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**Selling the Crisis –  
British and German Advertising Industry during the 1970s**

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A thesis submitted to the  
University of Birmingham  
for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy

School of History and Cultures  
College of Arts and Law  
History Department  
University of Birmingham  
September 2012

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# Introduction

## Advertising

*"You can tell the ideals of a nation by its advertisements."  
- Norman Douglas, South Wind*

Advertising – to many of us, it means annoying messages on our radios, televisions and computers, or colourful pages in magazines and daily newspapers. All of them try to capture our attention, and all of them hope to transform us into buyers. Advertising has been omnipresent for hundreds of years and still is today. We see advertisements in the media, on the streets, and in the workplace. Its presence does not seem to be questioned; in fact, it is widely accepted.

The role of advertising within society is controversial. As one Norman Douglas described it in 1917 in his well-known novel *South Wind*, advertising can tell us about the ideals of a nation.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, its function can be interpreted differently. In a study about social communication in advertising, Williams Leiss states that "Advertising does not reflect society, it reflects the aspirations of society."<sup>2</sup> However, advertisements have a difficult role to fulfil. In order to increase sales for the advertised product, potential customers need to be approached in a way that evokes their will to buy. Some bring to mind new ideas and dreams, while others try to convince. However, it must be remembered, though, that the advertisement must fit the audience rather than vice versa. The question as to what extent advertising influences society was discussed by advertising executive Carl Ally in 1977:

*"Advertising doesn't manipulate society. Society manipulates advertising. Advertising responds to social trends. Agencies respond to advertisers. It's that simple."*<sup>3</sup>

There was also a persistent conviction that advertising would not try to change society; rather, "advertising simply accepts the world as it is, and then makes it even more so".<sup>4</sup>

This study seeks to explore the complex relations between advertising and society. Its focus lies on how advertisers perceived changes within society and how they reacted to them.

German historians Rainer Gries, Volker Ilgen and Dirk Schindelbeck argue that advertising is a way to analyse the history of mentality and everyday life (*Mentalitätsgeschichte*). Accordingly, advertising is understood to mirror society at a

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas, N., *South Wind* (London, 1917).

<sup>2</sup> Leiss, W., Kline, S., Jhally, S., *Social communication in advertising, Persons, products & images of well-being* (New York, 1990), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Fox, S. *The mirror makers, A history of American advertising and its creators* (Urbana, 1997), p. 329.

<sup>4</sup> Bensman, J., 'The Advertising Agency Man in New York', in Tunstall, J., *Media sociology* (London, 1970), pp.202-217, p. 217.

certain date in history. In the introduction to his study on American advertising between 1920 and 1940, Roland Marchant takes a different approach to advertising. He reveals how he initially regarded advertisements as “mirrors of society”, but after conducting some research on the subject speculates that the content of advertisements does not mirror the actual situations and behaviour of consumers, or rather their fantasies and aspirations. They may even show the values and preoccupations of advertisers and advertising agents. Ultimately, Marchant is unable to support his speculations with any concrete findings, but his conclusion is significant for his assertion that advertisements are a “zerrspiegel”, or a means of reflecting the object in a distinctive manner.; He also contends that advertisements are purposefully selected. For example, social realities such as workers toiling at the factory or the concept of the working class family hardly appear at all.<sup>5</sup> As will be demonstrated over the course of this thesis, advertisers are significantly influenced by changes within society. At the same time, advertisers attempt to link these changes to the advertising messages that they aspire to propagate..

However, as these statements show, advertising cannot be reduced to a simple business action; it is far more complex than a business expenditure undertaken in the hope of moving merchandise off the store shelves.<sup>6</sup> Rather, it functions as an integral part of modern culture, or, as Victoria de Grazia puts it “[advertising is] as much as a cultural question as a business proposition”.<sup>7</sup> As a means of business and a tool which is shaped by cultural elements, advertising must pick a side and stick to it both from a business perspective and with regard to culture.

### ***Existing research***

Taking these observations into account, the study of advertising provides a rich field for cultural scientists to exploit. However, the history of advertising has not been adequately explored up to now. This may be due to the sheer number of people within the advertising sector and/or difficulties in research, as Frank Mort suspects. He laments the fact that there is no “authoritative account of British advertising” or marketing by academic historians.<sup>8</sup> This statement does not acknowledge Terence Nevett's *Advertising in Britain*, which provides an effective overview of advertising up to the beginning of the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> Other studies have focused on the comprehensive influence of the USA on the European economy following World War Two; these

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<sup>5</sup> Marchand, R., *Advertising the American Dream. Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (London, 1985), p. xv-xvii.

<sup>6</sup> Leiss et al., *Communication*, p. 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> de Gracia, V., ‘Foreword’, in Swett, P., Wiesen, J., Zatlín, J. (eds.), *Selling modernity, Advertising in twentieth-century Germany*, pp. iix-xx, p. xiv.

<sup>8</sup> Exemption are Nixon, S., ‘In Pursuit of the Professional Ideal: UK Advertising and the Construction of Commercial Expertise, 1953–64’, in Jackson, P. et al. (eds.), *Commercial Cultures: Economics, Practices, Spaces* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 55-74; and Mort, F., ‘The Commercial Domain: Advertising and the Cultural Management of Demand in Post-War Britain’, in Conekin, B., Mort, F., Waters, C. (eds.), *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain, 1945-1964* (New York, 1999), pp. 55-75.

<sup>9</sup> Nevett, T., *Advertising in Britain. A history* (London, 1982).

studies include the impact of the 'USA mindset' on the advertising industry.<sup>10</sup> Still, there have been far more studies into British advertising than its German counterpart. The majority of the accounts which have been compiled focus on the period prior to 1945.<sup>11</sup> As there is a general lack of historical studies available with regard to advertising, there is a veritable dearth of work which adopts a comparative or transnational perspective..<sup>12</sup> Since advertising is an international industry which always keeps an eye on developments and trends in other countries, the narrow national perspective prevents national characteristics from being highlighted..

The reasons as to why advertising has not been a popular topic among historians are diverse. Stefan Schwarzkopf argues that while there was enormous interest in the history of advertising during the 1980s and 1990s, the subject now attracts much less attention. The last decade in particular has seen extremely few historical articles devoted to advertising.<sup>13</sup> Historical research into advertising is now merely conducted by media studies, journalism and sociology university departments. Furthermore, these departments carry out case studies, thereby making it difficult to draw any conclusions about long-term historical developments. As such, television advertising of the 1970s and 1980s has been subject to studies by communication scientists Siegfried J. Schmidt and Brigitte Spieß.<sup>14</sup>

In Germany, the root cause for a comparative lack of historical research into advertising seems to be historical in nature. As will be shown, a sharp critique of advertising was formulated by Frankfurt School theorists. They accused it of immorally manipulating peoples' minds to fit the needs of the market. Many German historians are said to base their assertions on this critique. Therefore, Anglo-Saxon accounts have had an important impact on German historiography. Conversely, an

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<sup>10</sup> West, D., 'Multinational Competition in the British Advertising Agency Business, 1936-1987', in *The Business History Review* 62 (3/1988), pp. 467-501; Masson, P., Thorburn, A. (eds.), 'Advertising: the American Influence in Europe', in Bigsby, C. W. W. (ed.), *Superculture: American Popular Culture and Europe* (Ohio, 1975), pp. 96-106.

<sup>11</sup> Most importantly Ross, C., *Media and the Making of Modern Germany, Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford, 2008); Reinhard, D., *Von der Reklame zum Marketing, Geschichte der Wirtschaftswerbung in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1993); de Grazia, V., 'The Arts of Purchase: How American Publicity subverted the European Poster, 1920-1940', in Kruger, B., Mariani, P., *Remaking history* (Seattle, 1989), pp. 221-257; Berghoff, H., 'Times change and we change with Them: The German Advertising Industry in the Third Reich Between, Professional Self-Interest and Political Repression', in *Business History News: Newsletter of the Association of Business History* 45/2003.

<sup>12</sup> Some can be found in Nava, M. (ed.), *Buy this book. Studies in advertising and consumption* (London, 1997); Schwarzkopf, S., 'Transatlantic Invasions of Common Culture? Moves of Cultural and Economic Exchange between the American and the British Advertising Industries, 1850-2000', in Wiener, J., Hampton, M., *Anglo-American media interactions, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 254-274.

<sup>13</sup> Schwarzkopf S., 'The subsiding sizzle of advertising history. Methodological and theoretical challenges in the post advertising age', in *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* 3/4(2011), pp. 528-548.

<sup>14</sup> Schmidt, S. J., Spieß, B., *Die Kommerzialisierung der Kommunikation: Fernsehwerbung und sozialer Wandel 1956-1989* (Frankfurt/Main, 1997); Schmidt, S. J., Spieß, B. (eds.), *Werbung, Medien und Kultur* (Opladen, 1995).

intellectual critique of advertising in the style of the Frankfurt School has not received much (if any) exposure in the United Kingdom and the United States.. Furthermore, the paradigmatic change within communications sciences and psychology, which established new models of communications, was adopted more readily by Anglo-Saxon historians.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, there are some scholarly accounts which have charted the history of advertising. Rainer Gries is the German historian whose name is perhaps most closely linked to the study of advertising. He uses advertising as means of explaining the history of mentality,<sup>16</sup> and considers consumer goods to be a medium in themselves.<sup>17</sup> However, as has already been mentioned, embedding the work of advertising executives into a sociocultural context is crucial for being able to tell the history of advertising. In British historiography, Stefan Schwarzkopf has contributed many studies to advertising, marketing and the advertising industry in the first half of the twentieth century. His work marks a useful starting point for this thesis.<sup>18</sup> Although a comprehensive study of British or German advertising covering the post-1945 period has not yet been written, there are several accounts which touch on advertising because they focus on related topics and are therefore of great help to this study, such as Matthew Hilton's and Nepomuk Gasteiger's analysis of the history of the consumerist movement in the United Kingdom and Germany.<sup>19</sup>

As consumption and consumerism play key roles in this study, the terminology needs to be explained. Generally speaking, consumerism has two meanings. The first refers to consumption, i.e. the growing range of consumer goods available to increasing numbers of people in a society which is becoming more and more affluent. The second refers to the organisation of consumers to promote their own interests. As both meanings are important for this study, these terms will be used and addressed separately. Consumerism refers to the social movement which gained strength in many Western countries during the 1960s and 1970s. Whereas consumption had been part of society for hundreds of years prior to the new consumer era ushered in

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<sup>15</sup> Wischermann, C., 'Einleitung: Der kulturgeschichtliche Ort der Werbung', in Teuteberg, J., Borscheid, P., Wischermann, C. (eds.), *Bilderwelt des Alltags, Werbung in der Konsumgesellschaft des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts, Festschrift für Hans Jürgen Teuteberg* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 1-24, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Gries, R., Ilgen, V., Schindelbeck, D., „*Ins Gehirn der Masse kriechen!*“ *Werbung und Mentalitätsgeschichte* (Darmstadt, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> Gries, R., *Produkte als Medien. Kulturgeschichte der Produktkommunikation in der Bundesrepublik und der DDR* (Leipzig, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> To name a few Schwarzkopf, S., 'They do it with Mirrors: Advertising and British Cold War Consumer Politics', in *Contemporary British History* 2(2005), pp. 133-50; 'Transatlantic Invasions of Common Culture? Moes of Cultural and Economic Exchange between the American and the British Advertising Industries, 1850-2000', in Wiener, J. H., Hampton, M. (eds.), *Anglo-American media interactions, 1850-2000* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 254-274; 'Respectable persuaders: the advertising industry and British society, 1900-1939', in *Business History News* 39/2009.

<sup>19</sup> Hilton, M., *Consumerism in twentieth-century Britain. The Search for a Historical Movement* (Cambridge, 2003); Gasteiger, N., *Der Konsument. Verbraucherbilder in Werbung, Konsumkritik und Verbraucherschutz 1945-1989* (Frankfurt/Main, 2010).



at the dawn of the 1970s<sup>20</sup> and is described as a “mobilising force at the heart of twentieth-century social and political theory”,<sup>21</sup> it also gained a new dimension during the 1960s and 1970s. Extensive historical research has been conducted into this period.<sup>22</sup> Although German research has not been as intensive as its Anglo-American counterpart, a plethora of essays and studies have been published.<sup>23</sup>

The way in which growing levels of consumption has influenced society constitutes a key area of debate within this field of research, leading to the conviction that consumption balances social differences across Western European countries.<sup>24</sup> After 1945 in particular, consumerism has been described as a stabiliser for Germany’s young democracy.<sup>25</sup> Hannes Siegrist argues that post-war consumption included workers as well as peasants, and serve to close the social divide between different sections of society.<sup>26</sup> This democratisation of consumption is also said to have had stabilising effects on the political system.<sup>27</sup> However, this only represents one way in which consumption trends evolved after World War II. As chapter three shows, consumption was also a means of emphasising individualism and certain lifestyles. John Benson emphasises the growing willingness of consumers to spend their money on goods and services available to them. He takes into account “ideological changes” which affect the attitude towards consumption in the United Kingdom. Similar discourses have also been described for most European societies.<sup>28</sup> These “ideological changes” will also be addressed in detail within this study.

In order to analyse the post-1945 period, the decade of the Seventies seems to be a perfect starting point, as it marks a watershed moment in which profound economic, cultural and media changes were exacted across nearly all facets of Western society. Advertising is the catalyst which brings these parts of society into contact with one another. As such, it offers ways to analyse long-term developments in society, which

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<sup>20</sup> McKendrick et al. place the arrival of consumer society in Britain before 1800; McKendrick, N., Brewer, J., Plumb, J. H., *The birth of a consumer society: the commercialization of 18th-century England* (London, 1982).

<sup>21</sup> Hilton, M., *Consumerism in twentieth-century Britain: the search for a historical movement* (Cambridge, 2003), p.1.

<sup>22</sup> To name just a few: de Grazia, V., *Irresistible Empire: America's advance through twentieth-century Europe* (Cambridge, 2005); Cohen, E., *A consumer's republic: the politics of mass consumption in postwar America* (New York, 2004); Hilton, *Consumerism*.

<sup>23</sup> For instance Siegrist, H., Kaelble, H., Kocka, J., *Europäische Konsumgeschichte: zur Gesellschafts- und Kulturgeschichte des Konsums (18. bis 20. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt/Main, 1997); König, W., *Geschichte der Konsumgesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 2000); Swett, P.E., Wiesen, S. J., Zatlin, J.R. (eds.), *Selling Modernity. Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany* (London, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> Siegrist, H., ‘Konsum, Kultur und Gesellschaft im modernen Europa’, in Siegrist et al., *Konsumgeschichte*, pp. 13-51, p.23.

<sup>25</sup> Mazower, M., *The Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London, 2000), pp. 286-327.

<sup>26</sup> Siegrist, ‘Konsum’, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup> König, W., ‘Die siebziger Jahre als konsumgeschichtliche Wende in der Bundesrepublik’, in Jarausch, K. (ed.), *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 84-103, p. 86-88.

<sup>28</sup> Kaelble, H., ‘Europäische Besonderheiten des Massenkonsums 1950-1990’, in Siegrist et al., *Konsumgeschichte*, pp. 169-205, p. 176.

in turn allows for an assessment to be made into how advertising reacted to these developments. This thesis ultimately shows how progress and changes within society were constantly observed and reacted to by advertisers.

## 1970s

*„Slice the Seventies where you will, the flavour is unmistakable – a pungent mélange of apocalyptic dread and conspirational fever.”*  
- Francis Wheen, *Strange Days Indeed*<sup>29</sup>

The Seventies are usually perceived as a decade of crisis and change. As will be shown, advertising in Germany and the United Kingdom underwent profound changes, adjusting to economic troubles, alterations in consumption and fundamental criticism of the industry. Nevertheless, at the end of the Seventies advertising found itself in a morally and economically improved position than at the beginning of the decade. This seems somewhat contradictory to the general mood of this decade, which is laid bare by Francis Wheen. However, the way in which this decade is characterised also varies significantly. On the one hand, many people who experienced this decade themselves consider it to be archetypal of the 'good old days' of television, popular fiction, low-tech toys and club football.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, it is closely linked to the idea of crisis, especially in English-speaking countries.<sup>31</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel characterize the years 1973/74 as a turning point in history, with the “golden age” at an end and a new era about to commence. This “golden age” of the 1950s and 1960s was characterised by economic growth and a consistent rise in living standards.<sup>32</sup> The oil crisis in 1973/74 ended this period of unquestioned prosperity. Western societies faced a time of change. Andreas Wirsching, Thomas Raithel and Andreas Rödder interpret the 1970s as the beginning of a “fundamental process of transformation” for Western Europe. This included the transformation from an ‘industrial’ society to a ‘post-industrial’ one, and profound cultural changes were evident as well.<sup>33</sup> Many of these changes will also be addressed within this study.

The 1970s were certainly a dynamic decade; this is something that German and British historians more or less agree upon.<sup>34</sup> For Alwyn Turner, the period between 1970 and 1979 were “watershed years that saw the end of one Britain and the first

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<sup>29</sup> Wheen, F., *Strange days indeed. The golden age of paranoia* (London, 2009), p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> Turner, A. W., *Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (London, 2008), p. x.

<sup>31</sup> Ferguson, N., ‘Crisis, what Crisis?’, in Ferguson, N., Maier, C. S., Manela, E., Sargent, D. J. (eds.), *The Shock of the Global. The 1970s in perspective* (London, 2010), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Crafts, N., ‘Golden Age and Economic Growth in Western Europe, 1950-1973’, in *Economic History Review* 48 (1995), pp. 429-447.

<sup>33</sup> Raithel, T., Rödder, A., Wirsching, A., ‘Einleitung’, in Raithel, T., Rödder, A., Wirsching (eds.), *Auf dem Weg in eine neue Moderne? Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren* (Munich, 2009), pp. 7-14, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

tentative steps towards a new nation".<sup>35</sup> On the political stage, 'consensus' and 'decline' were key words of the Seventies.<sup>36</sup> The political consensus was altered by the fledgling policy of Thatcherism. It ushered in a new political era based solely on confrontation rather than compromise. 'Decline' refers to the collapse of the British Empire, which included. Strangely though, these historic changes were largely met with indifference by the British public. It was the economic difficulties resulting from these changes that caused significant concern.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, it can be said that the United Kingdom was the Western European state which "represented the crisis in an almost paradigmatic way".<sup>38</sup>

While the crisis of the 1970s had an extremely impact on everyday life in in the United Kingdom, its impact was altogether different in Germany. In fact, the introduction of the rule which forbade the use of cars on Sundays was perhaps the most visible aspect (*autofreie Sonntage*). However, in chapter two of this study, it will be shown how advertising had to react decisively to the economic troubles. Due perhaps to rather complex changes, German historians confine themselves to analysing the long-term effects of the crisis in the 1970s. While the new *Ostpolitik*, sustainability issues and terrorism dominated politics at the time,<sup>39</sup> studies into the long-term effects of the crisis also focus on sociocultural changes, which are linked to the move towards becoming a 'post-industrial' society; this was a development which was highly influential for advertising.<sup>40</sup> Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael emphasize several new central tendencies in a stimulating essay about the 1970s. They describe a profound *Strukturbruch* (structural break-up) which heralded a new era "nach dem Boom" ("after the boom").<sup>41</sup> New tendencies arose, such as social movements, growing unemployment, rising aspirations with regard to consumption, mass tourism, a new 'type' of man challenged by globalisation, the diminishing influence of the church and an ongoing search for orientation in a world which had become increasingly complex.<sup>42</sup> Like other historians, they stress the radical changes observed in the role played by women in society. Women's movements and the growing number of working women contributed to the creation of new opportunities for different lifestyles.<sup>43</sup> Like other liberal developments, this has often been linked to

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<sup>35</sup> Turner, *Crisis*, p. ix.

<sup>36</sup> Geppert, D., 'Der Thatcher-Konsens. Der Einsturz der britischen Nachkriegsordnung in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren' in *Journal of Modern European History* 9(2011), pp. 171-173.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Wirsching, A., 'European Responses to the Crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. Introductory Remarks', in *Journal of Modern European History* 9(2011), pp. 167-169, p. 167.

<sup>39</sup> Faulstich, W., 'Die Gesellschaft der siebziger Jahre: Einführung und Überblick', in Faulstich, W. (ed.), *Die Kultur der 70er Jahre* (Munich, 2004), pp. 7-19, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> Raithel, Rödder, Wirsching, 'Einleitung'.

<sup>41</sup> Doering-Manteuffel, A., 'Nach dem Boom. Brüche und Kontinuitäten der Industriemoderne seit 1970', in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 55(2007), pp. 559-581; Doering-Manteuffel, A., Raphael, L., *Nach dem Boom. Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen, 2008).

<sup>42</sup> Doering-Manteuffel, Raphael, *Boom*, pp. 312-326.

<sup>43</sup> Schildt, A., Siegfried, D., 'Introduction', in Schildt, A., Siegfried, D., (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: youth cultures in changing European societies, 1960-1980*, pp. 1-39; Faulstich, W., 'Die

the 1960s and the 1968 movement.<sup>44</sup> However, these changes in peoples' lifestyles became more obvious during the Seventies and therefore forced advertisers to find ways to deal with them. For advertisers, these changes predominantly became visible when applied to variations in consumption patterns. This is a factor which is extremely important to consider, as advertisers generally attempt to guide consumption in favour of their clients.

### ***Methodology and Structure***

During a decade which was marked by crisis, advertising in Germany and the United Kingdom was one of the most successful industries. The amount of money spent on advertising more than doubled in Germany and it also increased significantly in Britain.<sup>45</sup> The question as to how the British and German advertising industry managed to achieve this success during a time of crisis and change will be of central importance throughout this thesis.

The complex structures within advertising have been barely touched upon so far. These structures consist of the relationships between agencies and clients as well as companies' selling strategies and their advertising. Roy Church has the following to offer on this issue:

*"Little is known about the advice accepted or rejected by companies on such matters as targeting markets, positioning products, promotional campaigns, expenditure levels, and methods of advertising. How often was the advice offered by advertising agencies acted upon and with what effects? The intention of advertising agents to advise clients on their product range as well as on how to position and advertise individual products also underlines the importance of exploring the process of product development in the period before it came within the ambit of professionals employed by advertising agencies."<sup>46</sup>*

Some aspects of this open question will be answered in this dissertation. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to reconstruct the way in which agencies operated and the complex structures which they adopted. Instead, general trends and examples will be provided in order to gain a fundamental understanding of how advertising is linked to its environment. As the lack of profound studies on advertising

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Gesellschaft der siebziger Jahre: Einführung und Überblick', in Faulstich, W. (ed.), *Die Kultur der siebziger Jahre* (München, 2004), pp. 7-19; Geyer, M. H., 'Gegenwart der Vergangenheit. Die Sozialstaatsdebatte der 1970er-Jahre und die umstrittenen Entwürfe der Moderne', in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 47(2007), pp. 47-93, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> '1968' has been connected to long-term transitions within the 'long sixties' in Schildt, A., Siegfried, D., Lammers, K. C. (eds.), *Dynamische Zeiten. Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften* (Hamburg, 2003); Frese, M., Paulus, J., Teppe, K. (eds.), *Demokratisierung und gesellschaftlicher Aufbruch. Die sechziger Jahre als Wendezeit der Bundesrepublik* (Paderborn, 2005).

<sup>45</sup> See chapter on economic crisis

<sup>46</sup> Church, R., 'New perspectives on the history of products, firms, marketing, and consumers in Britain and the United States since the mid-nineteenth century', in *Economic History Review* 52/1999, pp. 405-435, p. 425.

within this period has already been described, this study seeks to offer basic research into this expansive topic.

Correspondingly, Dirk Reinhardt disapproves of the simplistic way in which advertising historical research has been undertaken. He claims that most studies show advertisements in a colourful light, but not in any meaningful manner. A glut of images and a relative dearth of explanations or analyses reduce historians to being "Geschichtstouristen" (tourists of history). Most studies also concentrate on one advertising medium, meaning that little insight is gained into advertising history.<sup>47</sup>

Like Reinhardt, Stefan Schwarzkopf criticises most English historians' works for the way in which they examine advertisements. Labelling it the "semiotic paradigm", he claims that advertisements need to be seen within its social context. Ads should not be "read" like an open book, because they would misconstrue the relationship that has emerged between advertising and consumers. Furthermore, a semiotic analysis would not be sufficient because historians cannot replicate the way people in the past read and understood the advertisements they saw. Schwarzkopf therefore advises that content analysis, especially in its semiotic variety, should be used in conjunction with other methods offered by the historical and social sciences:

*"Rather than directly trying to infer from an advertisement how consumers and society were affected and changed by it, it is advisable for historians to use advertisements as sources to understand how advertisers aimed to present their product, in which market segment they wanted to position it, and which visual and textual means they employed over time."<sup>48</sup>*

As a further means of research, Schwarzkopf claims to investigate the ideological structures of the industry itself.<sup>49</sup>

In accordance with Reinhardt's critique and Schwarzkopf's claims, in this dissertation advertising will be examined from a different angle to the one of a "Geschichtstourist". Regarding the sheer extent and variety of advertisements, it would be impossible to study all advertisements or even a particular section of them. Another problem is the fact that there are few printed sources available in archives or as publications. Advertising agencies and companies normally do not preserve their documents within an archive.<sup>50</sup>

Using several sources, advertising will be embedded within its social context. In order to show how specific developments and changes influenced advertising, discourses and debates on how advertising should react will be highlighted. The advertising industries' most essential and influential mediums will be the most important source for this study. For British advertising, *Campaign* was the main magazine which

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<sup>47</sup> Reinhardt, *Reklame*, p. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Schwarzkopf, S., 'sizzle', pp. 535-539.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 540.

<sup>50</sup> Exemptions can be found at the John W. Hartmann Centre at Duke University.

focused on the advertising and commercial media industry. Indeed, it has been referred to as "the Bible of British adland"<sup>51</sup>. Major debates were conducted in this weekly medium. As it was also successful outside the United Kingdom, *Campaign* launched a counterpart which covered advertising issues in Europe. *Campaign Europe* started in 1978, and is also used for the purpose of this thesis. Within these magazines, news for the advertising business was presented, and new trends and influences were discussed. In addition, *Adweek*, a competitor to *Campaign*, was also used. *Adweek* was published in a newspaper style and covered issues in a brief, tabloid-like manner. Its sister publication in Germany at that time was *werben und verkaufen*. Unlike *Adweek*, which was stopped in the mid-Seventies, *werben und verkaufen* is still the advertising journal with the highest circulation in Germany. Its rival is *absatzwirtschaft*, which is more influential due to its extensive coverage of current issues; the magazine also offers concrete advice on how to adjust marketing and advertisements to current circumstances. In addition to advertising journals, contemporary writing about advertisement will also be used in this thesis. This includes contemporary critique of advertisements as well as contemporary economic literature.

This dissertation covers the 1970s, meaning the years between 1970 and 1979. This decade has been labelled in various ways: in Germany, the Seventies were known as the "long Seventies", encompassing the period from the student protests in 1968 to the conservative turn in 1982/83. In the United Kingdom, there have also been several attempts at periodisation, with one social history movement referring to the years between 1961 and 1979 as the "Wind of Change"<sup>52</sup>, while another economic, social and cultural history school termed the years between 1964 and 1979 as the development "From Affluence to Uncertainty".<sup>53</sup> For Europe in general, Tony Judt describes the period between 1971 and 1989 as "Recessional".<sup>54</sup> As there is little consensus about the periodisation of the 1970s, a multifaceted approach has been adopted for this dissertation.

Furthermore, West Germany will serve as the geographical centre, and comparisons will be made with the United Kingdom in order to highlight similarities as well as national characteristics. Of course, not every development occurs in both countries. Therefore, some events can only be described for one country. The German Democratic Republic will not be considered in this study. While in many parts of society the Federal Republic and the GDR were similar, this is definitely not the case for advertising. In 1975, advertising was officially forbidden by the GDR

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<sup>51</sup> Tungate, M., *Adland: a global history of advertising* (London, 2007), p. 95.

<sup>52</sup> Brüggemeier, F.J., *Geschichte Großbritanniens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2010).

<sup>53</sup> Johnson, P., *Twentieth-century Britain. Economic, social, and cultural change* (London, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> Judt, T. *Postwar* (New York, 2006).

government.<sup>55</sup> This occurred at a time when the advertising industry was successful as never before in the Federal Republic.

The study is divided into three main sections. Each section shows how advertisers reacted to differing challenges of their times. The first focuses on the influence of the economic crisis of 1973/74 on advertising and how the industry dealt with it. The second section highlights a more abstract development within the decade, namely developments within consumption connected to changing values and other instances of progress within society. The last section concentrates on the consumerist movement and its criticism of advertising. Some topics will occur in several chapters. However, this structure seeks to reflect the three main topics that contemporary advertisers focused on and how advertising managed to be one of the thriving branches of the decade.

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<sup>55</sup> Tippach-Schneider, S., *Tausend Tele-Tips. Das Werbefernsehen in der DDR 1959 bis 1976* (Berlin, 2004).

## Economic crisis

*“Six months ago, the prospects for advertising were rosy. Suddenly things have changed.”<sup>56</sup>*

The sudden change described in a major *Campaign* article at the beginning of 1974 was caused by the so-called ‘oil crisis’. Weeks beforehand, Arab oil exporters had increased the posted price of oil by seventy per cent, punishing Western countries for their support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War. While many Germans used ‘autofreie Sonntage’ to go cycling and walking on the autobahn, the British population found itself in a state of emergency. The cause was not only the energy crisis, but also striking miners and railway workers. Floodlighting and electrical advertising were banned, and on New Year’s Day 1974 a three-day working week was announced.<sup>57</sup> Until these tumultuous weeks at the beginning of 1974, there had been hope that 1974 could be “fairly good – though not as good as ‘73”.<sup>58</sup>

This chapter seeks to show how far the oil crisis that soon became an economic crisis changed the mood within the advertising industry. During the course of 1974, it became clear that the ‘golden years’ of the Sixties had ended. The “limits of growth”<sup>59</sup> had been reached and a feeling of constant crisis established. The years 1973/74 have been marked as a decisive turning point within German historiography,<sup>60</sup> while British historians have simply emphasised 1979 as the beginning of a new era.<sup>61</sup> With regard to the advertising industry, the importance of 1973/74 has to be stressed for both countries. However, the case of advertising shows that crisis also has to be understood as a chance to rethink existing strategies and to use crisis as an option for new approaches to advertising. Despite differing situations, the advertising industries in Britain and Germany can be described as the ‘winners’ of the crisis decade of the Seventies.

### ***The Seventies – Beginning of a new Era***

As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, historians Eric Hobsbawm and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel characterise the years 1973/74 as a turning point in history, with the “golden age” at an end and a new era about to begin. This “golden age” of the 1950s and 1960s was characterized by economic growth and a constant rise in living

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<sup>56</sup> ‘Forecast ‘74’, in *Campaign* 04.01.1974.

<sup>57</sup> Sandbrook, D, *Seasons in the Sun. The battle for Britain, 1974-1979* (London, 2012), p. 10ff.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Forecast ‘74’.

<sup>59</sup> Club of Rome, *The limits to growth: a report for the Club of Rome's project on the predicament of mankind* (New York, 1972).

<sup>60</sup> Especially Doering-Manteuffel, Raphael, *Boom*.

<sup>61</sup> For example Harrison, B., *Finding a Role? The United Kingdom 1970-1990* (Oxford, 2010).



standards.<sup>62</sup> The oil crisis in 1973/74 ended this period of unquestioned prosperity. Western societies faced a time of change. Andreas Wirsching, Thomas Raithel and Andreas Rödder interpret the 1970s as the beginning of a “fundamental process of transformation” for Western Europe. Instead of only causing an economic crisis, the years 1973/74 were characterised as watershed years which divided German post-war history into a “Golden Age”<sup>63</sup> and a period “nach dem Boom” (after the boom).<sup>64</sup> Raithel and Doering-Manteuffel emphasise long-lasting changes and the transformation towards a post-industrial society.<sup>65</sup> This term was coined by contemporary US sociologist Daniel Bell. He described it in his book *The Coming Of Post-Industrial Society* as a society defined by the “centrality of theoretical knowledge as the source of innovation and policy formation for the society.”<sup>66</sup> Some of the major aspects of these shifts in society played a decisive role for advertising. Economic historian Werner Abelshauser supports this, showing that traditional industrial branches such as the textile industry and shipbuilding lost importance during and after the 1970s. As a consequence, many jobs for unskilled workers were lost and unemployment rose in the following decades.<sup>67</sup> Consequences of the transformation from an ‘industrial’ to ‘post-industrial’ society as well as profound cultural changes will be addressed in detail in chapter 3.<sup>68</sup> Abelshauser's theory of a “Strukturbruch” has led to heated debate among historians.<sup>69</sup> Still, there is no consensus about how to judge the profound economic changes of the Seventies. Clearly, the oil crisis was not the only cause of the economic difficulties which shocked Europe at this time.<sup>70</sup> The challenges of globalisation, new work-based structures and the end of the Bretton-Woods system also contributed to these changes. Jeremy Black describes the “abandonment of the 1960s optimism” as one of the most significant outcomes of these structural changes.<sup>71</sup> The confidence of overcoming economic difficulties gave way to the perception of only managing one crisis after another.<sup>72</sup> In the latest part of his post-war social histories about the Seventies, Dominic Sandbrook characterises

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<sup>62</sup> Crafts, N. ‘Golden Age and Economic Growth in Western Europe, 1950-1973’, in *Economic History Review* 48 (1995), pp. 429-447.

<sup>63</sup> Hobsbawm, E., *The Age of Extremes, 1914-1991* (London, 2011).

<sup>64</sup> Doering-Manteuffel, A., Raphael, L., *Nach dem Boom. Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> Raithel, T., Rödder, A., Wirsching, A., ‘Einleitung’ in Raithel, T., Rödder, A., Wirsching (eds.), *Auf dem Weg in eine neue Moderne? Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren* (Munich, 2009), pp. 7-14, p. 8; Doering-Manteuffel, A., ‘Nach dem Boom. Brüche und Kontinuitäten der Industriemoderne seit 1970’, in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 55/2007, pp. 559–581.

<sup>66</sup> Bell, D., *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York, 1974).

<sup>67</sup> Abelshauser, W., *Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Munich, 2004), pp. 39-44, pp. 408-416.

<sup>68</sup> Raithel, T. et al., ‘Einleitung’, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 278.

<sup>70</sup> Hohensee, J., *Der erste Ölpreisschock* (Stuttgart, 1996), p. 223.

<sup>71</sup> Black, J., *Europe since the Seventies* (London, 2009), p. 139.

<sup>72</sup> Maier, C. S., ‘Two Sorts of Crises. The “Long” 1970s in the West and the East’, in Hockerts, H. G. (ed.), *Koordinaten deutscher Geschichte in der Epoche des Ost-West-Konflikts* (München, 2003), pp. 49-62.

the decade as unstable and unsafe.<sup>73</sup> Taking into consideration all sectors of British society as well as politics, Sandbrook concludes that the impact of the oil crisis was felt the most in Britain.<sup>74</sup> This feeling of uncertainty also prevailed within advertising agencies. The following chapter seeks to show how uncertainty led to differing strategies and ways to deal with the crisis.

### ***Advertising – Thriving Businesses despite the Crisis?***

The impact of the economic crisis was different for advertising than it was for others. Generally, one would expect advertising rates to decline along with economic figures. However, this was only the case for advertising in some industries. Advertisers managed to present their work as a means of overcoming economic difficulties. As the example of the German car industry will show below, in a time of enormous problems and a dramatic decline in sales car manufacturers invested in advertising as a means to stimulate sales. This was not the case for every branch that found itself encountering difficulties; other examples demonstrate how advertisers suffered from cuts in advertising expenditure. However, in the long run, advertisers managed to emerge from the economic struggles between 1974 and 1976 more unscathed than the majority of industries. The following chapter shows how new approaches and sale strategies were applied to stimulate consumer demands.

Despite this relative success, the initial weeks of the oil crisis did not yield any developments within the advertising industry; rather, as the following examples will show, uncertainty was the predominant emotion.

### ***Weeks of Uncertainty***

At the end of 1973, it was unclear what effects the petrol crisis would have (as the quote at the beginning of this chapter indicates). At first, the immediate cuts in some industries that resulted from strikes did not alarm advertisers. Accordingly, *Campaign* ran the headline “Admen stay cool about cuts”. An advertiser was quoted as saying that “unless the situation becomes very acute and production is actually held up, I don’t think it will have much effect on our own clients.”<sup>75</sup>

A few weeks later the situation had become significantly worse in an economic sense, particularly in the United Kingdom. This is reflected in *Campaign*’s main headline “Agencies ready to tighten their belts”. John Page, financial director of J. Walter Thompson, asserted that he had never known “a time of more uncertainty”; as he stated at the time, he expected the total number of people working in advertising

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<sup>73</sup>Sandbrook, D., *State of Emergency. The way we were: Britain, 1970-1974* (London, 2010); Sandbrook, D., *Seasons*.

<sup>74</sup> Sandbrook, *Seasons*, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Admen stay cool about cuts’, in *Campaign* 16.11.1973.

to fall: “I see '74 as a year of no growth and great pressure to curb costs”.<sup>76</sup> Another executive described severe cutbacks in major sectors; petrol giants would not “dare to advertise” and “promotional activities in that line have gone to a complete standstill”. Towards the end of 1973 the mood worsened, and the energy crisis became omnipresent which led *Campaign* to ask “We’re not panicking, are we?”<sup>77</sup>

The uncertain outlook also had a huge impact on their German counterparts. The *absatzwirtschaft* expressed the fear that the energy crisis might turn into a full-blown economic crisis, or the “fear of the year”:

*“Die Angst des Jahres – gerade in den letzten Wochen – zweifellos, daß Energie- und Rohstoffverknappung 1974 in eine echt Wirtschaftskrise führen können.”*<sup>78</sup>

The beginning of 1974 did not show any significant improvements for the German or British economies. On the contrary, in the United Kingdom the three-day week caused shortages in some industries. As one “can’t advertise goods which aren’t available”,<sup>79</sup> these industries also cut their advertising expenditures. As a reaction to the three-day week, one agency advertised itself, praising that they could “beat the three-day-week” by flying urgent work to their Brussels laboratory.<sup>80</sup> While public life in Britain nearly collapsed due to countrywide strikes, the Heath cabinet was forced to launch a campaign called “S.O.S – Switch Off Something” in order to save energy. The slogan “If we each save a little, we’ll all save a lot. Cut fuel consumption now” could be found in numerous daily newspapers.

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<sup>76</sup> ‘Agencies ready to tighten their belts’, in *Adweek* 14.12.1973.

<sup>77</sup> ‘We’re not panicking, are we?’, in *Campaign* 30.11.1973; ‘Together we can work it out’, in *Campaign* 23.11.1973..

<sup>78</sup> ‘1973: Erfolge, Blamagen, Spekulationen’, in *werben und verkaufen* 21.12.1973.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Forecast '74’.

<sup>80</sup> ‘BEAT THE 3 DAY WEEK’, in *Campaign* 25.01.1974.



**Image 1: Advertising by the British Government, in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.**

### ***Dealing with the Crisis: Cuts in Advertising***

In a similar manner to the situation in the United Kingdom, the prevailing belief in Germany about 1974 was that “advertising’s golden years in the sixties are now history”.<sup>81</sup> Although advertising figures did not suffer as much as in Britain, it was stated that “the fat years have gone”:

*“Even in Germany, which has the highest advertising expenditure per head of population inside the European Community, people are thinking carefully before spending anything on advertising.”<sup>82</sup>*

The year was seen as “survival training” for upcoming years in which economic growth was expected to shrink.<sup>83</sup> Several articles in *werben und verkaufen* and *absatzwirtschaft* proclaimed the crisis as a time in which advertising would have to prove itself.<sup>84</sup> While during the golden years it would have been easy to be successful, the crisis would now show who a so-called “boom-manager” was.<sup>85</sup> Creative agencies would not gain revenue from poor management.<sup>86</sup> One German commentator contrasted shrinking advertising revenues with women’s skirts, which

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<sup>81</sup> Scheuren, W., ‘German Marketing goes through a violent upheaval’, in *Adweek* 29.03.1974.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> ‘So steuern Sie durch die Krise’, in *absatzwirtschaft* 2/1974.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Vorwort’, in Neumann, E., Sprang W., Hattemer, K., *Werbung in Deutschland, Jahrbuch 1975* (Düsseldorf, 1975); ‘Management: Der Revisor geht um’, in *absatzwirtschaft* 1/1974.

<sup>85</sup> Reichard, P., ‘Hilflose Boom-Manager’, in *absatzwirtschaft* 3/1974.

<sup>86</sup> “... dann holen sich die guten Agenturen die Etats von den lausigen”, in *werben und verkaufen* 13.09.1974.

became longer after being cut to a minimum.<sup>87</sup> This resulted in a battle for new advertising accounts. Increasingly, accounts went to large agencies which had already earned millions and continued to poach accounts from smaller agencies. Many medium-sized agencies were forced to merge with one other, or had to specialise in a certain branch.<sup>88</sup> Still, major agencies were not able to prevent cuts in their client's advertising expenditure either. The New York-based agency J. Walter Thompson reported a net loss of more than \$2 million in the first quarter of 1974.<sup>89</sup> Fierce competition was not only observed between agencies, but also within advertising agencies. Admen fought for their "very survival" within the industry.<sup>90</sup> On both sides of the Channel, budget cuts led to "redundancies in the industry, so that today a considerable number of qualified admen are finding it difficult to get a job, and there have already been closures of some advertising colleges."<sup>91</sup>

By the end of 1974, the general sentiment was that it had been a year of crisis, or, as the *Jahrbuch der Werbung* put it: "eher in Moll gehalten." Advertisers yearned for the end of that year's "disaster", which led to severe cuts in the advertising sector's revenue.<sup>92</sup> Whereas some articles predicted ongoing "gloom, doom and despondency"<sup>93</sup> and no "Silberstreif"<sup>94</sup>, others predicted an upward trend for 1975. Nigel Grandfield, chairman of McCann advertising agency said: "We are certainly seeing consumer demand rising higher and higher [...]" Paul Green at Media Buying Services agreed: "There is an upward trend through the whole industry. There is renewed confidence."<sup>95</sup> Still, uncertainty about future prospects dominated in German and British advertising magazines. Regarding a new awareness of raw materials and energy, *Campaign* asked,

*"What will happen once the immediate crisis is over? It seems inconceivable that there will ever be a return to a situation in which people are actually encouraged to use electricity more liberally."*<sup>96</sup>

In 1975 it became clear that advertising expenditure in the United Kingdom would not reach the level of 1973 again; in fact, it would remain at a relatively low level until 1977/78, when advertising expenditure rose once more. However, many companies saw these years of economic troubles as a necessary stage during which to rethink their strategies. Marketing was declared a panacea for declining sales. Other

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<sup>87</sup> Brendel, H., 'Modethema Nr. 1: Die Kosten!', in Neumann, E., Sprang W., Hattemer, K., *Werbung 1975*, p. 121.

<sup>88</sup> Scheuren, 'German Marketing'.

<sup>89</sup> 'JWT chalks up a first quarter loss', in *Adweek* 10.05.1974.

<sup>90</sup> 'Kaum Grund zum Jubeln', in *werben und verkaufen* 19.07.1974.

<sup>91</sup> Glocke, B., Leisching, D., 'Economic crisis hits German agencies', in *Adweek* 29.03.1974.

<sup>92</sup> 'Für '75 überwiegt Optimismus', in *werben und verkaufen* 12.09.1974; Altman, W., 'Travel trauma in aftermath of a crisis', in *Adweek* 31.01.1975.

<sup>93</sup> Geier, P., 'Making the best of bad Times', in *Campaign* 03.01.1975.

<sup>94</sup> 'Vorwort', p. 6

<sup>95</sup> 'Big rise in top agencies' spending', in *Adweek* 09.05.1975.

<sup>96</sup> 'Leader', in *Campaign* 25.01.1974.

companies, especially those most affected by the oil crisis, reacted with a pro-active style of advertising in order to overcome the bottleneck of demand.

### ***Overcoming the Crisis: Marketing and Pro-Active Advertising***

In February 1974, it became clear that the oil crisis would have negative long-term effects on the economy. The pressure on British and German companies rose as consumer demand decreased. One reaction to economic challenges was to rethinking business and selling strategies in particular.<sup>97</sup> Marketing as a tool to manage strategic selling was established in many German companies; this approach was already well-known in the United Kingdom. Marketing now played a role in every step of production, and advertising was considered to be part of a “marketing mix” rather than the main route to promote sales. Agencies modified their routines accordingly. As Ingo Köhler showed for the German car industry, the economic crisis enforced the use of marketing as a means of ensuring that products could be sold in great numbers. In 1977, a director of Daimler-Benz summarised this ideal: “Unternehmensziele sind jetzt Marketingziele.”<sup>98</sup> So-called “marketing management” became a central need in order to be successful in saturated markets. A key part of the marketing mix was a new set of research procedures in order to identify new groups of consumers. These new approaches that lead to a “segmentation” of markets will be further explained in chapter three. Although marketing had only been “discovered” by German economic scientists a few years before, it was quickly adapted by scientists and practitioners. As one of the first marketing textbooks in German explained,

*“Nicht mehr die Produktionskapazität, sondern die Nachfrage wird zum Engpass.”<sup>99</sup>*

The text went on to state how saturated markets needed to be managed by long-term sale activities. This meant that changing values, opinions and social differences needed to be observed, analysed and reacted to.

Only two years beforehand, the title of the key German advertising textbook had been “Einführung in die Lehre der Absatzwirtschaft”. At the beginning of the Seventies, ‘marketing’ was established as a translation for the German “Absatzwirtschaft”. Within a few years, ‘marketing’ became the common word to describe any selling activities. The journal *absatzwirtschaft* is one of the few occasions where this word still exists today.

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<sup>97</sup> Borscheid, P., ‘Agenten des Konsums: Werbung und Marketing’, in Haupt, H.G., Torp, C., *Die Konsumgesellschaft in Deutschland 1890-1990* (Frankfurt, 2009), pp. 79-97.

<sup>98</sup> Köhler, I., ‘Marketing als Krisenstrategie. Die deutsche Automobilindustrie und die Herausforderungen der 1970er Jahre’, in Berghoff, H. (ed.), *Marketinggeschichte. Die Genese einer modernen Sozialtechnik* (Frankfurt/Main, 2007), pp. 259-295.

<sup>99</sup> “Not production, but demand will become a bottleneck.” (translations by author), Nieschlag, R., Dichtl, E., Hörschgen, H., *Marketing. Ein entscheidungstheoretischer Ansatz* (Berlin, 1971), p. 13.

Whereas during the years of economic growth markets focussed on products due to a generally high demand for goods, the years of recession enforced the need to focus on a certain target group in order to sell one's products. The consumer-oriented marketing management became a popular way to answer to economic troubles.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, the 1970s were characterised as the decade of the "marketing revolution" in Germany,<sup>101</sup> However, to many medium-sized and small businesses the principles were still an "unbekanntes Wesen" by 1974 (unknown creature).<sup>102</sup> It took nearly a decade until the ongoing development towards customer-oriented markets would be completed. The worsening economic situation pushed the already ongoing development in the direction of customer-oriented markets. Of course, the new market situation did not only affect the production process. Customers' buying patterns changed, and marketing and advertisement had to adjust accordingly. These developments will also be explained further in chapter three.

In addition to a general change within management, *absatzwirtschaft* also offered ways to tackle the crisis head on. Most of all, they advised managers to advertise more than before, as the "battle for customers" was fiercer than ever.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, reports from New York's Madison Avenue showed later that year that economic crisis does not automatically mean less advertising expenditure.<sup>104</sup> As explained before, companies pursued various strategies to deal with the new situation. Interesting examples of how to proactively deal with fuel shortages can be found in the oil and automotive industries, as they were affected most heavily.

For instance, one of the most controversial players during the oil crisis, ESSO, pursued a pro-active style of advertising. In the event of shortages in the production process, *absatzwirtschaft* recommended explaining the reasons to customers. In Germany, *Esso* started a campaign which showed in detail how fuel was produced. This strategy was applauded by *absatzwirtschaft* as the "reaction of the year" at the end of 1973.

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<sup>100</sup> Köhler, 'Marketing', p. 266.

<sup>101</sup> Berghoff, H., 'Einleitung', in Berghoff (ed.), *Marketinggeschichte*.

<sup>102</sup> "'Marketing" – das unbekannte Wesen', in *werben und verkaufen* 04.10.1974.

<sup>103</sup> 'So steuern Sie durch die Krise'.

<sup>104</sup> 'Crisis 'good for agencies', in *Adweek* 08.11.1974.



***Image 2: Esso advertisement "Es gibt viel zu tun", in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.***



***Image 3: Esso advertisement "weil wir so viel über Erdöl wissen, suchen wir schon seit Jahren nach Uran", in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.***





**Image 4: Esso advertisement "50° Kälte, grenzenlose Einsamkeit. Hier frieren Männern, damit andere es warm haben", in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.**

Whereas oil companies in Germany followed an offensive advertising strategy during the oil crisis, their counterparts in Britain did not “dare to advertise”<sup>105</sup> and cut their advertising budgets drastically. Therefore, it seems exaggerated to say that the economic crisis of 1973/74 was consistently “good for agencies”.<sup>106</sup> Calling the crisis the “höchste Bewährungsprobe” (practical test) for the German economy, *absatzwirtschaft* offered some practical advice how to make use of several “hard-selling approaches”. Advertisements had to be successful and “not beautiful”.<sup>107</sup> These new hard-selling approaches placed a new emphasis on price and quality, which *absatzwirtschaft* also recommended. According to the magazine, advertisers had to emphasise low prices and the long-lasting quality of their products.<sup>108</sup>

Another industry, that was especially affected by fuel shortages, the automotive sector, made effective use of this approach. They responded with a new focus on fuel-efficient vehicles and promoted their cars as “vernünftig” (“reasonable”). Volkswagen advertised their *Käfer* with the slogans “Sparzeug” (saving-car) and “Gerade jetzt” (“Just now”) or “Kommen Sie zur Vernunft” (“Come to your senses”). The attributes of the Beetle which were highlighted included the fact that it was long-lasting, reliable, solid, good value and economical. The international equivalent stated “Open a savings account”, presenting the Beetle as a way to save money. Other car manufacturers followed similar strategies. The impact of the oil crisis is therefore clear.

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<sup>105</sup> ‘Agencies ready to tighten their belts’, in *Adweek* 14.12.1973.

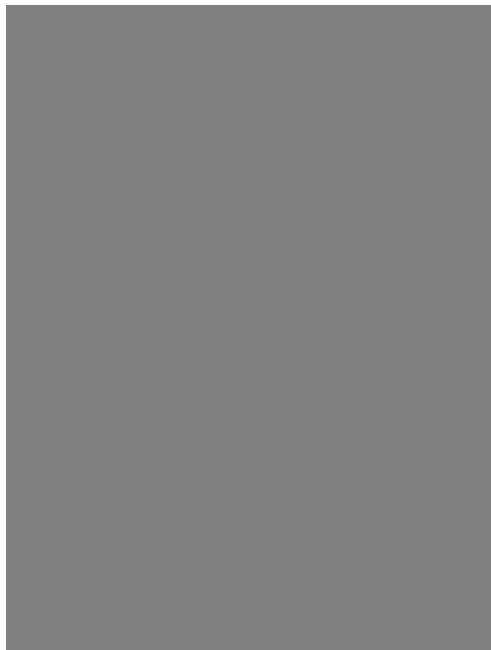
<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Wülffing, C. M., ‘Wird die Werbung eintönig?’, in *werben und verkaufen* 19.04.1974.

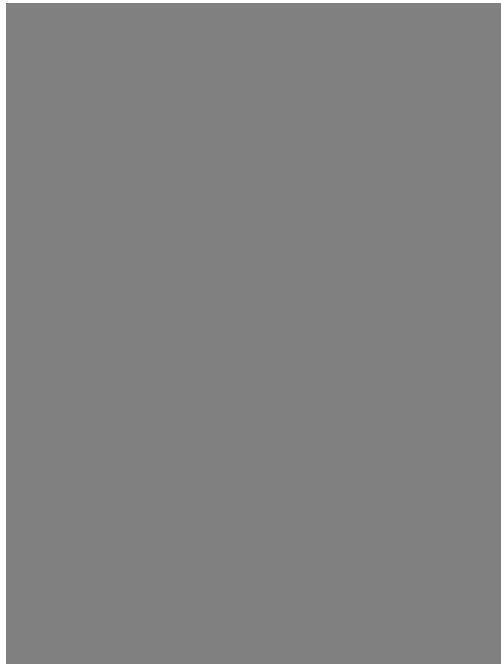
<sup>108</sup> ‘So steuern Sie durch die Krise’.



***Image 5: VW Beetle advertisement "Das Sparzeug", in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.***



***Image 6: VW Beetle advertisements, in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.***



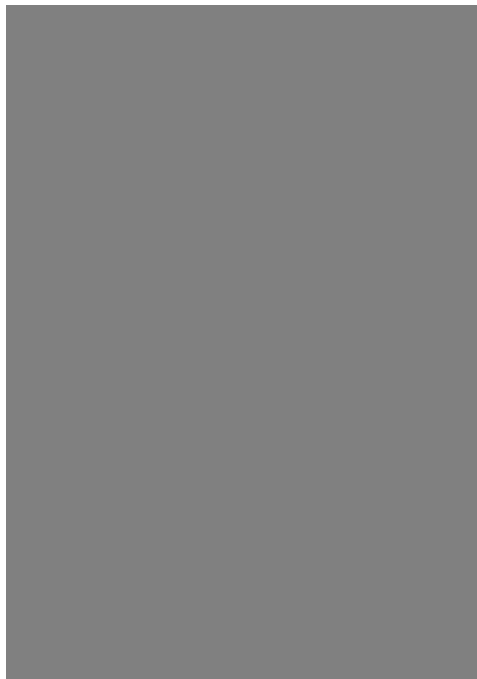
***Image 7: International Beetle advertisement "Open a savings account",  
in Campaign 28.11.1974.***



***Image 8: VW advertisement "Ein Bild von einem wirtschaftlichen Auto",  
in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.***



***Image 9: Volvo advertisement "Mehr Sicherheit. Mehr Qualität.",  
in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.***



***Image 10: Peugeot advertisement "Umsteigen auf Vernunft",  
in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1974.***

Overall, the German car industry doubled its advertising expenditure between 1974 and 1976.<sup>109</sup> This happened in a time where its sales declined by about twenty per cent.<sup>110</sup> Obviously, car manufacturers hoped to increase sales again with the help of

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<sup>109</sup> Köhler, 'Marketing'.

<sup>110</sup> Hohensee, *Ölpreisschock*, p. 221.

advertising. As one of the key German industries, this was one reason why the economic crisis did not hit German advertising as hard as its British counterpart.

However, although the car and oil industry increasingly invested in advertising, this was not the case for every industry. In many cases, advertising was one of the first items that were reduced. Understandably, this widespread strategy within companies was heavily criticised by advertisers. It was argued that in uncertain times in particular, companies needed to communicate reasonably in order to reassure their customers.<sup>111</sup> However, declining revenues had consequences not only for the style of advertising, but most of all for the advertising industry itself.

### ***End of the crisis?***

By comparing Germany and the United Kingdom between 1974 and 1979, it can be seen that economic growth slowed, and a subsequent rise in unemployment followed in both countries. Still, the effects of the crisis were felt much more strongly by most people in the United Kingdom than in Germany. With average consumer price inflation at over 13 per cent, the United Kingdom experienced the worst rate of inflation throughout the whole of the twentieth century.<sup>112</sup> The double-digit inflation of the mid-1970s also explains the increasing number of total advertising expenditure in table 1 (p. 31).

However, advertising managed to overcome the crisis more quickly than most other industries. As has been shown, economic decline did not necessarily mean less advertising expenditure. Contemporary surveys estimated that “slightly more than half the companies polled expect to cut their advertising, and slightly under half expected to increase it.”<sup>113</sup> Advertising presented itself as a way to beat the crisis by using new marketing methods, new approaches in advertising and answering to consumers’ needs.<sup>114</sup>

In 1978, *Campaign* found “a lot of reasons for UK admen for being pleased”. Advertisers were “enjoying the biggest all round upsurge in advertising in years”.<sup>115</sup> A review of 1978 described it as the year “when everything happened”, meaning record numbers, changing accounts and a boom in advertising.<sup>116</sup> Although the second oil crisis of the Seventies hit Europe at the end of 1978, this event did not cause anywhere near the level of disruption as the 1973 crisis. In a review of 1979, only a passing mention was made of “störende Ereignisse auf dem Ölmarkt” (“disturbing

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<sup>111</sup> Schlehofer, R., ‘Die Werbung muß sich den veränderten Verhältnissen anpassen’, in *werben und verkaufen* 06.12.1974.

<sup>112</sup> Furgeson, ‘Crisis’, p. 6.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Advertisers split 50-50 in crisis’, in *Adweek* 22.02.1974.

<sup>114</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>115</sup> Viney, K., ‘Race for space, as the ad agencies cash in on a boom’, in *Campaign European Supplement* 03.11.1978.

<sup>116</sup> Davis, B., ‘1978: The year when everything happened’, in *Campaign* 22.12.1978.

events within the oil market").<sup>117</sup> In comparison to 1974, the headlines were less panicked and more balanced in the United Kingdom and Germany. Indeed, the rise in advertising expenditure in both countries lowered but it did not decrease. The reason for this might have been that constant economic fluctuations were perceived to be normal. Nevertheless, the so-called "winter of discontent" had massive psychological effects on the United Kingdom.<sup>118</sup> Endless strikes paralysed the country, while coal shortages and unusually cold weather added to the misery of the British population. Of course, this mood did not completely spare the advertising industry. Advertising expenditure lowered during this year, but it did not decrease as during the mid-Seventies. Pictures of rubbish piling up the streets of London became symbolic, comparable to pictures of the empty autobahn by the end of 1973.<sup>119</sup> The year 1979 played a decisive role in British historiography of the Seventies, where "all these problems [that occurred in the years before] culminated".<sup>120</sup> Images from the "winter of discontent" remained vivid in politics for decades<sup>121</sup>, and Conservatives in particular kept the memory alive.<sup>122</sup> The beginning of the Thatcher era, which many historians see as a turning point in British history, is primarily a political one.<sup>123</sup> Remarkably, the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi was heavily involved in Thatcher's election campaign.

Of course, advertisers welcomed the new neo-liberal thoughts of the Thatcher government and were looking forward to Thatcher's premiership, as they expected fewer industry regulations. As one of Thatcher's first acts in charge, she abolished the Price Commission which was set up in 1973 as a means of controlling inflation. The new government's attitude towards advertising was characterised by the following:

*"Thatcher regards advertising as a wholly legitimate business activity, which stimulates demand and competition, and services the customer."*<sup>124</sup>

After years of critique which will be further explained in chapter three this turn was very welcome among advertisers. The 1979 general election in Britain marked a

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<sup>117</sup> Zentrallausschuß der Werbewirtschaft (ZAW), *Jahrbuch der Werbung 1980* (Bonn, 1980), p. 253.

<sup>118</sup> Geppert, D., 'Der Thatcher-Konsens. Der Einsturz der britischen Nachkriegsordnung in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren', in *Journal of Modern European History* 9(2011), pp. 141-173.

<sup>119</sup> Bösch, F., 'Umbrüche in die Gegenwart Globale Ereignisse und Krisenreaktionen um 1979', in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 9(2012), > <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Boesch-1-2012> (15.08.2012).

<sup>120</sup> Harrison, *Findng a role*, p. 303.

<sup>121</sup> Historical reception James, T., *"Bound in by History". The Winter of Discontent in British Politics, 1979-2004* (London, 2007).

<sup>122</sup> Harrison, *Findng a role*, p. 305.

<sup>123</sup> See for example Brüggemeier, F. J., *Geschichte Großbritanniens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2010), pp. 309-346; Thackeray, F. W. (ed.), *Events that changed Great Britain since 1689* (Westport, 2002), pp. 173-193.

<sup>124</sup> 'Thatcher boost for admen', in *Campaign* 18.05.1979.

turning point towards a new style of politics which loosened restrictions for the economy.

### ***Conclusion: A Look on the Bright Side***

As this chapter has shown, the economic troubles of the Seventies had several consequences for advertising. These consequences varied in Britain and Germany as well as in different branches. At the end of the decade it became clear that the industry had managed to overcome the majority of these economic difficulties rather effectively. Therefore, at the end of the decade, a leading article in *Campaign* concluded:

*"The Seventies as a decade have been cataclysmic in the context of the world economy in general and in Britain in particular. It is no exaggeration to say that inflation and the oil crisis have wrought fundamental changes to existence and hence to business practise. There is no gainsaying the fact that, the quality of life has been diminished, even though incomes and spending power have grown apace. The advertising industry can be proud that it has managed significantly to improve its output and productivity in a decade which has generally been marked by decline, especially since it is difficult to think of any other business that can make a similar claim."*<sup>125</sup>

The data shown in table 1 confirms this statement. Advertising expenditure declined between 1974 and 1976 due to economic difficulties but increased rapidly towards the end of the decade, except for a drop in 1979.

**Table 1: Estimated National Advertising Expenditure 1970-1979**<sup>126</sup>

Year	Total expenditure (£ million)	Expenditure in 1970 Prices* (£ million)	Changes in advertising expenditure in 1970 Prices (in per cent)
1970	554	554	--
1971	591	544	-1,8
1972	708	608	11,8
1973	874	716	17,8
1974	900	667	-6,8
1975	967	565	-15,3
1976	1188	556	-1,6
1977	1499	602	8,3
1978	1834	645	7,1
1979	2137	652	1,1

\* Figures in this column are obtained by deflating the current price figures by the combined index media rates

The figures of German advertising were even better, increasing throughout the whole decade. Although the boom years of the Sixties had ended, after the crisis of the mid-

<sup>125</sup> 'Leader', in *Campaign* 21.12.1979.

<sup>126</sup> Nevett, *Advertising*, p. 177.

Seventies the German economy recovered quickly and continued to grow. Table two shows how German advertising grew steadily and only slowed down in 1974 and 1975, before continuing on a path of upward growth. In addition to a better economic environment, German advertising found itself in a morally improved position by 1976. The reasons for this will be further explained in chapter three.



**Table 2: Advertising Revenue in Germany<sup>127</sup>**

Year	Advertising Revenue (in million DM)	Increase in per cent
1971	4.543	10
1972	5.035	6
1973	5.369	18
1974	6.387	4
1975	6.670	4
1976	7.676	15
1977	8.639	12
1978	9.710	12
1979	10.736	10

Initially, advertisers had feared that advertising expenditure would decrease after the economic crisis of 1974, the effect of which could still be felt in 1975. In 1976, however, the tables had already turned, and advertising expenditure was increasing. Whereas German economic growth increased moderately, advertising grew massively. By the end of the decade, the *Jahrbuch der Werbung* proudly presented figures of growth for advertising compared to GDP. Starting in the year 1974, the table shows how disposable income (“verfügbares Einkommen”) and private consumption (“privater Verbrauch”) grew steadily after 1974, while advertising revenue (“Werbeumsätze”) increased more rapidly than both of these figures. A year later, the *Jahrbuch der Werbung* again emphasised the strong performance of the advertising industry; while GDP would have grown by a factor of 1.52 between 1974 and 1980 and private consumption by just factor 1.56, advertising revenue increased by a factor of 1.85 to nearly 12 billion Deutsche Mark (see image 11).<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Wilke, J. (ed.), *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bonn, 1999), p. 786.

<sup>128</sup> Zentrallausschuß der Werbewirtschaft (ZAW), *Werbung '81* (Bonn, 1981), pp. 12-14.



**Image 11: “Dynamik der Werbung”, in Jahrbuch der Werbung 1980, p. 176.\***

\*The grey figure shows the increase in German GDP (“Bruttosozialprodukt”); the green figure shows the increase in advertising revenue (“Werbeumsätze”).

The reasons for this extraordinary growth were diverse. As has been shown, advertising responded quickly to the economic crisis and with the help of new marketing strategies presented itself as a means to overcome economic problems. Additionally, other conditions developed a favourable climate for advertising. These reasons will be further explained in the following chapters.

## Consumption

### ***Consumption and Advertising or 'How to Make Them Buy'***

*“Advertisements are selling us something else besides consumer goods: in providing us with a structure in which we and those goods are interchangeable, they are selling us ourselves.”<sup>129</sup>*

Consumption and the history of consumption has been a topic which is attracting increasing interest from historians. It offers the possibility to combine aspects of historical research as diverse as economic, social, cultural history and history of art. In doing so, changes, trends and developments can be examined from different perspectives in order to obtain a wider picture. The following chapter seeks to show how structural alterations caused changes within consumption, a development which was of particular interest to advertisers. These changes were effected over the long term and were therefore more difficult to sense than short-term adjustments, as they occurred during a time of immediate economic crisis. Even if they are not present in every issue of *Campaign* or *absatzwirtschaft*, articles focussing on changing consumption patterns were usually detailed and based on recent studies into how to address consumers. Another underlying issue of these articles (and also touched upon by the quote above) is whether advertisers were able to shape their own 'target groups' or if they could only respond to trends within society. As will also be shown, both possibilities were true. Admen tried to direct their customer's wishes in a certain direction. At the same time, they were highly interested in trends within society and tried to sense them as soon as possible.

Generally, mass consumption was largely unaffected by economic problems and rising unemployment during the Seventies. Consumption as a mass phenomenon instead of the privilege of a small group had been an ongoing development since World War II.<sup>130</sup> Still, changes in post-industrial society, which emphasised the growing importance of leisure and recreation, increased the cultural significance of consumption that began during this time and reached its materialistic peak during the 1980s.<sup>131</sup> Some of the structural changes within society, such as a shift in values, individualism, gender roles and social equality, will be described, as will the way in which they were discussed and acted upon within the advertising industry.

### ***Savings, Low Prices and High Value – Advertising during the Crisis***

As mentioned before, the reaction of consumers to the immediate economic crisis had an effect on buying habits. As early as May 1974, *Campaign* stated that the

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<sup>129</sup> Williamson, J., *Decoding Advertisements* (London, 1978), p.13.

<sup>130</sup> Haustein, S., *Vom Mangel zum Massenkonsum. Deutschland, Frankreich und Grossbritannien im Vergleich 1945-1970* (Frankfurt/Main, 2007).

<sup>131</sup> Schramm, M., 'Konsumgeschichte', in *Docupedia* 25.07.2011

><https://docupedia.de/zg/Konsumgeschichte?oldid=79724>< (08.09.2012).

standard of living had dropped within the last few months and that British consumers were being forced to change their whole buying pattern in comparison to just twelve months previously.<sup>132</sup> The overall standard of living fell, and this could be noticed in minor modifications to one's lifestyle, such as changing from butter to margarine, cutting back on the regular purchase of meat, shopping around for cheaper goods, and imposing a reduction on entertainment and holidays. With inflation expected, women would increasingly go to work in order to increase household income.<sup>133</sup> German consumers also consumed less during the immediate crisis in 1974. The so called "Konsumklima" ("consume climate") fell to a record low since the end of World War II.<sup>134</sup> The manner in which consumers adjusted to recession was also examined by the well-known marketing theorist Philip Kotler. The academic, who was called a "marketing pope" by *absatzwirtschaft* in 1973 and is still famous today,<sup>135</sup> described the effects that recession had on consumption patterns. He characterises three consumer groups. The majority of "intense consumers" retain their old consumption values and continue to make purchases according to the old scale of calculation. The "sensible consumers" concentrate on functional product values and focus on reasonably expensive goods with high quality. The third group, called the "austere consumers", start an alternative lifestyle and try to produce as much as possible themselves.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to the immediate reactions of consumers, consumption changed structurally over the course of the decade. These changes were not necessarily connected to economic troubles. On the contrary, most workers had more money and time to spend than ever before. As a profound change in consumption patterns, people spent more money on luxurious products that they did not necessarily need and less on basic goods such as food. Therefore, consumption gained new meaning. Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried summarise the "materialization of the 1960s and 1970s" as follows

*"Consumption no longer focused on the safeguarding of basic survival such was shelter, clothing, or food, but on strictly speaking, dispensable things and possessions which could be arbitrarily combined: the nicer apartment, the more palatable food, the different clothes. It was the combination of excess and arbitrary selection that determined the distinct lifestyles – and that also revealed the 'slight differences'."*<sup>137</sup>

Consumption was no longer a question of class, but a constitutive element for certain lifestyles. However, the influence of consumption on social inequalities was highly controversial, as will be shown. The following will also delve into how advertising

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<sup>132</sup> Adler, E., 'The Price of Change', in *Campaign* 24.05.1974.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> 'Konsum – Tief wie nie zuvor', in *werben und verkaufen* 29.03.1974.

<sup>135</sup> 'Kotler was here!', in *absatzwirtschaft* 12/1973.

<sup>136</sup> Kotler, P., *Marketing management. Analysis, planning and control* (London, 1976), p. 492.

<sup>137</sup> Schildt, A., Siegfried, D., 'Introduction', in Schildt, A., Siegfried, D. (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola. Youth cultures in changing European societies, 1960-1980* (New York, 2006), pp. 1-39, p. 13.

reacted to the 'battle for customers' and the structural changes occurring within consumption patterns.

### ***Different Values – Different Consumers***

In the *Jahrbuch der Werbung* 1975, psychologist Herbet Wettig asks if it is possible to divide consumers psychologically.<sup>138</sup> He explains that consumers have gained more self-confidence and have to be regarded as "mündig" (adult) by advertisers. The consumer should be treated as an individual and a complex combination of desires. The Scottish-born advertiser David Ogilvy, who became highly successful with Madison Avenue Advertisers, puts this sentiment most clearly when he states that "The consumer is not a moron, she is your wife."<sup>139</sup> Advertisers needed to address consumers accordingly. This could only be accomplished by constructing a "target group" for each product and advertising this product according to the target group's desires.<sup>140</sup> However, the motives behind why people bought a certain product became more and more complex. While cheap prices and high-value were key attributes in times of immediate economic crisis, non-materialistic ethics became increasingly important in the long run.

This shift from materialistic to non-materialistic values was part of a wider development. So noticeable was this that contemporary sociologists observed the shift the values:

*"The values of Western publics have been shifting from an overwhelming emphasis on material well-being and physical security toward greater emphasis on the quality of life."*<sup>141</sup>

This opening sentence of political scientist Ronald Inglehard's well-known study *The Silent Revolution* describes his main points.<sup>142</sup> Inglehard described a shift of values within western societies as early as 1971.<sup>143</sup> His magnum opus was published in 1977; according to Inglehard, younger generations would have different values to their parents or grandparents because they grew up during times of economic and social security. As they never experienced materialistic shortages, their values would be solely post-materialistic, including equality, democracy and self-fulfilment. Most young people would identify with post-materialistic values, and these values would

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<sup>138</sup> Wettig, H., 'Psychologisch segmentierte Konsumenten – gibt's die?', in Neumann, E., Sprang W., Hattemer, K. (eds.), *Werbung in Deutschland, Jahrbuch 1975* (Düsseldorf, 1975).

<sup>139</sup> As cited in Fletcher, W., *Powers of persuasion. The inside story of British advertising: 1951-2000* (Oxford, 2008), p. 128.

<sup>140</sup> 'Psychologisch segmentierte Konsumenten'.

<sup>141</sup> Inglehart, R., *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton, 1977), p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Inglehart, R., *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton, 1977).

<sup>143</sup> Inglehart, R., 'The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies', in *American Political Science Review*, 65 (1971) 4, pp. 991-1071.

impose materialistic values over the course of time.<sup>144</sup> Though Inglehard's theories were controversial, they nevertheless remained influential.<sup>145</sup> He pioneered a new approach to social studies; one of his disciples was German sociologist Helmut Klages. A few years after Inglehard's groundbreaking studies, Klages also examined a "Wertwandlungsschulb" (change of values), which essentially implied the decline of Prussian virtues which had been part of the German middle-class self-image for over two hundred years. He described a shift from "Pflicht- und Akzeptanzwerte" (values of duty and acceptance) such as discipline towards "Selbstentfaltungswerte" (values of development) such as self-fulfilment. However, he also showed that new values would not necessarily replace the old ones. Instead, old values and new ones could be combined.<sup>146</sup> Similar changes had already occurred within the United Kingdom during the 1960s. In this case, however, Victorian values were perceived to be under threat by the so-called "permissive society".<sup>147</sup> However, these studies remained controversial because they were rather limited in scope and could not provide information about long-term developments, i.e. longer than a decade.<sup>148</sup> Additionally, there were several studies which laid emphasis on a trend towards growing individualism. Generally speaking, this meant a life which focussed on one's goals and desires. This development also included the weakening of ties between members of the same social class and changing attitudes regarding traditional family values.<sup>149</sup> Interestingly, research about growing individualism and changing class structures was carried out more extensively in Germany than in the United Kingdom. In contrast, class structures within the UK were seen as an example of ongoing inflexible social structures. However, although these social structures still bore importance in British society, a trend towards an individualised class society has also been observed here.<sup>150</sup>

Recently, the use of sociological approaches and "Wertewandelsforschung" (changing values research) in particular has been criticised and debated in German historiography circles. Rüdiger Graf and Kim Christian Priemel accuse their fellow

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<sup>144</sup> van Deht, J. W., 'Wertewandel im internationalen Vergleich. Ein deutscher Sonderweg?', in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B29(2001), pp. 23-30, p. 24

<sup>145</sup> Thome, H., 'Wertewandel in Europa aus der Sicht der empirischen Sozialforschung', in Joas, H., Wiegandt, K. (eds.), *Die kulturellen Werte Europas* (Frankfurt/Main, 2005), pp. 386-443, p. 391-410; Hillmann, K.-H., 'Zur Wertewandlungsforschung: Einführung, Übersicht und Ausblick', in Oesterdickhoff, G., Jegelka, N. (eds.), *Werte und Wertewandel in westlichen Gesellschaften. Resultate und Perspektiven der Sozialwissenschaften* (Opladen, 2007), pp. 15-39.

<sup>146</sup> Klages, H., *Werteorientierung im Wandel. Rückblick, Gegenwartsanalyse, Prognosen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1984), p. 20.

<sup>147</sup> Collins, M. (ed.), *The permissive society and its enemies. Sixties British culture* (London, 2007).

<sup>148</sup> Rödder, A., 'Vom Materialismus zum Postmaterialismus? Ronald Ingleharts Diagnosen des Wertewandel ihre Grenzen und Perspektiven', in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, Online-Ausgabe, 3 (2006) H. 3. ><http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Roedder-3-2006>< (23.07.2012).

<sup>149</sup> contemporary Lukas, S., *Individualism* (London, 1973); Berger, P., Hitzler, R. (eds.), *Individualisierungen. Ein Vierteljahrhundert "jenseits von Stand und Klasse"?* (Wiesbaden, 2010).

<sup>150</sup> Schröder, A., 'Großbritannien – jenseits von Stand und Klasse? Zwischen Klassengesellschaft und Individualisierung', in Berger, Hitzler, *Individualisierungen*, pp. 97-117.

historians of using contemporary sociological studies in an all-too-easy adaption. By doing so, historians reproduce contemporary findings, but fail to look beyond the perspectives of contemporary social scientists.<sup>151</sup> In answer to this criticism, Bernhard Dietz and Christopher Neumaier do not follow this radical deconstruction. Instead, they argue that academic literature should not only be treated as contemporary self-description; otherwise, there would not be any scientific literature at all. As a tool for historians, results from social sciences can be used both as sources and as analytical tools.<sup>152</sup> This approach is also used in this dissertation, which uses contemporary findings as sources, but also seeks to show the wider context in which these results were produced. However, it is not possible within this dissertation to examine whether a shift in values actually took place. Nevertheless, contemporary magazines reported on similar developments, and these results were taken seriously by advertisers. Therefore, they tried to react to the changes which they believed were taking place within society. Harm Schröter argued that by responding to perceived social changes, marketers and advertisers would also enforce these developments, as they seek to detect them as early as possible as a means of adjusting advertising accordingly.<sup>153</sup> This thesis cannot be proven within this dissertation and would be a potential matter for future studies to look into. However, it seems logical that advertisers understood the changes they read about in advertising journals to be genuine and tried to adjust their actions to correspond to them. Thereby, they enforced already ongoing trends and developments. After all, advertisers were eager to sense changes early in order to gain an advantage over their competitors.

As will be illustrated, this sociological research played a decisive role for advertising. Sociological developments influenced marketing strategies, which in turn partially attempted to control consumption patterns and nudge them in a certain direction. Market researchers at the beginning of the Seventies believed that their target groups could be created by means of advertising and marketing. With the help of empirical research, new consumer needs would be awakened, thereby opening up new markets. By the end of the Seventies, however, this assumption had fallen by the wayside. The consumer could not be 'controlled' by marketing. A paradigmatic shift within psychology and communication sciences proved that communication between the advertiser and the consumer was not a "one-way-street".<sup>154</sup> Consumer behaviour was simply too complex and somewhat contradictory to be framed by a

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<sup>151</sup> Graf, R., Priemel, K. C., 'Contemporary History in the World of the Social Sciences. Legitimacy and Originality of an Academic Discipline', in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 4/2011, pp.479-508.

<sup>152</sup> Dietz, B., Neumaier, C., 'On the Use of the Social Sciences for Contemporary History. Values and Changing Values as Topics for Historical Research', in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 2/2012, pp. 293-304.

<sup>153</sup> Schröter, H., 'Marketing als angewandte Sozialtechnik und Veränderungen im Konsumverhalten. Nivea als internationale Dachmarke 1960-1994', in Siegrist, Kaelble, Kocka, *Konsumgeschichte*, pp. 604-636, p. 616.

<sup>154</sup> See chapter 4.

simple model.<sup>155</sup> In the *Jahrbuch der Werbung*, these forecast attempts were dismissed as "amüsante Schönwetterbeschäftigungen" (fair-weather activities).<sup>156</sup>

However, changing consumer behaviour was an ever-present topic in advertising journals. Several articles tried to describe the "new consumer type" and characterised them as reasonable, well-informed about new trends, style and products, and demanding. They were able to manage the growing range of products and adjust these according to their lifestyles:

*"Die Konsumenten der siebziger Jahre wissen mehr und sind kosmopolitischer. Sie sind über nationale Trends in Geschmack, Stil und Produkten informiert, sie sind anspruchsvoller und fähiger zu unterscheiden. Ihr Lebensstil wird von der schnell wachsenden Vielfalt der Produkte und Dienstleistungen geprägt. Die Auswahl verfügbarer Produkte und Dienstleistungen vergrößert sich stark und bietet damit eine größere Zahl von Alternativen für ihren Lebensstil."*<sup>157</sup>

*Absatzwirtschaft* stated that the needs of these consumers were purely a means of contributing to their own sense of self-fulfilment. So-called "conspicuous consumption" was replaced by more reasonable consumption, which was focused on one's needs:

*"Selbstverwirklichung ist das Schlagwort. [...] Der demonstrative, naive Geltungsverbrauch ist der Selbstbesinnung gewichen."*<sup>158</sup>

In his study of consumer images, Nepomuk Gasteiger labels this new type the "postmodern consumer".<sup>159</sup> This expression was used years later for a type of consumer that existed at that time.<sup>160</sup> Postmodernism was described as a triumvirate of individualisation, pluralism and changing values.<sup>161</sup> Therefore, this appears to be an adequate label. Of course, the postmodern consumer did not simply emerge and replaced existing consumer habits. These changes were, however, observed, described and acted upon by sociologists, marketers and advertisers over the course of the decade and beyond. In the eyes of advertisers, the postmodern consumer demanded different concepts of advertising. The content of advertisements became increasingly important.<sup>162</sup> Products needed to fulfil a certain function for customers, and these needs were not only materialistic. The need to identify and define oneself with a certain product was also expressed.<sup>163</sup> This new kind of consumer would build their identity with goods that suited their way of life, that had emotional and symbolic

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<sup>155</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, pp. 225-228.

<sup>156</sup> Reichard, R., 'Das Marketing und der Werbung Wellen...', in Zentralausschuß der Werbewirtschaft (ZAW), *Jahrbuch der Werbung* 1983 (Düsseldorf, 1983).

<sup>157</sup> 'Verbraucher 1978: Individualisierungswünsche', in *absatzwirtschaft* 4/1978.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, pp. 210-255.

<sup>160</sup> 'Auf dem Weg in die Postmoderne? Wie Konsumenten differenzieren', in *absatzwirtschaft* 10/1989, as cited in Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 233.

<sup>161</sup> Rödter, *Moderne*, p. 197.

<sup>162</sup> 'Werbung in den achtzigern', in Zentralausschuß der Werbewirtschaft, *Werbung '80* (Bonn, 1980).

<sup>163</sup> van Deht, 'Wertewandel'.



value. They would also judge advertising critically and only purchase products presented in a way that supported their sense of individuality. Eventually, this kind of consumer would be able to evaluate how products are connoted emotionally and socially.<sup>164</sup>

Already at the beginning of the sixties John Waller Hobson of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising described similar developments in British society. He insisted that class structures at that time needed to be understood not simply as economic indicators, but also as cultural variables. Class would thereby also determine one's way of life or "lifestyles".<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, Hobson explained that markets and consumer preferences were increasingly complicated by the emergence of what he termed "special-interest groups". He defined those groups according to age or leadership position within the community.<sup>166</sup> Refuting the claims of sociologist Anthony Giddens, who links identity to movements of self-affirmation and lifestyle decisions about the self, Frank Mort points out a similar trend for consumers in the United Kingdom, namely the increasing trend of "self-dramatization of identity" in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>167</sup> As the United Kingdom had reached a higher level of affluence more quickly than Germany after World War II, this turn towards post-materialistic values probably occurred earlier than in Germany; it was the Seventies which marked a "Sattelzeit" (transitional period) in Germany's consumption history.<sup>168</sup>

"Special interest groups" which were bound together by similar consumption patterns had become a focus within marketing by the mid-1960s. Market segmentation, or rather the focus on "special interest groups" described by Hobson, had become a trend in marketing. As mentioned previously, the concept of marketing management embraced advertising as part of a marketing mix. The preparation of advertising campaigns for certain target groups involved a whole new set of statistical and marketing research procedures. These merely statistical packages methodically replaced the application of psychological concepts and techniques to the study of consumers and the impulses behind their purchasing behaviour. The most famous representative of these approaches had been the well-known Ernest Dichter. The Austrian psychologist and pioneer of motivation research emigrated from Vienna to the United States in the 1930s, and became an influential researcher for major brands, developing new approaches for explaining consumer behaviour.<sup>169</sup> However, Dichter's psychological concepts were gradually replaced from the mid-1960s

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<sup>164</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 211.

<sup>165</sup> Hobson, J. W., *The Selection of Advertising Media* (London, 1961); Mort, F., 'Paths to Mass Consumption. Britain and the USA since 1945', in Nava, M. (ed.), *Buy this book*, pp.13-33.

<sup>166</sup> Hobson, *Selection*, pp. 30-33.

<sup>167</sup> Mort, 'Paths', pp. 15-29.

<sup>168</sup> König, W., 'Die siebziger Jahre als konsumgeschichtliche Wende in der Bundesrepublik', in Jaraus, K. (ed.), *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 84-103, p. 87.

<sup>169</sup> Schwarzkopf, S., Rainer, G. (eds.), *Ernest Dichter and Motivation Research. New Perspectives on the Making of Post-War Consumer Culture* (Basingstoke, 2010).

onwards. Statistical packages concentrated not on personality, but on activities of different subgroups of consumers, providing some analysis of their use of media, their consumption preferences, and – most importantly – their lifestyle attitudes.<sup>170</sup> Using this information, advertisers sought to find out what was important in their potential consumers' lives so as to make products appealing to them. In order to fulfil this aim, the entire production process was focussed on consumer's needs. Products were created to meet consumers' wishes and needs and to contribute to their lifestyles and sense of individuality.

### ***Consumer Orientation: How to make it a Volkswagen***

One example of how this shift towards consumer orientation occurred can be observed through the actions of major German car company Volkswagen. It, like other car companies, suffered as a result of the economic crisis of 1974. Sales declined drastically in 1974, and Volkswagen reacted with advertisements which responded to a more reasonable attitude towards cars generally, as seen in chapter one. These adjustments were part of a new marketing strategy which responded to criticism asserting that Volkswagen would not be sufficiently consumer-oriented. This criticism was also stated in the *absatzwirtschaft*, a major reason as to why VW introduced new strategies.<sup>171</sup> Several articles stated that marketing was the means of overcoming economic withdrawal, thereby putting pressure on executives to introduce what was stated as a "modern" and up-to-date corporate strategy.<sup>172</sup>

In the case of Volkswagen, the marketing strategy covered two main points: firstly, the adjustment of models, equipment and terms and conditions according to changing customer demands; secondly, the attempt to guide these demands in parallel with a positive brand image.<sup>173</sup>

In terms of adjustments to models and equipment, Volkswagen took an entirely new direction. Between 1945 and 1968, VW's business was mainly based on the *Käfer* (Beetle). During the Sixties and Seventies, Beetle sales declined, subjecting VW to severe economic difficulties. In response, VW introduced several new types of car in 1974. Economist Heribert Meffert, who examined VW's new strategies, explains why these changes were necessary. He describes how the shift from product orientation towards market orientation was realized with the help of a new product policy which then became the centrepiece of the company's philosophy. The old products and

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<sup>170</sup> Leiss et al., *Communication*, pp. 158-159.

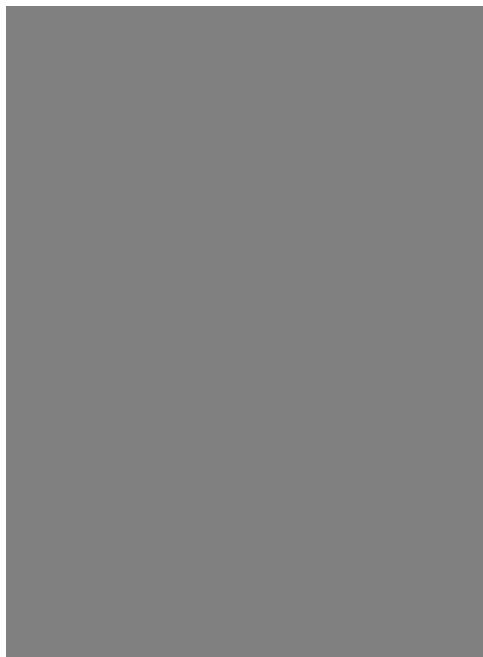
<sup>171</sup> Köhler, 'Marketing', p. 278.

<sup>172</sup> 'Werber in der Schlankheitskur', in *absatzwirtschaft* 11/1974; 'Unternehmer an der Klagemauer', in *absatzwirtschaft* 9/1974; 'Marketing im Windkanal', in *absatzwirtschaft* 5/1975.

<sup>173</sup> Köhler, 'Marketing', p. 278.

selling strategies would not have met “den gewandelten Konsumentenbedürfnissen” (changing consumer needs), i.e. a new emphasis on lifestyle and individuality.<sup>174</sup>

In order to meet customer demands, VW expanded their range of products both 'horizontally' and 'vertically'. This involved having products at all price levels and generating more variety within a single particular class of products. As such, for VW and many other car companies, the 1970s marked the transition from a strategy merely based on standardised mass products towards a 'full-product-line' strategy. This strategy offered the customer the possibility to change between several classes of cars according to their needs. The new "stages" of VWs were Polo-Golf-Passat-Scirocco a line comparable to Ford's Fiesta-Escort-Taunus-Granada-Capri, which ostensibly offered a suitable car for everybody. Consequently, the successor of the Käfer, the Golf, also gained a symbolic dimension as the typical German middle-class car that gave name to a whole generation.<sup>175</sup> The horizontal product expansion offered the possibility to adjust these models with different equipment and styles to the customer's preferences. During the years of economic crisis in particular, the demand for small and compact cars increased.<sup>176</sup> Offering fuel-efficient cars and advertising helped car companies to overcome the immediate crisis and answer to a new customer demand for product attributes. The novel emphasis on reasonable cars meant priorities for high-value materials, equipment, comfort, security, efficiency, eco-friendliness and endurance.



**Image 12: VW Golf advertisement "Der neue Volkssport: Golf",  
in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1975.**

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<sup>174</sup> Meffert, H., *Marketing. Einführung in die Absatzpolitik mit der Fallstudie VW-Golf* (Frankfurt/Main, 1980), p. 606.

<sup>175</sup> See the bestseller by Illies, F., *Generation Golf. Ein Inspektion* (Berlin, 2000).

<sup>176</sup> Köhler, 'Marketing', p. 279.



*Image13: VW Golf advertisements, in ZAW, Jahrbuch der Werbung 1975.*

### ***Everybody can purchase – Social Equality***

Unsurprisingly, the new emphasis on individuality and self-fulfilment became important to many social scientists. Numerous contemporary sociologists predicted these changes on how people created their lifestyles to be end of social class.<sup>177</sup> Advertisers therefore praised their work because it would contribute to “mehr an Gleichheit” (more equality) within society. While this kept the political system stable during the Seventies, it would increasingly contribute to diminish poverty and social inequalities.<sup>178</sup> In contrast to this, sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Baudrillard emphasised the manner in which consumption contributed to social inequality. The “slight differences” within consumption would now reproduce social status.<sup>179</sup> Theorists of the Frankfurt School heavily criticised the new emphasis on consumption. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, for example, stated that consumer goods would contribute to new social classes within the middle-class and that they would serve as a replacement for the feudal system.<sup>180</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno condemned advertising and marketing in particular for adjusting goods according to target groups, as this would produce such groups.<sup>181</sup> Their assumptions as to how advertisements could influence consumers were highly influential within the consumerist movement. However, a paradigmatic change and new results in communication sciences and

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<sup>177</sup> Schelsky, H., *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 1954), p. 223f.

<sup>178</sup> ‘Werbung in den achtzigern’.

<sup>179</sup> Baudrillard, J., *La société de consommation* (Paris, 1970); English edition, *The Consumer Society. Myths & Structures* (London, 1998); Bourdieu, P., *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris, 1979); English edition, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (London, 1984).

<sup>180</sup> Haug, W. F., *Kritik der Warenästhetik* (Frankfurt, 1972).

<sup>181</sup> Adorno. T. W., Horkheimer, M., *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt/Main 1944), p. 110f.

sociology disapproved their findings, as will be shown in the next chapter. The question as to whether mass consumption could contribute to a more equal or unequal society remained controversial. However, Eric Hobsbawm argued that the end of the “Golden Age” reinstated social differences which had become less pronounced during times of growing prosperity.<sup>182</sup> Additionally, in her study *A consumer's republic*, which dealt with the politics of post war consumption in the United States, Lizabeth Cohen showed that consumption was an engine for growing inequalities during the 1960s. Consumption, marketing and advertising enforced boundaries between race, class and gender, as she states:

*“The consumer purchase became both the objective and the evidence for social-class segmentation.”*<sup>183</sup>

In particular, the boundaries between genders were important to advertisers and marketers, as much of their work targeted women. The question as to whether and to what extent their consumption patterns changed was therefore highly relevant to them.

### **Women's consuming Liberation**

*“Lieschen Müller und Otto Normalverbraucher sind verblichen. An ihre Stelle sind eine Vielzahl von Konsumententypen getreten, deren Lebenswelten mit entsprechenden Produkten ausgestattet werden wollen.”*<sup>184</sup>

As a matter of course, the paradigmatic changes within consumption trends did not spare the most important group of consumers, i.e. the housewife. As the housewife was the person who made most of the day-to-day decisions regarding what was bought, she was of central interest to marketers. Therefore, the *Centrale Marketinggesellschaft der deutschen Agrarwirtschaft*, the most important marketing association within the German food industry, conducted two key studies on how housewives purchased their food and ran their households.<sup>185</sup> The differences between the studies which took place in 1971 and 1978 are remarkable. German housewives were divided into six groups at the beginning of the Seventies:

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| ▪ Die durchschnittliche Hausfrau        | 28% |
| ▪ Die gleichgültige Hausfrau            | 23% |
| ▪ Die gesundheitsorientierte Hausfrau   | 17% |
| ▪ Die am Essen uninteressierte Hausfrau | 14% |

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<sup>182</sup> Hobsbawm, *Age*.

<sup>183</sup> Cohen, *Consumers' Republic*, p. 312.

<sup>184</sup> “Jane and Jon Doe are gone. In their place, several new types of consumers have appeared who demand their lifestyles to be filled with products.” Bien, H., Kroll-Math, A, *Von der Reklame zur Werbung. Deutschland 1945-1995* (Frankfurt/Main, 1995), p. 43, as cited in Knop, K., ‘Von Flower Power zur Pril-Blume: Werbung und Werbemedien der 70er Jahren’, in Faulstich, W. (ed.), *Die Kultur der siebziger Jahre* (Munich, 2004), pp. 211–233.

<sup>185</sup> ‘Hausfrauen-Report’, in *absatzwirtschaft* 12/1973; ‘Hausfrauen-Report: 2. Teil’, in *absatzwirtschaft* 6/1979.

▪ Die sparsame Hausfrau	9%
▪ Der Gourmettyp	6% <sup>186</sup>

The same study was conducted eight years later. Surprisingly, these six types could not be matched with the findings at the end of the Seventies. The academics found “völlig neue Typen” (completely new types) which not had existed eight years before:

▪ Convenienceorientierte Berufstätige	23%
▪ Gesundheitsmäßige Küchenmanagerin	23%
▪ Treusorgende Hausfrau	19%
▪ Außenorientierte Hobbyköchin	13%
▪ Am Haushalt uninteressierte	12%
▪ Anspruchslose ältere Hausfrau	10% <sup>187</sup>

Whereas the majority of housewives had been labelled “durchschnittlich” (average) and “gleichgültig” (indifferent) in 1972, in 1979 the majority was “convenienceorientierte Berufstätige” (“convenience-oriented”) and “gesundheitsmäßige Küchenmanagerin” (“health-oriented”). The “average housewife” had disappeared, and several new types came into existence. Women were not just housewives; some were also employees or had other interests besides being a housewife. Women were increasingly adopting roles in addition to the ‘housewife’ label, and their lives were not compulsorily reduced to their homes, children and the kitchen. As the survey shows, many women were “hobby-cooks” or even “not-interested in house holding”. The devoted (“treu-sorgende”) housewife became a thing from the past. There are several reasons for these rapid changes within gender roles. It was also part of what Andreas Wirsching describes as the “Entstandardisierung der Lebensläufe” (“de-standardization of life courses”), meaning the opportunity to freely make decisions about one's life.<sup>188</sup> Since the mid-Seventies, marriage, family and children were no longer the “standard” for a female life. The wish to fulfil one's own dreams and opportunities led to what has also been labelled the “Entfamiliarisierung der Frau” (de-familiarisation of women). In particular, more and more women were part of the working population. The percentage of working women increased steadily since 1974.<sup>189</sup> However, this has not only been interpreted as part of the on-going process of individualization which offered many ways to live one's life; in fact, the growing female workforce increasingly took on low-paid or part-time jobs. Therefore, the segregation of the labour market and the so-called “sex-typing” of work were also part of this “de-standardization of life courses”. Women were increasingly becoming the “flexible post-industrial Reservearmee” (reserve army) which was needed to cope with the new challenges presented by the structural

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<sup>186</sup> ‘Hausfrauen-Report’.

<sup>187</sup> ‘Hausfrauen-Report: 2. Teil’.

<sup>188</sup> Wirsching, A., ‘Erwerbsbiographien und Privatheitsformen. Die Entstandardisierung von Lebensläufen’, in Raithel, T., Rödder, A., Wirsching, A. (eds.), *Auf dem Weg in eine neuen Moderne? Die Bundesrepublik in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren* (Munich, 2009), pp. 83-99, p. 87.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

changes within western economies.<sup>190</sup> Having said this, gender roles did not only change because of economic reasons. Education played an important role in enabling women to instigate new changes. The growing feminist movement raised awareness of gender inequality, demanding equal rights for women in all sectors of society. In Germany, the so called 'second wave' movement fought for new abortion laws in particular.<sup>191</sup> This controversial debate also reflects fundamental discussions of the Seventies, namely the gap between self-fulfilment and traditional values.

Similar topics were central to the Women's Liberation movement in Britain, as the demands of their first conference in Oxford in February 1970 show. They demanded equal pay and opportunities, contraception and abortion as required and 24-hour nurseries. In addition to changes within the labour market, a "sexual revolution" also started at the beginning of the Seventies through the use of the pill as means to plan childbirth.<sup>192</sup> Although there had been methods of contraception prior to this and birth rates had declined in the 1960s, increasing sexual liberation and economic opportunities enabled women to make decisions about their lives in a way that had not been possible before. Generally, having children lost its importance within industrialised societies. Children were not compulsory in order to secure economic security. The growing welfare state took care of many social problems which otherwise would have stayed within the family. All of these reasons contributed to a significant drop of childbirth rates.<sup>193</sup>

At the end of the decade, the consequences of this development were also recognized within advertising, as the industry feared that the "dramatic drop in birth rates" would reduce the number of potential consumers.<sup>194</sup> Generally, the changes occurring for gender roles were clearly evident in advertising. Discussions regarding a new type of women or "the New Woman" occurred regularly in advertising magazines. The subject of changing gender roles was already commonplace prior to the end of the decade. However the changes described within the labour market and a "sexual revolution" provided reasons to take a closer look at women, the almost unknown fifty per cent of potential consumers. Central to this debate was the question of how to address women reasonably via advertising.

In answer to this on-going debate, the British car manufacturer British Leyland announced in 1974 that it would launch a new campaign which would concentrate on "the girl who pays her own car and garage bills", as research had shown that an

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<sup>190</sup> Wirsching, 'Erwerbsbiographien', p. 97.

<sup>191</sup> Schulz, K., *Der lange Atem der Provokation. Die Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik und Frankreich 1968-1976* (Frankfurt/Main, 2002).

<sup>192</sup> Cook, H., 'The English Sexual Revolution: Technology and Social Change', in *History Workshop Journal*, Spring 2005, pp. 109-128.

<sup>193</sup> Rödter, A., 'Moderne - Postmoderne - Zweite Moderne: Deutungskategorien für die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik in den siebziger und achtziger Jahren Moderne', in Rödter et al (eds.), *Weg*, pp. 181-201, p. 189.

<sup>194</sup> 'Tomorrow's consumer', in *Campaign* 12.10.1979.

increasing number of women bought and paid for their own cars. Advertising for the purchase of a "second car" had traditionally been aimed at both men and women before.<sup>195</sup>

A major *Campaign* article criticised "an alarming number of advertisements" for being "blatantly sexist".<sup>196</sup> Giving a number of examples, Volvo advertisements in particular were highlighted as being in "a class of their own". The author provided a few examples;

*"In the past Volvos failed to attract women buyers because 'nobody looks at you in a Volvo'. But this would all be in the past because ... you'll undoubtedly get winked at in a 244. The only problem may be that the young man in the sports car will choose to look at the car's body..."*

*"The engines were praised as being so quiet that 'you can arrive home late without waking your wife'."*

*"Being a man, he'll want to know about the engine."*

*"You and your car don't go hopping mad when she forgets to change out of top at 20 mph."<sup>197</sup>*

Stereotypical images of a women used by the majority of advertisers included "typists, kiddy-minders and scatter-brains", and the advertisements themselves adopted a "patronizing girls-watch-tone". The article demanded "role-swapping in ads" as a creative approach to changing gender roles.<sup>198</sup> However, a few weeks beforehand, the "New Woman", characterised as "the independent 'do-it-yourself' type of lady who's living in a man's world", had been subject to another *Campaign* article.<sup>199</sup> However, the author emphasised the fact that advertisers had to become used to this new type of woman:

*"Women are moving into all sorts of new areas of activity and have been for quite a time now. Allow a year or two for advertisers to catch on and catch up but when they do, they cement the facts solidly. Once you start seeing a life style depicted in ads, you know more surely than in any other way that it's really happening to lots of people. Advertisers don't set foot until the path has been well and truly trod."<sup>200</sup>*

Interestingly, most of these articles did not mention the fact that most of the copy writers and people working in advertising were male. However, *Campaign* did mention the disadvantages faced by women in the industry. One article asked if clients were to blame for agency sexism, as some executives would argue that clients would not accept a women account executive (the person responsible for

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<sup>195</sup> 'British Leyland goes after the new women', in *Adweek* 11.01.974.

<sup>196</sup> Bingham, R., 'Sex Symbols', in *Campaign* 22.11.1974.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> 'Sex Symbols'.

<sup>199</sup> 'It's a Man's Life Being a Woman', in *Campaign* 04.10.1974.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.



dealing with the client face-to-face).<sup>201</sup> Additionally, the article showed that women were also excluded from creative jobs:

*"Just 11 per cent of agency copy-writers were women. [...] Among the artists, nine per cent were women.*

*Women were excluded from 90 per cent of creative jobs in agencies. Of the remaining 10 per cent where they would be considered, placement agencies were given a woman's rate for the job and higher rate for male applicants."*<sup>202</sup>

Eventually, if women found a "reasonable job in advertising, they could expect to be paid below the rate for the job." As these figures show, the growing number of working females did not necessarily mean equality.

At the end of the Seventies, *Campaign Europe* summarised how women's attitudes and roles had changed during the Seventies as a result of the economic crisis and transformations within society:

*"Advertising aimed at women has become more difficult in recent years because of a change in attitudes, behaviour and status of women in the developing societies. This change is likely to be long lasting."*<sup>203</sup>

Accordingly, advertising would not meet their new interests and needs. Many women felt rejected by advertisements, which tended to depict women in an old-fashioned way.

In a similar manner to the *Campaign* articles, *absatzwirtschaft* also analysed the way in which women were treated as potential customers, summarising that advertising was entrenched in old-fashioned gender roles. Marketers would not realise and therefore not subscribe to the reality that women predominantly decided on what was purchased within the household. Women were mostly decorative objects for all kinds of products, and were not recognised as equal consumers. Therefore, advertisements geared towards women treated them in a patronising way, with lives built around beauty, their husbands or the pursuit of men. The beauty product company Endocil explained very clearly the difference between the genders: "Ein Mann darf Falten haben. Eine Frau nicht." (A man is allowed to have wrinkles. A woman not.)<sup>204</sup>. Another example of how women were targeted in their "secret wish" to please their husbands was the example of a coffee machine which would make "den müdesten Helden hellwach" (the tireddest hero awake). After all, the housewife would have waited for him the whole day.<sup>205</sup> The stereotypical image of women in advertisements has also been criticised by feminists within the consumerist movement, as will be shown in chapter three. Remarkably, this issue is still being

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<sup>201</sup> 'Are clients to blame for agency sexism?', in *Adweek* 01.03.1974.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> 'How to reach modern woman in Europe', in *Campaign Europe* May 1979.

<sup>204</sup> 'Die Frau, das oft verkannte Wesen', in *absatzwirtschaft* 11/1974.

<sup>205</sup> 'Die Frau, das oft verkannte Wesen'.

discussed today, as recent studies have proven. In fact, some recent studies have shown how our understanding of the changing roles of women in 20th century society may be enhanced by means of an analysis of commercial and governmental advertising campaigns.<sup>206</sup>

All in all, the question regarding how to address women properly was a constant topic within advertising. However, the prevailing belief was that advertisements would not be able to keep up with changing gender roles. As the report about changing types of housewives proved, a shift in values occurred within a relatively short period of time. Self-fulfilment and a life apart from traditional family values became increasingly important for women at that time. Advertisers had to meet and address these new desires of women. However, advertisers failed to heed them and instead held on to traditional and old-fashioned role models. One reason for this might also have been that the advertising industry itself was dominated by males.

### ***Postmodern Consumption***

Changes in consumption patterns were evident during the Seventies. The economic crisis caused a new focus to be placed on efficiency and high value, which advertising addressed with specific adverts. Additionally, companies which were affected by declining sales had to adjust their products accordingly. The example of Volkswagen shows how the shift from production focus to consumer focus was implemented. A wholly new product line and flexible methods of production led to an array of product innovations which corresponded to consumer needs. As marketing increasingly became part of companies' strategies, consumer-oriented thinking was established at every step of the production process. Accordingly, products were designed for a certain target group, and advertising was a means to reach these groups. Products needed an "image" which had a certain symbolic meaning. Products thereby attained individual features which distinguished them from competing products. So-called market segmentation became increasingly important, which involved the determination of target groups on the one hand and special advertising for these groups' lifestyles on the other.<sup>207</sup> These lifestyles were increasingly becoming detached from a particular class, and could be defined and redefined ever more independently. Of course, lifestyles can never be completely autonomous from class boundaries, as economic means also determine the ability to lead a certain lifestyle. Therefore, social inequality was not abolished as a result of mass consumption. Moreover, slight distinctions in consumption were used to express affiliations to specific social groups.

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<sup>206</sup> Adkins-Covert, T.J., *Manipulating Images: World War II Mobilization of Women through Magazine Advertising* (Lanham, 2011); Scott, L.M., *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism* (New York, 2005).

<sup>207</sup> König, 'siebziger Jahre', p. 93.

At the end of the decade, the *Jahrbuch der Werbung* summarised how consumer's demands had changed within the last few years.<sup>208</sup> Their analysis showed how the general trends described within society and consumption actually turned out. Firstly, the growing number of single households generally resulted in more consumption. Secondly, changes within the labour market, meaning fewer jobs within agriculture and fewer blue collar workers, led to an increase of civil service jobs and ones within the service sector in general. The article also predicted that the 1980s would be defined by the "Phänomen Freizeit". During the Seventies, private income would have doubled and people were willing to spend this money on consumer goods. The lifestyles of the majority of people also reflected changing values as contemporary sociologists had described them. Post-materialistic values and individualism became increasingly important over the course of the Seventies:

*"Der Lebensstil der Mehrheit drückt sich in höherer Mobilität, mehr Freizeit, Ausgabenfreudigkeit, Gesundheitsstreben und mehr Individualismus aus. Zugleich zeigt sich ein Trend zu mehr sozialer Verantwortung und Absicherung sowie zu einem stärkeren Umweltbewußtsein."*<sup>209</sup>

Individualism and 'Selbstverwirklichung' (self-fulfilment) were the central characteristics of the postmodern consumer. These developments were not limited to the male consumer, although he was the one mostly targeted by advertising. As the survey of housewives shows, they too demanded the means for their own self-fulfilment. More and more women were employed and did not want to have their lives reduced to being 'barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen'. Although discussions about the 'new woman' occurred several times in history, improved education, economic independence, sexual liberation and growing awareness about gender inequality contributed to long-lasting modifications to gender roles. The question as to whether advertising reacted adequately to these changes remains as controversial today as it was then.

To conclude, consumption and consumption patterns underwent fundamental changes during the Seventies. Of course, these changes were also rooted in the Sixties and occurred earlier within the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the postmodern consumer and the question of how to deal with this new entity were central for advertisers. The role of advertisement itself within these developments is diverse. By picking up trends such as the 'postmodern consumer' and the 'new women' and applying their advertisements to them, they also enforce and create these types and thereby enforce ongoing developments within society. Thereby, advertising contributed to a general shift of values and the making of a 'postmodern' and 'postindustrial' society.

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<sup>208</sup> "The majority's lifestyle is characterised by increased mobility, more leisure-time, increased consumption, strive for health and more individualism. At the same time there is a trend towards social responsibility, safeguarding and environmental awareness." 'Werbung in den achtzigern'.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

## Consumerism

*"We need to be able to convince the world at large that advertisements enhance the 'quality of life'."*<sup>210</sup>

As it was stated in the introductory chapter, the term consumerism has two distinctive meanings. Remarkably, the meaning with which it is associated today only came into use during the 1960s. Since then, the *Oxford Dictionary of English* has explained it primarily as the "emphasis on or preoccupation with the acquisition of consumer goods". However, this chapter will focus on its former connotation, namely "the advocacy of the rights and interests of consumers", with regard to its consequences for advertising.<sup>211</sup> Of course, criticism of advertising had been occurring long before the 1970s.

Prior to World War I, there had been complaints that advertising would destroy the environment due to a glut of posters. As a consequence, the first "Preußische Verunstaltungsgesetz" (Prussian law against deformation) was passed in 1907. After World War I, the so called "Berliner Plakatterror" (Berlin poster-terror) also effected laws which banned excessive advertising.<sup>212</sup>

Advertising was criticised in a more profound way during the Sixties and Seventies. The debate had started by the end of the 1950s, sparked by the publications of John Kenneth Galbraith (*The Affluent Society*), Ralph Nader (*Unsafe at any Speed*) and most of all Vance Packard (*The Hidden Persuaders*). Packard's influential book was first published in 1957, exploring the use of consumer motivational research and other psychological techniques by advertisers to manipulate consumers. The back cover of the English edition enforced not only fears of subliminal advertising techniques, but also of Americanisation:

*"Whether we like it or not, most American habits, tastes, and institutions are eventually imported into Britain: American pop-songs and hair-styles – and American advertising techniques. Thus the frightening process evolved and applied by American super-advertising-scientists are having an increasing effect upon the potential victims in Britain."*<sup>213</sup>

Packard added two more books to his "Trilogy of Affluence" which established his reputation as a social critic.<sup>214</sup> Although the following publications were also bestsellers, they did not reach the heights of *The Hidden Persuaders*. Packard was greeted with criticism from the advertising industry, claiming he exaggerated the power of advertising, especially of Motivational Research. It was also claimed that he

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<sup>210</sup> Fletcher, W., 'Those Wonderful Folks Revisited', in *Campaign* 13.12.1974.

<sup>211</sup> Stevenson, A., *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford, 2010).

<sup>212</sup> Kleinschmidt, C., *Konsumgesellschaft* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 102-103.

<sup>213</sup> Packard, V., *The Hidden Persuaders* (London, 1957).

<sup>214</sup> Packard, V., *The Waste Makers* (London, 1960); Packard, V., *The Status Seekers* (London, 1969).

overemphasised the degree to which advertising agencies accepted this method. Additionally, Packard also unintentionally contributed to the success of Dichter's methods.<sup>215</sup> As American publications such as *The Hidden Persuaders* were also successful in the United Kingdom, the British consumerist movement was closely linked to its American counterpart.

In Germany, theorists of the Frankfurt School developed a more radical critique of advertising. According to their views on the subject, economic needs would eventually determine human life. Marcuse's essay, the 'One-Dimensional Man', was published in Germany in 1970 and argued that mass media would play a dominant role in manipulating humans to serve economic demands.<sup>216</sup> Enzensberger had similarly criticised media influence several years beforehand.<sup>217</sup> A decisive critique of consumerism and advertising was written by Wolfgang Fritz Haug. In his book *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society*, he condemned the sales strategies that promised consumers more than the goods could actually offer.<sup>218</sup>

Due to the major influence of the Frankfurt School in Germany, the discussion about advertising was often a discussion about capitalism and the political system itself. As will be demonstrated, there were fundamental differences in how advertising was criticised and the way the advertising industry dealt with this criticism in Germany and the United Kingdom. German criticism was merely ideological, whereas British consumerists concentrated more on practical implementation.

German historians have claimed that the German consumerist movement was only "eine exegetische und epigonale Abspiegelung der literarischen Diskussion in den USA" (a mirror if the US discussion).<sup>219</sup> Instead of a consumerist movement, the environmental movement was more important.<sup>220</sup> In the long run, this was indeed the case. However, by the mid-1970s, German advertising found itself under heavy attack by so called 'Konsumeristen'. After all, Nepumuk Gasteiger describes the Seventies in Germany as the "Jahrzehnt des Verbraucherschutzes" (decade of consumerism). During this time, advertising went through its "erste tiefe Depression ihrer Geschichte in der Bundesrepublik" (first depression since 1945) due to a

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<sup>215</sup> Horowitz, D., *The anxieties of affluence. Critiques of American consumer culture, 1939-1979* (Amherst, 2004), pp. 108,120.

<sup>216</sup> Marcuse, H., *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston, 1964); German edition Marcuse, H., *Der eindimensionale Mensch: Studien zur Ideologie der fortgeschrittenen Industriegesellschaft* (Neuwied, 1970).

<sup>217</sup> Enzensberger, H. M., *Bewusstseinsindustrie* (Frankfurt/Main, 1967).

<sup>218</sup> Haug, W. F., *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society* (Cambridge, 1986); Haug, W. F., *Kritik der Warenästhetik* (Frankfurt, 1972).

<sup>219</sup> Fischer-Winkelmann, W. F.; Rock, R., 'Vom Elend der Markt- und Marketing-Theorie', in Fischer-Winkelmann, W. F.; Rock, R., *Kritik der Marketing-Theorie* (Munich, 1976), pp. 11-38.

<sup>220</sup> Kleinschmidt, C., "'Konsumerismus' versus Marketing -- eine bundesdeutsche Diskussion der 1970er Jahre", in Kleinschmidt, C., Triebel, F., *Marketing. Historische Aspekte der Wettbewerbs- und Absatzpolitik* (Essen, 2004), pp. 249-260, p. 253.

number of new laws which protected consumers.<sup>221</sup> Additionally, the budgets of consumerist associations were doubled and the voice of the public was given attention.<sup>222</sup> For the United Kingdom, Matthew Hilton emphasises the influence of the consumerist movement as "almost as crucial to the dynamo of change as workers, voters, employers and citizens".<sup>223</sup>

### ***Accusing the 'Hidden Persuaders'***

Following the publications of Vance Packard and due to the influence of the Frankfurt School theories, advertisers in both countries were accused of manipulating the consumer. Manipulation would not only coerce people into buying certain products, but would create an environment in which consumption became central to people's lives. Consumption would thereby become the "index of one's value".<sup>224</sup> In Germany in particular, leftist politicians, journalists and writers connected these accusations to the regime and propaganda of National Socialism. Eventually, as a tool of capitalism advertising would manipulate and force people into a system of "Leistungszwang" (force to perform) and "Konsumterror" (consumption terror).<sup>225</sup> Advertising would misuse people's desires by making both clear and subliminal associations to consumer goods. It would not inform customers about products, instead merely suggesting that they could satisfy people's needs.<sup>226</sup> The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Verbraucherverbände* (AGV), which was founded in 1953 based on the model of the American Consumer's Research Inc. and Consumer Union of the United States, tried to prove that advertising intentionally misinformed consumers. In 1974, it published a study showing that misleading advertisements harmed consumers. According to this study, which compared British and German advertising, forty-six per cent of all ads contained "übertriebene" (exaggerated) promises, and six per cent made "zweideutige" (ambiguous) statements. Another six per cent did not provide essential information, and seven per cent presented misleading information. Only thirty-five per cent of all ads were not objected to by the AGV.<sup>227</sup> As a consequence, consumerists demanded that advertising should offer rational arguments and that consumers should be educated to be immune against the hollow promises of advertising.<sup>228</sup>

Remarkably, all of these critiques regard consumers as merely passive and manipulated entities. The assumption of the manipulated consumer affected the consumerist movement positively, because they could thereby justify their claim to

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<sup>221</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 209.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Hilton, *Consumerism*, p. 24.

<sup>224</sup> Scheel, W., Wimmer, F., 'Kritik am Marketing. Einzelwirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Aspekte des Konsumerismus', in *Jahrbuch der Absatz- und Verbrauchsforschung* 4/1974, pp. 287-304, pp. 292-294.

<sup>225</sup> Scheel, Wimmer, 'Kritik', pp. 287-288; Gasteiger, *Konsument*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>226</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 199.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p. 205-207.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

educate and inform consumers and their demand to act against dishonest advertisements. In addition to these basic demands, consumerists had three concrete claims: firstly, to improve the consumer's position within the economic system; secondly, for vendors to consider the long-term interests of the consumer, and; thirdly, that advertising should respect that an act of buying cannot fulfil the consumer's every need. These demands called for two approaches: the "marketing approach", which was directed towards companies, and the "legal approach" which was directed towards the government and other political institutions.<sup>229</sup>

Along with consumerist activists, the unions were an important opponent of advertising at the beginning of the Seventies. During their annual meetings, they decided to counteract manipulative advertising. In some cases, they wanted to ban manipulative methods of advertising. Additionally, they also fought for more money to educate consumers and students in order to evoke a critical attitude towards advertising. As a means of paying for these campaigns, they proposed to introduce a special tax. This proposal was circulated by a governmental commission. Additionally, consumers had to 'learn' which goods they really needed, because otherwise they could be manipulated by advertising. Compared to major companies, consumers were simply too weak and would therefore be exposed to their manipulative strategies.<sup>230</sup> Standing firmly on the side of the unions, the SPD was another opponent of the advertising industry. In May 1974, one SPD member of Bundestag wrote in *Die Welt* that he wanted to oppose subliminal commercials, manipulation and misleading information in advertising. This type of advertisement would prevent consumers from making their own decisions rationally and responsibly. Emotional appeals in particular needed to be forbidden.<sup>231</sup> In July 1975, the SPD Commission on Mass Media actually proposed that all advertising on radio and television should be banned. They supported their claim by saying that advertising would not contribute to the primary task of public broadcasting:

*"Werbung im Hörfunk und im Fernsehen widerspricht dem Programmauftrag der öffentlich-rechtlichen Massenmedien. Wenn und so lange sie aus finanziellen Gründen unvermeidlich ist, muß sie im Anteil am Gesamtprogramm und hinsichtlich der Sendezeit weitestgehend eingeschränkt werden."*<sup>232</sup>

Similar to the German Social Democrats, the British Labour Party was particularly critical of the activities of advertisers. In 1959, Labour Member of Parliament Francis Noel-Baker set up an Advertising Inquiry Council. This Council was intended to serve as an independent body which was to watch out for all kinds of "socially harmful advertisement".<sup>233</sup> In 1972, Labour published a so-called Green Paper on Advertising in which advertising was condemned for creating an imbalance in the relationship

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<sup>229</sup> Scheel, Wimmer, 'Kritik', pp. 295-298.

<sup>230</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 182.

<sup>231</sup> Jens, U., 'Soll der Staat auch die Werbung regulieren?', in *Die Welt* 15.05.1974.

<sup>232</sup> 'SPD will Werbung im Fernsehen abschaffen', in *Handelsblatt* 14./15.10.1978.

<sup>233</sup> Nevett, *Advertising*, p. 197.

between consumer and producer. It also proposed that fifty per cent of all advertising expenditure should be considered as a deductible expense for tax purposes. Subsequently, the taxation of advertising was adopted as official party policy.<sup>234</sup>

Another Member of the Bundestag for the Social Democrats who was well-known as a prominent critique of advertising was Anke Martiny. Along with alcohol and cigarette company advertising, she condemned the sexist image of women in advertising. She also demanded strict limits for advertising in order to protect consumers. Women were only shown as sex objects or in the role of the conservative housewife. Advertising thereby undermined claims for gender equality.<sup>235</sup> Her claims were the political outcome of what feminists groups had long been protesting against. For example, in May 1970 a group of feminists took direct action, sitting in at the offices of Ladies' Home Journal to protest advertisements that they believed were demeaning to women. The editors were forced to respond. They included an eight-page insert on women's liberation in the August issue. Other magazines covering feminist's issues tried to avoid advertising entirely.<sup>236</sup> Feminist issues were not an integral part of the consumerist's movement. However, they were mostly supported by them. When "women in media", a group of three hundred women journalists and broadcasters met with ITV in February 1973, they were also supported by consumer groups. Women in media also criticised the way in which woman appeared on television. After the meeting they said:

*"We made it quite clear that far too many advertising present women solely as a sex object or service units... But the meeting cleared a lot of air and we gave some practical examples to the committee of outmoded and offensive attitudes being used on the screen."*<sup>237</sup>

As was shown in the last chapter, feminists had every reason to complain about the image of women in advertising. The basic assumption that consumers were manipulated by what they saw on the screen worried activists, and they demanded governmental reactions. As Gasteiger shows in his study, this notion played an important role in the discussion on advertising. As long as they were regarded as weak, advertisers were in a position to manipulate consumers.<sup>238</sup> This left the advertising industry in a defensive position. The opposite was the case for consumerists, whose position was strengthened by fighting for the consumer.

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Martiny, A. 'Wunsch der Konsumenten: Mehr Information, weniger Suggestion. Die absolute Werbefreiheit kann es nicht geben', in *Die Welt*, Sonderbeilage Kommunikation, 18.05.1977.

<sup>236</sup> Horowitz, *Anxieties*, p. 164.

<sup>237</sup> 'ITV to Women's Lib as a new ad row looms', in *Adweek* 02.02.1973.

<sup>238</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, pp. 256ff.



## *Talking publicly about Advertising and Advertisers*

The discussion about how advertising influenced society was also highlighted by newspapers and television. Newspapers featured articles by advertisers who defended their work and recreated the discourse between advertisers and their opponents.<sup>239</sup> Most of these articles argued in favour of advertising. As advertising was and still is the most important source of income for most newspapers, the defence of it was also a matter of self-preservation. The close relationship between advertising and the media was also an issue at that time. In the United Kingdom, a Royal Commission conducted a study into how the media was influenced by advertisers.<sup>240</sup> However, they agreed that advertising only partly influenced the content of newspapers. These findings were heavily criticised by James Curran, who claimed that advertising not only influenced the media, but also indirectly influenced the way in which certain topics were covered.<sup>241</sup>

Obviously, the widespread criticism of advertising was noticed by the public. A survey of the *Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung* (GfK) in 1974 showed how badly the image of advertising had suffered. Because of its immediate impact among advertisers, this survey was later called the "Nürnberger Bombe" (Nuremberg Bomb).<sup>242</sup> Only about half of the interviewed persons thought advertising was actually necessary. A quarter of them believed it was uncalled for, and only about six per cent thought that it was credible at all.<sup>243</sup> Another study revealed that the proportion of consumers which generally condemned advertising had grown from ten per cent in 1970 to around thirty per cent in 1975.<sup>244</sup> A long-term study of the GfK also showed that the percentage of people who thought that advertising was necessary had declined from sixty-four per cent in 1954 to forty-four per cent in 1973.<sup>245</sup>

Along with the image of their work, the public image of advertisers themselves suffered. In a survey among advertisers, the majority supposed that consumers thought advertising would be dishonest. Additionally, they agreed that the image of advertising was probably negative rather than positive and dishonest rather than honest. The combined vociferous criticism from the Left and consumer associations

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<sup>239</sup> Rost, D., 'Manipulation im Wettbewerb?', in *Rheinischer Merkur* 12.04.1974 as cited in Gasteiger, *Konsument*, pp. 253; Brozio, G., 'Manipulierte Verbraucher?', in *Die Welt* 13.03.1970; Binkowski, J., 'Eingeschränkte Werbung – eingeschränkte Presse', in *Die Welt* 15.05.1974.

<sup>240</sup> Her Majesty's Stationery Office, *Royal Commission on the Press, Final Report. Presented to the Parliament by Command of Her Majesty in July 1977* (London, 1977).

<sup>241</sup> Curran, J., *The British press, a manifesto* (London, 1978), pp. 232-249.

<sup>242</sup> 'Werbers Kurskorrekturen', in *absatzwirtschaft* 4/1974, p. 40.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>244</sup> Stengel-Güttner, G., 'Markenimage im Wandel – der kritische Verbraucher', in Neumann, E., Sprang, W., Hattemer, K. (eds.), *Werbung in Deutschland. Jahrbuch der deutschen Werbung 1975* (Düsseldorf, 1975), pp. 19-22, p. 20.

<sup>245</sup> 'Wem vertraut der Verbraucher? Wie erlebt er Marketing?', in *absatzwirtschaft* Sondernummer 10/1988.

was seen as the cause for the dismissal of advertising by sixty-seven per cent of the people surveyed.<sup>246</sup>

Along with the external perception, the self-image of advertisers also suffered during this time. Several articles described advertisers as being too insecure and defensive. They did not identify with their work, which in turn adversely affected the work itself.<sup>247</sup> They criticised their own "dirty" business without drawing any conclusions from this.<sup>248</sup> In a contemporary ironic article, Harald Körke assumed that the new awareness of the influence of advertising was the reason for the poor image of the advertising profession. Previously, people had thought they were immune to influences exerted by advertising, while the opposite was actually the case.

*"Aus einer Berufsgruppe harmloser Idioten, denen man allenfalls ihr hohes Einkommen verübeln konnte oder ihr gelegentliches Tendieren zur Scharlatanerie, ist in der Meinung der Bevölkerung oder jedenfalls derer, die sich dafür halten, das 'Böse' schlechthin geworden."*<sup>249</sup>

The author of the following *Campaign* article also held Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* responsible for the industry's poor image:

*"They seem to think that one ad appearing on the occasion can fundamentally change a person's buying habits and even their attitude towards life overnight. This, of course, is nonsense. We have undoubtedly to thank the immense impact which Vance Packard made with his book The Hidden Persuaders for much of this ignorance of attitude. The critics of advertising, since reading this book, and many who have not, have managed to produce two implications. The first is that advertising is insidious and the second is that it has much more power than we realise."*<sup>250</sup>

Another article argued that advertisers reacted too slowly to criticism and acted like a rabbit caught in headlights.<sup>251</sup> The author demanded a public instead of internal debate about the benefits of advertising. Only a few weeks later, advertising executives started defending their profession.

### **Advertising strikes back**

At first, the advertising defended itself by claiming that it would only 'inform' the consumer. Some German advertisers worked to regain lost credibility. One way they hoped to accomplish this was to provide the consumer with the opportunity to try out products and to issue free samples. Some television commercials showed laymen questioning experts or scientists, who subsequently explained the advantages of the

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<sup>246</sup> 'Werbung im Urteil der Werbung', in *absatzwirtschaft* 11/1975.

<sup>247</sup> 'Werber sind unsicher und verkrampft', in *werben und verkaufen* 30.8.1974.

<sup>248</sup> Brock, B., 'Über heile Kritik an der Werbung – und den Wurm in ihr', in Neumann, E., Sprang, W., Hattemer, K., *Werbung in Deutschland, Jahrbuch 1975* (Düsseldorf, 1975), pp. 7-11, p. 7.

<sup>249</sup> Körke, H., 'Wie die Werber zu ihrem Ruf kamen', in *absatzwirtschaft* 2/1974.

<sup>250</sup> 'Destroying the myths of advertising', in *Adweek* 13.06.1975.

<sup>251</sup> Wuth, R., 'Werbe-Allianz gegen das Ideologen-Lager', in *werben und verkaufen* 04.10.1974.

particular product. Similarly, many advertisers used supposedly scientific research to prove the quality of consumer goods. Another strategy was to apply "informative Werbung" (informative advertisement) which were intended to inform the consumer about the advantages and disadvantages of a certain product. The frozen food producer *Iglo* produced a three minute commercial in which detailed information about their products was provided.<sup>252</sup> Similarly, print adverts appeared as if they were journalistic articles offering information about their products. However, these approaches were not necessarily very successful as *absatzwirtschaft* commented.<sup>253</sup> Consumers were not convinced by these new strategies, and by the mid-1970s, advertisers were struggling to defend themselves as discussions about advertising intensified.

An example that shows how tense the situation within the advertising industry had become is the case of Gerd Gerken, head of the Berlin-based agency *otw*. In August 1973 in an episode of *Monitor*, he talked about how advertising fulfilled its purpose and created possibilities. The political television magazine proved that several advertising promises of well-known brands were spurious. Gerken represented the advertising industry talking openly about its business. He attacked the *Gesellschaft Werbeagenturen*, which continued to hold on to the statement that advertising would be clear and honest. Gerken stated that this was not the case, as there would never be advertising which would meet these requirements.<sup>254</sup> Advertising would not provide any relevant information about the product. Instead it would promulgate hollow promises. He also admitted that selling the product would be significantly more important to advertisers than the consumer's demand for information.<sup>255</sup>

Of course, the reactions among advertisers were diverse. Some accused Gerken of betraying his profession, of being a "Nestbeschmutzer" (traitor).<sup>256</sup> The two major advertising associations *Bund deutscher Werbeberater* and the *Zentralverband der deutschen Werbewirtschaft* relied on their conviction that advertising was honest, and promoted the notion that the consumer could decide freely.<sup>257</sup> In two articles which followed the broadcast, Gerken explained himself to his advertising colleagues. He called on his colleagues to finally break free from the "masochistischen Klima der Selbstbezeichnung ebenso herauszukommen wie aus dem defensiv verkrampften Klima der Überidealisierung des Werbejobs" (masochistic climate of self-incrimination and the defensive climate of over-idealisation of an advertiser's job).<sup>258</sup> Advertising was a profession of persuasion rather than honesty. The assertions of the advertising associations were the most significant problem in the defence of advertising.

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<sup>252</sup> 'Werbers Kurskorrekturen'.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> 'Gerd Gerken, Ich stelle mich! (1)', in *absatzwirtschaft* 11/1973.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> 'Gerd Gerken: Ich stelle mich! (1)'.

<sup>257</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 186.

<sup>258</sup> 'Gerd Gerken, Ich stelle mich! (2)', in *absatzwirtschaft* 12/1973.

Advertising did not need any justification. After all, the advertiser was as important as a dentist. The more advertising promoted its "honesty", the more its opponents fortified their position:

*"Kurz, wenn wir aufhören, uns extrem zu verteidigen, indem wir nachweislich falsche Funktionen der Werbung verkünden, haben wir die Chance zum Dialog mit der Seite, die uns zerstören will."*<sup>259</sup>

Although many advertisers still regarded Gerken as a betrayer (as many letters to the *absatzwirtschaft* show), there were also supporters of his thesis. Peter Reichhard supported Gerken, claiming that advertising and persuading consumers to purchase items was "psychologische Kriegsführung" (psychological warfare). Ultimately, everyone wanted to gain something from it.<sup>260</sup>

At the end of 1973, the Gerd Gerken broadcast was honoured as the "Werbestory" of the year. The episode of *Monitor* showed for the first time an open discussion about advertising and advertising's role within society. Gerken himself was awarded "Man of the year", because he had played the devil's advocate, although his views and appearance on the show remained controversial. However, his appearance on television nevertheless made this episode relevant. The advertising industry was forced to react to its critics. It thereby gained experience in handling anti-advertising attitudes.<sup>261</sup>

The appearance of Gerd Gerken on television only marked the beginning of advertising's case for self-defence. Just like Gerken himself, some advertisers were quite self-critical, while others accused their opponents of being dishonest.

### **1974 – Difficult Times Battling for Consumers**

The year 1973 marked a decisive step forward for consumerists in Germany.<sup>262</sup> Their demands were accepted and promoted by leftist organisations. Advertisers were forced on the defensive. At the end of 1973, *werben & verkaufen* stated that consumerists wanted to intensify their work over the course of the upcoming year. The economic crisis and a general awareness of consumerist demands had strengthened the standpoint taken by consumerists.<sup>263</sup> The ZAW also noticed that consumerism had gained "a new dimension".<sup>264</sup> In the eyes of the ZAW, the ongoing criticism also caused the negative effects of the economic crisis. The "demonization of cars" had already led to problems within the automotive industry anyway. The critique of consumerists had severe consequences:

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<sup>259</sup> 'Gerd Gerken, Ich stelle mich! (1)'.

<sup>260</sup> Reichard, P., 'Die Wahrheit über die Wahrheit', in *absatzwirtschaft* 11/1973.

<sup>261</sup> '1973: Erfolge, Blamagen, Spekulationen', in *werben und verkaufen* 21. 12.1973.

<sup>262</sup> 'Verbraucherposition '74 weiter stärken', in *werben und verkaufen* 11.12.1974.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Zentrallausschuß der Werbewirtschaft (ZAW) und Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern (IVW), *Jahrbuch Werbung 1973/1974*, (Bonn, 1974).

*"Wer jetzt auch noch den Verbrauch zivilisierter Menschen im 20. Jahrhundert verteufelt, sollte sich darüber im Klaren sein, daß er eine Krise erzeugt, die die Arbeitslosenquote erhöht und die Inflation fördert."*<sup>265</sup>

The president of the ZAW, Dankwart Rost, was one of the most outspoken defenders of advertising. He divided the opponents of advertising into two groups with differing intentions. On the one hand, there were those arguing in favour of a different economic system. They also supported the Frankfurt School theorists who had coined words such as "Konsumterror" and "Ausbeutung des Konsumenten". On the other hand, there were the consumerists who inflicted the American criticism upon Germany. However, the circumstances in Germany were extremely different and therefore their criticism was baseless.<sup>266</sup>

The year 1974 was perceived as a lost battle for advertisers. In its annual review, the ZAW concluded "die Wachstumsbekämpfer haben ihr Ziel erreicht" (fighters against growth have reached their goal).<sup>267</sup> In the view of the editors, the poor economic outlook and recession was not caused by the oil crisis or global economic trouble, but by consumerists and leftist groups.<sup>268</sup>

Finally, the advertising industry publicly challenged its opponents in 1975. At first, it responded directly to the survey published by the AGV about misleading advertisements. Perhaps unsurprisingly, its findings refuted those of the survey and asserted that advertising could not actually be held responsible for making hollow promises.<sup>269</sup> Additionally, Dankwart Rost claimed that the AGV survey was not representative. Furthermore, in comparison to foreign newspapers and magazines, German advertising was not misleading at all. After all, German advertising laws were some of the most stringent in the world.<sup>270</sup> Eventually the ZAW was able to make the German Press Council condemn the AGV by proving that its findings were exaggerated. Advertisers saw this decision as a landmark victory..<sup>271</sup>

### ***In Defence of Advertising – Pro-Advertising Campaigns***

By the end of 1974, Axel Springer, the most influential publisher in Germany, announced the launch of a pro-advertising campaign. In collaboration with advertising agency *Lintas*, the campaign "Werbung ist für alle da" (advertising is for everyone) was intended to remedy the lack of knowledge about, and prejudice of,

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<sup>265</sup> "Everyone who demonises the consumption of a civilised person should be aware the he causes an economic crisis." Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> 'Klimawechsel an der Werbebörse', in *absatzwirtschaft* 11/1974.

<sup>267</sup> Zentralausschuß der Werbewirtschaft (ZAW) und Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern (IVW), *Jahrbuch Werbung 1973/1974*.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Nickel, V., *50 Jahre ZAW 1949-1999. Eine Skizze von Ereignissen und Ergebnissen* (Bonn, 1999).

<sup>270</sup> 'Irreführung mit Irreführung', in *absatzwirtschaft* 6/1975.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

advertising among consumers.<sup>272</sup> This campaign was featured in every *Springer* publication, including *Bild* and *Die Welt*. Additionally, *Die Welt* included two supplements called "Plädoyer für die Werbung" (appeal for advertisement). Discussing the accusations of consumerists, these supplements also aimed to prove that accusations of manipulation were false. Ultimately, critics wanted to abolish the free market economy and would only be motivated ideologically rather than to the benefit of the consumer.<sup>273</sup> The aim of the campaign was to gain influence over public opinion and to create a positive image of advertising.<sup>274</sup> The pro-advertising campaign featured advertisements which presented advertising as a means to help the consumer. This is shown by some of its slogans:

*"WARUM WIR DEM WINTER EINEN WARMEN EMPFANG BEREITEN KÖNNEN.  
[...]*

*Werbung trägt dazu bei, unsere wirtschaftliche Potenz und unseren Wohlstand zu erhalten."*

*"WARUM DIE WERBETROMMEL BEI DER SICHERUNG VON ARBEITSPLÄTZEN  
EINE GEIGE SPIELT.*

*[...]*

*...indem sie den Verkauf stimuliert, trägt Werbung zur Sicherung von Arbeitsplätzen bei."*

*"WARUM DIE WERBUNG WEDER LÜGT NOCH DIE GANZE WAHRHEIT SAGT.  
[...]*

*...Werbung dient dem Unternehmen. Werbung will verkaufen. Das ist unsere primäre Aufgabe."*

*"WARUM ES NICHT GELINGEN WIRD, DEN ENGLÄNDERN IHREN TEE AUS-  
UND KAFFEE EINZUREDEN*

*[....]*

*... Werbung ist wirkungslos, wo sie sich nicht an den Wünschen der Menschen orientiert."*<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> 'Werber in der Schlankheitskur'.

<sup>273</sup> 'An die Leser dieser Dokumentation', in *Plädoyer für die Werbung. Eine Dokumentation, Beilage zur Welt* 15.05.1974; 'WiWo Extra Werbung', *Beilage zur Wirtschaftswoche* 18.03.1977.

<sup>274</sup> 'Werber in der Schlankheitskur'.

<sup>275</sup> 'Werbung ist für alle da', in *werben & verkaufen* 4.10.1974.



**Image 114: Springer's pro-Advertising campaign, in werben und verkaufen 04.10.1974.**

Other adverts also argued that advertising contributed to making luxury accessible to the mass market and modernising society:

*“Die Werbung bekennt sich schuldig, tatkräftig daran mitgewirkt zu haben, daß sich heute Millionen das leisten können, was gestern noch Millionären vorbehalten war. Mallorca.“*

*“Die Werbung gibt zu, am Tode des Waschbretts und einiger anderer alter Hüte beteiligt gewesen zu sein.”<sup>276</sup>*

Along with Springer's campaign, the ZAW also started several campaigns in order to improve the industry's image. The first, "Werbung pro & kontra" started in 1973 as a means to discuss advertising's role within society. With a print run of 140,000 copies, this marked the largest advertising-centric campaign to date. The second, "Werbung in Grenzen", was started in 1976 as a way of informing people about how advertising was controlled by law and voluntary self-censorship. The final campaign, "Werbung – Fakten für Verbraucher" (advertising – facts for consumers), was launched in 1977 and focused on people with influence over public opinion, such as journalists and politicians. Its purpose was to provide detailed information about how advertising worked and thereby achieve a new opinion about it.

Along with publishers and the advertising associations themselves, another group which was also highly interested in the credibility of advertising, namely conglomerates, started pro-advertising campaigns. Major advertisers such as Henkel, Bayer and Unilever started their own campaigns to meet the consumerist challenge. As such, Henkel launched a campaign to explain the importance of free enterprise. Bayer, a pharmaceutical giant, produced a series of corporate TV ads featuring its research as a contribution to social progress. Finally, Unilever ran three-minute

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<sup>276</sup> 'Werber in der Schlankheitskur'.

commercials giving general information on frozen food and how it should be handled, stored and cooked.<sup>277</sup>

All in all, these actions show that several groups who depended on advertising saw the need to improve the industry's image. However, pro-advertising campaigns were not limited to Germany. Advertisers in the UK also felt the need to advocate their work. Consumerists had gained support at an earlier stage than in Germany and advertisers followed a different strategy to deal with their challenge.

### ***Challenging competition – Consumerism in the United Kingdom***

British advertising was closely connected to its American counterpart. Developments within the United States were carefully observed within the United Kingdom. In the 1960s, American advertising agencies bought local agencies in many foreign countries instead of building up their own branches.<sup>278</sup> This seemed to be a less complicated way of offering American clients their services abroad. For these purposes, however, the majority of agencies used London rather than Frankfurt as their "gateway to Europe".<sup>279</sup> Between 1957 and 1967 alone, Americans acquired thirty-two British agencies. Unsurprisingly, *The Times* called this a "successful American invasion"<sup>280</sup> Nevertheless, as Jeremy Tunstall's contemporary study of the industry shows, most of the staff hired was local, and had been sent to New York for training.<sup>281</sup> Consequently, of the 366 members of staff employed at Young and Rubicon in 1961, only five were American.<sup>282</sup> British advertising magazines also covered American trends and thereby the growing influence of consumerists in the US.<sup>283</sup> The increasing impact of consumer organisations on regulative practices in the USA was perceived as a threat to the British advertising community. In order to contain similar developments in the UK, the British advertising industry organised several educative campaigns which ran in the press in a similar manner to the German versions.<sup>284</sup> These campaigns were started as early as the 1950s in order to influence the British public about the benefits provided by advertising to the consumer. Stefan Schwarzkopf argues that advertising and consumer movements embarked upon a challenging and productive competition regarding "who is to speak on behalf of this new king in social and political life: the consumer."<sup>285</sup> Indeed, compared to the German confrontation between advertisers and consumerists, it can

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<sup>277</sup> Glocke, B., Leisching, D., 'Economic crisis hits German agencies', in *Adweek* 29.03.1974.

<sup>278</sup> Tunstall, J., *The Media are American* (New York, 1977), p. 54ff.

<sup>279</sup> West, 'Multinational Competition', p. 497.

<sup>280</sup> 'Why Madison Avenue moved in', in *The Times*, June 26th 1969, p. 25.

<sup>281</sup> Tunstall, J., *The Advertising Man in London Advertising Agencies* (London, 1964).

<sup>282</sup> Masson, P., Thorburn, A., 'Advertising: the American Influence in Europe' in Bigsby, C. W. W. (ed.), *Superculture. American Popular Culture and Europe* (Ohio, 1975), pp. 96-106, pp. 101-102.

<sup>283</sup> For example 'Ain't we got style?', in *Campaign* 03.05.1974; 'Hang on the Dream', in *Campaign* 25.01.1974, McCarthy, J., 'The thrill of landing a new account', in *Campaign Europe* February 1979.

<sup>284</sup> Schwarzkopf, S., 'Classes to masses: how advertising agencies responded to the challenges of the mass market in interwar Britain', Public lecture, *Proceedings of the 2006 Economic History*.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.



be said that these opponents engaged in mutual dialogue and cooperation as much as they did confrontation in the United Kingdom.

The way in which advertisers in the United Kingdom were willing to discuss and cooperate with their opponents became clear at the annual Association of Advertisers Conference in Brighton in May 1974. Politicians, consumerists and advertisers talked openly about advertising. Although there had been similar conferences before, Clive Thomas, reporting for *Adweek* found that

*"This year there seemed to be an unmistakable groundswell of opinion that the industry must face its critics and introduce not only tangible, but credible, modifications to the existing voluntary system of advertising controls. This year only the ultra-blasé could still harbour the feeling that the consumerists were nuisance, making fuss over little, or nothing."*<sup>286</sup>

A long *Campaign* article covering the "long march of consumerism" stated that

*"the choice of Shirley Williams and John Methven as speakers at this year's Advertising Association conference marks a growing influence of the consumer in the marketing business. The industry will change, but must not give in to every consumerist whim without a fight."*<sup>287</sup>

The conference was covered extensively, and a leading article by *Campaign* summarised it as a "useful two days".<sup>288</sup> Speeches held at the conference were given much attention, especially those of critics of advertising, such as Shirley Williams, the Minister for Prices and Consumer Protection within the Labour Government.<sup>289</sup> Williams reminded advertisers that they bore a responsibility in society.<sup>290</sup> John Methven, Director General of Fair Trading, criticised the voluntary system of advertising control, stating that it needed to be revised (this was something which did actually occur after the conference).

As early as the dawn of the Sixties, British advertising had taken measures as a reaction to criticism in order to ensure higher standards in the advertising industry. In 1961, the Advertising Association Conference had introduced a Code of Practice, providing for the first time a set of formal standards to be observed and applied by all sides of the industry. However, this Code of Practice was not always respected, and the Advertising Association had few means available to ensure that advertisers adhered to it. A *Campaign* article showed examples of advertisements which clearly misconstrued the Code of Practice. The author concluded that

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<sup>286</sup> Thomas, C., 'Facing up to criticism: But has it come in time?', in *Adweek*, 10.05.1974.

<sup>287</sup> Dakin, T., 'The long march of consumerism', in *Campaign* 10.05.1974.

<sup>288</sup> 'Leader', in *Campaign* 10.05.1974.

<sup>289</sup> 'Mrs. Williams gives a warning amid some mild congratulation', in *Adweek* 10.05.1974; 'Methven: How self-discipline had failed', in *Adweek* 10.05.1974.

<sup>290</sup> 'Challenge to profligate society', in *Adweek* 10.05.1974.

*"Despite the advertising's industry's current attempts to tighten up its voluntary control system, it is still depressingly easy to find breaches of the Code of Advertising Practice."<sup>291</sup>*

By 1974 – the same time when consumerism was at its peak in Germany – pressure was exerted on advertising. It was becoming clear that unless the means to control advertising were seen to be effectively enforced, the Labour Government would introduce a statutory code of practice together with suitable measures to ensure its compliance.<sup>292</sup> As a response, the permanent secretariat of the Advertising Standards Authority was strengthened, and a revised edition of the Code of Practice was established, with copies going to every citizen's advice bureau in the country. These legislative measures were accompanied by massive pro-advertising campaigns. These campaigns aimed to tell the public about the Authority and its work, and urging them to complain if they saw an advertisement that was not legal, decent, honest and truthful.<sup>293</sup>

The unveiling of the "new, improved, more expensive Advertising Standards Authority" was seen as the "culmination of the most eventful six months in the history of British advertising control".<sup>294</sup> Furthermore, these measures prevented governmental control from being enforced on the industry. In order to prevent the same, German advertising also discussed how a system of voluntary control could be implemented.

### ***Governmental Reactions – Restrictions on Advertising***

The conviction that consumers were in need of special protection actions reached legislative authorities by the mid-Seventies. However, the need to control advertising was not a new innovation of the decade. In 1964, "Stiftung Warentest" was established in order to provide consumers with a sense of orientation among a growing range of goods. The British pendant "Which?" had already been formed in 1957, and its magazine *Which?* soon became a useful guide to the quality of products on sale. During the Seventies, several laws were introduced in order to empower the consumer in Germany. Consumer protection and consumer politics became an independent part of economic politics.<sup>295</sup> The social-liberal coalition introduced several laws and gave more money to consumerist associations than ever before. The number of protective consumer laws increased from twenty-five in 1970 to 338 in 1978, including laws concerning advertising. Most importantly, cigarette advertising was banned on radio and television from 1974 onwards.<sup>296</sup> Further

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<sup>291</sup> 'Ad Control – The Breaches Go On', in *Campaign* 20.09.1974.

<sup>292</sup> Nevett, *Advertising*, pp. 199-203.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> 'How the AA fought to keep control', in *Campaign* 01.11.1974.

<sup>295</sup> Berghoff, 'Einleitung', p. 158; Mitropoulos, S., *Verbraucherpolitik in der Marktwirtschaft. Konzeptionen und internationale Erfahrungen* (Berlin, 1997).

<sup>296</sup> 'Zigarettenwerbung in Hörfunk und Fernsehen wird verboten', in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 14.06.1974.

restrictions applied to advertisements for pharmaceuticals and alcohol.<sup>297</sup> Of course, the tobacco advertising ban was opposed by advertisers. They criticised that these restrictions would not have any success, arguing that cigarette advertising would not increase sales but enforce competition between tobacco companies. All in all, it was a "Bärendienst für den Bürger".<sup>298</sup> In the United Kingdom, television commercials for cigarettes had been banned since 1961. During the Seventies, advertisers even feared that print advertising could also be forbidden, as the tobacco companies disregarded its code of good practice.<sup>299</sup>

Although it was often discussed, a code of practise has never been established for German advertising. During the time of controversy, the proposal for voluntary self-regulations was discussed several times. The British Code of Practice was seen as a suitable example of how to implement this.<sup>300</sup> In Germany, Liberal Democrats who wanted to avoid legal regulation even advised advertisers to limit themselves.<sup>301</sup> Nevertheless, governmental control on advertising has never been established although consumers in Germany gained a notable representative and negotiating role at the federal level, while the Verbraucherverbände enjoy the same function at state-level.<sup>302</sup> One reason for this was a paradigmatic change which occurred by the end of the Seventies. The image of the consumer itself changed, and advertising thereby gained new strength.

### ***Goodbye 'Hidden Persuaders' – a Paradigmatic Change***

When accused of manipulation, advertisers often argued that the influence of advertising was highly overestimated. However, it seemed that *Hidden Persuaders* was still on peoples' minds when they talked about the possibilities of advertising. In order to oppose this, some advertisers referred to recent studies within communication sciences which showed the limits of advertising.<sup>303</sup> This shift within communication sciences meant that renewed focus was placed on the recipient; prior to this, the sender of a message was central. In 1974, Jay Blumler, Elihu Katz and Michael Gurevitch presented their "Uses and Gratifications Approach".<sup>304</sup> From now on, communication – including advertising – was regarded as a process involving a

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<sup>297</sup> Nickel, *50 Jahre*.

<sup>298</sup> 'Werbung in Fesseln', in *absatzwirtschaft* 11/1973; 'ZAW: Bärendienst für Bürger', in *werben und verkaufen* 21.06.1974.

<sup>299</sup> McAuley, L., 'Is the cigarette a smokescreen?', in *Campaign* 31.05.1974.

<sup>300</sup> 'Selbstkontrolle – aber wie?', in *werben und verkaufen* 14.12.1973.

<sup>301</sup> 'Selbstbeschränkung erwünscht', in *werben und verkaufen* 22.02.1974.

<sup>302</sup> Hilton, *Consumerism*.

<sup>303</sup> Haseloff, O., 'Wirtschaftswerbung zwischen Manipulation und Information', in *Jahrbuch der Werbung* 1976.

<sup>304</sup> Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., Gurevitch, M., 'Utilization of mass communication by the individual', in Blumler, J., Katz, E. (eds.), *The Uses of Mass Communications. Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research* (London, 1974), pp. 19-32.

message and needs.<sup>305</sup> It was argued that recipients would only be able to provide messages with a certain meaning. The responsibility of how influential advertising could be now placed upon the consumer. The 'active consumer' decided which type of advertisement they were willing to expose themselves to. Theories which judged advertising critically were replaced by those in support of them.<sup>306</sup> In addition to the shift within communication sciences, psychologists put their approaches towards the manipulation of consumers into perspective. Finally, social scientists declared the individual as being more independent from their social environment and the media than was previous thought.<sup>307</sup>

In a special supplement on communication, *Die Welt* highlighted the new scientific results. The consumer was declared to be a complex being with a selective perception according to their specific needs. Therefore, it would be impractical to assume that advertising could "magically force" consumers to purchase a certain product:

*"Der 'geheime Verführer' ist ein Phantom, das die Dunkelheit und die Dünste der Gerüchteküche liebt. Knipsen wir das Licht an und lassen wir frische, klare Luft herein, damit der 'geheime Verführer' endlich stirbt."*<sup>308</sup>

It took a year until the secretary of the ZAW also declared "Geheime Verführer gibt es nicht" in *Die Welt*. It called upon politicians and consumerists to take the new findings seriously. Even if public opinion still thought of advertisers as hidden persuaders, politicians should move on from this.<sup>309</sup>

Although the political climate did not change immediately, the moral crisis of advertising was over. From 1977, advertising found itself in a much more comfortable position. Accusations of manipulation disappeared, and the attitude towards advertising improved. In 1977 the *Wirtschaftswoche* wrote:

*"Werbung selbst ist akzeptiert, die Hexenjagd der Systemveränderer auf die vermeintliche volkswirtschaftliche Verschwendung abgeblasen."*<sup>310</sup>

Similarly, the ZAW summarised:

*"Die scharfen Angriffe gegen die Werbung, die in den vergangenen Jahren zu einer starken Emotionalisierung der Diskussion geführt hatten, sind einem vergleichsweise nüchternen Pragmatismus gewichen."*<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Wischermann, J., 'Einleitung: Der kulturgeschichtliche Ort der Werbung', in Borscheid, P., Wischermann, C. (eds.), *Bilderwelt des Alltags. Werbung in der Konsumgesellschaft des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp.8-19, p.11.

<sup>306</sup> Reinhardt, *Reklame*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>307</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 215.

<sup>308</sup> Bauer, S., 'Einen psychologischen Kaufzwang gibt es nicht. Die geheimen Verführer sind tot', in *Die Welt Sonderbeilage Kommunikation* 18.05.1977.

<sup>309</sup> Nickel, V., 'Geheime Verführer gibt es nicht', in *Die Welt* 28.05.1979.

<sup>310</sup> "Advertising is accepted. The witch-hunt by system-critics on alleged economical waste is canceled." 'Werbung '77. Klasse statt Masse', in *Wirtschaftswoche* 18.3.1977.

Furthermore, the President of the ZAW, Rost, also claimed that advertisers had gained new self-confidence in addition to new sense of responsibility

*“Wir registrieren jetzt ein besseres Klima für die Werbung. [...] Dem gesteigerten Verantwortungs- und Selbstbewußtsein der Werber entspricht eine sachlichere Kritik der Verbraucherschützer und Politiker.”<sup>312</sup>*

The public debate also led an increased acceptance of advertising among social democrats and unionists. Finally, the number of people who generally rejected advertising declined since 1976. In turn, this meant less public awareness for consumerists' issues; as a result, consumerists had remarkably less influence during the eighties.<sup>313</sup>

Looking back on the last two decades in the United Kingdom, Winston Fletcher, managing director of an agency, concluded that consumerists had achieved many of their original objectives. The legislative climate in which goods were produced and marketed had changed for good and mostly for the better.<sup>314</sup> Regarding the image of advertising, he concluded:

*“I suspect that adpersons have become a whole lot more humble than they used to be – and rightly so. Twenty years ago, people believed – just read Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* – that you could sell anything if you employed sufficient motivation researchers and a big enough ad budget. Nobody – except maybe the nincompoops who produced the Beeb's ghastly *Persuaders* – believes that now. I hope.”<sup>315</sup>*

As Hilton also describes, consumerism ground to something of a halt by the end of the decade; this was in stark contrast to the support it found in the early 1970s. He argues that the movement faced difficulties in working with the Conservatives because of their 'producer-friendly' outlook, disguised by Margaret Thatcher as her own brand of consumerism.<sup>316</sup>

All in all, at the end of the decade advertising had gone through a paradoxical form of development. Although its power to influence consumers was less focused than in the middle of the decade, its image and acceptance by the public had improved.

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<sup>311</sup> “The harsh accusation which have led to emotional discussions have been replaced by a matter-of-fact pragmatism.” Eichhorn, F., ‘Entkrampfung’, in *Die Rheinpfalz* 04.08.1977, as cited in Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 243.

<sup>312</sup> Rost, D., ‘Allgemein freundlicher’, in *Wirtschaftswoche Sonderbeilage “Extra Werbung”* 18.03.1977, p. 38, as cited in Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 241.

<sup>313</sup> Gasteiger, *Konsument*, p. 241,

<sup>314</sup> Fletcher, W., ‘How the ad game has altered in twenty years’, *Campaign* 21.09.1979.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Hilton, *Consumerism*, pp. 240, 257.

## *All's well that ends well – Advertising at the End of the Seventies*

A retrospective article on advertising in Germany in the Seventies describes predicted developments which did not occur. Firstly, the "Aufstand der Verbraucher" (consumer's rebellion) failed to appear. On the contrary, consumers rejected consumerism. Secondly, the "klassische Werbung" (classical advertisement) continued to be used. Advertising actually proved to be a burgeoning industry.<sup>317</sup> A look at what could occur in the Eighties yielded the prediction that advertising would increasingly be used in politics, public institutions, churches, unions, and the social sector.<sup>318</sup> This general acceptance almost certainly contributed to the development of a major sector for advertising. Private television was established at the beginning of the 1980s, designed according to the British broadcasting set-up.<sup>319</sup>

As has been shown, advertising experienced a moral crisis over the course of the Seventies. This was not necessarily a crisis that came from within, but one that followed as a result of public criticism. German and British advertisers reacted in a fundamentally different manner to consumerist claims. Whereas the British industry sought a mutual dialogue, German advertisers were less self-critical and even quite aggressive towards their opponents. Nevertheless, both industries reinforced their respective positions when a paradigmatic change within psychology, communication sciences and social sciences introduced new models of communication. As the leftist criticism of materialism lost importance, the advertising industry in turn stopped preying on self-doubt, shyness and dishonesty. Dirk Reinhard concludes that the industry even became a public "prophet" of a new ideology which promoted the joy of consumption and individual lifestyles. Ultimately, German advertising reached the moral and social status of the 1920s.<sup>320</sup> The ZAW concluded that a new morally and socially improved framework was the cause of another boost for advertising at the end of the Seventies despite economic troubles.<sup>321</sup>

Similar developments could be observed among British consumers, as a poll in 1979 demonstrated. Asked how they judged television commercials, consumers answered rather differently in 1979 than they did in 1972. The percentage of viewers who disliked commercials fell from 12 per cent in 1972 to 6 per cent in 1979. On the contrary, the percentage of people who enjoyed commercials increased from 13 per cent to 20 per cent.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> 'Werbung in den achtzigern'.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> 'Germany to end broadcast monopoly', in *Campaign* 13.07.1979.

<sup>320</sup> Reinhardt, D., 'Vom Intelligenzblatt zum Satellitenfernsehen: Stufen der Werbung als Stufen der Gesellschaft', in Teuteberg, J., Borscheid, P., Wischermann, C. (eds.), *Bilderwelt des Alltags. Werbung in der Konsumgesellschaft des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts: Festschrift für Hans Jürgen Teuteberg* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 44-63, p. 60.

<sup>321</sup> Zentrallausschuß der Werbewirtschaft (ZAW), *Werbung '81* (Bonn, 1981), pp. 12-14.

<sup>322</sup> O'Reilly, D., 'Consumers poll proves Hattersly is wrong', in *Campaign* 27.04.1979.

In conclusion, the consumerist movement caused a moral crisis for advertising in Germany and the United Kingdom. Both industries managed to overcome this crisis and found themselves in a stronger position at the end of the decade. Today's most obvious indicator of how consumerism has fallen into oblivion is the fact that the word itself is mostly used as a synonym for consumption. In Germany, the word 'Konsumerismus', which was used in many articles discussing the topic, is almost unknown today.

## Conclusion and Outlook

The German and British advertising industries had to meet several challenges over the course of the 1970s. At first, the advertising industry was plunged into a state of uncertainty during the economic crisis which unfolded between 1973 and 1975. The 'golden sixties' had ended, and advertisers, just like everybody else, had to find new ways to survive in the era 'after the boom'. Advertisers in both countries managed to present their work as a solution to economic difficulties. Failing industries tried to compensate for decreasing sales by increasing advertising. In Germany in particular, the new concept of marketing was a popular way to overcome for the challenges faced in saturated markets. By the end of the decade, both advertising industries found themselves in an improved situation in comparison to six years earlier. In fact, advertising was one of the major winners of the oil crisis. Though the 'golden era' had ended, the watershed years between the end of 1973 and 1975 only meant a short period of uncertainty before the advertising industry was infused with a new sense of self-confidence. The era 'nach dem Boom' proved to be prosperous for advertising despite a general mood of uncertainty. However, this was not only due to its own role within the economic crisis.

Changes in consumption patterns were also closely linked to shifting values recorded by contemporary social scientists. Postmodern consumers increasingly laid emphasis on self-fulfilment, lifestyles and leisure time. In addition, they were general more willing to spend money on consumer goods. Accordingly, the industry had to find new ways to address these fledgling target and lifestyle groups properly. Such groups also included female consumers to whom advertisers paid special attention. Still, advertisers did not always strike the right note when they tried to address women directly. However, as advertisers tried to create advertisements aimed at the 'new women' or the 'new type of consumer', they also enforced changing values and consumption.

Finally, the consumerist's movement challenged advertisers in both countries in a moral sense. In Germany, the Frankfurt School influence became obvious as consumerists fundamentally argued against advertising and capitalism. Within the United Kingdom, consumerist criticism emerged earlier than in Germany and was influenced primarily by American movements criticising the methods and content of advertisements. Although both industries acted differently in response to criticism, they could not prevent new regulations from being implemented by their respective governments. Eventually, this moral crisis only ended when new paradigms in communications sciences, psychology and social sciences announced the end of the 'Hidden Persuaders'. Along with this paradigmatic change, the general acceptance of advertising increased.

The advertising industry proved that it was able to overcome several crises over the course of the decade, thereby making it even stronger. By the end of the decade of crisis and change, advertising had grown morally and economically stronger than it



had by the end of the 'golden sixties'. Perhaps most comfortably, there were no signs that these developments would slow down in the 1980s either.

The widespread approval of advertising can be seen as part of a wider trend which became increasingly evident at the beginning of the 1980s. As Andreas Wirsching describes, the critical approach towards consumption became redundant in the Eighties. Instead, continental Europe, Germany included, essentially accepted the model of "American prosperity".<sup>323</sup> As various consumer critics showed, this model had already been accepted in the United Kingdom and was enforced by Thatcherism over the course of the 1980s. Advertising in the eighties found itself in embracing a positive, indeed affirmative attitude to consumption and the consumer society, defining 'selfhood' and 'consumption' in an entirely different manner to before.<sup>324</sup>

These developments in the Eighties had been evolving and foreshadowed during the Seventies. During this decade, which was characterized by uncertainty and crisis and marked the transition towards a 'post-industrial' society, traditional values had steadily eroded and been replaced by new ones. As advertising has also shown, leftist criticism became less important, and a new emphasis was laid on consumption and post-materialist values. By the end of the decade, these long-term developments became clear, and they continued to become increasingly commonplace over the course of the Eighties.

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<sup>323</sup> Wirsching, A., 'From Work to Consumption. Transatlantic Visions of Individuality in Modern Mass Society', in *Contemporary European History* 20(2011), pp. 1-26, p. 20.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

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