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Embodiment and Materialization in "Neutral" Materials: Using Audio-Visual Analysis to Discern Social Representations

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Abstract: The use of audio-visual media puts bodies literally in focus, but there is as yet surprisingly little in the methodology literature about how to analyze the body in this kind of material. The aim of this article is to illustrate how qualitative audio-visual analysis, focusing on embodiment and materialization, may be used to discern social representations; this is of especial interest when studying materials which have an explicit ambition to achieve "neutrality" without reference to certain kinds of bodies. Filmed occupational descriptions—produced by the Swedish Employment Agency (SEA)—are analyzed and discussed. The examples presented in the article illustrate how various forms of audio-visual analysis—content analysis, sequential analysis and narrative analysis—can be used to reveal how social representations of occupations and practitioners are embodied and materialized in these films.

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1. Introduction

Occupational job descriptions—presentations of vocations used for occupational or career guidance—constitute an example of material that is produced with an ambition of providing a "neutral" or "objective" representation of reality and various phenomena. Instruction manuals, authority information and educational books are additional examples of such texts. From the standpoint that the production of this kind of material is always influenced by societal discourses and power, it is possible to argue against the belief that any "neutral" material could ever be produced. Moreover, with the use of audio-visual material such as films this ambition becomes even harder to realize, something which I will show in this article. [1]

To study social representations (cf. MOSCOVICI, 1984)—understood either as the presence of individuals from various social groups; as common understandings of cultural and social phenomena; and/or as articulations of social practices and power relations—in such neutral material, specific audio-visual research methods, which take both auditory and visual dimensions into consideration, are called for. In a recent study of occupational descriptions, I was particularly interested in methodological literature focusing on bodily aspects. However, I soon realized that even though certain commentators have written about the use of video analysis in workplace studies (see SCHNETTLER & RAAB, 2008), in ethnographic research ("videography," as KNOBLAUCH, BAER, LAURIER, PETSCHKE & SCHNETTLER, 2008 termed it) and in research into bodies, embodiment and bodily practices (e.g. EMERSON, 2002; EMMISON & SMITH, 2000, pp.211f.; GREIFFENHAGEN, 2008; HINDMARSH & HEATH, 2000; PINK, 2001), the scope and content of their work is far from exhaustive (see also BATES, 2013, p.29). [2]

The notion that images reflect and reproduce social representations is not in any way new, and my purpose is not to demonstrate that this is the case. This article's intention is to provide a methodological contribution in the field of audio-visual research methods. More specifically, the aim is to illustrate how audio-visual analyses, focusing on embodiment and materialization in a wider sense, can be used to discern social representations and stereotypical beliefs about different phenomena in materials that are otherwise presented as "neutral." [3]

To achieve this aim, I will be using qualitative analyses of filmed occupational descriptions—produced by the Swedish Employment Agency (SEA)—as an illustrative case. The SEA is a national public agency that matches jobseekers and employers. The Agency's tasks also involve vocational rehabilitation and vocational guidance. As part of this latter undertaking, occupational descriptions are published on the Agency's website. The producers explicitly state that their aim is to produce occupational descriptions that are "neutral," while at the same time striving to fulfil their policy-regulated obligations to counteract gender segregation and to work for increased equality in the Swedish labor market (LINDE, 2011). To some extent, the Agency succeeds in this ambition: occupational practitioners are, for example, never referred to as "she" or "he"

(BACKMAN, HEDENUS & ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON, 2014, p.60; ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON, 2006, p.185). Recent studies of the SEA's occupational descriptions, however, reveal the existence of both class and gender biases in how different occupations are presented (BACKMAN et al., 2014; ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON & BACKMAN, 2014). [4]

The use of computer-based systems involving audio, video and graphics (e.g. cyber-counselling) is a common and growing practice within vocational guidance (HARRIS-BOWLSBEY & SAMPSON, 2005). What is interesting about this change is that the visual dimension of these new tools involves further challenges to realizing the aim of producing genuinely neutral descriptions. The reason for this is that the presentations of occupational practitioners become *embodied*. This means that the producers face the decision of using bodies that either challenge or confirm the stereotypical beliefs about those who perform certain kinds of jobs. [5]

Moreover, and in comparison to written occupational descriptions, the use of visual representations on film contributes additional information about occupational practice and practitioners (e.g. MONDADA, 2008). This is provided by images of physical objects (e.g. the workplace, tools and work materials, the practitioners' clothing); other people (e.g. the number and social characteristics of colleagues, clients, customers, bosses); actions and interactions (e.g. scenes indicating hierarchical positions); and symbolic images—these are generally illustrative images, so-called cutaways, used to avoid jump-cuts. As the films are often construed upon a certain narrative about the occupation, this further adds to the common knowledge about occupations that these films provide. While some of this information can be used to further embody the occupation (by confirming or challenging notions about the bodies that practice it), some of it should rather be talked about as a *materialization* of occupations. For example, certain skills can be materialized in a tool or perhaps in the supposed merits of a diploma on a wall, while interactions and working conditions can be structured and materialized in the spatial organization and physical environment of the workplace (cf. GOODWIN, 2000). While the embodiment of the occupation can be derived from, and reflects back upon, a notion of the typical practitioner, materialization is arguably related to stereotypical beliefs about the occupation as such. [6]

In this article, I will outline the theoretical standpoints for discussing embodiment and materialization in general and in occupational descriptions specifically. Thereafter, I present my empirical material as well as some previous work on how to analyze film. In relation to this, I also elaborate how "social representations" can be understood, and analyzed, in different ways. This is followed by an empirical section, and, finally, the discussion and conclusions, in which I illustrate and discuss how various forms of audio-visual analysis may help us discern social representations. [7]

2. Theory and Previous Research

2.1 Embodiment and materialization

Why the particular interest in bodies and audio-visual material? In this section, I will try to answer that question and define how these concepts are used in the article. [8]

To begin with, bodies can be perceived as **"**the physical sites where the relations of class, gender, race, sexuality and age come together and are embodied and practiced**"** (SKEGGS, 1997, p.82). It follows that social representations of occupational practitioners, for example, must concern bodies to a significant extent, as we tend to visualize what bodies conduct certain kinds of jobs. The importance of bodies is especially the case when we talk of social representation and occupations from the perspective of statistics (e.g. regarding the representation of different minorities). Sara AHMED (2009, p.41) describes the striving for an increased representation of minority groups as a "numbers game" in which individuals representing these minority groups come to "embody" diversity in organizations. Working from AHMED's reasoning, the role played by bodies becomes crucial; while some remind us of structural problems and discrimination, others become bearers of promises. In this case, bodies remind us of a segregated labor market where different bodies conduct different jobs. However, the presence of certain bodies also makes us optimistic that this order can be changed. [9]

In "Bodies that Matter," Judith BUTLER (2011, p.7) maintains that "to be material is to materialize, where the principle of that materialization is precisely what ‘matters' about that body." In this sense, this particular usage of the term materialization can be synonymous with embodiment. However, materialization can also be used to describe physical items and objects other than bodies, for example buildings, furniture, stationery and so forth. Material objects thus represent discourses and ideas about an object at hand. [10]

Similar to materialization is the concept of objectification. Describing the psychological function of social representations, for example, MOSCOVICI (1984, p.29) shows how representations familiarize the unfamiliar through the process of anchoring and objectifying. While the first mechanism **"**strives to anchor strange ideas**"** by naming and categorizing them, drawing upon an existing order of names and classification, the latter mechanism is used to make the abstract concrete. BAUER and GASKELL (1999, p.172) give "Dolly the sheep" as an example of an objectification of **"**adult nucleic transfer techniques**."** In this sense, objectification performs a similar function as materialization, and I will, in this text, therefore treat these two terms as synonyms. [11]

2.2 Embodiment and materialization in occupational descriptions

Occupations are surrounded with strong stereotypical beliefs about what people, what kind of bodies, perform different kinds of jobs. In particular, we can recognize notions of what constitutes typically female and male jobs, but we can also find examples of how occupations and work tasks are racialized or associated with bodies of different ages and abilities (e.g. ÅSLUND & NORDSTRÖM SKANS, 2010; CEJKA & EAGLEY, 1999; KAYE, 2009; MAURER, WRENN & WEISS, 2003; POSTHUMA & CAMPION, 2009; PRENTICE & CARRANZA, 2002; SCHROVER, VAN DER LEUN & QUISPEL, 2007; WHITE & WHITE, 2006). Previous research has demonstrated how such stereotypical beliefs strongly affect the vocational choices made by individuals, and how "descriptive representations"—when representatives "are in their own persons and lives in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent" (MANSBRIDGE, 1999, p.629)—affect individuals' identification processes (e.g. BECK, FULLER & UNWIN, 2006; CORRELL, 2004). In short, being presented with bodies similar to oneself makes one more inclined to aspire to the occupations or positions that these bodies represent. [12]

This is nothing new to the field of vocational guidance. Since the 1970s, the important influence of social structures on vocational choices has been acknowledged. The producers of different kinds of guidance material, such as occupational descriptions, have also been made aware of how such stereotypes may be enforced and reproduced in their material (e.g. BIRK, TANNEY & COOPER, 1979; BROOKS, 1983; HESHUSIUS-GILSDORF & GILSDORF, 1975; ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON, 2006; YANICO, 1978). [13]

The influence of stereotypes and social representations is relevant for filmed occupational descriptions, which can be categorized as a kind of documentary. Documentaries claim to depict reality objectively, something that has always been used to attract an audience. Opposing this claim, researchers have long questioned the strict separation of the documentary from the fictional movie. Since it has been argued that the documentary is a directed and edited product, it is inevitably affected by the filmmaker's presence and preconceptions (IZOD & KILBORN, 1998). Similarly, FYFE and LAW (1988) show how visual languages and depictive conventions allow readers to envisage and conceptualize the human body, and thereby also views and interpretations of the world at large. Moreover, interpretations of materials are inevitably influenced by social context and so tend to vary with audience members' different frameworks and cultural resources (BALL & GILLIGAN, 2010; GILLIGAN & MARLEY, 2010). Depictions in texts are thus, FYFE and LAW stress, never merely illustrations. This can be related to the SEA's ambition to create neutral and factual materials, while simultaneously describing how a part of the work task is to "filter" the information (cf. LINDE, 2011). [14]

Reviewing previous research on career information and vocational guidance material, it became clear that scholars have not, as yet, paid much attention to the role of stereotypes and social representations in audio-visual material. In the

Swedish context, several studies—using qualitative analyses of written occupational job descriptions—have demonstrated how the descriptions reflect and reproduce occupational stereotypes based on gender, class and status (GESSER, 1980; MANNBERG, 2003; ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON, 2006; ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON & BACKMAN, 2014). There are also three notable older American studies, presented in the 1970s, which are often referred to (namely BIRK et al., 1979; HESHUSIUS-GILSDORF & GILSDORF, 1975; LAUVER, GASTELLUM & SHEEHEY, 1975). While these Swedish studies focus on written texts, the three American studies are based on content analysis of visual material (i.e. photos, illustrations, pictures, cartoons) provided in career literature. Their analyses demonstrated that the illustrations used in this material reinforced occupational sex role stereotypes and underrepresented women. They also showed that blacks and ethnic minorities were either underrepresented or disproportionately represented in jobs requiring little or no education or training. Although some work has also been done on the use of audio-visual material for occupational guidance (e.g. HASEBROOK & GREMM, 1999; see also HARRIS-BOWLSBEY & SAMPSON, 2005), the focus of these studies is not on occupational stereotypes. In conclusion, this situation calls for additional research on how vocations and practitioners are audio-visually portrayed in occupational guidance material, not least concerning how workers are represented in terms of age and disability. [15]

3. Material and Method

3.1 Audio-visual material: occupational descriptions

The discussion in this article is based on qualitative analyses of filmed occupational descriptions from the SEA, one of Sweden's main producers of vocational guidance material. Published on the Agency's website in 2010–2011, 182 short documentary films provided information about a wide range of occupations.[1] These occupational descriptions were produced by a special editorial board at the head of the vocational guidance provided by the Agency (LINDE, 2011). The imagined recipients of this information are of two types: on the one hand, we have an individual facing their first choice of a long-term career trajectory (e.g. a student), and, on the other hand, we have people who, for employment reasons, have been forced to consider a new career. Furthermore, the material is used as an information resource for all of the agents charged with guiding the unemployed into employment. According to HASEBROOK and GREMM (1999, p.382), video functions "to elaborate the text and give a realistic impression of work life." The aim of providing "realistic" descriptions of occupations is similarly stressed by the producers at the SEA, who also perceive the films as offering the possibility of giving more "lifelike" representations (LINDE, 2011, pp.9, 29). [16]

All of the films were streamed from the SEA's website between 2010 and 2011 and can be categorized as "found" visual data (cf. PROSSER & LOXLEY, 2008).

1 As many of these films are no longer published on the website I have not provided specific links to the data in this text.

The films do not all follow the same format and they deal with slightly different themes in varying ways; some films, for example, introduce the occupational practitioner by name, occasionally by title and/or employer—sometimes an introduction is not made at all. In some films a narrator is used, in others the narrative voice is absent. Some descriptions are based primarily on interview cuts with the practitioner, whereas others are based on stage-setting or depictions of the professional practice. The films also differ in length, ranging from about a minute and a half to nearly five minutes. [17]

Based on Swedish statistics of gender representation in different occupations, 91 (50 per cent of the total) of the films describe male-dominated occupations (i.e. where the workforce is at least 60 per cent men), 37 films (20 per cent) describe numerically equal occupations (the percentage of women and men in the workforce lies somewhere between 40 and 59 per cent) and 54 films (30 per cent) record occupations which are female dominated. [18]

After an initial content analysis of the material (described in detail below) a smaller sample of 41 films was chosen for further examination. This subsample was carefully selected to include a wide variety of films that included footage of low-status and high-status occupations, and of jobs that are numerically equal or dominated by gender; I sought examples with and without external narrators, and I was also careful to include a selection of films with representations of race and ethnicity. [19]

3.2 Analyzing film and social representations

One difficulty in analyzing film as a medium is that it is such rich material, open to many different strategies for analyses (cf. KNOBLAUCH, SCHNETTLER & RAAB, 2009). For example, KNOBLAUCH and his colleagues (p.15) emphasize the importance of studying the relationship between verbal and visual depictions. BANKS (2001, p.12) claims that since film as a product is closely entangled in human social relations, a complete analysis requires a reading of the external narrative as well as the visual text itself. The occupational descriptive films should thus be understood as audio-visual, multi-faceted and complex representations of occupations. [20]

The perceived complexity of the occupational descriptions is further increased when also taking into consideration how stereotypes, or social representations, may have influenced their production. To describe people's generalizing ideas, we often use the concept of stereotypes. This is useful when it comes to describing the ideological and structural hindrance that stereotypes may have on people's capacity to make free-willed life-choices. Occupational stereotypes, for example, help conserve and reproduce the social division of labor by providing individuals with information on "suitable" career choices. However, to describe the cognitive process involved in the representation of such social and collective notions, the concept of social representations are more commonly used. As social representations also capture those aspects of culturally shared beliefs that

we do not usually speak of as stereotypes, but rather as simply common knowledge, I have chosen to primarily use this concept. [21]

However, I will not strictly confine myself to the notion of social representation as defined by theorists working under that same flag. In this article, I write about three different ways of understanding and analyzing social representations:

1. as numerical or descriptive representation, i.e. the "presence of individuals" from various social groups;
2. as "common understandings" of cultural and social phenomena;
3. as articulations of social practices and power relations, for which I will use the term "articulated practices." [22]

As I elaborate in the following pages, these three notions are all useful for conducting different kinds of analyses, and for highlighting various aspects of phenomena. [23]

It was my desire to incorporate this complexity of audio-visual material in general, and in "neutral" materials specifically that prompted the decision to narrow down the original volume of source material to a smaller subsample of films. This also accounts for the adaption of three different approaches to analyzing the material:

1. a content analysis displaying what kind of bodies are present;
2. a sequential analysis revealing in more detail how these bodies and occupational practices are represented;
3. a narrative analysis which reflects stereotypical understandings and common beliefs about occupations. [24]

BANKS (2001, p.22) stresses that a movie can never be reduced to the parts that compose it. In my case, this sometimes involved studying individual sequences and sometimes interpreting the film as a whole. [25]

It is common practice to produce transcripts of video data and then analyze these transcripts rather than the original video itself (MARKLE, WEST & RICH, 2011). According to SCHNETTLER and RAAB (2008) the systems for producing these transcriptions are still in an experimental stage, although we may note that many of the solutions that have been adapted are based on the tradition of conversation analysis from very detailed transcripts of both auditory and visual occurrences. The extent to which such use of detailed transcripts should be adapted as a general practice for audio-visual analyses is, however, questionable. MARKLE and his colleagues (2011) direct our attention to some of the problems involved with transcription, such as efficiency (they point out that it is time consuming) and accuracy (some information is inevitably lost when audio-visual data is translated into written language). For both of these reasons, I have not made any detailed transcripts of the films that constitute my data. Instead, I have coded and analyzed the data in its original form, working interchangeably with the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti and with Excel. The respective

coding processes will be described below, specifically in relation to the different analytical approaches I have employed. [26]

3.2.1 Analyzing social representations

The notion of social representations as the *presence of individuals* refers to the descriptive and statistical representation within various fields and positions of people of certain social identifications. In "The Politics of Presence," PHILLIPS (1998) discusses the political representation of social groups. Her claims that the notion of an "honest representation" would be similar to a proportionate representation mirroring the population at large are very controversial. She also argues that the focus on increasing the representation of minority groups and a subsequent "over-representation" can be questioned. While some commentators argue in favor of such over-representation, because of the importance of role models and the symbolic representation of minorities, the arguments of others derive from a belief in group-specific interests. PHILLIPS, however, asserts that such a belief is a problematic assumption, falsely positioning—as it does—ideas and people in opposition to each other; in other words, people from "other" groups are expected to *not* carry certain beliefs or interests. [27]

The second understanding of social representations—as *common understandings*—is based upon the theoretical work of MOSCOVICI (1984, pp.7ff.) in which social representations are presented as fulfilling two socio-psychological functions. First, they conventionalize the objects, persons and events we encounter to the extent that even when our impression does not match the model we "constrain" it to fit the representation. Second, they are prescriptive for our thoughts, interpretations and actions. BAUER and GASKELL (1999, p.173), who build upon MOSCOVICI's work, define social representations as "comparable structures ... which may serve different functions for the activities of social groups." Such functions are, for example, ideological or mythical, providing identities or enabling resistance. Social representations thus constitute the "common senses of social milieus" (BAUER & GASKELL, 1999, p.179) and fulfill the purpose of making anything unfamiliar, familiar (MOSCOVICI, 1984, p.24). This should be understood in relation to the "iconography" and significance of visual representations in visual materials, as stressed by GILLIGAN and MARLEY (2010, §74): "Every culture has its iconography, its shared visual representations and conventions which help to inform the interpretation of images. When we view an image we often compare it to other images with which we are already familiar." [28]

The third understanding of social representations—as *articulated practices*—is found in CHAPLIN (1994, p.1), who defines representations as articulations of "not only visual or verbal codes and conventions but also the social practices and forces which underlies them, with which we interpret the world." We may note that CHAPLIN's visual and verbal "codes and conventions" are similar to what MOSCOVICI and BAUER and GASKELL articulate as contemporary "common sense." The difference between them lies in the latter part of CHAPLIN's definition, where she, based upon the work of TAGG (1988), puts more emphasis on underlying social practices and forces; how certain forms and relations of

power bear upon practices of representation; and how representations, in turn, contribute to social processes. Even though this definition of social representation is slightly different from MOSCOVICI's, the concepts of prescription and conventionalizing are also applicable in relation to this understanding of social representation. [29]

The understanding of social representations as the presence of individuals thus responds to the call for numerical representation of certain bodies. The understanding of social representations as common understandings captures the existence of occupational stereotypes, the ideological consequences this may have and an awareness of these effects on our actions and thinking. Finally, the third notion—social representations as articulated practices—is concerned with how power relations are presented (e.g. through making gender segregation visible), reproduced or challenged. [30]

3.2.2 Content analysis

To get an overview of the representations of gender, race/ethnicity and age in the total sample, I conducted a content analysis which can best be described as quantitative or standardized (cf. KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012, p.336) focusing on the person who represents the occupation. In the initial phase of this analysis, I watched all of the films in their entirety, with the aim of identifying the person or people that got to represent each occupation. Information about these representatives was entered into an Excel spreadsheet, providing the following data about each portrayed occupation/practitioner: 1. status level of the occupation; 2. percentage of women within the occupation at a national level; 3. gender; 4. race/ethnicity; 5. age; and 6. visually or verbally apparent disability. In this part of the coding process, I also documented what kind of clothes and accessories the practitioners were wearing and categorized these different codes as "social class." However, as this coding concerned the material aspects surrounding the bodies—rather than the bodies themselves—I later chose to analyze these codes as part of the sequential analysis instead. [31]

Under the heading "counting what you (think you) see," ROSE (2001, p.54) discusses the difficulties in conducting content analysis of visual material from the standpoint that such analysis generally entails very subjective assessments. She emphasizes that content analysis which makes coding replicable requires exhaustive and exclusive categories that are completely unambiguous. I do not claim to have carried out such meticulous replicable coding during the course of my research; for example, my coding of the practitioners' sex is based on a binary categorization of gender and on the gender stereotypes I myself carry. For race/ethnicity, I have coded the practitioners' skin color, and the prevalence of any accent and non-Swedish names. Age is roughly estimated to within the range of 5-10 years, although I concede that my estimate of the practitioner's age may sometimes be out by several years. [32]

The coding thus provides the basis for a rather crude analysis, and the results should primarily be understood as a tendency in the material. This analysis can

also be criticized because of its use of simplified categories without regard to how these categories interact and reinforce each other. With reference to what McCALL (2005) writes about the (inter)categorical approach, this does, however, constitute a conscious choice, and by temporarily adopting analytical categories it is possible to demonstrate the unequal relations between social groups. And such analysis also makes it possible to show the bodies that are allowed to represent —and thus encourage identification with—certain occupations. [33]

3.2.3 Sequential analysis

The first steps of the sequential analysis actually involved watching the films, not sequence by sequence, but from beginning to end. While doing this, some additional information about other people or objects shown, or comments on certain things being said, was added to the spreadsheet used for the content analysis. This practice resembles what FIGUEROA (2008, p.8) describes as making "impressionistic" notes as part of the initial steps of conducting an audio-visual analysis using grounded theory methodology. Her methodological proposal for this kind of analyses is to start with viewing an entire program and thereafter to proceed with a change of focus: from global impressions to more detailed sequences. By following this procedure, the researcher avoids breaking "the unity (the structure) of the text too soon" (p.7). [34]

As a first step in the second stage, the films in the subsample have also been analyzed sequence by sequence. The division of the films into different sequences was mainly based on the audible dimension where a pause in the practitioner's or narrator's speech resulted in the creation of a new sequence for coding. Individual sequences have, however, also been created based upon spatial and pictorial transitions where the camera changes focus in order to illustrate something different. As the films in my data consist of shots filmed at various locations and times, and then cut together in a new order, they do not offer opportunities for sequential unfolding of events and interactions in the way that research generated data generally does (cf. SCHNETTLER & RAAB, 2008). However, analyzing these films sequence by sequence still allows for an analysis of what SCHNETTLER and RAAB describe as a "moment-by-moment production of talk and visual conduct" (§36). [35]

MASTERMAN's (1985, Ch.5) review of the rhetorical techniques that can be used to create a "realistic" depiction shows how paying attention to the use of these techniques enables one to say something about *which* reality is being reproduced, and how. Among these techniques, selection is of central importance. The visual rhetoric employed is another technique where the assumed authenticity (and the related notion of objectivity) is used to emphasize subjective claims or clarifications. BANKS (2001, p.50) describes the photograph as a representation of a representation: "the qualities or actions of knowledge associated with the person represented." Logically, this must then contribute to reproducing the filmmaker's own presumptions about phenomena, events and institutions. The filmmaker's choice to zoom in on a specific tool will, for example, materialize notions about the occupational practice, while shots of people's bodily

expressions and reactions can be used to embody the content of speech or text (cf. GOODWIN, 2000; GREIFFENHAGEN, 2008; MONDADA, 2008). [36]

All sequences have, for the purposes of the present analysis, been coded with regard to what is visually depicted (people, tasks, social relations and interactions, and physical objects); verbally mediated (through speech in interactions, interviews and voice-overs, but also in text messages); and the content displayed through other sounds than voices. The coding was first conducted in Atlas.ti as an open coding (cf. CHARMAZ, 2006). In a second step, relevant codes were transferred into an Excel spreadsheet and categorized according to what they revealed about: 1. work tasks; 2. expected competences/qualifications for the occupation; 3. positive/negative aspects about the occupation; and 4. single remarks signaling notions of the typical practitioner. In a fifth column, the content of these categories was—by comparing and relating them to each other as well as to previous research and my theoretical framework—summarized as a portrait of the "ideal" or "most typical" practitioner of the occupation. Focusing on the introductory and final scenes—as part of the narrative analysis presented below—I also coded these scenes according to the use of: 1. staging (fictive or documentary) of the occupational practice; 2. interviews; 3. visual illustrations; 4. voice-over; and also 5. the agency of the practitioner—being portrayed as a subject or an object in the film. Finally, after having conducted the narrative analysis, the conclusions of this analysis were compared with, and contrasted or adjusted to, the results of the narrative analysis. [37]

3.2.4 Narrative analysis

The subsample was further analyzed with the focus on how the communicated narratives reflect and reproduce beliefs about gendered competence and career choices. Similar to fictive film, documentaries often follow a narrative structure with a beginning, middle and an end. Though it is the final totality that communicates the narrative, a film is construed upon two main building blocks: the photo and the cut (KOLKER 1998, p.15). BANKS (2001, p.11) clarifies this relationship by distinguishing between the internal narrative—the story that the images communicate—and the external narrative constituted by the context and the social relations in which the images are embedded. What constitutes the whole film is hence the complex interplay between film and audience, structure, content, context and culture (HELLSPONG & LEDIN, 1997; KOLKER, 1998; ROSE, 2001). MASTERMAN (1985) points out how dramatized stories function in a popular and entertaining way, helping people to collectively create meaning and make what they have seen intelligible. We need, therefore, to look specifically at what meanings and values are represented through the narratives in the films under study. [38]

There are many ways to define and identify narratives and narrative structures (KOHLER RIESSMAN, 2002, pp.230f.). Motivated by the belief that the introductory and the final sequences of the films are particularly important to the narrative, I have analyzed these sequences specifically. The introductory scene is

central since it sets the stage for the narrative and communicates the story that is to be told. It presents viewers with an orientation guide concerning time, place and participants, and often also provides the audience with an abstract of what is to follow, and a complicating action for the narrative. The final scene, on the other hand, is significant as it summarizes and evaluates the narrative, thereby revealing the core of the (narrative of an) occupation (KOHLER RIESSMAN, 2002). Initially, this analysis also involved making notes of my general impressions (cf. FIGUEROA, 2008), answering my own question: what narrative is being told here? [39]

By analyzing the introductory and final scenes in relation to each other, the films were thereafter categorized—based upon an inductive coding—as *complete*, *incomplete*, *task-accomplishing* or *non-chronological narratives*. In films with a *complete narrative*, the viewer gets to follow the execution of a task that is presented as typical for the occupation in question. For example, the pastry cook starts baking the cake in the beginning of the film and in the final scene the cake is placed in the display window. In these films the final scene always shows how the specific undertaking has been finalized. This makes them different from the films with an *incomplete narrative*, where the final scene provides an open ending. In the filmed descriptions of train drivers and bus drivers, for example, both films end with the driver continuing on her route. In these two categories the events that constitute the narrative are presented in a chronological order. In films with a *non-chronological narrative*, the introductory and final scenes do not reveal that much about the narrative in itself, yet they still indicate that it has a beginning and an end, and that some aspect of a situation or a participant has changed (cf. GILLIGAN & MARLEY, 2010). The medical secretary, for example, enters the room in the introductory scene and walks out in the final scene. In the concluding scenes of films with *task-accomplishing narratives*, finally, the practitioners themselves speak about what they are supposed to achieve in their jobs. For example, the builder takes pride in seeing a house completed, and the employment agent speaks about the satisfaction in helping someone to get a job. In different ways, these narratives thus provide rich information about such aspects as: stereotypical associations in relation to the occupation, whether it is primarily conceived of as a mental or a practical job, the degree of repetitiveness, and what level of job satisfaction the practitioner is expected to express. [40]

4. Revealing Social Representations in Occupational Descriptions

4.1 Using content analysis

A content analysis of the representatives of various occupations (or other positions) primarily provides insights into social representations as the *presence of individuals*: the numerical and descriptive representation of different bodies. Yet it also reveals what social representations—as *common understandings* (or stereotypical beliefs) about practitioners of various occupations—are (re)produced through the films. In this material, for example, we are presented with representations of "male" and "female" jobs, and of the "typical worker" in Sweden as both white and Swedish. [41]

Results from the analysis of the 182 occupational descriptions show that the typical body is somewhere between 30 and 55 years old, seldom younger or older than that. Since the films show no people with a disability that is visually or verbally apparent, we can conclude that the social representations of occupational practitioners present them as able-bodied; this corroborates the findings of previous research which found that individuals with disabilities, living normal lives, are largely absent from the mainstream media (SCHWARTZ et al., 2010). The fact that there are few older practitioners in the material can likewise be understood in relation to an able-bodied norm. [42]

The number of female and male bodies that get to represent various occupations is equally distributed: 89 and 93 respectively. Looking more closely at what occupations they represent we can, however, discern a clear pattern. Among the 182 films, 103 constitute "gender-conservative" representations where the body that represents the occupation matches the sex dominance of that occupation. Only 42 films can be described as "gender challenging," that is, when occupations dominated by men are represented by a female body or vice versa.[2] In general, the embodied representations thus reinforce gendered beliefs about occupations. [43]

The overwhelming majority of representatives in the material are white, speak Swedish without an accent and have Swedish names; only nine of the 182 representatives differ in any way from this norm. This finding that non-white people are under-represented corroborates previous research showing that white bodies are often over-represented in audio-visual media as well as in career information materials (BIRK et al., 1979; HARWOOD & ANDERSON, 2002; WILLIAMS, MARTINS, CONSALVO & IVORY 2009). Within this minor group in the films, we can also note a tendency for further stratification. While the young male with dark skin color is found as a representative for tyre-fitters—a low-qualified and low-status job—the white, middle-aged male who "only" deviates by having a Finnish accent represents ships' officers—an occupation of much higher status and one that also requires higher educational study. The whiteness of the material therefore does not just communicate stereotypical beliefs about ethnical niches in occupations; it is also likely that it contributes to the structural exclusion of immigrants from the Swedish labor market (GUSTAVSSON, 2003) by presenting the typical practitioner, and workers in general, as white and Swedish. [44]

4.1.1 Pros and cons of content analysis

The main advantage of using content analysis is that it helps to demonstrate the presence or absence, as well as highlighting (tendencies to) an over- or under-representation, of people from different social groups. However, this form of analysis generally requires a kind of simplistic, binary and one-dimensional categorization that is susceptible to criticism (cf. McCALL, 2005). Furthermore, the task of generating a replicable and less subjective coding is difficult to accomplish (cf. ROSE, 2001), especially when that which is portrayed and

2 The remaining 37 films present occupations that are not dominated by any sex.

analyzed is not well-known to the researcher. Such lack of knowledge may result from, for example, the fact that the material is produced in a different time or in a different culture. [45]

Another drawback with this method is that the conclusions—or maybe rather the anticipated effects of the social representations found—are often undermined by the overall narrative or by the visual rhetoric in certain sequences. For example, the use of a male practitioner in an occupation dominated by women potentially offers a subject for male viewers to identify with more easily. Other aspects of the film might, however, "help" the viewer to interpret the occupation as female, something which I will illustrate and discuss further in the following section. PHILLIPS' (1998) argument that people and ideas are often (falsely) put in oppositional relation to each other is a claim that should be recalled here, stressing as it does how specific groups of people are also assumed to lack certain interests (e.g. women are assumed to lack an interest in motors). My analyses of occupational films show that social representation—through the use of one particular kind of body—does not necessarily mean that a certain occupational stereotype is then (not) expressed. The relationship between people and ideas is more complex than this, and using certain bodies does not automatically provide a simultaneous representation of specific ideas. [46]

4.2 Using sequential and narrative analysis

The sequential and narrative analyses for this study have been conducted separately. As the results from the analyses to a considerable extent overlap and point in similar directions, I have chosen to present the findings intertwined. Instead of keeping an outline based on the two forms of analysis, the text is structured in relation to the differences found in regards to a focus on embodiment and materialization respectively. However, it should be noted that it is of course possible to use one of these methods without the other, and that this will often contribute with completely different kinds of information. For this reason I will also discuss the pros and cons of these methods separately. [47]

4.2.1 With the focus on embodiment

Even if the question of what bodies come to represent different occupations is important, this issue is—as the analyses of the subsample shows—often downplayed by how the occupation and the typical practitioner is presented in the film as a whole. Here, it is the third understanding of social representations that is in focus: social representations as *articulated practices* (CHAPLIN, 1994). [48]

Social representations can be revealed by analyzing the overall narrative of the film, or by decoding single comments that reflect stereotypical understandings and establish, for example, gendered notions of occupations. Moreover, the social representation of the occupation and practitioner is displayed in both gender-conservative and gender-challenging presentations. In a gender-conservative film, such as a film about loader operators, the male representative emphasizes the gendered notion of a male-dominated occupation by talking

about sometimes having to work with "stressed-out guys." The social representation is here clearly prescriptive for our interpretation of the occupation as male. [49]

In films where the gender stereotypes might be challenged by the use of a non-typical body, the narrative and single remarks instead function to conventionalize (MOSCOVICI, 1984) the representation of the occupation so that the viewer is able to grasp the sex dominance even when this is not communicated by the representing body. I will discuss two examples to illustrate this point. [50]

The first example I want to discuss is from a film about train drivers. The film starts with a train coming out of a tunnel, with the view seen from inside the driver's window. A text comes up with the question, "A girl's dream?" at the same time as we can hear the voice-over of the reporter putting the same question. Next, we see the profile of the female driver laughing and responding: "Absolutely not!" After just six seconds—without anything else being said about the occupation or the typical practitioner—we already know that she has made a gender-challenging choice of occupation. This way the representation is conventionalized to fit our prejudiced notion of train drivers. The decision to highlight the gender-untypical career choice can, however, also be understood as a verbal and visual anchoring of this "strange idea"; naming it makes the unfamiliar familiar (ibid.). [51]

In this second example I want to highlight a film about bus drivers. In this film a female also represents this traditionally male-dominated occupation. Several sequences of the film also illustrate work tasks and competence that are often coded as feminine (e.g. ÖZKAN & LAJUNEN, 2006; WESTBERG-WOHLGEMUTH, 1996): the practitioner is shown being social, service-minded and driving safely. The overall narrative of the film, however, focuses on the bus and the transportation of the bus from the garage to a terminal stop. Also, the first thing that we get to hear in the film is the driver stating, "I've been interested in motors since I was a kid. I played with cars rather than with dolls." This stresses the importance of having a male-coded interest, and thus leads our minds to male practitioners by reminding us of the stereotypical image of the male bus driver. Similar to the female train driver, the female bus driver is presented as the wrong body in the wrong occupation. [52]

4.2.2 With the focus on materialization

Just as the individuals that represent different occupations come to embody occupational stereotypes and notions of the (a)typical practitioner, so the objects that are audio-visually presented reflect and reproduce social representations of the occupation and the people practicing it. Thus, this mode of analytical focus bears primarily upon the second meaning of social representations: as *common understandings* of phenomena helping produce and mediate a sense of familiarity (GILLIGAN & MARLEY, 2010; MOSCOVICI, 1984). [53]

Physical objects can, for example, be part of the practitioner's appearance—items used when conducting the job; objects that are part of the workplace environment; or more symbolic images that the producer has included as cutaways. Here, I will give some examples of how the use of visual rhetoric, including physical objects, can be prescriptive for our interpretations, but also contribute to the materializing of abstract ideas and ideals. [54]

Studying how the practitioners are dressed, we can conclude that this reflects the educational level required and the status of the occupations. While the clothing among practitioners of highly qualified occupations varies from uniforms and other formal clothing to informal dress, the practitioners within the male-dominated working-class occupations are almost always dressed in working clothes. Clothes, to a considerable extent, materialize the status of the occupation (cf. EMMISON & SMITH, 2000, p.213; JACOBSON, 1994). [55]

In a study of occupational descriptions, GESSER (1980) showed how these construed a distinction between mental and manual jobs; the distinction reflected a categorical dividing line between white-collar and blue-collar jobs. Visually focusing on the objects used by the practitioners in the films analyzed in this study helps the audience to quickly establish whether the occupation is primarily a manual or a mental job. In presentations of white-collar jobs (for example a financial controller) images of computers, binders or books are routinely used to materialize the task and the necessary competence of information gathering, analyses and planning; the use of this visual shorthand thus helps in conveying the work of a financial controller as being primarily of a mental nature. In presentations of blue-collar jobs, such items are rarely at the forefront; instead, company cars, tools and materials are used to communicate the practical nature of this kind of job. A carpenter's practical skills are illustrated by the foregrounding of immediately recognizable manual work tools—yardsticks, screwdrivers, hammers and so forth. [56]

Similarly, images from the workplace suggest whether occupations are primarily practiced in- or outdoors, in an office or in a workshop. It may also reveal a lot about the status of the occupation. In the film about enforcement authority inspectors, the intrinsic authority of the job is immediately highlighted in the opening sequence by the camera's focus on the organization's logo. In the sequence following this introduction, we see the male inspector sat working at his desk; in the foreground is a letter about the "guardian committee" pinned to a screen. Both the logo and the document thus materialize the execution of power that this occupation involves. [57]

Such images from the workplace communicate what the producers perceive as central aspects of the working conditions of the job. The notion of working independently and close to nature is, in the film about fish farmers for instance, materialized by images of the sea, rocks and jetties (all empty of people), and with no other sounds than the seagulls crying and the sea lapping. [58]

Finally, the objects displayed by the camera often constitute cutaways: images used to construe bridges between different sequences. These images are often chosen because they illustrate or symbolize something that the producers associate with the occupations. In the presentation of judges, for example, images of an open law book and of a statue of Lady Justice serve to materialize the notion of judges making just decisions based upon the law. [59]

4.2.3 Pros and cons with sequential analysis

Applying sequential analysis to seemingly neutral materials is highly appropriate since it gives us the opportunity to critically reflect on *which* reality is being reproduced (cf. MASTERMAN, 1985). By exploring the employment of visual and auditory rhetoric—and scrutinizing how this rhetoric is also interrelated with social representations of different phenomena—we demonstrate how it not only materializes abstract ideas, but also becomes prescriptive for our interpretations. The use of recognizable, emotionally loaded and/or symbolic rhetoric helps us to interpret what we see in certain ways. Deconstructing the sequences thus makes it possible to question the claims of objectivity that are attached to this kind of material, and to show how the presentations are actually saturated by social representations; as common understandings as well as articulated practices. [60]

However, in conducting sequential analysis the researcher risks "not seeing the wood for the trees." That is, the researcher may pay too much attention to the details in each sequence without also taking the narrative of the whole film into account (cf. FIGUEROA, 2008). Moreover, the analysis often draws upon different categorizations of the bodies present in the sequences, which sometimes turns a content analysis—or a similar analysis—into a prerequisite for the sequential analysis. The same criticism regarding simplistic categorizations that were raised against content analysis could thus be raised here as well. [61]

4.2.4 Pros and cons with narrative analysis

Narrative analysis takes framing and the cultural embedding of the material into consideration (e.g. BANKS, 2001). It is useful for pinpointing the meanings and values, stereotypical beliefs and morals that are mediated through the presentation. Similar to the sequential analysis, the narrative analysis is thus helpful in discerning social representations both in the forms of common understandings and as articulated practices. [62]

The disadvantage of this method is the very opposite to the drawback of sequential analysis: by focusing on the presentation as a whole, the researcher might underestimate the social representations mediated through individual sequences, individual statements or the presence of certain bodies. [63]

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this article has been to provide a methodological contribution to the debate about how audio-visual analysis, focusing on bodies and the material itself, can be used to reveal the prevalence of social representations in materials that are otherwise conceived of as "neutral." The examples provided in this article —demonstrating how social representations are manifested in "neutral" occupational descriptions from the SEA—rely on three different notions of social representation: as the *presence of individuals*, as *common understandings* and as *articulated practices.* Various forms of audio-visual analysis can contribute with important insights in response to all three of these notions. However, the different methods that I have discussed in this article also have different methodological strengths and weaknesses which make them comparatively more applicable for some analyses than for others. In Table 1 this is formulated as to the particular method that is primarily used to discern the respective forms of social representations.

How to analyze social representations as:	**Presence of individuals**	**Common understandings**	**Articulated practices**
Content analysis	Primarily		
Sequential and narrative analysis focusing on ...			
Embodiment			Primarily
Materialization		Primarily	

Table 1: Applicability of various forms of audio-visual analysis [64]

A content analysis—with the focus on embodiment and the bodies that are represented—is used to analyze ideas about social representation in descriptive and numerical ways (the *presence of individuals*). In the occupational descriptions, for example, we could see that workers in general were portrayed as able-bodied and as white. The analysis also demonstrated how the representation of bodies corresponded with the sex dominance of various occupations, thereby confirming gendered notions about these occupations. The findings reveal that these occupational films reproduce similar stereotypes to those that are found in other materials (e.g. BIRK et al. 1979; BROOKS, 1983; ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON, 2006). [65]

Sequential and narrative analyses have both been shown to be helpful tools for discerning social representations as *common understandings* as well as *articulated practices.* From the examples given in this article, it is the differences when focusing on bodies, or on other material aspects, that should be stressed. [66]

Sequential and narrative analyses examining *what* the present bodies do and say can contribute to an understanding of social representations as articulations of

social practices and power relations, i.e. *articulated practices* (CHAPLIN, 1994). Here, it is not only the ideas about the practitioners that are embodied, but also the embodied beliefs about the occupational practice (which in turn influences stereotypes about the typical practitioner). In this article I have showed how the narratives of the films, together with single remarks, produce social representations that are prescriptive for our interpretations of occupations. Somewhat surprisingly, they even help to conventionalize gender-challenging representations in a way that makes them fit with already existing gender stereotypes. And the techniques of both visual and verbal anchoring are used to make the unfamiliar more familiar (cf. MOSCOVICI, 1984). [67]

Moreover, through sequential and narrative analyses focusing on materialization, and the ways in which physical objects are used as part of the visual rhetoric, we may capture social representations by a second definition: as widely shared *common understandings* of phenomena (MOSCOVICI, 1984). In the occupational descriptions, for example, clothes, work tools and other workplace objects come to materialize the status of various occupations, as well as a conceived distinction between manual and mental jobs (cf. EMMISON & SMITH, 2000, p.213; GESSER, 1980; JACOBSON, 1994). Focusing on typical objects as symbolic illustrations and cutaways, the films also communicate a representation of the occupational practice that the audience can recognize and feel familiar with. [68]

For the curious reader who wonders what conclusions could be drawn from these analyses of filmed occupational job descriptions, something should be said about the consequences that these social representations may have for people's vocational choices and job seekers' opportunities. Even if the material offers several examples of how to challenge stereotypical beliefs about occupations, there is still a clear tendency to present occupations by using "typical" practitioners and similarly "typical" depictions of the work environment and work tasks. Special attention should be directed to the fact that people of color, people who are not ethnically Swedish, and people with visually or verbally apparent disabilities, are seldom represented in the material. Occupational choice hence appears as a matter primarily for able-bodied Swedes, while other job seekers must be content with whatever jobs they are offered. Producers of occupational descriptions are recommended to reconsider the possibility of making "neutral" descriptions that are familiar and recognizable for the audience—representative displays of a single and true version of the occupation and its practitioners—and to instead aim for depictions that capture the great complexity of occupational practice (HEDENUS, ULFSDOTTER ERIKSSON, WIKSTRAND & BACKMAN, 2015). [69]

In this article I have given a few examples drawn from my own research which illustrate how audio-visual analyses with a focus on embodiment and materialization can be useful and what methodological limitations must be considered. My work has, however, far from exhausted the possibilities, and I believe that this field offers other avenues for further productive research and methodological discussion. Because of time restrictions I was only able, for example, to look at the practitioners themselves. Additional analyses of embodied

representations could include examination of the other bodies that are present in the material, for example colleagues (indirect representation of the occupation) or clients, customers and bosses (all bodies that may, conceivably, give information on the type of job, its status or hierarchical position). Analyses of how these bodies interact would further enrich the stock of beliefs, positions and discourses that may be embodied in audio-visual materials (cf. HINDMARSH & HEATH, 2000). Moreover, bodily expressions—and how these are altered between cuts—could be more thoroughly examined. For example, BIRK and her colleagues (1979) showed how gendered stereotypes about women (as helping and assisting, ever-smiling, pleasant, passive and observing) were communicated by the facial expressions and activities of female bodies in career material illustrations. They analyzed visual data, and although a corresponding analysis of audio-visual data would be much more time-consuming and complex it would almost certainly provide a wealth of interesting results. [70]

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