Consumption:

From Cradle to Grave.

In-depth research into brands' conceptualization of children as a
consumer market in Northern and Western Europe

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Abstract

Title:	Consumption: From Cradle to Grave. In-depth research into brands' conceptualization of children as a consumer market in Northern and Western Europe
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Keywords:	Children, Consumption, Advertisements, Conceptualization, Branding, Societal developments
Thesis purpose:	To explore and understand how children are conceptualized as consumers through corporate branding in Western and Northern Europe.
Methodology:	This research has an inductive approach and uses hermeneutical methods. The qualitative methods used for this are interpretive content analysis and semi-structured interviews.
Theoretical perspective:	The study builds on previous literature on child consumerism, mainly derived from psychology, independent writers and CCT. The nature of consumption and branding is considered in their regards to conceptualization of children as consumers.
Empirical data:	Empirical data derived from content analysis of printed advertisement and interview transcriptions.
Conclusion:	Among others, it was found that children are portrayed as influential, imaginative and linked to social and personal values. This research identifies the polarized debate about child consumption and realizes families, politics, branding and media play an important role in this. Brands' conceptualization of children confirms this, however brands' aren't the only influence in children's growing consumerism.

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1. Introduction

"If my tween were in the market for, oh, say, highly inappropriate sexy thongs, she would be awash in options, such as the new brand coming this spring from Victoria's Secret called 'Bright Young Things'."
– Goldman, 2012

Soft drinks, toiletries, make-up, sexy lingerie, videos and computer games are just a few out of many examples of products targeted towards children from preschool age-up in today's western world society (Linn, 2004). When for example pop-star Madonna was provocatively singing about being a material girl in the 80's, academic researchers and corporate businesses were only just seeing the tip of an iceberg, which today has turned out to be one of the biggest and most important markets in today's society; the market of child consumers.

But how are children seen as a consumer market by brands? What is child consumerism and how did it become such an important market for companies to tap into? Why are companies trying so hard to sell products to children, when children have very little, if any, money to spend? How do corporations selling products to children understand this market and do they feel having any ethical responsibilities? Is it possible to create brand identities for children? How do advertisements targeted towards children conceptualize children as consumers?

These questions represent the thoughts that we were trying to find an answer to in the making of this master thesis. Based on the interest in marketing and consumption, this specific target group was found as one of the more appealing, challenging and important groups of consumers to understand, as quite little information is yet to be found. After all, children are the future generation, so understanding the activities connected to this market seem relevant for both academics as well as practitioners.

<u>Background</u>
In the last century consumption has exploded, and it has turned out to appear more as a foundational rather than merely epiphenomenal characteristic of society (Corrigan, 1997). The latest step in this evolvement includes children as consumers. Although research in consumption dates back to the 1930s (Arndt 1986; Ekström 2010), research on consumption in relation to children is relatively new (Hansen et al., 2002; Tufte et al. 2009).

The interest in children as a vital marketsegment took off with the baby boom generation after the Second World War (McNeal, 1992). The idea of a "teenager" as a distinct life cycle phase combined with the start of a so called 'youth market' did not attract much attention from marketers or researchers until

the mid-1950s (Davis, 1990). The idea of youth consumers or teenagers as a distinct subculture, with its own consumer related behaviours, was a result of the growing post-war economy in the western industrialized societies, primarily The United States directly followed by European countries (Gunter and Furnham, 1998). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the concept of consumer socialization was introduced by the American researcher Scott Ward, who defined consumer socialisation as "the process of learning consumer-related skills, knowledge and attitudes" (Ward, 1974). Despite different definitions from researchers, consumer socialisation is considered as a developmental process that proceeds through various stages as the child grows up and gradually becomes an adult consumer (Tufte 2010). Ward's work on consumer socialisation indicated the beginning of psychological research in the field of children as consumers.

Children are a market with a great economic potential and growing development. By the end of the 1960s, children and teenagers were already spending $2 billion a year in America alone. When direct marketing towards children began, this figure was raised to $6 billion by the end of the 1980s and in mid-90's it was estimated that children and teenagers annually indirectly affect consumer flows for more than $132 billion worth of household purchases (McNeal, 1992). Imagine what the continued development since has resulted in.

Over time, a rather polarizing debate on children as consumers has evolved. On the one hand, critical publications written by some academics, but mostly journalists, criticize the ways marketeers 'exploit' advertising to children. Noticeable critique include publications such as *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers* (Quart, 2003); *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture* (Schor, 2004); *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Kids* (Linn, 2004); *Kidnapped: How Irresponsible Marketers are Stealing the Minds of Your Children* (Acuff & Reicher, 2005) and *Consumer Kids: How Big Business Is Grooming Our Children For Profit* (Mayo & Nairn, 2009). The common perception here is children are vulnerable victims incapable of understanding the manipulation from marketers, and therefore need protection from the material and commercialised world. On the other hand, marketers and brand professionals claim that children are strong individuals, far from passive victims but instead should be perceived as sophisticated (Lindstrøm, 2004; Buckingham , 2011). Lindstrøm, refers to the expression KGOY that stands for "Kids Grow Older Younger" (Lindstrøm, 2003). In his opinion, children are empowered by all the information they receive from media such as TV, magazines and online channels, and this exposure to information educates and raises children to be conscious consumers.

Stemming from this debate there has been an increased interest in child consumers within the last ten years. In 2004, the European Centre for Children's Products at Université de Poitiers, Angoulême,

France, held the first international conference about children and consumption (Tufte et. al., 2009). The conference was so successful; it has resulted in a bi-yearly event since then.

The interest in advertisement towards children has also influenced society and policy makers. Two issues claimed to be effects of marketing commercials and media are a) the premature sexualisation of children, especially girls, and b) obesity among children (Buckingham, 2011). Lamb and Brown (2006), Levin and Kilbourne (2008) and Mayo and Nairn (2009) mainly address the issue of sexualisation and criticize it greatly.

Furthermore, children's food consumption and the role of marketing and advertising in that, has turned into a political issue. In 2007 the British media regulator Ofcom (Office of Communications) implemented a total ban on all food and drinks with a high level on fat, salt and sugar, in and around programmes appealing to children under the age of 16 (Ofcom, 2007). According to Ofcom's estimates, such a regulation would result in 41 percent less advertisements for children under the age of 16 and 51 percent less for children under the age of 9 (Ofcom, 2006). The regulation was a political step taken to protect children from suffering from obesity. In Scandinavia similar regulations related to child consumption have been a part of the political agenda. In Sweden, it is not allowed to show television advertisements aimed at children below the age of 12 (Tufte, 2010). While in Norway, the Norwegian Broadcasting Act has put a total ban on advertising and commercial sponsorship, related to children and child television (Ibid).

Polarized standpoints, international conferences and political influence stress the importance and relevance of further insight into this field of study. However, little academic research is available on the perspective of the marketplace. The main focus of previous research conducted in this field of study relates to how children process information targeted towards them, and how they respond to being in the centre of an expanding market segment. The constantly increasing exposure of marketing from traditional marketing channels such as TV commercials and magazines, as well as new marketing channels such as websites, social media and online games, all impact children's ability to judge and make decisions related to consumption. But, what exactly is it that company branders do when they try to target a product to a child? Research lacks on information to answer that part of the field.

Previous research

'Twenty-five Years of Research on Consumer Socialization of Children' (Roedder-John, 1999) is considered to be one of the more important studies within this research field. However, 1999 is quite some time ago and much has changed since that time. New media have influenced our lives; the internet, smartphones, social media have turned out to be a huge part of western civilization. Therefore, the environment in which children grow up, is no longer the same as when Roedder-John conducted her studies, which is why it is important to contribute with more accurate and time-relevant information.

Research on how children develop their thoughts and behaviour related to consumption has been covered in different ways (Tufte, 2007). Early research, as well as new research, has focused on children's ability to a) differentiate between TV commercials and regular TV shows and b) children's ability to understand the intention of commercials (Adler et. al., 1980; Tufte, 1999). This research points that children at the age of 5-7 learn to understand of commercials being blocks in between TV shows, but only when they turn 8-10 years old they realize the intention of it. Several pursuits to look for other useful data or previous works, have left us with articles from the early nineties on children's psychology in buying choices and tv-advertisement impacts (Roeder, 1999; Klein et al. 1992; Donohue et al, 1980; Caron and Ward, 1975). Also research regarding branded identities of children is outdated, relating back to between 2000 and 2005 (Gram, 2004; Kapoor and Verna, 2005; Moore and Lutz, 2000).

Quite some research has already been done on Fast Moving Consumer Goods about additives in food on the controversy on reducing sugar and fat in eatable products for children, and how to target the children and parents into buying certain foods (Johansson et. al., 2009; Strachan, 2008). However, the Fashion industry and Toy & Play industries are also of vast importance when it comes to researching consumerism among children (Ekström and Tufte, 2007). As the interest in children as consumers affects corporations, politicians and societal structures, it is highly necessary to uncover as many aspects of this field of research as possible. It is important to reduce this study to not just one industry and focus more on the branders' perspective than on the consumers' perspective. Research on companies' methods and thoughts lacks in this context. Based on the ongoing debate around whether children need more protection from advertisements or not, the importance on branders' perspectives in all this is indicated.

Research purpose

The research problem in the increasing child consumerism is twofold; first, there is a big change in the exposure to children when it comes to new consumer goods tailored to them, as the Victoria's example of a sexy lingerie tailored specifically for tweens. This alone sets the stage for moral and ethical discussion on childconsumption. Second, there is not enough up to date academic information on current branding towards children available, resulting in outdated or lacking publications on brand's perspectives.

The emerging purpose of this study is then to explore and understand how children are conceptualized as consumers through corporate branding in Western and Northern Europe. Conceptualization here is in the sense of perceived image and display, how children are portrayed or believed to be seen by brands. To make the findings more relevant, the issue consists of both a representation throughout the last couple of years as well as a current perspective from the field, thereby having more than just a present snapshot of the branding activities. When incorporating the brander's perspective in relation to the

results a corporate perspective will arise. Investigating the research question by two sub-questions provides information from a both a mediated view and branders' perspective. The following subquestions have been designed in order to expose that;

1. How have children been portrayed in printed advertisements between the years 2000-2013?
2. What is the branders' perspective on the conceptualization of children as consumers and branding towards children?

From an interpretive content analysis on 30 advertisement campaigns, resulting in 54 prints in total, published between the years 2000-2013, the image of children portrayed by brands is uncovered and broken down across three industries; the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, the Toy & Play industry and the Fashion industry. Through interviews with management employees from four major companies, also producing and targeting products to children, the current state of branders' perspective is provided, adding additional insights to the matter. Exploring branders' perspective crosses a gap in academic research within this field.

A critical discussion of the correlation between empirical findings as well as the context with interdisciplinary theories from previous and existing researchers, will serve the basis for a conclusion on how children are conceptualized as consumers through corporate branding.

2.   Theoretical background

Before entering into an analysis on the conceptualization of children as consumers and branders' perspectives on this, there needs to be a theoretical foundation to depart from. Exploring the theoretical foundations for this study resulted in acquiring literature by researchers and independent writers on children as a consumer-market, as well as consumption theories rooted in Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). It is important to note the research fields here are mainly through sociological and anthropological points of view to clarify child consumerism. However, also theories and authors from psychological and economical perspectives are included. It can be argued for that psychology focuses more on internal perspective of a child's being, and sociology and CCT on the external, therefore the theories might show contradicting assumptions. Nonetheless, in order to gain a holistic perspective on previous research all fields have to be considered and included in this study. As branding-research on child consumerism is limited, overall theories of branding, identity formation and consumption patterns have been applied to child consumerism.

2.1   Child consumerism debate

Marketeers and brander's have shifted their focus to younger audiences, referring to them as toddlers, kids, kiddos, 'the little people', the underaged, tweens, teens, teenagers, high-schoolers, pre-schoolers, infants and so on. The line between which title belongs to what age group is very blurred. Children are very influential and from a very early age on certain products, brands or items from childhood shape their future lives. Like in Noble and Walker's research (1997) where adolescents leaving home to go to college often brought along teddy bears or other symbols representing their childhood. This exemplifies the impact brands could potentially have on children. As children develop loyalty by the age of seven (Quart, 2004), in order to provide a holistic view on the conceptualization of children, it is important to not limit research into very specific age groups as for example psychological research from Roedder (1998) and Ward (1974), or differentiate genders or a single industry. Therefore, it is essential to look at the ages 5-16, as these are formative for a child's personality and understanding (Ekström and Tufte, 2007). Within the debate around child consumerism there is a clear polarization to be seen. The commodification of childhood is entangled with a fundamental tension to modern, Western childhood; that between the sacred and the profane (Cook, 2000). Before the explanation of this polarization, historical views on childhood studies have to be mapped out.

2.1.1   Childhood studies on conceptualizing children

Philosopher, John Locke described children in his theory from 1690 as a blank canvas - *a tabula resa* - that gradually needs to be filled (Locke, [1690]1970). In Locke's opinion, children are shapeable and need constant protection by adults. Opposed to this is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom published *Émile* (Rousseau, [1762]2010), a story about the new civil child. In his opinion, children are like a little seed

who need to grow freely, a little seed that contains positive values and sometimes needs protection from weeds as a part of its' childhood needs.

Locke stresses the educational and intellectual aspects of fostering children's development, whereas Rousseau stresses the importance of letting a child grow as freely as possible, with some help from adults. Locke and Rousseau represent two different approaches to the perception of children and childhood. Locke's opinion represents an intellectual approach where children are viewed as creatures that, in relation to the stage of development they are at, must be affected and instructed. While Rousseau has a more emotional and experience-orientated approach, advocating to give children as much freedom as possible for development (Tufte, 2007).

Research on childhood has for several years been based on developmental psychology (Roedder-John, 1999), children's development from one stage to another, largely inspired by the theory of Jean Piaget (Ginsburg and Opper 1988). These stages are defined in terms of cognitive structures (Ekström and Tufte, 2007) and belong largely to the field of psychology. Piaget perceives the child as an insufficient being, which will gradually develop from childhood into adulthood. With assistance from teachers and parents, the child is taken step by step to become a competent adult person. This development is a concept defined as 'social becoming'. Distinguishing children as this 'social becoming' links to Locke's *tabula-resa* theory, the empty canvas that needs to be filled.

However, in recent years researchers have had more interest in the social interaction and negotiation process that takes place between children and adults in relation to consumption (Ekström and Tufte, 2007). This type of research perceives children as competent actors whom, in dialog and interaction with his or her environment, create their own meanings and interpretations. In modern sociology and ethnology, the child is considered as a 'social being' (James, Jenks and Prout 1998; Alanen 2000; Brembeck, Johansson and Kampmann 2004). Social beings here relates to children being studied and treated in their own right. This then relates to Rousseau's theory of letting children freely mature.

Distinguishing childhood in these different ways indicates a paradigm shift within research of childhood studies. As the Danish professor Kampmann (2003) expresses it; "The childhood research has been wrested from the iron grip of developmental psychology in which it has been kept" (Tufte, Kampmann and Hassel, 2003).

These two different perspective also tap into today's debate on childhood, where some writers support the perception of children needing protection and education, while others believe that children are competent and capable of defining their own life.

2.1.2   Consumer critic discourse versus marketing discourse

With reference to the two paradigms of historical childhood studies and philosophies, literature on children as consumers originates. Over time, a highly polarized debate with supporters of both paradigms has emerged as there is a growing number of popular publications bemoaning the apparent 'commercialization' of childhood (Buckingham, 2011). This, in relation to further on mentioned developments, has created two camps of writers whom see children in very different way, especially when it comes to consumption.

Within the last decade, a vast number of publications criticizing brands' methods of advertising products towards children have been published (Quart, 2003; Schor, 2004; Linn, 2004; Acuff and Reicher, 2005; Mayo and Nairn, 2009). Common with these writers is their criticism of marketing and advertising, which are blamed for [among others] causing eating disorders, obesity, encouragement of premature sexualisation, gender differences and the promotion of materialistic values (Buckingham, 2011). In their words consumerism is destroying the fundamental values of childhood. As Mayo and Nairn express it when they describe the introduction to how big business is grooming children for profit;

"Lorna is as bright and chatty as any 8-year-old, but one way or another, her childhood (and the childhood of every one of the UK's 11 million people aged 15 or under [...]) is touched by commercial pressures and opportunities as hungry businesses are finding ways to groom children for profit." (Mayo and Nairn, 2009:4).

Children here are, with reference to social becoming, not able to grow up properly, because marketing and advertisement is affecting them in all possible ways. Or when Susan Linn (2004) claims corporations seek to establish cradle-to-grave brand loyalty: "Every aspect of children's lives – their physical and mental health, their education, their creativity, and their values – is negatively affected by their involuntary status as consumers in the marketplace" (Linn, 2004:1). Other authors add to the dispute; "Today's teens are victims consuming and finding self-definition in logos, teens are the most troubling case-study" (Pfeffer, 1995: xxi) proliferations like "Tweenage clothes are becoming more and more risqué" (Quart, 2004) and Acuff and Reicher (2005) simply declare; "Parents, your children today are in greater physical, psychological, emotional, and ethical danger than during any other era of modern civilization." (Acuff and Reicher, 2005:xii)

The amount of quotations from different authors is to emphasize the fact that there is such a big, and growing concern from authors about consumption among children. Critique like this relates back to Locke's philosophy, of children being shapeable and needing protection. If marketeers manage to shape and affect children in their childhood, then they are one step closer to growing lifelong costumers.

It is important to remember the different background these critique writers stem from. Schor is the 'most' academically schooled and presents statistical data from a psychological study of the links between consumption and materialism. On the other hand, Quart's book is essentially a journalistic exposure of the teen marketing industry (Buckingham, 2011), as also a lot of proper source referencing was often lacking or figures she posed on the industry were often based on incomplete or unsourced data. These critiques do not present many proper clear findings and this places them rather in a position of being claim-makers than researchers.

The other camp, covered by the Danish brand specialist Martin Lindström, does not see children being in any danger. If any, Lindstrom claims they are more empowered than previous generations. In his opinion, children are empowered by all the information they receive from media such as TV, magazines and online channels.

"Today, many semi-public institutions are already delivering information to children about how and where to shop for healthy and environmentally-safe products and how to choose the best alternative among the many product choices. Children are raised to become conscious consumers and are empowered by the information and education they receive through brand communities, institutions and schools" (Lindstrøm, 2011, p.211).

In other words, the believe here is, as the marketplace has grown significantly with many companies targeting products towards children, children are becoming more critical and better capable of making educated choices, compared to any other generation before them.

Whereas the content in the publications from the critics focuses on the negative impact that marketing and advertisements has on children, followers of the marketing perspective focus on children's needs and how you can reach them. Martin Lindstrøm's *Brandchild* (2003) is essentially a study on children's perspective and views on brands. Siegel, Coffey and Livingstone published *The Great Tween Buying Machine* (2001), which basically is a guidance book claiming to have tool for marketeers on how to market brands towards children and to get their attention.

Martin Lindstrøm is however also not an academic researcher, he is an independent writer, brand-specialist and speaker. His publication was developed in corporation with Millward Brown, an international consumer research consultancy company. It is important to note this, as findings could be biased, which makes him a bit of an anti-hero in the debate of child consumption. The same goes for Siegel, Coffey and Livingstone, they are also professional marketers. Nonetheless, both publications resonate with Rousseau and present the new paradigm in childhood research.

These two camps, independent critics versus economically trained marketeers, form the debate on children as consumers. The critics' camp holds majority of supporters, whereas publications and speakers representing the marketeers' point of view are less popular, as Brigitte Tufte explained to us. This contradiction can be referred to as a consumer critic discourse versus marketing discourse (Olesen, 2003). The consumer critical approach wished protection of the child whereas the marketing orientated approach believes that children are strong independent and competent.

<u>Synopsis</u>
There are is an ongoing debate about the influence brands and advertising have on childhood. There are very polarized ideas between critical writers and the marketing field. This also involves the discrepancy in determining what a child actually is, which results in different views. The purpose is not to take a standpoint in the polarized debate on whether children are considered as weak or manipulated beings versus strong and independent beings. It is something that is there and has to be taken into account when aspiring brander's findings and believes. The wish is to rather investigate and analyze the evolvement and current state on branding towards children so information is clear on how brands conceptualize children as consumers, therewith contributing to both theory as well as practicality issues for branders.

Ultimately consumption is not just solely about objects or commodities, but also about social meanings (Buckingham, 2011). As consumption carries more underlying patterns of behaviour and distinction with it, it is important to map out the changing consumption patterns leading the way for the increased consumption among children.

2.2   Changing Consumption patterns

This section touches up on the several aspects influencing children's environment and the construction of their identity. Before entering in detail about the current state children and branders determine their consumption, a brief history of overall changing forms in consumption sets the frame for later on spoken of concepts.

2.2.1   New forms of consumption

The interest in consumption in recent decades is confirmed by the increasing number of research journals and conferences dealing with this topic (Ekström, 2011). Consumer research is conducted in different disciplines; however this study focuses on children seen as consumers, stemming from Consumer Culture Theory within the marketing field. Consumer behaviour has been studied along the years since the 30s using different approaches, theories and techniques reflecting the historical periods.

Between the 30's and 80's consumption was mainly researched by Behavioural Decision Theory. Consumers have been seen as "information-processor" or machine from which to gather information and understand attitudes, brand perceptions, satisfaction, involvement and other useful insights for marketers. At the start of the 1900's, child labour disappeared and children needed education and goods. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, Americans witnessed the rise and proliferation of mass-produced goods specifically designed, manufactured and merchandised for children, such as clothing, toys and furniture (Cook, 1995; Kline, 1993; Leach, 1993; Forty; 1996). A new market-segment was born. There are several ways to match 'child' with 'market'. One was to define these new commodities as beneficial or functional for children, they had a use value which could improvement a child's development. Another way is to see children as autonomous people whom also have the right to desire goods. It has become increasingly difficult to deny a child's 'right' to enjoyment in the world of goods (Cook, 2000). It wasn't until the development of personal display and status rising in the postmodern society, that children became markers of consumption and social status. The harsh economic conditions of the mid-1930's severely constrained the financial, and cultural capital of the mid-classes to even regard children as a way of status display.

Displaying status is largely covered and researched based on theories of Veblen and Bourdieu (Corrigan, 1997; Holt and Cameron, 2010), where the first talks about conspicuous consumption versus conspicuous leisure and the latter of cultural- and economical capital. Both are concepts explaining the ways people distinguish themselves in relation to others; be that other (sub)cultures or other classes. In today's society the ideas of cultural and economic capital are still highly relevant.

After the Second world war and the increased financial means gathered, it became possible for people to display their wealth and edification. According to Ekström (2011: 43-50) in the 80's an interpretive and so named, "postmodern turn" reverses the nature of consumer research, using sociological and anthropological theories and shifting the focus on consuming, communities, subcultures, consumer identity and lifestyle. She states that consumers are seen as 'tourists' or 'tribe members' and qualitative methods are adopted to grasp into the emotions, cultural meanings and symbolism of consumers.

In today's society children, as being part of a culture, society, family or groups, also become a way to emanate capital. By portraying the ideas of desire and self-consciousness onto the child, these concepts have now actually became part of childhood. In this view, children's likes and feelings are seen as important, but their display is almost as significant as the parent's, observer's, society, or any other 'adult' exterior group you'd like to label it to. A child's worth is no longer confined to values thought to be intrinsic to the child, but their value also depends on their appearance, as they display style and line outwardly to some observer (Cook, 2000). However, relating back to the previous discussion about protection versus fostering, a child consumer is not to be seen as just a pint-sized version of an adult (Gunter and Furnham, 1998). But is does map out the importance children have acquired over time as part of consumption overall. Children have since emerged as consumers in their own right and childhood

has become a primary social medium for the display of status and it has resulted in the creation and exchange of the commercial value of the childsegment.

The ideas of desire and displaced meaning and the exploration of the ways in which "certain objects and processes come to be invested with natural selection, boundaries, objective solidity, and material force" (Stephens, 1995: xx) fit childhood consumerism like a glove. Childhood is often invested with a sense of "naturalness", and children embody and personify how desire for consumer goods can be represented as something naturally occurring (Cook, 2000). The notion here is that for children it is normal to want, have and get possessions as they do not know differently, thereby, there is a continuous creation of new consuming generations.

The ongoing hegemony of capitalism depends upon the continual integration of people with commodities (Cook, 2004). The creation of the self and the realization of one's position in this world, is stimulated by consumption. What constitutes a person, lies in the reproduction of capitalist culture to the extent that they themselves serve as mediums to economic and exchange value; people become commodities. This has also been applied to childhood and is referred to as the "commodification of childhood' (Gottdiener, 2000). This commodification addresses the way children are created as social persons in the commercial marketplace.

What is however important to note is the way commodities and symbolic exchange value are used in a way to construct self identity and being a consumer as something 'natural'. It is therefore vital to discuss identity formation as a part of the development process of children as consumers.

2.2.2   Forming Identity

Children's identity formation and that of consumers in general, is important to note as branders' use this to evoke certain emotions and associations through advertisements with their brands.

Children identify with brands in the sense that these are seen to be parts of themselves (Allwood, 2010). They choose products and brands that suit their identity or values (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998). "One twelve year old murmured to me when a girl clad in Reebok gear passed by 'Adidas is cooler'." (Quart, 2003). Consuming these brands and products then becomes an element in a large scheme of the self-expression. Holt mentions in his dialectal theory on branding that in the 'Post Postmodern Branding Paradigm', which we are currently facing (Holt, 2002), this branding principle of self-expression and self identity is named Citizen-Artist. In this stage, brands become humanized and are relevant and authentic cultural resources. Elliot and Wattanasuwan (1989) refer to this as brands becoming a symbolic resource for the production of social identity. Children use and display brands to create their identity in this world. Products and brand-logo's say something about a person; who they are, what they stand for, what they believe in and so on. The self becomes transformed into the commodity self. If children are currently

enfranchised as persons, they have become so mainly through the medium of the marketplace over the course of suggestive generations of youth/consumer culture (Cook, 2000: 125).

However, this personal display is also based in relation to other people. Bartlett et al. (2005: 7) state, "it is important to re-acknowledge that individuals consume within broader networks of social relations and cultural codes." In regards to this, Kozinets (2002) builds upon social aspects from theories of Tönnies (1964) and Maffesoli (1996). Where the first focuses on the 'Gemeinschaft' idea of a close-knit community and belonging, and the latter on neo-tribalism. Neo-tribalism includes networks of people gathering together for social interaction, often around consumption, brands, interests, and values (Bauman, 2001; Kozinets, 2002; Maffesoli, 1996; Thompson and Troester, 2002). These concepts, of how the everyday life of post-modern tribes associate with common interests and lifestyles, leisure activities, fashion, fandom, gaming (Kozinets, 2001), have been widely applied in research present day. Self-conception is then formed through a collection of things like role identities, personal attributes, relationships, fantasies, possessions and other symbols for the purpose of self-creations and self-understanding (Belk, 1988; Turner, 1987)

Thus the branded identity comes from the formation of one's identity both in relation to others - where the feeling of self is created with the collection of brands that fit your certain social circle - as well as in relation to personal values which a brand represents to a consumer.

Examining values and the creation of personal values is important to analyze, as advertisements and brands try to tap in to children's' subconscious, associating the product or brand to a child's personal values. Consequently, the brand or product then again forms the symbolic resource consumers seek for in the production of their social identity (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998).

Children learn social values and shape their personal culture when they are in constant contact with other people living in a certain country, a process Kotler et al. (2009) named "enculturalisation". These values differ from person to person and from country to country, and some researchers examine how consumervalues influence the shaping of consumerneeds in different countries (Jain et al., 2011). The general values of a nation, for instance equality between sexes and freedom of speech in the Nordic countries, constitute a sort of structure in which individuals form their own evaluation of the world (Ekström, 2011). Nonetheless, some values might not be transferred to new generations and society or nation values might change over time.

Ordinary behaviour shapes the values of people and their concerns with the environment and interactions with other people (Dielemans and Zanni, 2012). Personal values are measured in this segmentation research when researching consumerism among children. Understanding the development of an individual's internal motivation to take part in consumption, contributes to a better understanding

of how children are seen as consumers by brands, or by people working for these brands are. Their reflectivity is what develops certain campaigns targeted to children.

Self-identity formation through consumption relies on all of the complex aspects of social interaction described above. However, in addition, there are other aspects often neglected or ignored by those writers emphasizing consumption alone (Gottdiener, 2000). So now that the parameters of belonging, social values and identity formation are clear, the next step is identifying the changing family constructions in this post modern world.

2.2.3   Changing families: the postmodern family

In the new millennium, accompanied by globalization, increased mobility and so for, not only life itself, but also traditions have also undergone some major changes. The mushrooming one-stop-shopping centres, growth of convenience stores and fast food industry are a catalyst for people to catch up to overwhelmingly fast lifestyles. Also the changing definition of what a family constitutes has been historically evolving, from the dissolve of the nuclear family to the beginning of the postmodern family.

For children growing up, the construct of two-parent family is less common today, since the increased rate of divorced parents. As a result, new satellite families emerge, like for example a couple with children from different marriages, accompanied by the several step-sisters or half brothers and new grandparents and extended family. The idea of the nuclear, two-parent family is no longer largely existent (Ekström, 1997). The emerging notion of family is outlined as a group of members who feel their lives are scattered by intensified pressures of society, resulting in personal disconnections (Gergen, 1991). Adolescent indifference to family identity, instability in the lives of couples through rapidly increasing divorce rates, and destruction of the 'nest' notion from previous nuclear families are important characteristics in the postmodern family (Shorter, 1975). This fragmentation has fostered an absence of social interaction in postmodern families, framing a historical change which causes a social disruption (Holt and Cameron, 2010). The postmodern family is characterized by isolation, insecurity, and individualism (Stacey, 1990), which is partly led by disappearing social structures and the rising use of technology. The new postmodern family is characterized by a sense of fragmentation. In resistance to this alienation, there is a growing counter-argument that states postmodernity is evolving to encourage a search for more fluid social bonds.

This is where consumption taps in. Consumption creates a way to interact with the family. Making family time, or "doing' family around the consumption of children's playthings isn't just about to the pressures of the established social structure, it is also a way to define important social-cultural sites by way of consumption practices (Philips, 2007). Things as playing interactive toys with family members to establish family values, routine visits together to the supermarket or shopping-mall, online browsing for

the child's new laptop and so forth, are all examples of consumption being used as a way to create family bonding. In a very real and everyday sense childhood and its memories are formed by commodities. Daniel Miller (1998) also sees shopping as an activity whose primary meaning derives from the family relationships it helps produce and reproduce. Philips' study on toys (2005) reveals commodities obtain an age- and family-making attribute where the perception of family is constantly revisited, redefined, repaired or reaffirmed. By choosing to consume cultural and commercial products, families show who they are or who they would like to be.

Not only the institution of family has changed, also the increased online interactivity and the exposure to online platforms have shaped children

2.2.4   Value and the media: the disconnected generation

Social networking and messaging changes the way postmodern families view the world. Concerns about technology negatively affecting family lives have started rising among researchers and families. Turkle (2012) claims that technology has become the architect of our intimacies; as our technology use ramps up, our emotional lives ramp down.

As technology becomes an increasing part of people's lives, it seems virtually impossible to escape the world of laptops, tablets, pc's, and smartphones. The unstoppable growth of newly developed technologies and emerging innovations seems to never end. Researchers are debating whether these are harming or improving community life and social relationships (Kraut, et al., 1998).

Children surf the web looking for identity constructs but suffer from an over-exposure of mediated images. Nearly 90% of American teenagers and adults own a cell phone and around 60% own desktop computers and laptops (Casey, 2012). In the fast-growing, ever changing realm of electronic marketing, consumers find that they can now order even their groceries online. People have the ability to upload photos within minutes and share their lives over social networks, although there's a high risk of being scrutinized, which can really harm children. Cyber bullying, 'thinspo' websites[1], lifestyle blogs and online modelling competitions are all constructs of the extensive media use in today's society. Simulation and theming are but singular aspects of an expanding media-driven environment that includes this virtual reality wherein children increasingly consume (Gottdiener, 2000). The internet gives the impression everything is attainable. Due to the globalization and rise of global structures, unattainable far-away examples delivered through the web will become a standard for children to measure themselves with. Within this multidimensional universe, overlaps occur in the valorized images constructed in the worlds of fashion, show business, professional sports, advertising, magazines, Hollywood films and television (Gottdiener, 2000). As they are connected through technology, they are also disconnected through the loss of personal human face-to-face connections. People have reduced the times for meeting and

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[1] A thinspo website is a platform or blog with thinspiration images and thought promoting the extreme measures of girls being thin and coherently the promotion for eating disorders like anorexia nervosa occurs.

gathering for civic and social purposes (Kraut, et al., 1998) and are putting more time and effort into mobile and pc devices. Families have less real-time bonding and parents become more busy with their smartphone, in the display and construction of their own identity, than their child.

The targeting of niche groups like the child-market and over-exposure to advertisement and technology poses problems. The signal of the post-postmodern [lack of] communication is based on isolation, insecurity, and individualism (Stacey, 1990). Children go online to look for similarities with other and wish to acquire real bonding, only to find the opposite. People, and children, look for authenticity online in the construct of their identity, but due to the sheer number of available brands, advertisements and exposure to products, 'authenticity is becoming an endangered species' (Holt, 2002, p.86). Wollman (2009) believes mobile devices change children's relationships with others and themselves, because technology is invading places where it did not used to have a role. Marcus (2011) maintains that our obsession with our devices leads to breakdowns in family relations, depressions and anxiety of loneliness. The relationships within this young generation, built by means of technologies is both parasitic and symbiotic (Warner, 2012) and require a technology rehab or media diet for an increase in real, personal connections.

Synopsis

In sum, consumerism and the changing or developing patterns play a significant role in the formation and realization of the self, however that self is actually a multiplied existential construct. The concepts of lifestyle, subculture, family situation, neo-tribalism and media exposure all capture the varied ways in which children learn how to weave consumption activities in to their daily lives. These concepts though, articulate most by powerful cultural influences in society, like TV, advertising and movies (Gottdiener, 2000), therefore it is needed to comprehend the changing advertising and branding practices that influence some of the major concepts children will uphold to be important later on in life.

2.3   Branding development

As this study focus is on the brander's perspective of the conceptualization of children as consumers, it is needed to map out a couple of changes in advertising and branding beginning with a historical perspective. This gives an outline of how today's brander's develop their campaigns, which are also used for targeting children.

2.3.1   Advertising development

The role of advertising since the early 1900 has changed from being mere informative to creating a desire. Whereas wearing a sweater used to be something to keep you warm, it is now advertised with big logo's as the next best must-have for late spring.

Advertising constructs an image, a myth, of a desired state or a desired life, where the product will be the key to obtaining that life. This relates back to McCracken's (1998) idea of displaced meaning; always wanting to have something unattainable, but upon becoming a possession losing its glamorous meaning, only for the consumer to want something else unattainable again. Not having the advertised product, constructs the idea of being inadequate or 'not being enough'. Modern advertising relates the consumer to other people, as creating a desire to be as good as other consumers, or creating the idea that buying a certain product will make you a more successful social being. The essential characteristic of modern advertising lies in the suggestion to the consumer, that they lack something in their relations with others and proposed the product as the answer (Corrigan, 1997). The use of certain products can therefore help consumers overcome their individual problems. Advertising tapped into the idea people needed a certain toothbrush or bodycream to be extraordinary. The product in itself becomes a myth in creating ones identity, and the ad taps into this myth by showing a consumer needs to have it.

Historically, market innovation and power was largely dominated by economists and engineers between the 30's and 80's resulting in the idea of building better mouse traps; build a slightly better product, or create a slightly better story around it, and consumers will fall. Launching the next big thing was the holy grail of many corporations. Marketing is selling what people think they want.

However, along with the new post (or post-post) modern structures that shifted cultures and societies, also branding developed itself. New brands entered the same markets, and the marketspace in itself became highly fragmented, resulting in fierce competition. Holt and Cameron's critically acclaimed book Cultural Strategy (2010), builds on the idea of the earlier spoken 'myth', except here the myth is culturally charged. According to them, the future of brands, including brands targeting children lies in developing a brand promise which taps in to ongoing cultural social disruptions and creating a message connecting that towards a product. The product or brand then becomes, like what so many people pursue, a symbol in the construction of the identity. Their theory is an overall applied marketing technique, but in relation to child consumption important to notice, as it might be a fruitful way for brands to advertise to the child segment. . This imaginary world for children is created as well: spark the idea of "I want to be like that".

2.3.2 Known research on children's receptiveness of advertising
As a potential market , children pose a challenge to marketeers because they represent a market which is far from static. Traditionally, most children targeted advertisements have attempted to influence parents purchase power. But now, in retrospect to the changing environments of children, marketeers increasingly devote their attention to children as consumers themselves. As there currently is quite little informative research available regarding advertising to children, a look at previous, sometimes outdated data will give an idea on the current standard practices from branders.

In relation to effective key points used in ad's, visual and auditory changes in advertising can affect audience attention, especially among children (Wartella, 1980). Also humour has been found to lead to attentional orienting responses from children, thereby increasing the effectiveness of information processing from the commercial message (Stevens, 1988). When it comes to children's ability of understanding ads, results of various survey studies indicate that below the age of six, the vast majority of children cannot readily explain the selling purpose of advertising (Gunter and Furnham, 1998). Between the ages of five and nine, the majority of children come to recognize the selling intent of advertising (Meyer et al. 1978; Palmer and McNeil, 1991; Sheikh et al., 1974). As far as the content of children's advertisements is concerned, in practice, most children's commercials are for toys, breakfast cereals, other foods and snacks, and candies and sweets (Atkin, 1978; Galst and White, 1976; Greenberg et al., 1986). Apart from these major findings, not so much relevant information was found on how branders advertise.

2.3.3   Digital and online interactivity

The extensive use of technology challenges marketers to evenly spread their interaction through different media channels. From a marketer's perspective, digital interactivity creates new opportunities for the marketer to contribute to culture (Deigthon and Kornfeld, 2009). Contrary to the critical believes certain writers have on the use of the multi-mediated interactivity, social networking is seen as a useful addition by companies in their marketing channels and they believe it can be used as a cultural resource for children. However, social media make it more urgent than ever, that companies get the basics right, developing and reliably delivering on a compelling brand promise (Barwise and Meehan, 2010). From a brands perspective, it seems inevitably not to pursue marketing through social media (Scott, 2011). As a result, there is a lot of recent research into brands which now use social media to expand their exposure and awareness to consumers (Aljukadar and Senecal, 2010; Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden, 2011; Joachimsthaler and Aaker, 1997; Muniz and Schau, 2011), and help consumers and children to resonate with the brand identity (Aaker, 1997; Christodoulides, 2009) in order to increase loyalty and product sales. Companies tap into the previously explained intense use of online channels available to children. The magical effect of hyperabundance takes on a new dimension in which any need can be invented and immediately satisfied (Oh and Arditi, 2000). Therefore, online webshops, digital marketing-like tailored websites, facebook pages and apps will continue to be further developed by brands.

2.3.4   Brand resistance

As in the case of advertising, people tend to be simultaneously drawn to novel ways of theming and also resistant enough to these new practices to avoid making a consumer choice based on symbols alone (Goldman and Papson, 1996; Kellner, 1989; Bauman, 1992). As consumers became more and more exposed to frequent advertising, they also got smarter. No longer was an ad seen as a truthful

representation, but merely trickery. According to Klein (1999) in her No Logo-book, consumers are now fed-up with constant push of advertising in the after-globalization.

Consumers now believe to escape the capitalistic advertising industry and even certain anti-market movements have grown, ranging from *Adbusters* to the immensely popular 're-vamped' farmer's markets. Resistance among child consumers can be seen in the previously explained polarized debates, as well as youngsters straying away from well-established brands in search of undiscovered 'unique' brands or products that match up to their believes and identity creation.

<u>Synopsis</u>

The essential characteristic of modern advertising lies in the suggestion to the consumer, that they lack something in their relations with others and a proposed product becomes the answer (Corrigan, 1997). Advertising constructs desired state of life where buying a certain product will make you a better or more successful social being. Research into the perspective of brands on children's advertising is limited to psychological tactics in reaching children's attention through the use of visuals, audio and humour (Wartella, 1980; Stevens; 1988). Using cultural branding (Holt and Cameron, 2010) or anti-branding might be tactics brands can also use in approaching children. Even though there is a hyperabundance in multi-media exposure, social media are seen as an extension and is fruitful for brands as a way to attract awareness and loyalty among children.

2.4   Theoretical framework

After having reviewed the literature currently available on child consumption, it has become clear there are very distinct ideas on the impact brands and advertising have in the development of children. The literature and theory reviewed thus far in this thesis therefore provides a multifaceted backdrop for investigation of the research questions. This study takes note on the polarized debate, however, does not take a standpoint in it. The alignment is made with Buckingham (2011) whom also researched this debate, in order to map out the polarized ideas. As mostly independent and critical writers have contributed to this, there is little academic proof. The academic research done, it mostly based on cognitive development of children in relation to advertising. Research into children as consumers now needs more sociological background, rather than mostly psychological studies from the past (Tufte, Kampmann and Hassel, 2003). In this study, it is therefore important to highlight the brander's side in order to obtain clear information on their views, not solely psychology, assumptions or propaganda.

The realization has come that consumers are made, not born. There is a certain "naturalness" children learn about consuming (Cook, 2000), as it is passed down from one generation to the next. It has shaped "the commodification of childhood". But the influence that impacts children is not only limited to brands, the surrounding society and a child's social structures also take part.

This study wants to uncover another aspect in the plethora of influences on children's consumption, namely to see how brands see their part in this phenomenon and how they conceptualize the child in advertising. In order to provide a holistic view on the phenomenon of child consumerism, the chosen inductive approach will require to not limit the framework too much, as several aspects might reach the surface. Rather, it is important to see and be aware of developments and shifts among children's social-environmental and identity creation. The idea of the "self" and display of capital has also been transferred to younger generations and advertising might have therefore shifted towards a more culturally charged message (Holt and Cameron, 2010). Also the realization has come that the intensified digital interactivity (Ekström, 2003; Holt and Cameron, 2010; Gergen, 1991) and fluid changes in family structure (Tufte and Ekström, 2007) have contributed to the current upbringing of children. It will be interesting to find out whether branders take notion on this, or whether they have new insights on the topic.

3. Methodology

This chapter explains the chosen research methodology and justification of certain method decisions within the research template. A methodological departure starts with the explanation and arguments for how researchers and humans view the world, knowledge and theory. This is a vital starting point as it affects methodological choices made throughout the entire study. The aim of this thesis was to explore branders' perspectives on the influence of corporate branding towards children. To break the complexity of the main research topic down, the following interrelated sub-questions show the considered constructionist approach to meet the main research question;

1. How has branding towards children evolved over time between the years 2000-2013?
2. What's the branders' perspective on conceptualization of children and branding towards children?

A discussion on research strategy, framing of the data sample and data collection clarifies those particular choices made for used methods in gathering empirical data. The data analysis explains the process of analyzing the collected data and used methods. This is then followed by a conscious statement on reflexivity regarding trustworthiness of the study, ending with an outline of the limitations of the research, with the connected possible alternative research designs.

3.1 Methodological background

When researching the conceptualization of children as consumer through corporate branding, it is important to realize the focus is on understanding subjective meanings and interpretations, rather than on numbers and logical reasoning. People's reality is explained as the social construct resulting from diverse individual and group viewpoints, created through interactions in a contextual manner (Moisander et al. 2009). Therefore this study is approached from the ontological perspective of constructionism, which is suitable in forming an understanding of perceptions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 2008).

This study understands that individual perspectives are shaped by individual backgrounds and people employ certain categories to understand the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The categories, as well as backgrounds and perspectives are built through interaction with other people and are constantly under revision. This personal interpretation and interaction between people, are what will bring data to this research, as the goal is to gather personal views and insights from branders and corporate brands on the construction of children as consumers. It is also important to not only know what the branders' point of view is, but also why (King, 2004).

Closely related to this is the epistemological position of interpretivism, as this study aspires to understand human behaviour rather than only rationally explain it, which is relatable to Weber's approach of 'Verstehen' (Bryman and Bell, 2011). A factor to mention here is that the researchers need to set their own reflections and beliefs aside. No hypotheses or presumptions are formed beforehand, as

this would cloud the validity of the findings. Researchers could miss out on data, or develop 'a tunnel syndrome', resulting in loss of important aspects, as they could not emerge during the research process as they were excluded beforehand (Sackmann, 1992). An inductive approach will set a frame to do so; letting the data speak for itself, and from that form an analysis, opinions and critical assumptions.

Therefore, in this study we will place the weight on language and the conversations between individuals as means for creating their own interpretations of reality and meanings (Thompson et al. 1994). This study therefore falls under a hermeneutic approach, with text interpretation.

The applied use of the previous methodological reasoning will provide a holistic understanding of the research topic and allows for a thorough analysis of arising patterns from the empirical data collection, which may bring new insights and results on the conceptualization of children through corporate branding.

3.2   Research strategy

In relation to gathering unique and new data, it will be key to find out if there are changes, or differences and similarities in previous and current branding practices, as to clarify what is helpful regarding economical value, social value and ethics for a brand and the consequences for the construction of children's consumption. This can also be seen as the use of the enlightenment model (Finch, 1986), where implementation is an incremental process with a lot of scattered viewpoints from different angles, therefore providing an indirect link between the research, academics and practitioners.

Qualitative data collection is needed, as the description of meanings and interpretations on the conceptualization and construction of children as consumers through corporate branding, is a subjective and interpretational area. Therefore the choice to not enter in quantitative data collection is a logical one to us, as it represents numbers more than meanings. Quantitative data would be valuable when looking for information from large consumer-segments on perspectives and values.

The qualitative research has been accused of being difficult to replicate and challenging to generalize due to its subjectivity (Bryman & Bell, 2007). However, the last twenty years, leading scientific journals have increasingly published papers based on qualitative research which witness about a changed and more positive attitude where qualitative methods no longer are regarded as being too speculative (Goulding, 2005; Easterby-Smith et. al., 2012), subjective or vague. As the goal is to find meanings, interpretations and ideas on the construction of children as consumers, the choice for qualitative data was inevitable. This supports the idea of finding patterns or interrelationships between categories (McCracken, 1988; Bryman and Bell, 2007) and will result in a thick, in-depth description of branders' views in a certain cultural context (Sherry, 2008).

3.3 Framing the research topic

As the overall research question is rather broad, it was needed to frame the previous design according to certain criteria's. While scaling the overall research question down, questions arose on whether there are any differences between industries, or what type of challenges arise in for example politics, legal actions or geographical differences. These are more detailed insights, but examplementary for key concepts. Therefore the research frame itself needed to be scaled down.

We researched 3 industries that target children as consumers, namely the Fast Moving Consumer Goods Industry, the Fashion industry and the Toy & Play industry. These three industries are believed to be those who primarily target products to children and therefore most relevant (Ekström and Tufte, 2007).

The ads we studied target children between the ages of 5 and 16 years old. The choice is based on the notion these ages are formative for a kid's personality construction and choice preferences (Roeder, 1999). Psychological literature tends to break down the age groups, however, in relation to this study, it is impossible to find 6 brands that all target the same small bracket. Therefore, the choice was made to include all stages of the formative childhood.

For a geographical location, the main focus is on Western and Northern Europe, as this is the environment the researchers themselves are more acquainted with, as well as the fact that the external interviewed branders' are from these countries. The time frame will start from the year 2000, as this is where academic research on children's consumption is outdated or lacking. Furthermore, the rise of internet has dramatically changed consumption patterns, giving us the possibility to research printed ads from other media than solely magazines.

3.4 Research Design

As an approach to answer the two research questions, two different qualitative research methods have been chosen. First, data collection will be conducted through an interpretive content analysis of advertisements from 2000 up to 2013, involving elements that are also seen with visual ethnography (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Pink, 2001). Secondly, in-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted to gain understanding of branders' perspectives for a current outlook on the conceptualization of children. An interpretive content analysis will assess the structure and content of the advertisements for their stories and arguments (Ginger, 2000). These two methods will then later form the basis of an analysis on arising findings and concepts.

Content Analysis

Starting with interpretive content analysis, which consists of printed ads from six large brands targeting children. An interpretive content analysis fits the hermeneutical approach as we look for meaning,

messages and concepts. The label used similar to our method of interpretive content analysis is visual ethnography, which suggest visual images are a way of observing and recording reality. Analysis focuses on interpreting the meaning of these visual images within their cultural context (Pink, 2001). It draws an understanding of writing as through which people convey meaning by choosing, organizing and describing content at various levels (Ginger, 2000). Our content analysis 'steals' certain aspects of this visual ethnography, for descriptions in our data collection. The use of this analysis specifically touches up on hermeneutics (Easterby-Smith et. al., 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2011), which provides insight into the ways textual and visual advertising materials have been used in influencing children's consumption behaviour. This study makes use of extant (or external) images that have not been produced solely for this research. Buchanan (2001) argues for the use of visuals in conjunction with other methods helps research gain a greater understanding and lets them capture data that isn't disclosed in interviews.

<u>In-depth interviewing method</u>

Then the use of semi-structured interviews provided insights of branders' views. While looking for a brander's perspective, the need for rich contextual data that captures the view and opinions of the informants, is crucial to fulfil the research purpose. Thus, semi-structured interviews seemed the most appropriate in order to find a more profound understanding of the informants' inner ideas and meanings, once again fitting the hermeneutical approach

As mentioned before, the ideal situation would be to have a one-on-one connection with companies between the two different data collection methods, however, not all companies were willing to participate. Therefore, to enrich the data, also 'smaller' national brands that target children were contacted for interviewing. The companies have however not been including in the first part of the analysis as either the number of useful print advertisements was too small, or they were in different languages, creating a barrier for analysis. An outline we used in interviews with possible questions can be found in Appendix I.

3.5   Data Sample

<u>Advertisements</u>

The goal was to gather prints from 2 companies per industry, meaning 6 companies in total, from the time-span between 2000 and 2013. The idea was to have a one-on-one connection between the companies from the interpretive content analysis and the semi-structured interviews, however due to limited time and limited contact availability; this wasn't possible in this study. At first, we mainly looked for printed ads from children's magazines, however the archives in the library were quite limited and Sweden has a ban on advertisements in children's magazines, as well as on television or any other medium directly targeting children (Tufte, 2010). Therefore, advertisement prints through the internet were consulted as a base for the content analysis. The use of purposive sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2011) was to sample cases in a strategic way, so that the chosen ads are relevant to the research

questions. This is not to be mistaken for convenience sampling or 'cherrypicking'. In purposive sampling the ads are selected due to their relevance in understanding a social phenomenon. The chosen companies within this part of the analysis are Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Hasbro, Lego, Noa Noa and United Colors of Benetton, all representing 5 ads or ad-campaigns per company. A total of 30 ad-campaigns, with 54 prints in total, have been inductively analyzed, resulting in the formation of several re-occurring keywords or themes. Below there is an outline of the ad(-campaign) descriptions per company. All images can be found in Appendix II.

McDonald's

Campaign	Year	Number of ads	Description
I'm Lovin´it.	2002	1	Girl with her hair shaped in the McDonalds "M" logo
Imagination for Dessert	2006	1	A boy sitting at McDonalds booth, with a reflection of him as a pirate
The Real Milkshake	2012	1	Two girls in a meadow skipping rope with a cow
Forgiveness Is Never Far Away	2012	3	Staged settings, with a girl at a trash-can finding her drawing, a boy waiting to be picked up from soccer and a dad ruining a teddy bear with a lawnmower
What Is It With Kids And Boxes?	2013	3	Children playing with life-size cardboard boxes

Coca-Cola

Campaign	Year	Number of ads	Description
Life Tastes Good	2002	1	A girl in a home setting playing with a goldfish swimming in a Cola bottle
The Coke Side of Life	2005	4	Graphic Coca-Cola bottles with different animations and settings
Open Happiness	2006	1	A message shaped as a Cola bottle
Christmas: Santa	2009	1	Drawing of Santa drinking Cola
Polar Bears	2012	2	Polar bear families drinking Cola

Lego

Campaign	Year	Number of ads	Description
Builders Of Tomorrow	2006	1	Replica of a famous photograph with children as workers having lunch
Lego Brick	2006	2	Lego bricks with a shadow revealing the imagined construction
Creative Building	2007	3	Children shadowing over the landscapes of a city, the hoover dam and a space shuttle.

Builders Of Tomorrow	2011	3	Children as engineers and inventors, educating their parents on their Lego-build phone, led-lamp and wind-energy generator
Creativity Forgives Everything	2012	4	A bird escapes its cage, destroyed flowers, replaced Lego dentures and a wedding couple on top a wedding cake replaced with Lego

Hasbro

Campaign	Year	Number of ads	Description
Mr. Potato Head	2003	3	Children's faces imitating Mr. Potato figurines
Super Soaker	2008	2	Ancient painting like prints of children having a SuperSoaker water fight in meadows
Play-Doh: let imagination take over	2009	3	Children dreaming about settings they created with Play-Doh, before their sleep
Clue(do)	2010	3	Famous movie scenes, where the characters are replaced by children
Play-Doh	2012	1	A can of Play-Doh and a text mentioning the options of the product

United Colours Of Benetton

Campaign	Year	Number of ads	Description
Catalogue ad	2000	1	A nun drawing with a young girl
Catalogue ad	2000	1	Two boys wearing multiple pairs of classes
Catalogue ad	2000	1	Portrait photos of nine young children all from different cultural backgrounds.
Catalogue ad	2006	1	Photo with three children of mixed races wearing white-blue clothes.
Catalogue ad	2008	2	Girls dressed in colourful outfits holding gardening materials.

Noa Noa

Campaign	Year	Number of ads	Description
Catalogue ad	2009	1	Girl hiding behind a magazine
Catalogue ad	2010	1	Three girls in the back of a caravan.
Catalogue ad	2010	1	Four girls standing behind a curtain.
Christmas ad campaign	2012	1	Girl portrayed in a blue outfit
Spring ad campaign	2013	1	Black and white photo of two smiling girls.

<u>Interviewees</u>

The companies that were willing to cooperate directly were Brio, Coca Cola, Hasbro and HAK (a Dutch FMCG company), which all have partaken in the interviewing. The interviewees were chosen due to their first hand experiences working for large corporate brands that cater for children. In the short time-span it wasn't possible to connect with the marketing directors or brandmanagers alone, however, due to the connections some of the following participants had to the marketing departments and experience in past jobs working at other departments, the interviews resulted in a collection of valuable insights on brands' conceptualization of children.

Company	Position	Number of Interviews
BRIO Toy	Concept and Product Development	1
Coca Cola	Marketing Director, Marketing Coca-Cola	1
HAK	Brand manager HAK	1
Hasbro	Account manager Dutch market	2

The semi-structured interviews were either face-to-face or through telephone and Skype interviews, pending on the availability and preferences of the interviewee. Personal preference was face-to-face interviewing as it left better options to regard non-verbal communications which influences an interviewee's response, making it possible to extract more data if needed. Semi-structured interviewing leaves possibility to deviate here and there and to gives the interviewee freedom to talk about their branding practices and views on consumption of children. In order to avoid bias, questions were left open, but the use of techniques like probing for clarification and laddering (Easterby-Smith et. al. 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2011) were used in order to gain more in-depth details. The ideal situation would leave time for interviews and follow-ups, however, due to time constrains this wasn't always possible

Recording was done through sound recording, and interviews were later transcribed and translated. Three of the interviewees (Coca-Cola, HAK and Hasbro) were Dutch. These interviews where first transcribed and then translated to English. The BRIO interview was done in English and therefore only needed transcription. Even though translation is tricky; the original interviews were mostly recorded. The reason for translation is that we are a Dutch-Danish combo and as both of us need eyes on the data collection, all interview transcripts had to be in English. Keeping the original languages would conflict the analysis and categorization of quotations and result in researchers' insufficient knowledge from all interviews. Full transcriptions also make it easier to implement correct quoting in the Data Analysis. The translations reflect the ideas and insights of branders closest to truth.

3.6   Data Analysis

As both the interpretive content analysis and data-collection through semi-structured interviews consists of a natural language analysis (hermeneutics), cultural and historical dimensions arise to form context and time-frame, resulting in a more holistic approach. The approach of analysis here is not based on the strict use of codes, but more in the sense of selection, sorting and categorization of the empirical materials (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The choice was made to collect overall findings, or reoccurring concepts stemming from both the prints and interviews. In the later stage in the discussion, the analysis on current discourses will place these meanings and themes across an academic background.

An iterative strategy (Bryman and Bell, 2007) is used for going back and forth between data and theory, which is sometimes also referred to as the hermeneutic circle. Analysis starts after some of the data have been collected and the implications of that analysis then shape the next steps in the data collection process (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The inductive focus will however not be lost. The data still speaks for itself, yet the order of data to analysis and theory should not be static, as some research on the topic is necessary to categorize findings and interpretations (Thompson et al., 1994). This then relates back to the previously mentioned constructionism, with a main focus on authenticity and plausibility of the research. Meaning, a deep understanding of children's consumption seen by branders arises and is communicated to the reader, as well as linking branding practices to ongoing concerns and discourses for present advertising to children.

The interpretive content analysis was done by both researchers with a 'blank page' stance, we tried to keep it as objective as possible from our inductive approach, as new meanings and findings might reach the surface then. Things as child-placement, product-placement, interaction, social values, emotions and associations were remarked. In total the typed down outline of all 30 ad(-campaigns) consisting of 54 prints had a similar build-up, where quotations and key-findings were placed next to each other. The findings of this data-collection set consist of;

- Children are creative with a high level of imagination.
- Children are linked to social and personal values
- Advertisements portray children without adults
- Children are portrayed as playful
- Advertisements portray children in adult contexts
- Overall, Caucasian children are portrayed
- Additional branding perspective: extensive and different use of brand and product placement

The process of interview transcription has already been covered. For a comprehensive understanding of the branders' ideas and meanings related to the specific context (Bäckström, 2006), the researchers have strived to keep and nourish the informants' perspectives in the collection of data as well as in the

analysis of it. In the first step, all transcripts were read over and over again, highlighting important passages and quotations and including possible names for themes or concepts (Bryman and Bell, 2007). We tried to look at what the expressions meant, resulting in the identification of patterns and differences in the behaviours of our informants in relation to what they expressed. This process of re-contextualization proposed by Morse (1994) can trigger new thoughts and insights which prove to have been valuable in the process of data analysis by allowing more thinking. Starting from a particular point of view and moving upwards toward an more universal understanding of the phenomena in research. Nonetheless, the extracted expressions and sentences had to be continuously treated with respect to its certain context, therefore the research team rather kept a longer extract of the transcripts than risk loss of context where the key phrase was expressed. Once we had a list of our key findings, we went through the interview transcripts once more to select quotes that brought the findings to life. The findings of this data-collection set consist of;

- Branders try to create loyalty from early age on
- Branders think more about the parent-child combination than the child itself.
- No direct marketing to really 'young' children
- Fostering social relationships is important in marketing towards children
- Brands can change children and influence children enormously
- Brands hold a responsibility and need to give back

By looking for a red thread, in both images and wording, the underlying mechanisms and patterns behind these themes came across. The impression arose that these themes all covered a pattern of positioning a child's identity, either externally in relation to other children or parents, or internally by stimulating a child's cognitive development. The complete analysis will fall in line with the hermeneutic approach of part-to-whole. This part-to-whole model, presented by Thompson (1997) also relates to the previously mentioned iterative circle, where the combination of data and literature relates back to each other. It requires researchers' intensive reflection as an intertwined part of the process. However, keeping interviewees personal experiences as expressed is a fundamental basis and crucial part for the analysis (Goulding, 2005).

This relation to social objects, categories and symbolism also confines with the previously mentioned prevalent discourses (Bryman and Bell, 2011) and discourse analysis would have made an interesting third method within the hermeneutical approach. However, a discourse analysis has very strict rules in relation to set-up and data analysis and as time is limited, as well as the fact that doing a discourse analysis isn't the main purpose for this research study. As aspects from this will arise in the discussion part, the label 'analysis of discourse' is more appropriate.

3.7   Methodological reflections

In qualitative research techniques, assessing the quality of the study in relation to reliability and validity is challenging. These are terms often used for quantitative data collection, where there is a factual outcome through statistics (Easterby-Smith et. al, 2008). In qualitative research trustworthiness and authenticity are hallmarks on which the study is judged upon. Trustworthiness of qualitative research is further examined in terms of four criteria: credibility and transferability, dependability and conformability (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The following will briefly go through these elements;

The credibility of this study is reached by using good practice and ensuring that the interviewees had sufficient experiences and proper insights. They need to have a good view of the particular social world or phenomena being studied (Guba, 1985). This was achieved using among others the technique of triangulation. Triangulation is the process of using more than one method in order to verify the findings when gathering data about a social phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study two sets of data collection methods were chosen to improve understanding of brand's perspectives on the conceptualization of children as consumers. The methods have implied different ways to reach this view of the phenomena. More importantly, as the analysis methods complement each other in order of conduct, credibility is heightened.

Transferability, similar to the external validity of quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith et. al., 2008) aimed to describe the degree of which the findings of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred into other fields of research. In this study transferability cannot be done the exact same way in another field, but could be done in the same field of sociology, or a similar context at another time. The construction of children as consumers can namely also be studied from a consumer-based viewpoint. However, due to the need of parental permission for children under the age of 18, the choice was made to avoid any possible misunderstandings or time consuming processes that could have resulted from this. It is also difficult to determine whether children are telling their story themselves, or a view portrayed by their parents. The main goal of this study is also not to generalize, but more to discover the construction of children as consumers as a phenomena through meaning and patterns. Obviously, meanings and patterns are under deviation through time. Therefore, transferability of this study could be done when the study is conducted at another time or time frame, or using different brands as a reference perspective.

Dependability relates to the trustworthiness in the literal sense of proof. It requires that all records of the research process were recorded and preserved in order to be able to assess the procedures carried out as well as the correct handling of data. For this study, all the collected data from interview recordings, transcripts and translation to the advertisement analysis are available upon request. Due to the extensive length of the transcripts (40+ pages), they have not been included in the appendix. All the

methods of data collection have been thoroughly accounted for as provision for quotes and descriptions taken in the presentation of the empirical material.

Conformability is concerned with the objectivity of the research. Even though complete objectivity is impossible in business research (Bryman and Bell, 2011), it should be apparent we have tried to be as objective as possible within the analysis. The findings have appeared through the thorough analysis of the data provided by an inductive approach and through informants' ideas and insights, and not by any previous values or beliefs. The aim was to give a descriptive picture on the construction of children as consumers through corporate brands. Personal values or theoretical inclinations enter again the in discussion and conclusion.

The trustworthiness of this study was found through cross-checking each other's data. Working with each other in 'interpretive groups' (Thompson et al. 1989), allows for re-analysis and re-contextualization (Morse, 1994) of the data on several occasions where there's a mutual agreement on interpretations from the researchers. It is always tricky when doing interpretive content analysis as to if it is to be trusted, since it includes relations to interpretations and subjective meaning. Related to this, Denzin (1970) explains that observers who cross-check each others' interpretations can also be seen as a method to increase trustworthiness.

In relation to authenticity, the goal was to find new insights and new information that can form theories. According to the literature, justification of the research is reached if it is considered to represent different viewpoints among members of the social settings (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The collection of both empirical data sets provides new insights and viewpoints on a social setting that has lacking academic research into it. The order of the data collection deliberately begins with the interpretive content analysis, as the wish was not to let branders affect our views with answers from the interviews. Therefore the content analysis was done first, by trying to reduce as much subjectivity as possible. In this way, a more wholesome result of data collection is achieved. The interviewees' insights were very valuable and form authentic viewpoints for both the industry as academics.

4. Analysis

In order to answer the research question on how are children conceptualized as consumers through corporate branding, empirical data collection has been done. There are two sets of findings, which have been separately analyzed. The goal was to be as objective as possible. Further on the Discussion part will contain further detail about similarities or contradictions rising from the collection of different findings and critical reflections stemming from that.

4.1   Findings of the Content Analysis

This first part of the empirical data consists of printed ad campaigns published between the years 2000 – 2013, ranging from six different companies: Coca Cola, McDonalds, Lego, Hasbro, United Colors of Benetton and Noa Noa. Some, but not all images have been included to directly show the examined examples. The full set of these images can be found in Appendix II. The empirical material derived from the campaigns is in-depth analyzed, using the inductive approach of identifying common themes arising in the conceptualization of children as consumers.

The interpretive content analysis of advertisements shows six reoccurring findings on conceptualizations of children from corporate brands. These findings are considered as equally important, therefore please note that the following findings have not been listed in prioritized order. In order to correlate findings, they are grouped according to industry rather than chronological time frame. The collected six findings are:

- Children are creative with a high level of imagination.
- Children are linked to social values
- Advertisements portray children without adults
- Children are portrayed as playful
- Advertisements portray children in adult contexts
- Overall, Caucasian children are portrayed

A final additional finding on brand- and product placement relates back to the exposure of the brand towards children from the advertisements. It is not a conceptualization of children in itself, but does relate back to branding tactics.

Advertisements portray children as creative with a high level of imagination.
By analyzing the advertisements, it was found that creativity and imagination play a central role in advertisements targeted for children, especially within the FMCG and Toy & Play companies.
For Lego, creativity appears as a part of the company's overall tagline. In all of the five Lego campaigns, creativity is a central theme. Instead of going through all of them, three of the campaigns are presented as examples on how creativity appears in Lego's advertisements.

Starting out with the campaign 'Creative Building' from 2007. This campaign, which consists of three ads, shows three different existent scenarios; the construction of the Hoover Dam, a large city with closely build housing and the Kennedy Space Centre. Towering over these constructions are shadows of children along with a text saying "Creative Building". These ads indicate children can become great 'architects' by using their creativity. Children whom play with Lego can breed their creativity and are capable of constructing great buildings if they were to become professionals. The ads portray children as very potent and able for replicating these great constructions.

The second campaign from Lego is Builders of Tomorrow, published in 2011. This campaign also consists of three ads, all with smiling and proud children teaching their seemingly sceptical parents about new technologies. The settings are simulated in probably the 1960's to the 1980's, due to décor style and grain noise of the image. The technologies the children teach their parents are windmills, and energy saving bulb and a handheld cellphone, all build with Lego bricks. The children are all 'the builders' of today, as their designs are all present technologies, but back in the 1960's -1980's it would be techniques of tomorrow. The ads illustrates that children are creative and think outside the box, as they are capable of showcasing their technological visions for future scenarios. It also relates to parents willingness to nurture children's ideas for future development. The last campaign is Lego's Creativity Forgives Everything from 2012. The name itself indicates that children are creative. The campaign shows children playing with Lego objects, in situations with an unfortunate outcome. In the four ads, Lego illustrates situations where children, by using their creativity and imagination, have managed to build a helicopter, flowers, dentures and a wedding cake topper. The slogan here would relate back that the creative effort of building the objects is valuable, even though the consequences of the Lego construction are unfortunate.

However, Lego is not the only company focusing on creativity. Hasbro also touches up on it in their campaigns.

The Play-Doh brand is the best example of how Hasbro includes creativity and imagination into their ads. The campaign from 2009 'Let imagination take over', literally mentions it in the advertisement. The campaign consists of three ads where children are asleep, dreaming about a world with life-size Play-Doh. The one ad illustrates a boy sleeping in on a sofa, while a blue Play-Doh dinosaur is putting a blanket on top of him. Another one frames the association with a famous scene from the fairytale Jack

and the Bean stock. In this case, a gigantic bean stock has grown out of the Play-Doh bucket and through the roof of the girl's bedroom and the last has a flying Play-Doh saucer hovering over a sleeping boy. Imagination here relates to the subconscious states where children process their ideas.

The 2012 campaign of Hasbro's brand Play-Doh only shows the product itself with a text box mentioning all the possibilities the product has to offer. The versatility of the product, its 'functional benefits' (being you can shape however you want it) and the scope of possible toys, gives the idea of endless possibilities. It is literally 'think outside the [Play-Doh] box'. It is up to the user, ergo the child, what it will become, again relating back to imagination and creativity.

Nonetheless, as the Toy & Play companies are rather obvious to touch upon creativity, FMCG companies portray the same image.

McDonalds illustrates creativity and imagination in their campaigns 'Imagination for Dessert' from 2006, again literarily stating imagination in the tagline. This ad shows a boy sitting at a McDonald's booth, with a colour book and a Tropicana juice box on the table. The boy's booth is located right next to the window, with a reflection of this boy and the table. However, in the reflection he is dressed up as a pirate. The text for this ad is located in the bottom right corner along with a happy meal box saying "Imagination for dessert". The window reflection works as a window into the boy's vivid imagination, he imagines himself as a pirate while he reads his Happy Meal treasure map.

The Happy Meal campaign from 2013, shows how creative children can be, by the different ways they play with a cardboard box. The children use the box as a car, a place to hide for a game of hide and seek, or as a robot costume. They see a 'blank canvas' and transform it to their wishes when they want to play. It takes great some imagination for children to create scenes with only cardboard. Therefore it also portrays kids as being creative and resourceful.

Then Coca-Cola, the other FMCG company, illustrates creativity with their campaign 'Life Tastes Good' from 2002. In this ad, a girl is playing with a goldfish, swimming in a used Cola bottle. Through the creative and alternative use of a Coca Cola bottle as an aquarium for a goldfish, creativity is associated to the girl. Whether the girl came up with the idea by herself, or if her parents made the solution, one can only wonder about, but the link between creativity and Coca-Cola comes across in this ad.

The association between creativeness, imagination and children appears in advertisements from the Toy & Play industry, as well as in the FMCG industry, making it a central finding for conceptualization of children. Nonetheless, this association wasn't clearly found in the ads of the Fashion companies.

Advertisements link children to social and personal values

Another finding is that products are often associated to social values. Coca-Cola uses this social association most in their ads.

They have been using social values as a central theme in their advertisements since 2005, with 'the Coke Side of Life' from 2005. The campaign consists of four ads with either the words 'hang', 'dream', 'meet' or 'together' used in the phrase '[…] on the coke side of life'. The ads shows Coca Cola's iconic bottle-design, but instead the traditional Coca-Cola drink coming out of the bottle, objects like straws, family trees, rainbows and weapons armed with flowers, pop out of the bottle. Common for these ads are the last four words, "the coke side of life". The connection to activities you do when drinking a coke is made, emphasized by the illustrations for each of the ads. The expressions 'Hang', 'Meet', 'Together' and 'Dreaming' are all connected to social activities and values.

The 'hang' on the Coke side of life print has rainbow colours on the one side, and a single red stripe, with a hand, mimicking a 'call me' gesture, on the other side. Hang is a slang word, usually used among youngsters for meeting each other and participating in an activity with either friends, family or even 'hanging out by oneself'. The message stemming from these ads is that Coca Cola fosters social relationships. In that way, the ads brand Coca-Cola *as a means for social bonding and fostering relationships.* The 'dream' ad transcends this even more, as it is clearly a political statement, taking a stance against guns. This ad speaks to the onlooker also on a more personal level, as dreams often are something personal to pursue. However, dream could in this case also be seen as a communal factor, dreaming of peace, or the greater 'good'. All ads seem to encapsulate positivity, optimism and inspiration.

These prints all relate to children, and more so to the teenager fragment as their message is either political, or relates more to hanging out with friends, where hanging is slang that is often used by youngsters. Herewith Coca-Cola *taps in to pop-culture*. The use of rainbow and flower filled ads, also relates to nostalgia and those are typically 'happy' and good things taught from early age on.
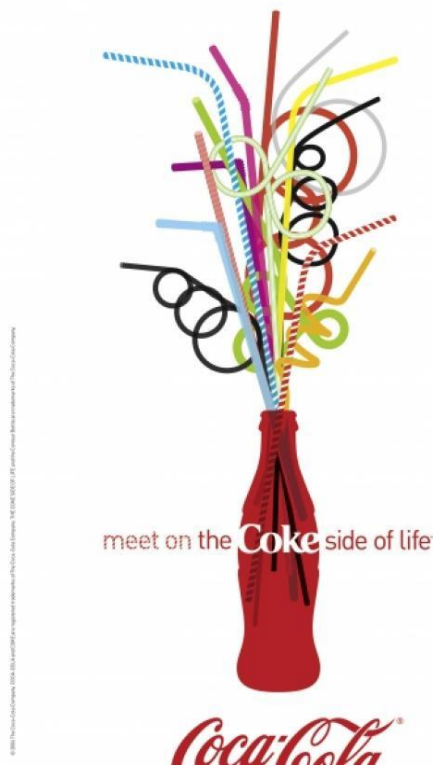
The 'Open Happiness' campaign from 2006, also by Coca Cola, continues to build on the use of social value. The ad has a bottle as its centre-point and even though it is obvious there is writing on the bottle, some of it has to be more closely examined due to the 'scribbling' nature of the words. The words that are very noticeable straight from the beginning are 'words', 'Coca-Cola, 'Smile' and somewhat also easily readable is 'favourite'. The whole sentence is:

'A smile is worth a thousand words. It says "hi" I've been noticing you" Coca-Cola "you're cute", "8AM, standing next to you on the bus is my favourite time of the day', 'guess I'll see you again tomorrow? Is your smile a "yes'?" OPEN HAPPINESS

Targeting the feelings of being in love, or associating lovable feelings to a stranger, creates *the association of happiness and love to the product and to the target group*. The fact that it happiness and love are social values everyone can relate to, makes it a very popular theme to use. Smile is used twice, and printed big, placed in about the same proportion from the Coca-Cola brand. This associates Coca-Cola with smiling, with being happy. If people only see the print briefly, or if they won't have the time to read the full text, these words of 'smile', 'favourite' and 'Coca-Cola' are most quickly and best readable. It therefore associates smiling and favourite with Coca-Cola, whereas favourite often means number 1, concluding Coca-Cola wishes to associate itself with being someone's number one drink, sparkling drink, soda, number 1 brand or so on.

The final example from Coca Cola is their Polar Bear campaign from 2012. The campaign consists of two ads, with both cases portraying a parental bear and two young cubs. The ads reflect to family situations. The first one only shows the situation in relation to the drink, the second one specifically says; "bring the family together". Here Coca Cola taps into the values of togetherness, social bonding and sharing, generally evoked by Christmas time and new years' resolutions. It resonates *lovingness and family*. Polar bears are often seen as 'cute' and 'furry', and therefore raise positive associations with the drink. It is also a way to avoid the portrayal or typification of certain genders, races and so on.

Also McDonalds touches up on feelings and family dynamic with its 'Forgiveness Is Never Far Away' campaign of 2012. Three ads show different situations where a child is harmed; a late pick-up from soccer practice, a torn up drawing and a dad accidently running the lawnmower over a teddy bear. The prints all show situations where the child is harmed due to the consequences of another person, high possibility of that being the parent. The slogan connected to the ads is "Forgiveness is never far

away" which in this case it can be both literal as figurative, whereas a McDonalds might not be far away, as well as the act of buying something from McDonalds and bringing it to children could cheer them up. The ad brings up the idea *that wrongfulness is often on a personal level* and differs from person to person. McDonalds tries to tap into these moments by placing itself in a position as being a general quick fix, and brings a solution for an apology. It relates more to a buyout of guilt, buying your kids something instead of teaching them a valuable lesson about true forgiveness.

Another social value brought up is *teamspirit*. In Hasbro's SuperSoaker ad, two 'camps' can be distinguished on either side of the river, holding different flags, made out of jerseys or sweaters These ads connect playing to social relationships, and through playing games creating team spirit. The game seems to create friendships in a fun way through physical activity.

Then, in the fashion industry, United Colors of Benetton has in the past also made the connection to social values. Three ads from the year 2000, put a focus on *cultural differences and races.* By portraying several racial children together in different settings, accompanied with the brand name, sends a clear message to the target group. United Colors of Benetton embraces all people despite of race, culture and religion. One ad shows a white nun sitting with a black girl. This ad could relate to a bunch of things. In the olden days missionaries were sent to Africa to 'convert' people to Catholicism. It could also be from current perspective; maybe the girl is an orphan and is raised by nuns, who knows. Nonetheless, they are colouring together, *creating a social relationship in an adult-child way*. The nun has a protective stance in relation to the child, more like an embrace, associating the ad with social bonding and *fostering of childhood relations*.

A second ad from the same year shows a very, culturally diverse group of children. None of the apparel is shown, only the faces and the 'gaze' of children. They are all headshots, like a passport photo almost. Therefore the pictures are taken of the children by themselves, as strong individuals. Benetton embraces the versatility of children, and by not focussing on clothes but only on their faces, the viewer is told they have beauty. No layers of social codes, just the way children are. As if you can't put a label on a child. It becomes *a message of cultural equality*, which is both a political statement as well as a generally pursued social state.

Linking social values to the product also means linking the target group to social values. These findings shows that advertisements links social values like happiness, equality, friendship, forgiveness, love, family and politics to the child segment.

Advertisements portray children without adults
The majority of the campaigns analyzed show children in isolated settings, without their parents. Surprisingly, only five prints out of 54 included an adult person, resulting in not even 10 percent. In these cases, adults can either be a parent, a parental-like figure, or a grandparent.

For example, taking Lego's campaign 'Builders of Tomorrow' from 2011, which already covers three of the prints, shows children and parents sitting together. In these ads, the children poses the educational role towards the parents, explain them about future technologies of windmill power cell phones and energy saving bulbs. Nonetheless, there is no physical contact between the child and their parents.

Two ads which do have physical contact are the one from United Colour of Benetton with the nun and one print from Lego's 2012 campaign 'Creativity Forgives Everything', showing a boy next to a person assumed to be his grandmother. The boy has built a set of dentures out of Lego bricks and his grandmother is wearing those as a substitute of her original dentures. She has a warm side-embrace and is laughing, making a positive association between them. The 2012 Coca-Cola 'Polar Bear' campaign though, manages to incorporate a family moment with a mom and her two kids. This is the only time where an ad uses *this image of family bonding, however in an abstract sense*, where the onlooker has to make this connection her/himself.

These are the only cases of advertisements showing children directly together in relation to real-life adults. None of these examples illustrates `traditional´ family situations, like dinner time, playing games or reading bedtime books.

Children are portrayed as playful
Across all advertisements, the image of children being playful is a continuous addressed topic. The settings and context can vary in different ways, but the playful image stays. Not every example will be explained, but rather some that show different settings to bring the point across. The following examples from the data collection illustrate the playful image.

Starting out with the Toy & Play industry. In 2003, Hasbro had a Mister Potato Head' campaign with children re-enacting or imitate the potato head facial expressions, resulting in amusing photos. Mr. Potato head is a toy from Hasbro with mouldable features; it is a character from the Toy-Story movies. Kids can be like their (favourite) toy. It could also be as if kids act like this when they actually play with them, as they are often quite verbal or non-verbal when they play while they're in their 'own' world. These prints portray kids as *fun, smiling, happy and playful*.

In 2008, Hasbro published two Super Soaker ads, both illustrate a big group of children in the outdoors participating in a water fight. Animals, which probably relate to pets also join in, making this activity, the Super Soaker water battle, for everyone. The children are portrayed as *active, cheerful, spontaneous, cooperative, cheeky, and are in full submersion of the game*, using other artefacts to emphasize their roles. The setting of the water fight is framed as a 'classic painting' style, reminiscent to old dusty paintings on wars from the 1800's. This can then evoke a certain historical feel to the ad.

Lego then illustrates playfulness in their campaign Creativity Forgives Everything from 2012. They represent situations where the consequences of children's play has resulted in unfortunate situations for onlookers. For example, one ad shows a boy who has built a helicopter out of Lego bricks and placed it into a bird's cage and consequently the bird escapes its cage. Hence, the slogan Creativity Forgives Everything – relates to forgiving playfulness and creativity of a child. Another ad from the same campaign portrays a girl that looks sneaky behind a flowerpot. The viewer assumes she made Lego-flowers and planted them in her parents' flowerpot, thereby ruining the actual flowers. The slogan here would relate back to her effort (which is essence is a good intention), being enough to forgive her destruction of the original flowers. In this sense *children learn by doing, by constructing something new*, and Lego makes the claim this should not be frowned upon.

As Hasbro and Lego pare Toy & Play companies, this playful image isn't too surprising to see. However, by analyzing the advertisements from the FMCG industry, examples of the playful image arise there as well.

The Happy Meal campaign by McDonalds from 2013 portrays three ads of children playing with something as simple as a cardboard box. The children are portrayed as active with the box, either laughing, or being curious. The text on these boxes says "What is it with kids and boxes?". For the reader, this appears as a rhetorical question and is used as a reference to the McDonalds happy meal box. A cardboard box is a simpler object for children to play with, or possibly less complex compared to the toys or games Hasbro and Lego advertise.

This image of playing with simpler objects continues within the advertisements from the Fashion companies.

Noa Noa's catalogue campaign from 2009 shows a young girl hiding underneath something that appears to be either a colouring book or magazine. She's wearing a dress, tights a princess crown, associating her image to being very girly. As she is hiding the onlooker can't really see her facial expression, making it mysterious as well. Dressing up and hiding are parts of *play-like situations*.

The same goes for United Colors of Benetton, who in their ad from 2000 portrays two boys wearing multiple classes. Watching these boys wearing 4 pairs of classes on their heads and a few hanging in the shirt, adds a fun or 'goofy' aspect to the setting. As a viewer, only guesses on their scenario can be made, but there is no doubt that they seem to be enjoying the moment.

Playfulness has appeared as a frequently theme, in advertising and conceptualization of children. From the early campaigns by United Colors of Benetton (2000), to the campaigns from late 2000's by Hasbro (2008 and 2009) and Noa Noa (2009) and the present campaigns by Lego (2012) and McDonalds (2013), show that the theme is popular and that playfulness is repeated across the entire timeframe and covered by all three industries.

Advertisements portray children in adult contexts

Framing children in adult contexts has appeared several times throughout the data collection. The ads from the Toy & Play industry and the Fashion industry mainly use adult contexts.

Hasbro, portrays children as adults in their Clue(do) campaign from 2010. The game consists of certain characters and typifications. These advertisements are 'copies' of scenes in famous or movies, which can be considered pop-culture. The first one is a replica of Sharon Stone in basic instinct the second of Al Pacino in the Godfather and the third of Hannibal Lector in Silence of the Lambs. However, these prints are re-created.

The tag-line is 'Cluedo, the crime game for kids'. Children here are portrayed as the 'bad' people, or they have taken on the role of the bad person, an aspect which in the game itself is also possible. The movies and the characters fit the Cluedo game, but it is *a paradox to use children in these copied scenarios*. Children will not have seen or will see these movies yet, maybe teenagers, but the movies itself are from at least 20 years ago [respectively 1991, 1972, 1991].

However, they are considered 'classics' so children might be able to see them. Nonetheless, the add will attract *the attention of young adults*, as they might recognize the scenes. Therewith, not only does Hasbro advertise to children with this campaign, but also incorporates the adult range The question remains though if these ads are appropriate or not, thereby wondering if Hasbro is pushing its boundaries in advertising.

In 2006, Lego published a 'Builders of Tomorrow' advertisement. The ad shows a replica of a world famous photography with New York construction workers having lunch on a beam of at what is possible becoming a skyscraper. The boys are placed completely in the same setting as in the original print, dressed in the same way as the men from the original photo, with working clothes, dirt and lunch boxes, except for the fact that they are boys; children. Nonetheless, children themselves won't probably know this print, their parents will. Herewith Lego is tapping into pop-culture and using historical moments to bring their message across. By replacing men with boys, the frames the children as the next generation to build, construct, develop, invent. It also brings an association with being though and stimulating the mind for the future.

This can also be seen in the other 'Builders of Tomorrow' 2011 campaign. In these three ads, the adult context appears in the way the children are teaching their parent on future technologies. The ads show situations of children showing or educating their parents about their inventions. Classically, a parent is the educator and the child the student, but in this case, the roles have reversed.

Then, from the Fashion Industry a 2008 ad from United Colors of Benetton's ad, presents another example of how children can be staged in an adult context. The ad shows a group of four children at around the age of 6-7 years old, posing together with a baby who seems to be around the age of 3 years old. The adult context appears in the way the girl in the centre of the picture holds the baby in her arms, as if there is a mother-daughter relationship between the two of them. The ad associates the girl holding the baby with a caring, almost protecting image, something expected to be seen as an adult characteristics rather that a child's character.

The Noa Noa catalogue ad from 2012 shows a girl at around the age of seven. She is posing in a very independent and strong way. Her outfit and hair are carefully put together. Her posing and lack of mimic expression seems very unnatural for a child her age. By looking at this picture, the thought of a staged scenario comes to mind.

Overall, Caucasian children are portrayed

In 7 of the overall thirty ad (campaigns) consisting of 54 prints no children, or people in general, appear. Meaning 23 ad campaigns do have children in them. An overall finding is that 23 of these campaigns, resulting in 46 actual prints, contain the display of children. Out of these 46 prints, only 10 show mixed racial cultures, in the sense of non-Caucasian.

It could be due to the sample of the ads stemming from mainly northern and western European publications, but it is still a rather large proportion. The point here is not to enter into a discussion about certain races or cultural backgrounds yet, it is merely the finding that out of 46 prints showing actual children, *36 prints (78 percent) portray 'white' children*. Another small note to this is that both genders, either boys or girls alone or a combination of them, have come widely forward in the ads, and this is therefore not distinctly outlined in the findings.

In Hasbro's ads, there are only Caucasian children to be determined, meaning based on salt-and-pepper, blond or dark-blond hair and pale skin with Caucasian like facial features. Even its' painting-like SuperSoaker ad (2008), where a large number of children is included, had 'white' children drawn in it. Also Noa Noa presents largely Caucasian children, where only in one ad a Asian-looking girl could be seen in combination with two blond girls. From McDonalds' campaigns, a world-wide global company, only one print of the 2013 Happy Meal Campaign shows a mixed-race girl. Her background can't be fully determined, but her hair is dark, she has a dark-skin colour, frizzy hair and African like features, leading to the idea of mixed gender. Then Lego in 2012, also has only one print with a boy with frizzy hair, and a darker skin colour, where he's portrayed with a girl of Caucasian background. The cultural heritage of the girl in the 2002 Coca-Cola campaign couldn't be completely determined based upon the shot. Benetton then amps the quota up, as all of their 6 prints have mixed races in them.

Additional branding perspective: extensive and different use of brand and product placement

Next to researching children's position in the brands, notes and patterns on brand and product placement also kept reoccurring. Looking at branding or product placement gives an insight in to tactis branders might have used in positioning their brand in relation to the child. There is quite a difference noticeable on how the industries use product- as well as brand placement.

Starting out with the FMCG industry, Coca Cola uses their product, the bottle, and brand itself in all of their campaigns. This is the only company in our data collection that does so. McDonalds, the other FMCG company, uses only their brand in their campaigns. There is not one campaign, which shows the actual product of a burger, fries, Milkshake or Big Mac. However, the brand, whether it is McDonalds or Happy Meal, is present in all campaigns. In other words, the FMCG industry always has brand placement in the researched campaigns, but not always product placement.

For the toy & play industry, the use of brand and product placement is more balanced. Lego uses brand placement in all of the researched ads, whereas the physical product, the Lego brick, is less present in the campaigns. For Hasbro, the brand is also present in all of their ads. However, since Hasbro is an umbrella holder of many different brands it is more the sub-brand of the products framed, rather than the Hasbro brand, this has only been printed since 2010. Product placement is only presented in the Play-Doh campaigns (2009; 2012).

The fashion industry is very much different from the two other industries. Noa Noa uses their brand in only one of the campaigns, whereas their products is in focus for all of their campaigns. United Colors of Benetton places their brand in the three campaigns from 2000, whereas in later campaign (2006 and 2008) only the product, the apparel is seen.

In overall, the FMCG and Toy & Play companies use brand placement in all of their ads, however not always product placement. The fashion companies on the other hand focus more on product placement, rather showing the apparel. Therefore the different industries differentiate themselves in their exposure of brandplacement and display towards children.

Synopsis
The data collection of the printed ads from six different companies across three industries has resulted in the collection of the explained findings;
- Children are creative with a high level of imagination.
- Children are linked to social and personal values
- Advertisements portray children without adults
- Children are portrayed as playful
- Advertisements portray children in adult contexts
- Overall, Caucasian children are portrayed
- Additional branding perspective: extensive and different use of brand and product placement

This is part of the actual reflection and display of the advertisements portraying and conceptualizing children. It is now time to see what branders, or representatives of the brand, themselves have said about overall branding towards children, conceptualizations and the meanings and emotions they associate to that.

4.2   Findings of the in-depth interviews

The second part of empirical data consists of 5 transcribed interviews with employees of BRIO, Coca-Cola, HAK and Hasbro, either working directly for the branding or marketing department, or having close relations with those departments. The interviews have been thoroughly read and analyzed resulting in either additional data to our previous found topics, or the development of new themes for conceptualization of children through the interview's perspective. These findings include people's own views and reflection on posed questions, and as not all of them have been with the company at the time of the published advertisements, or work in other departments closely related to marketing and branding but not at marketing or branding themselves, the views have to been seen as reflexive and insightful, but not generally applicable to the entire company at the time the researched prints were published. The findings are on the current perspectives and conceptualization of children based on their experiences. 4.2.1 covers additional findings in the construction of the 6 previous findings. Whereas the

4.2.2 covers the new additional derived findings. Once again, the findings are not listed in priority; they are equal factors in brander's perspectives.

4.2.1 Brander's viewpoint on previous findings

In relation to the finding of <u>children being portrayed as playful,</u> mostly the Toy & Play companies covered this in their interviews. For example Hasbro sees playing as an integral part of learning and interaction:

"We have an ideology to improve a child or a family's life through playing and having fun. Like I said, for parents it is also very important to represent a 'learn' factor. Kids have to be able to do puzzles, or develop creative thinking, and then there are obviously the products that are more fun, like the Furby we just re-launched. But also these have a sort of interaction-aspect to them"

Whereas BRIO focuses more on improvement of the experience:

"Because we are both pushing the limits on what we can bring to the table with new ideas, new materials, plastics and use of wood, in the way that you create the new play that you invent for kids."

Nonetheless, imagination was also regarded as part of child's inner development and learning process, when highlighting *children as creative with a high level of imagination,* BRIO touches up on the imagination and development needed for construction: *"[…] like with BRIO builder, which is primarily based on construction, which is for kids to be creative and interact with it and learn how to imagine and then build exactly what they want. The railway is more system driven, so you need to create a lay-out and loop it, and that requires a certain development of a child to understand."*

However, they also take notion of the motorical development when "*we work under these circumstances where we're trying either to bring in new pull-toys, or push toys, or incorporating motoric development. But it's also important in the Brio Builder segment to develop spatial insight for development or thinking differently. So we're trying to keep the range vivid and broad actually, we're trying to get everyone something that they want to buy.*"

Then all interviewees felt they were <u>linking children to social and personal values</u> through their brands and mention the value of community and belonging:

"Being part of a group and belonging becomes very important for a child at a given moment is, and then suddenly there's a period of "I am focused on myself" from another age, so that are simply developmental stages that children go through. And yes, you know in the end, who knows what's really going on?" – HAK

And also Coca-Cola notices this group belonging: *"At one point they're really looking for identity and something to relate to. They are struggling and they don't want to confirm this, but at the other end they feel they have to, to distinguish themselves. So how as a child or as a youngster do you deal with that, and how can a brand come in place to help you with that?" - Coca-Cola*

But also in the sense to harvest these value and community which can be used for branding tactics: "One of the things we look for, or what we named it, are so called passion points. So what does someone in that age group has passion for? What resonates with them?" – Coca Cola

But also happiness is often addressed:

"Our tagline is 'creating happy childhood memories', that's what we try to do, that's our goal at least. Children should be happy and we try to give them that, and I hope other companies involved in children's product think about it in the same way" – BRIO

Even though the Coca-Cola interviewee often referred to more micro-levels of emotions and needs:

"What we tend to focus on mostly is the mood-stage, so the emotions and needs you have, and those can also change per day and per moment. Some moments you wish to have more peace, sometimes you need more of a boost, sometimes you want to be alone, sometimes you want to enjoy a drink and enjoy a moment themselves, and for some people taste isn't as important, but more the social aspect of it, about being together with others" – Coca Cola

"[It's] more a need stage. That is often paired with emotion, that's true, but people are often looking for something, a brand or product, that can fill-in that need."

Brander's acknowledge the importance of understanding which emotions and values that are connected to a group. Eventually, this information can then be used to brand the product as a mean for social relations towards children.

In relation to <u>advertisements where children are portrayed without adults</u>, there were quite some responses which later on are elaborated, but Hasbro did have some insights into why they have different advertisements between adults and genders: "*There is clearly a conceptualization of children, we have girls brands, and boy brands, that in itself means we differentiate the genders, but then again we also have more adult brands, like the mentioned Trivial Pursuit. So this is also reflected in the way we communicate towards our target group.*"

And also explained why they use older segments or <u>adult-like context</u>: "*If you look at Nerf, you'll see boys of the age of 15, 16,17, a bit older than our core target group, cause we want to inspire these consumers of 8,9,10 to think it's really cool to have a Nerf blaster, you know, it's a very nice, flashy, though commercial, but again it really depends on the brand.*" And also ""*[…] we try in all ads to communicate to both parents and children, because the parents will eventually purchase the products. It's a creative way of approaching both parties.*"

Though this example does not refer to the actual adulthood, the idea behind the strategy comes across; advertisements portrays children in adult-like contexts to create a desire for the actual younger target group, by letting them think that the product is cool as the older kids use it.

Comments on the <u>use of brand- and product placement</u> in relation to exposure to children resulted in the following from the Toy & Play companies;

"Well [we] primarily [display] the sub-brand, because a lot of people don't know Hasbro as an umbrella name. But we will do this more in the future, to.... So for example, the tv-commercial or the printed ad will be focused on monopoly but we will put a subtle reference to the Hasbro brand to load extra quality into the ad. We've done this a little in the past to experiment, but this is something we will continue with for the future." – HASBRO (p.2)

"We try to incorporate the brand at least once, but it depends on what you see as a product, for instance the BRIO builder system, it's made of compartments, so it's kind of hard to just have one placement. For example the railway system, we make sure the brand is represented at least once on each item, but then when you build it, it's obviously gonna pop-up in a sequence. And then BRIO toddler only once on each toy." – BRIO

"You nowadays make more use of digital, so compared to 2000, we were a more tv-commercial based approach to now a more digital approach, or evolving more digital elements. So digital we see as www.monopoly.com or .nl, but you also have the facebook account or the Hyves [a Dutch social network] in the media channels. We use and create events as well to load our products and brands, and tv-series. So 2000 was mainly tv-commercials for branding, and now it's more and more the immersive approach to frame our brands." – Hasbro

"We try to be where our consumers currently are, they are in stores, they are online in the stores, they are online with the social networks, they are online in the games, they are at McDonalds, you know, we had several campaigns world-wide with McDonalds for the happy-meals. So there are a lot more possibilities to have brand- and product placement than purely tv-based." - Hasbro

Interviewees are all aware of the effects of brand and product placement, and it can be done in many different ways pending on the marketing channel being used.

4.2.2 New findings derived from in-depth interviewing

While interviewing tough, it became apparent branders' think more about other elements in relation to children, the brand exposure and the brands' conceptualization of children, which resulted in the following new findings;

- Branders try to create loyalty from early age on
- Branders think more about the parent-child combination than the child itself.
- No direct marketing to really 'young' children
- Fostering social relationships is important in marketing towards children

- Brands can change children and influence children enormously
- Brands hold a responsibility and need to give back

The quoting is kept in its context and therefore some of them can seem rather long, however it is needed to keep the spoken context relevant as this will provide insights into the interviewees' mind frame regarding child consumption. The hermeneutical approach requires context rich data for mapping out similarities and contradiction

<u>Branders try to create loyalty from early age on</u>
What is noticed that brand find it important to tap into young consumers for loyalty and awareness, for example Coca-Cola states:

"It's a relative Iron law, that when you involve those kids as early as possible with your brand, you benefit that from that a really long time. They'll develop themselves as loyal followers and in the end, buyers. So the lesson here is, get them early, benefit for a long time. […] So that doesn't mean that we want them to buy directly, or in the end we do, but the goal there is to create a relationship with at least the brand Coke, that they like the brand, appreciate it."

So creating awareness and loyalty among children early on, and benefit from that relationship when they develop from followers to buyers. In addition, the image towards children and parents impacts that loyalty. Looking at Brio where:

"The image is very important, and people should look at and think like 'hmm, didn't I have this as a child?' and it's obviously released maybe not even one year ago. But as soon as they think of that, to evoke those emotions, then it's easier for them to go to the register and buy it."

Evoking childhood memories among the purchaser is then a way to harvest a sale. According to Coca Cola, it is also essential to be open and purposely scout for response, in order to harvest loyalty.

"Kids want to be heard, so keep your ears and eyes open and be understanding, we call this social listening, I don't know whether it is an accepted term, or only we use it, but we call it social listening" – Coca-Cola

And for the HAK lady: "*It is always a case of trust, with any product or brand whatsoever.*"

Branders' also research the ways to create the exposure needed for loyalty building. By identifying where the children are being influenced, you know where to put your efforts to establish the relationship**.**

"[…] generally speaking you have three connections. Either the child sees the game or toy at a friend, so here the friend is the instigator, second level would be a tv-commercial and the third is in-store. So, of all the generated research we have collected these three touch-points, or levels, or channels are important for children's exposure where the child is being influenced" - Hasbro

And HAK used a once-yearly nationwide published magazine to expose both parent and child to their brand:

> *"[…] and September, after the school holidays. It's a moment where schools are starting fresh, and parents want a fresh clean start for their children. That's by the way the only medium we have advertised in children's magazines! In the Okkie and Bobbo [freely published magazines at schools nationwide], so that is more directed to the children themselves." - HAK*

By marketing to children while they are in school, HAK creates awareness from a very early point in a child's life. But loyalty was also created trough re-establishing relations and getting the next generation in:

> *"You have to keep up to date with what's going on in the world, and in the direct environment of children, you also have to keep re-inventing the advertisement. I mean, with so many brands, and so many different target groups it's difficult not to fall in to rehearsal" - Hasbro*

Coca-Cola follows up by saying:

> *"[…] it is very important for Coca Cola to remain in that target group [15-25], and those ages, because you know, you have to re-invent yourself. Every year there is new charge of 15 year olds, so new kids that you have to win" – Coca- Cola*

Brands aim to create awareness and establish loyalty with the child from a very early stage. By creating awareness before children are able to become a purchaser, brands still integrate awareness for later on in life. One of the ways to create loyalty is to be present in children's surroundings and re-establishing relations everytime a new generations in.

<u>Branders think more about the parent-child combination than the child itself</u>
Branders' perspective on the conceptualization and branding towards children does not necessarily have to be aimed directly towards children, according to interviewees. The parent plays an important role when branders target products towards children. There are different reasons as to why branders wish to advertise through the parents, the first one as the parent being the purchaser or gatekeeper. All four interviewees confirmed this;

> *"Well what we basically do, if we have a children's product, then we do not advertise directly towards the children, but more to the parents. We give a signal that it is a product for children, through packaging or colour, those kinds things, but we do not focus on children directly" – HAK*

" […] and if it's not the youngsters, it is the what we call gate-keepers, so the people buying the products for home. People are often a consumer until their like 50's or 60's. So we target them because they are a consumer themselves, but also as a gatekeeper for children in the choice of the brand" – Coca-Cola

"[…]staying true to our fanbase, it's not a huge fanbase. But it's not only the parents, but also the grandparents, so we try and stay true to them and give them something, so they can go into the store, find a new toy, more or less cause it reminds them of what they had when they were kids and then they buy it for their kids and grandkids." – BRIO

"With our online customers we know that the children solely play online and parents buy, because the children don't have a credit card, children don't pay. But when you're in a physical store with a child, it's a different world. Because the child gets a lots of influences, or a lot of what we name sensory impacts. There are so many toys to choose from, so in store it's a combination of child-parent" – Hasbro

Another factor is the importance brands wish to have for parents, it seems relevant to send a heartfelt message towards the parent, and grandparent:

"The core of the product and the story behind it is important for parents, they want to know it's something good they serve their families. It's important for parents to know, 'hey, the world doesn't have to be so chaotic'. And you just want to put a nutritious meal for your family on the table. […] We also think that with our products, you basically should speak towards the parent, and the parent is the one who buys the product. […] I really do think we will always be a company that sends their message 70% percent of the time through the parent." – HAK

Then BRIO has a clear view that brands need to be a solid base for children, and convey that through a soft and mellow message to parents:

"Our director always says we're like mashed potatoes. […] you think, well that doesn't sound too appealing. But when you're a parent, or a grandparent you want your child to have proper nutrition, to develop accordingly, have good bones, a good spine, you know… general health and wellbeing. And it's important to have something that's soft and mellow like mashed potatoes, a basic food, that is good, honest and trustworthy, that's strong. There are so many flashy, hypersugary, electronic, high pitched, colourful products out there. Just click on the commercially owned channels that air children's shows, like Pokemon. It's so flashy and fastphased. As a parent and adult you need something solid, something bland. That's why we're mashed potatoes." – BRIO

Even though Hasbro has some of those 'flashy and 'colourful' products in their range, they also feel they need to help educate children: "I mean games, both board and video have to be educational as well. It is important to represent something to both parent and child" – Hasbro

Although the parent-segment can also be a challenging factor, when it comes to feedback from parents and the justification of giving certain products to their child, the HAK interviewee had some personal encounters with that;

"Parents are very nicely put together because they say 'no, I will always give my child only fresh fruit', so that's something you as a supplier or external FMCG cannot ever overwrite, even though so much candy is sold. […] But you know secretly, our applesauce also convenient, because if parents give it to children, they think 'well, then my child's daily serving of fruit is inside the system again'." – HAK

"But parents can be very difficult to assess a truthful situation. What's really going on with children, how it really is, and what the motives are. […] as a parent you can second-guess things, but we believe their opinions [the parental] are valuable in our assessment." – HAK

It becomes clear that parents are believed to have a very important role for marketers when they advertise and sell products for children. It is an issue, which takes a lot of effort for success, and sometimes it is rather complicated to get past these gatekeepers.

No direct marketing to really 'young' children
It is difficult to identify the exact ages that are a bit of a no-go when it comes to marketing to children. For instance the FMCG industry has some clear policies about it;

"[…] very important to note, and what we've been pursuing for several years is that we absolutely do not market to children below the age of twelve. And you see this is multiple countries, and multiple industries, that there is a policy of not market to those children, since they are still to impressionable, to influential. It's not right to advertise in that way, so in those ages it is mostly through other people or reference material" – Coca Cola

"It's not until high schools that we have our vending machines. We have media rules, so we'll never advertise in programs with a primary reach to children" Coca-Cola

HAK follows up by saying:
"[Branding] is present somehow or somewhere [in events], and especially as a parent you will see that it's noticeably HAK, but children we do not target directly in it." -HAK

"[…] and this is also where the extra rules come in play. Like until the age of twelve it cannot be done to publish to children or advertise to them, so the ads also had to be adapted." - HAK

But also the Toy and Play industry has similar guidelines:
"The basic rule for Hasbro Holland is, so the younger they are, the less we communicate directly to the child. So as a guideline, that is part of Habsro policy, children below the age of 8, we don't directly target them for instance on social media, like facebook. So that's a policy. Also with children below 8, there is no database building. When we get customer feedback or reflections, we destroy the given data from children below 8. We don't use any of their information." – Hasbro

"I'm not sure what the guidelines are, in Sweden we try not to target to children directly, it's a bit… we don't treat the toddlers as are primary market. It's really the parents with us that's the core market, and in

some cases the grandparents as they buy. But some children need to learn what it is to deal with wanting and desire, so they obviously will foster this wanting of a BRIO toy the more they play with it." – BRIO

Guidelines and policies are one thing, however, a lot of companies still face legal issues in Europe in relation to marketing to children;

"*You know that you'll have a lot of restrictions that you will face and that you'll enter in this maze, a spiderweb, of rules, and that is very time exhaustive."* – HAK

"*you have companies who are constantly restrained by rules and push against those boundaries, resulting in the response of creating even more rules to reduce exposure to children, and the consequence will be, that when it comes to the focus on children only, it will probably be completely restrained. But I think companies and governments have to meet somewhere in the middle"* – HAK

Especially the *Nordic countries are seen as a hassle and a highly restricted zone* by branders;

"*Yes, there are definitely legal constrains. There are differences from country to country, to give you an example in Greece, but also in Sweden, let me take Sweden as an example; it is not allowed to advertise towards children, so this is with any type of product, but mainly with food. Because the Swedish government wants to protect children for obesity and the extensive intake of sugar. But also non-food companies are subject to that. Whilst, for us, you could dispute that, because I mean how is a toy going to make a child fat in Sweden?"* - Hasbro

"*It is however to be noted that for example Nordic countries people are voting to tighten legislation from 16 to 18, and then here in our offices in Holland, we think 'what, are you crazy?!' I mean, you don't have to patronize people completely now do you?"* - Coca-Cola

"*For instance, I believe it's Denmark, in Denmark it's not allowed for instance in a store to have a shelf, and it's a girls shelf for instance, to put 'girls' on the signing tops. Like normally we have girls toys or boys toys on separates shelves, but it could be that 95 percent of the consumers or the kids that will play with the toy is a girl and 5 percent is boy but there, and I'm not sure if it is solely Denmark, it might also be Sweden or Norway, but there you cannot put a name tag on it because then you exclude, or discriminate so to say the minority group. Here in Holland that's so different. […] So yes, it is difficult, each country has different specifics which you have to take into account. It makes it more difficult in Europe"* - Hasbro

Nonetheless, there seems to be small cracks and some mazes in the strict rules Nordic countries uphold;

"Well, back in the days it was that you couldn't target children, or advertise to them. But most of the television that is broadcasted in Sweden isn't actually from Sweden. So nowadays it's more than OK to have tv-ads. Like when we launched BRIO builder last year, the Nordic countries had the possibility to have tv-ads which is for a small company like BRIO, is really big, 'cause normally we don't have that kind of money." BRIO

Even though the age limits are different, it has come to the realization that companies do have their own clear policies and guidelines on where to draw a line, however legislation differs from country to country, and especially the Nordic countries are a hassle in approaching children.

Fostering social relationships is important in marketing towards children

In relation to an earlier finding on social values like happiness and love, also the fostering of social relationships is also important in the conceptualization of children. Children are seen as for example part of the family;

"For example, family-friendly values are very important in our advertising. Family, and building the idea of family time." – Hasbro

But very important for brands is the idea of creating and fostering real-life connections and creating values that transcend isolation and individuality. Social media play a key role here;

"The brands that are smart, tap into this [social media] by creating something that is live, like events or concerts, so that people can foster real-time relationships. So yes, like I mentioned facebook is very important, but we also try to cultivate live-contact" - Coca-Cola

"[…] especially since the influence of media and isolation of children, it is important to focus on coming together and learning how to socialize and play, as this is important for later on in live in relation to communication, cooperation and skills." - Hasbro

But portraying the image of family time is also on their radar;

"Families don't always have to run, and achieve better than other people. You know, the new media really put a looking glass and intensified everything. The 'winners', or that American mentality of being a winner is only intensified by social networks and online communications. But we believe, 'you know what dear consumer, just get the basics right'. Take care of your family, give them the proper nutrition and time and love that they deserve and foster family time through having dinner together" - HAK

"Social bonding? Yes, for instance with our games, we… the tagline in our commercial is 'make time for Hasbro games'. So our pay-off then is then; 'dear consumer, think about making time for your family with a Hasbro game', so yes, for games you could say that that's a message we'd like to enforce" – Hasbro

Also the topic of gender equality in relation to socializing and setting examples is referred to:

"Because we are Swedish, so we're sometimes maybe a bit bland, and then I don't mean in our design but the population in general. We don't have an outspoken opinion, it's just what we like, and what we try to do. So we try to strive for equality. And then we also take into account to family issues, like the relation grandparents and parents have to the toy in relation to the child" - BRIO

Creating platforms and beliefs of closer family relations plays a central role in brands' perspective on advertising towards children and the overall conceptualization of children need social relationships.

<u>Brands can change children and influence children enormously</u>

As the impact of brands on identity formation and the influence on children's everyday lives was a rather largely debated issue in the literature. It was interesting to find out that the branders' perspectives were quite distinct ranging from a more corporate perspective;

For Coca-Cola associating the brand toward the *youth generation* is where they feel their impact is;

       "Deciding to support a brand, or buy a brand to show and determine who we are. Especially a drink or packaging you're holding, says something about you. […] They're also searching for an identity and developing this, they're looking for their own things, what they find important or not. And they are also looking for anchors in the society, or Icons of what they think, 'hey this is interesting and I would like to belong to that, or that suits me'. And especially in those ages, in that target group influence is huge and we believe it is important to create that connection." – Coca-Cola

       "The brand will give it the piece of mystery, the story behind it, which hugely influence the perception, your liking of a product. You buy Coca-Cola as a statement, it becomes a belief, a part of a person' - Coca-Cola

Then Hasbro discusses tactics of carbrands to impact younger children for the fostering of later loyalty:

       "[…] like I said, enormous. The influence of brands on a kids life, where they're highly influential. There are even carbrands, adult carbrands, featured on Nickelodeon 'cause they already start to influence youngsters at an early age, cause youngsters can also influence the buying decision of parents. But also, these carbrands already want to tap into the awareness of the child for their life, or perhaps later in life to influence them for buying in ten, twenty years. It's really something." – Hasbro

But interviewees also felt their products can change children's lives;

       "By advocating the benefits and the health of vegetables and fruits we can change and educate children. By providing the information in an accessible and tangible way to children, and also to parents, throughout the year, and through several access points, we can really deliver a large contribution to the overall wellbeing." – HAK

       "Well there's actually a story, from many years ago, and I'm not sure how much of it is the truth because it passes down from person to person. But many years ago before I entered the company, most of the brands were produced in Sweden, and some of them were even produced in Swedish jails, and one of the interns which was known as one of the most bad-ass ones, he sent a letter to the company stating that if he had a toy like that, he wouldn't be in prison. So a toy can really create meaning and memories for a child, it's also a way of interacting with other children and with the parents. The story has been told many, many times obviously." – BRIO

Then again, interviewees sometimes counter-argument themselves by minimizing the effect of their own brands on children;

"We think change, no, you cannot change a child's day, but we can have a positive effect on a child's life. So change no, but an influence and effect yes" – HASBRO

"Yes, but in a very simple and small way, you know, creating little moments of happiness. You can't drastically change a child's life, but you do create the option of a moment for themselves. That's what I think is the strength of brands all around, to create little moments for children, create good associations. And like I said, to give good examples." – Coca-Cola

Then when though when asked to reflect back on their personal opinion, 'brands' in general were sometimes given a negative connotation:

"I actually, when we went to the Lund hospital [for delivering the baby] we got this welcome package and one of the Swedish diaper chains had this hat included, and we actually put this hat on the baby and it was branded of course. I just then realized that most people in Sweden have this first photo of their child with this branded hat, and that's kind of scary" - BRIO

"Well, what is scary, or what I personally think is scary, is that the idea we send out to children, is the idea a child is only part of the society or part of a group, once he/she wears certain brands, certain clothes, buys certain things, eat certain brands. You only count as a member of society when you're life is branded. Which means, as a parent, you have to keep up with this and provide for this, 'cause otherwise your child is left out at the playground. This relates in numerous feelings like guilt, sort of 'blackmail', and so on, whatever you as a parent makes you feel bad... only due to a brand." - HAK

Interviewees definitely see the impacts they have on children, and are even capable of reflecting over the possible consequences of advertising and brand towards children.

<u>Brands hold a responsibility and need to give back</u>
Then as a response to the effect brands can have on children, all interviewees mentioned the responsibility brands, and the people working for tem, hold in relation to children and their consumption patterns. First by addressing that yes, there is money to be made;

"Well you have to realize, we do want to sell, that's why we're in business. But I mean, we're not monsters, of course we want profit, we're in business to make money, so sure you need to see children as consumers, as income, but we do care about their development. […]. The stimulation and practicality of our products is something we think of in every new development." – Hasbro

"[…] whatever happened to making a nice apple pie? I think brands really have to think about this and that brands have to be aware and careful with it, and realize that they have a responsibility. Not necessarily to one child, but to a bunch of children. If your goal is to get good ratings and numbers, fine, but be prepared to give back." – HAK

Next to children's personal development, social constructs where highlighted, especially by Coca-Cola;

> "*To be aware of societal developments and very clearly state a point of view on that […] and with the goal to not only state the point of view of the brand, but also support the people whom it concerns. To clearly communicate a positive message behind it, to show people 'hey, we know, we care, and we do'.*" – Coca Cola

> "*So yes I think brands can be definitely examplementary, it's the same with a celebrity. At one point you have influence, or power, and then also the connected responsibility. If you only use your influence to sell sell sell, well, that's not right and I'm also convinced this doesn't work.*" – Coca-Cola

> "*[…] there are lots of reasons to in fact believe in a better world. It's very important for our target group to establish this for the future*" – Coca-Cola

A side-step was made by two of the interviewees regarding an institution called MediaSmart;

> "*what I also would like to mention when it comes to advertising, Hasbro is involved with the company called MediaSmart, which is an international firm, which in Dutch is called 'ReclameRakkers', and MediaSmart offers learning programs for kids to make them more aware of what tv-commercials are, in basis. So kids get the sense of the concepts of tv-commercials and that kids become aware that a tv-commercial is there to make you buy something.*" - Hasbro

> "*Well, there's MediaSmart, where we're on the board, which educates children about advertising. Then we also have Mission Olympic, which for example is an activity which we do with all the highschools in, well at least here in Holland. […] with an end-activity in the Olympic stadium in Amsterdam […] to make the connection with sports, not so much with Coca-Cola, it's not a very branded event, it's more to create awareness about the benefits of working-out.*" – Coca-Cola

> "*Hasbro takes ownership and responsibility in that sense. Hasbro is also the only toy-supplier or toy-manufacturer that is in the committee of MediaSmart, also companies like Coca-Cola, Unilever and Nintendo are in there, and then I don't consider Nintendo as a toy supplier, but as a video game supplier. But these are also companies that support MediaSmart, and we contribute in that sense.*" – Hasbro

Another debate that was prevalent was the obesity issue and preservatives in the FMCG-companies;

> "*It's quite easy for people to say 'oh coca-cola makes you fat', but people aren't often very well informed, we take it upon us to inform our consumers*". Coca-Cola,

> "*Sometimes, dieticians themselves don't even know anything about preservatives and additives in food. So then we invite them to research and grade our produce externally. So then for the consumer, to have clarification from a trusted source, an external trusted source, the information is more viable and it creates brand trust for us.*" -HAK

With both respondents mentioning a positive contribution by creating awareness and trust;

"We have an initiative with elementary schools to educate children about health and healthy eating. We have certain greenhouse projects. So that's how children do not only learn about nutrition and healthy food, but also the origin of food." - HAK

"We don't think we're a key factor in the cause of obesity, I mean we [the soda industry in total] are only two percent. If we would change something, the world wouldn't shift completely. But we do wish to take part in the solution. [...] in every country we will support and create those activation programs to promote physical activity and wellbeing and more sports. In that way we try to contribute to the cause." – Coca-Cola

"In these times, of globalization and food scandals, it is good for people to have trust in us, and for us to also deliver on that promise. It has recently been increasingly important for consumers to know hey, we don't want to eat food that has been travelling for weeks or months on the road to get on my plate. No, the origin is Dutch, we promote local development." – HAK

"It's also to sort of go against the statistics. The statistics mention 'by 2030 everybody is too fat, has no real-life contact, overall wellbeing is diminishing and so on. And you know, we create the statistics ourselves. So we, the people, but also the brand can be of an influential cause to create those real-life contacts" – Coca-Cola

Other good causes were elaborately discussed as well;

"But we also wanted to show that we give back to the world. And Coca-Cola has had a long standing cooperation with WWF [...] so we donate 3 millions ourselves, freely over the next few years, but then we also ask people to donate money and to take action and make changes themselves in the debate around global warming to influence the environment."

"The scouts here in Sweden, we support their values and ideas in learning and teamwork, and therefore support their cause" - BRIO

"It is important for BRIO to give back, and that's actually one of the reasons why we're at Malmo festivalen. We also do this in Stockholm and then we have an event that goes around to Goteborg, Stockholm and Malmo. And that's not primarily for us to showcase our products, but also to give back and it's a lot of fun for us and you see how happy kids get when they get the change to construct a three meter long train track, their expressions is like 'woow'. That's what keeps you going as a toy producer" - BRIO

Nonetheless, branders note that parents themselves also need to have an active participation in relation to children's consumption patterns, and Hasbro mentions it's not only the brand, but also the parent itself, that needs to take responsibility;

"If I look at the company, the world is changing as it is, and we're there where the consumer is. But I mean, it also depends on how much exposure a parent gives to a child. If it is monitored and controlled. We just cater for a need or a wish for television shows and mobile apps. That's also why we are creating more and more

apps, we have new apps coming out for almost every board game. Most of them are for free, but in some cases also paid apps. I mean, it is not a companies' responsibility to handle the intensive use of digital media, we merely use it as an opportunity for business and expanded exposure. I think as a parent, you have the responsibility and duty towards your children in what, uuuh, level they make use of digital options. We'd like to touch a consumer in many ways in their life." - Hasbro

Synopsis

There was a lot of data to be processed and analyzed. As the goal is to find patterns and meanings alongside the hermeneutical approach it was important to keep long wording as this gives better details and insights for the discussion later on. Branders confirmed some of the previous conceptualizations but also added new perspectives and spoke intensely about the fostering of social relationships, the influences they [the interviewees and brands] believe to have on children's societal environments and the responsibility connected to this impact.

The following aspects reached the surface in brands' perspective when it comes to targeting children:

- Branders try to create loyalty from early age on
- Branders think more about the parent-child combination than the child itself.
- No direct marketing to really 'young' children
- Fostering social relationships is important in marketing towards children
- Brands can change children and influence children enormously
- Brands hold a responsibility and need to give back

And in short again, the previous conceptualizations of children in advertisements have been marked:

- Children are creative with a high level of imagination.
- Children are linked to social and personal values
- Advertisements portray children without adults
- Children are portrayed as playful
- Advertisements portray children in adult contexts
- Overall, Caucasian children are portrayed
- Additional branding perspective: extensive and different use of brand and product placement

Now that both sets of data analysis have been mapped out, it is time to see what these findings result in for the overall view brander's have on the conceptualization of children. Also critical evaluations of certain unique findings will be mapped out in the discussion part.

5.   Discussion

The analysis of this thesis examined meanings, feelings, portrayed images and emotions of both the advertisements and the transcribed interviews. In line with the overall hermeneutical approach this thesis is based upon, in order to fulfil the research of this study, it is not sufficient to identity and mentions the above found findings separately. The goal was to observe the phenomenon of children as consumers through the eyes of branders, and extract as much information possible in order to find the meanings which branders and advertising bring across. As there are two methods of data collection, there are also two sets of data and some of them have discrepancies.

The discussion on conceptualizations and discourses reveals socio-psychological characteristics of respondents and touches up on context more than textual coherence. In this context, the term 'discourse' is no longer referred to formal linguistic aspects, but to institutionalized patterns of knowledge, that become manifest in disciplinary structures and operate by the connection of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1981; Gee, 2005). This is needed in order to frame the construction of children as consumers in an academic background. This is needed to provide a critical evaluation of previous literature according to argument, logic and/or epistemological or ontological traditions (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006:19).

This means there are insights to be found, rather than overall macro trends, however with the addition of branders' perspectives similar patterns and believes can occur across the three among large corporate brands, vision. The discussion will therefore be mapped according to stand-out findings, overlapping similarities and contradictions. This will also include a personal evaluation on certain thought-provoking findings, which is presented in the following.

Brander's conceptualization of children

Even though it may come across as a rather obvious finding that children are portrayed as playful, it does tap in to the previous researched literature. As children are seen as independent, free beings, not mandatory of entering in labour, but need to rather enjoy the freedom and education of upbringing. Playfullness falls in line with Cook's (2000) beliefs of children having a natural righteousness to abstract elements , and by entering in consumption practices reaching those elements.

Being 'active, cheerful, spontaneous, cooperative or cheeky' or 'having fun' are certain predominant believes among respondents. Often playfulness and imagination was portrayed in Play & Toy advertisement, but branders of the FMCG companies also used that as a way to describe children. 'Life is better when you play', 'creating happiness' and 'Children should be happy' portray the idea of children's right to happiness. The correlation is made that playing and fun equal happiness.

Having fun, creativity and playing are often directly linked together, but an extra issue branders attach to that as a third element is an educational factor. Children are 'expected' to learn and are also displayed in a learning way by expanding their imagination and triggering their cognitive development. Learn by doing; so by building Lego constructions, setting up BRIO railways or gardening HAK plantations, they develop both cognitive and motoric skills. Nonetheless, it is very much based on psychological factors; the internal development of a child. This was often highlighted as important for the interviewees, as they use this 'stigma' to connect with parents. Therefore, the element of learning seems to be more a deflection for selling towards parents to buy a product, than to actually stand by itself. The idea of a toy brings both fun and education towards the stage, more than perhaps a Sudoku puzzle or schoolbook does.

The learning aspect was like said before, based on internal development, both in advertisements and from interviewees' respondents. Only the Hasbro interviewee mentioned the element of education in relation to other children or people, where playing together would result in developing team skills and cooperation: "especially since the influence of media and isolation of children, it is important to focus on coming together and learning how to socialize and play, as this is important for later on in live in relation to communication, cooperation and skills." When this is brought to a macro societal level again it brings the notion across we, as a 'people', live in a very individual world where the focus is on 'me' and 'we', e.g. a family, more than being part of a society.

Important in this discussion is to also wonder how advertisements in other cultures would address the element of fun and creativity. Perhaps looking at Chinese advertisements would bring across more educational display factors. This also relates to the position the child has in the society. In Western Europe a child seems to be its own entity and has a rightfulness to certain things, be that happiness or love, but also to commodities, which relates back to Cook's (2000) research. This also relates back to the display of a singular empowered child, supported by the marketing writers (Lindstrom, 2003).

It seems personal development and independence are big influences in brands' conceptualization. Children being seen in this independent way, they have their own voice and are allowed to portray expressions and feelings. Hasbro takes this literal in children showing their expressions, while Coca-Cola for example taps more emotional or mood-stages. Brands then use these beliefs of expression and emotion in their advertisement to sell the product. The classical association of advertising is made by buying the product, where a need to become a 'better' person is fulfilled (Corrigan, 1997), even if it is just as little as a drink.

Dominance hierarchy in natural selection

A rather provoking finding was the fact of the portrayal of Caucasian or 'white' children, pending on what label preferred. The point here is not to go into the discussion of the political correctness of the writers. The fact that 78% of the advertisements which had children displayed in it, concerned Caucasian children, is rather significant. Of course it might have to do with the data sample, but that doesn't take away there is a preference for showing a certain race. Sure, this sample is based on a Nordic and/or Western European setting, but a counter argument can be made. When brander's were asked about advertising campaigns being centrally or locally controlled from the headquarters, meaning some of these ads could have also been shown in other countries or continents.

The repetitive display leads to the creation of a social order or even a ranking system known as dominance hierarchy, where Caucasian children are displayed as superior for being predominate in relation to other 'inferior' races. Thoughts arise on whether brands are aware of this and do this purposely for selling, or whether branders subconsciously have this frame of reference as well. At this point, Europe is a melting pot of different cultures and different races, think about the effect of this large display of Caucasian children might have on all children out there. It becomes natural for children to see Caucasian as superior than other races. This finding touches up on moral and ethical issues, but also largely on the constructs the Western society is built upon.

The fact that we ourselves noticed and mentioned, that even though some ads did have mixed races in it, the children still had a 'European' look adds to the discussion. This dominance hierarchy is so embedded in the social structures; it becomes even difficult for us to reflect back on. It raises the question whether marketers and brands want to continue with this idea of the dominance hierarchy for future generations.

In interviews branders didn't automatically think about racial factors, more as gender differentiation and ages. In certain aspects, like mixed genders is something that came across of well-thought of in both the advertisements as well as the interviews. For example Brio specifically said "to strive for equality". Coca-Cola has researched expression differences among girls and boys, but does not relate this back into its ads, as it often uses abstract display of families or genders, thereby avoiding a typification of certain genders (and race for that matter). Hasbro has such a large range of brands that it does have certain products for specific ages and genders and also makes the differentiation between child and adult games: "that in itself means we differentiate the genders." Hasbro also mentioned different guidelines between Nordic and Western European countries about gender discrimination. In some Nordic countries it isn't allowed to have separate in-store boys or girls sections, whereas the Netherlands has 'looser' legislation in this.

It seems the political debates from the past years have encouraged brands to lessen gender- and age discrimination. Now, the question of race is still prevalent and this finding will challenge marketers to rethink the portrayal of race in advertisement towards children.

Conceptualization of children in adult contexts

Another finding which needs closer examination is that of the adult context. In the advertisements, the most striking example was that of Hasbro's Clue(do), where children were placed in 18+ movie scenes of Silence of the Lambs, the Godfather and Basic Instinct. Sure, it's a different approach from a brand, but the question remains if it was success. Confusion arises whether children should be exposed to this, as they probably don't understand it. The ad has more resonation with an adult segment than with children. However, the association adults can make in relation to the particular ad can then be rather negative. It seems with an ad like this might just cross the line, but it might also be the goal of the brander's at the time. An ad like this will be largely discussed in the media and online blogosphere, therewith creating publicity for the brand. Probably this wasn't the intention, but it might be highlighted as a form of anti-branding (Klein, 1999)

Gunter and Furnham, (1998) argued a child consumer is not to be seen as just a pint-sized version of an adult, but that is exactly what some brands do. The rationale for this relates both back to children being independent consumers by themselves (Cook, 2000) as they partake in the display and appearance distinction, but it is also something brands purposely do.

Tactics by branders are discussed in the sense that by portraying children in an adult context, or showing slightly older children than the actual targeted market, the desire is created to be like those children. Like what Hasbro for instance does; "If you look at Nerf, you'll see boys of the age of 15, 16,17, a bit older than our core target group, cause we want to inspire these consumers of 8,9,10 to think it's really cool to have a Nerf blaster" The central ideas of displaced meaning and identity formation within CCT about adult consumerism, is then seen to be directly applied to children.

Another discussed tactic is that children's are seen to be influential in the decision making process. Children now become instigators for a purchase or examples for their parents in the expression of their consumption patterns.

"There are even carbrands, adult carbrands, featured on Nickelodeon 'cause they already start to influence youngsters at an early age, cause youngsters can also influence the buying decision of parents. But also, these carbrands already want to tap into the awareness of the child for their life, or perhaps later in life to influence them for buying in ten, twenty years. It's really something"

This is also reflected in Lego's ad where children educate their parents about their inventions and in the Noa Noa ad's where the girls dressed up are set in grown-up environments. Parents now take the role of children more seriously when it comes to purchase of products, both for the child itself as in regards to a family purchase (Ekström, 2003).

The use of placing children in adult contexts is thus twofold, one being to spark a desire among children to be like an older generation, and the second the influence children can have in family or adult-purchases.

Conceptualization of fostering social relationships

From branders' believes children are part of a family and the socialization between them is important. Although this didn't directly show in the advertisements, branders have heartfelt ideas about the fostering of social relationships. All four interviewees believe family time is fostered through real-life contact and situations. Toy & Play companies tap into this by connecting playing with parents, or even grandparents as a way for connecting. The FMCG companies believe in family dinner (HAK) and coming together for a drink (Coca-Cola). In relation to the postmodern family issues, brands use certain values and perceptions to bring families and children together by consuming.

Lovingness, family, togetherness, sharing, hanging out and forgiveness are certain words that keep reoccurring, both in advertisements as interviewees responses. It seems these are personal values used in order to conceptualize children in relation to others. Brands' see the social disruption of the satellite families (Philips, 2007) and disconnected generation but try to use it to their advantage;

"Especially since the influence of media and isolation of children, it is important to focus on coming together and learning how to socialize and play. […]So our pay-off then is then; 'dear consumer, think about making time for your family with a Hasbro game'" - Hasbro

"   But we believe, 'you know what dear consumer, just get the basics right'. Take care of your family, give them the proper nutrition and time and love that they deserve and foster family time through having dinner together" – HAK

This exemplifies the fragmentation which has fostered an absence of social interaction in postmodern families. This social disruption (Holt and Cameron, 2010) is characterized by isolation, instability and insecurity for children as some of them no longer have steady foundational family. Partaking in consumption around goods then becomes a tool to foster real life communications. Relating back to Philips theory (2007) on children's consumption transcending to the pressures of the established social structure, but becoming a way to define important social-cultural sites by way of consumption practices.

The fact that campaigns from both McDonalds and Lego had the word of 'forgiveness' purposely printed in the ad, says something about the ongoing development within family relations. Forgiveness in itself relates to wrongdoing as the first action. This then directly relates to the views of Locke [1690]1970) with children being harmed, shapeable and in need of protection. Also the respondent from HAK mentioned the feelings of guilt;

"[…] Which means, as a parent, you have to keep up with this and provide for this [mass-consumption], 'cause otherwise your child is left out at the playground. This relates in numerous feelings like guilt, sort of 'blackmail', and so on, whatever you as a parent makes you feel bad… only due to a brand." - HAK

As this is an element brought up in 2012 it seems a rather new development. The brand becomes a tool in order to patch up the feelings of guilt or distress. To us, it relates more to a buyout of guilt, buying your kids something instead of teaching them a valuable lesson about true forgiveness.

For a brand though it is a smart way to tap into ongoing disruptions. Some ads therefore relate to Holt and Cameron's (2010) cultural branding, where deeper underlying emotions and societal disruptions are used for advertising, where a positive message or spirit is connected to the product. Again, consuming goods becomes a way to deal with emotions and relationships. Interviewees believe they encourage more fluid social bonds, and this is also reflected in at least one of the ad-campaigns per researched brands.

Another point frequently mentioned was that the interviewees also saw this intensified used of media as a new channels, especially when used in a way to create real-life events. Then, the conceptualization of a disconnected generation definitely comes alive, as online activity is first needed to create an otherwise natural offline event. However there's a discrepancy between how a brands see their impact in the situation around digital interactivity in relation to other brands out there: At the same time the intensified media use is "too influential", but otherwise it is also seen as a great business opportunity.

One interviewee did have clear statement as he believed "it's not a companies' responsibility to handle the intensive use of digital media, brands merely use it as an opportunity for business and exposure" (Hasbro). From a business perspective, this is obviously smart. The branding literature out there also recommends using social networking, websites and webshops as way to expand opportunities (Aljukadar and Senecal, 2010; Hanna et al., 2011; Muniz and Schau, 2011. From a marketer's perspective, digital interactivity creates new opportunities for the marketer to contribute to culture and it has become inevitable not to enter in online communication. Brands simply use this to create a better marketplace for themselves, also in the sense to create offline events where their fans can gather around for real-life communication.

In relation to the intensified media use, we ourselves believe this is largely a responsibility of the parents. Consumers set the platform for brands and business-entrepreneurs to partake in; be where the consumer is. Internet has intensified the identity formation and brought unattainable possibilities closer, therewith increasing the contribution brands make in the everyday life of children. Sure there is an over

exposure out there in the media, yet, the online activity currently present, is fed by consumers, both by parent and child with a result of sedentary, disconnected lives. This finding relates more back to issues around upbringing and how parents deal with providing tablets, smartphones and laptops to their children.

Discrepancy between portrayal of children in ads without parents and the branders' focus on parents

Pragmatically, there seems to be a contradiction between what branders say about the parent-child combination and what is actually seen in the ads. Out of the 54 prints, only 5 of them show some sort of family-like situation, however none of them illustrated `traditional´ family situations, like dinner time, playing games or reading bedtime books. Nonetheless, branders themselves all spoke about the parent-child combination and how important that is, both in the sense that parents are the gatekeeper or eventual purchaser of the product, but also in the sense that interviewees believe to show an importance of the brand to the parent, concerning the previously discussed issues of family and education.

Looking purely at the ads the paradigm shift regarding childhood research would be confirmed. In modern sociology the child is considered as a "social being" (James et al. ,1998; Alanen, 2000; Brembeck et al, 2004) that needs be studied and treated in its own right. The display of singular children sends the idea of them being strong or independent from parents, more or less their own entity. However, the interviews painted a completely different picture. As there wasn't a complete one-to-one connection in this study, it cannot be said that this is true for all advertisements. There is however a discrepancy to be noted between branders seeing children as part of a child-parent combo, and advertisements showing very few parents or parent-like figures. It seems like branders don't 'walk the walk' and need to personally evaluate their view on children in this relation to parents.

Discrepancy between the belief of no direct marketing to young children, but the goal of creating value from early age on

All interviewees mentioned in their own way that they have rules about not targeting too young children, with a sidenote that the line on what 'too young' is differs from company to company. According to Coca-Cola "It's a relative Iron law, that when you involve those kids as early as possible with your brand, you benefit that from that a really long time" as children will become loyal followers, and eventually consumers, of which benefits can be reaped until they're in their late 50's. Brands also know where to reach children; "Either the child sees the game or toy at a friend, so here the friend is the instigator, second level would be a tv-commercial and the third is in-store" (Hasbro). So children are an attractive market for brands, as creating loyalty from early age on prospers for future awareness and purchase. Yet, at the same time there seems to be a personal ethical line; "the younger they are, the less we communicate directly to the child"(Hasbro). Often age 8 or age 12 is set as being the line. Yet, 8 and 12 in itself greatly differ. This internal debate more or less already highlights the fact that dealing

with children as a consumer market is a very sensitive practice. It is therefore no surprise there is such a wild debate between independent heartfelt writers.

The ethics are also different from country to country. Sweden and Denmark are sometimes labelled as no-go zones due to strong regulations and political debates. Interviewees see this as taking it a little too far; "I mean how is a toy going to make a child fat in Sweden?" (Hasbro) and "you don't have to patronize people completely now do you?" (Coca-Cola)
Similar to age, gender and racial differentiation, children as a consumers market in itself also forms a political debate. As it differs from country to country, it then again questions the social constructs between countries and cultures.

It is important though to take a lesson in this that children as consumers are still children. They are developing human beings and brands have to think about the influence and exposure they have towards a child and what a child can learn from this.

Discrepancy between personal ideas on impact of brands vs. corporate response
Continuing on the previous section, there is also a paradox in the behaviour and emotions of our informants when talking about consumption among children and the influence they have. Fact is, we live in a society based on consumption and capitalism, in the near future there is no change to be seen in there. It has advantages of labour creation, education, freedom of speech and so on, but it is also a continuing rat race of appearance, display, wealth and overall wellbeing. Interviewees often had internal struggles between their corporate responses and personal responses when it comes children as consumers.

In response to the polarized debate about the influence of brands on children, they all believe to have a responsibility to give back to children in the form of education, real offline events, goodwill and so on. But also in helping children their identity creation in the form of creating positive beliefs, delivering full informed messages and supporting educational institutions.

In some rather corporate responses all those positive things a brand does are highlighted, and truth be told, initiatives for active lifestyles, family gatherings, social relationships and beliefs in helping and developing children are good and significant, however it's always in the context of a brand. There wasn't a single refusal upon the notion of events or educational intuitions not being branded, it was either 'not as branded' or 'it's as not prevalent to the children' and this also has a personal effect on the interviewees;

'The idea we [as a society] send out to children, is the idea a child is only part of the society or part of a group, once he/she wears certain brands, certain clothes, buys certain things, eat certain brands. You only count as a member of society when you're life is branded'

'I just then realized that most people in Sweden have this first photo of their child with this branded hat, and that's kind of scary'

So a brand will still want to reap the benefits of given back, which from a strategically point makes sense. It increases awareness and positive association. However, as soon as a brand enters into a larger market, it needs to be aware that it does in fact influence children. Once you partake in the race for corporate money, you will be scrutinized for 'exploiting' children. The appropriate role to take on is to set examples, aid environmental institutions and help in certain solutions for bigger societal problems like obesity or the disconnected generation. This in return helps the brand create a good name among consumers, which may cause even better returns. "we don't think we're a key factor in the cause of obesity, I mean we [the soda industry in total] are only two percent. If we would change something, the world wouldn't shift completely. But we do wish to take part in the solution." (Coca-Cola)

In this sense there actually is a development from brands in consumer societies. Brands are now reacting more to ongoing disruptions, both honestly from their position, but also to harvest potential return. The way brands now conceptualize children of being informed, active, happy, imaginative and cooperative through both advertisements and personal beliefs is a relatively positive change regarding consumerism. More likely now, than ten years ago, a company like McDonalds is pro-active when it comes to their contribution towards promotion of an active lifestyle. Corporate brands have to juggle their own desire to generate profit and childfollowers with the personal goal of creating a better world for children. As explained by the respondents;

"Well you have to realize, we do want to sell, that's why we're in business. But I mean, we're not monsters, of course we want profit, we're in business to make money, so sure you need to see children as consumers, as income, but we do care about their development." - Hasbro

"To be aware of societal developments and very clearly state a point of view on that […] with the goal to not only state the point of view of the brand, but also support the people whom it concerns. To clearly communicate a positive message behind it" - Coca-Cola

The standpoint we wish to make here is that yes, brands influence children, but they are only a part in a larger scheme of consumption patterns where family situations, political influence, cultural backgrounds, societal structures and the use of media also partake in. Brands are not the sole perpetrator here, as is often remarked by critical writers. The discussion around brands being so influential has indeed sharpened their internal regulations in response to media debates. Nonetheless, brands also need to

generate profit and cater for a need created by the capitalistic structures. The recent positive development is that brands know they have this influence and use that to create positive examples.

<u>Not only brands have a responsibility towards children</u>
As a response toward the previously discussed influence brands have on children, interviewees also brought the aspect of parental supervision and responsibility to the light;

"It also depends on how much exposure a parent gives to a child. If it is monitored and controlled. We just cater for a need or a wish for television shows and mobile apps. […] I think as a parent, you have the responsibility and duty towards your children in what level they make use of digital options. We'd like to touch a consumer in many ways in their life"

This is in relation to the intensified digital use, but can also be taken further into the larger sense of child consumerism. What we have noticed among critical writers against brands targeting children is the idea those writers have of brands infecting children's lives. But the fact remains that this construct is a consequence of the overall consumption society in general. Brands look for opportunities and cater for needs, for all the three industries parents will still remain to be the gatekeeper for a purchase and therefore parent's themselves need to question their rationales about how they wish to raise the new generation. The discussion on this is a very interesting one, but too extensive to enter.

<u>Synopsis</u>
In sum, the discussion above on the display of advertising in relation to the brander's perspective on dealing with children as a target group has managed to discover which reasons and meanings lay behind the conceptualization of children in Northern and Western Europe.
Brands have certain conceptualizations of children and there are also some discrepancies between what is said and shown. The context of brands targeting children as consumer transcends the position of the brand itself, as other impacts also have large contribution to the current social disruptions in children's environments. This enters in a discussion far greater than the purpose of this study. However, brands try to create some goodwill and positive return to consumers by setting proper examples and creating positive messages.

6. Conclusion

As previous research on child consumerism is either lacking, outdated or mostly in the field of psychology, there is a need for qualitative research from a Consumer Culture Theory stance, where not only psychological factors are taking in, but also social and anthropological. As there is currently not enough up to date academic information on branding towards children, the aim of this study was the answer the question on how children are conceptualized as consumers through corporate branding;

Between independent and some academic writers there has been a polarized debate on consumption among children. On one hand, there's the common critical perception of children being vulnerable victims manipulated by marketers, whom therefore need protection from the material and commercialized world. Branders seem to align more with the other side, where children are seen as strong individuals, whom are far from passive victims but should be perceived as sophisticated and developed and therefore need to be empowered through information in order to become conscious consumers. However, conceptualizing children as consumers is not as black and white as this might appear to be. It is a process impacted by several factors.

Starting with a brands' perspective with is a tendency to conceptualize children as imaginative, active, creative and playful. Children have a right to happiness, and correlating this believe to your brand then results in the consumption of that brand, as the message induces a desire to have fun, be happy and be fulfilled. The brand becomes a tool, a means for realization of this desire. This creation of desire is one aspect in the commodification of childhood.

Children are also seen as an entity on its own where development and independence are big influences and ideas on expression of emotions and distinction between children as individuals, are used in cultural branding strategies to attract children as followers to a brand. The concept of independent children also relates to advertisements where children are placed in adult-like settings. The conceptualization of children in adult situations is twofold. First, as children are still developing, they want to be like other older children, therewith using the idea of displaced meaning to sell products. Second, children are instigators for family or adult-purchases and tapping into their awareness and influence they can have on parents makes children an interesting market, not only for brands whom have specific products for children, but also carbrands or furniture chains.

Nonetheless, contradictory to the independent view, the child is also seen as a social actor in relation to others, especially in relation to parents. Even though this didn't directly show itself in advertisements. Branders do believe though the parent-child combination is an important one, both as a way to address the parent into buying, but also in a way to portray social fostering between families. There is a current social disruption in the society of disconnected generation and postmodern satellite families which form

instable, isolated and insecure social bonds for children. Brands see this as an opportunity to address family time and the creation of more fluid social bonds among families and children themselves. Buying products for your child or for your family becomes a way to reconnect; children's social relationships are therefore built through and around consumption. However, it seems branders don't 'walk the walk' and need to personally evaluate their view on children in this relation to parents. The discrepancy for branders to resolve is closing the gap between their ideas about the family and parent-child combination and the display of that in advertisements.

Then, concerning the prevalent intensified digital interactivity, brander's believe there is a business opportunity and they cater for a need to simply be where their target group is. The increase of online shopping and social media is something brands need to partake in for business prosperity. In regards to the sedentary life as a result of the intensified media use, brands believe they can use this digital interactivity to create offline events where children can gather for physical activities or real-life social relationship. Brands also see it as their duty to inform and educate children about the role advertising has, and empower children to learn about proper nutrition and health.

It seems Nordic and Western countries' political debates about age and gender differentiation have resulted in equal portrayal in advertisements, however regarding race, there is still a rather thought-provoking finding of the large contribution Caucasian children represent in relation to other races. This questions the dominance hierarchy of natural selection present in these geographical locations and is something that needs further research and insights by academics, but also reflection by branders. From the industries analyzed, it seems the Fashion industry seems to think 'most' of children being culturally different. Nonetheless, Caucasian children are still pre-dominantly presented in advertisements, which touches up on moral and ethical issues, but also largely on the constructs Western society is built upon. It raises questions on whether brands are aware of this matter purposely do portray Caucasian children, or whether it their own natural frame of reference passed down onto them.

In regards to branding, children are seen as a market segment, and therefore aspects like brand loyalty, brand and product placement and awareness are important aspects when targeting this market. For brands it's a relative Iron Law to stimulate loyalty from an early ago on. "Kids Grown Older Faster" and are seen as 'empowered' by the amount of information out there.

As brands do have some impact or influence on children they feel the need to educate and set positive examples for children and youth, by stimulation psychical activity, social bonds and offline events as well as raise awareness for environmental and societal problems and connected goodwill associations. In this way brands give back to the society, and when done rightly that in itself can reap benefits for the brand name and potentially profit.

Nonetheless, when dealing with children as a consumer market, brands' themselves have internal conflicting beliefs in to best balance profit versus responsibility. Note is to be taken though, brands are not the sole perpetrators causing the ongoing social disruptions of materialism, display and distinction between groups. They are an element in a plethora of influences consisting of politics, families' structures, cultural backgrounds and intensified digital interactivity. The claim of parents needing to realize they hold a large part of the responsibility as well, is supported. This enters in a discussion far greater than the purpose of this study, and the understanding arises why there are so many independent writers concerned with this. However, brands are not the scapegoat to point the finger at, as child consumerism and the debate around it questions current social constructs. Discussion around this transcends this study to political or philosophical education.

Limitations of research

The first limitation consists of that of the sample selection, it might have been too limited. Even though we tried to be as objective as possible and not enter in 'cherrypicking', the amount of available ads was rather large. A broader selection of analyzed brands and advertisements, with a bigger scope per industry across industries or with an even larger time-span might improve insights on changes or an evolvement from one stage to the next.

Also the availability of contacts has shaped the outcome of the data sample. Majorly due to time constraints, the number of interviewing participants is small. Even though it is enough to reflect on the themes and generate meanings and insights, more interviews would be of greater value. This study currently has no direct feedback from fashion companies itself, making it more difficult to assume the findings are also applicable to the larger fashion industry.

Also in regards to the interviewees, not all of them where the responsible branders or marketeers behind all of the campaigns. Starting off with the fact that we didn't have a complete 1:1 comparison between the advertisements and the responsible branders. In an ideal world we would have all responsible branders for those analyzed ads in the chair before us, but that, especially in this 2 month-time frame, is not doable. Not every pursued company was willing to cooperate, nor could some respondents be available in the short time span set for the thesis. As we wanted clear insights and meaning, two additional branders were asked to cooperate. Those two interviewees where from external companies [external in the sense of the advertising sample], but due to their position in relation to the branding department and their every day workactivities with branding towards children, they have proven to be valuable. For further research interviewing the branders who are responsible of the published advertisements will provide an even deeper understanding of the brander's perspective on conceptualization of children as consumers.

Then another limitation is that there was no proper time for follow-ups with all interviewees. Having time for follow-up interviews with branders will provide the opportunity to ask direct questions again relating to the findings made from the analysis of advertisements and the first round of interviews. Due to time-limitation, it has not been able to perform a one-to-one comparison and to make follow-up interviews with the company representatives who participated in this research.

In relation to generalizability, this study outcome cannot consist of larger trends or grand theories as our samples are what they are; samples. They will generate insights and detailed information on these specific companies/ cases, locations and target groups, but caution has to be taken not to talk about grand trends, merely insights. Nonetheless, this is often the case with a smaller qualitative data sample. However, the study has uncovered some new findings. It is to be viewed as an initial intend to uncover and categorize perspectives in the branding and advertising towards children as consumers, in order to understand what companies are actually doing when they target children.

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Appendix II: Advertisement sample

The following is the list of all advertisement according to the way they are placed here. In general, for each company it is in chronological order, expect for Coca-Cola, first starting out with the 2005 campaign, followed by the 2002 campaign.

McDonalds:
2002   I'm lovin' it
2006   Imagination for dessert
2012   The Real Milkshake
2012   Forgiveness is Never Far Away
2012   Boxes campaign

Coca-Cola:
2005   The Coke side of Life
2002   Life tastes good
2006   Open Hapiness
2009   Christmas; santa advertisement
2012   Polar bear campaign

Lego:
2006   Builders of tomorrow
2006   Lego bricks
2007   Creative Building
2011   Builders of Tomorrow
2012   Creativity forgives everything

Hasbro:
2003   Mr. Potato Head
2008   Super Soaker
2009   Play-Doh: let imagination take over
2010   Clue(do): the crime game for kids
2012   Play-Doh

United Colours of Benetton
2000   Catalogue or in-store advertisement
2000   Catalogue or in-store advertisement
2000   Catalogue or in-store advertisement
2006   Catalogue or in-store advertisement
2008   Catalogue or in-store advertisement

Noa Noa:
2009   Catalogue advertisement
2010   Catalogue advertisement
2010   Catalogue advertisement
2012   Christmas advertisement
2013   Spring advertisement

McDonalds

2002: I'm lovin' it

2006: Imagination for Dessert

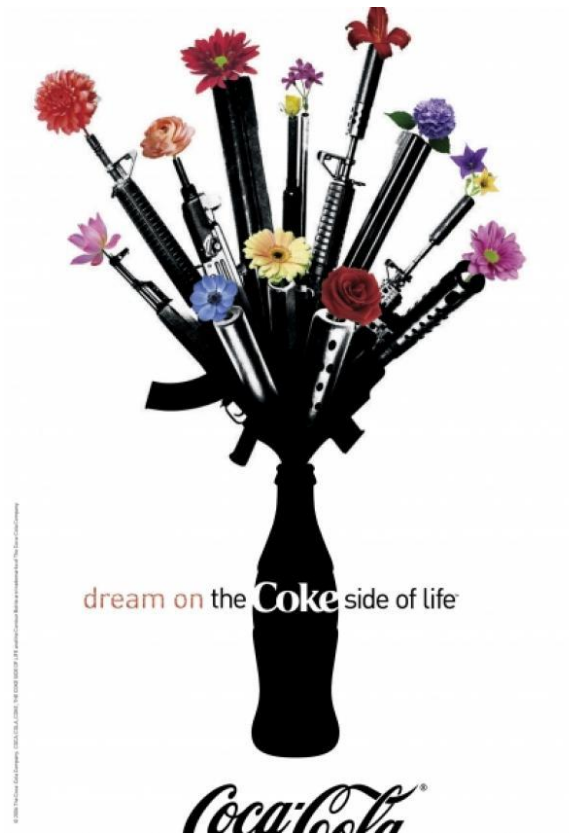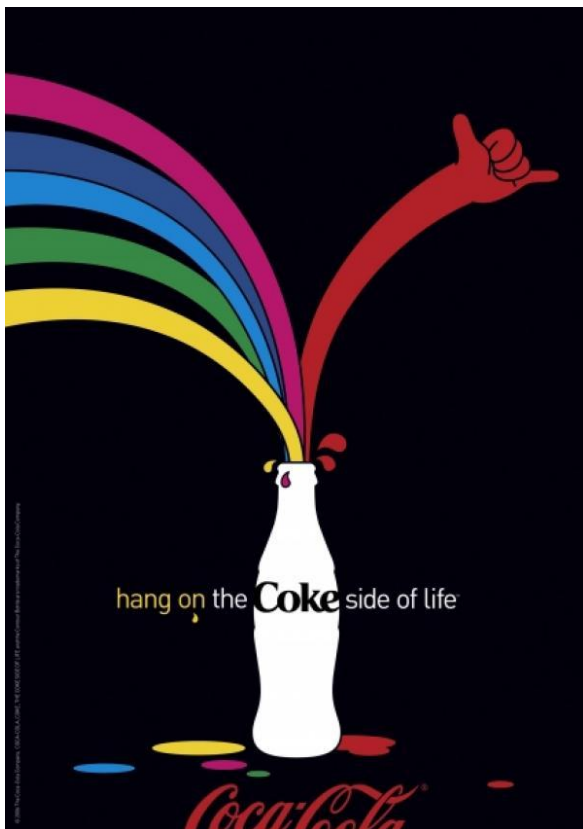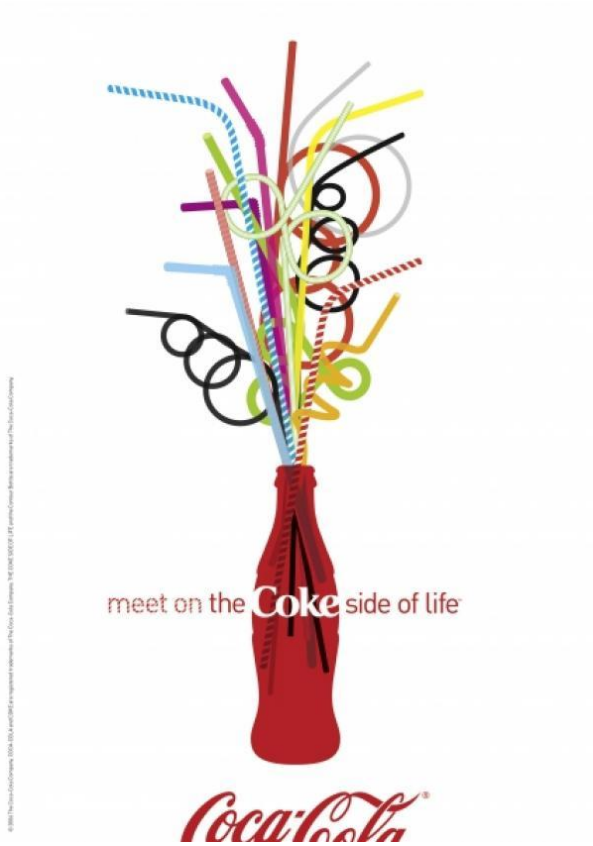### 2009: The Real Milkshake
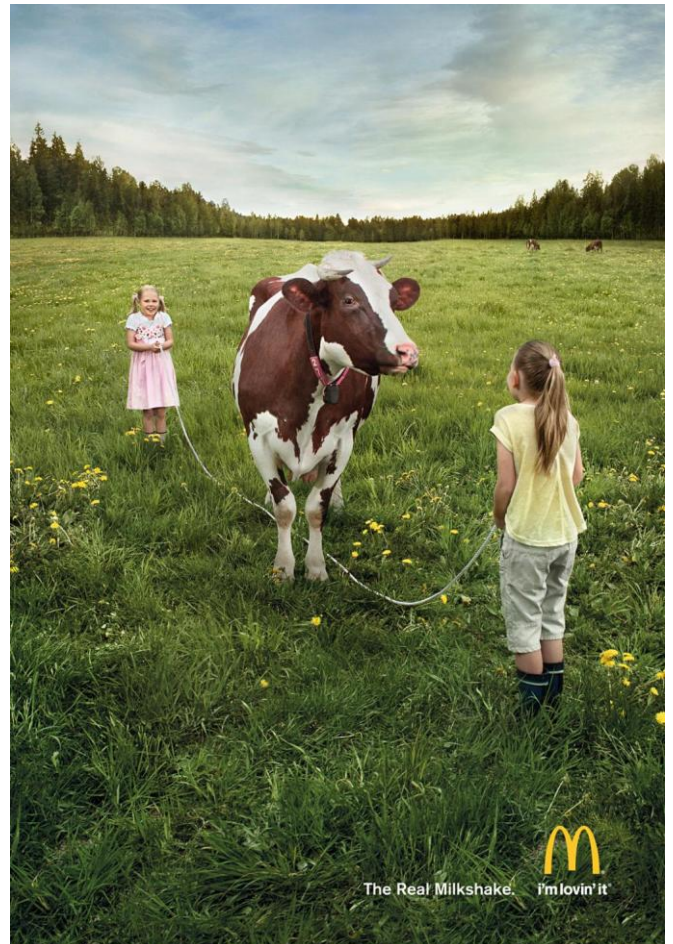
2012: Forgiveness Campaign

2013: Boxes Campaign

Coca Cola

2005: On the coke Side of life

meet on the Coke side of life

Coca-Cola

together on the Coke side of life

Coca-Cola

hang on the Coke side of life

Coca-Cola

dream on the Coke side of life

Coca-Cola
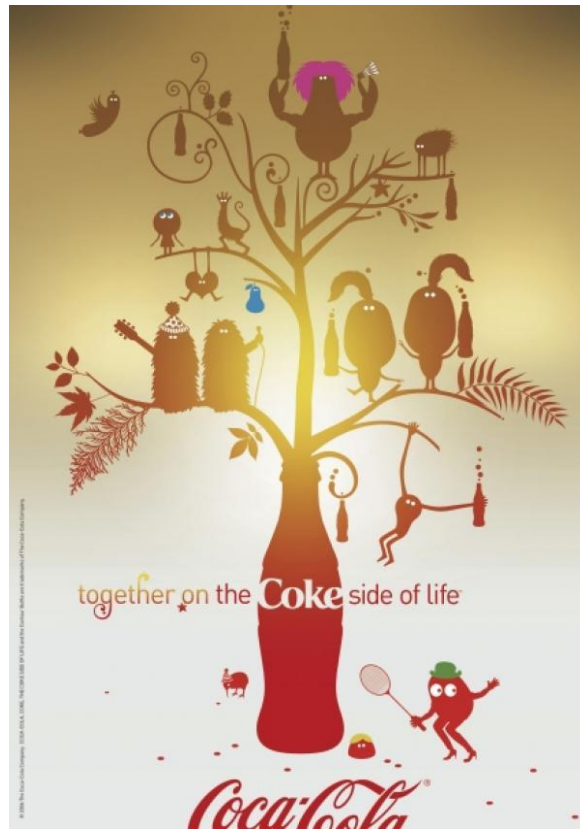
2002: Life tastes good

2009: Open Happiness

2009: Christmas campaign Santa

2012/2013: Christmas/New Years Campaign Polar Bears

Hasbro

2003: Mister Potato Head

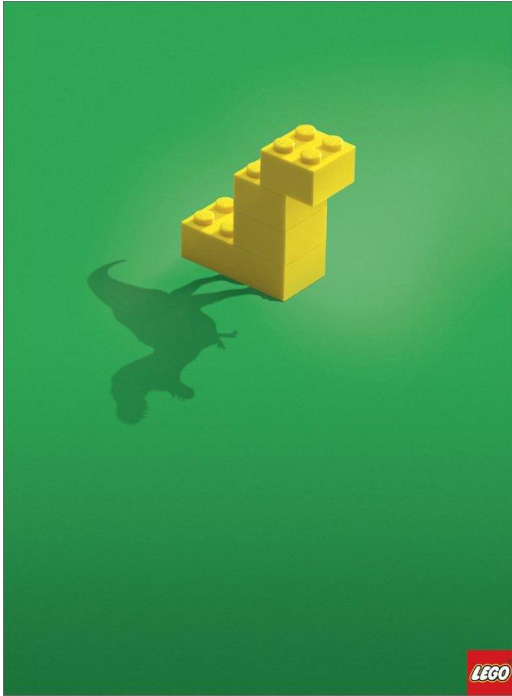**2008: Super Soaker**

2009: Play-Doh: Let imagination take over
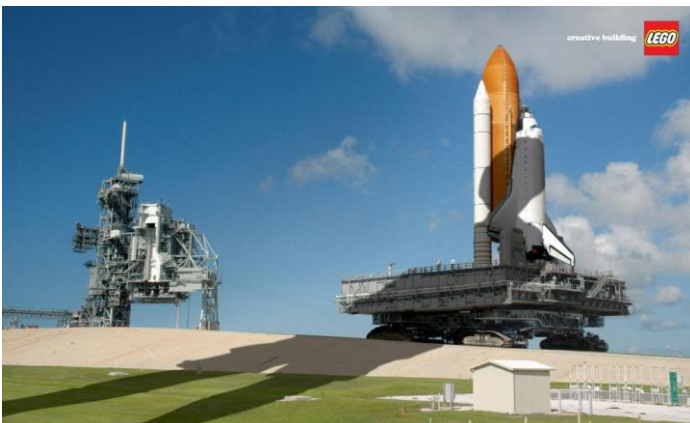

2010: Clue(do): The crime game for kids

2012: Play-Doh

Lego

2006: Builders of tomorrow
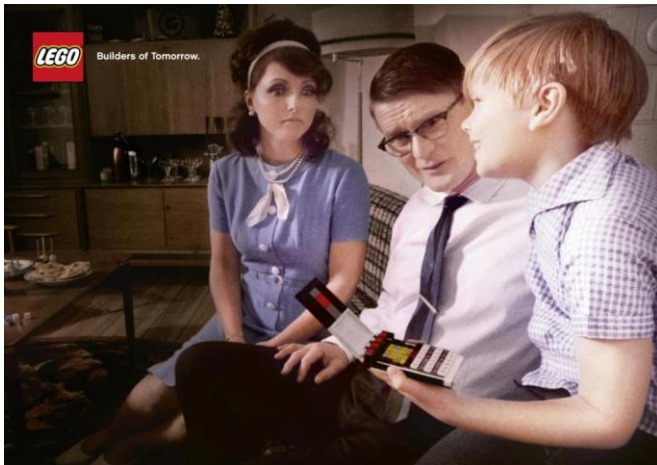
2006: Lego bricks
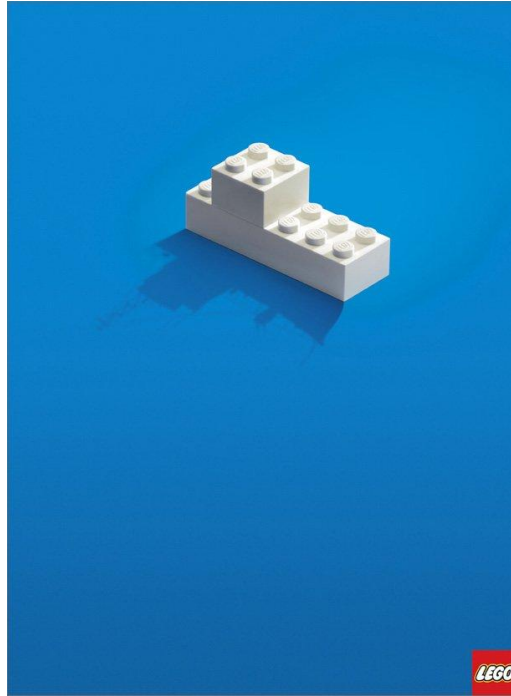
2007: Creative building

2011: Builders of Tomorrow

2012: Creativity Forgives Everything

United Colours of Benetton

2000: Catalogue or in-store advertisement

2000: Catalogue or in-store advertisement

2000: Catalogue or in-store advertisement

2008: Catalogue or in-store campaign

2009: Catalogue advertisement

2010: catalogue advertisement

2010: catalogue advertisement

2012: Christmas advertisement

2013: Spring advertisement