Abstract:
Americanism and the spread of television were among the most important phenomena in
the Post-War Europe. Television is the medium that, more than any other, was (and is)
best suited to the American image. Together with advertising, television is perhaps the
most effective vehicle to transfer American consumption-centred models to non-
Americans. In Finland there were better circumstances for that than in many other
European countries because Finland was among the pioneers to introduce commercial
television in Europe.

Of all the products, tobacco, especially cigarettes, are perhaps the most American
influenced advertising product category in the history of advertising. This article studies
the Finnish Post-War Americanization, from the mid-1950s to the end of the 1960s,
through the television cigarette advertising. This media and social historical study looks
at the similarities and differences between the pioneering model and the rapidly
developing follower – the Finnish and the American cigarette commercials and the
marketing strategies behind them.
Introduction: Americanization and Tobacco Industry

Perhaps the most important advertisers in the first years of Finnish television were the tobacco companies. With their large amount of capital they were imposingly engaged in television advertising and were developing it until the public demand for legislative actions began to restrict the advertising of tobacco on television. The total ban on tobacco advertising on television came into operation in 1970. By the same time American cigarette companies agreed to put an end to TV advertising.

Thus tobacco commercials were distinctive features of advertising in the 1960s. The changes in the cigarette advertising tell us not only of the evolving regulations and development of advertising, but also tell us about the first years of television broadcasting as a whole at that time. The Finnish tobacco company Amer (nowadays known as Amer Sports, the world's No. 1 Sports Equipment company) was, for example, the most important sponsor of Tesvisio – the first, commercial and independent television company in Finland. The Golden Age of American television in the 1950s and the early 1960 was ‘golden’ for American cigarette advertising as well.

As Briton Jeremy Tunstall noticed already in the 1970s, ‘the media are American’. (Tunstall, 1977). Especially after the World War II American cultural imperialism took a strong hold all over the post-war Western Europe through media. (See for example Epitropoulos & Roudometof, 1998; Kroes 1996; Lundén & Åsard, 1992; O'Dell, 1997; Stephen 2005)

Altogether, the ‘Americanization’ of Finland did not take place in the influx of physical artifacts as much as in the form of ideas and cultural goods. Most products, such as cigarettes, were produced in Finland in the 1960s. In many cases, American products
were either too big or too expensive, such as cars, for Finnish consumer markets. Besides, the rather small markets in Finland were not too attractive for American firms. The transaction costs, import fees, costs of packing, freight, and so on were simply too high. Although Finland was the only western country participating in the Second World War, which did not receive the post-war Marshall Aid package, Finland received instead ‘the Marshall Aid of ideas’. America was idolized in the 1950s just because it seemed to be a place in which things were better, faster, and more effective.

In its positive sense the Americanism served as the shorthand reference to America’s hallowed repertoire of guiding ideals in technology, consumption and media, explaining the nation’s course and destiny to American people while at the same time providing an inspiration to non-Americans abroad. In its negative sense the term symbolizes America as the antithesis to Europeanism, to everything that European intellectuals conceive of as their common cultural heritage. As Dutch Bob Kroes (1996: 40) puts it:

Europe values quality; America knows only quantity. Europe has a keen sense of authenticity; America adores the fake and phony. Europe appreciates things old and quit, it has “depth”; America dissipates its energies in shallow pursuits. Europe experiences itself as meaningful and find in America what is pointless. Europe experiences itself as meaningful and finds in America what is pointless. Europe knows and appreciates individuality; America subjects it to ruthless standardization.

The word Americanization does not really have such a dual face. It is normally used in a discourse of rejection to point to the variety of processes through which America exerts its influence on European cultures. America became the symbol of modernity in post-war Europe. America meant wealth, a comfortable standard of living, freedom and a peaceful life – happiness, which would be realized in consumption. America meant “the American dream”.

The most important influences for Finnish advertising came from America in the 1960s. The Finnish advertising people had regularly visited the United States since the 1920s – the broadcasting people had also done so after the World War II. The style and effects of advertising as well as the interview studies, the use of psychology and the idea of
marketing came from the United States. The books of the most important American advertising executives of the 1950s and 1960s, like Rosser Reeves, were translated into Finnish. In practice, the most important sources were American magazines like *Esquire*, *Life*, *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Harper’s Bazaar*. Most of the new generation advertising people of the 1960s had lived their youth in the 1950s; they were the first in Finland to taste chewing gum and Coca Cola, listen to jazz and later to rock’n’roll, and watch American short films (cartoons, newsreels, etc.) in movie theatres.

The American ideas of marketing and Americanism as a referent system for advertising had a strong influence on the Finnish television commercials. Cigarette advertising is perhaps one of the best examples of that. Tobacco advertising has preserved something unique about the turning point of Finnish society in the 1960s. The tobacco industry has used the images of glitter, luxury, wealth, success, romance, pride, individuality, relaxation, adventure, danger, action, freedom, pleasure, happiness, fellowship, friendship, style, sportiness and youth in its advertising. As such, most of them are features of modern life. As American Tom O’Dell (1997) notice in his account about Americanization of Sweden, Americanization and modernity are often closely linked phenomena. Americanization can be perceived as a modern flow, and consumption is one of the primary structures through which it is constructed as such.

Many professional marketing people in Finland, who worked for tobacco companies in the 1960s placed them above all other clients with regard to creativity, marketing and, first of all, to resources. The advertising campaigns of tobacco companies were a kind of marketing school for the Finnish advertising people in 1950s and 1960s – along with the detergent campaigns of the multinational corporation Unilever.

This is not different from the United States where tobacco industry has been a significant advertiser in the advertising and marketing history. Moreover, most of the globally well known tobacco brands, like Marlboro, are American and use mythic national images of the Wild West, for example. That was also the case in Finland during the 1950s and the 1960s. But have all the images of smoking been the same already then, or are there
differences in the ways tobacco products have been advertised to be found? Although the restrictions in the Finnish television advertising of cigarettes during the 1960s have been stricter than in U.S, have the marketing techniques been the same? Before we go to search for similarities and differences between the American and the Finnish cigarette commercials, let us take a short look on the history of the Finnish television broadcasting and tobacco industry.

Advertising to Finance Finnish Television Broadcasting

The 1960s, especially the first years of the decade, was significant for Finnish tobacco industry. It was the time when Finnish smokers turned to smoke American-style filter cigarettes. Still in 1960s the share of American-style filter cigarettes was only 15 percent but already in 1963 it reached 60 percent. Kurkela, 1987: 73–4, 78–9.) ‘American-style’ was manifested also in the brand names. Every new cigarette brand had an English name like Boston, Milton, Strong, Life etc. The licensing of American cigarette brands also started in Finland in the turn of the 1960s.

Michael Schudson (1984: 178–208) argues that the tobacco is an example of an industry that increased demand, not through the intrinsic superiority of its product, but through advertising. Advertising constantly plays a role in changing the nature of that demand. After the World War II movies began evolving into a popular venue for cigarette advertising (See Shaw & Alan, 2003: 313).

American films were widely shown also in Finland during the post war decades and the product placing of American cigarette brands certainly increased the smoking of filter cigarettes among Finnish smokers as in other parts of western world. Another kind of paid product placement by the American tobacco companies was sponsored programs in television. That model was also taken to Finnish television broadcasting – Finland being the first country in Europe to allow this kind of broadcasting – when it was starting to take shape in the late 1950s.
Because of advertising, Finnish television broadcasting started as early as 1956, and a television network quickly spread to all parts of Finland. Without the involvement of business and advertising people, Yleisradio, the national broadcasting company, would probably never have accepted advertising in its operations.

The very first Finnish public television broadcast featuring advertising was sent in early 1956. It was sponsored by Amer Tupakka, a Finnish tobacco company. This initial broadcast was sent by the technology students, who had established their own TV station a year before that. It began as an enthusiastic experiment, which was part of their studies (It recalls in many senses the mobile phone development of the late 1980s in Finland). The story of this TV station, called Tesvisio, ended in 1964, when Yleisradio bought it after Tesvisio encountered an economic crisis. Tesvisio was shown only in southern Finland – besides Helsinki it also had a channel in Turku and Tampere. TV 2, another arm of Yleisradio, was formed from this Tampere station in 1964.

Yleisradio started television broadcasting in the autumn of 1957. From the very first day it included commercials. The extra money was needed mainly because the construction of the VHF network for radio cost a lot of money. The Soviet television programs were transmitting through the Tallinn TV station from Estonia, and people could watch its programs in Southern Finland. Beside the programs, it was also a case of technology and a Cold War battle for broadcasting space. Russians wanted to sell their TV system to Finland. The American RCA won, mainly because they offered their transmission system at half the price, but also because the Finnish business people - and those in the technology department of Yleisradio as well - wanted the western system and the Russians fell behind. (Salokangas 1996: 109–155; Piha 1995)

Based on the proposal by the advertising and business people, the administrative board of Yleisradio decided to begin a separate company, which would be independent of Yleisradio and would be owned by advertisers, advertising agencies and film production companies. The new company was called Oy Mainos-TV Reklam Ab (nowadays known as channel MTV3, the third oldest commercial television company in Europe).
The agreement to start commercial television was a compromise. Advocates of commercial television did not succeed completely, but managed to get advertising for public broadcasting. The adversaries of television advertising opposed advertising money for Yleisradio, but succeeded only in segregating the buying and the controlling of advertising by making it external to the company.

The pattern for this system came from Britain, where ITV was funded as a commercial TV company a couple of years before – in competition to the BBC. But the Finnish version differed from the British one, especially in one particular sense. MTV did not have its own channel, but leased the broadcasting time from Yleisradio. This system was unique in the whole world and it was certainly not trouble-free. For Yleisradio, MTV was not just a source of finance, but also a competitor. In addition, MTV confined the development of Yleisradio and its existence ran counter to the public broadcasting principles Yleisradio held. MTV had to battle for its existence during the whole of the 1960s, and especially in 1968, when its license expired again; it was only a margin of one vote in the administrative board of Yleisradio that allowed MTV to continue.

Sponsored by Amer Cigarettes

At the same time when Finnish tobacco industry was going through its heyday with the significant financial resources, it got a new advertising media, television. Besides the advertising professionals, the very American influenced tobacco industry noticed the power of this new media in marketing right from the beginning of Finnish television. The main Finnish tobacco companies chose the best advertising agencies, because the agencies for their purposes had also to handle other advertising media, media planning, idea of marketing and creativity in general.

The whole advertising business in Finland was going through a change of generation during the 1960s. This older generation of white-coated, pipe-smoking advertising artists, who considered especially suggestive advertising to be an oddity, were soon replaced by
dynamic young people. These new young minds followed the trends and were committed to a belief in progress, which was so typical of the mentality of the 1960s. Creativity was the basis for all modern advertising in the 1960s, such that the “idea” in campaigns was the principle for everything. Working in teams, copywriters and art directors together became a general phenomenon during the 1960s. Indeed, this small Nordic capitalist country in the shadow of the Soviet Union had its ‘creative revolution’ in advertising as well as in America in the 1960s. Tobacco companies were among the best advertisers to offer possibilities for creativity.

Finnish tobacco company Amer was the most important advertiser of Tesvisio. It sponsored the very first public broadcasting in Finland in 1956. The show was called ‘Boston show’. Boston was a new Finnish cigarette brand introduced previous year by Amer. Among other things there was a ‘Boston-orkesteri’ (‘Boston orchestra’) playing in the studio. ‘Boston show’ was also a title for one of the early entertainment shows. Life cigarettes, a brand of another Finnish tobacco company Suomen tupakka (Tobacco Finland), also sponsored one of the early shows. This kind of broadcast sponsoring by tobacco company had started already back in late 1920s, when American cigarette brands like Lucky Strikes had their own music shows and orchestras in radio (Fox, 1984: 154).

Besides sponsoring the first public television broadcast in Finland, Amer gave about half a million Finnish marks for Tesvisio at the same time during the spring 1956. Several years later, when Tesvisio needed money for rearranging its organization and for moving to new offices, Amer gave its shareholder organizations about 5 million Finnish marks for buying shares in Tesvisio.

Like American big cigarette brands – Camel, Lucky Strike and Chesterfield – in America from 1940s to 1960s (See Shaw & Alan 2003, 314–15), the Finnish brands, mostly owned by Amer, were heavy sponsors of other television shows as well. For example, the company sponsored the first live broadcast, the ballet Swan Lake, from Finnish National Opera in January 1957. The following year Amer sponsored the quiz show Tupla tai kuitti (Double or Quit) with its cigarette brand Milton (losers of the show got a carton of
Milton). Milton also sponsored the attempt to transfer the very famous radio sitcom family series *Suomisen perhe* (Family Suominen) to television in 1958, but it failed and was finished after the first episode.

The sponsoring was a remarkable feature of the first years of Finnish commercial television. The sponsored shows were the basis of the whole television business in the “Golden Age of television” (1940s and 1950s) in America (See for example Samuel, 2001: 3–149; Wheen, 1985: 184; Fox, 1984: 210–17.), but Finland was the first country in Europe to allow this kind of broadcasting. There were many individuals in the Finnish business world, however, who were very aware of the potential of television for advertising. Since the early 1950s many articles about television have appeared in the Finnish advertising trade magazines. These advertising people also visited the United States and understood what this new medium meant for advertising.

As in America, the sponsored show was often produced by an advertising agency at first. Some of the Finnish agencies also had their own television studios. Television advertising meant changes for the organization of the advertising agencies themselves. Many agencies had a special department for television, as in America during 1940s (See Samuel, 2001: 8, 15), since television was considered to be something quite special. In practice, when a client briefed the agency on a campaign, the television department was also briefed. During the 1960s they finally had to admit that TV producers had to be such skilful all-rounders, and that there were difficulties in finding people, who were professional enough. However, this convention lasted until the beginning of the 1970s, so that it took over ten years for the Finnish advertising agencies to look upon television as one medium among others.

The sponsored quiz shows were mostly made by advertising agencies in the USA in the late 1950. The quiz show scandals, in which the advertisers fixed the shows for their advertising purposes, were an important reason for getting the advertisers out of programming in the USA and to move to the magazine format in the turn of the 1960s. (See Fox, 1984: 215–16; Samuel, 2001, 128–38, 156-7) In Finland, sponsoring ended in
the mid-1960s when MTV took care of the making and production of all its programs. The reason for ending sponsorship and for switching to a total spot advertising era in Finnish television was simply the development in television production – MTV has enough professional people to do all its own program production. Sponsoring also prevented effective sales of advertising time. Sponsoring came back as late as the 1990s.

However, the idea of *Tupla and kuitti* quiz show came from Italy. The adman behind Milton cigarettes advertising Tauno “Uki” Rautiainen saw it on Italian television. Italy was one of the few European countries, which allowed television advertising during the late 1950s. Italian television was very commercial and American influenced right from the beginning. After all, Finland was the first one to introduce sponsored programs in Europe (soon followed by countries such as Austria and West Germany) and very American influenced tobacco industry was in the vanguard of business. Unfortunately, sponsored programs were often live shows that were not recorded, so it is not possible to watch them nowadays.

**From Animation to Life Style**

But Finnish cigarette spots are still here for us to watch. What about their advertising style compared to American ones? How were the advertising and film techniques and trends absorbed from American cigarette advertising to Finnish ways of doing cigarette marketing?

Animated commercials and cartoons were a second major genre after Broadway-like musical extravaganza in American film advertising during 1950s. (Samuel 2001, 24) Those genres were often mixed, since the fantasy figures were usually moving in the beat of the sound track in the animated commercials and cartoons. Typical example of this kind of advertising film is Muriel Cigars classic black-and-white cartoon commercial ‘Sexy Cigar’ from 1951 (Lennen & Newell, Inc.), in which a cigar couple is singing and dancing to the musical style. A lady cigar that looked and purred a little like Mae West is
saying the famous line in a sexy voice: “Why don’t you pick me up and smoke me some time?”

You can find musical influences in the Finnish film advertising in 1950s as well. This decade was the heyday of the Finnish film industry. In 1952, the number of films produced per capita in Finland was the highest in the world. The ”Finnish Hollywood” kept producing entertainment, comedies, musicals and farces. In the early 1950s, one in every four films was a musical. As the moviegoers were an excellent target group for advertisers, and the Finns seemed to want to be entertained, music had a significant role in the advertising films of the time as well. (Kilpiö 2001: 71–72)

Typical advertising film from that era is the colour film ‘Boston Baari’ (Boston bar) (SEK) for Boston cigarettes from 1958. The couples are dancing and smoking cigarettes in the musical-style artificial bar setting. There are also been edited some animated sequences in the film, in which the cigarettes are moving to the beat of the soundtrack. But more of the same kind of animation was used in the cigarette commercials, just as in the pioneering black-and-white ‘Barn Dance’ for Lucky Strike from 1950 (N.W Ayer & Son), where cigarettes are dancing to the beat of the jingle. The Finnish commercial, the black-and-white ‘Boston “Osto”’ (Boston purchase) from 1965 (SEK) is almost identical to the Lucky Strike spot.

There were also animated cartoon commercials in Finnish cigarette advertising during the 1960s. Just as in the black-and-white ‘Winston Tastes Good’ spot from late 1950s (William Esty Inc.) ‘where the letters and shapes metamorphose pleasantly against the flowing choral background, and the solid bands at the top and bottom of the Winston package design serve percussively to score the clapping on the soundtrack’ as Lincoln Diamant (1971: 124) puts it, the letters metamorphose in black-and-white ‘Boston Metsästäjä’ (Boston Hunter) from 1965 (SEK) and in black-and-white ’Bristol-TV’ (another cigarette brand by Amer) from 1964 (SEK).
Another famous animated cigarette commercial is Kool Cigarettes ‘Smoking Penguin’ (Ted Bates, Inc.) from 1954. The black-and-white commercial combines animation and live film footage. As “Willie the Penguin” is shown walking on a bed of hot coals and skates on ice. In a live footage a stream is flowing through a winter landscape. The announcer is saying “from hots to Kools” and (during the live footage) “Kools are so cool and clean as breath of fresh air.” The slogan goes: “America’s most refreshing cigarette. Snow fresh Kool.” Willie also gurgles “K-o-o-l-s” on cue.

Kool was the first successful menthol cigarette by Brown & Williamson. Menthol cigarettes were the innovation of the 1930s – to freshen and to smooth the smoking experience. The cartoon penguin was introduced in 1934. (Shaw & Alan, 2003: 313) In 1950s Willie jumped into the TV medium as Kool’s spokesman.

The first Finnish menthol cigarette brand was Meil launched by Amer in 1959. Its colour commercial ‘Menthol-Meil’ (SEK) from 1961 shows scenes from an airport, and an Alpine skiing resort and a sailing club. A man dressed in a suit and a hat is lighting a cigarette and then smoking and smiling to the camera in a close-up. Announcer: “There’s a new wind is blowing across the world…” In the second sequence a woman dressed in the ski clothes is smoking in a wintry mountain sets. Announcer: “In it you can feel the fresh aroma of menthol cigarettes.” In the last sequence a man dressed in a white V-neck sweater and a white scarf around his neck is smoking by the sailing dock. Announcer: “And besides complete tobacco pleasure, it offers – freshness”. In the last picture there is a pack of Menthol-Meil on a clear, icy kind of glass.

Let us take a closer look to the commercial. In analyzing the commercials I use a modified version (figure) of the semiotic myth system by the French Structuralist Roland Barthes (1973), which was introduced in 1957. Briefly, the aim is to find certain modernization ideologies, worldviews and mentalities, which have been coded by certain symbols and discourses into the commercials. These connotations have created myths attached to consumer goods or services and given them a new meaning. Why and how certain myths were attached to certain commodities serves as the focal point of the
analyses. The study is concerned with both the signifiers (*the form*) and the signs: the commodities advertised by commercials and the marketing presentations created around them. But especially the signified (*the concept*), which includes all the connotations with regard to the commodity, is a particular focus. Such a concept used to analyze the world of commercials, can tell us about the historical, cultural and social rupture in Finland during the 1960s and more specifically, in this context, about the foreign influences in it.

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Figure: The Semiotic Square for advertising analyses

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Nature metaphors, like freshness of ice and winter in both Kool and Menthol-Meil spots here, have been popular in advertising already since the early 20th century. Moreover, leisure time, luxury and wealth have been encoded in the Menthol Meil by the different scenes. These codes may no longer sound so glamorous today, but at the turn of the 1960s Finland was still a poor post-war country and very few had an opportunity to visit places like that. Both alpine skiing (unlike cross country skiing, which was a national sports back then) and sailing were considered as recreational activities of elite in Finland in the early 1960s. Sailing might still have a bit of the same kind of reputation, but flying certainly won’t be associated with a product if luxury and success were needed (especially after September 11th). But at those times, especially international flights were quite rare in Finland. Thus the gentleman in the airport looks more like a businessman.
By that, the advertiser wanted to encode images of modern, international life style. Also the line ‘There’s a new wind blowing’ tells about fascination of modern times.

Life-style advertising found its way into Finnish advertising too. (See Heinonen et al., 2003) Increasing personalization and use of images in advertising after the Second World War crystallized in the idea of life style advertising in Finnish advertising in the late 1960s. And as Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1997) puts it, television has ‘powerful visual methods of storytelling and the matrix of consumption styles it portrays’.

**Seeking Modern Success**

Especially ‘modern lifestyle’ was a referent system for Finnish cigarette commercials in early 1960s. In the late 1950s and early 1960s Finland was going through a period of profound change towards a consumer society. The post war-period – until the mid 1970s – was a ‘Golden Age’ for the developed capitalist countries in Europe, as Eric Hobsbawn (1994: 259) put it. The change was universal, rapid, dramatic and wide-ranging: it concerned society as a whole. It occurred mostly in the 1950s and 1960s in the Western world. Although it was a worldwide phenomenon, Western European countries represented about three quarters of the world’s production and over 80 per cent of its manufacturing exports throughout these decades.

The economic growth in Finland was particularly rapid in the 1960s – at least compared with other Scandinavian countries. Before the 1950s Finland was the least developed country in Scandinavia, but by the early 1970s it had assumed the typical form of most industrialized societies in the world. (Senghaas 1985: 71–80) For example, the average annual rates of real national product growth by country were 5 per cent in Finland in the 1960s and about 3.3 per cent in Sweden, Denmark and Norway. (Ambrosius & Hubbard, 1989: 144) The gross domestic product at factor cost increase was sevenfold in the period 1956-1973. (Vattula, 1983: 379)
During the 1960s Finland was one of the fastest developing industrial country in the world. Urbanization, internationalization and making a Scandinavian type of welfare system were the main goals of Finnish politicians, businessmen and others in authority. Finland became, using the phrase by John Kenneth Galbraith (1958), an *affluent society* in a fast lane. As in one ‘Boston 100’ (SEK) spot from 1960 says: “You need to step forward.”

Modern lifestyles are in focus and success is the main goal, for example, in the 1961 ‘Bristol-Speaker’ (SEK) spot by Amer. Although lifestyle advertising often implies suggestive, unconscious elements, this commercial does not leave much room for them. The spot starts by the narrator talking to the camera: “Why does a man like you smoke Bristol? A man seeks success. That’s why he chooses Bristol. Bristol carries the mark of success. It is so successful that you get Bristol at the old price but in a new, modern package. It’s longer and more stylish.” The set shows a picture of modern city, either a painting or really meant to create the image of a modern urban milieu (in the latter function it is quite artless). The next scene shows the “painting” in full size, with a woman posing in front of it like a mere object. Closer to the camera, a man holds a pack of Bristol cigarettes in his hand, lights one and inhales the smoke. The narrator goes on to say: “Get to know success. Pay less – and say: Thanks… but I prefer Bristol.” The connotations of modern, even futuristic way of living and attractiveness to women are quite simply encoded to the product. Also the “modern” package is underlined.

You cannot find that kind of referring to modern in American cigarette commercials, at least not anymore in the 1960s. Still, there are influences of American movies in ‘Bristol Speaker’ spot to be found. The characters and the set are a kind of a clumsy pastiche of post-war Hollywood movies. Movies were (and are) an important media in showing the way of smoking.

**Celebrating Cigarettes**
A cigarette has always been essential image-maker among many Hollywood stars. Since the interwar period, smoking became essential part of the personal glamour of many film stars like James Dean, Humphrey Bogart, Marlene Dietrich, Mae West, Bette Davis, Lauren Bacall, Rita Hayworth and Maureen O’Hara. (See for example Hilton, 2002: 321–2.) Besides actors and actresses, celebrities of sport, music and other entertainers have served as a product personalization for cigarettes ever since the 1920s.

Finland was not an exception. However, the period of using celebrities in cigarette commercials was quite short – around the turn of the 1960s. This was, first of all, due to increasing restrictions in cigarette advertising, but there was also a kind of trend of using entertainers in advertising going on during that time.

The most famous Finnish actor of all times, Tauno Palo, was shown in cigarette ads. He advertised Milton cigarettes. The black-and-white commercial from 1957 (Finlandiakuva) Palo sits behind the table and speaks to the camera. The commercial is very product informative for an audiovisual ad. He lights a cigarette and says: “Good evening my friends. Shall we smoke?” After praising the new Finnish cigarette brand he announces a competition as “presents” to Finnish consumers. To win the competition requires counting how many times the name Milton can be found in the cigarette box. The first prize is American De Soto automobile.

American car was much desired object back then. Import cars were under rationing in Finland until 1963. The number of vehicles was low in Finland, which was all the time building highways. The few sedans that were driven were often Russian and Eastern European in origins in the 1950s. No doubt, American cars were popular above all others. The American car design was living its sky-high peak in the late 1950s and Americanism was the most important referent system for the European popular culture.

The cigarettes and cars were part of that affluent America that especially Hollywood promoted for Europeans. American movies helped to create the myth, a halo that surrounds an automobile. Hollywood studios had established extensive relationships with
advertisers and had proven their willingness to allow external commercial discourses into their apparently autonomous narratives since long before the 1950s. Hollywood’s commercial messages blurred the boundaries between narrative and advertising discourses. (Ross, 1994: 90–91) More than ‘window of the world’ American movies have been the ‘shop window’. Therefore Milton commercial combines three Americanization and modernization phenomena: filter cigarettes, automobile and cinema (the most respected and famous Finnish film star).

More American cigarette advertising influences are to be found in Marlboro commercials. Marlboro by Philip Morris was targeted for women in 1920s, but because of disappointing sales it was successfully repositioned to the filter cigarette brand for men by Leo Burnett Company. But in addition to famous Marlboro cowboy introduced in 1954 and other masculinity codes of advertising, there was also softer life style advertising in Marlboro commercials during 1950s. The new ‘Settleback’ campaign was made by Philip Morris and Leo Burnett to undo the damage that Reader’s Digest articles, which ranked the full-flavored Marlboro stronger than some plain tripped brands, have done to the Marlboro brand in 1957 (Rutherford 994, 39).

The commercials including the famous jingle ‘The Marlboro Song’ were full of connotations of glitter, luxury, wealth, success, romance, relaxation, pleasure and style. In one black-and-white commercial for Marlboro from early 1960s singer and actress Julie London is shown sitting by the fire in a country house with a male companion. She sings seductively: ‘Why don’t you settle back and have a full-flavoured smoke? Settle back with a Marlboro.’ The jingle extolls the virtues of Marlboro’s filter, flavour, and flip top box with the line ‘you get a lot to like with a Marlboro’.

The same well-known, classic jingle was used in Finnish black-and-white spot ‘Marlboro-laituri’ (‘Marlboro jetty’) from 1962 (Markkinointi Viherjuuri). Amer started licensing Marlboro in previous year. The scene is a jetty by the lake or a sea. Water skis are resting against the railing and there is a transistor radio on the table. The camera zooms back and we see a woman lying in a chair, singing in lip synch (in English). While
singing the woman opens a pack of Marlboros. She takes her eyes off the pack and looks down the lake where a man, tanned and dressed in white, is waving at her from a boat. He drives to the jetty, jumps off the boat and approaches the woman. He kisses her shoulder while she hides the pack of Marlboros behind her back. He takes a cigarette from the pack she is holding, lights it, inhales, blows the smoke and lies down on the jetty (‘Why not settle back and enjoy a full-flavoured smoke?’, as the lyrics to The Marlboro Song go). The attentive viewer notices the Philip Morris logo tattooed on the back of his hand. In the last picture, there is text in Finnish saying ‘with taste’ and in English: ‘the filter cigarette with unfiltered taste’.

The tattoo was a part of the Marlboro’s ‘masculinity campaign’ by Leo Burnett – together with cowboys and the idea of changing the package from a mild white design to a bold red in an assertive V-shaped pattern. The cowboy character was supplemented with a variety of other rugged, mature types. The tattoo was to suggest toughness and a romantic past – to create myth of mystery and intrigue to the product. (Fox, 1984: 223; Rutherford, 1994: 39) Probably many Finns did not understand the symbolism of the tattoo. That is why the columnist Vilkkusilmä of Finnish advertising journal Mainosuutiset (1962: 7) decided to enlighten Finns:

Marlboro has taken a symbol from a faraway subject, tattooing. That symbol, which, for us, has a barbarous kind of reputation, is a common masculine, even respectful description of a sailor amongst Anglo-Saxon sailing peoples. The symbolism hits the bull’s-eye, because this cigarette includes “the salty flavor of sea” and the image of times when “the ships were made of wood and men of iron” (a famous line from Finnish sailor song). Let’s see, how Finnish smokers are going to take it.

You can find connotations of luxury, wealth, success, romance, relaxation, pleasure and style also in Finnish Marlboro spot, if not as much glamour as in Julie London spot (simply due to the Hollywood star in American Marlboro spot). Still, the imagery and figurative language of the spots are pretty much same.

Scenes like this were popular in American cigarette commercials in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, a commercial for Parliament cigarettes features a couple in a sailing boat,
and in an Oasis cigarette spot a couple is water-skiing. Like Menthol Meil analyzed before, Oasis was a menthol cigarette advertised with the line: “ Freshest Taste in Smoking.” Especially during the 1960s, when cigarette advertisers wanted to tell the viewers that cigarettes were not dangerous, those kinds of visual elements increased. There were featuring young, athletic-looking adults engaged in vigorous activities and surrounded by pristine environments in very life stylish cigarette visuals (Shaw & Alan 2003, 315).

But before we go to the world of rising health concerns of smoking and restrictions in cigarette advertising, let us look at the how the American way with cigarette advertising really had an influence on Finnish tobacco advertising.

**Do it in American Way**

To be sure the previous ‘Marlboro laituri’ spot differs from other Finnish tobacco commercials of the era. This tells us about the precise instructions by Philip Morris for Finns in their Marlboro advertising. Although Amer licensed Marlboro, the advertising agency was not SEK (as it was for the other Amer Brands), but Markkinointi Viherjuuri. The demand for different agency came from Philip Morris, because parent company wanted to have a different agency than the other Amer brands, which were the competitors. Modern (American) marketing called for unique selling proposition (USP).

Yet, this did not automatically mean that the international companies held total control over the marketing of their subsidiaries. However, the giant tobacco company Philip Morris had fairly strong control already in those days over the marketing of its products by local manufactures.

This was not the last time when Philip Morris intervened in Marlboro advertising in Finland, although Markkinointi Viherjuuri was quite free to do their Marlboro advertising during the rest of the 1960s. In 1969 Amer and Viherjuuri introduced a competition for the Finnish Marlboro Man. The competition was very popular having over 2600 pictures
sent from ordinary Finnish men. Five was chosen and people voted for the final winner a sheet metal worker – for Marlboro Man. He was a tough looking; masculine man, who drove the first, recently introduced Finnish car Saab 96. The print ad also told that he would be seen in many contexts and occasions.

But that was about the only time Finns ever saw Finnish Marlboro Man. Next year the American marketing people from Philip Morris came and said that this is not working. A Finnish city man, who drove the first Finnish car, had to give way to the rugged outdoor Marlboro cowboy, who was introduced fifteen years before by Leo Burnett. However, this new cowboy campaign appeared on American television in late 1963 after the research reports have demonstrated that people like to see cowboys in Marlboro ads. But the campaign was not an immediate success. (Rutherford, 1994: 39–40)

Finnish advertising people tried to resist the idea saying that this kind of childish western myth would not work in Finland⁹, although the popularity of the western myth at the movies, on TV, and in popular literature was a trend in Finland as in America in 1950s and 1960s. For instance, American TV series Bonanza and The Virginian were very famous in Finland during the 1960s. However, marketing people of Philip Morris argued that because it seems that tobacco advertising was going to be banned, it was better to build a truly global brand all over the world. The images of cowboy campaign were also easily translated into print – more successfully than the jingle-based campaign by the industry leader Winston (‘Winston tastes good like a cigarette should’) (Rutherford, 1994: 43).

And the Americans were right. Tobacco industry was in the vanguard of global branding and already in the turn of the 1970s, and Finnish advertising people had to give in for multinational marketing strategies. Especially after the total advertising ban in many countries Marlboro cowboy showed its strength and became one of the longest-running successes in advertising history and a cultural icon. Only one picture of a riding cowboy was enough to get the advertising message through.
Marlboro cowboy is a classical example of a product personalization, when the person is the product. In this version of personalized format the person conveys a range of attributes to be associated with the product, like ruggedness and masculinity here. (See Leiss et. al, 1997: 254) When the images of the Wild West are transferred to the world of cigarettes, they work, according to semiotics, as signifiers for signified. The product substitutes for the mythical scene and it is meant to signify attributes such as adventure, masculinity, freedom etc. (Dyer, 1982: 123–124)

Before Prohibition

However, Marlboro cowboy was never seen in Finnish television because tobacco advertising in television was banned in 1970. Even before that, tobacco advertising in television had to be made under strict restrictions, which forced advertisers to create many kinds of solutions.

The first links between tobacco and lung cancer was found in the United States in the beginning of the 1950s. Many seminal studies of the dangers of tobacco, primarily cigarette smoking, cite an article published in 1952 in Reader’s Digest titled ‘Cancer by the Carton’. The article described the dangers of smoking, detailing the risks of lung cancer and heart disease, which led to similar reports in other magazines. Another landmark report came in 1964 when Dr. Luther L. Terry, the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, released so called Terry report called ‘Smoking and Health’.

The American tobacco industry, the third largest advertiser on network television, responded to health concerns and advertising restrictions by further increasing its substantial television advertising. But under pressure the tobacco industry had to make a few concessions. It stopped advertising aimed at young and eliminated claims that smoking would improve health, ease tensions, or enhance social or sexual success. The Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act of 1969 enacted by Congress banned cigarette
advertising in American broadcasting media. (See Shaw & Alan, 2003: 314–15; Fox, 1984: 304–5)\textsuperscript{10}

A bill for decreasing smoking was introduced in the Finnish Parliament already in the mid 1950s. Especially in the early 1960s there were more and more political statements for banning cigarette advertising on television. The press supported the plan vigorously, because it wanted to capture all the big advertising money of tobacco companies. After the negotiations between TV companies and tobacco industry in 1963, the latter preferred to withdraw from television advertising. Tobacco companies were afraid of the bad image for the whole industry.

However, tobacco companies came back to television in the beginning of 1964. But now there were lots of restrictions for tobacco advertising. Tobacco commercials were not allowed to broadcast with children and sport programs and only one tobacco commercial was allowed to broadcast per night and it had to be after 9 o’clock. The restricted airtime was divided between the tobacco companies.

But the most important for producing tobacco advertising for television were the restrictions concerning what can be shown in the commercials. Humans were not allowed to show in the spots, except only one (male) arm. Or if there were people in the commercial they had to be in an outdoor scene and nothing to do with the product. Conversations and discussions were not allowed either.

The strict restrictions and the later ban can also be seen as a sign of paternalistic society. Finnish society went through modernization in its entirety. The late 1950s and 1960s was also a period when Finland took big steps towards joining the Scandinavian welfare society. In a manner of speaking, the country caught up with the other Scandinavian countries in a remarkably short time in this sector of society as well. It was moving towards a ‘planned society’, as the Finnish sociologist Pertti Alasutari (1996: 135–149) has put it. This means briefly, that disturbances and problems in society could be best resolved through scientific planning and organizing.
Unlike in the United States, where cigarette advertising represented 7 percent of total television advertising in the end of 1960s (Shaw & Alan, 2003: 315), the restrictions affected a significantly smaller share of television advertising in Finland during the 1960. Still in 1959 the share was about 7 percent, but in the following year only 4 percent. At the end of the restricted advertising era in 1968, the share had dropped to 2 percent. Still, there were not any significant changes in the Finnish tobacco consumption in the 1950s and 1960s.

These restrictions naturally challenged the advertising people to invent new, creative solutions. The restrictions made the Finnish children of the creative revolution to invent a number of clever commercials in the latter part of the 1960s.

**Conclusion: Smoking Masculine Frontier Spirit**

Due to restrictions, cigarette advertising had to concentrate on male smokers. The Finnish brands clearly targeted to women by using the references to women’s liberation movement in their advertising, like Virginia Slim by Philip Morris introduced in 1968, appeared in the 1970s when campaigns were forced to concentrate on print advertising. That is why you could say, that strong emphasizing on masculinity dominated the Finnish cigarette commercials in the late 1960s. Also the creativity in the Finnish cigarette advertising came really into fruition in those last years of tobacco advertising on television.

North State, a brand by Suomen Tupakka, was the “official” men’s cigarette brand. In order to challenge North State and to target male smokers, who prefer strong cigarettes, Amer created Boston Red brand in 1969. The same year Amer made a black-and-white spot for Boston Red, and it was totally different from the spots analyzed above. The camera shoots shakily and handheld from the point-of-view angle through the whole film. The first scene shows a German shepherd barking at the camera. Then the dog moves back giving way to the camera and goes lying in front of a grocery store. There are only
steps of the subject sounding in the soundtrack. The dog stays with its ears laid back and whines. The subject passes by the scary dog, goes to the grocery door and walks in by knocking down the glass door, which breaks with a rattle. Then he goes to the cashier and bangs two Finnish marks on the cash desk. A very low and masculine voice says: "Red Boston – that strong cigarette." The pack of Boston Red slides immediately beside the coins. The hand tears it violently open and hits it back on the desk. A seductive female voice announces: “New Boston Red”.

It is evident, that Boston Red was targeted to men. Although marketing research was not as important as in America, agencies began to formulate marketing campaigns to particular consumer segments in Finland in the late 1960s as well. Boston was targeted to men who smoke strong cigarettes, usually the brand of a competitor. That life style segment was well known without highly refined researches. The advertisers knew that they needed to encode connotations such as masculinity, fearlessness, and insolence – even violence into the product. The Boston Red was also astonishingly modern in a cinematic sense, at least comparing to the previous cigarette spots. The Finnish television advertising finally became professional in the late 1960s.

No doubt there were influences of Marlboro advertising in the Boston Red campaign. As mentioned before, the first connotations of masculinity in the Marlboro commercials go way back to the mid 1950s. The first “macho” commercial was the black-and-white Marlboro ‘Smoker’ from 1955 (Leo Burnett, Inc.). In the documentary-style live action film a “real man” works with a sports car engine. The announcer says: “This is a man who smokes Marlboro Cigarettes. What kind of a man is he?” The man says: “I’m a guy who likes to work on my car. I like to take it apart, and put it together. I get to working on it, and I forget where I am…what time it is. I even forget to eat.” The announcer: “You don’t forget to smoke, though.” The man: “I always smoke when I work. They go together.” As Lincoln Diamand (1971: 118-119) put it:

This was the first of a vast group of competitive cigarette commercials that succeeded in equating masculine virility with puffing, and probably did as much for U.S. lung cancer specialists as it did for U.S. tobacco companies. The “Marlboro Man” epitomized this glamorous, independent
approach—male actors swathed in a heavy dose of reality and documentary lighting. It was certainly a change-of-pace campaign for what had once been considered “a woman’s cigarette.”

Although Marlboro cowboy was a bit late to conquer the Finnish airways, there was a modern version of cigarette cowboy riding and smoking on the Finnish television screens however. Amer tried to target with another brand for the male strong cigarette smokers. It was simply titled Strong. The ‘Strong “rekkamies”’ (‘Strong “Truck Driver”’) spot from 1968 (SEK) starts with a scene of an approaching truck. Then comes a cut to the driver’s hand as it changes the gear of the truck. After that, the hand takes a cigarette from a pack of Strong and a lighter, and lights a cigarette (off the scene). The hand puts the lighter back beside another pack of Strong. The smoking hand switches back to the gear stick and then to the car radio and turns it on. The fast bebop jazz starts playing in the soundtrack. The last scene shows the truck driving along the wintry highway at night. The slogan goes (freely translated): “Men who go ahead, who do things and see things, prefer a strong smoke. Filter Strong 1:84. Night and day.”

The connotations are clear. The truck driver, the setting and the announcement tell whom the product is targeted. The commercial uses a modern version of the lonesome cowboy – the myth of a masculine profession. The connotations, also aim at associating the myth to the advertised product: Strong is a cigarette brand of the mobile, masculine professionals.

As Heinonen and Pantzar (2002) have suggested, the strong pioneering spirit of the settlers in the American West was equally evident among Finnish peasants clearing their own wilderness. The American values of freedom and democracy were well suited to Finland, where no court or strong nobility ever existed, unlike in so many other European countries. Finnish society had strong peasant roots, an egalitarian tradition and national unity that was tested during the civil war of 1918 but regained during the very difficult years of the World War II. In both countries the progressive tone in building of the nation may be related to a sort of ‘new frontier’ ideology. Perhaps the whole Finnish cigarette advertising in the 1960 can be seen as one big cowboy heading to the West.
Referent systems’ are clearly ideological systems and draw their significance from areas outside advertising. (See Williamson, 1998: 17, 19.

All in this and following chapters is based on Jukka Kortti, Modernisaatiomurroksen kaupalliset merkit. 60-luvun suomalainen televisiomainonta (With the brief summary: The Commercialised Signs of Modernisation. Finnish Television Advertising in the 1960s) Helsinki: SKS 2003, if not referred otherwise.

About the ‘creative revolution’ see for example Fox, 1984, 218–71.

Quiz shows, still one of the most important of all television show genres, were very popular all over the Europe already during the first years of television. For example, the number one TV celebrity in Holland during the 1950 and 1960, quiz show host Eerdmans, was the epitome of Dutchness. However, no viewer at the time would have been aware of the American origin of the program. Like Rob Kroes, who has written the fascinating book If You’ve Seen One, You’ve Seen the Mall on Dutch post-war Americanization, put it: ‘Instead of Dutch television becoming Americanized, American models had been Dutchified’. (Kroes, 1996: 177).

About the first years of Italian television, see Richeri, 1985: 21–35.

In my dissertation (Kortti 2003) I analyzed 21 cigarette spots from 1957 to 1970. The films have been collected mostly from the collections of The Finnish Film Archive and advertising agency SEK&Grey, which was, then named SEK, one of the biggest agencies in Finland in the 1960s (and still is).

Not really a commercial or a spot, because it was made for movie theaters before television.

The source for these commercials is ‘Classic Cigarette Commercials Volume 1’ by Video Resources New York Inc. Unfortunately there are no information about years and agencies in the VHS cassettes.

There were doubters in the agency and the company in America too. They feared the campaign was too macho and too limited. (Rutherford, 1994: 40)

In England cigarette advertising on television was banned already in 1965. When the ban was announced tobacco advertising formed the third largest revenue category on television. (Wheen, 1985: 199; Henry, 1986: 107).

The beginning of the 1960s meant changes for the film production companies too, although the changes were not as radical as in the advertising agencies. There was a change of generation in the production companies as well, but because technique and mechanics have so important a role in filmmaking, it was not possible for the new people to learn new working methods in a short time. In addition, the training for the
filmmaking jobs in Finland in the 1960s was unstable. Most of the old filmmakers had a feature-film background. Besides, during the 1960s when the education started in the School of Arts and Crafts, the atmosphere of the school was very auteur and left-wing minded and not so favorable for advertising. In any case, because of television the explosion of film advertising offered new work opportunities for the filmmakers at the very latest at the beginning of the 1960s. At the same time, the Finnish feature film industry spiraled into a crisis, which actually lasted all the way to the end of the 1990s.

References