firm link between cultural character and masculinity in advertising, we would need to examine more samples from more nations. Thus, thirdly, instead of limiting the study only to two Western and in many respects similar countries, the study could be employed across more differing cultures (e.g. East vs. West; Asian vs. European). (cf. Gross & Sheth 1989, 81.) Fourthly, and quite surprisingly, the thirty-year study period did not reveal many pronounced or distinct changes in the mediated masculinity. This may be related to the fact that cultural changes, overall, happen gradually. As, besides media, family relations and social surroundings have a vital impact on one's gender identity, and the notion of what it means to be a man is often passed on from father to son, major discernible changes in conceptions of gender may actually take more than a generation.

Every research method has its flaws. As indicated earlier in this study, content analysis has been accused of several deficiencies. However, it is still one of the most prevalent methods within communications studies. As in many previous studies, also herein the codings utilized human observation; consequently, the results are subject to human error as well as subconscious bias (cf. Schneider & Schneider 1979, 80). This problem can be overcome by a well pre-planned coding sheet. As said, content analysis stands or falls by its categories. The high average intercoder reliability in this study evidences a well-planned coding sheet.

Subjectivity is even more extant in focus group discussions. Also in this study, it would have been practically impossible to constitute groups that would have provided generalizable findings. The general aim of focus group discussions is to develop insight into how people think and feel, and thus capture real-life data in a social environment. (cf. Devereux 2003, 49; Daymon & Holloway 2002, 12.) Also herein, the idea of using focus group discussions in addition to the content analytical phase was to enrich the meanings of masculinity in two different cultures, not to make generalizations based on the data. In accordance with the interpretative character of focus group research in general, attention was focused on images that were deemed conceptually noteworthy, rather than constructing a random sample (cf. Schroeder & Borgerson 1998, 162, 164).

By mixing content analysis and focus group discussions it was possible to overcome some of the flaws of both methods. The content analytical phase provided a longitudinal analysis of the way masculinity has been manifested in the two countries, and the discussions brought in the cultural view. Together, the methods comprised a nice, coherent whole. Without both, the study would have missed a lot.

Finally to an issue that is both related to the limitations of the study and potential areas of future research, and that is to do with race. Race is one of the factors according to which the construction of gender varies, and in the United States in particular, racial issues are of salient importance. However, in this study, there was practically no racial heterogeneity in the US focus groups. Consequently, similar discussions should be conducted among people of various racial backgrounds in order to elicit racially valid and reliable inferences. The same applies to other cultural differences as well; using nations, in this case Finland and the US, as surrogates for cultures can neglect the existence of within-country differences. Besides, in addressing the topic of cross-cultural similarities, we have to remember that culturally similar groups may exist across countries, i.e. the similarities may actually refer to cross-subcultural similarities. (Samiee & Jeong 1994, 208.)

* * *

When all is said and done, where have I come to? What did this study teach me? What can I say, based on the findings? I now know: the use of only flawless human models in advertising is a partial myth.

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Appendix 1 MEDIATED MASCULINITIES – Coding Sheet

Ad ID (product/company name) _____ Ad number _____
 Magazine ID (name, year, month; page number) _____

Variables coded for each advertisement with a male character*(1) Product category being advertised*

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Personal hygiene | 10. Construction materials |
| 2. Food and drinks | 11. Photographic equipment |
| 3. Health/medicine | 12. Entertainment |
| 4. Household cleaning | 13. Public good/charity |
| 5. Travel/transportation | 14. Financing/insuring |
| 6. Clothing/shoes | 15. Jewellery |
| 7. Home appliances/electronics | 16. Tobacco |
| 8. Vehicles and accessories | 17. Other |
| 9. Furniture | |

(2) Number of men in the ad

1. One
2. Two
3. Three or more

(3) Number of women in the ad

- | | |
|---------|------------------|
| 1. None | 3. Two |
| 2. One | 4. Three or more |

(4) Number of children in the ad

- | | |
|---------|------------------|
| 1. None | 3. Two |
| 2. One | 4. Three or more |

(5) Setting/location of the advertisement

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| 1. House/home/garden | 5. Leisure |
| 2. Store | 6. Sports |
| 3. Occupational setting | 7. Other |
| 4. Fictional/blank | |

Variables coded for the main adult male character*(6) Age*

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Young adult (18–35) | 3. Older adult (over 50) |
| 2. Mid adult(36–50) | 4. Indeterminant |

(7) Marital status

1. Married
2. Not married
3. Not identified

(8) Role

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Celebrity | 3. Typical user |
| 2. Authority figure | 4. Other |

(9) Image of masculinity

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Daddy | 6. Scientist/inventor |
| 2. Spouse/partner | 7. Working man |
| 3. Homemaker | 8. Don Juan |
| 4. Farmer/rancher | 9. Metrosexual |
| 5. Businessman/salesman | 10. Other |

(10) Race/skin colour

1. White
2. Non-white

(11) Facial prominence

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Only the face/head shown | 5. Full body including head, excluding face |
| 2. Face and parts of the body shown | 6. Full body shown, including face and head |
| 3. Parts of the body shown, excluding face | 7. Other |
| 4. Full body without head shown | |

(12) Body type

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Mesomorphic (strong, hard, muscular) | 3. Ectomorphic (thin) |
| 2. Endomorphic (soft, round) | 4. Other |
| | 5. Indeterminant |

(13) Clothing style

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Nude | 6. Casual |
| 2. Half-Nude | 7. Outdoor and recreational |
| 3. Underwear/swimsuit | 8. Sports |
| 4. Uniform | 9. Other |
| 5. Work/career | |

(14) Relation to other people in the ad

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. Family | 4. Professional |
| 2. Lover | 5. Other |
| 3. Friend | 6. No others in ad |

(15) Relation to product

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Participating in the product's use | 3. Other |
| 2. Decorative | |

Appendix 2 Finnish ads



Ad 1: Vuorivilla 1973



Ad 2: North State 1973



Ad 3: Philips 1988



Ad 4: Ahlström 1988



Ad 5: Sloggi 2003



Ad 6: HK 2003

Appendix 3 US ads



Ad 1: Man-Power 1973



Ad 2: AC Spark Plugs 1973



Ad 3: Chevy Trucks 1988



Ad 4: Beltone 1988



Ad 5: OxiMagic 2003



Ad 6: Nicoderm 2003

Appendix 4 Focus group results from the written part, Finnish women

Vuorivilla 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 24	Mineral wool A man Working situation	Safety, building own home, power, will, guts, securing happiness	Reliable	An ordinary, responsible man chooses this product
B, 27	Mineral wool, text, man, logo, the name of the company	Building (a man is building a house and putting in the mineral wool)	Action; an energetic Finnish man doing it himself	Mineral wool is easy to use, domestic, good for Finnish homes
C, 37	A man carrying mineral wool, looking up, working clothes on; logo	The product (=mineral wool) The man is responsible for the work	A product ad; the man is there to bring a professional impression	A contradiction between the text and the picture (cosiness vs. professionalism)
D, 44	A man, building, the company, information	Building; reliability	Pertinent (no nonsense)	Good construction; reliable products
E, 55	Mineral wool, logo, company	Building by manly power	Mineral wool in focus; men's work!	A heat insulator; information on heat
F, 59	A man in working clothes; mineral wool; name of the company	Mineral wool in focus; the thickness of the wool tells about the heat values	Honest, clean, pertinent; no yuppyism	The importance of using mineral wool in the Finnish conditions

North State 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 24	A manly twist; a battle of wills	'Laddism'; a manly look into manhood	North State is a Men's Thing	A man who smokes NS doesn't have to be ashamed in front of any other man.
B, 27	Biceps; rough and tumble; young men; NS; price; slogan	Man; power; roughness; competition; victory	Young men competing; smoking NS is a part of their lifestyle	If you smoke NS, you are a 'tough guy'
C, 37	Men; rough and tumble; in the background other men spurring	Men = [NS] smokers; by smoking NS you can be part of the gang	A dynamic ad; good looking young men; users young/youthful	By smoking NS you can become 'a tough guy' like the ones in the ad. A manly cigarette, not too sophisticated.
D, 44	Men; cigarettes; rough and tumble; a men's gang	Power; manliness	'A man of men' is strong; cigarettes are part of it	'A real man' smokes NS
E, 55	A pack of cigarettes; powerful men; slogan; price	Cigarettes give you power and a good feeling and create togetherness.	The ad is made alluring	Only real men use this product.
F, 59	A pack of cigarettes; a group of men of different age categories	Manliness and strong cigarettes go together; real men smoke NS	Adult men playing together: who is the strongest?	Linking power and North State

Philips 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 24	A sturdy washing machine; student in technology; clean glasses with flowers	Trustworthiness, scientifically tested; development; security; cleanness	Self-confident; successful; reliable	Philips' product development is based on reliable, modern scientific research; thanks to that, Philips has been able to develop best possible products for people
B, 27	Washing machine; engineer; bright glasses with flowers; text; brand name; patent/DPC	The left side refers to product development and to the quality of the product (a good machine, respected by engineers). The right side refers to the benefits (bright glasses) of the product. The left side speaks to men, the right side to women.	Philips' machine is of good quality and functional.	Philips' dishwashers are of high technical quality, and the benefit of using the product is obvious.
C, 37	A dishwasher and an engineer; glasses with flowers; text featuring the technical details.	Good quality and high technical characteristics.	A dull, static advert; the way of thinking is very old-fashioned: a man = expert (when speaking of tech)	A traditionally female-dominant product; now – via the man in the ad – promoted as a new technical device.
D, 44	A successful man; washing result; certificates; product itself; information; name of the company	Reliability; high standard; cleanness; reference to an intellectual high-flyer; a man (not a woman) is the buyer of this product; emphasizes engineer culture	Dull	An assumption that men need technical information in order to be able to make a buying decision.
E, 55	A washing machine, clean glasses, innovator of the machine, flowers, producer	A new dishwasher which washes the dishes so clean that it makes the flowers seem bare (not in the glasses).	Too many elements and text in a small ad.	A successful product, presented by a successful and educated man.
F, 59	Trade mark; engineer; dishwasher; information; clean glasses	Might refer to the assumption that an engineer has invented the product	A clear advert; the machine well-exhibited; the glasses show the washing result.	New technology, which is a guarantee for the end result.

Ahlström 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 24	Cheerfulness, mineral wool, a man	Easiness, simplicity, ease of use	Clear	Besides being good (long-lasting), the product is easy to use. An infallible choice.

B, 27	Mineral wool, a marketing man, logo, text	Mineral wool and its qualities	Ahlström is a big company which can produce and market mineral wool	You can easily buy mw from Ahlström's or any building materials company.
C, 37	A man in a formal suit lifting mw; many packets of mw, set in the middle of the picture; underneath there is text and more mw	The man in a formal suit → an anniversary of the product/company. On the other hand, the suit might refer to the easy use of the product.	Not very sensational. Maybe a somewhat odd way to advertise building materials in a suit.	Anniversary and a revamped product, belongs to the manly world.
D, 44	A man (not a builder but 'a man in a suit'); mw; action (throwing the wool); name of company; development (text)	Building has to do with men. The mw is the company's perennial product that's being improved. The movement refers to the development.	Dull. A manly business, targeted at men.	Quality; development (of the product); durability; product loyalty; an assumption of men needing information-based ads.
E, 55	Mw; a joyful man; producer; logo; 30-year anniversary	Insulation; building	The colours of the man's suit and the wool are too much alike. The reader is not inspired.	To stay in the mind of the builders.
F, 59	A man; mw; name of the company; information on the product.	The man's suit does not refer to building. Maybe the purpose is to promote the 30-year anniversary.	The yellow suit and wool gain attention. In general, a yellow suit is an odd choice – neither a working outfit nor a safety overall.	Mineral wool is so tidy to use that one can wear a suit and a bow tie.

Sloggi 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 24	Well-trained male bodies, an intensive look; underwear	Sportiness; taking care of oneself.	Tough, masculine.	Even if bare skin is shown to the readers (women?) and the men are in underwear, there is no reason for a man to become nervous or feel himself 'less of a man'.
B, 27	Three men in Sloggi underwear; helmets; logo; the good/bare body of the man in the middle emphasised; slogan (Stay cool men).	Sports, good looks, sexiness.	Sporty handsome men use Sloggies.	It's cool and sexy to use Sloggi underwear.

C, 37	Three men, one in the front. Men like soldiers, holding helmets (Am. football). Men in underwear; a little text; trained bodies; sportsmen in question.	It is clear that the question is of men's underwear. Looks on the soldiers' face tell that the product endures even hard use.	Pleasant and trendy. However, the combination of underwear and American football is quite surprising.	Professionals use these. Trendiness.
D, 44	Semi-clad men; sportsmen; name of the product; helmets; the word 'cool'.	A real man is a sportsman. A real man is an athlete. A real man uses Sloggi underwear. A real man is 'cool'.	A (artistically) good layout. Nice as a picture. The word Sloggi comes out well since there is hardly any other text.	To keep the word Sloggi in mind. To combine Sloggi with a sporty athlete who is 'cool'. An assumption that all men know English; thus, targeted at young men.
E, 55	Men; underwear; helmets; logo; product brand	Only handsome, active men use this kind of underwear.	The underwear suit for well-trained men only. Puts too much pressure on the ordinary users. Good colours; almost like music to the ears. Good combination.	Underwear for young, athletic men.
F, 59	Three men in underwear holding helmets.	Tough men use Sloggies. Maybe also that Sloggies are good underwear for vigorous sports.	Quite ordinary of football players.	Sloggies – for tough guys.

HK 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 24	Summer, nakedness, raffish atmosphere.	Carelessness; numerous barbeque parties of the summer.	Relaxed; a little drunken; funny.	In the summer, when people are taking it easy, HK products are easy.
B, 27	Barbeque tongs; a man looking like a paper doll; a red barbeque; logo; text/slogan.	Summer; barbeque food (sausage); a Finnish man who is pale at the beginning of the summer and who possibly, in the warmth, becomes brown and delicious.	Funny, relaxed summer feeling.	Summery barbeque things are nice. HK sausages are part of the nice atmosphere. HK products are domestic.
C, 37	A naked man in barbeque tongs wearing a cowboy hat. In the left corner there is a barbeque with steaks and sausages, on the right there is the HK brand.	Barbequing is summery stuff, and particularly men like sausages.	An odd way to advertise barbeque products. Difficult to say if the ad is targeted at men or women. Maybe at women: by buying HK sausages (you, woman) can hold your man in your tongs.	The way to a man's heart is through HK sausages.

D, 44	A man; tongs; the man in the tongs. Barbeque. HK. Slogans.	The woman makes decisions on food. HK is a manufacturer of barbeque food. The man is a little mouse who is held in tongs. The man may symbolize the penis.	Funny; clear; retro colours and feeling in the lay-out.	Targeted at men. The way to a man's heart –thinking. I think the idea of holding a man in the tongs does not relate to food. The message is confusing. Maybe the aim is to confuse.
E, 55	Barbeque tongs, a man, logo, barbeque, sausages.	The man caught in HK sausage tongs. The barbeque brings summer to mind.	Sausage creates a good mood.	To sell sausages.
F, 59	A man caught in tongs. A barbeque where products are being cooked. Name of the producing company.	Men often take care of barbequing. They also love barbeque food, i.e. HK products. Casualness as to dressing, eating, cooking and maybe some other things, too. (The man is good to keep in tongs.)	Good-humoured and even funny.	HK products help you cook easily. Even a man can do it.

Appendix 5 Focus group results from the written part, Finnish men

Vuorivilla 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 26	Ease of installation	Product features	Energy saving properties (due to energy crisis); technical features	The fit between the product and purpose of use
B, 26	Mineral wool, text, man with a contemplative, satisfied look	The man is holding the mw in his arms (← mw is not harmful or dangerous)	Mw is cheap and good insulation material. The company keeps a low profile.	By using mw your home is warmer and obviously cosier; mw is durable (→ economical)
D, 42	Mw, bare arms, chequed shirt, red shades; looking into the distance	Work, basic man, industrious professional	Building is a considerate whole.	Trust (in expertise)
E, 56	A man, building his own house part-time	Not a professional	Security, far-sightedness	Energy saving; safety (no safety procedures needed); ease of installation (even a non-professional can do it)
F, 55	A Finnish man, mineral wool, logo, company	Warmth; safety; determination	Honest, not extravagant	Ease of installation; proper insulation; energy saving; economical

North State 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 26	Power; esprit de corps; competition; product	The product has a unifying power; a tough product	Masculine; competitive; supportive	The product vs. 'a real manliness'; only tough guys smoke NS
B, 26	Rough and tumble; audience, pack of cigarettes	Cigarettes are smoked only by tough, real men.	Natural, relaxed image of men spending time together	Strong, virile men smoke cigarettes.
C, 38	Being together without women; competition; cigarettes	Manliness; power; spirit of comradeship	Men's game → men's cigarette	Cigarettes vs. manly group identity
D, 42	Hands/arms, pack of cigarettes, audience, price, slogan, muscles	Power, manliness; admiration; persistence	Cigarettes are meant for real men; smoking is a social habit	Smoking is good for manliness; smoking is not bad for your health.
E, 56	A group of men (colleagues?) off duty	Spirit of comradeship; we-spirit; who is the strongest in the group?	Men's (not women's) strong cigarette; trustworthiness; price is important	(Real) men's cigarette
F, 61	Manliness; power; cigarettes	Strong men smoke strong cigarettes. If you don't smoke, you are not a real man!	Machismo; this doesn't sell if you don't appreciate things like this	Smoking is part of strong, manly life.

Philips 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 26	The product, result and authority (engineer)	The ad is clearly targeted at men. The elements refer to the functionality and technical values of the product.	Emphasises triumph of technology; an atmosphere of the beginning of a new age	The superiority of the product (which is emphasised by the engineer)
B, 26	A dishwasher; engineer; Philips tm; text; clean glasses	The dishwasher tells how stylish the product is. The engineer represents high technology, the clean glasses functionality, word 'high-flier' superiority vs. competitors. Philips tries to be connected with all of these.	A dishwasher is a good buy.	Philips dishwasher represents the top in its field both by looks and contents.
C, 38	A dishwasher, clean glasses with flowers, an engineer, product name, product features, price.	Clean glasses → good washing results. Engineer recommending → an expert's choice. 'Diplomimachine' → academic, high quality. These kinds of machines typically targeted at men.	Targeted at men. 'You can buy a dishwasher as if you were buying a chain saw.'	In a dishwasher, there are many interesting elements that interest 'the little engineer' that is embedded in every man.
D, 42	Engineer, dishwasher, test result, glasses, flowers, white surface, details and technology.	Cleanness, naturalness, rationality, research	Buying a dishwasher is a rational choice; environmentally friendly, useful	The dishwasher represents new, tested technology which washes in an environmentally friendly way; everyone's rational choice for washing dishes.
E, 56	Dishwasher, engineer, clean dishes, price, end results (graphics)	A low price, good end result, little flowers refer to women.	The look on the man's face: 'This is true.' The dishwasher in front and the man in the background.	Trustfulness, high education, end result.
F, 61	Glasses, dishwasher, engineer	Good washing results, brightness and cleanness	A dishwasher with clean results. The product is developed by top technicians.	Superiority over competing brands. The engineer brings in credibility.

Ahlström 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 26	A man, wool and easiness.	Reference to the convenience of using the product and the ease of the installation.	Emphasises the power of money; by using this wool you don't only save but get good quality. The man in the picture does not install the wool himself but buys the service.	To communicate the product features (easiness and functionality); anyone can buy the product, but no image is shown separately in reference to the installation.
B, 26	Mw; a man in a yellow suit; text	The yellow suit (or suit in general) refers to the ease of use and installation. The packets refer to easy transportation and storage. The man touches the product with his bare hands which refers to safety.	Karhuntaalja is easy to use; anybody can use it without getting dirty.	Karhuntaalja is low-priced, durable and easy to install.
C, 38	A man, suit and bow tie (30-something); packets of mw; slogan; selling text; logos	Reference is made between the age of the man and Karhuntaalja. Easiness (can be installed in a suit); the colours of the suit and wool (→ wool in fashion)	Even the unused can rely on the easy installation and insulation ability.	The wool is easy to use, suits people who are at the right age for building, is fashionable and reliable.
D, 42	Mw; a tidy man; tidy packets; movement	Building is tidy and easy. Building is pre-planned, 'ready to be installed'.	Anybody can take care of insulation matters. Things have been thought of for you. Insulation is a 'cool' thing.	You can trust the product. Professionals have done the work for you.
E, 56	A gentleman in a suit; the product in a tidy packet.	The work (installation) is easy, tidy; doesn't need protective clothing or device.	Savings in energy costs; the product has been on the market for 30 years; perseverance.	You can do the work even in a suit; easy to do; even laymen can do it.
F, 61	Softness; gentility; superiority (novelty)	The new wool is softer and better for installation. It is flexible and easy to handle. It is also hygienic.	Cosiness (in the middle of the text there is a couch made out of the wool).	Insulation is easier and the wool is better than before.

Sloggi 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 26	Athletes and basic equipment.	Rock-solid and efficient as well as sporty modern man.	The ad brings in an image of the mineral wool man [Vuorivilla] of the 1970s. The overall setup emphasises masculinity.	Tells about the functionality of the product even in tough situations, and the suitability of the product to real men of today.
B, 26	Sporty looking men (American football players). Underwear. Texts. More information: www.sloggi.com	Masculine and also sporty men can invest in underwear. In fact, it's 'cool'.	Sloggi underwear makes you more stylish and sporty.	It's not 'sissy' to use Sloggi underwear since tough American football players use it, too.
C, 38	Product name, slogan (in English); underwear; men holding helmets; www address	Objectification of men. Exoticism (a foreign sport).	Sloggies make men exotic sex objects. Targeted at women.	Woman, buy Sloggies for your man! He will become a fit-bodied 'boar'!
D, 42	Bodies, underwear, helmets, dark background, intensive looks, bare skin, muscles.	Power, primitiveness, masculinity, decisiveness, courage.	The underwear is fashionable and modern, gaze-resistant.	The looks of underwear do count; real men use them.
E, 56	Three young athletes, American football players, coming from practice or a game; helmets	Youth; sportiness; aggressiveness; masculinity	Youthful; sporty; decisive. Sloggies are easy to wear. The English language emphasises internationality.	Sloggi refers to youth and stylishness.
F, 61	Masculinity; decisiveness; sportiness	An active man must have a proper outfit.	Rough, aggressive, rebellious.	An active and trimmed man uses proper underwear that fits well and doesn't make you sweat.

HK 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 26	A summer man, barbeque and tongs. The basic summer elements of a Finnish man.	Holiday, freedom and buoyancy of life. The lightness of the products is not emphasised even though you get that idea from the ad.	The general impression is carefree, free and easy.	Being free and relaxed and barbequing are parts of a Finnish summer. HK creates the summer – atmosphere.
B, 26	A (naked) man (not very sexy though?). HK products grilled. Barbeque tongs. HK logo and texts.	You can keep your man in good shape if you feed him with good HK products. Obviously, nothing else is needed.	HK products are good and easy to cook.	HK products are of good quality and they are easy to use. Maybe the aim is the old adage: The way to a man's heart is through his stomach.
C, 38	A naked summer man. Barbeque tongs. A barbeque with steaks. Texts.	Freedom, holiday. Barbequing, eating. Keeping your spouse in a good mood.	The summer is spoiled if a man cannot relax and barbeque enough. In summer, the manly world is filled with barbequing.	Targeted at women. Buy more food for barbequing than you need; otherwise your man could get into a bad mood and will do something that pleases you even less.
D, 42	A light background, barbeque tongs, barbeque and meat; red colour; bare skin; smile.	Lightness, naturalness, healthiness, optimism.	Meat is a natural, healthy, light ingredient. Meat is a joyful thing.	By eating meat you stay healthy and in trim. Meat is a pure raw material.
E, 56	A barbeque; barbeque tongs; a barbeque covered with steaks; a naked man wearing a cowboy hat.	Vacation. The barbeque refers to an old coal grill. A barbeque that can be found in the summer cottage. Freedom, cheerfulness.	Unreservedness; the man spending free time during his holiday; atmosphere similar to summer cottage atmosphere of times gone by	The ad fits in summer-time Finland. Seasonal ad.
F, 61	Facilities for barbequing. Summer man (on vacation?).	You have to eat well in summer. The food is easy to cook.	A little contradictory. Is it a man that's put on the barbeque? Doesn't really arouse appetite.	The naked man in the tongs obviously catches the eye and gets attention. After that, one pays attention to the brand.

Appendix 6 Focus group results from the written part, US women

Man-Power 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A man and a woman arm-wrestling next to a can of deodorant.	If you are strong, you need a strong deodorant. It shows that a man needs a man's deodorant.	I like how they used a regular sized man instead of a man with huge muscles. This shows that any man can use the deodorant. If you're a man, then you've got man-power. This will make it appeal to more men.	That a strong man needs a strong deodorant. Men need deodorant strong enough for a man.
B, 30	An attractive couple holding hands and smiling at each other behind a can of deodorant. The photo is in b/w except for the bright red can of deodorant. The words are in red in back.	I think that the idea is to show that if you use this product you will be attractive to the opposite sex.	This ad feels silly. The idea that something as mundane as deodorant requires the approval of two people is strange.	If you use this product, you'll be beautiful and attract beautiful people to you.
C, 42	A man, a woman, a can, red+black colours and words.	The strength of the man and his attraction to the woman.	The ad would not be well received in today's market. First, because it is not credible that a 'strong man' needs a different kind of deodorant than a 'weak' man. And secondly, the name and picture seem to suggest an inequality which is not seen in most ads today.	To communicate the attractiveness of a strong man to the opposite sex and that he, therefore, needs the more powerful protection of a strong deodorant.
D, 47	A man with very muscular arms – smiling at a woman (also attractive). They're holding hands – like an 'arm-wrestling' posture. The red can (product) stands out because the picture is otherwise in b/w. Words of ad obviously imply that 'strength' is key to product.	Male/female attraction; man is masculine with visible muscles – so this refers to the 'strength' of the product. The woman is apparently pleased with the muscular physique of the man.	Certainly somewhat 'old-fashioned': very direct and not especially sensual (like most ads today). The product appears to be very 'basic' – not needing to be subtle about who should use it (<u>manly</u> men!).	That this is a product for a very 'manly' man – not trying to attract the less masculine type. Also that women like that type of men.

E, 52	A man and woman smiling at each other, holding hands, a can of deodorant in colour, everything else in b/w.	A man feels good when he smells good. A woman likes it when a man smells good. The product is strong.	It takes more than a deodorant to draw two people close but a pleasant smell is hardly a repellent. The two people are attractive – probably more so than the average ‘couple’. The man is somewhat muscular or strong and not afraid to admit he needs ‘help’.	People prefer it when people of the opposite gender mask their natural scents with pleasant artificial scents. The strength of the deodorant is depicted by the use of colour in the product and fits other aspects (i.e. people, relationship) in the background.
F, 53	A man and a woman arm-wrestling. A can of Man-Power in front of them.	The man needs to have deodorant protection to deal with a woman.	It seems a little silly. It implies men are strong, women weaker. He’s wearing a tight shirt with open v-neck. He’s supposed to be very sexy. It’s stereotypical – a bit sexist.	My deodorant will help you be a strong, sexy guy – buy me!

AC Spark Plugs 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A truck, and a man in a cowboy hat. The truck looks like it is smoking. It has TOUGH! in big letters. There is a sparkplug at the bottom.	It looks like the truck is going through a tough time.	I didn’t really understand this ad. It doesn’t make sense unless you read the part that goes with it.	That when everything else is going bad, the sparkplugs will still be good.
B, 30	An SUV driving in the desert. Dust is being kicked up and there is an inset of a bearded, plump guy wearing a cowboy hat. The colours remind me of army fatigues. In very large letters is the word TOUGH!	Man vs. nature. The equipment has always got to work or you’re out of luck. Tough men pick these sparkplugs, so you’ll be tough if you use them.	It makes me wish that I knew more about sparkplugs.	Tough guys use these. You’ll be tough if you use them, too.

C, 42	Bronco or Blazer, a man with a beard and cowboy hat.	The ruggedness of the truck in relation to the rugged, agricultural nature of the man. The man seems to depict an outdoors-man with standards that include a vehicle that can withstand his lifestyle.	In just looking at the advertisement, I'd not guess it to be an ad for sparkplugs. After reading the lines under the man's photo, I agree that he must live or work in the open and would probably need a vehicle like the one shown that is dependable and able to withstand lots of abuse.	The reliability and strength of the vehicle and its ability to stand up to the rigours of hard work.
D, 47	A very worn, obviously well-used truck/jeep in an off-road wilderness area. A picture of a man's face – cowboy hat – looks like the 'rugged' type. Large word 'TOUGH'. And a section of 'testimony' as to why 'George Service' depends on product.	These are meant to show that this individual (celebrity?) uses the product – depends on the product – in the toughest circumstances.	Since I don't know who George Service is, I'm not particularly sold by his testimony. But, overall, I get the feeling that this sparkplug is supposed to be able to handle difficult driving conditions.	That we can trust the product because 'George Service' does; however, the pictures also communicate the 'off-road' rugged man who needs a tough product like this.
E, 52	A truck going over rough terrain in inclement weather – the operator of said GM truck in close-up.	The product aids the vehicle and driver when driving is difficult. Sparkplug in upright position speaks of toughness more so than if it were on its side.	So many things affect driving, only one of which is sparkplugs. Anything can go wrong, anything can go right. Interesting choice of last name (Service) – aids in recommending the product.	Tough vehicles, tough men, tough drivers need this product. Appeals to self-concept of toughness.
F, 53	A Ford Bronco type of vehicle pulling a trailer. There's a man w/a cowboy hat. His face is interposed on the picture.	AC sparkplugs are tough. You can use them to drive off-road.	What does the cowboy hat guy have to do with anything? Am I supposed to know George Service? There's too much writing; who would read it all? I never buy sparkplugs.	AC sparkplugs are tough. You should use them, too.

Chevy Trucks 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A Chevy truck next to a Ford truck. A man is leaning against the Chevy truck.	This shows that the man owns the Chevy.	I think that the Chevy in the picture looks better than the Ford. I don't really care about trucks, but if I did, it'd be by the looks of one. If it were a good-looking truck with a hot guy it makes the truck look that much better.	This shows that Chevys win with the man. This is supposed to mean that Chevys are better.
B, 30	This double truck ad shows a man leaning on a red Chevy truck with his arms crossed & his legs in the classic 'cool guy' position. The other vehicle is a Ford & is a dark colour; part of it is not even in the picture.	You can relax and enjoy your Chevy vehicle because they break down less than Ford. You can be any guy & own this vehicle because the man in the photo is just an average guy.	I like this one. There are facts and figures that I could go check and compare to other things.	Chevy is better than Ford.
C, 42	A red truck with a Chevy emblem and part of a dark truck with a Ford emblem. Also, a man casually leaning against the red truck.	The preference and superiority of the red Chevy as opposed to Ford. It's visually more appealing than the darker Ford and the man seems to prefer it.	My overall feeling is of the aesthetic superiority of the Chevy. Also, my opinion would be that it is the preferred brand by the middle-aged and working class. This is a very effective ad.	I feel that the advertiser is trying to communicate the preference of their vehicle vs. the competitor.
D, 47	A man standing in between two pickup trucks: a red Chevy & a dark-coloured Ford. He is leaning against the Chevy. He is not a real 'tough' type of guy, more 'thoughtful'; the print ads suggest Chevy beats Ford on tests.	That Chevrolet is the <u>intelligent</u> choice, that it isn't just more 'manly'. Also, the red truck is more attractive, brighter, visibly the best choice. Also, the look on the man's face suggests he is calmly confident.	Appealing to me – this man is more 'my type' (not just a rough, rugged mountain-man type). I find the Chevy appeals to my intellect.	That Chevy is the 'smart person's' choice.
E, 52	A Chevy truck next to a Ford truck with a man leaning against the Chevy. The text claiming that Chevy beats Ford in certain tests.	The winning Chevy is in a bright red colour, well-lit. The losing Ford is dark in colour and in poor light. The man favours the winner.	Heartbeat red, truck red: the life-blood of every man – use of colour & light instrumental in making point. All of Chevy & only part of Ford – Chevy eclipses Ford – whole product desired over half a	Chevy trucks keeping the country alive; keeping the man alive.

			product. Useful techniques.	
F, 53	A Chevy truck and a Ford truck. A guy is leaning against the Chevy.	The guy leaning against the Chevy means that it is the one. It beats Ford.	There is too much writing. Just because a guy is leaning against one truck, I'm supposed to think it's better? Give me a break! I don't like negative ads – saying you're better than something else.	The test proves it. Pick me – I'm American.

Belton 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	An older man holding a really small hearing aid. He is smiling.	This shows that the man is happy with his hearing aid.	I didn't know what he was holding at first. When I read it, it made sense. Hearing aids shouldn't have to be big to make you hear better. I was confused.	If this man is happy with the hearing aid, you might be, too. Hearing aids don't have to be big to be a big help.
B, 30	A distinguished, white-haired gentleman holding up a small hearing aid & smiling. The copy states that the aids are helping him enjoy life more. The model is a small time celebrity.	Distinguished, well-off people use this product. You can trust this guy because we've seen him on TV.	Nothing too memorable here. I think that I'd think about the ad more if I was closer to the age of the man or if hearing loss was affecting me.	Try this hearing aid.
C, 42	An elderly gentleman holding a small hearing aid in his hand. The hearing aid seems to look like an ad for a pill.	My guess is that the observable elements refer to the small size of the device.	The ad's visual components don't give the consumer much information about the product. However, the gentleman seems to be happy about the product and his celebrity adds to the product's overall image.	I feel that the advertiser is trying to communicate the small size of the product.
D, 47	Celebrity (Eddie Albert) holding a very small item, smiling. Print mentions 'petit' hearing aid & quotes him as using the product & being satisfied. Dark suit, blue shirt! Company logo large at bottom.	That someone we 'know' has been very satisfied with this product. Also, that the product really is very small.	For me, this product is not yet a necessity in my life, so I'm not drawn to it, yet! Probably the smile on EA's face would catch my eye – because he was well-known on TV.	Trust EA to steer you in the right direction. Also, that needing a hearing aid is a good thing if you can be as happy as Mr. Albert.

E, 52	EA holding a Beltone hearing aid & espousing via a quote a recommendation to use/purchase same.	Using a known person shows that hearing loss can strike anyone, even a successful actor. Also having a real person holding the petite instrument shows its appealing small size.	I'd stop to scan the ad seeing a familiar face more probably than if it were a 'stranger/nobody'. Use of colour shows person in good health in spite of malady (hearing loss).	Even you can suffer hearing loss and it's no disgrace. The remedy can be something that's barely detectable. Life can still be lived fully.
F, 53	EA is holding his Beltone hearing aid.	He's famous, well-known. He must know what he's talking about. It's a good hearing aid.	Again too much writing. I'm not in the market for a hearing aid so I wouldn't read it. Just because some actor says a product is good doesn't mean much to me.	Trust Eddie – try our Beltone aid.

OxiMagic 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A man lying on the ground making an angel behind a Clorox tub. The bottom says share the magic.	Where the Clorox goes, the carpet is clean.	Weird. But it makes sense I guess. It's magic (cleaning the stain) like it's magic making a snow angel.	This product will get your rug clean.
B, 30	A man has been flattened by a giant vat of OxiMagic and his arms & legs have cleaned the carpet in their path. It looks like the clean spot is a snow angel. It looks like the stains on the floor could be dirt & wine.	Cleaning carpets is fun and easy like playing in the snow. Children could do it. This product makes it fun & easy.	This ad is just weird. I can't tell if he is dressed as the product or if he's been flattened by it.	Even a man can clean with this stuff.
C, 42	A chair, a rug, a tub of cleaner and a man lying on a dirty carpet making a snow angel. Also a red stain on the carpet close to the man. Where the man is making the snow angel, the carpet is clean.	The product's ability as a carpet cleaner to clean even the toughest stains with minimal effort by the man.	I feel that this ad insights a thoughtful mind. In fact, <u>too much thought</u> for an advertisement. I don't feel that the overall message is clear enough with minimal effort from the consumer in the first few seconds of observing the ad.	To communicate the overall cleaning ability of the product.

D, 47	A tub of the product, with arms and legs! Lying on a stained & dirty carpet. (A chair nearby proves that this is a carpet) The 'product' is making a 'snow angel' on the carpet – by cleaning it!?	This product cleans dirty carpets – but why they gave it arms & legs is beyond me! I suppose it just shows the contrast between dirty & clean.	Silly – though I admit that it caught my attention as I tried to figure out whether the product fell on the man! And from the beginning, it's obviously a man – and do men clean rugs?! Ha! I'd buy it!	1. Cleans 'white as snow' – cleans tough stains. 2. Applies masculine power to dirty carpets.
E, 52	A container of Clorox having flattened someone on the carpet – the person making 'carpet angels' & cleaning up a spill.	OxiMagic cleans up a spill with very little effort & is good at it.	No person shown using product. Product not really shown in relationship to user. Bogus effectiveness of product.	Spills aren't permanent. People using OxiMagic clean carpet. Cleans like magic.
F, 53	A chair, a stain on the floor, a guy with an OxiMagic container doing a snow angel to clean the floor.	That OxiMagic cleans the stain and colour off the floor.	It's pretty silly. What guy cleans the floor? Saying that the OxiMagic angel is magical seems like a stretch.	We are a really good cleaner. Try us.

NicoDerm 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A man kissing a baby in the kitchen. The man is wearing a patch on his arm. There are knives in the background.	The man loves the baby so he wants to stop smoking. Just how you can barely notice the knives, you can barely see the patch.	If the NicoDerm box wasn't in the ad, then you wouldn't know what the patch was for.	Stop smoking for yourself and your family and do it with NicoDerm. You can stop smoking and do it with help people won't see.
B, 30	A man holding a small child in his arms & bending to kiss him on his nose. The man is probably a young first-time father. This is a warm kitchen, homey scene. Hair is rumpled & the clothes are casual.	Warm loving scenes come around more and last longer when you're healthy. If you were going to quit this would be a great reason. It's ok to need help.	This is the kind of man I'd like my child to know or be raised by. He's true, he's getting healthy.	Life is precious. Don't throw it away.
C, 42	A man holding a baby, kitchen cabinets with pots above and knives hanging on the wall, a large window and a washing machine.	I think the observable elements refer to the man in his home holding his child.	From the words on the page, I'm able to understand that the ad has to do with a non-smoking product. However, I see no reference to that in the artwork. I feel that the visual aspects of this ad aren't enough to properly explain the product.	The product can help smokers to stop smoking, to enhance their life and that of their family. Visually, I don't feel that this ad depicts the product's message.

D, 47	Man, muscular, holding/kissing baby (mostly naked), patch on arm (product to stop smoking). Large product with logo. Large writing saying to 'do it' (stop smoking) for family & yourself. Promise to be with you. Background: washing machine, kitchen, knives, pots, window.	Cuddling/kissing baby is good if a non-smoker. Otherwise, smoking is dirty; breath, smell etc. Baby is 'clean', man needs to be 'clean' also. Setting (kitchen?) is also clean, usually a woman's place but this man is now allowed in because no longer smokes.	This makes me think that non-smokers can contribute more to their family.	That smoking is a dirty, nasty thing that would prevent these types of positive interaction.
E, 52	A young man holding a baby, kissing it, in a kitchen – knives are hanging; pots are on a shelf; a stove is evident.	A man involved in the caring for and upbringing of his child. A man can be at home even in the kitchen.	Very touching to see a man being tender with a baby. B/w allows product to stand out on page.	Life is lived more fully with the absence of smoking. Men (real men) can care for family & stop smoking.
F, 53	A man holding a baby. He has a NicoDerm patch. He's in the kitchen.	You can get help to be a great husband and father if you stop smoking.	It seems like a good idea to stop smoking. He's in the kitchen – so he must be super-dad. Too much writing.	You can be a better guy, too, if you let us help you stop smoking.

Appendix 7 Focus group results from the written part, US men

Man-Power 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A man and a woman along with the product. Man and woman's hands are clasped and the man's muscles are emphasized. The product is brightly coloured while everything else is b/w.	The man with a beautiful woman is in obviously good shape. The name of the deodorant relates directly to the man in the picture. Being a powerful man requires a powerful deodorant.	This ad is way before my time. I can fully understand the message trying to be sent but the ad is also directed at a certain type of man, muscular men. You wouldn't see a skinny man buying this. The company cut their market in half with just their name.	The ad is trying to say that if you're a strong man then you need a deodorant that can keep up. The woman in the picture gives emphasis to wanting [the man] to smell good. Wouldn't want to disappoint her.
B, 21	A man & woman clearly happy and enjoying being together. There's a bright red can just below the man. The writing uses the word 'man' constantly.	Our eyes are drawn towards the product first off, then we'll notice the figures and writing in the ad. When observing the pair you're supposed to be almost in envy of this man because of the woman.	I feel that it's trying to push me a product by playing on insecurities men may have and using sex to sell as do most ads. I actually find it funny because there's very little about the product and a lot of emphasis on it making you a man by using it.	It seems they're trying to use a sexual aspect to the product: "If you wear our deodorant, you'll attract women." The ad is in most ways directed towards women, to encourage them to buy it for their 'man'.
C, 44	Man & woman in physical contact, eye contact. B/w background, product in red (stands out), man flexing arm, shirt unbuttoned, can is a phallic symbol.	Couple in a possible relationship. Product in colour vs. b/w background for product emphasis. Man showing masculinity & confidence, woman leaning into man showing receptiveness. Can = symbol of manhood.	Ad shows that using this product will give you a sense of confidence.	If you use this product you can imagine yourself a handsome, fit, sexual, male, able to have a relationship with a woman while smelling inoffensive.
D, 47	Strong man flexing. Nice looking female. Red can. B/w picture. Some words in red, some in black.	Strength of product, stronger than similar female product.	Men have stronger body odour and it takes something more than what women use to control it. The woman looks like she is saying "Well ok, you're gonna need a little extra help".	Those men have stronger body odour than women and need to have a special product to deal with it.

E, 53	A couple arm wrestling. Can of deodorant. Coupon for 12 cents.	Trying to refer to deodorant as 'man-power' protection. Promoting with a coupon.	Directed towards women to influence man's buying decision. Could not influence my decision to buy.	That 'Man-power' deodorant will provide protection that satisfies women.
F, 56	Woman on left, man on right, looking at each other, holding hands in arm-wrestling position, man's shirt open to show chest. Can (red) of deodorant in front	Shows man as both desirable and strong. Real men use this deodorant and are either admired by women or this is how a man attracts a pretty woman; women like men who are strong and who smell good.	States its message without being overbearing, awkward; pose of hands + two people looking at each other detracts from product. However, colour of can + red colour in verbal message eventually get viewer's attention. Almost too much in ad to be understood without spending a lot of time viewing it.	Usual message of personal care products = use my product and your life will be better, you will get the girl.

AC Spark Plugs 1973	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	There's a picture of a truck doing some towing. There's also a picture of a man. He apparently owns the truck and uses this product.	The truck doing heavy work and the ad for spark plugs makes me think that these spark plugs can handle a lot of torture on the road. And they even give a user's testimonial saying that he uses the product and it works. If you use this product it will not fail and it's for heavy application.	The text in the ad tells about the torture that 'George' puts the spark plugs through. The ad is well put together. The two pictures and the testimonial work well and get the advertiser's point across.	If you have a vehicle that does a hard job, this product is a necessity. 'George' uses it and his trucks do <u>really</u> hard work.
B, 21	The use of the word 'tough' seems to be the highlight. The background is a darker green and tough is in vivid white. There's a large truck and a picture of apparently George Service.	It seems to me that this ad is directed towards trying to make you feel tougher if you use the product. There's a large truck and a picture of a larger man with a cowboy hat and beard. It's showing all these extremely masculine images: desert, truck, cowboy.	I feel the advertisers are using male insecurities to push a product. They use words and pictures to sell it rather than really informing you about the product.	That only a real 'tough' man would use this product and that if you used it, you'd be one, too.

C, 44	Chevy blazer driven in harsh conditions. Picture of consumer GS. 'Tough'. Name of man.	The spark plugs will perform in harsh conditions. GS > personal testimony. 'Tough' refers to consumer & spark plug. Name of service implies spark plug will provide good service.	I can count on A/C spark plugs to perform under harsh conditions.	When the going gets tough, you can count on A/C spark plugs because tough guy GS does. Manly man doing manly things.
D,47	4x4 'off-road vehicle'. Bad weather, desert-like terrain, guy with cowboy hat, spark plugs, logos.	Dependable in harsh conditions. Testimonial picture.	My opinion is that they are trying to market this to mechanics or those who would repair their own vehicles.	AC spark plugs are tough and dependable in harsh conditions.
E, 53	4-wheel drive truck. Picture of possible owner GS. AC spark plug. No symbols.	AC spark plugs provide the service needed when the going gets tough. Customer satisfaction with AC plugs.	Knowing products involved, my opinion is positive. I think the ad is promoting a proven product.	Trying to tell that AC plugs will provide service when the going gets tough. If you want a solid, dependable product, use AC.
F, 56	Word TOUGH in bold white letters at top of page, a truck racing across open ground, a man with a cowboy hat, red AC plug, white/blue GM square.	Cowboy needs his truck in order to do the things he needs to do. The driver puts a lot of strain on his vehicle and needs his truck to stand up to daily pressures. AC plugs keep his truck running & allow him to do what he needs to do.	Good parts allow your truck to operate in 'tough' or adverse conditions; therefore those products are dependable. All the verbiage detracts from the overall view; who would read all that information about a spark plug?	Buy my product and you won't have to worry about your truck breaking down in tough conditions. AC spark plugs are tough so you can deal with tough conditions.

Chevy 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	Two trucks: one has light on it and is visible; the other is dark and not recognizable. A man is in between the two, leaning on the left, more lit truck.	I interpreted the man's expression to be full of pride; he's leaning on the 'better' truck.	I don't like ads that are negative. Ads that put down other companies to make themselves look better are unoriginal and not creative. Theoretically they could both be bad products and the ad would still apply. This ad doesn't say anything about the actual quality of the products.	To change the people who drive Fords into Chevy drivers. This ad is aimed mainly at Ford drivers. (?)

B, 21	Two trucks, one Ford, one Chevy, and a man leaning up against the Chevy. The Chevy is prominent in the picture, and red, the Ford is darker and cut off. The heading gives statistics.	This shows a heading with statistics as to why the Chevy is better than the Ford. The viewer is given a better look at the Chevy and torn away from the Ford. It's a use of light and color to show off one and not the other. The man pictured is leaning on the chosen truck with a straight face and folded arms: very masculine.	I feel my eyes drawn towards the brighter truck – as if it's in a better light. Better.	They use both statistics and a view of why their truck is better. Almost using envy of this man if the statistics fail.
C, 44	Red Chevy truck, dark Ford truck, man in white shirt leaning on Chevy, red undershirt, red truck, red lettering for heartbeat.	Red truck stands out, dark truck not worthy of colour or promotion. Man leaning on the winning truck. Red colours tie product, man & catch word together.	Ad shows the consumer that Chevy is a proven winner and by owning one you also can be associated with a winner.	In proven test results, Chevy is a better truck than Ford.
D,47	Red truck/black truck. Man leaning to red, logo, slogan, outdoors (non-urban setting).	Red is right / dark is bad. Leans to Chevy red truck. Average looking guy.	Looks like a satisfied white male! Chevy is trying to sell middle-class average white guy who still has an outdoor bent and likes to back up his decisions with 'data'.	USAC? proves that Chevy is a superior product.
E, 53	2 trucks side by side facing out, man standing between them leaning on Chevy. Chevy logo 'heartbeat' and emblem. Text.	Chevy truck is dominant in ad, Ford cut in half by ad. Man is leaning on Chevy. Text refers to tests which prove it beats Ford. Focus on Chevy.	Positive, since I like Chevy. Ad conveys positive note with colours and posture of man.	That Chevy is a better truck than Ford and test data proves it.
F, 56	Man standing between 2 trucks & leaning on red one. Farmland (wheat or grain of some type), man nicely dressed (slacks & white shirt), slogan "The heartbeat of America" + Chevy logo in bottom left corner.	In comparison of Ford & Chevy, results show that the average buyer should 'lean' towards Chevy. It also appears that Chevy is a little bit more forward in the ad, showing that although 2 trucks are similar, Chevy is a little better & shown in full.	This seems to be an ad which would work better as a TV ad, where they could show how Chevy is better than Ford; the visual image is very subtle and merely implies that Chevy is better.	Chevy is a better buy & better truck than Ford – sophisticated people, once presented with the facts, will buy Chevy.

Beltone 1988	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A man with a hearing aid in his hand. I don't know who EA is. He's the man in the picture. He was probably a celebrity from the 80s. He's very happy to have the product.	Eddie is representing this company to communicate the company's message. People know him so the ad will catch more eyes. Household names sell products.	Celebrities have been selling products for a long time. It's proven that it works. I'm sure this ad isn't any different. This product is targeting older people because of the subject used to represent them.	The ad is communicating to older people who generally use more hearing aids than any other age group. Maybe older people know more about EA and that's why he was used.
B, 21	A celebrity, older aged, holding up the product; dressed in a very nice suit.	That everyone can have this product if they need it, even celebrities. Also a celebrity uses this, why not you...	They are using the person's celebrity status to authenticate and push the product. Trying to get me to feel "Well, if he uses...". I don't think this works on me because I don't need it and I can see their attempts.	That you should use this product because 'he' does. So that makes it a good product because a celebrity is in the ad. It's mainly directed at older adults and the words push it towards people who may feel low/depressed about their condition.
C, 44	Small hearing aid. Smiling senior citizen. Bright blue shirt.	Hearing aid will not be noticeable but also comfortable. Spokesman is happy & feels good about wearing aid. Blue colour is pleasing to the eye & draws attention away from the hearing aid.	If an older parent or friend or relative is hard of hearing, I'd mention this product.	If you or someone you know is old and can't hear, this hearing aid will help them enjoy life more.
D,47	Smiling happy old guy (nice shirt), holding tiny product that you have to stick in your ear. Booklet. Old actor that still has his hair.	Small hearing aids, made for happy old guys.	You gotta be a rich old guy to get the tiny aids (due to the nice formal clothes). I also believe that they are targeting folks in their 70s and 80s.	Smaller than average hearing aid, made for a happier life. Trusted, well-known older actor to help others in his generation feel comfortable.
E, 53	White-haired man (EA) holding something up in his left hand. Text. Picture of brochure about Beltone.	Hard to tell. I had to look closely just to find out what was being promoted. Turns out to be hearing aids.	Not impressed. I had to look to determine what was being promoted. EA doesn't help me to understand what product will do and why I should buy.	Trying to use name to promote product.

F, 56	Picture of EA, dressed in suit, blue shirt&tie, holding a Beltone hearing aid between his thumb & forefinger of left hand, white hair = older person. Verbiage with picture of pamphlet in right corner + word Beltone across the bottom.	This ad uses a known star that people will recognize to show that it's ok if you've lost your hearing, because there is a way to solve that problem & improve your quality of life + information is readily available there as to how to get more information.	Gets its point across – catches your eye. Visual picture leads you to read more about hearing aid & where to get information.	Hearing loss can hit anyone. Do what a big star does and check out Beltone or tell a friend.
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Oxi Magic 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A bucket on top of a man who is making a snow angel in filth.	I think that the man and the OxiMagic is one subject and the filth is being 'snow-anged' away. This ad could have been released in the winter months.	Kind of confusing. A little weird. I can definitely see the difference in the time periods. My first impression was that the man was being crushed by OxiMagic.	There's no text and the picture is vague. The OxiMagic is unclear. It's obvious that they are showing that it cleans surfaces. I guess the 'filth-angel' is a seasonal thing.
B, 21	A very dirty carpet with a man/container of the product making a snow angel on the carpet because it cleans it.	It's showing how well the product cleans and using a funny or strange way of showing that. Trying to show how amazing the product is.	I find the ad funny and weird. I don't think I'd go out and buy the product but just having seen the ad I know it made an impact because it was so weird and unusual.	It shows the abilities of the product and uses an unusual image so that it will stick in your mind over the rest.
C, 44	Tan carpet. Red stain. White where man/product in touch with carpet. Product is in middle of a white angel (snow angel).	This product is sent from heaven to clean soiled & stained carpets & make things pure as snow.	Might buy product to see if it could make carpet/fabric this clean.	This is a heavenly product that will make fabric/carpets unbelievably clean.
D,47	Dirty carpet, product, snow angel, chair, product containers.	Product cleans well.	Man is knocked flat by product. They're trying to say: ok, guys, clean your carpet with our stuff – it works with good old Oz. It may be a little unbecoming for a guy to be lying there flapping around like an idiot on his carpet.	Men should clean their carpets with this – look how easy it is – all he has to do is roll around in it and then roll around on his floor and presto: your carpet is clean.

E, 53	Man underneath container of OxiMagic. Chair in upper right corner. Dirty carpet clean where man appears to have moved his arms/legs back and forth.	Something to do with carpet cleaner. Not sure what is being advertised.	No real opinion. Not a very good ad. Still not sure what is being promoted. Some kind of cleaner.	?OxiMagic cleans carpets?
F, 56	Brown chair in upper right corner, container of OxiMagic covering man making snow angel on carpet, or container has arms & legs. Stains of some type on carpet (looking like lipstick but that doesn't make sense). Other Clorox products in bottom right corner.	This is a product that can help you clean up stains on a carpet.	Poor ad – looks like a man has been engulfed by the product, what should be clean rug appears to be rug with different type of stain. Gives feeling that container has crushed the man.	Product that helps you keep house clean.

Nico-Derm 2003	Denotative level	Connotative level	General impression	Objective(s) of the advertiser
A, 20	A man holding a child in the home. He's wearing a short T-shirt and it is visible that he's wearing the patch on his arm.	This ad is for an anti-smoking product. The man with the child is a strong message to send. You don't want to smoke around people that age. It's obvious that it's his child and that he loves him/her very much and that's why he's quitting smoking.	The colours and the overall feeling of the ad are very relaxing. The message is very clear. There are no negative connotations in this ad, which I like. The fact that I don't smoke allows me to support and relate to this ad also.	If you have a child or any loved one for that matter, and don't want to hurt them by smoking around them, quit [smoking by] using the product.
B, 21	A man holding a baby, his. He's kissing the baby's nose. He has one of the patches on his arm. It looks like a kitchen in his home.	It's showing family, home, and love. Everything's got a white and clean feel to it.	You can feel the love the man may have for his child and I feel that I'm directed towards a way to quit smoking (if I did) for the sake of family and love and my child.	It's like they are using these images to get people to stop smoking for good reasons and use this product for the sake of their families.
C, 44	B/w picture, coloured product, knives and large pots in background, man holding/kissing baby.	Product stands out in ad. Dangerous environment. Man comforting & protecting baby, showing love & concern.	Pleasant picture of a man's love & devotion to his child/family.	Use this product to quit smoking so you'll be around your children for a lifetime to comfort & protect them from harm.

D,47	Young dad & baby. Kitchen. Knives, window, pots on top of cabinets. Packaging.	Caring, importance of life.	Young dads who smoke need to think about the future and stop smoking. Dads at home in kitchen show involvement in life at level other than work.	Life is important; use our product to kick the habit – Packaging helps you know what to look for in the store.
E, 53	Man holding baby in kitchen. NicoDerm box. Text.	That using NicoDerm will help you quit [smoking]. This will be good for both you and your family.	Again, I had to dig to find out what was being promoted. Positive image with man and baby and do it for yourself and your family message.	That NicoDerm will help you stop smoking, which will be positive for both you and your family.
F, 56	B/w man standing in kitchen in T-shirt holding a baby in his hands & looking as though he's going to kiss baby, baby cradled in arms with feet raised so they are touching man's shoulders. In colour (green) package of NicoDerm in bottom left corner.	Quit smoking and it will improve your life or allow you to see the better things in life. If you're not smoking, you'll have more time to spend with your child & you are more likely to be around to share happy moments.	Verbiage & picture & packaging convey the same message = quit smoking for your family → share in positive experience. Good ad – simple but message delivered.	That there is a way to quit smoking & that there is help for you. You don't have to do it alone.

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