

Boxed in

Offence from negative stereotyping in TV advertising



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Independent Television Commission

PUTTING VIEWERS FIRST

Boxed In

Offence from negative stereotyping in television advertising

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1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- *Descriptions of advertisements referred to in this section can be found at the end of it.*

The Independent Television Commission (ITC) is currently engaged in a broad review of its Advertising Codes and Guidelines. One of the issues being considered is stereotyping in advertising, since complaints about this issue have been on the increase. Many of these complaints are from people who are concerned on behalf of others but the ITC wanted to know the views of members of groups which are sometimes stereotyped. Qualitative research was commissioned amongst a range of different groups, including people with disabilities, various ethnic groups, women, older people, the over-weight, and children who differ from their peers in ways which sometimes prompt bullying.

The research indicated that mild comments or humour about certain characteristics can be harmless and acceptable even to people with those characteristics but that sensitivity is always needed in this area. The acceptability of a stereotype may depend on whether or not the characteristic is one which is a matter of personal choice and of relatively minor significance. (Hairstyles or hobbies, for example, lie at one end of this spectrum; disability, foreign or regional accent, nationality or skin colour lie at the other end, with characteristics such as occupations or attitudes falling in the middle.) Whether an issue has a high moral or social profile in society also affects its significance.

For many respondents, stereotyping in advertising was not a major concern but the research highlighted a number of key areas.

Visibility

- Viewers with a disability were not as offended by portrayals, such as the Hunchback of Notre-Dame in *Tunes*, as others predicted they would be. But they felt there was a dearth of portrayals of disabled people in television advertising. They wanted more visibility, since they are consumers too. They applauded the example of *Freeserve*'s glamorous and positive portrayal of a disabled model.

Inclusion

- Ethnic minorities, those from Asian, African Caribbean and Chinese origin, felt they were not sufficiently represented in television advertising, so negative stereotypes were likely to have a greater impact. *Reed Employment* was regarded as utilising a blatantly racist stereotype, especially by African Caribbeans, but *Home Pride Curry Sauce* was praised for showing a positive portrayal of a Scottish Asian family.

Bullying

- Parents and older children were concerned about stereotypes in advertisements that might lead to or condone bullying. They felt that portrayals, such as the one in *Tango Orange*, drew attention to characteristics that children could pick on.

Xenophobia

- Respondents felt there were occasions when sensitivity was needed about advertisements containing national stereotypes. For example, whilst many found the use of German stereotypes in *Sega Dreamcast (German)* amusing, others felt this advertisement had the potential to incite violence, especially if broadcast at a time when British passions were aroused, for example, during Euro 2000.

Regionality

- Stereotypes which portrayed people from their part of the country as simple or stupid were likely to inflame local passions.

Conclusions

There is little doubt that the use of stereotypes as a means of quickly establishing characters within the brief span of a television advertisement is, in principle, widely accepted. Nevertheless, some stereotypes can be harmful, patronising or insulting to the groups in question. The ITC has long been concerned to ensure that television advertising – which can be powerful and insistent – does not condone or feed prejudice, perpetuate damaging misconceptions or, in the case of children in particular, encourage bullying or rejection. The ITC will use these results, as well as the conclusions which have been drawn from past ITC casework, as inputs to a review of the television advertising rules and guidance intended to make it easier for advertisers and the television companies to avoid problem areas.

The significance of the stereotyped characteristic is one crucial factor in judging acceptability and particular sensitivity is required where the group in question is generally recognised to encounter prejudice. The second important factor is the presence or absence of ‘mitigating factors’ and, crucially, the extent to which they are successful in reducing any potential for offence. For example, the successful use of humour may help where the stereotype in question is of relatively low significance.

Note: This qualitative research, because it looked at a very wide range of stereotypes, inevitably drew on relatively small numbers of respondents who had any particular one of the characteristics in question. The detailed results should therefore be treated as a snapshot and guide rather than a definitive picture of the attitudes of groups of individuals which may be stereotyped in television advertising.

Descriptions of advertisements referred to above

Tunes

During an operatic production of *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, the sub-titled translation of the disfigured hero’s Italian lyrics makes jokes about his disability. (For example, “I have a hunch that Esmerelda doesn’t fancy me”.) After sucking a Tunes sweet, his confidence is restored and he sings (in English) “I feel pretty”.

Freeserve

This advertisement (which uses the theme of independence) is a complex montage of images intercut with shots of *Aimee Mann*, a real-life model who has lost both of her lower legs but continues to walk and run wearing a range of dramatically designed leg extensions.

Reed Employment

In a slightly ominous atmosphere, a casually dressed black youth with dreadlocks spots a smartly dressed white man in a crowded street and appears to deliberately bump into him. The white man immediately suspects he has been robbed and a flashback confirms that the black man has indeed picked his pocket skilfully. But there is a twist in the tail. Instead of stealing anything, the black man has placed a note in the white man's wallet advising him about a job opportunity.

Homepride Curry Sauce

A Scottish family of ethnic Asian origin praises the product in strong Glaswegian accents. The final comment is "As we Scots say, stoatin' stuff" (*ie wonderful stuff*).

Tango Orange (Megaphone)

An overweight young man is suddenly surrounded by six ginger-haired men. Through toy megaphones, they repeat everything the youth says and this apparently goes on for many hours until he is in an extremely distressed state. Viewers are invited to send for a *Tango* megaphone and 'join the fun.'

Sega Dreamcast (German)

This advertisement is for a video game which can be played by people in different countries via the internet. It includes Second World War imagery and features several clichéd comic stereotypes of Germans (including a reference to towels being used to reserve deck chairs). At the end, a fair-haired male German makes a challenging gesture and says "Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough". (The advertisement is one of a series.)

2 BACKGROUND

In recent years, the Independent Television Commission (ITC) has received significant numbers of complaints about various kinds of stereotyping in television advertisements. These have raised a wide range of issues. In addition to concerns about the portrayal of ethnic minorities, women and disabled people, advertisements have been criticised, for example, for helping to undermine male confidence by portraying men as ineffectual; for portraying children, inevitably chubby ones, as unpopular because they are boring ‘boffins’; for patronising people from different parts of the country and for stereotyping older people as fussy and cranky.

‘Stereotype’ is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as ‘a standardised image or conception of a type of person’. This indicates that stereotypes are not necessarily negative. They can also be associated with aspects which are admirable or valued by society. For example, the stereotype of ‘housewife and mother’ potentially comprises a range of implications which can be neutral (female), positive (cares for the family) or, depending on one’s viewpoint, negative (doesn’t go out to work).

The rise in complaints about stereotyping may reflect societal changes, such as the new emphasis being placed on diversity and inclusion, or it may reflect a perception that some television advertising has a harder edge. While the ITC has no wish to attempt ‘social engineering’, no matter how praiseworthy the objective, it *is* concerned with the protection of ‘vulnerable’ audiences, and so with any advertising which could lead to distress, insult or actual harm to individuals or particular groups in society.

In this research, the ITC wanted to find out when a stereotype stops being harmless and becomes something hurtful, offensive or more damaging. The study examined attitudes amongst both the public at large and members of groups which are likely to be stereotyped.

The Qualitative Consultancy (TQC) was commissioned to carry out qualitative research into whether or in what circumstances stereotyping can cause offence or distress. While the researchers were briefed to look out for any evidence that advertising had led to direct harm, for example to inter-group relationships, the study was designed to reveal attitudes, not to analyse cause and effect.

3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to:

- investigate to what degree stereotyping in television advertising is regarded as negative and is likely to offend or stigmatise groups or individuals
- assist the ITC to develop policy and guidelines for advertisers and for the television companies (who must ensure the advertising they carry complies with the ITC's codes).

4 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS

- Stereotyping, in its neutral or harmless forms, was accepted by respondents as an essential tool of advertising. It was understood that without easily recognised stereotypes it would be hard to tell a story, or communicate a message, in the short span of a television advertisement. Stereotypes were seen as ‘short cuts’ which enable people (for better or worse) to describe and make sense of their world. Respondents generally did not wish to see regulation which was so strict that the advertisers’ job would be impossible but, at the same time, they felt that some stereotypes could be offensive or potentially harmful.
- For some groups (including ethnic minorities, some parents, those who were overweight and individuals with a strong social conscience) negative stereotyping in television advertising was a contentious issue and more likely to be raised spontaneously. People from ethnic minorities, in particular, were sensitive to issues to do with inclusion and diversity. They felt strongly that advertising as a *whole* does not reflect or recognise the cultural diversity of the UK. As a result, they were more likely to find negative portrayals offensive.
- Fundamentally, stereotypes were found to be closely linked to, and indeed were signifiers of, underlying attitudes (or ‘isms’, such as racism) which may have power to offend or harm. The way in which an advertisement played on an ‘ism’, and the degree of personal significance to the viewer of the stereotype or of the ‘ism’ itself, were what determined whether an advertisement crossed the ‘offence boundary.’
- In some circumstances, offence was found to be mitigated by the presence of one or more of a range of different factors. These included the ‘successful’ use of humour, irony, story resolution, balance of positive and negative stereotypes, the use of historical characters or the perception that the stereotyped person is in control rather than powerless. Such elements could often counterbalance relatively mild negativity. But the more significant the ‘ism’, the less such factors helped. Three of the 44 advertisements shown in the study caused widespread offence among respondents: *Reed Employment*, *Tango Orange*, and *Sega Dreamcast (German)*.
- *Reed Employment* was commonly seen as an overt, though probably unintentional, example of damaging racist stereotyping. It was thought to capitalise on the most harmful stereotype of young, African Caribbean men – that they are ‘naturally’ criminally inclined. African Caribbean respondents, in particular, felt the advertisement had the potential to increase racial tensions. Many other respondents also regarded it as offensive because of its blatant stereotyping. The ‘positive’ twist in the tail was either not noticed or was not sufficient to counter the negativity.
- *Tango Orange* was criticised for not only being likely to encourage bullying but also for stereotyping an overweight youth as a natural target for bullying.
- Reactions to *Sega Dreamcast (German)* were more mixed but those who criticised it felt it fed xenophobic views in an unacceptable manner that could even incite violence.

- Disabled viewers, understandably, tended not to define themselves by their disability alone and were often not offended by material that others predicted they would object to. But there was concern about what some disabled respondents described as 'body fascism'. Those who took part in the study felt advertisers generally only showed people with 'perfect bodies' using their products. This made them feel excluded. Respondents who were seriously over-weight shared the same sentiments.
- Some women and young girls were particularly alert to sexist stereotypes such as the use of 'perfect skinny bodies' to sell products. Although there was widespread acceptance that advertising of this kind was reflecting a wider cultural bias, some felt advertising reinforced such bias in society.
- Stereotyping, as a potential cause of bullying, was an important subject for parents and for some children. A number of the 10-15-year-olds were concerned about the possible effect of the *Tango Orange* advertisement on the way younger children might be treated or might behave. Parents voiced strong concerns about possible emulation of the behaviour shown in this commercial. They thought that depictions of, for example, 'boffins' or 'nerds' could reinforce caricatures and characteristics which children already focused on. The small number of children included in the study because of their stereotyped characteristics (such as weight problems, glasses or being academic for example) did not seem to feel personally stigmatised by such portrayals but – nevertheless – had some concerns about the potential for bullying of people like themselves.
- Although the ITC has received complaints from men objecting to the way they have been portrayed in advertisements, the men in this study were generally unconcerned by advertising which presented them in unflattering ways. Even those with characteristics such as baldness, wearing glasses or being overweight were not offended by advertising which made fun of their traits.
- Negative regional stereotypes, such as *Ambrosia's* West Country 'yokel' sitting on a cow, could arouse strong spontaneous feelings although programmes were considered more of a problem than advertisements. A *Pot Noodle* advertisement featuring Welsh lads was also objected to spontaneously.
- Some advertisements which presented positive stereotypes, or which subverted traditional negative ones, were applauded. For example, Asian respondents, and others, liked the *Homepride Curry* advertisement because it presented a modern-day image of British Asians with Scottish accents. And some of those with disabilities praised *Freeserve* for showing the antithesis of the stereotype of a disabled person – a disabled woman successfully pursuing a career in the glamorous world of modelling.
- Many adult respondents believed that the effects of advertising, like other influences in society, could be subtle and cumulative. They considered there could be a slow-drip, build-up effect in relation to stereotyping (as with other issues). Individual advertisements such as those for *British Airways* and *Iceland* were thought to contribute to a greater or lesser extent to this process. Respondents felt this contribution should be taken into account when judgements were made about an advertisement's acceptability or likelihood to offend. Advertisements were seen by some as being guilty of creating or

reinforcing negative stereotypes at a subtle or even subliminal level. But it was recognised that any effects over time would be very difficult to determine because there were so many other contributing factors. Respondents felt regulators and broadcasters should, therefore, make 'judgement calls' on individual advertisements.

Note: Because the research aimed to explore attitudes among a large range of groups who might experience stereotyping, some categories of people (for example those with a particular disability) were represented by only one or two respondents. These findings cannot, therefore, be regarded as a definitive account of these groups' views and must be treated with caution.

Descriptions of advertisements referred to above

Ambrosia

A man with a strong West Country accent sits on a cow singing about the joys of that region 'where they say ooh-arrrh'.

Pot Noodle

The advertisement purports to be a poor quality home video. Two scruffy young men with strong Welsh accents eat the product enthusiastically but very messily.

British Airways

Children playing musical chairs react differently to finding or failing to grab a seat. For several of them, the commercial then suggests a future career to match their apparent personalities. Two are featured more prominently: a boy behaves petulantly when he thinks he is out and is labelled 'Managing Director'; a girl who then generously gives up her chair for him is labelled 'Cabin Crew' and described as suitable for BA. Children from ethnic minorities are seen in the background and are not allocated a career.

Iceland

A mother and daughter are preparing food for the family. One son looks up from playing the guitar to ask "When's lunch, Mum?" while the other says "I'm starving". The advertisement ends with the slogan "Iceland makes it easy..." and a male voice adds "...for Mum".

5 METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

Due to the sensitivity of recruiting people who fitted particular stereotypes, a range of qualitative methodologies was used, including 'full' group discussions, 'micro' groups and paired and individual depth interviews. Some categories of people, for example those with a particular disability, were represented by only one or two respondents so these findings cannot be regarded as a definitive account of these groups' views. They must, therefore, be treated with caution.

The 'micro' groups contained three or four people representing particular segments of society. These included parents of children with some 'disability' or stereotyped characteristic; people of African Caribbean, Asian and Chinese ethnic origin; people with a serious weight problem; men who were bald, had beards or wore glasses; older women, etc. These groups lasted for one-and-a-half hours.

Single-sex paired depths were carried out among Muslims, and a mixture of single-sex and mixed-sex paired depths with people with disabilities. These ranged from mobility impairments and speech impediments to emotional or mental problems, such as obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Single-sex paired depths were also conducted among children aged 10 – 15 years. A mix of ethnic minorities and social classes were represented and all the children had 'stereotyped' characteristics, such as being overweight, wearing glasses or being academic. The depth interviews lasted one hour.

In order to place reactions to stereotyping in context, there were two General Public groups, with eight respondents in each, none of whom were selected for any particular stereotype characteristic. The groups were mixed in terms of gender and life stages, and included 20-50-year-olds. One group contained BC1s, half of whom said they had at some time been offended by television advertising, and half who said they had never been offended. The other General Public group consisted of C2DEs, who all claimed never to have been offended by advertising on television. These groups lasted for two hours and were shown the 'clutter' tape and a mixed reel of examples of stereotyping.

Most of the groups and depth interviews contained a mix of those who said they had never been offended by television advertising and those who said they had. Half the respondents came from multichannel homes. The groups were held around the country, ensuring a spread of locations including Scotland and Wales. This enabled regionality, and the way people from different parts of the country felt they were portrayed in advertising, to be explored.

There were three distinct sections to the discussions.

- 1) All respondents were warmed up with an initial discussion about their general television viewing before being asked what they thought about advertisements. They were given no intimation that the research would focus on stereotyping in advertising because one of the aims was to find out how much of a concern this was compared to other issues surrounding advertising.

- 2) They were then shown a 'clutter' reel containing a selection of different advertisements representing a variety of advertising issues such as nudity, potentially dangerous behaviour, etc, as well as stereotyping. Respondents

recorded their spontaneous reactions to the advertisements on a self-completion sheet and these subsequently were explored. Any spontaneous mentions of stereotyping were discussed, but still just as one subject amongst many.

3) The 'stereotyped' groups and individuals were then shown one of a range of relevant 'tailored' reels. These contained advertisements featuring stereotypes of characteristics often associated with members of the group in question. The General Public groups were shown a selection from the tailored reels. Again, respondents recorded and explored their reactions. It was only at this point that the discussions focused on the issue of stereotyping. Respondents' views about any objectionable elements, as well as any mitigating factors, were probed.

It is important to bear in mind that respondents' reactions to any particular stereotype were likely to have been influenced by the specific qualities and impacts of the advertisements chosen to illustrate it.

For further details of the demographics of the sample, see Appendix 2.

The study was designed, and fieldwork carried out between 25 July – 15 August 2000, by Wendy Hayward, John Rose, Jeannette Croft and Leah Sims of The Qualitative Consultancy.

6 MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 GENERAL ATTITUDES TO ADVERTISING

During the warm-up discussion, negative opinions were frequently expressed about television advertisements. Many respondents found them irritating because they interrupted their viewing. Some felt the advertising breaks had got longer. (Others thought they offered a useful opportunity to channel surf or to make a cup of tea.)

In addition, advertisements were not always understood. Respondents believed there was a trend towards commercials being unnecessarily obscure or cryptic. They claimed to prefer a more literal approach.

“Sometimes I watch and think, I wonder what that was trying to advertise.”
(FEMALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

“You’re looking and you think.....what? What? Have I lost the plot?”
(GENERAL PUBLIC, C2DE, BIRMINGHAM)

“Some of them you can’t tell what they are advertising. And that’s a bit strange, because you watch it and you don’t know what it’s advertising.”
(15 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE)

If there was not a strong link between the product and the execution, many felt the advertisement was rather pointless. A majority felt any product message was lost if the creative treatment was too obscure, for example through the use of very obscure humour or irony. Older respondents most often held this opinion.

Many claimed that they tended to ignore advertisements and frequently could not remember the brand names of the products advertised, although others thought that commercials helped bring new products to their attention.

“Actually, I don’t think ads make an impact on me. I don’t think they could sell me anything through an ad.”
(OLDER WOMEN, 50-70 YEARS, NEWCASTLE)

“I think some adverts do... sway you to buy... or at least... I mean if you’re undecided.”
(OLDER WOMEN, 50-70 YEARS, NEWCASTLE)

There was some concern amongst adults, especially parents, about younger audiences who were felt to be more susceptible to advertisements. The 10-15-year-olds in the study, however, felt they were more than capable of resisting advertising influences, although they raised concerns about children younger than themselves.

Notably, spontaneous mentions of advertisements that were disliked included some commercials selected by the ITC to be shown at a later point in the discussion because they might be problematic. These were *Ambrosia*, *Tango Orange*, *Freeserve*, *Typhoo Tea*¹ and *Tunes*².

“The custard one. (Ambrosia) There is a bloke sitting on a cow going ‘ooh arr’. We notice stuff like that.....”

(FEMALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

“You’ve got the one with the ‘two thumbs fresh’ (Typhoo Tea) – I saw that and I thought it was really corny. I think they are trying to portray that Indians are stupid and they are not stupid....”

(MALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, BC1, BIRMINGHAM)

Pot Noodle was also mentioned spontaneously as containing an objectionable stereotype of young Welsh men. Responses to these commercials will be discussed more fully later on in the report.

Not all views about advertising were negative. Some advertisements were thought to be a source of good entertainment, especially if they had high production values and interesting storylines, or a particularly surreal style. A few were seen almost as mini films. The use of humour and music was appreciated and intrigue or novelty could work as a hook, drawing viewers’ interest.

“I like funny adverts.”

(10 YEAR OLD GIRL, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, MANCHESTER)

“I remember ones with a catchy tune.”

(FEMALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

“They do some cracking ones. They’re actually like mini films. I quite like them actually.”

(MALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

In addition, UK advertising was held in higher regard than advertising from other countries, as shown on programmes such as *Tarrant on TV*.

6.2 REACTIONS TO EXAMPLES OF ADVERTISEMENTS After the warm-up discussion, the general ‘clutter’ reel was shown. It was designed to illustrate a range of advertising issues and many of the commercials had been the subject of complaints. The aim was to allow any spontaneous comments about stereotyping to be compared with other concerns about advertising. To add further context, a number of commercials were included which were deemed neutral; that is, they were thought unlikely to be problematic in any way.

1. Typhoo Tea: With fixed grins and exaggerated enthusiasm, workers on an Indian tea plantation make a pantomime of demonstrating the freshness of everything involved in growing tea for Typhoo. Their anglicised Indian boss Tommy describes the product in heavily accented English as ‘two thumbs fresh’.

2. Tunes: During an operatic production of *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, the subtitled translation of the disfigured hero’s Italian lyrics makes jokes about his disability. (For example, I have a hunch that Esmerelda doesn’t fancy me’). After sucking a Tunes sweet, his confidence is restored and he sings (in English) ‘I feel pretty’.

Respondents often reacted to each advertisement as it was introduced by simply saying whether they had enjoyed or understood it. Their initial comments frequently focused on an assessment of the relevance of the execution to the product. Any concerns about advertising portrayals (whether stereotyping or other issues) tended to emerge only as discussion re-focused on the question of possible offence or harm.

The range of material on the clutter reel was often viewed, in the first instance, simply as examples of a 'typical' advertising break, although a few respondents felt that some of the commercials were evidence of advertising 'lowering its standards'.

For a minority, stereotyping was a spontaneous concern which struck a personal chord. However, compared to other issues such as nudity and the risk of encouraging violence or dangerous emulation, it seemed not to be top of most respondents' list of concerns about advertising.

Responses to the advertisements were not always consistent: a number were criticised by some respondents but drew praise from others. There was some consistency, however, when it came to identifying the key underlying issues of concern.

In particular, respondents picked up on *Tango Orange* which was widely disliked. It raised strong concerns amongst most respondents, with the exception of the 10-15-year-olds, many of whom found it entertaining. Those 10-15s who did criticise it, tended to say it was irritating, rather than that it might cause bullying.

"The way they came into his space, and the constant repetition. I thought it was threatening."

(MALE, SPEECH IMPEDIMENT, READING)

"I was going to ask if anyone was in any way concerned about that advert. That maybe children at school might end up being bullied."

(FEMALE, HINDU, CHINGFORD)

"It gets a bit annoying after a while, but it's original."

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE,)

"I like it. It's really stupid like all the other Tango adverts. They're completely stupid and they're made to have a laugh. It's really funny."

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, 'CLEVER', NEWCASTLE)

Among adults, the overriding concern with *Tango Orange* was that it might encourage bullying. But the fact that the victim in the advertisement was very overweight was thought by many to stereotype overweight people.

“I think that looks like a chubby little boy who is being bullied.”

(OLDER WOMEN 50-70, NEWCASTLE)

“I can just imagine some kids who are perhaps bullied because of how they look would be very uncomfortable with that.”

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

“ And it’s not even an ordinary looking child....you’ve got all those people taunting a person....to taunt a person who was of ordinary size is bad enough, but to taunt a child who is chubby....anyway, I just don’t like it.”

(OLDER WOMEN, 50-70, NEWCASTLE)

Strong criticism was also directed at the *Citroën Xsara*³ and *Sega Dreamcast (German)* commercials. Although there were mixed reactions to *Citroën Xsara*, most female respondents felt it used female nudity to sell a product and, therefore, stereotyped and objectified women, although a minority found it aspirational. Men had much less of a problem with this advertisement.

“It is very sexist.”

(FEMALE, HINDU, CHINGFORD)

“I didn’t feel comfortable [watching it] in front of my mum and dad.”

(13 YEAR OLD GIRL, ‘CLEVER’, NEWCASTLE)

“Why did she have to take her clothes off to get into the car?”

(AFRICAN CARIBBEAN FEMALE, BC1, BIRMINGHAM)

“I just want to know why they don’t have a guy doing that. That’s sexist.”

(FEMALE, MOBILITY PROBLEMS, GLASGOW)

“I would like a body like that!”

(OLDER WOMAN, 50-70, NEWCASTLE)

“Sex sells.”

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

Sega Dreamcast (German) also received mixed reactions. Those who criticised it felt it stereotyped Germans although not everyone thought it was offensive.

“I can imagine if you were a German that would be very offensive.....”

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

“I saw it as a bit racist against Germans....”

(AFRICAN CARIBBEAN MALE, BC1, BIRMINGHAM)

3. Citroen Xsara: Claudia Schiffer gradually strips as she walks down a staircase. She goes into the car in her underwear and, just before driving away supposedly naked, drops her knickers out of the window.

“That was bang out of order. If that was portraying a black man, thick lips and that, you know, the white gloves and all of this, it would not be accepted. And I don’t see how it should or could be accepted because you are talking about another race.”

(AFRICAN CARIBBEAN MALE, C2DE, BRISTOL)

“I thought it was very anti-German actually.”

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

“I thought that was quite funny. It just typifies the Germans, although it’s racist, it’s still quite funny. “

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE)

“I just thought it was quite biased, but.....people might find that funny.”

(14 YEAR OLD GIRL, WEARS GLASSES, NEWCASTLE)

6.3 PROMPTED REACTIONS TO STEREOTYPING

The ‘tailored’ tapes provided further stimulus for exploring reactions to stereotyping. Each group was shown commercials featuring portrayals of people who shared the characteristic for which the respondents had been recruited. Not all the examples shown were negative. Where suitable advertisements were available, stereotypes which were likely to be seen as positive were included. (See Appendix II for full details of the material used for each group.) The General Public groups were shown a selection from the tailored tapes.

Inevitably, respondents’ reactions to particular issues were influenced by the specific advertisements selected for the study. There may well be other issues/ advertisements which would have produced different reactions if they had been included. That said, considerable care was taken not to focus too much attention on any particular issue.

As with the clutter reel, initial responses did not always focus on the stereotype elements but there were strong differences within and between groups. For some respondents, stereotyping was much more of an issue than for others.

Some advertisements were regarded as contentious, with particular groups or individuals immediately finding them offensive. Others were recognised as having offensive potential only after reflective debate. Certain issues appeared to elicit more extreme, heartfelt responses than others.

The strength of response to stereotyping often seemed to be influenced by the extent to which the viewer felt a sense of personal identification with the stereotype. But membership of a ‘vulnerable’ group did not always sensitise viewers to depictions of stereotypes. For example, disabled viewers were not especially sensitive to images of disability that other respondents predicted would cause offence.

There was some evidence of a desire on the part of particular respondents to 'take up the cudgels' on behalf of others. In a sense, their social consciences demanded it.

Many expressed feelings of discomfort or embarrassment after watching *Reed Employment*, which made use of a racist stereotype. Although there was a twist in the tale, it came too late for these respondents. Some said they felt tricked into making a racist assumption, which they resented.

"I thought the Reed Employment was unnecessary in that it's making you think that you're prejudiced because you see this clean-cut, white bloke walking down the street and the black bloke, with an unusual haircut, coming out of a phone box, aiming straight at him, and it's making you think, 'Oh I'm prejudiced'...."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

"I think it's a very very cheap trick doing that when we're trying to be much less prejudiced, to just reinforce people's prejudices like that."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

"I find it personally offensive. I mean they're more or less insinuating that every white person looks at every black person in that way, you know, that is insulting to me..."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

6.4 THE UNDERLYING ISSUES

Despite the small samples and highly individual responses to particular advertisements, the study produced sufficient evidence to justify giving an *indication* of what stereotyping issues were uppermost in people's minds.

The strength of reaction to a stereotype seemed to be driven, at least in part, by the saliency of the issue or 'ism' to which it related. Whether the issue had been a recent high profile issue in the press is also likely to have been a factor. For example, racism evoked particularly strong reactions. *Reed Employment* aroused offence because it made use of an extremely negative stereotype, that young black men are 'naturally' criminally inclined. It was perceived to be guilty of racism, especially, but not exclusively, by ethnic respondents.

(i) Body Image

This issue was felt to affect almost everyone to some degree, although there were some individuals who felt a particularly strong and personal identification with it.

Concerns relating to the body or self-image focused on advertisers' choice of people with a stereotypical 'ideal' shape to promote their products. This stereotype was seen sometimes to be reinforced by the use of 'non-ideal' people, for example,

those who were overweight, 'ugly', or 'nerds', to portray non-users of their products. Most respondents felt there was a widespread failure to reflect, let alone celebrate, the great diversity of people with different shapes and sizes. Respondents thought this kind of media preoccupation put pressure on people to conform to a certain image. At worst, this was considered to endorse a kind of 'body fascism' where one only felt included and accepted in society if one had a certain image or shape.

"Every time there's an advert for nice things, it's always portrayed by a nice looking girl with a nice figure...."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, C2DE, BIRMINGHAM)

"Serious ads have got beautiful women and the funny ads have got the defects. You know, overweight, or stupid, or geeky."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, C2DE, BIRMINGHAM)

"I think in advertising they should advertise for everyone, not just for the skinny people. And they should not just take the mickey out of fat people."

(FEMALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

"I think in television nowadays, the people that are overweight are always the ones that are getting the mickey taken out of them. It just seems to me that if you are not a perfect size 10....."

(FEMALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

"I think it is saying only good looking people buy this."

(MALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

This area was a key concern for women, which may partly be a reflection of recent media attention to such issues. There has been much debate, including at government level, about the use of very thin models by the media; there is heightened awareness of the dangers of anorexia and bulimia and there is perceived pressure on young girls in particular to be thin.

Body image is something that could concern everyone, yet it appeared to be less of an issue for men, with the exception of those with serious weight problems. It was an especially prominent issue for young girls and something of concern to both male and female parents.

"What they should do instead of having a size 8 person, they should get a 14 in the middle standing there."

(MALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

"It makes people envious and they think 'she is nice' and stuff like that. I don't think they should do that. Everybody is different and various sizes."

(10 YEAR OLD GIRL, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, MANCHESTER)

“One of those advertising models again. Young children want to be like models – skinny.”

(13 YEAR OLD GIRL, ‘CLEVER’, NEWCASTLE)

“I feel that I am fat and all my friends are slim and I am fat.”

(13 YEAR OLD GIRL, ‘CLEVER’, NEWCASTLE)

“What offends me, and it is especially aimed at viewers, is these bloody skinny models. They are twigs and these young lassies are looking at it and they are all going anorexic because of these ads. And that gets me.”

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

“I get annoyed with the car adverts that they have when they have like Claudia Schiffer doing the Citroen and all that. I just keep thinking, well a fat woman like me can drive one of them. Why does she have to like undress and go completely naked and drive one of those. So I get annoyed with that. Because life is not a role model, so they shouldn’t have super models doing it, life is all shapes and sizes.”

(FEMALE, MUSLIM, SLOUGH)

Those who were overweight said that advertising often made them feel self conscious about being so. They strongly objected to *Lucozade*⁴ and found the version used in the study offensive, to the extent that they felt it should be banned. (The ITC received a significant number of complaints about this advertisement and did uphold them. The advertiser edited the commercial, removing the ‘Fat Slags’ slogan, but the cartoon image of grossly overweight women rejecting the weight control product remained.).

“It is like saying that people who are fat won’t like the drink because it is low calorie.”

(MALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

“It’s misrepresenting fat people.”

(MALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

“I think that one (Lucozade) should be banned.”

(FEMALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

Actimel⁵ and Lilt⁶ also raised concerns but not to the point where overweight respondents thought they should be taken off air.

“She (Actimel) looks anorexic.....”

(FEMALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

4. Lucozade: This cartoon commercial opened with the title “The Fat Slags”. These are two extremely fat, unhealthy characters from Viz magazine. In the advertisement, they object fiercely to any healthy, weight control product being put in their fridge.

5. Actimel: An extremely slim “model and mum” promotes this yoghurt drink with a health message.

6. Lilt: Two irrepressibly cheerful, overweight, black West Indian women in brightly coloured clothes take on two rather dull white weather forecasters in a mock wrestling match. They force the men to drink Lilt in an attempt to “put some sunshine” into their lives.

*Krisprolls*⁷ was seen to be visually offensive, but responses were muted by people's incomprehension of the advertising approach. *Tango Orange* too was regarded as raising weight issues but these were overridden by other concerns, notably emulation.

Views of disabled viewers

People with specific disabilities also reported feeling excluded, pressurised or insulted by the 'perfect body' syndrome, especially when their condition was visible to themselves and to others.

But, as well as advertisements which focus on 'perfection', there are many which play on traits other than size and shape. For example, characteristics such as shaking, limping, blindness, mild speech impairments, obsessive behaviour etc can be the basis of humour. Some respondents in the General Public Groups, especially those who knew people with a disability, felt that these kinds of advertisements were likely to cause offence to disabled viewers.

"Some kid's going to be hurt by seeing that (Tunes). This girl (we know), she's had steel rods put in her back. It hasn't straightened it out. She's got a bit of a hunch. She's very conscious of it. She's sat there with her family and an advert like that comes on..."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

But, there was little evidence that disabled respondents themselves were offended by the advertisements in the study which used disability themes as a tool for humour. This seemed to be because of the presence of mitigating factors, such as the use of a fictional character, or self-deprecation by a celebrity. For example, in the case of the character in *Tunes*, he was clearly based on the *Hunchback of Notre-Dame*.

"There again, that is the Hunchback of Notre Dame. It has been played by Charles Lawton, Anthony Quinn. It is a famous book and character."

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

Chris Eubank is a well-known personality and, in the *Nescafe*⁸ advertisement which closes with the banner reading 'Thimply the betht', he was considered to be positively trading on his mild speech impediment. He was seen as being in control of the situation and was not perceived to be vulnerable in any way.

"He has got a lisp and he is taking the mickey out of himself, instead of someone putting it on."

(FEMALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

Some of these advertisements were perceived to have used humour successfully. In the case of *Marbles.com*, the joke about a man who doesn't dare leave his

7. Krisprolls: An obese man, naked to the waist, scratches his back against a tree.

8. Nescafe: The commercial features boxer Chris Eubank's slight speech impediment, closing on a banner reading "Thimply the betht"

chair because of his obsessional notion that another man will sit in it, it was too obscure or surreal to cause much offence.

Additionally, there seemed to be an understandable reluctance among disabled respondents to define themselves by their disability. As a result, they appeared, on occasions, not to 'see' themselves in advertisements, even when their particular disability was featured. This may sometimes have led them to overlook the way in which the disability was being used or portrayed.

There were some questions raised about the 'commercial exploitation' of disability in relation to advertisements such as *Fuji Film*⁹ and *Freeserve* but the potential for positive presentation of disabled people in advertising was also recognised. For example, respondents spontaneously cited the *BT* advertisement with Stephen Hawking, who is a well-known and respected public figure, as an example of an advertisement featuring a disabled person in a positive light – in control of the situation and his world despite using a wheelchair and speaking via a voice synthesiser.

Some applauded *Freeserve* as an example of a disabled woman being shown as independent.

".....and on Freeserve, what I've said whenever I've seen the ad: 'Who is the runner?' It's brilliant, walking on springs like that and running. She is fantastic...."

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, BIRMINGHAM)

"I think she's got a lot of guts to get back into the business she was in before. Presumably it's the result of an accident, the disability she has, and she's just so good. I've got so much respect for her."

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, BIRMINGHAM)

"It's quite aspirational. It shows that you can have a disability and still be a model. I think if it is exploiting it, then it is in the best possible way."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

"I thought it was good. It's subverting stereotyping. She's a model, but she doesn't have legs and she can still be a model."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

But, this advertisement caused discomfort to some viewers without a disability, as well as significant confusion. Many were unsure about whether the woman had legs or not. Also, they were unsettled by their perception of sado-masochistic undertones present in the visuals.

9. *Fuji Film*: This shows a supermarket shelf filler who has a mental disability. The commercial suggests that, although people are inclined to stare, a good photographer with the right kind of film can present a more positive image.

“It was really bizarre.....I didn’t know what on earth they were doing, or where it was leading.....”

“It was obscure...”

“I thought she did have legs but...they were just freaky shoes.”

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

“When I first saw it I couldn’t understand it, couldn’t make out what it was for...”

“No, I didn’t know that she was disabled....”

“I just thought that she had a funny costume on.”

(GENERAL PUBLIC, C2DE, BIRMINGHAM)

(ii) Racism

Another key area of concern across the sample was racism. The primary focus in the study was on advertisements featuring members of ethnic minorities but examples of stereotyping of other European groups were also shown.

Racism and racist attitudes were recognised as widely present in society and as an issue which received significant media coverage. Advertising was regarded by many as a medium via which racism could be either reinforced or challenged, for example, by the presence or absence of ethnic minority participants, and by the ways in which they were portrayed on screen.

“.....they never have good-looking (Chinese) guys on telly. They have fat ones or ugly ones. They make the Chinese look so stupid. That is not a real image. That is really outdated.”

(MALE, CHINESE, MANCHESTER)

“Only thing that really annoys me is every time when they are showing any advert to do with oriental people. I just want to turn it off because it doesn’t reflect the real oriental people nowadays. The way they portray them is disgraceful and I just look the other way.”

(MALE, CHINESE, MANCHESTER)

“The Cornflakes ad....I was shocked when I saw black people eating Cornflakes, and I thought, they do eat breakfast, but that is the only one [advert] that sticks in my mind. I was amazed to see an advert reflecting something that is normal.”

(FEMALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, C2DE, BRISTOL)

Respondents expressed different perspectives in relation to racism as an issue.

- Ethnic minority respondents, for whom portrayal in the media was a personal issue, recognised the potential for some advertisements to cause insult or offence,

either to their own ethnic group or to another. However, there was not always agreement as to which advertisements crossed the offence boundary.

- Some white respondents found racist stereotypes very offensive to their personal beliefs and also felt that society was doing itself an injustice by not including and celebrating the diversity of ethnic groups in the UK.
- Other white respondents gave the impression that they felt they *should* object to overtly racist advertisements either because they were parents and felt they should set a good example to their children or because enlightened attitudes were now expected or because not to do so might unmask some hidden racism within them.
- In addition, there was a sense that a few white respondents held less liberal views that they were reluctant to air in a group context, especially once non-racists had expressed their views. These individuals looked uncomfortable when racism was discussed and took little part in the group discussion on this particular issue.

The advertisements which caused objections and, to a greater or lesser extent, offence were *Reed Employment*, *Sega Dreamcast (German)*, *Typhoo Tea*, *Lilt*, *Snapple*¹⁰, *British Airways*, *Malibu (Fishermen)*¹¹, *McDonald's Chinese Menu*¹², and *National Dairy Council*¹³.

As mentioned previously, *Reed Employment* was by far the most contentious advertisement. It was widely seen as overtly racist, not just by ethnic minority groups.

"I think it was portraying that black people were pickpockets, even though the guy was putting something back...."

(MALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, BC1, BIRMINGHAM)

"The whole point is that they're going to show you that he's a real nice guy, but they've done the damage in the first place by putting a stereotype in. The way he's looking, he's in the call box, looking at his target and people are now thinking that this is a criminal, going to mug...."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

"I think it is wrong that they even showed that ..."

(FEMALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

Typhoo Tea was criticised by many of the Asian respondents for portraying people from their background and culture in a patronising way. Other respondents also thought the portrayal could be deemed offensive.

10. Snapple: An ethnic Asian husband and wife stand stiffly outside their small foodstore in a poor part of London while the woman describes the goods they sell. Both speak in heavily accented English. The man says only Naturally in response to each of his wife's comments until, in a flat voice at the end, he reels off the name and address of their shop.

11. Malibu ("Fishermen"): This comic parody of an intensive management training course shows black islanders on a Caribbean beach taking part in the kind of ridiculous activities they might undergo if they wanted to become highly motivated fishermen. A voice comments that "If we Caribbeans took life as seriously as the rest of the world then we'd never have invented Malibu" because it's "seriously easy going".

12. MacDonalds Chinese Menu: This parody of cheap 1970's Kung-Fu movies shows a gang of Chinese villains attempting to steal the "traditional" MacDonald's Chinese recipes. The white store manager defeats them.

13. National Dairy Council: This cartoon commercial caricatures the boxers Prince Naseem and Chris Ewbank as being afraid of a spider. They are rescued by a milk-drinking little girl (who also has dark skin). The commercial closes on a glass of milk and the slogan "The white stuff. Are you made of it?"

“If that was shown in an Asian country, I would definitely say it would have a place there. But in England, I would think they were trying to run me down.”
(MALE, MUSLIM, SLOUGH)

“I get very offended when someone talks like that because we are away from that accent. That is how we were stereotyped years and years ago. We do not talk like that now.”
(FEMALE, MUSLIM, SLOUGH)

“I thought the tea one was really bad. It was just portraying them as being stupid.”
(FEMALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, BC1, BIRMINGHAM)

“It’s tongue-in-cheek to us, but to an Indian person it’s probably offensive.”
(MALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, BC1, BIRMINGHAM)

“It makes them look like a race of really ignorant natives.....very patronising.”
(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

There were similar reactions to *Snapple*. This advertisement shows an ethnic Asian husband and wife standing stiffly outside their small food store in a poor part of London while the woman describes the goods they sell. Both speak in heavily accented English. The man says only ‘Naturally’ in response to each of his wife’s comments until, in a flat voice at the end, he reels off the name and address of their shop.

“I think they were made to look a bit stupid really, especially the woman.”
(FEMALE, MUSLIM, SLOUGH)

“I am broader and wider and that narrows me.”
(MALE, MUSLIM SLOUGH)

“Again, I wrote down ‘accent not clear’. I couldn’t really understand what they were trying to say. And again, they were stereotyping, weren’t they? Asian people have corner shops.....I didn’t like that one very much.”
(FEMALE, HINDU, CHINGFORD)

Comments about some of the other advertisements included:

(Malibu ‘Bus’)¹⁴ ‘The stereotypical view of the black man is that you are always late, always laid back.’
(MALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, C2DE, BRISTOL)

14. Malibu (‘Bus’): The (black) passengers on a bus in the Caribbean seem very concerned about the bus being a couple of minutes late. But it is soon revealed that this is a fantasy. A voice points out that it would be impossible for the West Indians who created a ‘seriously easy going drink’ like Malibu to be stressed. (This commercial is one of a series. See above.)

(Lilt) "I can imagine it will make a lot of white people giggle away. Oh look at them, they are so full of life. They are so funny. But it is not offensive, it is just misrepresented....."

(FEMALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, C2DE, BRISTOL)

In some advertisements, the racist issues were considered low key, insignificant or obscured. For example, *Barclaycard*¹⁵, *Oriental Express*¹⁶ and *Malibu (Fishermen)*. Across the board, these advertisements tended to arouse less offence, although there were one or two Chinese respondents who were more sensitive to negative portrayals of their ethnic group. For example, these respondents disliked the use of the slogan in *Oriental Express*, a cartoon of a 'traditional' Chinese man (with Fu Manchu-style moustache and tunic) who excitedly praises the Chinese ready-meals in heavily accented English. The slogan 'It's Mental Oriental' appears. The fact that the advertisement was a cartoon lessened the potential for offence, but still some Chinese respondents felt that it was a negative portrayal.

Some advertisements were viewed in a positive light because they were seen to subvert traditional stereotypes. *Homepride Curry* was liked because it featured British Asians with Scottish accents.

"I thought it was very inventive of Homepride to actually stick their neck out and say it is a Scottish accent, Indian person, Asian person. It is breaking away from the stereotypes and introducing a new look. And you think, 'Oh look at him!'..."

(MALE, HINDU, CHINGFORD)

"Yes, I have always liked them. Over the years I have actually seen those ads change. I actually liked that they did use an Asian man, but he actually had a Scottish accent. That means that wherever you live, you get the accent and that is quite nice."

(FEMALE, MUSLIM, SLOUGH)

Over and above their immediate reactions, some respondents recognised the potential for cumulative damage by racially stereotyped advertising. They felt 'someone' (i.e. a regulatory body) needed to take a longer-term view.

(iii) Regionalism

Regionalism was quite a key issue. The research, conducted across the UK, included a number of advertisements which played heavily on regional stereotypes. Most respondents felt they were justified to a degree in defending their roots, particularly if they felt people from their part of the country were being portrayed as simple or stupid. So any media that portrayed any regional group in a negative, erroneous, or limiting way were likely to inflame passions.

15. Barclaycard: Angus Deyton sarcastically describes the coarseness and lack of sophistication. Western visitors must put up with a holiday in an unspecified country in south-eastern Europe or the Middle East.

16. Oriental Express: A cartoon 'traditional' Chinese man (with Fu Manchu-style moustache and tunic) excitedly praises the Chinese ready-meals in heavily accented English. The slogan 'It's Mental Oriental' appears.

Generally, television programmes were felt to be more at fault than advertising for negative stereotyping of the Scots, Irish, Welsh and people from the West Country, etc. But several advertisements, such as *Ambrosia* and *Pot Noodle* were criticised spontaneously for making use of negative stereotypes. Respondents from the West Country and from Wales respectively, found these advertisements offensive.

“Don’t like the Ambrosia one. I’ve got relatives in the West Country and they don’t speak like Worzels. There’s quite a lot of adverts where they show them with hats and straw in their mouth and they do make a fool of them.”

(FEMALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

(Ambrosia) “I have been on the receiving end of that.”

(MALE, AFRICAN CARIBBEAN, C2DE, BRISTOL)

(Pot Noodle) “To me they are just making Welsh people look thick.”

(MALE, PORT TALBOT)

“We don’t sit on cows and we don’t go ‘ooh arr.”

(FEMALE, OVERWEIGHT, PLYMOUTH)

“Och aye, we are always portrayed as drunk!!”

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

“They think we are walking about up here with kilts and heather growing out of our ears. They seem to forget that we invented the bloody television.”

(MALE, MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT, GLASGOW)

“The London people say we (Geordies) are a bit thick in the head, but we are not.”

(12 YEAR OLD GIRL, WEARS GLASSES, NEWCASTLE)

(iv) Sexism

Sexism was an issue with which respondents were familiar and with which they could identify, although it was not perhaps as ‘hot’ an issue as might have been expected given the number of examples shown which featured men, women, boys and girls in traditional, gender-specific roles.

Nevertheless, women, in particular, were alert to the presence of sexist stereotypes, including (as discussed earlier under Body Image) the use of women with ‘perfect skinny bodies’ to sell products. They recognised such portrayals in *Actimel* and *Citroen Xsara*.

Another well-known stereotype cited by respondents was showing women in outdated, traditional roles. But they were torn between criticism of such portrayals and acceptance that some of these depictions were simply based on how the world still operates. Examples of advertisements which respondents felt did this were *Iceland* and *British Airways*.

(British Airways) "Most of the girls were doing office jobs. And the boys were doing loads of different jobs. I think they should be mixed as that is being sexist."

(12 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, MANCHESTER)

"But I think that happens in real life, doesn't it?"

(15 YEAR OLD GIRL, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE)

(Iceland) "It was just the perfect family, wasn't it....."

....well most women make the meals anyway....

...yes, I think most women do the jobs around the house."

(12 -13 YEAR OLD GIRLS, WEAR GLASSES /'CLEVER', NEWCASTLE)

"They show women shopping, show women ironing, we're still back in the dark ages."

(FEMALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

"It's not always women who shop"

(FEMALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

"I shop, I like shopping."

(MALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

"I've written down 'sexist'."

(FEMALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

Most of the advertisements showing potentially sexist stereotypes did not seem to cross the 'offence barrier' with the women interviewed. This seemed to reflect the fact that, to some degree, society (and some women) has become inured to stereotyped media portrayals of women. Women have negotiated some equality across many areas of their lives, such as in educational, social and employment spheres. This may have equipped them to deal with sexism in a more dismissive way. However, some brands obviously feel it is to their advantage to present their female customers as individuals in control of their lives and finances, which some respondents felt more accurately reflected their own experience or was, at least, more aspirational.

As with racism, media endorsement or encouragement of sexism was thought to operate on a covert, slow-drip basis. This was the view often put forward on

reflection. Advertising was considered to be as guilty as any other medium, but sexism in advertising was not always easy to spot. For example, the sexism in the *British Airways* advertisement was not thought to be obvious as the action and sentiment overshadowed this element.

Many current advertisements were seen effectively to play upon the current 'ladette' culture amongst the target market of young, 'feisty', independent women, capable of giving as good as they got. This was thought to have positive spin-offs for all women. In addition, the 'reverse sexism' that appeared in some advertising, for example, *Fiat Punto*¹⁷ ('Men eh?') and ('Women eh?') was believed to balance and offset any potential for offence, especially when they were both shown in the same advertisement break.

"The two of them (Fiat Punto ads) showed men are not sexist, nor are women"

(MALE, PARENTS, GLASGOW)

"I find them quite patronising, like stereotypes, but I think men would identify with the one for men and they would find that amusing, and I think women would find the one with the woman amusing."

(14 YEAR OLD GIRL, WEARS GLASSES, NEWCASTLE)

"I thought that the first one was an advert for women and the second one was an advert for men. They were very funny when they were put together, separately they weren't so good."

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE)

A few respondents mentioned some of the advertisements as examples of the way men were excluded, or portrayed as incompetent. Negative portrayals of men in advertising represents a relatively new angle on the issue of sexism. The ITC has received complaints about this from men who perceive it as a growing trend. However, most of the male respondents in this small study had not noticed, or were unworried by men being portrayed as 'pathetic', 'nerds', 'boffins', 'sex objects' or 'beef cakes'. Similarly, there was very little evidence from this research to show that men were concerned about stereotypical portrayals of physical characteristics, such as baldness, beards etc.

(v) Ageism

In most respects, Ageism was not a major issue. The majority of adult respondents felt that the signs of ageing were visible everywhere, even in their own behaviour and in the way much older people behaved. This being the case, mild 'negative' characteristics of older people portrayed in the media were often just taken as 'the truth', for example, *Bisto*¹⁸ and *Carte d'Or*¹⁹. In the *Bisto* advertisement an elderly grandmother confides to the viewers that she uses her 'dodderly old girl routine' to get more gravy than the rest of the family by pretending her hands shake when holding the gravy boat. And in *Carte d'Or* a

17. Fiat Punto ('Men, eh?'): A young, Scottish female driver explains wryly why the car is perfect for men. For example, she describes the 'new torsion beam suspension' as something interesting for men to talk about 'when the football season's finished'.

Fiat Punto ('Women, eh?'): A young male driver explains wryly why the car is perfect for women. For example, he describes how 'You can make the power steering even lighter with this special girly button.'

18. Bisto: An elderly grandmother confides in the viewers that she uses her 'dodderly old girl routine' to get more gravy than the rest of the family by pretending her hands shake when holding the gravy boat.

19. Carte D'Or: A slightly senile granny embarrasses her family by revealing that her son is not her grandson's real father.

slightly senile granny embarrasses her family by revealing that her son is not her grandson's real father.

"I think the Carte d'Or one is typical of a granny..."

"Yes, I liked that one...."

"Yes....funny but true...."

"And the Bisto one as well...."

"It's a fact of life."

(OLDER WOMEN, 50 – 70, NEWCASTLE)

"Lots of old people think that they have got the right to say exactly what comes to their mind....and they say it....I don't think that there is anything offensive about that one [Carte d'Or]...."

(GENERAL PUBLIC, BC1, SUNBURY)

"I felt as though it (Bisto) was taking the mickey out of the old lady....with her shaking so much.....sort of thing....."

"She was doing that on purpose, wasn't she?...."

"Well I know, but I mean....to me it reflects on what they think very elderly people are like....and we're not all like that...."

"I thought it was still the wise old lady with the Bisto....so although she was pretending she was shaking, she wasn't really...."

"I think my own mum would find them quite amusing."

(OLDER WOMEN, 50 – 70, NEWCASTLE)

For most people, any potential for mild offence from these two advertisements was reduced by their humour. But, *Bisto* did cause offence to one older female respondent who was upset by the portrayal of the granny shaking the gravy boat and looking physically 'out of control'. She did not pick up on the ironic element of the advertisement, where it is revealed that the granny fakes her 'incapacity' in order to pour all the gravy on to her plate.

The 'hysterical, middle aged mother-in-law' stereotype in *Kleenex Velvet*²⁰ and *Tesco*²¹ raised little concern. They were simply regarded as a well-worn joke.

20. Kleenex Velvet: A snobbish, pushy woman in late middle age (similar to Hyacinth Bucket of 'Keeping Up Appearances') interferes with her niece's minimalist decor by adding a tasteless toilet seat cover.

21. Tesco: Prunella Scales, as a bossy mother who manipulates her daughter.

“I thought that was quite funny actually....”
It’s a typical mum interfering.” (Kleenex Velvet)
(FEMALE, MUSLIM, SLOUGH)

Most respondents felt that, overall, advertisements about older people were reasonably well balanced. They could cite examples of advertisements where older people were portrayed as more sophisticated and as valued customers, for example, *Saga, Tena Lady* and examples of insurance and pension advertising. But there was recognition that this could be an area for potential offence, depending on the advertising treatment.

(vi) Bullying

Some advertisements were included in the reels to explore whether the way children were featured was likely to lead to or condone bullying or rejection by their peers.

Respondents pointed out a number of triggers. They noticed that children depicted as ‘boffins’ were often portrayed wearing glasses, speaking ‘posh’, wearing unfashionable clothes and sometimes being overweight, shy or lacking in confidence. Similarly, ‘nerds’ and/or unintelligent kids tended to be shown wearing glasses, as overweight, or wearing unfashionable clothes. These triggers were thought to be strong ‘boffin’ or ‘nerd’ signifiers which some of the younger respondents felt could have an affect on how ‘vulnerable’ children were treated by their peers.

“Thick-rimmed glasses and brown hairhe had a straight face, no smile and he was reading a book.” (V Tech)²²
(12 YEAR OLD GIRL, WEARS GLASSES, NEWCASTLE)

“Usually people say that ugly people are swots, but that’s not true.”
(13 YEAR OLD GIRL, ‘CLEVER’, NEWCASTLE)

(Twix)²³ “I think wearing the helmet and the glasses makes him look a little bit like a nerd.”
(15 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE)

“Well, he is supposed to be the geek sort of thing, wearing his glasses, reading his computer manual. So it is a bit of a stereotype” (V-Tech).
(15 YEAR OLD BOY , ‘CLEVER’, NEWCASTLE)

“They would tease you if you wear glasses.”
(11 YEAR OLD BOY, WEARS GLASSES, MANCHESTER)

22. V-Tech WhizKid: A “cool” kid (good-looking; baseball cap) shows off his new computer to his companion who is called “Brains” and is a fat, boring boy in glasses. When told that ‘two of us can play’, Brains gets enthusiastic but the cool boy turns instead to a girl.

23. Twix: Within a colour commercial, a dull and ultra-cautious man called Norm is presented in black and white. He is boring and, as part of his ‘nerd’ outfit, is wearing a cycle safety helmet.

“I don’t think it helped how he was quite fat as well. It may be that he was bullied even more.”

TANGO ORANGE

These advertisements were not believed to be creating new harmful stereotypes but it was thought that they could reinforce caricatures which kids already focused on.

“I would say that advertising builds on existing stereotypes. It doesn’t create new ones.”

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE)

Stereotyping as a potential cause of bullying was an important subject for both parents and children. Advertisements, such as *Tango Orange*, which show violent or bullying behaviour worried parents and a few of the children. Some of the 10-15s in this study felt that children younger than them should be protected from such advertising, but most of them, personally, found it entertaining or, at worst, irritating.

“I don’t think any of them are completely shocking to take off. Maybe the Tango one could be the most offensive just because of the bullying.”

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, ‘CLEVER’, NEWCASTLE)

“Well ads can upset people, but they need a sense of humour.”

(10 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, MANCHESTER)

“That advert set out to be quite funny, I think, so it wouldn’t be so harmful.”

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, OVERWEIGHT, NEWCASTLE)

6.5 YOUNG PEOPLE’S VIEWS ON STEREOTYPING

The young people in the research showed themselves to be alert to issues such as racism and sexism. They used the terms freely, probably as a result of educational and parental initiatives. Most felt confident about making up their own minds about such issues and claimed not to be personally susceptible to the influences of advertising.

(Iceland) “The mum should have got the boys to help really. Not just the girls.”

(AFRICAN CARIBBEAN GIRL, 10 YEARS OLD, MANCHESTER)

“If it was racist it should come off TV.”

(AFRICAN CARIBBEAN GIRL, 10 YEARS OLD, MANCHESTER)

(Fiat Punto pair) “Just girls against boys, battle of the sexes.”

(15 YEAR OLD BOY, ‘CLEVER’, NEWCASTLE)

“I wouldn’t say the Scalextric²⁴ one was exactly offensive, but it’s just the way he sort of ignores his daughter.....he wants to play Scalextric. I think that’s actually a bit unfair on men actually, cause I don’t think most men would actually do that.”

(14 YEAR OLD GIRL, WEARS GLASSES, NEWCASTLE)

6.6 LONGER-TERM EFFECTS

In addition to their immediate reactions, there was some concern among respondents that there were longer-term issues in the sense of cumulative or ‘slow-drip’ effects. Advertisements were seen by some as being guilty of creating or reinforcing stereotypes at a subtle or even subliminal level. But it was recognised that any effects over time would be very difficult to determine because there are so many other contributing factors. Instead, respondents felt regulators and broadcasters had to make ‘judgement calls’ on individual advertisements.

Although many considered stereotypes to be an essential tool of humour and that virtually any advertisement could give rise to offence to someone somewhere, they also felt there were boundaries that should not be crossed. Excessive regulation should be avoided but this raised the difficult question: “Where is it reasonable to draw the line?”

RISK ANALYSIS

6.7(i) MITIGATING FACTORS

In many cases, offence from potentially negative stereotypes was mitigated by the successful inclusion of one or more of the factors listed below. But mitigating factors were sometimes not successful, either because they were not clear enough or because the issue (‘ism’) was considered too serious for such attempts to work.

The mitigating factors which featured (whether successfully or not) in some of the advertisements shown in this study were as follows:

- a high level of creativity (eg *Ambrosia*: but fairly unsuccessful especially among West Country people)
- humour (eg *Bisto*: successful even with older women)
- a ‘satisfactory’ resolution to a contentious story (eg *Reed*: but unsuccessful for many across the board)
- including ‘balancing’ stereotypes (eg *Fiat Punto*: successful as a combination of matching male and female stereotypes)
- having the stereotyped person appear to be ‘in control’ rather than patronised (eg *Nescafe*: Chris Eubank was seen making fun of his own, mild disability, a lisp. Successful)

24. Scalextric: In a maternity ward, a new father is seen holding a baby boy and enthusing about the prospect of having Scalextric racing cars to play with. His bubble is burst when a nurse tells him to give that baby back to its family and pay attention to his own new baby daughter.

- using historical or well-known fictional characters, or celebrities (eg *Citroen Xsara*: partly successful; *Tunes*: successful)
- animation or fantasy rather than real life (eg *Lucozade*: largely unsuccessful; *Tunes*: successful)
- the use of animals (eg *PG Tips*²⁵: successful)
- an obscure/oblique reference to a stereotype (eg *Marbles.com*: successful in that it was not obvious that the strange behaviour was a reference to a real obsessive/compulsive syndrome)
- a stereotype which is generally regarded as an 'accurate' reflection of real life (*Sega Dreamcast (German)*: unsuccessful, especially when timing of the broadcast was noted – ie around *Euro 2000*)

6.7(ii) Respondents' reactions to the commercials shown were assessed to gauge the 'risk potential' for offensive stereotyping. Although individuals' responses to the advertisements varied, the following roughly ranks a number of them in risk order.

THE RISK CONTINUUM

Tango Orange

Of all the advertisements seen, *Tango Orange* was the most widely criticised by adults. There was common consent that it should be banned. Some were aware that it had been taken off air and the decision was supported. However, dislike of the advertisement was primarily based on a concern that it could encourage bullying. It was thought to be invasive and disturbing to watch. These concerns were reinforced by the use of a stereotype of an overweight boy as a natural target of the bullying. In addition, adults were concerned that the advertisement offered a direct invitation to children to behave similarly through the invitation 'Join in the fun'.

But, amongst children, the advertisement was popular. Many saw the behaviour and characters as funny. Ten to 15 year olds seemed especially to enjoy it but some of those children were nevertheless concerned about the possible effect of the commercial on the way younger children might be treated.

Reed Employment

The *Reed Employment* pickpocket advertisement was seen as an overt, even blatant, example of racist stereotyping. It was thought to capitalise on the most harmful stereotype of young, African Caribbean men – that they are 'naturally' criminally inclined. African Caribbean respondents, in particular, felt the advertisement had the potential to increase racial tensions. Many white respondents also regarded it as offensive because of its blatant stereotyping. The

25. PG Tips: The father in the PG Tips chimp family is teaching his daughter to drive. After various disasters, he asks her where she is driving him next – "Round the bend?"

perceptions of racism were heightened by the sinister, threatening ambience created from the outset. The 'positive' twist at the end of the advertisement was either not noticed, was considered to be too late to counter the initial negative impact or was seen as a cheap trick.

Judging by the reactions of a minority of white respondents, it had also the ability to cause discomfort. This discomfort seemed to be associated with a superficial 'that's true' initial response, followed by a sense of being tricked when their assumptions were challenged by the resolution at the end of the advertisement.

Sega Dreamcast (German)

Feelings surrounding *Sega Dreamcast* were less consistent. It was criticised for being overtly racist in a manner that could easily incite violence, particularly because of the challenge "Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough". This was especially the case when respondents were aware that it had been scheduled for advertising breaks during *Euro 2000*, or were given the information. It was felt to feed extreme right-wing views in an unacceptable way. The critics overwhelmingly were in favour of the advertisement being withdrawn even when there was acknowledgement that the irony in the advertisement, levelled against the English, helped reduce the negativity associated with the German stereotype.

But for some, the stereotyping was valid because they regarded it as an 'accurate' portrayal of the German nation, particularly the more light-hearted elements such as the towels on sunbeds. They saw the commercial as amusing but even these respondents recognised the potential it had to incite violence if broadcast during *Euro 2000*. As a result, even those who enjoyed it considered the creative idea for the advertisement irresponsible.

Children were much more likely to know that *Sega Dreamcast* is a computer game and that the advertisement was for a product based on a European war game scenario but there was considerable confusion about the nature of the product among adults. As a result, the commercial seemed more gratuitous to adults. Once respondents knew there was a series of them, which also stereotyped the English, French and Spanish, they felt some element of balance had been introduced.

Lucozade

The characters in *Lucozade* were seen as offensive, particularly by those who were unaware of their *Viz* magazine origin. There was criticism of the term *Fat Slags* in the title sequence. The creative idea met objections at a literal level from some women, especially those who were overweight themselves. They argued that their fridges contained a variety of foods, including healthy, low calorie items and that larger people were not constantly eating or raiding fridges as depicted.

But for others, the characters were so obviously over-the-top that they did not perceive them as being based on reality in any way and so did not regard them as stereotypes. They thought of them as purely fictional and did not associate them with a reflection or perception of overweight people generally.

Ambrosia

Ambrosia was mentioned spontaneously by some respondents before the issue of stereotyping was broached, but especially by the groups conducted in the West Country. They saw it as insulting to West Country people because it showed them as 'stupid'. The accent and the character seen riding a cow were viewed as the epitome of the 'ooh arrh' country bumpkin stereotype.

Respondents in other parts of the country also spontaneously complained about regional stereotyping as a whole, especially where caricatures were used to make fun of people in their region. This offence was widely attributed to young advertising executives in London making stereotypical assumptions about anyone who did not live in the south east.

For other respondents who felt less sensitive about regional stereotyping, mitigating factors included the relevance of the product to the region. Some respondents associated the West Country with dairy produce, so for them, the *Ambrosia* advertisement promoted good local food quite appropriately.

Typhoo Tea

Racism was at the heart of criticism of the *Typhoo Tea* commercial. The key elements which upset some respondents were the ways in which the workers were portrayed as 'simpletons', and the anglicised 'Tommy' character. These triggers combined to give an outdated impression of the Asian community.

Most of the young ethnic Asians who took part in the study considered the portrayal inaccurate and unnecessary. For a minority, the stereotype was ameliorated by humour, particularly for those who likened the style of execution to the programme *Goodness Gracious Me*. Very few respondents were aware that a writer of the show, Meera Syal, had advised on the advertisement, but when this fact was disclosed, it went some way to reducing its negative impact.

The older ethnic Asian generation was inclined to feel that the depiction of tea growing was close to reality and, therefore, not a negative stereotype. There were similar reactions to *Snapple* from Asian respondents.

Tunes

Vicarious offence was expressed about the *Tunes* advertisement by some who personally knew other people who suffered from scoliosis (curvature of the spine). One woman who actually had this condition was included in the study but she enjoyed and even praised the advertisement. She did not seem to recognise or acknowledge the stereotype. More generally, the central character was not seen as a stereotyped portrayal because he was a fictional character in a costume. He was not a real person with the condition. For some, the advertisement was cleverly crafted with a humorous resolution, particularly the choice of song. Others found it rather obscure.

The use of the character was *not* seen by those with disabilities as commercial exploitation of people in a similar position to themselves.

Diet Coke²⁶

The *Diet Coke* commercial was sometimes accused of sexism, particularly by men – “*If you haven’t got a six pack here (pats stomach) and arms like this, women won’t look at you...*” But the concept of sexism was sometimes confused with ‘sex’ and ‘sexiness’. The advertisement was criticised as a little too suggestive, especially the closing sequence where a woman licks a drop of condensation from the side of the can.

But mainly there was a sense, largely among women, that using a man as a ‘sex object’ redressed a long-term imbalance where women’s bodies, for many years, were used to sell products to men. Female respondents felt the situation had now been balanced in an ‘about time’ way. Most of the men accepted this or dismissed the whole thing as something which was of no real consequence.

PG Tips

Any sexist stereotypes in the *PG Tips* advertisement were entirely overwhelmed by the brand’s advertising history. The chimps and their family relationships were regarded as so central to the brand values that any stereotyped behaviour in the advertising was overlooked.

Ikea (Beards)²⁷

This advertisement was looked upon as rather bizarre. Even when the problem of access to the stores was known, the advertisement was still seen as far too obscure. It was, therefore, taken literally and, at that level, it became nothing more than stupid. There was thought to be no issue of offence to bearded men despite the complaints received by the ITC.

26. Diet Coke: A group of women in an office are aroused by the arrival of a sexy delivery man who is beaded with sweat from carrying two cases of Coke. At the end, one of the women lasciviously licks a drip of condensation off a Coke can.

27. IKEA (Beards): IKEA explains that, to reduce overcrowding, bearded men are banned from their store. They are seen being carted away.

None the less, at a deeper level, there were some indications that the theme was seen as the very antithesis of the inclusion ideal, given the arbitrary nature of the criteria for exclusion (ie being bearded). Therefore, it is possible that other versions of the basic idea could provoke some offence (for example, the exclusion of people over a certain age, those with glasses, wearing hearing aids etc) especially if presented in a less obscure form.

Burton Viscount²⁸

In the same way, *Burton Viscount* was generally not understood. The stereotype of someone in the grip of an obsession was almost always missed. The behaviour was felt to be perfectly justified in view of the comic scenario of a man wanting more of his favourite biscuits.

When prompted, the advertisement was seen as potentially offensive, but the underlying feeling was that it was more likely to be dismissed or ignored due to its obscure nature.

Carte d'Or

The central character in the *Carte d'Or* advertisement was recognised as a stereotyped 'little old lady', but the portrayal was not generally regarded as a problem. The underlying 'ism', ageism, appeared to have limited saliency as a stereotype issue.

Bisto

The *Bisto* advertisement produced some identification with 'real life' in a positive way and the advertisement was felt to be balanced because 'Gran' retained control and, hence, some sort of 'hero' status. She was seen to get her own way in the end, by intentionally playing up to the stereotype of a dodderly old lady.

Nescafe

There was a similar reaction to the *Nescafe* advertisement. A speech impediment was seen as more 'unfortunate' than as a serious disability. Chris Eubank was known to trade on his lisp and it was assumed that he was paid handsomely for doing so in this advertisement; consequently he was not seen as a 'victim'. The only offence expressed was at a vicarious, literal level. Neither of the respondents who had speech impediments was offended by the advertisement.

Hamlet²⁹

This was commonly seen as a 'classic' piece of advertising and widely remembered. The notion that it could possibly cause offence to bald men was inconceivable.

28. Burton Viscount: A man writes a letter to Burton's pretending to have found foreign objects in his packet of mint biscuits. It is clear from the cartons of Viscount biscuits which surround him that he is obsessed with the product and hopes to be sent even more in compensation for his complaint. A voice says that he is 'mintal about new Viscount bars'.

29. Hamlet Cigars his famous commercial shows an overweight man trying, but failing, to pose for a good picture in a photo booth. He is bald except for a few strands of hair which refuse to stay where he has carefully combed them over his pate.

The bald men in the sample agreed. They felt the baldness was incidental rather than central to the storyline. Some even expressed the view that those with 'comb-overs' (as opposed to 'honest' baldness) deserved to be ridiculed although they did not necessarily feel this was what the advertisement was doing.

Twix

The *Twix* advertisement was recognised as part of an established campaign that featured 'Norm' as its central character. As such, it was usually seen as funny, albeit surreal. Norm is an amalgam of all aspects associated with a 'nerd', as evidenced by what he says, the way he says it and what he is wearing. The total, in this instance, equalled more than the sum of the individual parts so he became complete fiction and was not seen as a stereotype as such. Consequently, the commercial was not regarded as offensive.

SLOW-DRIP POTENTIAL Some advertisements were thought to have a 'slow-drip' potential for harm. Little or no immediate harm was thought likely but it was believed that the subtle messages such advertising contained might contribute to some form of build-up effect, which could reinforce negative stereotypes.

Iceland

Initial responses to the *Iceland* advertisement were positive in some respects. It was seen to show a good selection of foods, with good offers, from a brand positioned on a 'value' platform. Some women raised the issue of sexism spontaneously in the form of 'Why does it always have to be mum who does the work?' But this was more of a criticism than an expression of real offence. The sexism in the advertisement was often accepted by others – men and older women in particular – who felt that the reality in many households is that mum still does do most of the work and thus performs a valuable role. For all the reasons mentioned earlier, this particular issue was not of primary importance to many. But although the commercial did not cause much offence, it was seen *not* to be in keeping with contemporary social values and situations, where traditional roles may be broken down. Some respondents felt it could reinforce what they considered to be outdated traditional values.

British Airways

The *British Airways* advertisement had a very strong 'ah' factor, combined with an easily understood communication based around a well-known children's game. Something about the way it was shot suggested a traditional setting and for some respondents this did have potentially sexist and racist undertones. For example, it portrays children's future careers being determined by their gender/race.

POSITIVE POTENTIAL In addition, there were some advertisements, which were thought to contain positive stereotyping, notably *Homepride Curry Sauces* (discussed earlier).

Freeserve

Reactions to *Freeserve* varied considerably depending on whether the model's physical disability was recognised. Her impairment was almost invisible to some, due to the complexity of the advertising style, or was sometimes perceived to be a theatrical illusion.

Where the advertisement was understood, it was generally thought to show a positive portrayal of a disabled person. 'Aimee' was then seen as the antithesis of the stereotype of a disabled person because she was actively pursuing a career in the glamorous world of modelling.

Fuji Film

In theory, this should have fulfilled the same role as *Freeserve* but some respondents felt there was a voyeuristic and exploitative quality to the advertisement, which made viewing uncomfortable. When the theme was noticed, or the respondents were given the information, reactions tended generally to be positive about the issue of featuring a person with learning difficulties in an advertisement.

7 APPENDIX ONE

7.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPILATION TAPES

CLUTTER TAPE N-Power
 Kelkoo.com
 Tango Orange
 Citroen Xsara
 Sega Dreamcast
 (German)
 NSPCC
 (Shown to pilot group only)

TAILORED TAPES	<p>1. Ethnic African Caribbean Reed Employment Malibu (Fishermen) Lilt National Dairy Council British Airways</p> <p>2. Ethnic Asian/Middle Eastern Typhoo Tea Barclaycard Snapple Homepride Curry Sauce</p> <p>3. Ethnic Chinese Oriental Express McDonalds (Chinese)</p> <p>4. Girls Scalextric British Airways PG Tips Iceland Actimel V-Tech WhizKid Twix Fiat Punto (Women, eh?) Fiat Punto (Men, eh?)</p>	<p>5. Boys V-Tech WhizKid Twix Knorr Taste Breaks British Airways Iceland McDonalds (Couple) Scalextric Fiat Punto (Men, eh?) Fiat Punto (Women, eh?)</p> <p>6. General Public Oriental Express Reed Employment Typhoo Tea V-Tech WhizKid Scalextric Iceland Carte d'Or McDonalds (Couple) Tunes Freeserve</p> <p>7. Regions Ambrosia IKEA (English) Sega Dreamcast (English) Homepride Curry Sauces Fiat Punto (Men, eh?)</p> <p>8. Older Women Carte d'Or Kleenex Velvet Lucozade Iceland Bisto Lilt Actimel</p>	<p>9. Weight Lucozade Actimel Kleenex Velvet V-Tech WhizKid McDonalds (Couple) Lilt Krisprolls Soft & Gentle IKEA (Beards) Tango</p> <p>10. Men McDonalds (Couple) Diet Coke Knorr Taste Breaks Scalextric Iceland IKEA (Beards) Hamlet Fiat Punto (Men, eh?) Fiat Punto (Women, eh?)</p> <p>11. Physical characteristics Tunes Hamlet Nescafe Castlemaine Excite.com Freeserve</p> <p>12. Behavioural characteristics Marbles.com Fuji Film Burton Viscount</p>
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8 APPENDIX TWO

8.1 SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

SAMPLE		FIELDWORK DETAILS			
Groups					
Group 1	2 x male, 2 x female	20s – 50s	African-Caribbean	BC1	Birmingham
Group 2	2 x male, 2 x female	20s – 50s	African-Caribbean	C2DE	Bristol
Group 3	2 x male, 2 x female	20s – 50s	Chinese	BC1C2D	Manchester
Group 4	2 x male, 2 x female	20s – 50s	Hindus	BC1C2D	East London
Group 5	became depths 3 and 4		Muslims		
Group 6	2 x male, 2 x female	20s – 50s	Parents of children who are stereotyped: i.e. wear glasses, "boffin", overweight, have learning disability		Glasgow
Group 7	4 x male, 4 x female	20s – 50s	General public. No stereotypical characteristics for self or children	BC1	West London
Group 8	4 x male, 4 x female	20s – 50s	General public. No stereotypical characteristics for self or children	C2DE	Birmingham
Group 9	4 x older females	50 – 70		BC1C2D	Newcastle
Group 10	2 x male, 2 x female	20s – 30s	Self defined weight problems	BC1C2D	Plymouth
Group 11	4 x males	20s – 50s	Stereotyped characteristics (beard, bald, wears glasses, overweight)		Port Talbot
Depths					
Pd depth 3	2 x females		Asian Muslims		Slough
Pd depth 4	2 x males		Asian Muslims		Slough
NB. D3 and D4 contained a range of ages and social classes as in other interviews					
Pd depth 5	Boys	School Year 6	Weight problem and "boffin"		Manchester
Pd depth 6	Boys	Year 8	Wears glasses "boffin"		Newcastle
Pd depth 7	Boys	Year 10	Weight problem and "boffin"		Newcastle
Pd depth 8	Girls	School Year 5	African Caribbean, weight problem		Manchester
Pd depth 9	Girls	Year 7	Height problem and "boffin"		Newcastle
Pd depth 10	Girls	Year 9	Wears glasses		Newcastle
NB. Depths 5-10 contained a spread of social classes: BC1C2D					
Pd depth 11	1 x male, 1 x female		Mobility impediment		
Pd depth 12	1 x male, 1 x female		Speech impediment		
Pd depth 13	1 x male, 1 x female		Nervous disposition/ obsessive compulsive disorder		Port Talbot
Pd depth 14	1 x male, 1 x female		Mobility impairment		Glasgow
NB. Depths 11 to 14 included a spread of ages and social classes: BC1C2D					

8.2 RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

PROJECT:
JOB NO: 560

AGE	CODE
20s	V
30s	X
40s	0
50s	1
60s	2
70s	3

EXACT AGE: (Write in).....

YOUNGER INDEPENDENTS: In their 20s, living away from parental home, no children and not expecting

YOUNG FAMILY: Probably in their 30s with children aged 0-11 years only

OLDER FAMILY: Probably in their 40s with children aged 12-18 years only

OLDER INDEPENDENTS: probably in their 50s either without children or with older children who have left home

PRESENCE OF CHILDREN

Under 16 living at home

Yes	CHECK	V
No	SPEC.	X

Age(s).....

MARITAL STATUS

Married/cohabiting	V
Separated/divorced	X
Widowed	0
Single, living independently	1
Single, at parental home	CLOSE 2

WHERE RECRUITED

In the street	V
At respondent's home	X
At respondent's work	0
By telephone	1
Any other place (DETAILS).....	

Date recruited.....

ETHNICITY:

Black African Caribbean V
 Chinese X
 Indian sub-continent
 (Indian, Sri Lankan 0
 Pakistani, etc 1
 White 2
 Other (write in) 3

RELIGION:

Catholic V
 Protestant X
 Jewish 0
 Muslim 1
 Hindu 2
 Other (write in) 3

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is and I am conducting a Market Research Survey on behalf of The Qualitative Consultancy. Would you tell me if you or any members of your family or close friends work/used to work in any of the following professions or occupations.

SHOW CARD A

Self Family/Friends

ADVERTISING
 PUBLIC RELATIONS
 MARKETING, MARKET RESEARCH
 JOURNALISM
 BROADCASTING/TV

V		V
X	CLOSE	X
0		0
1		1
2		2

ROUTE

CODE

B) Have you ever attended a GROUP DISCUSSION OR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW before?

YES.....
 ASK Q2
NO.....
 ASK Q1

V

X

C) How long ago did you attend a group discussion or in-depth interview?

Less than 6 months ago CLOSE

None to have attended a group in the last 6 months

ASK ALL

Q1 Do you watch or read any of the following?
 SHOWCARD B

Television: BBC1 V
 BBC2 X
 Regional Commercial 0
 TV (eg ITV, Meridian)
 Channel 4 1
 Channel 5 2
 Cable/Satellite 3

Newspapers:	The Sun	V
	The Mail	X
	The Times	0
	The Telegraph	1
	The Mirror	2
	The Guardian	3
	The Independent	4
	The Express	5
	Other	6
Other:	Cinema	V
	Magazines	X

ALL RESPONDENTS SHOULD WATCH COMMERCIAL TV STATIONS – 1-2 PER GROUP AND SOME RESPONDENTS IN THE PAIRED DEPTHS MUST ALSO WATCH CABLE/SATELLITE TV

ASK Q2 TO ADULT GROUPS AND PAIRED DEPTHS ONLY

Q2 Have you recently felt personally offended (on behalf of yourself or your immediate family) by the content/style of any of the following?

A TV advert	V*
A TV programme	X
A film	0
A cinema advert	1*
A press advert	2*
A press article	3

*** WITHIN ALL GROUP/PAIRED DEPTH (APART FROM GROUPS 7 AND 8) IDEALLY HALF OF THE RESPONDENTS SHOULD SAY THEY HAVE BEEN OFFENDED PERSONALLY BY AN ADVERT IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS. MOST OF THEM SHOULD (IDEALLY) MENTION TV ADVERTISING. IF YOU ARE HAVING PROBLEMS FINDING PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN OFFENDED, PLEASE CONTACT US.**

GROUP 7: NONE OF THE RESPONDENTS IN GROUP 7 SHOULD HAVE BEEN OFFENDED BY ADVERTISING

GROUP 8: DETAILS TO BE ADVISED AFTER 25/07/00

WHEN INTERVIEWING/RECRUITING, PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE SENSITIVE NATURE AND ADJUST YOUR WORDING OF THE QUESTIONS AS NECESSARY TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THIS

CHILDRENS PAIRED DEPTHS (PAIRED DEPTHS 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10) AND PARENT GROUPS 6, 7 AND 8 SHOWCARD C

Q3 Does your child have any of the following problems or difficulties?

Sight – wears glasses	V
(Over)weight	X
Learning difficulties (eg dyslexia or Stated)	0
Possibly picked on because they stand out from the rest of their class in some way or other because they are seen as clever, eg 'boffins' etc.	1
None of these particularly	2

RECRUITER NOTE:

Our researchers are more than happy to talk to you about this recruitment. The subject is sensitive and the categories are not always clear so please do not hesitate to call the office if you need to clarify anything/discuss anything further.

PAIRED DEPTHS 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10 – MANCHESTER/NEWCASTLE:

FOR EACH PAIRED DEPTH WE WOULD LIKE ONE MAIN RESPONDENT WHO FITS THE CRITERIA ON YOUR SPEC AND ABOVE. SO, ONE MAIN RESPONDENT SHOULD WEAR GLASSES, ONE SHOULD BE OVERWEIGHT AND THE OTHER SHOULD BE A 'BOFFIN'.

EACH MAIN RESPONDENT WILL BRING A FRIEND ALONG WITH THEM TO THE PAIRED DEPTH WHO DOES NOT NEED TO FIT ANY OF THE CRITERIA EXCEPT THEY MUST BE IN THE SAME SCHOOL YEAR.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR SPEC FOR SCHOOL YEAR AND SOCIAL GRADING PER PAIRED DEPTH

GROUP 6: PLEASE ENSURE A SPREAD OF PROBLEMS/DIFFICULTIES ARE REPRESENTED THROUGH THE PARENTS IN THIS GROUP

GROUP 7 AND 8: ALL RESPONDENTS SHOULD CODE 'NONE OF THESE' – CODE 2

WHEN INTERVIEWING/RECRUITING, PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE SENSITIVE NATURE AND ADJUST YOUR WORDING AS NECESSARY TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THIS

ADULT CHARACTERISTICS/DIFFICULTIES GROUPS (7, 8 AND 10) AND PAIRED DEPTHS (11, 12, 13 AND 14) ONLY

SHOWCARD D

Q4 Do you have any of the following characteristics?

Baldness	V
(Over)weight	X
Sight – wear glasses	0
Walking/mobility problems	1
A speech impediment – stutter, lisp etc	2
Nervous disposition, mental health problems (eg ‘bad nerves) or obsessive compulsive disorder	3
None of these	4

GROUPS 7 AND 8 – ALL SHOULD CODE ‘NONE OF THESE’ – CODE 4

**GROUP 10 – ALL SHOULD SAY THEY HAVE A WEIGHT PROBLEM AND
CODE X**

**PAIRED DEPTH 11 – BOTH RESPONDENTS SHOULD HAVE A
WALKING/MOBILITY PROBLEM AND AGREE WITH CODE 1 AT Q4**

PAIRED DEPTH 12 – BOTH RESPONDENTS SHOULD HAVE A SPEECH
IMPEDIMENT AND AGREE WITH CODE 2 AT Q4

**PAIRED DEPTH 13 – BOTH RESPONDENTS SHOULD HAVE A COMPULSIVE
DISORDER OR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM AND AGREE WITH CODE 3
AT Q4**

PAIRED DEPTH 14 – DETAILS TBC

FORENAME OF RESPONDENT.....
 SURNAME.....
 HOME ADDRESS.....

 TELEPHONE.....
 DATE/DAY/GROUP.....TIME.....

AUDIO RECORDING

Please sign below that you have informed the respondent that the group/depth will
be tape recorded.

Signed.....Date.....

VIEWING FACILITY GROUPS/FILMING

You must ensure that you recruit only those who are willing to give their telephone number (so they can be prechecked) and every respondent should be given a copy of the letter explaining about a viewing facility/filming.

RESPONDENTS MUST SIGN OVERLEAF THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF FILMING

TELEPHONE RECRUITMENT ONLY

Please sign below that you have informed the respondent about viewing facility/filming and posted the reassurance letter with the invitation card.

Signed.....Date.....

Please give respondents an invitation and a thank you leaflet.

ENSURE THAT ALL THE RESPONDENTS CAN ARRIVE 5 MINUTES BEFORE START OF GROUP/DEPTH AND CAN STAY FOR THE FULL DURATION.

I certify that I have carried out this interview according to your instructions and that all the information herein is confidential and will not be disclosed by any other party.

Signed.....Date.....

I understand that I have been invited to take part in a group discussion in a studio designed specifically for this purpose and, that it has been explained to me that the discussion may be filmed. I confirm I am willing to take part in the discussion and I understand that the video will only be used for Market Research purposes.

Signature of respondent.....Date.....

SHOWCARD A

ADVERTISING
PUBLIC RELATIONS
MARKETING
JOURNALISM
BROADCASTING/TV

SHOWCARD B

Television	BBC1 BBC2 Regional Commercial TV (eg ITV Meridian) Channel 4 Channel 5 Cable/Satellite
Newspapers	The Sun The Mail The Times The Telegraph The Mirror The Guardian The Independent The Express Other
Other	Cinema Magazines

SHOWCARD C

SIGHT – WEARS GLASSES
(OVER)WEIGHT
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (EG DYSLEXIA OR STATEMENTED)
POSSIBLY PICKED ON BECAUSE THEY ARE SEEN AS CLEVER OR
STAND OUT FROM THE REST OF THEIR CLASS – ‘BOFFINS’ ETC.
NONE OF THESE

SHOWCARD D

BALDNESS
(OVER)WEIGHT
SIGHT – WEAR GLASSES
WALKING/MOBILITY PROBLEMS
A SPEECH IMPEDIMENT – STUTTER, LISP ETC
NERVOUS DISPOSITION, MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS (EG ‘BAD NERVES’)
OR OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER
NONE OF THESE

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PUTTING VIEWERS FIRST