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## **Abstract – Children in Advertisements**

I am interested in the ways in which children are portrayed in the visual field of Swedish contemporary printed advertisements. Focus lays on analysis of the pictures in advertisements that contain children, but not necessarily direct themselves towards children as a consumer group. In Sweden advertisements and commercials often direct themselves towards an adult customer group. Despite that children are often represented in advertisement. This can be interpreted as if the children are symbols of good values from a grown up perspective. According to this children have little or no power to influence the ways in which they become represented in media or in advertisements. The pictures of them in the media can then be seen as adult viewings of children. It is their notions of what children are or should be that are mediated. Also, in advertisements most often the ideal are shown. The study of advertisements that contain children is then telling us about adults' ideals of children and childhood. Hence in what visual ways children are portrayed tell us about which notions of children and childhood that exist in the society where the pictures are used.

So the discussion I want to raise in my presentation is how discourses about children are visualised in advertisements. Which kinds of children are shown, out of gender, age and ethnicity? In what contexts are they depicted and together with whom. What do these children represent and tell us about ideas of the ideal child and ideal childhood?

The empirical material for my presentation is printed advertisements from one of the largest Swedish newspapers, *Dagens Nyheter*. All advertisements containing children printed during March 2007 has been collected and analysed. In methodology and theory I am inspired by semiotics and critical discourse analysis.