

1. Introduction

Is it possible to persuade consumers in different markets with the same advertising message? Will they respond favourably? Or should the advertising message be customised to reflect local culture? This question is one of the most fundamental decisions when planning an advertising campaign in different cultural areas, and, not surprisingly, one of the most frequently discussed issues in advertising today. Whereas many anecdotes tell the story of failed, or misunderstood, advertising, little clarity exists what exactly makes advertising different from country to country, and what types of appeals are used to promote different products in different markets - if there should be any difference whatsoever.

One side in this debate emphasises that the world is growing ever closer, and that the world can be treated as one large market, with only superficial differences in values (Levitt, 1983). In their view, advertising and marketing can be standardised across cultures, and the same values can be used to persuade customers to buy or consume the product. The opposing side is content with the fact that the basic needs may well be the same around the world, however they argue that the way in which these needs are met and satisfied differs from culture to culture. Any marketing (and advertising) campaign should, in their view, reflect the local habits, lifestyles and economical conditions in order to be effective. In 1985, Woods et al. concluded in a study of consumer purpose in purchase in the US, Quebec and Korea, that "important differences are found in the reasons why they [the consumers] purchase products familiar to all three countries".

Many researchers have contributed to the debate, examining a sample of advertising for particular ways of portraying lifestyle and themes used (Gilly, 1990; Tansey, Hyman & Zinkhan, 1990); advertising strategies and information content (Lin, 1993; Zandpour, Chang & Catalano 1992; Ramaprasad & Hasegawa, 1992), the use of humour (Weinberger & Spotts, 1989; Alden, Hower & Lee, 1992), Americanisation of appeals used (Wiles, Wiles & Tjernlund, 1996; Mueller 1992) or they tested for a mix of different themes, styles, appeals or advertising content. These studies, among others, and

the magnitude of their findings have put significant doubt over the theories and applicability of standardised, global advertising. They clearly suggest to localise advertising messages to suit consumer expectation in each market (Albers-Miller, 1996b).

However, the degree of difference in advertising strategies and appeals used may well be very different not only from country to country, but also from product category to product category. As Zandpour, Chang and Catalano (1992) and Katz and Lee (1992) have pointed out, information content, creative strategy, format and content style differ with each product category.

This study will try to address the issues of differences in advertising in three countries: the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. I will use a whole range of advertising, both general as well as individual product categories, and examine the different appeals that are used in all three countries to promote the respective products as well as the strategies used.

2. Rationale

As international advertising increases, the demand for more factual information on cultural and other differences in advertising and the appeals and strategies used has increased significantly. Up to now, the majority of published research in this area has focused on comparing the US to another market, often in the Far East. This study focuses exclusively on a northern European environment, an environment that is particularly attractive not only to foreign (from outside the UK, Germany or the Netherlands) investors and advertisers, but is also characterised by its consolidation in business from within. The three countries, the Netherlands, the UK and Germany, are among the most affluent markets in the European Union, offer a variety of advertising possibilities and enjoy high advertising expenditure per capita. Equally, all three countries score relatively closely on four out of five of Hofstede's culture dimensions, and can hence be seen as being culturally close.

The study will be both descriptive as well as predictive, and may offer the potential advertiser an extensive guide on

both advertising strategies used as well as potential advertising strategies. It will focus not exclusively on the differences, but also extend to explain and examine the similarities that can be observed, in order to give a complete picture of the interaction between culture, advertising, products and the consumer.

Equally, the results of the study may well be expandable to cover a wider range of cultures. By relating the similarities and differences to cultural factors, the study may point the way to further research and theorisation on a more global scale, and a more predictive and descriptive model for advertising in different cultures than the vague descriptions available today.

3. Conceptual Background & Definitions

3.1 Ad creation, pre-market testing and localisation

Advertising creation can vary enormously from one company promoting their products or services across borders to another company. Whereas real economic benefits, dominantly economies of scale, can be obtained by standardising advertising across borders, many companies choose not to do so, but rather to rely on local knowledge.

In order to create a commercial, an advertising agency is usually instructed to create the overall concept in line with the marketing objectives, create a set of different test commercials and pre-test the commercials for effectiveness. This is a crucial step for advertising creation, and often takes a relatively long time, in which the test commercials are tested qualitatively and quantitatively in focus groups, through questionnaires, in test markets, sample areas and so on. After successful testing, the real commercial is created, and finally airtime for the commercial is booked or auctioned (either directly or through a media agency). During and after the commercial is running, further tests are usually carried out in order to optimise advertising targets with real outcomes, and commercials may be adjusted depending on the outcome.

In a survey of the Fortune 500 US-based multinational companies, Hite and Fraser (1988) reported, that 50% of these companies used a foreign (i.e. local to the market) agency for their advertising, 21% used an international agency or network (i.e. an agency that maintained local offices in the target market), and 18% used a foreign affiliates of an in-house-agency. In the same report, Hite and Fraser also observe a steep decline in the trend to use the same advertising (standardised advertising) in different markets. Earlier reports (Sorenson and Wiechmann, 1975; Boddewya, Soehl and Picard, 1986) reported that in 1975 only 20% of multinational companies utilised localised versions of their advertising, in 1986 the figure reported had grown to 39%. In their own survey, Hite and Fraser (1988) reported, that 36% of companies that advertise across borders use localised advertising, and that a further 56% use a combination strategy (such as the same images, different text). Only 8% used standardised advertising across borders. They also reported, that 95% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to change the language of their advertising depending on the target market, 59% the product attributes, 69% the models, 58% the scenic background and 31% the colours used. When carefully observed, this trend holds true for a large amount of European advertising. A number of companies use completely different commercials in the UK, the Netherlands and/or Germany, such as the German brands Müller and Holsten Pils. In Germany Müller's commercials focus on the health benefits, whereas in the UK the commercials emphasise the taste of the yoghurt. Holsten's German advertising features friendship and achievement set on a sailing boat at sea, whereas the UK advertising is a Monty Python style sketch set in a bar. Other commercials use the same images, but change the text completely: such as Max factor's commercials featuring Madonna. In the UK, Madonna talks about how superficial life as a superstar is, and the lipstick is a mean used to seduce an attractive co-actor. In Germany, Madonna talks about how important it is to look good even in a kissing scene, and there is little evidence of intended seduction of the co-actor at all.

3.2 Values, appeals, content and style

In researching advertising across borders a number of terms are used to describe what is said in a commercial or how things are said in a commercial. All of this type of research focuses primarily on the message of advertising, taking both the visual and the audible component into account. Most researchers have paid little interest in execution or objectives, which may influence the advertising message. Both execution and objectives are taken a priori as being equal across countries. This limitation should be clearly pointed out, as it may account for some of the differences observed.

I have divided three main areas of research, with all overlapping or influencing each other to some extent:

- Appeals (values) research, looking primarily at all or some of the advertising appeals used in commercials.
- Information cues research, trying to identify the amount and type of information that is presented, usually about a product, in a commercial.
- Communication and creative strategy research, looking at the actual advertising, communication or creative strategy, or parts thereof, used in a commercial.

Frequently researchers have combined certain areas. For example, Mueller (1996) in her study about beer advertising in the UK and the US looked for selected appeals as well as some communication styles in commercials.

The terms "appeals" and "values" are used loosely in the literature to describe the traditional notion of "advertising appeals". In their textbook "Advertising - Principles and Practice", Wells, Burnett and Moriarty (1995) give the following description of appeals:

Persuasion in advertising rests on the psychological appeal to the consumer. An appeal is something that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting to the consumer. Common appeals are security, esteem, fear, sex, and sensory pleasure. Appeals generally pinpoint the anticipated response of the prospect to the product and message.

Advertisers also use the word appeal to

describe a general creative emphasis. For example, if the price is emphasised in the ad, then the appeal is value, economy, or savings. Wells, Burnett and Moriarty (1995): 278

As this definition suggests, appeals make the product attractive to the consumer, and are hence emphasised in advertising for the product. However, they do not necessarily represent product attributes, nor do they have to be realistically connected to the product at all. De facto they are often used to set a desired atmosphere or as a means to "connect" with the target group. As such, they are "built" into the commercial and designed to represent the supposed values of the desired target group. For example, a product that has housewives as a target group may show, as an appeal, pictures of a happy family - which is thought to represent a value of the target group, or at least a desired state. Also, for example beer in itself has little sex appeal - however this appeal is frequently used in beer advertising (Dahl, 2000). The combination of "sex appeal", displayed in the advertising connected to the consumption of that particular brand of beer, may however make the product attractive to the potential consumer, as it may represent a widely held value in the target group. Connected to the product, this may make the product more appealing to the target group. Clearly, not everybody will have the same values, and the appeals that are used do not necessarily actually appeal to all consumers - even within the target group. However, they usually are chosen to represent values thought to be held by the target group as a whole. The advertiser aims to link the set of appeals used in the commercial with the product in the mind of the consumer, in order to enhance and position the product, the product image and perception. They are used strategically to influence consumer perception of the product (such as drinking beer = success with women) and hence to increase consumer readiness to purchase - or product appeal. Understood as such, they can be regarded as an active part in positioning the product in the market place and enhance the product's image, by associating desirable aspects to the product.

Kotler (1997) differentiates three different types of appeals: rational appeals, emotional appeals and moral appeals. He

classifies rational appeals as "appealing to the audience's self interest". Typically they refer to the quality, value or performance of the product. Emotional appeals "attempt to stir up negative or positive emotions" (ibid.), and include fear, guilt, joy. Although Kotler makes a reference to negative emotions, I would argue, that these are turned into positive appeals in commercials. For example the negative "fear" appeal is used only when the product can actually provide safety. Finally moral appeals "are directed to the audience's sense of what is right and proper." (ibid.) These may include such appeals as ecological appeals and nationalism.

The often interchanging use of appeals and values by some researchers can be explained when looking at the interaction that is necessary between the two. Appeals are used to appeal to the values a consumer holds, and as such, values are the underlying source of appeals. Wells, Burnett and Moriarty (1995) define values and tentatively describe the interaction as:

The source for norms [defined as simple rules for behaviour] is our values. An example of a value is personal security. Possible norms expressing this value range from the bars on the window and double-locked doors in Brooklyn, New York, to unlocked cars and homes in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Values are few in number and are not tied to specific objects or situations. (...) Advertisers often refer to core values when selecting their primary appeals. Burnett and Moriarty (1995): 167

This extract clarifies this interaction to some extent: Knowing that people value personal safety, and that a product X can enhance the personal safety, advertising for product X may use a safety appeal. So strictly argued, the safety value (or the desire to be safe) is held by the consumer - and the appeal is what is expressed in the advertisement in order to suggest to the consumer that their desired state of personal safety can be enhanced. The appeal hence represents the underlying value.

This definition of values comes relatively close to the definition of values given by Hofstede (1994):

Values are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Hofstede (1994):8

To continue the above example: The advertising for product X, appealing for enhanced personal safety, displays a preference for a state of safety. And as such can be interpreted as displaying the preference for the state of enhanced personal safety (or in other words: the value of personal safety). Hence, if an advertisement displays a happy family, it can be understood to use the family appeal to represent family values.

In order to avoid any further confusion of the situation, for the remainder of this document, I will refer to "appeals" as the values that are expressed in advertising, by using appeals, or the appeals that are displayed in advertising representing certain values. I will use values strictly when this represents a tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others by human beings in the real world.

The use of appeals, and with them the possibility of a distorted representation of reality, has been a topic of discussion for a considerable time. In 1983 Pollay published a coding framework for the identification of cultural appeals (actually, he called them values) in advertising, primarily as a response to the discussion over the cultural consequences of advertising appeals and what values of society these reflect.

By reviewing a variety of advertising related literature, as well as literature and values research in other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology and the humanities, Pollay created a list of 42 appeals most commonly found in advertising. He notes, that advertising does reflect a somewhat different set of values as can be found in a society in general (Pollay, 1986), a notion which he termed the "distorted mirror", and which has led to a significant debate over the subject matter. Clearly, advertising will attempt to have positive appeals associated with the product, and hence lead to a distorted reflection of reality. Although Kotler (1997) includes negative appeals, such as fear or guilt, in his examples, these will normally be turned "positive" in advertising, and are included as such in the Pollay list: For example the fear of an accident is resolved by demonstrating the safety features of a car (safety appeal). The com-

plete list of Pollay's appeals is given in Appendix A.

Other researchers who carried out research into advertising appeals have developed different lists of possible values, often because they only tested for certain appeals rather than a complete set of appeals. For example Mueller (1996) and Cheng & Schweitzer (1996) used limited lists developed by them to reflect their line of enquiry. However, both take their definitions from Pollay's original work. As such, Pollay's framework is the most complete set of possible appeals with definitions. It is also "pre-tested" as it is derived from previously published material, and is generally considered to be complete. As such may be the most suitable instrument both for probing a complete set of appeals, if used as a whole, or a limited set of appeals, if used in parts.

Clearly, in order to be effective, advertising has to appeal to the positive values that are held in the target group, or taken at large, the target society. If advertising is "out of touch" with the target group, it may alienate the target group, as the consumer can no longer identify with the product. It is hence essential for the advertising to reflect at least a proportion of the values held by the target group, or society at large. As Hofstede and others have demonstrated, values can vary considerably between cultures. Some cultures may be comfortable with a relatively high level of uncertainty - if expressed in appeals, then it can be expected that advertising in these cultures will make less use of safety appeals than advertising from a culture where the culture is less comfortable with uncertainty. Equally, in a society that holds highly individualistic values, it can be expected that advertising in general will use more appeals to individual achievement than in a society that holds dominantly collectivist values.

As such, advertising appeals are not a mere representation of a culture's values at large, but they represent a selective sample of positive and desired values of that culture. They are in fact a "distorted mirror", a mirror that represents idealistic, rather than realistic, values.

Other researchers focused more narrowly on the information content, rather than the appeals as a whole, in advertising. Information cues in advertising are

generally understood to relate to pieces of information relating to the product or service that is being offered, the content in which the product is used or consumed is generally disregarded. A major tool for research focusing on information content is the Resnick-Stern Content Classification System (Stern, Dean & Resnick, 1981). The full list of the Resnick-Stern Classification System is given in Appendix B.

Information cue research, such as Weinberger and Spotts (1989) or Maenaka, Miracle and Chang (1991), count either the total or the unique number of information cues presented in commercials.

Clearly, this type of research is far more limited in its approach, as it is more concerned with the product attributes that are displayed, rather than the entire message. It is however quite useful in order to evaluate the "directness" of advertising, and as such can be related more evidently to Hall's high context/low context concepts, rather than to broader based cultural dimension concepts, such as Hofstede's dimensions as a whole. If counting the information cues present in advertising, a large number may suggest a low context society, whereas a low number would possibly suggest a high context culture. However, the number of information cues may equally be related to uncertainty avoidance, as it seems plausible, that in a largely risk averse culture the consumer may want to have more information about a product than in a less risk averse culture, as suggested by Usunier, 1999.

In comparison with Pollay based research, this type of research is not suitable for research into values, however it is far more differentiated in respect to the information content that is provided, and what product attributes are explained explicitly in the commercial message. As such, it provides a more detailed picture of target market consumer expectation than the more general values research, however it provides less opportunity for descriptive advertising context analysis. This is particularly evident, as certain appeals as classified by Pollay are considerably expanded. For example the "effective" appeal is split up in to three Resnick-Stern cues: Quality, performance and taste. The "safety" appeal is

repeated in two cues: Guarantees and warranties and safety.

Another aspect that has frequently been looked at is the overall communication or creative strategy that is used in advertising. One frequently used measurement system analyses if the advert presented in the form of a lecture, with a narrator speaking about the product (typical of direct sales commercials), or if a "story" or drama is created in the commercial. This distinction was originally developed by Wells (1988) and later adopted and expanded by Deighton, Romer and McQueen (1989). The Wells and Deighton et al. system is given in Appendix C.

Typically, a lecture-type commercial will use hard sales strategy to convince the consumer, whereas a drama will be more soft sell approach. Equally, a lecture-type commercial will usually contain more information cues than a drama-type commercial, due to the nature of the presentation. Looking at the communication style used, direct speech can be expected to be predominant in lecture type commercials, as the narrator usually addresses the audience directly ("Call now"). Indirect speech is logically more dominant in drama-type commercials, where the characters can be expected to speak to each other as the plot develops.

A slightly different flavour of creative strategy research, and more differentiated than the above, focuses on a variety of possible creative strategies that are frequently used in commercials. Most dominantly used are Simon's Creative Strategies (1971). Martenson (1987), researching advertising in the US and Sweden, defined the strategies as given in Appendix D.

This method again is clearly more differentiated, and allows for a greater variety of creative styles to be analysed than the lecture/drama method. It is however quite limited in its approach and usability to analyse the interaction between values and advertising, as it focuses more on an additional preference for a certain creative style or styles in a country. It is however well suited for that, and possibly a good tool for a more descriptive research than pure value centred research.

Again, this method makes use of communication style and the use of linguistic styles, such as a preference for indirect and direct speech, however the link is less clearly visible than with the lecture/drama method.

Another stylistic or creative method that is frequently referred to and researched is the use of humour in advertising. This stands out somewhat, as it doesn't represent a full creative style, and is not linked directly within the area of information cue or appeals research.

As can be seen from the above examples of research instruments used, the focus of research into (cross-cultural) advertising can be radically different, though related. Research into appeals is evidently the most broadly focused research, whereas information cues and strategy research takes a far narrower, however more explicit, focus. All of these research foci make a useful contribution to identify more clearly how advertising is influenced by culture, and if used in combination, have the potential to provide an extremely powerful analysis of advertising practice.

4. Previous Research

4.1 Communication and Culture

"Culture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural norms and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the meaning of other people's behaviour" (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). The concept of "culture" and business has been extensively researched (Hall, 1983; Hofstede, 1980; 1983; 1991; 1998), both how it affects interpersonal communication, as well as in more general terms: such as culture influences business practices, consumer choice and behaviour (Hofstede, 1991; 1998; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1993, 1997).

Two models have been extensively used in the business world: Hofstede's 5 Dimensions (1980; 1983, 1991) and Hall's perception of time and high-context/low-context models (1983; 1989). A number of other, sometimes more detailed, models are available (Chinese

Culture Connection, 1987; Fiske, 1991; Schwarz, 1994). These models clarify and support Hall's and Hofstede's dimensions, and can mostly be related back to the Hofstede dimensions (Smith and Bond, 1998). Hofstede (1991), differentiates between five cultural dimensions:

Individualism/Collectivism: Individualist cultures typically emphasise the goals of the individual, individual initiative and achievement, more dominantly than collectivist societies, which are more concerned with collective goals and the group as a whole. In business, individualist societies rely more heavily on facts and figures to determine the optimum outcome, whereas collectivist societies put a greater emphasis on personal relationships and group harmony. This Hofstede dimension is largely seen as connected with Hall's High-context/Low-context dimension.

Femininity/Masculinity: Masculine cultures typically favour assertive, competitive and tough attitudes, whereas feminine cultures are expected to emphasise caring and tender attitudes. Typically, masculine societies offer higher rewards and favour a challenging and competitive environment, whereas in feminine societies the emphasis is more on good relationships and co-operation.

Uncertainty Avoidance: The degree of risk aversion in a society is central to this dimension. Countries that score low in uncertainty avoidance typically favour taking risks, trying new ways and using novel approaches. Societies that score high however tend to put greater emphasis on the "tried and tested" methods, are unlikely to take on high risks and are generally considered to be averse to ambiguity.

Power Distance: This dimension is concerned with the respect for authority, hierarchy and status. The respect for authority and status are typically more dominant in high power distance countries than low power distance countries, where decisions from the top can (and should) usually be questioned and are typically based on reasoning and factual information. In extremely high power distance countries, the respect for authority figures, such as teachers, superior managers and parents, is generally so

high, that their decisions are not questionable and have to be obeyed, regardless of whether or not these decisions make any sense to the recipient.

Long Term Orientation: This dimension is typically concerned with the time frame in which the individual operates. Short-term-orientation is primarily concerned with the present and immediate future, such as favouring immediate benefits over long term gain. The emphasis in long-term-oriented cultures is more clearly on the continuity of the past to the future, such as the adaptation of traditions to modern life, and the perseverance towards slow gains.

Polychronic / Monochronic: This dimension described by Hall and Hall (1989) is mainly concerned with the perception of time: Time is either perceived as linear and a hard guideline (monochronic), and it is only possible to handle one thing at a time, which requires full attention. In polychronic cultures time is seen as soft guideline, allowing for great flexibility and tasks are handled as they occur, often resulting in several tasks being handled at the same time.

4.2 Advertising and Culture

With the increase in international marketing research in recent years, an increasing number of scholars have shown interest in cross-cultural advertising research. In survey, Saminee and Jeong (1994), reported on a total of 24 cross-cultural studies in advertising for the period of 1980 to 1992. In their survey, the overwhelming majority of studies (21 out of 24) studied advertising in the US compared to at least another nation, whereas the second most studied country was Japan, with only 7 studies. The UK was included in 4 studies, Germany in 2 and the Netherlands in no study.

This section focuses on the most cited studies, and reviews them in some detail. However, there are a large number of other studies in existence that study certain aspects of advertising, or repeat other studies in different settings. For obvious reasons, those studies have not been discussed in this part. The main studies included here have been selected to represent and visualise the variety of studies

that are available, but certainly, the list is not exhaustive.

Few studies examined countries because they were perceived as culturally similar (e.g. Mueller and Caillat, 1996). The majority selected the countries because they were culturally dissimilar (e.g. Katz and Lee, 1992; Culter and Javalgi, 1992; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996).

Most of the studies published have paired two or more countries and examined the differences. The majority of the studies used either two or three countries, and only a few have extended their studies beyond this number (e.g. Zandpour, Campos and Catalano, 1994; Albers-Miller, 1996; Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996). Some of these studies used research questions and resulting hypothesis loosely based cross-cultural theories, such as Hall (e.g. Biswass, Olsen and Carlet, 1992; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996) in combination with economic and other data, or strictly based on cross-cultural theories, such as Hofstede (Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996). Other studies have used country specific information, such as predominantly economic information (e.g. Tansey, Hyman and Zinkhan, 1990; Culter and Javalgi, 1992; Mueller and Caillat, 1996; Tse, Belk and Zhou, 1989; Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund, 1996). A large number of the studies looked at advertising in general, without a directed research question, however, some studies were particularly interested in a limited number of societal phenomena, such as gender roles and work ethics (e.g. Gilly, 1988; Tansey, Hyman, Zinkhan and Chowdhury, 1997). Resulting from this, current research can be broadly classified in three categories:

Sociological research Research of this type usually focuses on a certain aspect of society as portrayed in advertising. Research in this category typically tries to contrast culturally inspired norms such as gender roles between different countries. (e.g. Gilly, 1988; Tansey, Hyman, Zinkhan and Chowdhury, 1997).

Ethnology inspired research Studies in this category rely on a set of historic and general society values to explain perceived differences in advertising in two or more countries (e.g. Mueller and Caillat, 1996; Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund, 1996).

Cross-cultural psychology inspired research. This type of research aims to provide a somewhat deeper explanation of observed differences in advertising by linking appeals and observations to cultural dimensions, and hence trying to be able to forecast value and appeal differences in various countries (e.g. Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996).

4.2.1 Sociological research

Sociological research is mainly interested in examining a certain aspect of social life, as it is portrayed in advertising in two or more countries. Often, this type of research tries to characterise a culture's (or country's) social attitudes towards a certain aspect of society by examining advertising content for the values that are reflected in the content. As suggested above, this type of research usually does not claim to explain the differences in advertising, but does try to explain the differences in the societies by content analysing the advertising. Here are two examples of this type of research: one focuses on the decline of work ethics in the U.K. and the US, the other research examines gender roles in US, Mexican and Australian television commercials.

An Advertising Test of Work Ethic in the U.K. and the U.S. (Tansey, Hyman, Zinkhan and Chowdhury, 1997)

In this study, the authors examine if a perceived declining trend in work ethics can be supported by examining business journals' advertising. According to the authors, "many social commentators in the U.K. and the U.S. claim that their respective country is in economic decline, and that a major cause of this decline is the indigenous workforce's increased pursuit of leisure and affiliation rather than work achievement". To test this hypothesis, the authors examined print advertisements for either liquor or cars published in *The Economist* and *Forbes* from 1971 to 1981. Using three coders (one UK male, one US male and one US female, all with a college degree (one with a Masters degree)), they analysed a total of 1757 ads for achievement, affiliation, work and leisure themes. The authors conclude that for the UK a shift from work to leisure/affiliation pursuits cannot be concluded from the themes of the advertisements studied, thus offering no support for the hypothe-

sis that a shift from work ethics to leisure and affiliation has taken place in the UK (as claimed by some social commentators). In the U.S., where social commentators are more divided on the possible decline of work ethics, the results of the study are less conclusive. Two declining trends could be established in the US with some statistical significance: a decline in work themes in liquor ads, and a decline of achievement themes in car ads. Tansey et al. also point out, that overall the work ethic may be stronger in the UK than the US.

Sex Roles in Advertising: A Comparison of Television Advertisements in Australia, Mexico and the United States (Gilly, 1988)

Gilly examined the differences of gender roles as portrayed by television commercials in Australia, Mexico and the United States of America, by studying to extent to which stereotypes were present in the commercials (i.e. to what extent the portrayed characters differed from the actual demographic variables of that country). In the study, a sample of 12 hours of programming was videotaped in Los Angeles, Monterrey and Brisbane from the major network with the highest viewer ratings at the times (8:00 AM – 4:00 PM on Tuesdays and 7:00 PM – 11 PM on Wednesdays). This yielded a total of 617 commercials: 275 US, 204 Mexican and 138 Australian commercials. One bilingual coder was used to code all the commercials for product type, product user, voice over and setting. Equally, each character was analysed for gender, age, marital status, employment (work situation, non-work situation, no indication), occupation (or work position), spokes person role, credibility (product user/authority), help (receiving or giving help), advice (receiving or giving), role (partner, parent, homemaker, worker, celebrity, interviewer, other), physical activity and frustration. Gilly found some significant differences in the settings in which male and female characters were portrayed in the US commercials: "Women were more likely portrayed in the home, a store, or outdoors whereas men were more likely to appear in work settings." No differences were found between Mexican and Australian commercials. Female voiceovers were used in 12% of the commercials in all countries. In all three countries, females

portrayed in the commercial were generally younger than the demographic of that country. Gilly concludes, that overall the Australian commercials exhibit the least differences between men and women ("though still exhibit some sex role difference, [the commercials] are superior to the US ads in terms of overall equality of the sexes"). The US commercials varied to a greater extent, where females were more often portrayed as receivers of help, males more often portrayed as authority figures etc. Mexican commercials tended to have even more gender role differences, though Gilly comments: "from a country perceived so much more traditional than our own [the US], sex role stereotyping is not much greater than that in the US ads."

As can be seen from the above examples sociological research focuses exclusively on one defined societal phenomenon and tries to review this with the help of advertising images/messages. This type of research is also often used to illustrate the relationship between culture and advertising/media messages, given the often a priori assumption that advertising content is itself reflective of culture (Samiee and Jeong, 1994). As this type of research mainly examines one isolated area of interest, it can not and usually does not claim to illustrate a certain leaning towards themes and advertising appeals dominant in any one country overall.

4.2.2 Ethnology inspired research

This type of research is somewhat more general than the sociological research into advertising. Generally a broad selection of advertisements are examined for the presence of defined clues, appeals or values. Generally the presence (or absence) of these is then explained with some ethnology inspired research (such as historic and economic data, societal characteristics). This type of research clearly gives a more complete picture of advertising strategies in a country – however it is often difficult to theorise out of the obtained data a somewhat more global formula for the presence of advertising appeals in a given culture. Data obtained from this type of research could be described as descriptive of the advertising used in the countries studied.

A selection of often-cited studies from this category is given below. This selection illustrates the range of cultures, as well as the range of different values, appeals and clues that have been examined over time. The first example (Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund, 1996), examining the US and Sweden, is based purely on economic and social data, and gives no importance to cross-cultural theory. The second and third examples (Caillat and Mueller, 1996; Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996), examining the UK and the US, and China and the US derive some of their research questions from cross-cultural theory (Hall), however overwhelmingly examine the advertising with a background of economical, historical and ethnological data and observations.

The Ideology of Advertising: The United States and Sweden (Wiles, Wiles and Tjernlund, 1996)

In this study, the authors examine the differences and similarities of printed advertising in the US and Sweden. The findings were also contrasted with a content analysis of advertisements published some 20 years earlier in the US, trying to establish if there has been a significant shift in values portrayed. The ads were collected from the 10 highest paid (SIC.- that is the way they say it exactly, without any clarification) circulation magazines, and only half page ads and more were considered. In total, 269 US American and 275 Swedish ads were included in the study, coded by five coders from both countries for appeals such as youthfulness, racial distribution, body shape, levels of undress depicted, leisure activities, housework and childcare activities, individuals and relationships and product categories. Overall Wiles et al. conclude, that there are very little differences in all of these variables. Ads in both countries depict people overwhelmingly as youthful, and more slender body types were represented in ads than can be found in the general population. Overall, the authors conclude that "advertisers identify life with leisure [...], private life is what matters, mainly life as individuals and to a lesser extent as couples or families; youth and a slender body are the "ideal"; and life is best when there are no racial differences". Also the authors conclude, that overall the values portrayed are identical to those found in the US 20 years ago.

The Influence of Culture on American and British Advertising (Caillat and Mueller, 1996)

This study is one of the most cited and reviewed studies in this category. Caillat and Mueller compare British and American beer advertising, hence reducing the comparison to only one specific product type and allowing greater focus on the cultural variables. Caillat and Mueller also view beer as "one of the more culturally bound" products. Caillat and Mueller assume, ethnologically, that Britain and the US are similar countries; based on the common language and cultural heritage, advanced economic state of the two countries, the economic policies during the 1980s, economic co-operation as well as similar advertising spending. The study tries to counter the well known argument by Theodore Levitt, that a standardised advertising approach can be used for most products by demonstrating the different advertising values used in the two countries.

In the study, Caillat and Mueller examined a total of 62 television commercials, made by domestic companies for broadcast on their domestic market television (UK or US respectively). The samples consisted of 24 commercials for 12 US American brands and 38 commercials for 19 British brands. These commercials were consequently examined for their cultural values, rhetorical style, advertising appeals and the occasion for product usage. Caillat and Mueller define individualism/independence, modernity/newness and achievement as American cultural values, while they associate affiliation, tradition/history and eccentricity as British cultural values. They also categorised direct speech as American style, while indirect speech was associated with British culture. The commercials were also examined for the dominant advertising appeal out of a list of eight primary appeals as defined by Beckman and Gilson (1987): rational, emotional, negative, positive, humour, fear, sex and patriotism. Finally, the commercials were examined for the context in which the product was used. According to Caillat and Mueller, the British commercials were more likely to present beer drinking as a common occurrence, where as American commercials would depict beer drinking in a "special occasion" setting.

The samples were coded by the two researchers and recoded by a graduate student for intercoder reliability. The results supported the hypotheses set by Caillat and Mueller. American advertising showed significantly more "American cultural values", whereas the British commercials displayed overwhelmingly British cultural values. The full results are given in Appendix E.

Equally, nearly all of the samples US commercials (91.7%) used direct speech, whereas 97.4% of the British commercials used indirect speech. Caillat and Mueller also found, that the dominant primary advertising appeal was emotional/sex for the US (78.9% as compared to only 8.1% in the UK for that appeal), whereas humour dominated in the UK (91.9% as compared to only 21.1% in the US). Equally, the UK commercials tended to show beer consumption as a common or regular activity (83.8% in the UK, 14.3% in the US), whereas the US commercials tended to depict a special occasion as the setting for beer consumption (85.7% compared to 16.2% in the UK).

Cultural Values Reflected in Chinese and U.S. Television Commercials (Cheng and Schweitzer, 1996)

This study is one of the most complete studies of television commercials. It compares a large number of prime time commercials for all types of product categories from the major networks in the US (616 commercials) with commercials from Chinese television stations (486 commercials). The commercials were coded using a procedure developed by Cheng, using Pollay's (1983) typology of cultural values in advertising. Cheng and Schweitzer used two pairs of coders. Cheng and Schweitzer treated traditional values, such as family and tradition, as being eastern values, while progressive values (such as modern) were linked to American culture. In their findings, the dominant values reflected in Chinese commercials were found to be "family", "technology" and "tradition", whereas US advertising dominantly reflected "enjoyment", "individualism" and "economy". Common to both cultures were the values "modern" and "youth". Cheng and Schweitzer point out, that Western values were most frequently used in commercials for imported products. Additionally, Cheng and Schweitzer point out that val-

ues portrayed in commercials differs for product categories. For example, the value "family" is used in both the U.S. as well as in China in commercials for medicine.

4.2.3 Cross-cultural psychology inspired research

Compared to the former types of research, this type of research aims to make, at least to a certain extent, predictions about cultural variable variation across cultures by linking research findings to "intercultural dimensions" research, such as Hofstede's culture dimensions.

Three unique studies fall into this category. Zandpour, Campos, Catalano et.al. (1994) examined advertising strategies and style, and in 1996 Albers-Millers and Gelb made a first attempt to establish some hypothesis on predicting advertising values in different cultures in relation to cultural dimensions.

Albers-Miller and Gelb were the first to attempt to measure the extent to which cultural dimensions are reflected in advertising appeals (and values). They used a list of 42 common advertising appeals published by Pollay (1983) – the same list as used in part by Cheng and Schweitzer and Caillat and Mueller. Out of the 42 appeals, 12 appeals are argued to have no relation to any of the dimensions and were eliminated. Subsequently the relationships between the appeals and the cultural dimensions were hypothesised (for example: Relative frequency of self-respect appeals is correlated positively with country scores on the individualism dimension). As not all product categories were advertised equally among the countries, Albers-Miller and Gelb selected advertising only in four categories to be included in their research: office equipment, financial services, clothing and accessories, and travel services. Following this, around 200 advertisements in all four categories were taken from the main business publications of Chile, Brazil, Taiwan, Japan, India, Israel, Mexico, United States, France, Finland and South Africa were collected, and coded using the 30 appeals identified as being culture related.

As a result, 10 of the 30 hypothesised relationships could be positively supported. These are:

Five of eight appeals for Hofstede's power distance

Three of eight appeals for uncertainty avoidance

Two of six appeals for masculinity

None of the appeals for individualism.

Because of the relatively small sample size, outliers in the data were subsequently removed. This yielded a further 8 supported relationships. In detail there were:

Three additional appeals for individualism (total 3)

One additional appeal for power distance (total 6)

Two for uncertainty avoidance (total 5)

Two for masculinity (total 4)

Albers-Miller and Gelb concluded from their findings, that advertising appeals may be related in a non-random way, i.e. that advertising values may well vary inline with the cultural dimensions as described by Hofstede.

5. Aims & Objectives

The aim of the study is to understand and explain how culture plays an important role in advertising communications, and to investigate how these can vary across countries that are perceived to be culturally close and between different product categories in different countries.

The main objectives are:

- To analyse and describe advertising appeals used in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Germany.

Using television commercials from all three countries, the appeals, as well as information content and communication style used are analysed both for all commercials together as well as in different product categories to allow for a more differentiated reading of the results. With the help of this analysis, the main appeals and themes that are used can be described and attributed both to the product category as well as the country specific cultural environment for a product and advertis-

ing as a whole. Equally I will identify and describe the frequently used communication styles and the information content of commercials in each country and/or product category respectively.

- To relate the similarities and differences to cultural factors.

The similarities and findings can then be analysed using established theories and research findings in cultural and intercultural research, and explained within the framework of these. Using cluster analysis, possible links could be established between cultural dimensions and preference for certain advertising appeals and styles, allowing for theorisation about variances on a broader scale.

Following from the above objectives, the study may, also potentially provide a guide for practical application in cross-cultural advertising. Given the descriptive nature of the findings, the study may well be useful to advertising practitioners seeking to better understand and be informed about current advertising in the three countries covered. Up to now, there is no research available that covers advertising in these countries to such an extent and depth. Following from this, the study may well be useful determine a possible future strategy for practitioners seeking to enter either or all of the three markets, or to enhance their present advertising and understanding.

Furthermore, as the study aims to provide more than just factual information on current practice, but tries to combine the factual outcomes with previous cultural research, it may provide useful for further theorisation of the interaction of culture and advertising. Equally, the findings may be applicable more broadly to encompass consumer psychology and behaviour and their interplay with culture.

6. Procedure

6.1 Advertising and Media selection

Commercials included in the study are collected on the most popular general entertainment channels in the three countries. The channels included were terres-

trial commercial channels, such as ITV and Channel 4 in the UK, as well as satellite and cable channels widely available, such as Sky One in the UK or RTL4 in the Netherlands. Equally included are the terrestrial public television channels in Germany (ARD and ZDF) and in the terrestrial not-for-profit channels in the Netherlands (Nederland 1, 2 and 3). An overview of all television stations used is given in Appendix F. The commercials were recorded during late 1999 and early 2000, and covered daytime, afternoon and evening advertising (10 am till around midnight), and covered all types of programming that were shown during this time without exception. This sampling should maximise the range of advertising available, and minimise the risk to select advertising aimed mainly for one consumer group.

All commercials, regardless of whether or not they advertised a domestic or foreign product or service were included in the study. However, commercials exclusively for a special event or promotion/contest were excluded, such as advertising focusing around the Euro 2000 Football championships. As all commercials recorded were broadcast on domestic channels, commercials destined for each target market were collected - regardless of whether or not they were standardised and equally used in other markets, or if they were localised.

6.2 Coding Instrument

In 1983 Pollay published a coding framework for measuring the cultural appeals in advertising, primarily as a response to the discussion over the cultural consequences of advertising values.

By reviewing a variety of advertising related literature, as well as literature and values research in other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology and the humanities, Pollay created a list of 42 cultural appeals most commonly found in advertising. He notes, that advertising does reflect a somewhat different set of values as can be found in a society in general (Pollay, 1986), a notion which he termed the "distorted mirror", and which has led to a significant debate over the subject matter. Although American based and derived, the list was claimed to be relatively culture free. In the following years, the list was used successfully by Pollay

(Belk and Pollay, 1985; Belk, Pollay, Bryce, 1985) to compare advertising values in Japanese and US commercials. The appeals were also successfully used in part by Caillat and Mueller (1996) and Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) for their research into advertising in the UK, US and China. Albers-Miller and Gelb (1996) used 30 of the 42 appeals successfully in their study of advertising in 11 countries. In 1997 Cheng tested the frequency of appeals used in Chinese television advertising using the full list of Pollay appeals. Cheng concludes, that Pollay's framework "for advertising in North America is applicable to the Chinese context". Table 1 gives an overview over the appeals Pollay identified, and compared to those used in the Cheng and Schweitzer study (1996).

Pollay's list of advertising appeals is, in my view, unique in two aspects, which also make it extremely useful to use it in this context:

- The list is a comprehensive, and possibly complete, list of possible appeals that can be used. By being derived from previous studies, and conclusively verified independently, it may help to avoid the pitfall of not asking the "right" question or missing out on possible appeals.
- The list has been successfully used in intercultural research, and has been validated as been applicable even outside the Western advertising culture.

Other, more technical or strategic classification methods for advertising, such as Berkman & Gilson's Advertising Strategies, Simon's Creative Strategies (1971) and the Resnick-Stern Information Content Classification System (1981) may be useful for a later, more complete and descriptive analysis of the advertising practices in selected product categories during the PhD stage.

6.3 Coding Procedure

In order to maximise the efficiency of coding, as well as reduce the possibility of culture-linked misunderstandings all commercials were coded by coders that were born and raised in the country for which they coded the commercials, as well as reside there. Two coders in each country were asked to code the commercials independently. All coders are in their late 20s, and hold a university degree.

Each coder was trained in coding using the Pollay list, and all values were extensively discussed prior to doing. Some 50 commercials per country were "test" coded to familiarise the coders with the procedure, and to avoid complications and uncertainty using the coding instrument. All problems and uncertainties that arose during that stage were extensively discussed and cleared.

Each coder used a computer programme to code the commercials. They were presented with a page and a list of all Pollay appeals, with check-boxes next to the appeals to mark if the appeals were present. When holding the mouse over the appeal, a full description of the appeal was displayed as a guideline. There was no restriction on how many times a commercial was viewed, however the coders reported watching a commercial on average 2 times to complete the coding.

Intercoder reliability was as follows:

UK:	92.2%
Netherlands:	89.1%
Germany:	93.2%

The levels that were obtained are clearly satisfactory intercoder reliabilities.

7. Work Done So Far

7.1 Initial Stage

In the first six months I explored various angles of analysing corporate communication for their intercultural component, and explored different communication instruments for their viability. I also familiarised myself with existing research in this area, and conducted various literature searches on the topic.

I also attended the University research methodology seminar (September-November 1998), and familiarised myself with various different research methods.

After further literature searches I identified the communication instrument that seemed the most appropriate for analysis (television commercials), as there has been some work on the subject matter, however little systematic work in both culturally close and European countries. A preliminary theoretical frame-

work for analysis was developed, based on the Pollay list of advertising appeals.

7.2 Data Collection and initial analysis

Following the initial stage, I collected television commercials according to the procedure explained in section 6, and trained and instructed the coders to code the material collected. For each country around 2200 commercials were recorded. After elimination of duplicate commercials, 597 commercials remained from the UK, 546 from the Netherlands and 460 from Germany.

So far, I identified the dominant advertising appeals for each of the three countries, the results of which are given in Appendix G.

A preliminary analysis of these results suggests that there are quite significant differences in the appeals used in television commercials in the three countries - as well as certain similarities. Not surprisingly perhaps, "effective" is the most dominant appeal in all countries, given that commercials in Western Europe generally tend to reason that a product is "effective" as defined by Pollay. However, the frequency of this appeal occurring is somewhat higher in Germany (50.9%) as compared to the UK (43.2%). Other appeals differ quite considerably in their use: Some striking examples are the use of nature/natural in Germany (17.5%) as opposed to only 3.8% of UK advertising. Equally Dutch commercials favour enjoyment and relaxation appeals, whereas German commercials focus more on health (possibly related to nature) and friendship. Productivity is another frequently used appeal in German advertising, and less often identified in the UK and the Netherlands.

However, there are also some appeals that are used in all three, or two, of the countries with the same, or a similar, frequency. An example of these appeals is "Independence" in the UK and the Netherlands (10.4 and 10.6%).

These, and other observed differences, suggest that advertisers in all three countries use different certain different, as well as certain similar, appeals to market their products and services. As appeals try to match, at least to some extent, consumer values, the differences

in appeals suggest that, although geographically close, economically united and generally regarded as culturally close, the difference in consumer values is significant.

The data used above is however drawn from all commercials, regardless of their product category. This may distort the picture quite significantly - as generally certain products from one category will be overwhelmingly associated to certain specific appeals. An example for this would include beer commercials - that use very different appeals to sell in the UK, the Netherlands and Germany, or telephone companies - which use virtually identical appeals in all three countries. It therefore seems sensible to not only focus on the appeals in all commercials as a whole - but also to split the results back up into product categories, and analyse these individually.

Further it seems viable to not only focus on the pure presence or absence of an appeal, but to also focus on the context in which this appeal is used. This would be, on the one side, the product it is associated to, and on the other side, the information that is provided and how this information is provided.

This raises the question if and how a more profound analysis of the data can be made. Resulting from the previous research, I suggest to include two further tools for analysis: The Resnick Stern System - which counts the information cues, and the Simons Creative Strategies method of analysis. These may well help to complete the picture - as they provide vital additional information regarding the context in which the appeals are used.

8. Further Work and Direction for Future Research

Research into the cultural differences in advertising is still relative young. Although a number of articles deal with the topic, a large number of them focuses on specific topics or specific product categories, and does only rarely attempt to link their findings with previously researched cultural dimensions. Equally the majority of the research focuses on America and the Far East, and few arti-

cles deal with Europe exclusively. This study will, hopefully, fill this gap.

Previous research has suggested that not only the appeals, but also the communication style as well as the information content is significantly different in various cultures. My analysis so far has shown significant differences in the appeals used, however using methods like the Resnik-Stern Classification System and Simon's Creative Strategies in addition to the appeals, the analysis of differences and similarities of commercials in the three countries can be enhanced significantly.

Equally important can be the difference and similarities in various product categories, particularly as some products may well be considered more "culturally charged" than others. Anecdotal evidence exists, that commercials for washing powders and other household goods differ only slightly from culture to culture, however food and drinks advertising seems to be significantly different.

Previous research has en large focused on describing the observed differences, with few attempts (Albers-Miller and Gelb among the most prominent ones) being made to try and relate the observed differences in appeals, communication style and information content back to cultural dimensions. Using cluster analysis, as well as statistical methods, I will attempt to link the observed differences and similarities back to cultural dimensions. A detailed framework for which still has to be developed.

Additionally, I will attempt to test, in a type of focus-group-setting, how different commercials are perceived when displayed to members of an other cultural group - and what type of reactions they show towards being exposed to a different type of strategy and/ or commercial message. To achieve this, I will show commercials, localised for one market, to a small selection of members of another culture (market): For example British Holsten advertising to German consumers, Dutch Heineken commercials to British viewers. Following the viewing, we will discuss their reactions to the commercials, as an additional qualitative analysis of exposure to foreign advertising content.

8.1 Structure

The **introduction** places the current study into its overall context. It discusses the advertising market in general, and the international advertising market in particular. It also discusses the fundamentals of the standardisation/localisation debate, as well as presents the market figures for the three countries and introduces the regulatory framework as well as the media environment of the countries studied.

Chapter Two looks at research into intercultural dimensions, and sets the framework for analysis of the findings and their relation to culture. This chapter reviews the major theories, including the works of Hall, Hofstede and Schwarz.

Chapter Three focuses on existing research into international advertising and cultural differences. It presents some major studies in and their findings as well as discusses their relevance to this study.

Chapter Four focuses on the methodology, and explores methodologies and concepts that have been used in previous research. It discusses the methodologies used in light of the objectives of this study and presents the methodology for this study.

Chapter Five explores the possible links between values, appeals (Pollay), communication style (Simon) and information content (Resnick-Stern) and the cultural dimensions and research presented in chapter two. This chapter provides the link between the research findings and the cultural dimensions.

Chapter Six presents the findings for advertising as a whole, and explores the possible links as discussed in the previous chapter. It also includes a more detailed view of the limitations and regulations of advertising as a whole in the countries, and goes on to discuss the implications.

Chapter Seven presents the findings for selected product areas, focusing more in depth on certain significantly different and similar areas, and explores the reasons for these observations. It also discusses the country specific factors, such as economic and regulatory factors, as well as broader implications for selected sectors.

Chapter Eight focuses on the effects that exposure to a different set of appeals, styles and information content has. It explores, resulting from the focus group analysis, how consumers would react to these differences.

Chapter Nine details the conclusions and implications of the study, reviewing the study's purpose, discussing the study's limitations, and gives directions for future research.

In the next twelve months I will further collect and analyse commercials, as well as analyse the commercials for communication styles and information content. I will also further familiarise myself with the regulatory requirements for different product categories in the countries discussed.

The study is expected to be completed by the end of September 2001. My timetable is scheduled as follows:

November – January 01:

establish a framework to link appeals, content and style and cultural dimensions/draft of Chapter 5

December 00:

Focus groups in Germany/Netherlands

February 01:

Focus group in the UK.

March 01:

Further analysis of data

April – June 01:

write Chapters 6/7/8/9

July 01:

revision of Chapters 2/3/, complete first full version of thesis

August 01:

final revision/formatting

September - October 01:

submit thesis