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The organization of creativity in Japanese advertising production

Brian Moeran

ABSTRACT

This article makes use of the results of ethnographic participant observation to analyze how creativity is organized in the production of Japanese advertising. An ad campaign, like many other creative products, is produced by 'motley crews' of personnel from both within an agency contracted to conceptualize the campaign on behalf of its client (an account team) and freelance professionals hired to realize the account team's creative concept (a production team). The concepts of frame analysis and art worlds are used to analyze the symbolic space of the studio and the transformations that occur there, while that of field enables a comparative analysis of advertising's 'space of possibles' in which different actors position themselves and their clients' products. Creativity is used to establish relations of power among advertising personnel, as well as over consumers, by means of the constant (re)positioning of advertisers' products. This is the function of advertising's motley crew.

KEYWORDS

advertising campaign ▪ art world ▪ creativity ▪ fashion magazines ▪ frame analysis ▪ motley crew

This article examines embedded structural tensions in the organization of creativity in Japanese advertising production. These arise from the fact that an advertising campaign, like many other creative products, is conceived and produced by 'motley crews' of personnel from both within an agency contracted to dream up and prepare the campaign (an account team) and

freelance professionals hired to assist in the creative work required to put it into effect (a production team).

Two different theoretical approaches are used to analyze what goes on in a studio setting where the concepts created by an account team are realized as visual images by a production team. One makes use of Erving Goffman's concept of frame analysis to look at the symbolic space of the studio and the transformations that occur there. The other relies on Howard Becker's analysis of art worlds and examines the production team as a network of people whose cooperative activity, organized by means of their joint knowledge of conventional ways of doing things, produces the kind of ad campaign that the advertising world is noted for (Becker, 1982).

By using these two rather different, though in many respects complementary, theoretical approaches, the article applies a sociology of occupations to creative work in the Japanese advertising industry. At the same time, it makes use of Bourdieu's concept of field to discuss the 'space of possibles' in which different actors – in particular, art director, photographer and client – take up and challenge the positions of other players and products in the field of advertising. In the process, it reveals deeper structural issues connected with occupational structures, the distribution of advertising budgets, and the relationship between magazine and advertising production.

The methodology employed is that of long-term participant observation, consisting of a 12-month period of fieldwork in a Japanese advertising agency, together with occasional follow-up visits (see Moeran, 1996, 2005, 2006a), and several days spent in studio settings observing the production of advertising campaigns. This original fieldwork in 1990 and more recent and concentrated participant observation of production teams at work in 2002, as well as follow-up interviews among freelance fashion personnel in Denmark, reveal a structural continuity that makes my earlier research on advertising production as pertinent today as it was more than a decade and a half ago.[1]

Participant observation is slowly becoming recognized as a key tool for the understanding of business processes (see Ailon, 2007; Garsten, 1994; Kunda, 2006; Moeran, 2005, among others). What good fieldwork reveals – among other things – is the customary discrepancy between what people *say* they do and what they *actually* do (something not discernable in interviews per se). It also enables the fieldworker to pick out covert codes of behavior, such as the spatial framework of the studio in which a production team works as related below, and to lay them bare to structural or other forms of analysis (Moeran, 2005, 2006a). The analytical thrust of this particular article is (social) anthropological and broadly comparative, seeking to show not only how creative practices in Japanese advertising differ

in some degree from those described for the United States and Europe, but also how these differences themselves throw light on the organization of creativity in the advertising industry as a result of structural variations in related professional fields.

This approach in certain important ways mirrors that taken by people working in the advertising industry itself. Advertising executives, for example, like anthropologists, focus on social interaction, beliefs and values surrounding the relation between people and things in a society, while account planning tends to be rooted in qualitative, ethnographic approaches to the study of consumers (Grabher, 2002). The work of both anthropologists and advertising professionals tends to take them into areas well beyond the boundaries set by their technical expertise (Malefyt & Moeran, 2003). Each aims to be an objective, penetrating observer of society (Young, 1991).

Advertising worlds

Advertising enables a client to deliver a message to many people through an impersonal medium for which the client pays, and advertising campaigns are usually conceptualized and realized by advertising agencies working on behalf of corporate clients. Most advertising is designed to market goods and services as part of a sales campaign to launch a new product or reposition an unsuccessful brand vis-à-vis competing brands, although it may also be used to change consumer attitudes, show support for an advertiser's sales force, reinforce its corporate image, and so on (Moeran, 1996). The main aim of every advertising campaign is differentiation. It is the creation of differences per se between products, brands, advertisers and so on, rather than the content of such differences, that is of crucial importance in the production and consumption of advertising (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Moeran, 1996).

For a long time, with one notable exception (Hower, 1939), detailed descriptions of the work and organization of advertising agencies came from within the trade (e.g. Hopkins, 1998; Young, 1991) rather than from academic research. Scholars interested in creative practices were obliged to take at face value insiders' interpretations of what did and did not constitute 'creativity' and of how best to manage it (e.g. Ogilvy, 1963, 1983). They were assisted in their endeavors by the occasional informative journalistic account, albeit painted with a broad brush for effect (e.g. Arlen, 1979; Goldman, 1997; Mayer, 1991; Rothenberg, 1994).

From the early 1990s, however, a handful of anthropologists began to explore the world of advertising practices in places as far apart as Trinidad

(Miller, 1997), Japan (Moeran, 1996) and South Asia (Kemper, 2001; Mazzarella, 2003). Their research, in turn, has encouraged others originally trained as anthropologists, but thereafter working in the advertising industry, to reflect on their hands-on experiences and to publish detailed case study analyses of some of the strategies in which agency personnel engage during the course of their everyday work (e.g. Malefyt, 2003; McCreery, 2001; Morais, 2007). This trend was accompanied by ethnographic research on the marketing practices of firms (Lien, 1997), art (Plattner, 1996) and stock markets (Hertz, 1998), as well as of cultural processes in the global marketplace (Garsten & Lindh de Montoya, 2004), so that within marketing management some account is now taken of everyday marketing practices (e.g. Hackley, 1999; Svensson, 2004). Scholars in other disciplines, such as economic geography (e.g. Grabher, 2002), have also made their contributions to the study of organizational forms in the advertising industry.

As a result, we are beginning to get a clearer picture of the kinds of social, cultural, economic and political constraints affecting the production of advertising campaigns. This picture reveals an advertising agency's internal organization and dynamics, as well as external agency–client relations, and focuses on the fact that advertising campaigns are conceived by account teams, comprising primarily accounts, marketing, creative and media-buying personnel. One part of this organizational landscape reveals that, like other creative industries, advertising suffers from a number of tensions arising from what Richard Caves (2000: 6–7) has so felicitously described as 'the motley crew'.

Such tensions arise from the different tasks and sets of expertise that different members of an account team bring to the conception of an ad campaign. They may be internal to the team, as when marketing and creative personnel disagree with one another (Moeran, 1996), or externally generated, as when the account manager who represents both agency to client and vice versa (Quinn, 1999), fails to satisfy the differing expectations held by the agency's client and his account team.

The account team, therefore, is mired in an organizational paradox in that, in order to meet all its client's needs and do its job properly, an agency has no alternative but to bring together potentially incompatible personnel with different world views (see Caves, 2000). Among devices put into place to limit rivalry and promote mutual tolerance and understanding are project deadlines (Grabher, 2002) and, in Europe and the USA, the establishment of a relatively stable set of core relationships among team members, especially between copywriter and art director, working on a single account. The downside of such devices is that, by working with a stable set of colleagues,

members of an account team develop team, rather than agency, loyalty (Grabher, 2002). Moreover, the very limitation on collaboration enforced by a project deadline prevents a permanent resolution *within* an agency to the competing logics of 'art' and 'science' held by different sub-teams (creative and marketing, respectively), although *between* an agency and its clients creativity is the magic by which the latter are dazzled.

In Japan, however, the former problem is resolved by teaming different personnel to work together on multiple accounts. This is made possible by the fact that Japanese, unlike American or European, advertisers do not allocate the whole of their account to a single agency, but tend to split their accounts by product or media, or some combination of the two, and to allocate them among a number of different agencies (Moeran, 1996). This distribution of work enables every member of an account team to learn about and appreciate the variety of numerous others' worldviews of advertising and its practices, as well as get a broad range of experience in different kinds of advertising problems brought to an agency by its clients. Thus, in contrast to the European and American emphasis on specialization (brought about by the fact that no single agency is allowed to handle the competing accounts of – say – two different automobile or soft drinks manufacturers), Japanese agencies seek to make generalists out of their staff whose allegiance is to the agency as a whole and not just to an account team. The competing logics of 'art' (aspired to by the creative team) and 'science' (espoused by the marketing team) are not resolved as such, but they are given a little less weight, perhaps, because of the sheer number of accounts handled and of account teams formed with multiple personnel. Individual egos have neither the time nor occasion to become inflated.

So, although attention has been paid to advertising practices within an agency, what happens when the latter contracts a studio, photographer, model, hairdresser and other personnel to carry out the actual production of the visual images to be used in one of its ad campaigns has received rather less attention. Here we find a second-level motley crew (what I shall here call the 'production team') assigned to carry out the task of transforming a creative team's concepts into visual representations. How is this done? And what tensions arise – and why – from the interaction among these professionals with different sets of expertise and tacit knowledge, as well as between them and the advertising agency's art director who has employed them for the task at hand? Questions like these should enable us to understand better the organization of creativity in advertising production, both in Japan and elsewhere.

The production team

The job of the account team is to come up with an acceptable idea for an advertising campaign that meets its client's requirements and brief. However, once the client has given its OK to an account team's creative proposal, those concerned have to initiate actual production of the campaign in question. It is here that an agency's creative team brings together a second-level motley crew, or production team, led by the art director who selects and employs a photographer, model or celebrity, stylist, hairdresser (or hair stylist), make-up artist, studio and, in the case of a television commercial, production company (see Aspers, 2001). This 'performance team' (Goffman, 1959: 85) cooperates in staging the single routine of shooting an ad campaign, to which each member brings specific expertise. Some are accompanied by their own personnel: a photographer, make-up artist and hairdresser by their assistants; a model by her booking agent; a celebrity by her manager; and a studio by its staff. Almost all of them work freelance and are hired by the agency, for which they work very intensively for two to three days on the project at hand.[2]

How does the production team go about its job, and how do participants come to terms with one another's different spheres of competence? An uninitiated visitor's first impression of a studio set is one of total chaos. Some people appear to be sitting around doing nothing but drink tea and chat, while others are busy arranging lighting, moving furniture, papering one part of the studio floor, and so on. Meanwhile, in a small cubbyhole adjacent to the studio, a model is being tended to by a handful of make-up, hair and fashion stylists. However, such confusion in time reveals to the participant observer a fairly clearly defined demarcation of participants and their duties – a demarcation that is mirrored in the spatial organization of the studio.

Using frame analysis to examine social behavior is one useful way to get to grips with what goes on in advertising production, since frames organize who does what, where and when before, during and after a studio shoot. There are more and less important frames in every field of creative activity, but one that renders what would otherwise be meaningless into something that is meaningful we may call, following Goffman (1986), a *primary framework*. In the advertising world, primary frameworks include competitive presentations, where different agencies are invited to compete for an advertiser's account by presenting creative ideas based on a client's marketing brief (Moeran, 1993); client workshops, where agency personnel interact with a new client's team in an attempt to overcome marketing uncertainties, assess interpersonal dynamics, and direct and control as much interaction with their client as possible (Malefyt, 2003); and studio (and

location) shoots. Each allows participants 'to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its own terms' (Goffman, 1986: 21). Although they may not be consciously aware of such organized features and would be unable to describe them coherently when asked, they can easily and fully apply the framework in their everyday activities.

Like other primary frameworks, a studio shoot is regarded as relevant and important to the tasks undertaken by members of an advertising world. What we find in a studio shoot are the 'guided doings' (Goffman, 1986: 22) of individuals – guided because they are subject to certain standards, norms, expectations and social appraisal. Certain kinds of behavior are expected (at certain stages) during the course of a shoot (total stillness when the photographer starts shooting a scene; shifts between concentration and casual playfulness among personnel; the kind of music played and how loud; and so on). Those present behave according to such norms and expectations because they know that to do otherwise would invite criticism and possibly social sanctions of one sort or another.

Frame analysis helps clarify the 'guided doings' – or characters' roles (Goffman, 1986: 124–9) – of a production team at work. But it is more than the analysis of a spatial framework per se, since the aim is to be able to point to and explain the transformations that take place in a setting like the studio, rather than the setting itself (Goffman, 1986). The frame analysis which follows, therefore, serves to reveal in later sections of this article the tensions underpinning the organization of the production team's creativity.

Every production team tends to be organized into four distinct spheres of work practice and related personnel. First, whenever a model, actress, or celebrity is being used in a campaign, s/he will be tended to by the fashion stylist, hair and make-up team in what may be called a *beauty room*, leading off the main studio.[3] Their activity is carried on more or less independently of what is going on in the studio itself, until the model is called for a session, when she will be ushered onto the set and given final administrations by her attendants before the photographer takes over.

Second, there are the photographer and his two assistants – one of whom is an assistant to the other – whose job it is to set up the *camera* in a particular spot, arrange the lighting and prepare the film, making sure that each spool is properly numbered and packed after use. They will also develop the film and make the final prints required for the advertising campaign.

Third, there is the art director who usually instructs the studio stage-hands in how to set up the *set* and who works closely with the photographer to ensure that, together, they get the image effect that both of them think is right for the job in hand. In this respect, there is some crossover of

responsibilities as the photographer ensures that the set, camera and lighting are in accord. The art director, however, does not interfere with the photographer and his assistants.[4]

Although the art director moves about the studio, giving instructions or consulting staff as appropriate, his 'home base' – or fixed point of return – is a table set up in one unused part of the studio (but almost invariably near the studio entrance). It is here that client personnel, and random visitors (of whom there tend to be many, including the occasional anthropologist) are invited to sit, and to which other personnel will gravitate during a slack moment during the day's work. This is the *client base*, which serves as a general liaison point between client, agency art director and subcontracted freelance personnel.

There is one other point of reference in the studio. This is a special stand or table to which photographer and art director repair after every session in order to examine the Polaroid photos (or computer images) just taken. All staff, including the model, usually gather silently around this *photo stand* between takes, as photographer and art director examine and discuss the images before them. It is from here that further instructions are issued for the next session.

The location of these points of reference reflects the importance of each of the tasks being carried out, as well as of their personnel and the relationships among them. Thus the 'outsider', the client, is located at the point nearest to the studio entrance and thus the 'outside' (or *omote*), while the camera and set are located in the 'interior' (commonly referred to as *oku* in Japanese) of the studio. It is in this highly charged symbolic space that the two pivotal actors, the art director and photographer, take up their positions, although the art director is obliged, as an 'employee' of the client, to move back and forth between interior and exterior locations. The liminal point linking client to camera and set, and attracting all members of the production team at particular points during the course of the day's action, is the photo stand (see Figure 1).[5]

The primary relationship guiding the production team in its work is that of art director and photographer. Although it is the former who, in conjunction with other members of his account team, has come up with an idea for an advertising campaign, it is the latter who has to transform that idea into a series of visual images. It is important, therefore, that the art director explains carefully his concept (often with the aid of illustrations or photographs) and that the photographer understands it, before adding his or her particular take on the creative idea in question.

Other members of the team take on greater or lesser importance according to the product being advertised. In a hair products campaign, for

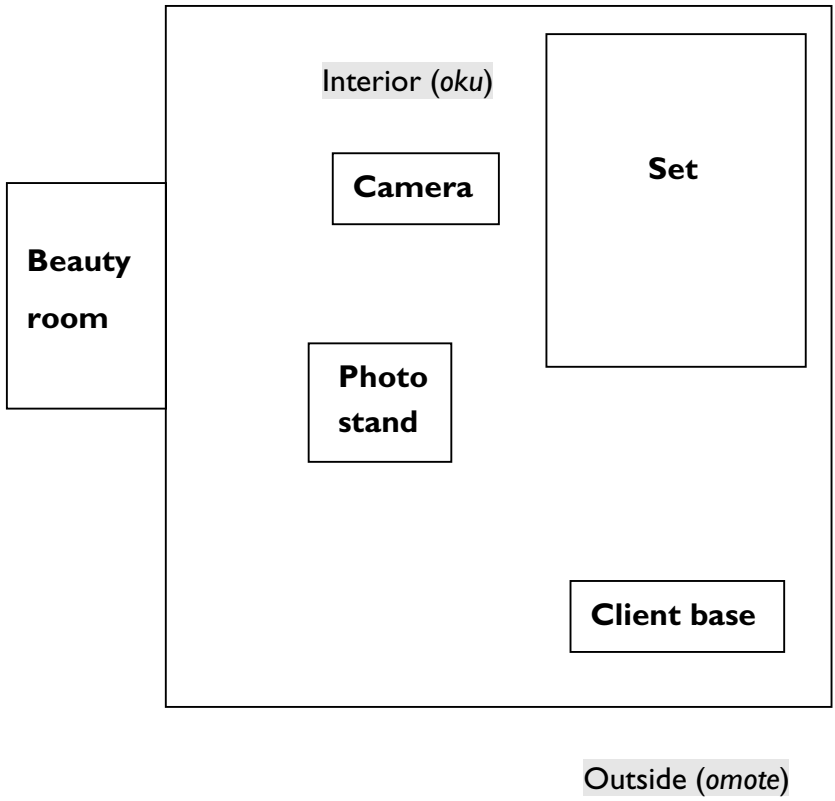

Figure 1 The organization of symbolic space in a studio

example, the hairdresser will be brought into the art director-photographer discussions, and may – as we shall soon see – even take over the role of the art director entirely. In a cosmetics campaign, the make-up artist will take precedence; in fashion, the stylist. But all members of the beauty team can, and will, make unanticipated interventions, as they feel appropriate, during the day's shooting. In a contact lens campaign, witnessed by the author, for example, while the photographer was in the process of posing an actress for the second print ad photo, the hairdresser suddenly stepped forward with a pair of chopsticks, twisted the actress's hair upwards behind her head and fastened it with his impromptu 'hair pin', before stepping back theatrically to admire the effect. The photographer checked the image in his viewfinder before inviting the art director to take a look. All agreed that this was an excellent way to pose the model, even though the effect was somewhat different from the art director's initial intention. It is in such improvisations

(Ingold & Hallam, 2007) that creativity is recognized. But we might also note that each member of the production team acts to support the others. In so doing, it becomes very unclear who is *the* creative person and who are the support people in the production of an ad campaign (Becker, 1982).

A revealing encounter

What does frame analysis of the symbolic space of the studio reveal in terms of the organization and 'guided doings' of the performers? First, we should note that every production team acts as an informal training ground for the acquisition of both technical and social competences. Assistants to the photographer, hairdresser and make-up artist are all involved in on-the-job training, and learn to master a variety of technical solutions to problems arising during the shooting of different advertising campaigns. At the same time, the learning process takes place across professions as photographers learn from the accumulated experiences of art directors, hairdressers from those of make-up artists, models from those of fashion stylists, and so on. Such technical competence is thereby transformed into social competence as different personnel reveal their knowledge in each of the encounters that the formation of a production team creates. We thus find a synthesis between concrete know-how and abstract knowledge as members of the team act in concert with one another in what Keith Negus and Michael Pickering term 'a mutually enhancing absorption and understanding' (2004: 19).

It is during this long-term process of multiple membership of production teams that a photographer, fashion stylist or make-up artist, for example, comes to be recognized as an 'insider'. While at their periphery motley crews provide a site for training, therefore, at their core they establish an organizational context in which reputation – that is, social and cultural capital – is established (Grabher, 2002; see also Aspers, 2001). Such reputations develop through a process of consensus building in advertising's creative world. The reputations of art directors, photographers, stylists, makeup artists, hairdressers and models result from their collective creative activities, which in turn produce the ad campaigns on which their reputations depend (Becker, 1982).

'Encounters' are the social form by which members of production teams describe this social process:

> Everything starts with the people you choose for a job. Encounters (*deai*) are crucial here. Like my choice of Nicky, for example. I saw his work in a magazine and liked it, so I got in touch with the staff there

> and asked how I could contact him. Then I met him and really liked him. His work was the start, but it wasn't everything. He's also got love, and a philosophy that I like. He's easy to communicate with, and this makes him much better, so far as I'm concerned, than some incompetent Japanese. So, it's a spiritual way of thinking, rather than just what's trendy, that influences me in deciding who to choose for a job, as well as what kind of work to do in the first place.[6]

Just how such encounters enable freelance photographers and others in a production team to move from 'outsider' to 'insider' – that is, to someone with her own recognized symbolic capital – depends on a number of factors. One is the technical and social skills that each brings to a situation and the ability to work within social conventions. A second is explicit knowledge of the 'portfolio of connections' (Bourdieu, 1996: 360) – of who's who – in the advertising and fashion worlds. A third factor involves the longer term building up and maintenance of trust as an integral part of social networks (see Aspers, 2001; Moeran, 2005). Encounters ultimately create mutual confidence in 'this is how we do things here' – the taken-for-granted, tacit knowledge, unknown to outsiders (including the advertiser), which is based on impression management and pervades each production team's activities. The organizational result is what Pierre Bourdieu (1993: 81) has felicitously referred to as 'social alchemy'.

In this respect, it is in the recognition granted by one set of producers (freelance personnel) producing for another producer (advertising agency) (Bourdieu, 1993) that advertising is legitimated as a creative process. In other words, their performance serves to express characteristics of the task performed, rather than of the performers themselves (Goffman, 1959). It is *how* something is done, rather than *who* does it, that matters. Here, two factors are important to the relationship among individual members of the production team. First, each relies on the proper conduct and behavior of other members of the team. In other words, there is reciprocal dependence among them. Second, precisely because they are accomplices in maintaining an appearance of how things should be done, teammates who are 'in the know' are bound by reciprocal familiarity (Goffman, 1959).

The contradictory nature of reciprocal dependence and reciprocal familiarity can lead to a breakdown of dramaturgical cooperation in the production team – a breakdown that embarrasses the appearance of creativity and teamwork staged in the studio. For example, at the end of one particular hair products print ad shoot, an unexpected difference of opinion arose between photographer and hairdresser who had assumed the role of creative director for the day. The two of them had worked closely together,

picking out images that the hairdresser liked best, then rearranging the model's hair, before taking and selecting more photos, until, in the end, just one was isolated for the poster that the Japanese client wished to send out to hairdresser salons all over the country for the New Year.

The photographer checked with the hairdresser that she was happy with the chosen image, made sure that the client had no objection, and then gave the order to his assistants and studio staff to dismantle the set. A few minutes after they had begun to go about their work, however, the hairdresser suddenly came back into the main studio from the beauty room where she was tending the model with two assistants and asked the photographer to take another set of photos. She felt that she could get an even better effect than the one they already had.

The entire production team froze in its tracks. Faced with this unexpected request, the photographer quietly asked why and was told by the hairdresser that she had thought of a new way to style the model's hair. He pointed out that the set was already being dismantled, that the camera had been put away, and that it would take an immense amount of time to re-establish everything exactly as it had been. He noted the extra costs that the client would incur both in terms of labor and studio rental. The hairdresser was adamant. She could do a better job.

By this time, even the music to whose rhythm everyone had been working all day had been turned off. Then, the art director, who had sat all afternoon at the client table without interfering at all in the work being done by photographer and hairdresser, suddenly spoke up. He reminded the hairdresser rather sharply of the sequence of events that had taken place that day, and of her responsibilities to the photographer, client and the production team as a whole. He emphasized the different sets of professional expertise that each had brought to the set, but insisted that each should know where to draw the line in terms of perfection. Should the client be obliged to pay for extra studio rental and labor time for little more than a 'marginal improvement'? Was the hairdresser really going to insist?

Standing in the midst of the assembled crew around the photo stand (in this case, the photographer's computer), and in an icy silence, the hairdresser pondered the situation. Caught in the classic predicament of 'negative experience' described by Goffman (1986: 378–9), she floundered over the formulation of a viable response in a frame that she had herself broken. After a long 30 seconds, she bowed her head quickly, in acknowledgement that the art director was in the right, and apologized before going back to the beauty room. The studio staff and photographer's assistants immediately unfroze and went back to dismantling the set. The loud, rhythmical music was turned back on. The photo stand – that liminal point in the studio designed to bring

together and harmonize the production team's different sets of expertise – had served its symbolic purpose. The 'false note' (Goffman, 1959: 92) of open disagreement in front of the combined audience of client and other team members quickly receded into dramaturgical cooperation once more.

The reason for this sharp, but potentially explosive, exchange between photographer, hairdresser and art director had to do precisely with the kind of knowledge 'in the air' (Marshall, 1961: 271) that surrounds all production teams (and, by extension, motley crews in general). By suddenly demanding that the photographer re-shoot a scene, the hairdresser was questioning the taken-for-granted knowledge that all those concerned had known precisely what they were doing all day, and thus the trust that they had performed properly (Goffman, 1959). She not only placed her own professionalism in doubt; she opened up an avenue of disagreement that could easily have torn apart the carefully wrought harmony between advertiser and ad agency, on the one hand, and the ad agency's art director and his production team, on the other.

Advertising's space of possibles

One question arising from this description and analysis of a production team at work concerns who controls whom and at what points during the production of an ad campaign. My particular focus here is on the broader field of advertising and the 'space of possibles' (Bourdieu, 1993: 176) that orients the lines of demarcation between art director, photographer and client, as the symbolic space of the studio is transformed into a 'stake of struggles' (Bourdieu, 1993: 42) in which performers discover whether their vision of how things should be done prevails and, if not, *whose* vision prevails (see Caves, 2000).

An advertising campaign is 'the deposit of a social relationship' (Baxandall, 1972: 1) between advertiser and advertising agency, in much the same way that a 15th-century painting reflects a relationship between painter and the client who commissioned and paid for it. In advertising, as in early Renaissance art, the client is often an active, determining and not necessarily benevolent agent, who is mindful of the positions being taken by his competitors as they stake out an 'ensemble of relations' in the field (see Bourdieu, 1993: 58, 61, 119). The funds allocated by a client affect the finished ad campaign in terms of content, function, size, and quality of materials and skills applied, in much the same way as they did a 15th-century painting (Baxandall, 1972), but – however great or small an advertiser's budget – he expects, indeed demands, that his campaign be 'creative', for it is creativity

that enables him to (re)position his product. Creativity, then, dominates the space of possibles in the field of advertising.

It is the – sometimes permanent (Jackall & Hirota, 2000) – pairing of copywriter and art director which has to respond to the client's demand for creativity. Although their established roles often collapse in the process, the copywriter's job is to spin words around a sales pitch, while the art director is responsible for accompanying graphic images and composes the visuals and layout of the print (and occasionally video) ads accepted by the client. However, while the copywriter is active during the conceptual stage of an advertising campaign, the art director's role extends into its production, where he has to mediate between client, photographer, and other members of the production team, and 'to resolve tensions arising from uncertain identities and frustrated experiences' (Bogart, 1995: 135). It is when he brings together a production team to transform his creative ideas into actual images, that the art director needs an astute use of administrative, rather than creative, skills. The production team – consisting of photographer, fashion stylist, make-up artist, and hairdresser – then dons the mantle of creativity.

Here lies the rub. Art directors sometimes confuse these different responsibilities and interfere with a production team's work in the misguided belief that success depends upon their maintaining artistic control (Bogart, 1995). Such a belief may have something to do with the fact that the art director is usually (though not necessarily) a regular employee of an advertising agency. His (or occasionally her) past and potential career therein decides which particular jobs he is allocated and he tends to orient what he does to the needs of his agency, as well as to those of individual clients. He thus develops motives and positions that are rather different from those of the production team with which he works. The photographer, for example, like the other specialists employed in a production team, is one of a pool of similarly qualified freelance professionals and is contracted separately for each ad campaign. Freelance assignments are always contingent upon a photographer's background experience, creative style, reputation, geographical location, client and budget (see Bogart, 1995). However, there are other photographers (as there are other stylists, models, and so on) who are equally competent and who could equally well have been asked to do the same job. This means that the photographer needs a network of connections who will contact him and nobody else when the occasion arises (Becker, 1982).

The result of the different occupational structures underpinning the work of art director and photographer is that the latter is necessarily constrained in his work by the fact that s/he has to please two clients simultaneously: his client, the advertising agency which employs him; and his

client's client, the advertiser who employs the agency.[7] As a result, 'the photographer must supply visual expertise, must possess a cheerful and easy-going manner, must take orders in an accommodating way and must communicate a special quality called "faith in the outcome" to people whose business is fraught with uncertainty' (Rosenblum, 1978a: 428). Here, disposition (or habitus) confronts the taking up of a particular position in the available space of possibles (Bourdieu, 1993).

Although both Rosenblum and Bogart have noted the potentially explosive relationship that exists between art director, photographer and client in the American advertising industry, my research in Japan reveals a more harmonious distribution of and respect for responsibilities. For a start, the advertising client almost invariably takes a back seat when it comes to the actual shooting of a campaign. Although the advertiser will inevitably engage in long and detailed negotiations with the advertising agency's account team over the exact contents of a campaign prior to its production, when it comes to production itself the client does *not* interfere with the professionals whom the art director has hired – even when, as we saw earlier, a disagreement breaks out between the photographer and hairdresser. He does not, therefore, tell the photographer to make sure s/he photographs his product in its best light (Rosenblum, 1978a), but leaves him to get on with his work in the conviction that s/he – and not the advertiser – is the one who knows best at this point. Similarly, he will leave it to the art director to adjudicate in the case of disagreement among members of the production team and not himself intervene, even when appealed to. In other words, positions available to and occupied by actors in the field of Japanese advertising appear to be more clearly defined and respected than they are in American advertising.

A second point worth noting in support of this hypothesis is that in Japan it is the art director – and not the photographer as in the USA (and Scandinavia[8]) – who makes separate contractual arrangements with a studio, photographer, and other employees (hairdresser, stylist, model, and so on) necessary for a particular campaign shoot. Although he may make recommendations about personnel, or help choose the model, the fact that he does not himself directly hire anyone other than his assistants relieves the photographer of a lot of tension during the course of his work, as well as of responsibility when things go wrong.

Both these points underline the fact that in Japan an advertising campaign shoot is, on the surface at least, an extremely egalitarian gathering of professionals who work together in a climate of mutual respect for one another's expertise.[9] The main actors in the production team – the art director and photographer – cooperate closely, while working for the most

part independently, and so mirror working relations in the account team where planning, research, media buying and creative activities tend to be carried out in semi-independent parallel. Decisions are made on the basis of discussion and mutual agreement, rather than by means of some form of hierarchical control structure. Control is, of course, exercised – but by different actors at different points in the shoot.

This is, perhaps, surprising in a society well known for its overall hierarchical structure, but in Japan we do *not* find that 'the social organization of advertising has the net effect of chiseling away at the broad range of knowledge and expertise that the photographer brings with him'. Nor do we find that 'the photographer's contribution is virtually reduced to technical labor'; nor that s/he 'is often given direct orders by the art director and is told to photograph the models or objects the art director's way and not his way' (Rosenblum, 1978a: 430). The Japanese photographer (or Western photographer working in Japan) does *not* have an unsolicited comment 'overruled by the coalition formed by the advertiser and art director' (Rosenblum, 1978a: 431). Rather, he is expected to use technical expertise to resolve an art director's conceptual difficulties and to add his own inimitable style to the images that he takes for the advertising campaign on which he is working, while taking into account the constraints imposed by the client's brand. Although a photographer's work is evaluated according to his ability to find 'the solution to a technical problem for which there are no standardized solutions' (Rosenblum, 1978b: 84) – as in when he uses Vaseline on a sheet of plate glass to simulate rain blobs – his creativity is also judged by his stylistic inputs.

Such stylistic inputs may be found in a broad array of activities, for photographers do not confine themselves to working in just advertising, news journalism, or art photography, but rather cover as many different spheres as they can. These include, in particular, fashion magazines, but also music videos and other kinds of work, all of which are used to fill a photographer's portfolio or 'book' – the photographic record of his work that is used to solicit more jobs.[10] The preferred form of work in Japan is advertising, since the amount of money lavished on a campaign permits a photographer freedom to work in different, interesting and 'creative' ways. Even though an account is split, thereby leading to some form of economic constraint, an advertising budget is still far greater than that available for a magazine fashion shoot, which is marked by what might be termed 'an overload of social constraints'. As a Swiss photographer working in Japan put it:

> One reason why I don't like to work for magazines very much is because there're too many vested and political interests in the shooting

> of fashion stories or covers. Which means I can never really achieve the kind of effect I'd like. So, when I *do* get involved in this kind of work, it's because I know a freelance fashion editor who's been contracted to put something together for a magazine and I want to help a friend out. I know that then I'll probably get some really good work through the same friend when it comes along. It's a matter of give and take, isn't it?[11]

The kind of assignments that photographers working in Japan dislike, then, is magazine work. This is understandable, given Aspers's (2001) comment that a magazine editor's task is to hire photographers who, she thinks, will mirror and reproduce her magazine's style. But there is another reason for this dislike. In the words of a young Japanese photographer:

> As far as I'm concerned, foreign magazines place their main emphasis on *image*. But here in Japan it is always the *clothes* – their flow and the materials they're made of – that are the focus of the camera's attention. In this respect, even magazines like *Vogue* have to adapt to their Japanese readers a bit. As a result, of course, photographers in Japan are more restrained in their work. They can't indulge in the kinds of experiments that European and American photographers, and their employing magazines, take for granted. This makes them seem less creative.[12]

Why should advertising work in the USA, but magazine work in Japan, be seen as constrained? Why does magazine work in the USA, but advertising in Japan, provide a photographer with the chance to show off his creativity? Why the difference in focus, on images or clothes? Here we need to consider the sub-field of fashion magazine publishing. In Japan editors need to pay a lot of attention to their *readers* because their titles are not sold by subscription, but have to be sold and resold to readers with every monthly issue (Moeran, 2006c). This is not the case in Europe or the United States, where the subscription system ensures a stable readership for fashion magazines, whose 'vital statistics' are then sold to *advertisers* who themselves then become more important than readers – a point made clear by the way in which fashion magazine text and advertisements are structured (Moeran, 2006b). As a result, photographers can ignore readers' expectations and perform all sorts of technical and aesthetic tricks to attract advertiser attention in European and American magazines, but are rather more constrained in Japan until contracted to shoot an advertising campaign. This supports Rosenblum's argument (1978a) that creative style is partially determined by

socio-economic arrangements relating to work organization and working roles.

Concluding creatively?

This article has analyzed how a number of tensions inherent in the conceptualization and production of advertising by two different motley crews are in fact embedded in larger structural issues related to the field of advertising as a whole: the dual creative/administrative roles of key personnel; a double client system; the distribution of advertising budgets; the relation between advertising and fashion magazine publishing; and the overall need for differentiation. In this brief concluding section, I would like to add a few words about creativity.

First, although the idea of creativity tends to be associated with individual agency and freedom of action, it is clear that creativity itself is shaped by – and itself comes to shape – numerous constraints and conventions that affect the work of the motley crew. Participants in a production team, for example, do not decide things afresh every time they produce an advertising campaign. Rather, they rely on earlier customary agreements that have since become the conventional way of doing things. Such conventions make possible an easy and efficient coordination of activity among team personnel (Becker, 1982). They also enable particular forms of advertising (print and broadcast, for example) to be recognized as such and differentiated from each other, as well as from other media forms that make use of photographic images (for instance, news journalism). At the same time, team members' involvement with and dependence on mutual cooperation constrain the amount and form of creativity that they can contribute to an ad campaign. This can lead to both agreements and disputes among the various actors in a motley crew, who explicitly formulate and rely upon these 'rules of the game' to judge success or resolve problems (Negus & Pickering, 2004: 68).

Creativity is enabled, outlined and constrained, then, by various aesthetic (or representational), economic, material/technical, social, spatial, and temporal factors, none of which is entirely independent of the others (Moeran, 2006a). The product itself – beer or bargain sale – for example, to some extent contextualizes and determines how much creativity takes place because of the symbolic properties that can be attached to it. Also, the size of the budget set aside by a client for an advertising campaign often influences choice of personnel (*A List* for high, *B List* for low, budget work), accompanying aesthetic styles, location (Tokyo studio or beach in the Bahamas), and media coverage (television commercial or print

advertising). The time frame, too, for completion of a campaign impinges on the availability and selection of personnel, which in itself has knock-on effects. For instance, the decision of whether to go for traditional film or contemporary computerized images in the selection of two available photographers influences the finished campaign style, since the 'modernist' can manipulate images in a way that the 'traditionalist' finds impossible (and often distasteful).

Second, creativity is not the only requirement of creative personnel, since almost all concerned need also to be able to *manage* those who come under their command. This means that 'creative' becomes a sliding category that depends very much on context. An art director is 'creative' when trying to come up with a creative platform for his account team's client, but takes on an administrative role once he enters the studio and is required to transform his creative concept into a tangible product by giving instructions to photographer, studio staff and other members of the production team. Similarly, although a photographer or hairdresser is employed for the creative contribution s/he can make to a particular task, s/he, too, has to manage her assistants and ensure that they do their part of the job in a professional manner. This combination of creative and managerial roles is to be found in creative positions in other fields of cultural production – fashion designer, magazine editor, film director, and so on – as well as among humdrum personnel who see their work as, in part at least, creative, and so brings into question Caves's (2000) absolute distinction between creative and humdrum personnel.

Third, we have seen that the production of advertising is based on a double client system. An agency is employed by an advertiser, but at the same time employs a photographer, hairdresser, stylist, model and others in a production team, which ultimately owes its employment to the advertiser. However, this double client system in which power relations are established by the flow of money is carefully controlled by overt recourse to trust and reciprocity in social interaction, and by a classic denial of the importance of 'commerce' in creative work. This can be seen in the art director's comments quoted earlier, where his selection of a photographer depended on such abstract and non-commercial criteria as 'love', 'philosophy', and 'a spiritual way of thinking'. The hairdresser's intervention at the end of the shoot in the 'revealing encounter' laid bare, and threatened to upset, this hidden structure. Both photographer and art director were obliged to justify their position not to accede to her request in terms of the financial implications for the client.

So, in spite of appearances to the contrary, the denial of power relations in the everyday work processes of a production team is not based on a sense

of social egalitarianism. Rather, it is designed to enable creativity to take place in a commercial vacuum. In other words, acutely aware of the potential constraints imposed by power relations, people in Japan's advertising world do their best to minimize them in the actual production of advertisements. In this way, they hope, participants will feel free to improvise as they go along, for it is such cultural improvisation that enables numerous, and minute, touches of interactive creativity (Ingold & Hallam, 2007).

In a sense, then, the concept of creativity itself involves a double process. On the one hand, it is used to deny the obvious power relations, based on money, that drive advertiser–agency and art director–studio personnel relationships. On the other, it creates new spaces which permit, instead, the establishment of new forms of power among art director, photographer, make-up artist, stylist and hairdresser, as each competes with the others to reveal his or her creativity within the field's space of possibles.

At the same time, an ad campaign also creates new spaces for an advertiser by repositioning its product vis-à-vis competing products, which themselves are forced to release old, and seek new, selling (pro)positions in a constant juggle for consumer attention. Here, creativity exerts power over the consumer as it enables the advertising industry to continue its activities ad infinitum. This, then, is the function of the motley crew in advertising: to enable a space of possibles in which different actors use the tool of creativity to continuously reposition their collective endeavor.

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Notes

1 In examining the hitherto unexplored organization of advertising production processes, this article presents entirely new fieldwork material, although relevant aspects of my earlier research in an advertising agency are brought in as necessary to the discussion.

2 The data that follow were gathered during participant observation in five studio ad campaign shoots held in Tokyo in 1990 and again in 2002. All of them involved a model or celebrity who also appeared in fashion magazines, for whom all the photographers also on occasion worked. The analysis that follows reflects this aspect of these advertising campaigns.

3 The stylist usually has a row of clothes on hangers available for use in or near the beauty room.
4 For the record, I should point out here that all the photographers and art directors encountered in the five studio shoots I attended in Japan were men. Hence, my use of the masculine pronoun in this article.
5 For further discussion and analysis of situational frames in Japanese business settings, see Moeran (2005). Dale and Burrell (2008) also discuss the conceptualization of space in organizational contexts, but tend to focus on fixed constructions rather than on the kind of recurring reconstructions of space analyzed here.
6 Interview, Michihiro Ishizaki, art director, November 2002.
7 This mirrors the situation facing the account manager vis-à-vis the client and his account team, as well as the account team vis-à-vis its creation of an ad campaign that will please both client and targeted consumers.
8 Aspers (2001) notes that in Sweden, too, it is the fashion photographer who decides who will be part of the production team and employs the stylist, hairdresser and make-up artist.
9 Such respect extends to creative–client relations, unlike in the United States (see Jackall & Hirota, 2000).
10 Portfolios are also used by models, make-up artists, stylists and assistants of one kind or another (Aspers, 2001), as well as by art directors, copywriters and others in the advertising industry.
11 Interview, Nicky Kohler, November 2002.
12 Interview, Muga Miyahara, Tokyo, November 2002.

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Brian Moeran is Professor of Business Anthropology in the Department of Intercultural Communication and Management at the Copenhagen Business School, and Director of ©*reative Encounters*, a research program focusing on the socio-economic organization of creative industries. Relevant publications include *A Japanese advertising agency* (Curzon, 1996), *The business of ethnography* (Berg, 2005), and *Ethnography at work* (Berg, 2007).
[E-mail: bdm.ikl@cbs.dk]