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I BUY, SO I AM - THE HOMO OECONOMICUS AND THE WORLD OF ADVERTISING, USING THE EXAMPLE OF GEWISTA

*SATIN ALIYORUM - ZİRA BEN REKLAMLA ŐEKİLLENEN İNSANIM!
GEWİSTA ÖRNEĐİ EKSENİNDE REKLAMCILIK DÜNYASI*

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Zehra Özkececi
Nisantasi University Faculty of
Economics and Administrative
Sciences Department of Journalism
zehra_ozkececi@yahoo.de

ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4822-6899>

Abstract

Business and economy use advertising to promote their products and to increase their profits. Political parties also try to win votes with the help of commercial propaganda. Every step of the way we are accompanied by advertising, our everyday life and our culture are shaped by it. This article asks how the permanent confrontation with advertising affects the recipients. What consequences does propaganda and manipulation have for people who are exposed to this constant influence? The phenomenon of the homo oeconomicus is also examined in this context. The Homo oeconomicus is primarily a person who consumes and subconsciously identifies with his or her consumption. He's addicted to consumption. Advertising determines the life of the Homo oeconomicus. The psychologist Erich Fromm already dealt with the phenomenon of exuberant materialism in his book „To have or to be” in the 20th century. This book in particular and his work in general are also presented in this article. Fromm propagated a "rational" consumption that focuses on the real needs of people. A separate chapter is dedicated to Edward Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud, a pioneer of public relations, whose work "Propaganda" - his famous book from 1928, which is still surprisingly current - is presented. Gewista is an Austrian advertising company. This company is in the focus of this article because we can find its out-of-home commercials also in places that were previously free of advertising. That's why the story of Gewista is told and its product range will be presented. Using the example of Gewista there will be asked for the self-image and the foreign attributions of advertising companies. These companies offer a service they describe themselves as a form of communication. Therefore, the article also analyzes whether advertising can really be seen as a topic of communication theories.

Key Words: Advertising, Communication, Economics, Homo Oeconomicus, Gewista, Erich Fromm, Edward Bernays

Öz

İřletme ve ekonomi, ürünlerinin tanıtımını yapmak ve karlarını artırmak amacıyla reklamları/ reklamcılık hizmetlerini kullanırlar. Siyasi partiler de ticari propagandalar yoluyla seçimleri kazanmaya çalışırlar. Reklamcılığın her aşaması, gündelik yaşamlarımızı ve kültürlerimizi şekillendirmektedir. Bu makale, reklamların alıcılar üzerinde nasıl kalıcı etkiler bıraktığını sorgulamaktadır. Söz konusu kalıcı etkilere maruz kalan insanlar için propaganda ve manipülasyonlar ne gibi sonuçlar ortaya koymaktadır? Reklamla şekillenen insan fenomeni de bu bağlamda incelenmektedir. İktisadi insan yani akılcı, rasyonel akla sahip insan, öncelikle tüketen ve bunu bilinçaltında tanımlayan insandır. O tüketime bağımlıdır. Reklam ise; o insanın (homo oeconomicus) hayatını belirler. Psikolog Erich Fromm 20. yy.'da "sahip olmak ya da olmak" adıyla yayınlamış olduđu kitabında cořkulu materyalizme vurgu yapmaktadır. Bu makalede Fromm'un genel olarak çalışmaları özel olarak söz konusu kitabına yer verilmektedir. Fromm, insanların gerçek ihtiyaçlarına odaklanan "rasyonel tüketim" kavramını savunur. Aynı bir bölüm olarak Freud'un yeđeni olan, 1928 yılında çıkarmış olduđu "Propaganda" isimli kitapla ünlenen ve şařırtıcı biçimde günümüze kadar bu ünü devam eden; ayrıca halkla ilişkiler alanının öncülerinden Edward Bernays'a yer verilmiştir. Bu makale, Avusturyalı bir reklam firması olan Gewista'ya odaklanmaktadır. Gewista Firması örneđi ekseninde reklam şirketlerinin benlik imgesi ve dıřsal nitelikleri arařtırılmıştır. Bu şirketler bir iletiřim biçimi olarak kendilerini tanımlayan bir hizmet sunarlar. Bu nedenle söz konusu makale reklamın, iletiřim teorileri açısından geçerli bir konu olup olmayacağı üzerinde de durmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Reklam, İletiřim, Ekonomi, Homo Oeconomicus (Reklamla Şekillenen İnsan), Gewista, Erich Fromm, Edward Bernays

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1. Introduction

"We are confronted with advertising messages every day, all the time, but in rare cases, we deliberately think about what advertising is doing to us. Often we perceive advertising only casually. But even such messages have an impact." (Dünser 2015)

In this article I deal with the effects or rather the consequences of advertising. Specifically, the article deals with the impact of permanent advertising messages on the population in general and the individual in particular. Advertising is aggressive, flattering or blatant. And it is usually unmistakable: Anyone who is confronted with it for a fraction of a second when surfing through the channels knows immediately that it is advertising. Often, but not always: Because nothing is so effective as the hidden advertising (discussed later in this article).

As an example for advertising companies, I chose „Gewista“, because there`s a number of interesting criteria for studying the consequences of commercial advertising.

First, it is the de facto monopoly of Gewista in Austria, especially in Vienna. On the other hand, the penetration into previously private or advertising-free areas and the permanent presence, whereby the border between private and public spaces is increasingly crossed.

It is an Austrian advertising company with a long tradition and an unbroken success story. Walking through the city, you can find their products everywhere, in the subway, on the street, on the houses, even on churches....

Most people are angry about the excessive advertising you are facing everywhere. But their messages are unmistakable and it`s hard to avoid being confronted with them. The company is responsible for a large part of advertising in Austria. The company generates sales of more than 73 million euros per year and is constantly working on further expansion.

Gewista is the largest provider for out-of-home advertising in Austria and is one of the top-selling companies in the country. For decades Gewista has defended its leading position, while other advertising companies are hardly competitive. On the one hand, this is due to the high degree of popularity and, on the other hand, to the comparatively low prices. 65% of the Austrian outdoor advertising is offered by Gewista.

In the self-image, Gewista sees itself primarily not as an advertisement, but as a media company. The service is described as a form of communication or information.

Permanent advertising makes the city according to its own definition “more colorful” and “serves as a guide” for passers-by (Standard editorial office 2018).

What also makes the Gewista interesting is the unclear position of the company: Although already privatized, it is still seen as a part of a state media structure with a close relationship to the SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria). This has repeatedly led to criticism from other providers who accuse the Vienna-ruling SPÖ of favoring Gewista and violating the competition rules. Although the party has always denied this, a close relationship with the party can not be denied, because some SPÖ representatives are active in important functions of the company.

The aim of this work is to examine the concrete advertising effect using the example of a well-known Austrian company. The discussion gets its meaning by the increasing commercialization of all areas of life, even if my article does not represent a new debate, but only a current contribution to it. As method I use the source research, whereby I would like to refer both to historically relevant texts on the philosophical and psychological effects of advertisement as well as on the current self-promotion of the company Gewista. The information and percentages in this article are based on information from the primary and secondary literature that I have used.

My interest in this company is based on my long stay in Vienna during my studies: the omnipresence of posters and other advertising media of the Gewista was obvious to me. For me as a visiting student this was more noticeable than for my Austrian fellow students, who were used to this near-monopoly position and did not question it. Since I have dealt with marketing not only during my studies, but also professionally, I have been confronted with the work of this company.

I would also like to note that in this article I will also touch on the psychological aspects of advertising. It's not my core competency as a communication scientist, but in connection with the causes and consequences, psychological issues are so important in advertising impact research that they cannot be ignored. Therefore, I will also deal with the model of the "homo oeconomicus" and the identity of

consumers. Erich Fromm's theories on the differences between the "have" and the "be" structures are also presented because they confirm to this model.

In addition, in a separate chapter I would like to deal with Edward Bernays, who was one of the first to try to use mass psychology for commercial advertising. His work and his books are also very interesting from a communication-scientific perspective because he explains in detail how the language of advertising can be instrumentalized.

Finally, I summarize the insights gained and try to answer the following questions:

Can advertising be described as a form of communication?

How does the constant advertising affect the recipients who are confronted with it?

For this purpose, the following hypothesis is established: Although advertising is considered as a form of communication, it reinforces the recipient's social alienation.

2. Self-image and external image of advertising

Advertising has become the engine of the economy and the hallmark of a consumption-oriented society. We are confronted with it at every turn, whether we watch TV, listen to the radio, surf in the Internet, visit the supermarket or go for a walk in the city. Advertising is omnipresent and has become a part of our culture. There is no chance to ignore it, it is almost everywhere.

Advertising is helping to stimulate the economy, but has itself become a profitable industry. There is a great demand and therefore a strong rivalry between the different providers.

Advertisers themselves prefer to use new terms for advertising to describe their own activity, often paraphrased as "creative industry". In the media, advertising is described as "consumer information" or "product placement".

The manipulative nature of these redefinitions shows that the advertising industry often also advertises itself. It likes to underline its own merits for the real economy: It is an important employer and promotes the constant competition. In fact, the advertising industry is an engine of the economy and absorbs the most creative minds of society. Gewista also tries to portray their activity as an enrichment rather than a harassment to the people (Gewista a, 2018).

For the effectiveness of commercial advertising, it is important that it is not always presented as garish as the commercials at the prime time or the neon signs in public places. There is also the hidden advertising, which is presented in the form of the mentioned "product placement" or as a newspaper article (Esch, Merkel, Surts 2011).

For example, it is well known that products are often advertised in "James Bond" films. Product placement is also used in theatrical performances or other cultural events when a specific product is presented in an attractive way without being promoted directly. Also criticized are the interviews with politicians, which are not labeled as paid advertising, although they are not made out of interest in the statements of a person, but solely for financial reasons.

Hidden advertising can also be the role model effect in a motion picture. An example would be when young men are inspired by a military war movie. Some Hollywood films were also supported by the US Department of Defense to transport certain messages.

Advertising wants to influence potential consumers. It is mainly focused on the subconscious mind. Although most people reject advertising - especially as an interruption of television or as a constant harassment - and also know that advertising messages contradict reality, advertising can achieve its effect when it's combined with positive emotions and feelings.

There is a grey zone or a fluent transition between advertising, public relations and propaganda. In the summer of 2018, an online consumer survey was conducted to learn more about the impact of advertising. It was commissioned by the Austrian Advertising Council, which also wanted to review the changes to a comparative study from 2015. This was reported in an article in the Austrian journal "Der Standard", which also presented the most important results of the study (standard 2018). The most interesting key findings concern the direct impact of long-term advertising on buying behavior.

Eighty-seven percent of the interviewed persons said they had found products through commercial advertising, and three-quarters were encouraged to buy goods. However, the study also showed that some advertisement is so strongly rejected that the purchase decision is negatively affected.

This includes "violence-glorifying" and "aggressive portrayals" in advertising, or the discrimination against minorities (Ibid.). Rejected are also advertising messages that are too obviously

exaggerated lies. For example, 63 percent deliberately refused to buy a product to protest the form in which it was advertised.

Due to the consequences described, many recipients don't want to accept the glorifying self-descriptions of the advertising companies as "media companies" and "information service providers" anymore. They think, that advertising is a form of harassment.

3. Advertising and the Homo oeconomicus

The term "homo oeconomicus" is very widespread and characterizes people who act only on the basis of economic interests.

„The Homo oeconomicus knows only economic goals and is characterized by attributes such as rational behavior, the pursuit of the greatest possible benefit (maximization of benefit), the complete knowledge of its economic decision-making possibilities and their consequences, as well as the complete information about all markets and characteristics of all goods (complete market transparency).“ (BpB 2016 – „Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung“ „Federal Agency for Civic Education“).

Of course, the emergence of such a type of person cannot arise without the constant influence of advertising messages that characterise our everyday culture. The Homo oeconomicus is therefore not a mature consumer, because the so-called „consumer information" is of course not a serious description of a product, but serves the manipulation of the recipient.

The advertising messages are internalized as well as the constant consumerism. The Homo oeconomicus is primarily a person who consumes and subconsciously identifies with his or her consumption.

If it is an uncritical homo oeconomicus, continuous advertising will be an incentive for him to buy more and compensate for his inner emptiness with the purchase of products. The critical Homo oeconomicus, on the other hand, will buy very consciously. He will think about where the goods came from and under what circumstances they were produced. He will prefer products that are produced organically and sustainably. The critical homo oeconomicus asks: What is the life of workers in the various stages of manufacturing and selling a product? He/ or she is concerned about human rights and working conditions (Wirz, 2015: 7).

But even the critical and responsible consumer remains a homo oeconomicus. His resistance is limited to his buying behavior. This can change a lot, but certainly not a culture whose search for meaning is increasingly focused on consumption. On the contrary, especially in advertising you can see how this target group of conscious customers is addressed and courted: So-called fair-made products are offered in an expanded range and at a higher price. Unfortunately, this also means that the large masses with low income can not always afford sustainable or organic products.

Also conscious consumers are first and foremost consumers. Although they are a relatively small group compared to the buyers who mainly buy the cheapest product, they are a growing group that has influence. And they are also willing to pay more for a fair labeled product. Members of this group are therefore coveted customers who are particularly courted.

Advertising becomes the bracket and the framework of our daily routine and determines the life of the Homo oeconomicus. This can be observed by the example of television or radio listening. Advertising no longer interrupts the artistic-cultural-informative program as it did in the past, but it is in the other way round, since the volume of advertising has massively increased. The program underlines the advertising and serves as a transition to the next jingle.

However, advertising itself becomes a cultural asset, a kind of art in capitalism. Every year coveted prizes are awarded to the best and most original commercial. Advertising is accordingly presented as a creative process. Customers are excited about the clips and have become used to the fact that every movie they see is interrupted by commercials. The psychologist Erich Fromm already dealt with the phenomenon of exuberant materialism in his book „To have or be" in the 20th century.

"In the interplay between economic conditions and psychological moments, the "to have" structure of society emerges, which is based on the principles of private property, profit and power (CE II, 320). This "technocratic fascism with a smiling face" (CE II, 280) contradicts human conditions of existence by its nature-destroying impulses." (Weir, 1990: 75).¹

The author contrasts this social design of "having" with the state of "being." He is concerned with the actual needs of the individual, who as a social being lives and exchanges with others without

¹ The GA in the citation refers to the complete edition of Erich Fromm. (See references)

being dependent on consumption and material goods. The living person strives for self-realization and lives in harmony with nature. He emphasizes the limits of the affluent society, which produces more than it needs for its survival and thus accelerates its own demise.

From the effects of „having" on the individual, conclusions can be drawn for the society as a whole. Developments such as the danger of war and environmental destruction are attributed to this structure of destructiveness described by Fromm (Fromm 1974).

Fromm juxtaposed economy and humanity. Production should be oriented to society's needs, not just to profit and business interests. The intended maximum consumption was rejected by the psychoanalyst. Instead, he propagated a "rational" consumption that focuses on the real needs of people. According to Fromm, the „have“-structure will bring alienation, greed and exploitation, that is why he rejected any commercial advertising. Here artificial needs and a false world would be created. Therefore, he also speaks of the marketing character who develops a greed for consumption (Wehr, 1990: 82-84). This character takes refuge in adaptation and the norm, as this is especially suggested in advertising.

The "being" describes for him the biophilia, the love of the living and the real, the "having" on the other hand the "necrophilia", the desire for possession and for the sublimation of true needs:

"That what has been, that what is dead, rules his life: institution, laws, property, tradition and possessions. In short, the things dominate the man, the having the being, the death dominates the living." (Fromm, 1974: 307)

Professor Jörg Matthes, director of the Institute for Advertising Research at the University of Vienna, refers in an interview to the devastating consequences of permanent manipulation, especially on children as recipients:

"We are confronted with advertising messages every day, all the time and everywhere, but in the rarest cases we consciously think about what advertising is doing to us. Often advertising is only incidentally perceived, but such messages are effective as well. Since even the casual perception of advertising leaves a memory, this trail can later lead to a purchase decision for the advertised product." (Dünser 2015)

Matthes points out that we are confronted daily with around 500 advertising messages, especially with the previously described hidden advertising, which we register only in our subconscious mind. Especially children tend to advertise, as they can only filter at the age of 11 years between regular information and advertising (ibid.).

It is obvious that this target group is being advertised with unhealthy foods and soft drinks. Especially in this age group, more and more children are overweight due to the advertising-effective nutritional awareness. In addition, brand clothing is increasingly playing a role in the clothing of young people: anyone who wears a different brand is "out". Adjustment pressure during adolescence plays an important role in the search for identity. That's why commercial advertising is so successful in this age group.

The researcher also points out that most recipients feel that - in contrast to other consumers - they are not influenced by advertising. This means that the effect of permanent advertising is usually underestimated.

4. Edward Bernays as a pioneer of advertising

Hardly any other individual was so influential to the Homo oeconomicus as the so-called spin doctor Edward Bernays (1891-1995). He is seen to be the father of modern advertising and public relations. He was a nephew of Sigmund Freud and tried to use his uncle's theories and new findings of mass psychology for advertising. Therefore, he wanted to use the experience of psychology and the social sciences to attract new consumers. Bernays managed to make cigarettes attractive to women, or even to campaign against smoking a few years later. He fascinated men for car brands or could bring certain electoral candidates to power - or appeal to the patriotic feelings of US citizens to reach US entry into the war.

Bernays invented the term "public relations" to describe his activity and thus replaced the rather negative word "propaganda" with a new term. With little diplomacy, he exposes in his work "Propaganda" how people's opinions can be influenced to make either goods or political views attractive. He openly stated that he considered free will to be just a rumor:

"The conscious and purposeful manipulation of the behavior and attitudes of the masses is an integral part of democratic societies. Organizations that work in secret control the social processes. They

are the real governments in our country. We are ruled by people whose names we have never heard of. They influence our opinions, our tastes, our thoughts. "(Bernays, 2009: 11)

The quote shows that "democratic societies" in the PR consultant's concept are not mature and enlightened citizens, but Bernays wanted to create the manipulated "masses" that are directed in one direction or the other. But a democracy whose basis is not the free, but the manipulated thinking, does not really deserve the name "democratic".

It is frightening that Bernays already published his famous book in 1928. This means that the propaganda practice has been perfected for ninety years to be even more effective. With today's technological advances, digitalization and the medialization of society as a whole, there are much more effective ways to influence the masses.

But why does public relations work at all? According to Bernays, this is because a product is not bought or consumed primarily for its practical value, but because it represents something or symbolizes a particular image. Behind the desire to own a commodity there is an unfulfilled desire, which is compensated by the purchase. An illusion that can be artificially created. Bernays saw this as one of the main tasks of PR consulting. Bernays was also surprisingly honest when he explained the methods used:

"Propaganda professionals use all the media that people use every day to exchange ideas. There are no means of communication that could not also be used for a targeted propaganda, because it concerns the understanding between a person and a group." (Bernays, 2009: 100)

What was addressed by Bernays many decades ago is still relevant today. Especially during the election campaign, political propaganda plays a more important role than real concerns that may be important to a party. Political contents, programs and real requests are subordinated to the acquisition of power. Therefore the search is going on for ways to achieve the needed level in votes. Voters become an amorphous mass whose individuals have no right to actual information. So they lose their opportunity to reflect on actual facts and to think independently.

"The activity of man in the group is determined by feelings and motivations that can not be explained by the approaches of individual psychology. But if we know whereby and how the mass psyche is moved, why shouldn't it be possible to guide and control it in our will?" (Bernays, 2009: 36)

In contrast to other advertising companies, Bernays did not only try to promote a product. Rather, he tried to change the general environmental conditions so that a product could be sold better. So he hired designers to make the color green to the fashion color, in order to make the cigarette brand Lucky Strike, which was offered in a green package, more attractive.

Or he engaged modern-looking women marching and smoking on parades as suffragettes, while at the same time making sure they were photographed and filmed. This was intended to promote smoking among women, which was then seen as an emancipatory act. Bernays also motivated the government to build highways to have the roads where the advertised cars could drive. Or he persuaded the furniture manufacturers to install bookshelves in the standard equipment, because he hoped that then the books would be bought, which he had advertised (Tribelhorn 2018).

Bernays later led a slander campaign against the elected Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman when his government wanted to implement an agrarian reform in 1951. Because this would also have an effect on the United Fruit Company, Bernays worked for, he defamed Arbenz as a Moscow-loyal Communist.

This campaign finally led to the creation of a rebel army and the CIA-backed military coup (ibid.). His method of initiating a civil war to provoke a regime change is still used today for the unofficial intervention in the sovereignty of other countries. It also became known that the propaganda department of the German National Socialists also used the methods of Bernays to lead the masses (ibid.).

5. Advertising as a form of communication

Gewista, which will be described in more details in the next chapter, defines its activities with the slogan: *"Out of Home is more. Out of Home is communication!"* (Gewista c, 2018)

Although many people do not want to use this more positive term, advertising is, according to all media experts, a form of communication. In this sense, an advertising company like Gewista helps other providers to communicate with people. This is also shown by the following quote, with which the company wanted to promote its own work:

"Every day our clients connect with people on the streets with the support of our billboards. With our advertising media, we help to present messages, to make them tangible for everyone. We can do that

because we benefit from a broad product range, have a large number of high-quality locations and can implement campaigns at all sensory levels through innovative solutions: visual, acoustic, haptic, olfactory and, of course, interactive. "(Ibid.)

Gewista often refers to be a media company. Anyone who is confronted for the first time with the claim of advertising and public relations companies that their work is actually a form of communication may think, that this self-image is presumptuous. In the opinion of critical consumers, social interaction is limited to allowing a recipient to buy or not to buy an advertised product. Therefore, according to these critics, advertising deserves only the formal definition of the term "communication". But there is a lack for the exchange and the possibility of reaction.

However, advertising is a sort of social interaction. In this respect, it is legitimate to speak of a form of communication. Finally, the traditional means of communication are used to spread the advertising messages. The awakening of interest and the effort to win the individual attention of potential customers are certainly among the criteria that characterize communication. Business administration clearly speaks of "marketing" or "marketing communication". The Gabler Wirtschaftslexikon defines advertising as follows:

"Advertising is the influencing („Meinungsbeeinflussung“- "behavioral influence" Kroeber-Riel 1988, 29) of behaviorally relevant attitudes by specific means of communication that are disseminated via communication media. Advertising is one of the instruments of communication policy in the marketing mix." (Schulz 2018)

Nevertheless, it is clear that this is not just a normal interpersonal exchange, certainly not an exchange on equal terms.

In general, advertising such as Gewista information represents a classic sender-receiver model. Advertising consumers, especially when they are confronted with traditional advertising, have no ability to respond to the proposed messages. In recent years, however, more interactive options have been incorporated into high-tech advertising. Such a possibility can be found, for example, in mobile marketing, which will be described at the end of the next chapter.

6. The Gewista - concept and historical review

Advertising has a long history of distributing certain products, recruiting for war and supporting certain political leaders. But mankind has never been advertised as comprehensively as it is today. Since the development of the mass media, the amount of advertising has massively increased, using every opportunity to spread its messages.

This development can also be seen in the rise of the described Austrian advertising company: Gewista has gained sufficient experience in its specialist field of outdoor advertising in the recent decades. Their posters have been present for almost 100 years and have changed the cityscape, especially in Vienna.

The founding of Gewista started at the beginning of modern advertising. In 1921 the company was founded by the administration of the city of Vienna, in which initial announcements of the city were supplemented by transport advertising (Gewista a, 2018). Already the legendary posters on advertising pillars from the silent film era, on which various Austrian products were advertised, were presented by Gewista.

Only in 1974, the Gewista was outsourced from the city administration (Ibid.) The proximity to the SPÖ - the Social Democratic Party of Austria - is still subordinated to Gewista, because there are still prominent party members working for the company. Since it was originally a state-owned company, this close relationship could also be ideologically legitimized. Because the SPÖ is the mayor and thereby also the provincial governor in Vienna, it has often been accused of preferring the Gewista to other providers. Even after the sale, the municipal company "Wiener Holding" remained as the majority owner with 51%.

After the end of the Cold War, the company expanded into the East. Subsidiaries were established in Prague, Bratislava and Budapest. Today, the company is 67% owned by the JCDecaux Central and Eastern Europe Holding. At least 33% are owned by the company Progress (ibid), which is close to the SPÖ.

6.1 The product range

In addition to the classic paper poster, Gewista offers other advertising options, such as the „Rolling Board“, the „City Lights“, the subway advertising or the „city bike“, a rental bike that also serves as an advertising medium.

There are large screens in the subway stations, in the buses and also in a subway, where the advertising mixed with messages can be viewed by the waiting passengers. (Gewista c, 2018)

The Gewista promotes mainly commercial offers, but also for political parties. Only in rare cases we see campaigns for humanitarian initiatives or NGOs. This is mainly due to the fact that these organisations are no financially strong customers and therefore can not afford the fee from advertising companies. Although Gewista offers relatively low prices compared to other providers, the costs for most non-state actors are still too expensive for their low budget.

6.1.1 To the paper poster

The paper poster still plays a major role in the various offers of Gewista. It is distributed in various formats and can be ordered as a poster with 8, 16, 24 or 48 sheets. The Gewista itself describes the paper poster as a "timeless classic". In spite of the other offers, most people associate the name Gewista with the countless posters that unmistakably and ubiquitously promise the greatest joy and the lowest price:

"In any case, the medium always finds application when a campaign requires a quick publicity. The reason for it is obvious: almost no one can ignore the placards." (Gewista b, 2018).

Gewista posters can be found on advertising columns, on large billboards, as small posters or big placards at the tram stations. In summary, about 1,800 advertising columns are being used by Gewista throughout Austria. And there are 17,000 poster sites in total. Long-term posters are rather rare, most are exchanged regularly and according to the occasion.

„Posters are also among the chameleons in outdoor advertising. Whether permanently installed as an advertising pillar, as a small advertisement, a poster by the tram station or as a mobile eye-catcher, the poster is the perfect advertising medium for POS² activities and product launches and just as well suited as a long-term billboard in spacious, highly frequented places and locations." (Gewista b, 2018)

The numbers given are rather modest by Turkish standards, but in terms of the geographical size and the comparatively low population of Austria, they mean that Gewista dominates the austrian market in out-of-home advertising.

Especially in times of election campaigns you can see the posters nationwide, even if the smaller posters usually do not belong to the Gewista, but the parties themselves. Dominant is not the political, but the commercial advertising. People get used to it, especially in the big city. As already stated, Gewista advertises its own posters with the argument to make the cities more colorful.

The fact that many people might feel harassed by the countless posters and their loud messages is rarely discussed. The company also has no problem with getting on people's nerves, because this anger also guarantees the attention that is ultimately wanted by an advertising company. The recognition value exists regardless of whether the passers-by react positively or negatively to the presented advertisement.

Some posters have even been scandalized, for example, when it violated moral guidelines, such as sexist, obscene or racist advertising. Some of these posters were advertised by the Benetton company, which attracted attention with more and more broken taboos. Many passers-by felt hurt by their religious feelings or were outraged even for aesthetic reasons (Welt-Redaktion (Editing) 2018). Some posters were also criticized because they cause disgust among the observers: For example, when the city of Vienna campaigned that dog owners should pay attention to more cleanliness, oversized dog excrement was displayed. This led to protests and angry calls. Ironically, such campaigns are seen as success by Gewista, because they could attract much attention in a large public (Schiffl 2018).

6.1.2 The selection of poster areas

As an advertising company, Gewista seeks the best marketing strategies not only for itself but also for its clients (Gewista d, 2018). Their success automatically means an increase in the own reputation and thereby the acquisition of new customers.

It is therefore obvious that posters are placed especially at those places frequented by many people. Own studies are implemented to determine these locations (Gewista e, 2018). The aim is to reach as many potential customers as possible.

² POS=Product of Sale

First the density of passenger traffic at the respective locations where Gewista advertises is measured. Subsequently, the changed buying behaviour due to a campaign is also examined: Has it risen or is the ultimately cost-intensive advertising disproportionate to the profit achieved?

On the other hand, it can be argued that, especially in cities like Vienna, there is hardly any area where Gewista does not advertise all over the place, so it would not be necessary to search for the best location. Nevertheless, the respective design and the innovative effort differs, ranging from the small A3 format to the huge transparency on large church towers. Posters are made of paper, fabric or plastic.

The so-called Rolling Board should also be emphasized in order to take advantage of mobility and opportunities for change. These are single framed posters which are preferably placed at busy traffic junctions or urban hotspots. At these central places they achieve a high visibility through an innovative design.

6.1. 3 Digital advertising and city lights

Since 2014 Gewista has been trying new forms of communication with digital advertising in order to draw attention to its customers. These electronic billboards can be seen above all in underground stations, on buses or skyscrapers. Gewista has been offering „light advertising" since 1924. Even electronic advertising messages as city lights have long been present in the cityscape, but the digital development offers completely new possibilities for outdoor advertising.

Small and large screens, mobile or at fixed locations, constantly send advertising. There are 8.000 City-Light installations at bus and tram shelters (Gewista c, 2018).

Especially in the vicinity of subways, large-screen presentations can also be seen. For the passengers, the screen becomes the main attraction. Even people who otherwise avoid advertising, here they will look to bridge the waiting times in the stations. Not only out of boredom, but also because they don't want to communicate with other passengers in any way.

6.2 Interaction and Innovation

Gewista has innovated with interactive advertising to stay up to date. With so-called QR codes (QR for Quick Response) they enable a de facto communication between provider and recipient (Webschool 2014).

There is also outdoor advertising that responds to sounds or touch of passers-by. So-called "marketing eyes" can also react to smartphones with the help of infrared interfaces. The activation takes place by the input on the mobile phones. There are even multimedia posters that exude fragrance brands or react with a motion detector to passersby with sound recordings. There is also the possibility to order goods with the help of barcodes and infrared or Bluetooth (Ibid.).



Two bubble gum automata have been integrated into this billboard advertisement (Ibid., Photo by Gewista)



(Kletschke 2018, Turkish Airlines advertising, photo by Gewista)

Turkish Airlines also approached Gewista in Vienna to install interactive advertising. As the photo shows, the visitors of a shopping center were able to present themselves in front of a screen and take selfies, which were integrated into a promotional video. At the same time, passers-by were able to take part in a competition and win a holiday trip. Those who had themselves photographed were able to keep the photo and were shown for a short time on a total of 15 screens (Kletschke 2018).

7. Conclusion

In this article I have dealt with the effects of the constant confrontation with advertising and what form of communication it represents. As an example, I have examined the field of activity of the Austrian advertising company Gewista. As the historical review in this work showed, Gewista was from the beginning an unsurpassed market leader in Austria in the advertising market.

In several chapters I have approached the answers to the research questions. As regards the question whether advertising is communication, it can be said that it is a classic sender-receiver model. Despite innovative design and interactive interfaces, the relationship and power gap between providers and customers remains intact. But although there is no equal exchange, of course it remains a form of communication.

Further research is needed to investigate the impact of continuous advertising on recipients. In this article, the main question was how people react to permanent advertising. I didn't limit myself to buying behaviour, but also asked how the psyche suffers from the aggressive messages and the pretending of a perfect world. All in all, I found only a few investigations in my research that deal with these questions.

However, it is obvious that not millions would be put into advertising if it were not effective: The main goal is to ensure that advertisers' clients maximize their profits. This is achieved primarily with the help of simple promotional messages that encourage the purchase of products. In fact, these messages are usually slogans which, due to their blatant reduction, no responsible consumer would believe. No one believes that clothing has no alternative but to use a specific cleanser, or that eating sweets can bring happiness to a person or the meaning of life. Nevertheless, advertising works, especially about subconscious and emotional effects. This realization is all the more difficult as it is impossible to ignore it.

As already mentioned, companies like Gewista occupy advertising-free rooms: it is therefore no longer possible to turn off the radio set or zap off the commercials in order to escape the messages that now cover all areas of life. It penetrates ever further into the private sphere and occupies places that have been spared so far from the commercials, because of their sacred significance or out of respect. For

example, European churches were already hung with advertising banners, which seemed unthinkable just a few decades ago.

However, advertising on such an extensive scale does not only ensure that these or those products are bought or not bought. It also becomes the basis of a culture that defines itself through consumption.

The homo oeconomicus described in this article corresponds to the necrophilic character that psychoanalyst Erich Fromm has worked out in his book *Anatomy of Destructiveness*. His life is more or less about consumption and the acquisition of actually useless matter. The work of public relations expert Edward Bernays confirms the efforts of the advertising industry to distract people from their real needs and to develop a manipulated homo oeconomicus. In this respect, the hypothesis that advertising contributes to social alienation can be confirmed.

Finally, the question arises as to whether the flood of advertising can even be increased any further, as suggested by the logic of growth in the free market economy. It would be useless to wish that all advertising would be banned and that in Austria, for example, all posters, city lights and rolling boards would disappear. But at least the legitimate demand is for the creation or restoration of ad-free zones, so as not to be constantly harassed by advertising messages. The staff in supermarkets should also not be constantly exposed to slogans and price announcements.

In addition to restricting the volume of advertising, there is also a claim to comply with ethical minimum standards, such as avoiding the promotion of unhealthy, high-fat and sugary foods for children. There should also be bans on exaggerated propaganda: for example, if a product is marketed as healthy, although it can cause cancer and other serious diseases.

As we know from communication science, our subconscious is constantly shaped by its environment, our development depends on the messages we receive from earliest childhood. It should not become part of our culture that everything becomes a commodity and that in our communication we orient ourselves more on the artificial models of the commercial screen than on our own feelings, emotions and needs. For interpersonal relationships, it is very important that the influence of advertising, propaganda and public relations on communication can be examined more critically than before. I hope I have contributed to this with this article.

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