



AAN Quarterly

The Quarterly Publication of the AEF Academic Network

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The Editorial

Welcome to the AEF Academic Network

The Advertising Education Forum is an organisation created to put into the public arena comprehensive information about issues surrounding children and advertising. This has been primarily through the compilation of a database of, now, around 1700 relevant documents that can be found at www.aeforum.org.

The intention is to be as comprehensive as possible without any bias in selection. The site can be accessed free of charge by anyone with an interest in the subject.

AEF is unashamedly funded by industry because of the simple belief that any action on issues related to children and advertising is likely to be more appropriate if based upon good information. ***The AEF Academic Network (AAN), which has only recently been established but which already has 56 members, has a key role to play in this.***

Our hope is that by encouraging the sharing of information not only will our database stay up to date and be even more comprehensive, but also new areas for research and debate will be identified that plug the gaps in our understanding.

Advertising and children is increasingly the subject of debate, with passionately held, but often poorly informed, opinions being aired. AEF, with the help of the AAN, hopes to improve the quality of the information available and so lead to better judgements being made in this much disputed area.

The intention is to make the AAN Quarterly of use to the members of the AAN, so any suggestions or submissions will be gratefully received to go on improving the quality and variety of our information.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for accepting to become members of the Academic Network, and for supporting the AEF in the achievement of its objectives.

I hope you will enjoy our first issue of the AAN Quarterly and will be happy to contribute to the next issues.

Yours sincerely

Martin Phelps
AEF Chairman

Special points of interest:

- **The Editorial:**
Welcome to AEF Academic Network
- **Focus on:**
The Communication Watchdogs
- **Special Topic:**
Media Education in Italy
- **Forum:**
A new research project
- **AEF Database Latest Entries:**
January –February 2005

Index

The Editorial	1
Inside this issue	2
Focus on	2, 6-7
Special Topic	3, 8
Forum	4, 9-10
AEF Database Latest Entries	5, 11-14

In this issue

Within issue n.1 you will read:

Focus on ...*The Communication Watchdogs.*

An article, the first of a series, that will focus on the bodies appointed by national governments to supervise the implementation and enforcement of broadcasting legislation.

Special Topic:

"Media Education in Italy: challenges, trends and innovations",
by Dr. Pellai.

A description of the ways and processes to implement a good media education strategy addressing both adults and children in their life environments in Italy based on research conducted from 2001 to 2004.

Forum:

Research project: "*Teenagers Social Perceptions of Food Consumption and Health*", *by Dr. Roland-Levy.*

The presentation of a new research aiming to conduct a comparative study of Canadian and French teenagers' perceptions of the links between food, environment and health, with a view to identifying better ways to communicate about healthy habits around food consumption.

The Forum page provides the opportunity for the AAN Academics to describe the early stages of a research. It is an open space to the AAN members to liaise with each other and for the presentation and discussion of research and scholarly thought.

AEF Database Latest Entries: *January-February 2005*

The complete bibliography of the works that have been inserted in the AEF Database in the previous months.

Focus on :

The Communication Watchdogs

In this issue we start a series of articles that will describe the regulatory framework for broadcasting, advertising and the protection of minors in the EU and other countries. This first issue will focus on the bodies appointed by national governments to supervise the implementation and enforcement of broadcasting legislation



Independent regulatory authorities (IRAs) established as autonomous administrative agencies entrusted with regulatory powers are a key component of modern regulatory governance.

In Europe, the rise of independent regulatory authorities has coincided with the decline of public service monopolies in the '80s. IRAs are characterised by the fact that they are not part of the actual structure of the government administration.

There are many types of authorities in charge of supervising the (*continued to pg. 6*)

Special Topic

Media Education in Italy: *challenges, trends and innovations.*

by Alberto Pellai, MD; PhD. *

Media Education in Italy

Media education is quite a new issue in Italy. Though many European nations have included media education as a regular subject of the compulsory curriculum, this is not the case of Italy. Many teachers, parents and educators are asking for a major school involvement in this field, and though experts are lobbying and working at the institutional level to include Media Education in the regular curriculum, the situation of media education in Italy is still a poor one. Few teachers have been trained for this and those schools having programs of media education are doing this on a voluntary basis. Not having national guidelines for media education has allowed the development of many diverse educational approaches in different schools and geographical areas of the country.

Some schools have introduced some media education curricula which are highly focused on technical aspects of media products. These approaches help students to better understand how the images are framed and why they are framed in certain ways. These curricula are very often conducted by teachers of art and drawing and only rarely are integrated into a more holistic approach involving teachers in charge of other subjects and disciplines.

Other schools are working harder on "content analysis" and are using curricula helping students to recognize how programs and advertising messages are packed with many different contents and values and how some of them, like violence or sex, can create an impact on one's values, ideals and lifestyle.

Finally, a new trend for media education is now growing more and more in popularity and practice. It implies that media education becomes integrated into health education.

More and more health education programs are helping students understanding how media messages are promoting, glamorizing or normalizing behaviours that very often have an influence on one's well-being, and this is especially true for advertising messages dealing with controversial and at risk behaviours like smoking, drinking, aggressive driving, etc. This kind of media education programs aim at helping students how to recognize and resist the pressure acted by our media saturated environment.

We should say that while the first two approaches have media as the real subject of educational interventions, in the last ones media are seen as tools to be used in curricula whose actual subject is one's health and well-being.

Exemplary models of media education in Italy

Many different programs have been realized in Italy and implemented so to be able to reach different targets. Here I present three examples of programs addressing three different targets, (*continued to pg. 8*)

"a new trend for media education is now growing: it implies that media education becomes integrated into health education"



Forum

Research project "*Teenagers Social Perceptions of Food Consumption and Health* "

by Dr. Christine Roland Levy*

Our goal is to conduct a comparative study of Canadian and French teenagers' social representation of both food consumption and health. Based on the links between food, environment and health, by studying social representations, we intend to find better ways to communicate about healthy habits around food consumption.

Subject of the study

Previous studies linked to education and health have shown that it is not enough to inform people in order to change the behaviour, nor is it necessary to refer to fear. It is easier to change group behaviour than individual's behaviour. Changes in behaviour and changes in representations and in attitudes are closely linked.

*A view to
identifying
better ways
to
communicate
about healthy
habits*

The **main influencing factors** on teenagers' food consumption are grouped according to four reciprocally influencing levels: **intrapersonal** (what comes from the person; it includes psychological variables such as personality, personal preferences, motivation, cognition and representations); **interpersonal** (the influence of the direct environment: the family itself and family context, as well as peers); **community** (direct influence of the physical environment as well as of the economic context, including the family socio-economic level); and the **societal** level (which covers mass communication, advertising as well as preventing campaigns).

Among these reciprocal influences, environment appears to form, maintain and guide behaviour, but people can also change their environment.

All these influences are often interacting. For example, a teenager can buy for lunch a soft drink, a pizza and a chocolate bar, because he/she likes it, because it's quick, cheap, easy and convenient, because his/her friends do the same, and because these products are well advertised.

Social representation appears to be a key concept to study here.

Social representations are social forms of knowledge which are free from scientific constraints and naturalised in figurative schemata. They can serve as a basis for perceiving and interpreting reality, as well as for orienting people's behaviour. Furthermore, they are related to the social characteristics of people, and empirical evidence shows that, most of the time, it is possible to distinguish different social representations corresponding to particular social groups. Interpretations of a particular object differ from one social group to another; in the same way, a social representation expresses the identity of each group. in the same way, a social representation expresses the identity of each group.

Here, the goal is to focus on the content of social representations of environment, food and health. Which are the converging factors (common categories), which are the conflicting points (mutually excluding categories) and which are their specificities at a key moment in the construction of a social thought: adolescence?

Since representations are social because they contribute to the formation of group identity, people sharing the same views of the world will have the feeling of belonging to the group. **Food plays an important role in the** (continued to pg. 9)

AEF Database Latest Entries: *January- February 2005*

In January- February 2005, 68 new documents from 17 different countries were added to the AEF database.

The new entries cover the following AEF issues:

- Children's perception of advertising
- Children and the new media
- Food promotion and childhood obesity
- Media literacy
- Morality and ethics of advertising to children
- Social values in advertising to children
- Toy advertising
- Techniques used in promotions to children
- TV/media watching and lifestyle
- Worldwide legislation and self-regulation.

SEARCH DATABASE

A few highlights:

On 1 January, Fevia (Fédération de l'Industrie Alimentaire) in Belgium released its code for food and drinks advertising, including specific provisions on advertising aimed to children.

On 1 January, CSPI (the USA Center for Science in the Public Interest) released its "*Guidelines for Responsible Food Marketing to Children*". The Guidelines provide criteria for marketing food to children in a way that does not undermine children's diets or harm their health.

On 2 February, Prof D'Alessio, presented a research report related to the social representation of children in advertising in Italy. The research analysed more than 1000 commercials aired for two weeks in March 2004 on the major national public and private TV channels.

Cyprus: in Dr. Rossou's paper (2004), we find an analysis on the role of TV advertising on local young people diet, with a look to the s.c. *westernized eating habits* of children and young people of the Mediterranean island.

Australia: Dr. Hobbs, in her study "*The acquisition of media literacy skills among Australian adolescents*" (2005) provides a thorough research on the skills of 333 15-year-old students enrolled in secondary schools in Melbourne, Australia, to determine the differences between students who have had formal exposure to media education classes and those whose exposure has been less systematic.

We also find "*Food advertising on Australian television: the extent of children exposure*" (2004) by Dr. Neville. The objective of this study was to investigate the extent and nature of food advertising during Australian children's television (TV) viewing hours and programs, and to determine whether confectionery and fast food restaurant advertisements were more likely to be broadcast during children's programs than during adults' programs on Sydney television stations.

From pg 11 to pg 14 you will find the complete list of the latest entries.



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Focus on: *The Communication Watchdogs*

(continued from pg.2)

implementation of broadcasting legislation. These bodies monitor whether broadcasters are fulfilling their legal obligations and are empowered to impose sanctions if they fail to carry out those obligations.

The organisation, the structure and the powers of the European Communication Authorities show a number of differences.

The vast majority of European countries have at least two separate regulatory bodies respectively in charge of the regulation of broadcasting and telecommunications. Their powers relate to:

- Administration of the broadcasting sector (i.e. award of broadcasting licences)
- Supervisory functions (i.e. programme monitoring)
- Rule-making functions (i.e. codes of practice).

In this article we outline the independent broadcasting regulatory authorities of the six founding countries of the European Union.

Belgium

In Belgium there are two different entities: *the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel de la Communauté Française* and the *Vlaams Commissariaat voor de Media*.

The *Conseil* is competent for the regulation of the broadcasting sector in the French Community in Belgium. At the request either of the Government or of the Parliament of the French Community, the *Conseil* releases opinions on all issue related to the audiovisual policy, including advertising and children's protection from harmful content in programmes. It is also entitled to draft and update regulations on commercial communication and protection of minors and can impose sanctions on broadcasters who do not comply with such regulations.

The *Vlaams* has got similar competences for the broadcasting sector operating in the Flemish Region.

France

When the *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (CSA) was inaugurated on 13 February 1989 by the President of the French Republic, it was given the two-fold role of guaranteeing and promoting broadcasting freedom in France.

The objective of the *Conseil's* monitoring is to safeguard fundamental principles such as the respect of human dignity and public order. It also aims to ensure that broadcasters respect their obligations in terms of programme content. These obligations essentially cover six areas: pluralism and veracity of information; conditions for the broadcasting of film and television productions; TV channels' contribution to the development of video and film production, protection of adolescence and childhood; advertising, sponsorship and teleshopping, promotion of the French language.

A large part of the CSA's work is devoted to verifying that radio and television broadcasters are being responsible in their programming, i.e. that their messages are not harmful to the audience and that they respect the interests of children.

Germany

In Germany, the individual Länder (States) have jurisdiction over radio and television broadcasting.

As a result, there is no centralized regulatory authority for the broadcasting sector. Instead, there are 15 state regulatory authorities the so-called Landesmedienanstalten – (State Media Authorities for Broadcasting), which deal with regulatory issues at the state level. The LMAs' primary objectives are licensing and monitoring of private radio and television channels throughout Germany to ensure content diversity, pluralism of opinions and compliance with regulation concerning the protection of minors and advertising. (continued to pg.7)

Focus on: *The Communication Watchdogs*

(continued from pg 6)

Nationwide issues are addressed by the Direktorenkonferenz der Landesmedienanstalten - DLM (Directors' Conference of the State Media Authorities for Broadcasting). Within the DLM we find the Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz – KJM (Commission on the Protection of Minors from Unsuitable Media Content), responsible for the protection of minors from harmful content in radio, television and other electronic media.

Italy

The Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni (*Agcom*) is an independent authority, established by law in 1997.

Like the other IRAs set up in the Italian system, *Agcom* is accountable to the Parliament, which establishes its powers, defines its statutes and elects its members. The two main tasks assigned to *Agcom* consist of ensuring equitable conditions for fair market competition and protecting the fundamental rights of all citizens.

The main task of *Agcom* in the broadcasting area is the safeguard of pluralistic information: in cooperation with external experts and data survey companies, the Authority has set up an important plan for round-the-clock monitoring of national TV programmes in order to assess the extent to which networks comply with national legislation or regulatory provisions on advertising, political and social pluralism, protection of minors and programming.

Agcom's regulation of advertising aims to balance business and consumer interests, also through the interpretation of existing rules, often not applied or arbitrarily applied by broadcasters.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg is a rare exception in the EU, since the Government has not bestowed the regulation of broadcasting on an independent regulatory authority.

The *Conseil National des Programmes*, set up according to the Law of 27 July 1991, has only consultative powers and monitors that all operators comply with regulatory provisions regarding the broadcasting sector. The *Conseil* can only refer violations to the Ministry of Communication, but it does not have the power to impose sanctions.

The Netherlands

The "*Commissariaat voor de Media*" (Dutch Media Authority) was created in January 1998 in order to enforce the rules of the Dutch Media Act and related regulations. It is an independent administrative body led by three Commissioners.

The *Commissariaat* supervises public service broadcasters, private broadcasters and cable network operators, as far as the provisions in the Media Act apply to them.

The *Commissariaat* checks whether these organizations act in compliance with the rules and regulations of the Media Act and the Media Decree. The supervision (monitoring) of radio and television programmes is always *post facto*, since the Media Act explicitly excludes a pre-vetting system. The monitoring is largely done in order to control whether public service and private broadcasters comply with the regulations for advertising and sponsorship.

To be continued in the next AAN Quarterly issue.

(continued from pg. 3)

whose originality and effectiveness made them extremely popular and well known in our country.

1) A program targeting **children**: A very good example addressing children can be seen in the Project "TV come ti voglio" a national contest launched for school children attending compulsory schools represent (through drawings and written composition) the TV as they would like it to be. TV has been the means through which all Italian schools have been informed of the contest and the response from students has been overwhelming, counting thousands of different projects and applications. These materials have been transformed into an exhibition which has been presented in different media- and school-related national events.

2) A program targeting **parents**: "A signature to change the TV system". This project was launched to ask parents and educators to take a concrete step to improve the quality of the TV national system. A national document was published asking for more respect and educational contents in public television, especially programs targeting young audiences. This manifesto asked politicians and all the people involved in the TV system to change the rules in the best interest of children, putting limitations in advertising addressing young children and promoting better programs with enhanced educational values. 500.000 adults (almost 2% of the whole adult Italian population) signed this document.

3) A program targeting **the community as a whole**. There are some initial programs that have involved the whole community in a media education process, aiming at raising awareness among parents and educators so to better cope with the side-effects of media exposure on children's well-being and health and to prevent the undesired ones. In Pioltello, close to Milano, a multi-disciplinary group has realized a very unique media education program addressing the whole community. A mother, an elementary school teacher, a post-elementary school teacher, the community pediatrician and a University researcher have all together coordinated a research with all the pupils attending the elementary schools operating in Pioltello. With the collected data a final report has been released together with an educational handbook where each of the component of this working group has been contributing a chapter. So this handbook contains data collected among the children living in the community and thoughts and insights from some of the more distinguished figures among the group of educators living there. Reading what the community pediatrician, the school teachers or the same parents had to say about the media impact on children's lives helped in raising awareness and concern and allowed to promote initiatives open to the community to be in better control of children's media-related behaviors.

Conclusions

Italy is trying to find its own ways and processes to implement a good media education strategy addressing both adults and children in their life environments. To date, what is most needed is a law integrating effective media education in the current curricula in all schools. More awareness and knowledge of how the media works and what is the impact they have on children's life and well-being is very much needed among adults, both parents and educators. Looking at the main experiences implemented abroad and trying to adapt and replicate locally what seemed to be effective elsewhere seems at the moment the most urgent thing to do.

2005, This article has been drafted on researches conducted from 2001 to 2004.

** Dr Pellai works as a researcher in Public Health at the Department of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine of the Medical School of Milano State University (Institute of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine at Milano State University-IRCCS Ospedale Maggiore di Milano, Italy). In the last 8 years he has been studying how TV affects children's life. His books about children and media are one of the most read and cited source in journals willing to explore educational implications of children's exposition to media. In 2000 he has been appointed as the Italian representative at the Media Department of the Virtual School of the European SchoolNet.*

(continued from pg.4)

construction of teenage culture, but it is specially the idea of conviviality and sharing some cookies or pizza, rather than the symbolic of food itself.

Representations facilitate group cohesion and communication via adoption of a common language. Advertising influences this common language (e.g. names of brands replacing the names of products). Consummation is in itself a discourse; the codes of this discourse can be found publicity.

Are there any links in advertising discourse between environment, food and health? Based on the teenage language, the social dimension of group cohesion and their knowledge about environment, food and health, how can a coherent discourse be constructed in order to prevent risks (e.g. obesity)? These representations are transmitted via collective memory (food is part of our culture), via education (supposed to promote scientific knowledge), via mass media, which reproduces scientific discourse by distorting it, by advertising, which reproduces the life style of teenagers by improving it. ***Here, it is interesting to study the interactions between environment and food consumption with today and future life.*** Could the fact that one is able to project himself/herself in the future, as well as to link today's food to health in the future, be a way to facilitate potential changes in food habits? This question is established upon research based on the **temporal perspective** [Shostrom, 1963, 1968 mentioned by Nuttin, 1980]. This study showed that an individual who can perceive continuity in time is motivated and stimulated in his/her daily practices. Being able to perceive a succession of events in time, as well as being able to anticipate the potential results of one's acts, not as just due to chance, but also due to reasoned actions, allows the person to relate the present actions to future results. *We can formulate the hypothesis that teenagers who see their daily food habits in relation to what they will be tomorrow, will be more influenced by messages aiming at healthier food habits.*

Methodology and Data collection

The first goal is to identify and describe the social representations of 12-14 year olds, living in different environments. This implies that we will include geographic variables, comparing city and rural areas, as well as include different cultural variables. Education around health is in Québec much more focused on than in France; this education starts early, is more complete and systematic in Quebec, whereas in France it mainly depends on the good will of some teachers.

Data collection

Population studied: about 450, 12 - 14 year olds (18 groups)

Sex

Urban context vs. rural context in a series of French regions

Cultural context: France vs. Québec (urban context only)

This research project will take place in two different phases: (1) a survey, based on interviews allowing to identify the social representations of the teenagers related (or not) to the content of the food advertising messages, (2) followed by an experimental study, based on different processes (conferences, discussions, testing of products...) aiming at verifying the impact of specific messages constructed on the basis of favourable representations and healthy behaviours of teenagers.

In the first phase, it is therefore important to know and understand the social representations and attitudes of the teenagers first based on their answers to a series of questions, and attitude scales, but also, in parallel to analyse the content of a series of food adverts as well as of prevention messages.

The results obtained will be analysed in terms of social representations according to the different variables (Sex, urban vs. rural contexts, France vs. Québec). These results will also be analysed according to the different attitudes, to the time perspective (present vs. future), to the type of dominant locus of (continued to pg. 10)

(continued from pg 9)

control (intern vs. extern) as well as to the kind of (territorial) feeling of belonging. In parallel the analysis of the discourse of a corpus of food adverts as well as of prevention messages will be analysed with the help of a specific software programme (ALCESTE).

In the second phase, it will be interesting to make operational the previously obtained results with an experimental procedure testing the effect of various types of messages provided in a series of different contexts. From the social representations of the teenagers interviewed, we will elaborate both a series of prevention and promotion messages. In order to test their efficiency, we will not only test the effect of the content of the messages but also the modes of transmission in which they can be more efficient. Based on previous studies in social psychology, it has been demonstrated that the way (positive vs. negative) in which a message is presented clearly influences the impact on the participants.

A better understanding of the various variables involved in the transmission of prevention/promotion messages will allow improving their efficiency, especially by taking into account the specificity of a teenage population.

Calendar: a three-year project

Phase 1: 20 months

Phase 2: 16 months

**In this article Dr. Christine Roland- Levy, of the Laboratoire de Psychologie Appliquée Stress et Société, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne has briefly outlined the main features of a project of a study still to be conducted together with Dominique Lassarre, Véronique Ambrosino, Sophie Berjot, Benjamin Paty (France) Marie Watiez (Québec).*

If you would like to receive more detailed information on the research, please contact Francesca Fanucci at francesca.fanucci@aeforum.org

AEF Database Latest Entries: *January-February 2005*

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AEF Database Latest Entries: *January-February 2005*

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