Ulrich Beck's 'risk society' thesis and representations of food and eating in the British general interest women's magazine sector 1979-2003

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Abstract

Beck asserts that since the 1950s, broad social transformations have radically altered collective relations. According to Beck, these changes have rendered conventional materialist analyses no longer appropriate to describe the new times we are living in. Beck links radical restructuring of organisational forms with the reorientation of cultural experience and modern selfhood as we move from 'class' to 'risk' positions (Beck, 1992: Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003). This thesis employs a creative operationalisation of the key dimensions of Beck's predictions, allowing them to be tested as hypotheses using data from the women's magazine sector. Beck's idea that cultural organisational practice is coming under increasing pressure to reorganise and encompass new principles of social orientation is critically evaluated.

The magazine titles selected for analysis represent the different socio-economic, age and family responsibility status of this sector's target audience. A longitudinal sample of the representation of food and eating is subject to a textual analysis to catalogue the historical development of these processes. In addition, interviews with editorial staff examine the underlying production principles of mediated selection and framing practice. Empirical evidence is generated to assess whether changing institutional practice is involved in society's move from one set of social arrangements to another. This thesis essentially evaluates Beck's assertion that the forces transforming organisational practice are rooted

in an innovative institutional drive to democratise. The findings suggest that Beck's explanation is insufficient and that classical materialist and market-driven accounts of institutional policy and practice remain appropriate.

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In loving memory of Lianne and baby Reece

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Introduction

The original programme grant application tendered to the Leverhulme Trust, which provided the funding for this PhD project, outlined an empirically based project that examined representations of food in the women's magazines sector with the sociological context provided by a socio-cultural approach to risk. At the outset it was imagined that this project would focus on the mediated coverage of BSE or salmonella and that women's magazines would be full of 'do not' messages. In reality, it became immediately apparent that women's magazines do not cover these controversial areas to any great extent. Indeed, as will be demonstrated later in this project they actively avoid them, which is a finding in itself (Chapter IIII).

In addition, as the project progressed Ulrich Beck's writing on the radical restructuring of cultural experience was found to be most pertinent, as he describes the processes by which individuals move from 'class' to 'risk' positions in 'risk society' (1992). This thesis takes Beck's position as a case study of socio-cultural approaches to risk.

Fundamentally, Beck's 'risk society' thesis contains two inter-linking arguments, one relating to risk distribution, the other to processes of individualisation (Lash, 2002). Beck himself has highlighted that discussions of the 'risk society' have centred mainly on the risk argument, and little or not at all on the individualisation argument (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: xii). However, despite the overwhelming rhetoric of individual agency in both strands of the 'risk society' thesis, Beck provides us with a depiction of the relationship between structure and agency that is never quite clarified.

The individualisation strand of Beck's thesis raises the cultural aspects of the formation of modern identity. Beck (1992) argues that living with risk gives rise to radical changes in social values and expectations as life becomes increasingly characterised by experiences of fragmentation, diversity and insecurity. Beck asserts that in an age of flexible working practices, high standards of living and shifting family arrangements, the fundamental co-ordinates of individual identity have been transformed. His description of the evaporation of social class in the alignment of modern identity is particularly intriguing (Chapter I). The universality Beck attributes to these radical changes raises questions about the social penetration of processes of modernisation.

Beck defines class society in line with classic sociological models, in that unequal economic relations, differential social status positions and asymmetrical participation in systems of authority prescribe an

individual's life opportunities in a class society (Chapter I). However, Beck's ideas depart from these classical models of distinction as he asserts that life expectations are no longer predicated on economic relations to production or market position, but on new relations of definition. Beck is talking about equality of opportunity replacing economic issues of access (Chapter I).

Ultimately, Beck's approach provides us with a new way of looking at how people form their sense of self-identity which is detached from collectively experienced inequality. The development of the processes that he describes as intensifying over the last few decades is argued to have produced marked changes in social knowledge, social relationships, cultural attitudes and the institutions that traditionally disseminate social values (Chapter I). The mass media as a cultural institution provides us with ideas about gender, relationships and ways of living (Gauntlett, 2002). Beck regards the mass media as a force deeply involved in the radical transformations of these facets of modern identity (Beck, 2000b).

The popular media are explicit sources of lifestyle information which supply images of what a good relationship looks like, what represents attractiveness and what makes life worth living (Gauntlett, 2002). To provide the opportunity to directly evaluate Beck's ideas in the media sphere, we are encouraged to examine manuals, guides, therapeutic works, self-help surveys and practical guides to living (Giddens, 1991:

2). This list of mediated genres is where the 'risk society' theorists assure us we will find evidence to support their predictions (Chapter I). This thesis asserts that women's magazines can also be added to this list. Women's magazines are popular lifestyle guides that give us an insight into the ways in which contemporary feminine identity is addressed (Aldridge, 2001 and Chapter II). Essentially, women's magazines contain constructions of social and historical ideas about appropriate womanhood. However this sector is often maligned by mainstream academia (Chapter II). The value of approaching the women's magazine sector from a cultural studies approach can be seen as, in theory at least, eliminating the boundary between elitist arts and popular culture (Chapter III).

The major part of the findings of this project is made up of a textual analysis of magazine content, which is justified by the cultural studies approach that recognises the value of being concerned with the creator of the text (Berger, 2000: xv). Editorial interviews are used to explore whether, as Beck argues, institutional policy has changed to accommodate these transformations in the orientation of modern identity (Chapter VII). The readership of the women's magazine sector is traditionally differentiated by commercially derived 'social class' characteristics (Chapters II and III). This is most obviously manifest in the differences between the weekly and monthly magazine sectors (Gough-Yates, 2003). Thus, this sector provides a fertile area for

research concerned with evaluating changes across socio-economic categories.

Beck's ideas have been taken up enthusiastically in media studies research (Kitzinger, 1999). However, these studies have focussed on the media as a crucial mechanism of risk communication rather than Beck's ideas about the mass media acting as an active agent in the reflexive project of the self (Beck, 1999: 135). Beck's account of the media role in these proposed changes lacks any acknowledgement of the commercial environment and the effects this may have on the emergence of the shifts he describes (Chapters I and VIII). Further, his thesis fails to account for the significance of routine media working practices in the media (Chapter VII). Having examined the existing women's magazine literature it is surprising to discover that production and organisational policy in this sector has not been investigated closely for over twenty years (see Ferguson, 1983).

Food is a highly appropriate vehicle through which to examine Beck's ideas. First, food and eating is an essential, mundane every-day task that everyone, irrelevant of class, race, age and gender differences must undertake. Second, food is traditionally associated with being a predominantly female preoccupation, usually linked to family sustenance and the home (DeVault, 1991). Finally, food and eating practices represent issues of socially appropriate skills, technical know-how and etiquette, all of which are traditionally associated with

collective distinction. Therefore, if food and eating practices are thrown into the public domain and discussed openly, this may be taken as symptomatic of the reflexivity that Beck talks about. If women no longer simply cook for the family, but do so for their own self-actualisation, this is evidence to suggest social relationships and female self-identity have been subject to processes of individualisation (Warde, 1997).

The theoretical framework for this study is provided by Beck's predicted shift in institutionalised support for the development of individualisation (Chapter I). According to Beck's assertions one could expect to find evidence to support his proposition that the impacts of living in the 'risk society' will be evident in the domains of the construction of social knowledge, shifting social relationships and the diversification of life expectations that are increasingly disassociated from collective experience (Chapter I). From Beck's position hypotheses were generated which were tested in the women's magazine sector through a textual analysis of food and eating-related content, and interviews with magazine editors. The longitudinal sample of the women's magazine sector is taken from 1979 to 2003 in order to track these proposed shifts over the time scale indicated in Beck's thesis (see, Beck et al, 1994; Latour, 2003: 39). Thus, the hypotheses constructed encapsulate expectations that follow directly from Beck's social theory.

This thesis evaluates whether popular mediated ideas about the female self have changed (see Beck et al. 2003: 2). For Beck's predictions to

be substantiated in this popular sector, one could expect to find that information is provided in a qualitatively different way from previously (Chapter I). Magazine content could be expected to be more open to interpretation, for lay participation to rise and the female self to be offered a multitude of alternative feminine roles to choose from (Chapter III). This could be expected to occur without the provision of editorial closure on these choices and irrespective of the commercially derived socio-economic status characteristics of the target audience (Chapters II and III).

The findings chapters however, indicate that Beck has overstated the degree of change in institutional practice and underplayed the influence of economic factors that affect both individual and institutional choice. The findings raise criticisms regarding the historically uniqueness of the processes he describes and are used to illustrate that Beck has exaggerated the oppositional potential of society's institutions, as well as overstating the democratising force of modernity (Chapter VIII).

Chapter I begins with outlining Beck's approach. This chapter goes on to highlight the essential processes that propel Beck's assertions, namely: a new distributional logic reflected in changing relations of definition brought about through processes of individualisation and reflexive modernisation.

Chapter II provides an understanding of the women's magazine market and highlights the complexities of examining Beck's ideas in this dynamic sector. Chapter III begins with the hypotheses generated from Beck's ideas, which outline what this sector could look like if his predictions are to be substantiated. This chapter goes on to provide the details of the methods and methodologies employed during data selection, collection and analysis.

The findings of the textual analysis concerning the proposed changing nature of legitimate social knowledge are presented in Chapter IIII. Chapter V presents the analysis of the magazine content concerning the social relationships referred to over the sampled time frame. The data concerning the existence of collective distinction over the twenty-five year period are presented in Chapter VI. Chapter VII presents findings from semi-structured interviews with six women's magazine editors currently working in this sector. The direct evaluation of Beck's series of claims in light of the research findings is contained in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER I

Ulrich Beck's 'risk society' thesis

Since the translation of *Risk society: towards a new modernity* into English in 1992, Beck's work can be described as becoming fashionable literature, which has proved as broad as it is influential. Beck argues that radical social transformations have taken place since the end of the Second World War, and that over the last twenty to thirty years, Western society has moved from an industrial society to a new historical epoch: the 'risk society' (Dingwall, 1999: 475). Beck's thesis is a plausible explanation of political and socio-economic changes that produces a sense that 'we are living in new times' (Smart, 1999: 15).

Beck makes a series of claims. First, that we are witnessing the emergence of a new and unique form of society, which has particular implications for the individual that can no longer be understood through classical sociological models. Second, that society's institutions have significant oppositional potential despite the predominantly commercial markets in which they operate. Finally, that the progressive changes described will have a democratising affect that will release society from the constraints of the political economy and immutable classed and gendered life trajectories that defined the industrial era.

These predictions have particular significance for the place of women in society, as being agents of their own lives becomes increasingly

essential as 'class differences and family connections' diminish and are replaced by 'secondary agencies and institutions' (Beck, 1992: 131). As these traditional guidelines, that once governed self-identity, erode Beck asserts that the way individuals integrate themselves into society provides a new and different personal or social identity than previously (Warde, 1994). According to Beck, this new 'individual *female* biography' largely frees women of previously compulsory family duties (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 60). Indeed, the family is the site where Beck claims the full force of the changes he predicts will be felt, as the woman's place within the family is subject to processes of individualisation (Beck, 1992: Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1996). According to Beck, it is cultural institutions that transmit these new individualised relations. In this way, Beck's thesis offers an insight into the interplay between modern selfhood and society's organisations as he describes institutions such as the media, as vehicles for individualisation.

Therefore in current media aimed at women, the transformations he describes should be prominent. The present thesis evaluates these claims by examining whether contemporary female magazine readers are addressed in a different way than previously. A series of critical tests in the form of hypotheses were created from Beck's ideas (Chapter III). This approach was taken in order to generate empirical data with which to test Beck's claims that a radically individualised society is something new, which society's institutions play a significant

part in, and that life opportunities become more equal as a result (Chapter VIII).

The first part of this chapter begins with a clarification of the key processes driving Beck's predictions. The appropriateness of examining these ideas in media targeted at women is highlighted throughout the chapter. An overview of how Beck's ideas have influenced approaches to media analysis is also provided. The second part of this chapter explores the predicted affects of Beck's radical transformations on social stratification, which is compared with classical sociological models. From this discussion, the development of the initial framework for hypothesis generation is conveyed with the outlining of how Beck's ideas have been appropriated into an examination of the women's magazine sector in the present thesis.

Beck's 'risk society' narrative

Beck's 'risk society' thesis refers to a particular set of social conditions that are characterised by a political economy of uncertainty (Beck et al. 2003: 29). This ambiguity is said to transform existing social structures, institutions and social relationships towards an assimilation of more complexity, contingency and fragmentation (Adams et al. 2000: 5). One can therefore anticipate that these complexities and fragmentations, increasingly affecting women's lives, will be apparent in media aimed at women. Beck describes these shifts as illustrative of 'institutionalised individualism', which are said to emerge progressively through three

stages (Beck, 1992). First, a process of dis-embedding is said to occur, where historically prescribed social structures dissolve. Ever-increasing standards of living, expanding educational opportunities, increasing mobility and changes in women's participation in public life are cited as illustrative of these dis-embedding mechanisms (Beck, 1992; 1999). Second, traditional knowledge and guiding norms are said to loose their conventional security, as women are said to becoming more economically independent and exercising more choice over fertility. Finally, and as a result of these transformations, a new type of social commitment is described as re-embedding itself in the social psyche, namely radicalised individualism (Beck, 1992: 128).

Beck's describes how these transformational stages develop through processes of modernity that simultaneously support these shifts, namely: new relations of definition and a changing logic of social distribution, which are driven by reflexive modernisation and institutionalised individualisation (Beck et al. 2003; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003).

Relations of production to relations of definition

Central to Beck's thesis is the idea that a *new* system of articulation has emerged between capitalism, media, science and politics (Beck, 2000a: 12). Playing off Marxist terminology, these 'new relations of definition' refer to institutional involvement in the structuring and management of

new modalities of sense making (Beck, 2000a: 224). This is in direct opposition to the relations of definition that underpinned industrial society, which are characterised by predictable and traditionally defined relations and (Beck, 2000a).

Beck specifically defines contemporary relations of definition as the 'legal, epistemological and cultural power matrix in which discussions of science and technology are conducted' (Beck, 2000a: 224). Beck's narrative predominantly focuses on the relations of definition in science and technology. However relations of definition are not restricted to these categories. Beck characterises relations of definition as bringing different descriptions of reality that universalise common interests and norms than existed previously (Beck, 1999: 149- 150). He asserts that these new relations function by encouraging competing alternative identities, wider choices and different forms of knowledge (Beck et al. 2003). It is said that these shifting relations are exemplified in institutions that manage definitions, such as the media, which damage the reliability of traditional social knowledge and expertise and affect the way individuals re-negotiate traditional affiliations (Beck et al. 2003: 2).

These new relations are understood as emanating from social institutions involved in the emergence of conflicting rationalities, thereby promoting the 'opening up to democratic scrutiny of the previously depoliticized realms of decision-making' (Beck, 2000a: 226-227). The advent of this new set of circumstances where traditional cultural reality

is replaced by a more diverse system of orientation is indicative of the relations of definition Beck describes (Beck et al. 2003; Latour, 2003). As relations of definition are characterised by institutionalised statements about the 'real' world, this concept offers an insight into the significance of examining women's media in relation to Beck's ideas.

From 'class' to 'risk' as the new distributional logic

In modern-day society, Beck asserts that a categorical change has occurred, in that genuine material need has been objectively reduced while processes of modernisation have released hazards and potential threats to an extent unknown in previous eras (Beck, 1992: 19). For Beck, these changes have forced fundamental shifts in the way society is organised, as in class positions 'being determines consciousness, while in risk positions, conversely, *consciousness (knowledge) determines being* (Beck, 1992: 53, original emphasis). Beck describes a society that is released from traditional constraints as instrumental reason and reflexivity replace the class struggle as the motor of history (Beck et al. 2003: 5; Stevenson, 2001: 306 and later section).

Indexed to notions of equality, the distribution of 'goods' has been the mainstay of social theory for decades. Marx and Weber describe how, in industrial societies goods are distributed unequally, both (to different degrees) deploying class and status as determinants of social experience (Lowith, 1993 and page 40). Beck asserts that class-based identity and experience is diluted, as the new distributional logic

introduces processes that are more inclusive (Beck, 1992: 19-23). According to Beck social distinctions recede:

> People with the same income level, or put in the old fashioned way, within the same 'social class', can or even must chose between different lifestyles, subcultures, social ties and identities. From knowing one's 'class' position one can no longer determine one's personal outlook, relations, family position, social and political ideas or identity (Beck, 1992: 131).

Beck is drawing attention to the relationship between the disappearing influence of social structure and qualitative shifts in patterns of cultural experience (Beck et al. 2003). However, Weber justifies distinguishing 'class' and 'status' because the connection between money and class Beck makes here is insufficient in the quest to understand a changing society (this issue is returned to in a later section of this chapter).

The idea that a new distributional logic will be evident, as material distinction and traditional identity orientation diminish, highlights the significance of examining media aimed at women. Women's magazines are commercial forms of communication, which offer advice on identity formation and have traditionally traded on certain processes of group identification and social regulation (White, 1970: Warde, 1994: 877 and Chapter II). According to Beck, the shift from relations of production to relations of definition and the new distributional logic occur as

processes of individualisation and reflexive modernisation are institutionalised.

Individualisation

For the modern individual, self-discovery, self-assertion and a quest for self-fulfilment embody newly individualised forms of self-regulation and identity. Of particular significance to women is the claim that individualisation will challenge and change family forms, as Beck predicts that we are entering an era where all social relationships are optional (Beck, 1992; 1999). Social friendships outside of the family are said to become more significant 'as a shared lifeline to take the weight of each other's confusions and weaknesses' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 164). Women are said to be increasingly making plans for their own personality development, rather than focussing on the family. Every element of women's daily lives thus becomes orientated towards the self:

> Concerning questions about who I am and what I want?
> (…) [*this*]…leads to a different kind of definition of the
> political - a directly political field of decision making can
> suddenly arise in what appear to be purely private matters
> of everyday life - for example filling the petrol tank or
> cooking dinner' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: 44).

Individualisation is described as a constant pressure, or 'a compulsion, albeit a paradoxical one, to create, to stage-manage, not only one's own biography but the bonds and networks surrounding it' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 27). In this way, Beck challenges the very foundations upon which social relationships are constructed and maintained, as he describes the ascribed, predominantly family-centred 'cement' binding society together as increasingly disappearing (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: 37). Consequently, newly individualised relations of definition can be said to focus on the needs of the individual female subject, which increasingly overrides considerations of the 'other'.

Beck's concept of 'Individualisierung, in the sense of *institutionalized individualism'* asserts that these processes can be identified in alternative social and institutional practices that focus more intensely on individual choice, rather than community or class (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: xxi, original italics). Beck makes a tenuous connection between identity formation and exercising individual choice, which is institutionalised (Warde, 1994). He has already been labelled as a sociologist of institutions (Lash and Urry, 1994). By insisting on the institutionalisation of individualisation, Beck asserts that institutional practices will develop that presuppose and enforce equality (Beck, 1999: 147; Beck et al. 2003: 15).

Beck's narrative goes on to insist that, where industrial society was characterised by immutable and distinctive collective practice that suppressed life chances, the individualised society 'deprives *class distinctions of their social identity*' (Beck, 1999: 100, original emphasis). Beck asserts that the barriers between public and private spheres will dissolve as individualised institutional practices increasingly acknowledge 'outside perspectives and rationalities' (Beck, 1999: 131). This can be expected to be manifest in media addressing women as being increasingly aware of unfamiliar and alternative practices originating outside the domestic sphere (see Beck et al. 2003: 18). Therefore, in an individualised society the media can be expected to come under increasing pressure to address women as self-actualising, decision-making subjects who are now free from traditional imperatives, such as the subordination of the 'self' to the needs of the family.

These processes of individualisation however, cannot feasibly be activated without the simultaneous *accessibility* of different roles for women, alternative family relations and the knowledge required to negotiate with these previously untried ways of living. Beck's narrative describes how processes of reflexive modernisation challenge and change established social practice.

Reflexive modernisation

Beck links the terms modernisation and reflexivity because reflexive processes pose questions about, and thus initiate changes to

established ways of doing things. The core idea behind this term encapsulates a transformation in, and freeing of, accepted social roles and social knowledge that were structured through unequal gender and class relations in industrial society (Beck, 1992; et al. 2003). The notion of reflexive modernisation is thus indicative of 'unintended self-confrontation' rather than simply reflection (Stevenson, 2001: 306). This term therefore enshrines the reflexivity that is pivotal to Beck's thesis (Beck, 1992: 155; et al. 2003).

Beck asserts that processes of reflexive modernisation function to introduce knowledge and skills needed to try new ways of doing things. This can be expected to manifest in a novel capacity to challenge and change previously ascribed social attributes, which in Beck's terms could be described as the 'old' relations of definition (Beck, 1992: 1999; Beck et al. 2003). In this way, processes of reflexive modernisation put everyone in a parallel structural situation in the new relations of definition 'with respect to truth, objectivity and certainty of knowledge' (Adams et al. 2000: 4).

Therefore, knowledge about all aspects of social life is said to both increase and change through processes of reflexive modernisation (Beck, 1992: 109). According to Beck, a reflexively modernised society is one where individuals must 'say farewell to the notion that administration and experts always know exactly, or at least better, what is right and good for everyone' (Beck, 1994: 29). In women's

magazines, one can expect a reversal of the authoritarian line taken in the publications of the 1950s (Ferguson, 1983 and Chapter III). According to Beck, knowledge gains a new currency, and is described as becoming more participative and more contradictory. As institutions, like the media expose people to increasingly alternative sources of information, the authority of expert knowledge will, according to Beck, be challenged and undermined,

> As experts dump their contradictions and conflicts at the feet of the individual and leave him or her with the well-intentioned invitation to judge all of this critically on the basis of his or her own notions (Beck, 1992: 137).

Beck asserts that institutions will increasingly foster these changes by developing practices that include their patrons' diverse opinions, views and experience. He describes reflexively modernised forms of institutional practice being demonstrated where institutions increasingly encourage individuals to complain, campaign and act on 'all things' (Beck and Beck- Gernsheim, 2003: 43). The important issue here is that Beck is not simply describing an increase in participation, which can occur without challenging hierarchical divisions of authority. What he is talking about is a situation where institutions demand 'what is still denied in participation – namely, the right of citizens to take charge of matters they deem important' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: 43; Beck, 1994: 30-31).

Society's institutions, particularly the media, can therefore be expected to increasingly provide a forum for the introduction of systematic alternatives 'for dissenting and dissenting experts' (Beck, 1992: 119). The reflexive modernisation of social knowledge means that it is no longer interests that dominate the political horizon 'but claims about the legitimacy of particular forms of expertise and knowledge' (Adams et al. 2000: 4). However, as Smart points out, there is little to reassure us of this positive scenario emerging over any more negative consequences (1999: 29). These types of observations highlight the lack of sensitivity in Beck's work to the influence of the market economy on opportunities for both individuals and society's institutions to be truly reflexive.

Beck's assertion that socialisation processes will be radically altered by changing relations of definition and the transformation of the logic of distribution from 'class' to 'risk' has raised the cultural contours of his thesis. The dimensions presented reflect Beck's account of the choice and deliberation that is said to characterise modern self-identity and relations of definition in modern society. Society's institutions have been identified as coming under increasing pressure to modify their practice to reflect or promote these new relations of definition. Beck is emphasising that the impetus for social change and the new focus for identity formation will be found in cultural institutions. Since the early 1990s, media researchers have responded enthusiastically to the significance Beck has attached to this sector.

Media studies and Beck's narrative

Beck's assertion that the realisation of the 'risk society' era is linked to the existence of strong and independent media has attracted the attention of media analysts (Kitzinger, 1999). However, the risk strand, as opposed to the individualisation strand of Beck's thesis has dominated the agenda (Lash, 2002). Consequently, studies have concentrated around Cottle's (1988) three-tiered interpretation of Beck's model of risk in the media, where it is claimed that the media function to identify, contest and critique risk information.

This has resulted in an abundance of media research focussing on the media distortion of the 'true' nature and trajectory of risks and highlighting journalistic sensationalism in newsgathering routines (for example Hertog and Fan, 1995; Henderson, 1999; Miller and Reilly, 1995; Friedman et al. 1986). However, as Kitzinger (1999: 56) notes, studies that concentrate on criticisms of the media as an institutional culture may obscure rather than clarify the very processes that influence the media coverage of risk.

The public's understanding of and attitude to risks has also become a significant area in studies examining cultural perceptions of media inspired by Beck's ideas (for example Kitzinger and Reilly, 1997; Eldridge et al. 1997; Lupton and Tulloch, 2002). Media specifically aimed at women has also been approached in this way; producing the

observation that unrealistic and factually incorrect information is presented in this sector (for example Clinkerbeard et al. 1999; Henderson, 1999; Field et al. 1999). These studies have generally measured frequency of health content against reality benchmarks, such as actual incidents of diseases in society (for example Gerlach et al. 1997; Black, 1995). In this way, over literal readings of Beck's thesis have been applied to media content under the science paradigm and have been absorbed by the public (mis-) understanding of science discourse. It has however been suggested that a more complex relationship between groups of media providers and consumers needs to be acknowledged (Lash and Urry, 1994).

The dominant focus taken from Beck's ideas into media studies has resulted in narrow readings of his work and over-simplified assumptions. This situation has occurred despite the clarity in Beck's thesis that individualisation processes are observable as the media present every-day issues, as:

> Individualization means market dependency in all dimensions of living…the mass consumption of generically designed housing, furniture, articles of daily use, as well as opinions, habits, attitudes and lifestyles launched and adopted through the mass media (Beck, 1992: 132).

By meeting Beck on his own territory with regards to the individualisation strand of his thesis, our attention can be more fruitfully applied to examining how media practice is informed by knowledge structures in the past and the present (see Latour, 2003). This approach can be used to evaluate whether things have changed, as Beck predicts, as a result of the increasing pressure on institutions to incorporate new individualised relations of definition. Beck's 'risk society' thesis is not just about risk and safety, he is making a bigger statement about people's construction of identity, life course and the management of social relations.

If identities are now more fluid, the media can be expected to both reflect and justify changes in social knowledge and shifts in family structure as class boundaries vanish, gender roles are renegotiated and traditional social identities disappear (Beck, 2000a; Beck et al. 2003). This equally significant media function of providing institutional resources to support the change from 'class' to 'risk' positions is being progressively acknowledged (for example Cottle, 1998: 12; Gauntlett, 2002).

Further, professionals operating in a media organisation are part of what Beck calls the 'institutional props and resources' required to actualise these shifts (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: 44, original emphasis). Beck makes a connection between the independence of the mass media and the freedom to govern oneself in a more democratised

and individualised society within the existing market economy (Beck, 1992: 24). Beck's commitment to changing organisational policy as a harbinger of cultural democracy provides us with a concept of mass culture in an emancipatory role (Chapter II). This link is the forerunner to the present thesis' prediction that two distinct and observable phenomena will develop in mass media. First, the communication of a variety of different meanings will be observed and second, people working in the media will increasingly adhere to a public service ethic (Chapter II).

According to Beck, the content of the media needs to be both acceptable to the audience and accommodating to processes of modernisation (Beck, 1992: 2000a). Mythen (2004: 90) considers that it is not reasonable to examine if the media are acting in favour of or indeed against the new relations of definition in any uniform fashion. However, the present thesis asserts that Beck's model of the media is one where information can be expected to be reproduced or presented in a qualitatively different way from previously (see Beck et al. 2003). We can anticipate new modes of information presentation from the mass media as a direct consequence of the intensification of processes of modernisation (for example Lash, 1994). This project asserts that Beck's emphasis on the institutional integration of these processes marks the very spirit of his theory in terms of the assertion that 'institutions open themselves to the political right down to their foundations, and become malleable' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1996:

34; Beck, 2000a, original emphasis). As pressures to adopt practices that affirm diversity and cultivate conflict intensify, these institutions can be expected to reform the organisational foundations of industrial society and change their traditional frames of reference (Beck, 1999: 2 and 110-111; Beck et al. 2003: 9; Latour, 2003: 41). However, whether these new frames of reference simply mirror wider social change or set them in motion is never made absolutely clear in Beck's narrative.

Beck's theoretical terms can be elusive from an empirical standpoint. However these concepts point towards distinct trends (Beck et al. 2003; Latour, 2003). The second section of this chapter underlines the claim that observable phenomena can be extrapolated from Beck's thesis by outlining the initial stages of the development of the present thesis' hypothesis.

Hypothesis development

Beck asserts that the affects of the radical shifts towards reflexive and individualised relations of definition and logics of distribution have effects on systems of social stratification that are both revolutionary and observable. These effects are compared and contrasted with classical sociological models to provide a clearer understanding of the nature of the changes Beck is predicting, whilst also providing an outline of the setting from which this project's hypotheses were developed (detailed in Chapter III).

Mapping social stratification

Social divisions are neither natural nor inevitable, but are socially constructed principles of organisation that rest on the maintenance of distinctions between categories of people. Membership of a category of social class traditionally confers a shared identity that encapsulates unequal opportunities of access to resources, different life chances and distinct life styles (Gerth and Mills, 1974: 181). Despite their real differences, both Marx and Weber conceptualise social classes as groups whose membership is determined primarily by unequal economic relationships (Lowith, 1993).

Weber defines class relations as those that result from not only the distribution of property like Marx, but also other resources in capital, product and labour markets. Weber however maintains that their significance needs to be considered in conjunction with economic determinants on life chances (Lowith, 1993: 32). Weber asserts that there are two other distinct dimensions of stratification that have independent effects on the determination of life chances, namely status and authority or command situation (Parkin, 1971).

Weber has effectively taken Marx's relations of production, and made it more multifaceted by adding aspects of market position and affording status and authority or command situations with a significance that is more independent of one's economic situation. However, one can argue

that Weber's model of social stratification is diminished by the assertion that you can separate status and power situations from economic factors.

Beck's model of social stratification

Beck asserts that whereas class-based societies reinforce differential access to opportunities, his changing logic of distribution ensures equality of opportunity in the 'risk society'. His model of stratification can be seen to break with classic conceptualisations of social class in significant ways. First and most fundamentally, Beck severs the ties of social stratification from economic determinants. He claims the significance of this distinction no longer determines life chances to the same extent as previously, as new relations of definition place everyone in a similar structural position (Beck, 1992: 95). Unlike Marx, Beck asserts that liberation from the exploitative class system will occur within the existing capitalist system as he claims that tentative forms of self-management will come about irrespective of the free enterprise system within which they operate (Beck, 1992: 95). As the shifts Beck portrays occur without substantial changes to the market economy, he is describing capitalism without class stratification, but with new forms of differentiation and inequality. Beck therefore asserts that equality of opportunity is progressively replacing economically determined life chances (Beck, 1999: 131).

In addition, Beck claims that inequalities are individualised, whereas Marx and Weber (to differing degrees) view inequalities as problems for specific groups within society. In Beck's model, individuals no longer compete for shares in resources but participate in avoiding anxiety; therefore the competition between different groups in society is negated. Individuals must now make active decisions, if these decisions turn out to be wrong, for instance choosing the wrong partner or occupation, this is seen as being a result of that individual's flawed decision-making, rather than an outcome of broader social processes. In effect, Beck has rearranged Weber's under-developed components of authority and, through new relations of definition, has expanded Weber's notions of a breakdown of the segregation between public and private spheres and systems of authority (Beck, 1992; et al. 2003). Beck can thus be seen as heir to Weber.

Traditional models of class society anticipate fixed affiliations, traditional community ties and structures of authority. Regardless of the theoretical outcomes, some people still end up being poor. Beck is writing in the same classical tradition and the same problem is inherited in his model. Beck's model of social stratification embodies his ideas about both individualised and institutionalised structures that cannot be entirely disconnected from material relations. For Marx inequality is both the problem and the solution for society, for Weber inequality is a potential problem, in Beck's model inequality is individualised and effectively removed from the political map (Beck, 1992: 101; Beck et al. 2003).

Beck asserts that the economic relations, once underpinning class distinction, no longer stratify society or hinder participation in a culture of reflexivity and agent-orientated authority. Beck's model moves the focus from *differences* in economic, status and command or authority dimensions of social stratification to the institutionalised promotion of the principles of individualised responsibility and self-regulation. By conceptualising inequality as individualised Beck's narrative is effectively making inequality an individual, rather than social problem and ultimately legitimising the status quo. In sidelining issues of inequality in this way Beck is, at best ignoring inequality and at worst making inequality invisible, which makes the reality of social inequality inconsequential. The issue posed by these assertions is that if society is no longer stratified by material factors, is it exclusively new relations of definition that now structure social relations and as a result, do inequalities simply become less visible?

Appropriating Beck's model of stratification

In this project, 'class' was defined and measured through Beck's model of its dimensions. That is, 'class' societies are characterised by shared life experiences mediated by the market, shaped by status and affected by one's authority or command situation. According to Beck, a society stratified by class is where life experience and traditional identity

development is determined by distinction in three key areas of social life:

- in distinctions concerning relations and access to social knowledge which serve as barriers to mobility
- in distinctions in consciousness of communal bonds, networks of contacts or social relationships
- in unequal material conditions and collective status symbols that characterise traditional industrial lifestyles (Beck, 1992: 96)

Beck's conceptualisation of social stratification was developed further through the dimensions of class described above, to enable an evaluation of the democratising forces he describes. Beck asserts that in class-based societies (that is economic, status and command or authority-differentiated societies) distinction suppresses life chances and therefore is characterised by institutions where:

1) lay participation and interaction with social knowledge is unequal
2) social relationships are ascribed and inevitable
3) status distinctions between classes are immutable and visible

Whereas in 'risk' positions (democratised, individualised and reflexively modernised) life chances are dislocated from economic systems of differentiation. Therefore new relations of definition are characterised by institutions where:

1) lay participation and interaction with social knowledge is equal and expected of everyone

2) social relationships are chosen and no longer ascribed

3) status distinctions become increasingly invisible

Beck and the women's magazine sector

This chapter has highlighted Beck's assertion that a new more diverse set of individualised relations of definition have replaced relations of production as fundamental to the orientation of the reflexively modernised individual (Beck et al. 2003). These shifts are described as pressuring cultural institutions to promote the devolution of strategic control and open up choice and autonomy for their consumers.

Beck's concepts of 'institutionalised individualism' and 'new relations of definition' have been shown to encapsulate how Beck sees the modern citizen being located, informed and addressed by society's institutions in a new way. Beck's narrative has revealed that both processes of institutionalised individualisation and reflexive modernisation contribute to a different way of understanding the self and the world than that of earlier decades (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: xxi).

Therefore, the framework for any hypothesis development (and data collection decisions, Chapter III) has to be able to capture these

dimensions of Beck's thesis. These are that new democratised relations of definition, as opposed to class-differentiated relations of production, can be identified as intensifying in cultural institutions over recent decades. For Beck's ideas to be substantiated, three significant affirmations need to be satisfied in the women's magazine sector:

1) the nature of social knowledge has changed as a result of reflexive modernisation processes

2) social relationships have shifted in the face of processes of individualisation

3) economic and status distinction inherent in collective class-based social experience and identity will have increasingly disappeared in the face of the new distributional logic of risk positions

It is predicted that the women's magazine sector will exhibit increasingly standardised, as opposed to *different* relations of definition. This can be expected to be identifiable in a convergence in presentations of social knowledge, social relations and a reduction in distinctive status markers. This is predicted to occur despite the commercial environment of the institution in question (Chapter II).

The media's ability to achieve a sense of familiarity and credibility with their readers is identified as *the* medium of interaction with wider

systems of practical social engagement (Giddens, 1991: 2-3; Beck, 1992). Beck can be seen as predicting that contemporary media will offer a greater degree of choice about self-identity and enhance reflexivity, agency and instrumentalism to their audiences. These ideas could be illustrated in terms of information that is tailored to the democratised positions media audiences are now said to occupy (Beck, 1992: 132). The women's magazine sector is expected to operate in ways that increase individual responsibility 'as organisational discretion, authority and autonomy is increasingly relinquished' (Webb, 2004: 723). It is expected that different systems of ready-made classifications and different modes of knowledge production will be identified in contemporary women's magazines as opposed to earlier publications (Smart, 1999 and Chapter III).

This chapter has highlighted that Beck's model of the media fails to acknowledge the influence of economic, political and organisational influences that also have significant effects on media output. The British women's magazine market is a dynamic sector that operates within certain crucial market tensions and contradictions that highlight this market's volatile nature. The following chapter provides an overview of the women's magazine industry, thereby exposing some of the complexities of examining Beck's predictions in this sector.

CHAPTER III

The British general interest women's magazine sector

Women's magazines are inexpensive reading matter, which are designed for the commercially defined category: women. Women's magazines are traditionally disparaged by academics and are consistently overlooked by mainstream media analyses (with the exception of Bignell, 1997). A conventional association exists between the lengths of a written piece of work and the intellectual stamina required to both write it and understand it (see Showalter, 2000). The content of these magazines is abbreviated. Women's magazines also contain advertising, which is in some ways responsible for the cultural chauvinism building up around this sector (Aronson, 2000) and epitomized in Friedan's seminal prose (Friedan, 1963).

Despite some real attempts to overturn these assumptions, the aspect of women actually enjoying these popular journals is seriously undeveloped (see, Holland, 1987; Hermes, 1985; Winship, 1987a; Van Zoonen, 1994). This situation is bemusing as Winship's comments highlight that 'to simply dismiss women's magazines [*is*] also to dismiss the lives of millions of women who read and enjoy them each week' (Winship, 1987b: xiii).

Anecdotally, where mainstream academia does not consider women's magazines to be important, politicians apparently do. Tony Blair is reported to have been requesting an interview with the editor of *Take A Break* since 1997 (Armstrong, 2004). *Take A Break* has a readership of over four million, who are 40 years old, and largely working class, or C1, C2 in advertising demographics. So, as far as Britain's political parties are concerned, 'magazine's readers have it in their power to decide the next government' (Armstrong, 2004: 12).

This chapter provides an understanding of how the magazine sector works, by highlighting how and why this dynamic market is segmented. Sources of revenue are identified as a crucial tension in this sector. Shifting patterns of women's experience that could conceivably reconfigure women's magazines as a cultural form, as Beck's ideas suggest, are identified. Assumptions about people working in the mass media are summarised to both contextualise a more specific discussion in terms of editorial autonomy in this sector and as a basis for a specific evaluation of these themes in data chapter seven. The final section of this chapter is devoted to discussing the audience. How this sector operates influences how editorial staff address the audience and therefore the ways in which an audience is thought to read these magazines is outlined.

Market segmentation

Since its inception, the women's magazine sector has been built around providing different magazines for diverse groups of women, and its ability to do this partly explains this sector's exceptional expansion (see, Winship, 1987a: 24; Gough-Yates, 2003). Choosing to read *Woman's Weekly* over *Company* indicates a set of self-identification processes that magazine publishers rely upon to ensure commercial success. The totality of female magazine readers has conventionally been divided- up through two further commercially defined categories, which until recently have been seen as immutable (Ferguson, 1983: 14 and 61-77 and Turner, 2004e), weekly or monthly publication and age-income.

Publishers have traditionally provided different frequencies of publication aimed at different classes of women (defined predominantly through income differentials) (see, Ballaster et al.1991: 21; Gough-Yates, 2003). Beginning in the late seventeenth century, the women's magazine industries original title is recorded in 1693 as *The Ladies Mercury* (White, 1970). A variety of titles, diaries and almanacs followed in the next hundred years, all projected at the upper class who could afford the considerable sum of a shilling for entertainment by the 1800s (Braithwaite, 1985). In 1852, Samuel Beeton's first enterprise *The English Women's Domestic Magazine* was aimed at the wider audience of middle class women (Ferguson, 1983: 16). The 1870 Education Act opened up elementary education to all classes and between the late 1800s and early 1900s, weekly publications appeared catering for

working class readers. Publications like *Answers* (1888), *The People's Friend* (1869), *My Weekly* (1910) and *Woman's Weekly* (1911) used lower quality paper which was reflected in their cheaper cover price (Braithwaite, 1979: 8).

The women's magazine sector has undoubtedly been built on class as defined by income, but class characteristics are inevitably related to more fundamental issues of life chances. This is reflected in the different kinds of content found in weekly and monthly titles. Today, the difference between the monthly and weekly sectors is illustrated as one monthly magazine editor sums up her readers as: "Women who will always want a luxurious read. They don't buy a monthly title to find out what's happening that week, they want something to savour" (editor of *Elle*, quoted in Fixter, 2005e: 2). The buyers of the more glamorous, better quality monthlies have higher disposable incomes and their magazines have more pages, more in-depth aspirational content and higher quality advertising. Weekly titles tend to contain fewer advertisements, which are more likely to be for credit agencies offering finance for those with a poor credit rating, than for luxury consumer goods. Features tend to focus on fate, accepting, or at least getting on with, your 'lot' in life (Turner, 2005i). The 'cheap, cheerful and gossipy' weekly magazines are relatively topical and are still designed for women on lower weekly incomes, where, unlike their monthly counterparts, cost is an important criterion for shopping (Turner, 2004e: 13).

These primarily economic differentials are also reflected in the differences between the weekly and monthly magazine's planning and budgeting cycles. A weekly magazine title produces a publication to shorter lead-times, i.e., one every seven days, with a significantly lower editorial budget than the monthly magazine titles (Loxley, 2005b: 17). Monthly magazines have longer lead-times in which to plan their publication and retain a "more generously proportioned budget" than their weekly counterparts (editor of *Good Housekeeping*, quoted in Ryle, 2002: 6).

This conventionally immutable slicing up of the magazine sector between distinct weekly and monthly publications has however, come under pressure. In 1988, Carlton Publishing launched *Riva*, a weekly glossy, leading the quest for the industry's 'Holy Grail': the upmarket woman's weekly (Turner, 2004c: 13). Despite it's £3.5 million super-launch, *Riva* closed after seven issues. Seventeen years later in 2005 however, at least one publishing company is confident that it is time to attempt to corner this section of the market again. Emap has launched an up-market weekly in the hope of attracting a larger pool of aspirational readers. *Gratzia*, produced in the UK under a 30-year licence deal from Italian publisher Mondadori, is aimed at 25-45 year old ABC1 women (Pike, 2004: 1). The publishing rationale behind *Gratzia* is that since the late eighties, the number of female graduates has swollen and the distinction between high and low culture has

become increasingly blurred. Industry observers have labelled *Gratzia* as 'genre-changing' in a time where 'the *Times* debates *Big Brother*-this isn't slumming, but a modern eclectic cool' (Turner, 2004e: 13). *Gratzia* appears to be living up to its expectation of causing a 'seismic shift' that could force a revolution in the women's magazine industry (Noguera, 2005: 26), not unlike the shock waves that were felt in the monthly men's magazine sector after the runaway success of weeklies, *Nuts* and *Zoo* (see, Clayman, 2005: 9).

The magazine industry has traditionally segmented its audiences through age (see White, 1970). The logical extrapolation is that if you know a woman's income and age, you can use this information to estimate both her household status and interests, i.e., if a woman is 19, one can expect her to have a disposable income with no dependants to spend it on, be single and interested in men and clothes. Whereas a 35 year old will have a husband and young dependent children, less disposable income and be more interested in the home. At 45, the children will have grown up, left home and therefore more cash will be disposable. In this way, age is linked with life stage and family responsibility status, which is linked to income (Gough-Yates, 2003).

In 1956, age and income systems of categorisation were formalised in the National Readership Survey's (NRS) classification, which, to this day differentiates readerships by age and socio-economic groupings (based primarily on income) of A, B, C1, C2, D and E (Gough-Yates,

2003). More recently, however people in the industry are increasingly admitting that this age-income-life-course approach to addressing readers "is becoming increasingly ineffectual" (editor of *Good Housekeeping*, quoted in Hodgson, 2000:9). Conversely however, one editor notoriously declared that his readers were from the "under classes" who: "By the time they are 18, (…) have got three different kids by three different prisoners and have affairs with their step dads" (editor of *Chat*, quoted in Addicott, 2002b: 14).

However, many magazine editors acknowledge that an inclusive address is becoming more difficult to pin down as:

> "you've got women at the same age, who are married,
>
> women who aren't, women living with boyfriends,
>
> single women, women with children, women without
>
> and you've got to find a way to make them all
>
> welcome" (editor of *Glamour* cited in Fixter, 2005c: 19).

These issues are highlighted in publishers attempts to address magazines at older women, particularly at the industries second 'Holy Grail', the 'grey pound' or, in advertising demographics, ABC1, C2 women aged from 30-59 (Steven, 2002). Women in this older age group form part of the most divorced generation in history and the largest and richest demographic, yet they have been ignored by the women's magazine sector (Steven, 2002: 9). However, this is not from want of trying. It is openly admitted that upmarket advertisers are keen to tap into a market of wealthy, liberated and aspirational women (Hodgson,

2000: 9). Attempts by magazine publishers to tap into this difficult demographic have had mixed fortunes: *Aura* shut soon after its launch in 2001 and *Woman's Journal* closed in January 2002 (Ryle, 2002: 6). The BBC's *Eve* nearly folded after launching in August 2000 (has been bought out this year). *Woman's Realm*, launched in 1958 struggled to stay modern and closed in 2001 (Watson, 2001: 15), while *Chic*, closed in 2000 (Roberts, 2000: 8). As one editor notes, the market is there, "it's just that women in this age group have well-formed opinions and are much more difficult to pin down" (editor of Good Housekeeping, cited in Hodgson, 2000:9).

Attempts to address a generalist magazine at this gap in the market have struggled because it is 'much more difficult to talk to that older demographic than it is to younger women, who have much more in common' (press buyer of *Vizeum*, cited in Fox, 2004a: 8). Defining such a broad readership, based predominantly on age and income have proved delicate, as a thirty-year-old woman may have only finished university in the last few years, while a fifty-nine year old could potentially be a retired grandmother. There have, however been some successes, in 1988, the magazine *Red* launched. According to industry observers, this titles success was down to addressing women entering their thirties in a lively and un-patronising (Fox, 2004a). More recent launches, *Easy Living* and *Your Life*, which are aimed at women aged from 30-59 are also settling into this market.

Easy Living, Conde Nast's 2004 launch into this market gap, is described as tailoring its address to older readers as:

> 'a sophisticated breed of domesticated females who would no more buy *Good Housekeeping* than she'd wear support stockings- which is reflected in the advertising (…)' (Turner, 2005f: 14).

Likewise, the people used in the features are barristers, and architects, just like the media 'savvy' readers, the title is addressing. However, with twenty pages of promotions, it is thought that Conde Nast may be risking their reader's distrust of real editorial, by looking 'plain greedy' (Turner, 2005f: 17). The market success of *Easy Living* is said to be the editorial targeting of a mindset, a lifestyle, rather than a tight age or income-range (Fox, 2004a: 7). It is appearing increasingly probable that the habitual ways of slicing up of the magazine market may increasingly be turning away from socio-economics and age related categories and into attitude (Loxley, 2005a: 15).

The business of market segmentation

The significance of having such a clearly defined niche market of readers is that it is a guaranteed audience, which can be sold to advertisers. Advertising is crucial to the commercial success of a magazine in a very competitive, volatile sector where titles attracting little advertising struggle to survive (Lagan, 2004c: 3). The women's health market at the end of 2004 is a case in point. *Here's Health*

closed down after 50 years of publishing (Ives, 2004: 6; Fixter, 2005m: 21). The editorial team of *Here's Health* claimed that mainstream advertising no longer invested in health magazines (Ives, 2004). The promotion industry meanwhile maintained that this magazine niche had difficulties defining its readership in strong enough terms (Ives, 2004: 6). The implications of advertising finance on the product are returned to in a later section.

This situation highlights the importance of retaining a distinctly competitive edge, as a magazine, 'even a successful one – can never, ever stand still' (Turner, 2005g: 19). Magazine titles compete vigorously for stories, accusations of copying are widespread and differentiating your title from all the others in a niche is a constant pressure (Lagan, 2004a; Crozier, 2005: 16). It is a common publishing strategy to release a copycat or me-too publication, when a newly launched magazine is doing well. In the men's magazine sector the two new weekly titles; *Nuts* and *Zoo* have been 'locked in bitter rivalry since they were launched within a week of each other' (Fixter, 2005d: 2). Underlining the importance of differentiating yourself from other titles, *Zoo's* editor responded by saying that his title is a smarter, more premium men's weekly than *Nuts* (cited in Fixter, 2005f: 6).

The real-life weekly market has seen two launches already in 2005 with IPC's *Pick Me Up* and Burda Media's *Full House* (Fixter, 2005k: 3). The design decisions taken on *Pick Me Up* illustrate the wide variety of

devices a publisher can use to attempt to distinguish a title from its rivals and therefore retain premium circulation and therefore advertising (Soutar, 2005: 34).

New magazine launches also cause alarm to the editors of rival, more established titles. In the real-life niche, *Take A Break's* editor, responded to the launch of *Pick Me Up* by insisting that his title was aimed towards the older end of this niche of readers (McGuire, 2005). *That's Life!,* the cheapest title in this sector also claimed to be unruffled, adding that their audience was the slightly younger market with more modern spin on sex, celebrity and flirtier fashion.

Established magazines often revamp their title in response to a new launch in order to stand out. *New Woman* received a major redesign in response to *Gratzia!'s* publication earlier this year (Fixter, 2005c: 12). After *Gratzia!'s* launch, IPC's managing director commented that they were "never complacent", but admitted that "it would be ludicrous" to say that Gratzia! was not "a threat" (cited in Clayman, 2005: 9).

Magazine publishers can also resort to a price war. For example, in the TV listings magazines niche, where twelve titles are currently jostling for position, IPC has cut the price of their title *What's On TV.* They have also raised the price of their other title *What's on TV?*, back up to 40 pence (Fixter, 2005b: 3). This is a long-term price strategy which is aimed at securing both the bargain end of the market and the readers

who are willing to pay more 'for a bit of a read as well' (Fixter, 2005o: 21). In the monthly men's magazine sector, *Loaded* has cut its cover price to 90 pence with the hope of rejuvenating this niche, which is flagging behind the men's weekly sector (Fixter, 2005n: 9).

The women's magazine industry does have a traditional history of securing loyal readerships that purchase the title week after week or month after month (see, White, 1970). However, readers are said to be becoming more promiscuous, as these 'repertoire readers' are buying multiple magazine titles (McKay, 2000: 193). With traditionally loyal readers looking around at other rival titles, publishers are concerned about their profits. IPC's recent launch of *Pick Me Up* into the same market as their successful title *Chat* is illustrative of publisher's acknowledgment of this multiple-buying trend. *Chat* already accounts for one third of the women's weeklies sold in the UK (McGuire, 2005: 26). An IPC insider said that their new launch was not trying to steal *Chat* readers, because *Pick Me Up* was designed as an additional purchase, not instead of *Chat* (Fixter, 2005o: 4). Emap's launch of the glossy weekly *Gratzia!* is another example of the industry's recognition of the possibility of multiple sales. This title is aimed at the same demographic group that usually buy a monthly glossy, but publishers are hoping that *Gratzia!* will increase this group of readers' spending, as they can now buy a weekly glossy as well as a monthly glossy (Pike and Lagan, 2004: 1).

Industry observers have noted that launches into the weekly magazine market are doing well, as editor of Emap's *Zoo* claims that all the major publishing houses:

> "have realised that growth and long-term profits come from launching weeklies, rather than propping up existing titles or acquisitions" (cited in Fixter, 2005k: 3).

However, one might remember that there was a third weekly men's title launched alongside *Nuts* and *Zoo* last year (Addicott, 2004:1). Bauer's *Cut* closed after three editions (Turner, 2005f). The risks of new launches may be high, but IPC and Emap, publishers of *Nuts* and *Zoo* respectively, are both reported to be planning a second launch into the men's weekly sector by the end of the year (Fixter, 2005k: 3; Fixter and Clayman, 2005: 8). Niche marketing, however is not a new phenomenon in this industry.

> 'Lad's' magazines may be celebrated as the 'incident'
> of the 1990s but 100 years previously young men
> loafed around with a copy of *The Idler'* (Holmes, 2002:
> 17).

Re-launches are also said to be as common 100 years ago as they are today (Holmes, 2002: 17). However, the risks of me-too, copy-cat publications see fledgling plans for future launches shrouded in industrial espionage level secrecy, as one observer describes the planning room in a publishing office: 'It's so private, the walls are rumoured to be steel-lined (…). Staff sign agreements promising, on pain of sacking, not to reveal what's going on' (Fixter, 2005o: 20).

The competitive techniques that have been described to retain, reinvigorate or create niche markets for these popular magazines are ultimately used for reasons of revenue generation.

Generating revenue

The women's magazine industry generates revenue from two sources, the purchase or cover price of the magazine title (split between newsstand and subscription sales) and advertising revenue. The proportion of revenue from the cover price varies between magazines. Currently, monthly title prices range between £1.50 and £4.00, while weekly titles are priced between 35p and 99p. However, the cover price of a magazine title does not cover the overall production costs (McKay, 2000: 190; Gough-Yates, 2003; 38; Ives, 2004).

The remaining production costs are financed by the selling of advertising space in the publication, which again varies between magazine titles. For example, in the monthly title *Good Housekeeping* it costs £24,610 to have a colour advert on the outside back page, whereas in the weekly title *Chat*, the same position costs £12,750 (BRAD, 2005: 326 and 668). To ensure advertising sales, editors need to have a strong reader profile in order to let the advertisers know what kinds of products their magazine reader will buy. This situation illustrates a crucial tension in this sector concerning the influence on

magazine content and how readers are addressed by the editorial. These issues are returned to in later sections.

The aggregate revenue of the women's magazine sector comes from subscription/newsstand-led sales and advertising sales (Pike and Lagan, 2004: 18-19). Magazine's purchased over the counter account for a larger percentage of sales than mail order subscription (Reeves, 2002b: 13; Turner, 2005g: 15). However, there are problems associated with a magazine that depends on newsstand sales and increasing numbers of repertoire readers who buy on impulse. In terms of title differentiation, magazine covers have to be designed as eye-catching and cover-lines have to be intriguing. Design staff also have to cope with the pressure of creating a cover that will be partially concealed by other titles stacked beside it (McKay, 2000: 193).

A strategy used by magazine publishers to persuade the repertoire reader to buy their title is to get the edition in the newsstands earlier and earlier (McKay, 2000), although, wholesaler supply chain problems and distributor delays can still cost a publication a day on sale (Reeves, 2002b: 13). The traditional news agent, tobacconist and confectioners which used to sell these magazines have increasingly seen their business' taken over by supermarkets and garages, affecting the range of magazines these new outlets will carry. There are also more pressing problems in the wholesale and distribution part of the journey to the reader. The Office of Fair Trading has announced plans to deregulate

the distribution and wholesale of newspapers and magazines, which is alarming the industry (Fixter, 2005q: 10). Previously, outlets, whatever their size or location, had access to full range of titles. Under these proposed changes, publishers are worried that smaller retailers and newsagents outside large cities will find it more expensive to receive deliveries and publishers are worried this move will threaten their profit margins.

Publishers investing resources in increasing subscription sales hope they will provide solutions to these kinds of distribution problems (McKay, 2000: 193). Mail order subscriptions provide a more predictable income for publishers and avoid publication wastage. Subscription sales accounted for over 10% and rising of total magazine sales in the UK in 2003 (Pike and Lagan, 2004: 18). However, subscriptions sales are kept down by the weight-based cost of postage. When advertising is plentiful and pagination is high, up to fifty per cent can be added to magazine production costs due to the higher weight of a title (Reeves, 2002a: 17).

Ultimately, advertisers provide at least half of the revenue of women's magazines and even more in some cases (Turner, 2004a: 13). If the economy is growing, advertisers take out advertising space, but, when growth begins to slow, advertisers remove their trailers and 'magazines soon feel the pinch' (Hodgson, 2001b: 4-5). The pressures on editors to maintain high circulation figures in order to attract advertising revenue

are fierce. Magazines containing free gifts in an attempt to persuade the reader to purchase with a free lip stick or make-up bag have become a feature of the magazine sector since the early 1990s. However, industry observers note that free gifts can only 'bolster flagging ABC figures for so long' (Loxley, 2005b: 17). The pressure to maintain modest circulation increases in order to protect advertising revenue results in editors coming under considerable pressure to hide flagging circulations and true newsstand performance.

The assumption that the higher the circulation of a magazine the better, is however, not always the case. For monthly titles, it is not about reaching lots of readers, but the quality of readers that is important, or rather their spending power (McKay, 2000: 191). *Good Housekeeping's* editor is quite frank about her reasons for not wanting to sell more magazines:

> "We actually do not want to sell many more than (…) copies. I know that makes me sound mad but it is the economics of it. It actually costs a lot more to produce and distribute many more copies and we already charge a premium rate for advertising" (editor of *Good Housekeeping*, cited in Ryle, 2002: 6).

Magazines can increase their advertising rates according to their circulation success, but there is a cut off price at which advertisers will no longer buy space. The extra production costs for a higher circulation

can also begin to outweigh what can be accrued from advertising and sales (Reeves, 2002a). Editors have to weigh up the benefits of not selling more editions, making sure there is not too much advertising and balancing the cost of distribution vis-à-vis the number of readers. This situation highlights a tension in the delicate relationship between editorial and advertising content.

Revenue from advertising may keep the cost of magazines down, but also shifts the balance between editorial and advertising departments. This issue is significant as in terms of the occupational identity of journalism, as it is obsessed with autonomy (Aldridge, 1998; Edwards, 2003).

Editorial autonomy

Research into the occupational culture of journalism has continued since the early 1970s, largely from cultural studies (Tunstall, 1971: Gans, 1979). However, recent research trends have focussed almost solely on media texts, and thereby production processes, such as professional identification have been increasingly overlooked. However, three assumptions about journalism are said to inform media practitioners' self-understanding.

First, is that the most desirable traits of this profession are instinctive and best learnt through experience as journalism is a vocation that cannot be taught (Ponsford, 2005c). A high value is placed on being a

'self made' journalist with years of on-the-job' experience (Aldridge, 1998; Marsh, 2004). Formal qualifications are disparaged, to the point that even those within the industry currently supporting regulation, still preserve the belief that certification should never be a prerequisite for experience in the field (Meyer, 2004). Despite calls by Professional Training Committees to regulate journalism and encourage formalised-college based training, two thirds of media practitioners are educated by a system of in-house training (McNair, 2003; Leston, 2004: 64). These skills are however, under threat as rewriting press releases or agency copy is, according to observers, killing off 'skilled reporters' (Ponsford, 2005c: 12).

The second assumption is that journalism is a fundamentally autonomous, individualised profession that promotes democracy (Hickey, 2002; Turner, 2004a). Popular representations of journalism encapsulate larger than life personalities whose activities revolve around finding stories that powerful people do not want made public (Hargreaves, 2003). These views are part of journalism's professional identification as a 'force for good' that makes a positive contribution to social life (Ponsford, 2005a: 2). These ideas are borne out according to a new survey of journalists, where the top benefits of working in the media are identified as being able to be creative, job satisfaction and making a difference (Slattery, 2005: 13). This is a profession that asserts that its role is to "enhance democracy (…) stimulate debate and allow criticism to make informed decisions" (General Secretary of the

National Union of Journalists, quoted in Pondsford, 2005a: 2; Tomlin, 2002: 14).

The final assumption is that the sovereignty of media practitioners remains untouched by commercial interests (Meyer, 2004: Reeves, 2005). However, competition in the media is fierce, as each publication competes for more readers and enhanced advertising revenue. The reality of pressures from advertising on journalistic practice is seen to threaten journalism's occupational identity (Lloyd, 2004; Marsh, 2004).

If we accept these three assumptions about journalism un-problematically, we have an image of media professionals that underscore basic democratic values and effectively depict advocacy journalism, not unlike Beck's model of the media. He makes a connection between the conduct of a free press and a more democratised society (Beck, 1992: 24 and Chapter I).

Professional resistance to commercial realities on autonomy is an issue that in family therapy terms is the elephant in the living room. Everyone knows that pressure from existing or potential advertisers has an effect on published material, yet no one in the profession really wants to acknowledge it (Meyer, 2004; Marsh, 2004, Lloyd, 2004). The degree of autonomy and independence of media practitioners in the face of commercial pressures unfold most interestingly when people in the industry itself shed light on these controversies (see, Steinem, 1995;

McNair, 2000; 2003; Harcup, 2004: Hargreaves, 2003: Meyer, 2004; Preston, 2004a). However, despite considerable evidence undermining the conventional wisdom about the autonomy of media practitioners, journalism's intersection with advertising and entertainment is still downplayed by many in the industry.

This situation makes it even more important to understand magazines as organisational products (Altheide, 1995: 9). As a result of these issues, this project herein considers the dialogue from media professionals as illustrative of the rhetoric of autonomy rather than literal description (Chapter VII).

Delivering the reader

Women's magazine editors are highly paid creative thinkers, but it is an insecure profession, where one is judged primarily on circulation figures (Tunstall, 2001: 116-117; Merrill, 2005). The constant pressure to contribute to the commercial well being of magazine titles as well as their own editorial success sits heavily on the magazine editor (Morrish, 1996: 16). In this way, the two sides of the editorial process can be identified. First, that of the artistic and imaginative editorial task or the sprinkle-of-stardust which is the creative, visionary side of the editorial process (Turner, 2005h and j: 15). Second is the commercial preservation of circulation figures and attracting advertising, in other

words: the business side (Morrish, 1996; Reeves, 2002b; Lloyd, 2004; Turner, 2004b).

Since the mid-1950s the balance of responsibility between the creative editorial and commercial demands are observed to have swung in favor of the latter in response to increasing pressure from higher management (see, White, 1970: 157; Turner, 2004a). The roles of editor and publisher are merging, a point illustrated as the editor of *Zest* has also recently taken on, alongside her editorship, a publishing position (Fixter, 2005s). This editor asserted that the role of editor-publisher made sense because "everything we do is about growing the brand, whether editorially or commercially" (quoted in Fixter, 2005s: 2). Other editors however acknowledge the difficulties of balancing both sides of the editorial role:

> "Advertisers do ring us up and try to bully us, asking for an editorial in return for some advertising, but why on earth would I want to jeopardise 80 years of hard won credibility?" (editor of *Good Housekeeping*, cited in Ryle, 2002: 6).

In 1956 the editor of *Woman* was put under pressure by the British Nylon Spinners Association to agree not to feature any articles about natural fibres in the same issue as their advertisement (Winship, 1987: 157). Likewise, Gloria Steinem's (1995) account of her time as editor of *Ms* magazine shows that advertising demands impinging on editorial

credibility has been a long-established rule of the game (see, Turner, 2004a: 13). Advertisers spend large amounts of money on magazines and 'few editors will pass through their careers without at some point or other receiving a threat of the removal of advertising for some slight, whether real or imagined' (Morrish, 1996: 94). The ever-increasing volume of material, like advertorials is however, argued to point to the commercial part of the creative-trade-editorial equation being increasingly obscured by editors seeking to retain advertisers approval (McCracken, 1993; McKay, 2000; Reeves, 2005).

Tailoring editorial content around commodities, to retain valuable advertising revenue is paramount to the commercially successful editorship of a magazine title. The editor is under constant pressure to 'yoke' the reader to what they buy, which inevitably influences the shape of the contents of any magazine (Winship, 1987a: 39). It is claimed that in the industry, 'nowadays anyone asserting that magazines have a duty to retain a modicum of editorial independence from advertisers will invite eye-rolling accusations of naivety, idealism and suggestions they lighten up and get with the programme (Turner, 2004a: 13).

As media practitioners operate in a competitive environment some in the industry believe this is 'the basic bargain journalists make with the market economy' (Lloyd, 2005: 7). Although people in the industry seem to accept that the pressures to provide advertising revenue directly

influences the way content is selected and presented, this is still conventionally out of view, in the sense that editors try not to produce a publication that readers will explicitly identify as an advertising directory (see, McCracken, 1993; Steinem, 1995; Turner, 2005g). The task of producing a publication, which fulfils these aims, falls to the editor and undoubtedly has an impact on the editorial address adopted towards a magazine's readership.

Editorial address

The working reality for a high-profile media editor is a fast moving industry full of hard work and much uncertainty (Hodgson, 2001a; 2-3; O'Hara, 2002: 2; Merrill, 2005: 17). The fiercely competitive magazine market experiences 'rounds of editor's musical chairs' or retirements after ABC figures are released (see, Addicott, 2002a: 11; Brown, 1999: 8; Noguera, 2005: 26). If however, the figures reflect well on editorial staff, they are often 'poached' by other titles (Lagan, 2004b: 3; Fixter, 2005a: 3). Thus the editor's job of addressing their audience in a commercially successful way is put under pressure, as getting it wrong may result in a detrimental effects on future career choices.

Since the Second Word War, the advertising and magazine industries have both refined their role of educating women as consumers (see Ballaster et al. 1991 and Gough-Yates 2003 for informative summary). The question of women addressed as consumers is detailed elsewhere

(Williamson, 2000; McCracken, 1993). However, a number of observations can be made regarding how magazine producers have dealt with addressing their readerships in a time when women's lives have changed so considerably.

There have been significant changes in women's participation in the employment market and their life experiences between 1970 and the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 2003, 78.1% of women aged 35-49 were in work and most women in full-time work worked a full 38-hour week (HMSO, 2004). This means that many women spend far less time in the home than in 1970. The divorce rate has risen since 1979, so has the number of single women living alone (HMSO, 1980 and 2004). Women are marrying and having children later. The average size of a household in 1970 was 2.9, while in 2003 it is 2.4 (HMSO, 1980 and 2004). There are more households now than in 1970, but families are getting smaller, which reduces the years of the average female life cycle spent caring for dependent children. In 2003, 22% of children lived in lone parent families and more than one in ten children live in reconstituted stepfamilies (HMSO, 2004). Magazine producers are well aware of these shifts.

In terms if the magazine's industry's market segmentation and editorial address the implications of these shifts, are obvious. Traditionally this sector's commercial imperative has been identified as the core motivation for magazine publishers to fasten onto a family and domestic focus as the 'lowest common denominator in writing for women as the

surest way of building and maintaining multi-million readerships' (White, 1970: 287; Ballaster et al. 1991: 62). The large numbers of women moving into full time work signals that more women have independent incomes, while unprecedented numbers of women remaining childfree means: no babies, more cash. Given the phenomenal success of television series, such as *Friends* and *Sex and the City* validating a modern alternative to the traditional family (see, Gauntlett, 2002; Pahl, 1988) it seems consistent to expect that both magazine editors and advertising agencies will want to tap into these shifting social arrangements. Some magazines are reported to have been quick to reflect the changes of lifestyle of the independent woman (see, Braithwaite, 1995: 157).

It has also been argued that the traditionally authoritarian magazine editorial of the 1950s has been gradually replaced by a new more upbeat style, emphasizing self-realization, independence and self-confidence, as magazine staff insisted they no longer 'talk down to their reader' (McRobbie, 1991: 137; Ferguson, 1983). Magazine titles aimed at self-improvement and domestic virtue did begin to give way to new and more specifically alternative-segmented targeted titles, such *Working Woman*, (McCracken, 1993) and the feminist orientated title *Spare Rib* (Winship, 1987a). The younger women's monthly magazine market also responded with titles exclusively aimed at women with no children (Gough-Yates, 1999; Stokes, 1999). Titles like *Elle* and a re-vamped *Honey* were argued to typify a new magazine mantra, that

marriage and children were not the only destiny open to women (Winship, 1983; Gough-Yates, 2003).

Despite these bold departures from the traditional domestic magazine address, the late 1980s also saw the commercial success of the more traditional home-based address of the European imported titles, weeklies *Bella* and *Best* and the monthly title *Prima* (see, Winship, 1982; Braithwaite, 1995). However, the ultimate aim of launching magazine titles is profit and titles like these continue to be popular with readers and therefore profitable for both publishers and advertisers (Ballaster et al. 1991: 113). These issues raise questions around whether women's magazine project women's reality or contain fantasy, a topic that is returned to in the next section.

Magazine editors know about the changes in women's experiences and acknowledge that, "life cycles are no longer what they once were" (editor of *Good Housekeeping*, cited in Roberts, 2000: 8). Yet, the emergence of the independent female reader has seen magazine producers addressing them as 'superwomen', apparently able to turn her hand to an ever-increasing and widening list of other tasks to do on top of the household chores (Winship, 1983: 105). Further, you-can-do-anything features are also accompanied by products endorsed by the editor to aid the reader in her quest for fulfilment.

When seen in this light, addressing women as head of the household, as mother, wife, worker, lover or as having her own needs to attend to are ultimately endorsed by the advertising industries lucrative assertion that it can fulfil needs and desires in every sphere of women's lives (Roberts, 2005). Contemporary magazines contain increasing volumes of editorially generated consumer features which aid the reader through ranges of products and efficiently represent consumption as an articulation of individuality and choice (see, Winship, 1992: 48; McCracken, 1993). Addressing women as resourceful controllers of the household budget can thus be seen as a lucrative strategy for both editor and advertising agency (Steinem, 1994). The editorial necessity of selling the same magazine space twice, once to the reader and once to the advertisers, shows us that both publishers and advertisers will not want this situation to change.

Reading women's magazines

Women's magazines have been described as constructing an imaginary world for an imaginary reader (Ballaster et al. 1991), where the premise of biological destination and gender determinism is maintained (Ferguson, 1983: 189). From this position, women's magazines are often seen as barriers to women's liberation, offering unrealistic representations of femininity that hide the realities of women's oppression by dressing it up as popular pleasures (for example McCracken, 1993).

However, women's magazines contain material that is aspirational, creative, fictional and eminently pleasurable. Some argue this to the point that the content in the popular women's media is, some argue, too frivolous to be taken seriously (Roberts, 2005). The issue of whether women's magazines are not important enough for study (highlighted in the introduction of this Chapter) is also being responded to by magazine producers. In September 2005, Hachette Filipacchi are launching a magazine of 'most unfashionable austerity and seriousness' (Turner, 2005i: 15). *Psychologies*, contains no fashion, gossip, celebrity or shopping. Observers are uncertain how it will meld with the British reader's 'approach to existential angst: have a drink, laugh at yourself and just bloody well get on with it' (Turner, 2005i; 15). This could be an interesting development in this sector in terms of the fantasy and reality debate and this titles market development with be undoubtedly monitored with interest.

However, the co-existence of fact and fiction in these magazines has been traditionally described as providing a phantom reality as they both 'reproduce women's oppressive feminine position and allow women to deal with it' (Winship, 1987: 56). Post-modernist authors claim that the existence of this inconsistency in this sector positively encourages alternative subject positions for the audience (Hermes, 1995). These disparate accounts reflect different theoretical connections between the cultural products examined and how women are tied into dominant social relations. These kinds of pre-occupations fail to appreciate the

production principles of the women's magazine sector, where their producers and publishers are probably more concerned with what is, rather than what should be (Silverman, 2001: 295) and this thesis is not about readers or effects but examines the product.

Women's magazines have traditionally provided both education and entertainment for their readers (White, 1970). Women's magazines are all about advice and aspiration and can be seen as a mix of fact and information with a different mix of these logics between weekly and monthly magazines. The fundamental tension of fact and fantasy co-existing in the women's magazine sector points to the complex logic of this product and raise important questions about how readers read these magazines.

How readers are thought to read women's magazines is an essential interest to magazine producers, advertisers and crucially magazine editors alike (Morrish, 1996: McKay, 2000; Fixter, 2005e). In this sector, magazine publishers spend what amounts to millions on audience research each year (Turner 2005j). Editors are well aware of the findings from both market and academic research and results undoubtedly influence the ways in which readers are addressed in these complex, commercial products (see, McKay, 2000).

If one assumes that women read uncritically off a page, this places the reader as simply accepting the social identities that they are presented with. For example, McRobbie's (1978) textual analysis describes young

girls reading the magazine *Jackie* in terms of absorption. In 1987 however, Frazer published interviews with readers of the same magazine, which showed that these girls did understand that the boys in this magazine were mythical, which undercut the notion of reader's passively assimilating media content (Frazer, 1987: 415). In response, McRobbie's later work gave readers a new position of prominence, credits readers with understanding a multiplicity of meanings and as confidently applying alternative readings (McRobbie, 1991: 137; 1999).

Since that time, it has been increasingly highlighted that women's magazines include contradictory cultural definitions of femininity and oppositional reading strategies for their readers, as well as highlighting that readers have potentially critical capacities (see, Frazer, 1987; Winship, 1987a). This positioning of the audience suggests that there is no 'single' reading of text, going on to describe reading these magazines as 'a fleeting, transient past time that does not leave much of a trace' and are therefore 'low impact' media (Hermes, 1995: 147 and 23).

If, however we take this point to its logical conclusion, i.e. all media texts are open to unbounded alternative readings and are therefore un-problematic, that would undermine the very point of researching the media at all. Hermes' (1995) ethnographic research with Dutch and UK magazine readers is an extreme example in terms of polysemy (multiple readings of text), yet her description of her respondents 'interpretive

repertoires' sound just like what the magazines are trying to do (Hermes, 1985: 143). Further, Frazer's discourse analysis shows that the girls she interviewed fell back into talking in traditionally non-critical mode when discussing the characteristics of desirable relationships and marriage (Frazer, 1987: 423).

This project is not focused on media effects, but accepts that text acquires meaning through the interaction between readers and the text (Hermes, 1995: 3) and assumes that female readers get a variety of things out of buying, reading and enjoying these magazines. However, this project also recognizes that by concentrating on the act of consumption, we are in danger of ignoring the effects of the mode of production (see, Ferguson and Golding, 1997). The popular media is ultimately based on commercial gain, however these interests are culturally mediated for readers and however many reader's interpretations of the text are collected or analysed.

Conclusion

This chapter has established that the women's magazine industry produces complex, commercially sensitive, cultural products that are explicit sources of lifestyle information. These magazines are commercial products sold for profit as well as vehicles for advertising designed for specific groups of female readers.

Winship (1982) argued over twenty years ago that the women's magazine sector's priorities were firmly rooted in the expansion of the capitalist economy. This chapter has underlined that how magazines are financed cannot be separated from what they 'say'. The assumptions surrounding professional identities in the media sector reveals that tensions exist regarding the rhetoric of editorial autonomy, the commercial status of a magazine title and an editor's responsibility to their audience.

Contradictions identified in this chapter between contemporary women's experience and editorial address have revealed disjunctions between social facts, like changing family forms and the increase in women's employment, and the fantasy or escapist content of women's magazines. Given this paradoxical situation, both reality and fantasy material can be described as being managed in a practical and seemingly unproblematic way in this commercialised sector.

Rather than evaluating what is real or imaginary in this sector, this thesis identifies this sector's established way of operating, and assess whether this has altered over the last twenty-five years. The most important issue, stemming from Beck's ideas, is to identify whether the traditionally different logics of weekly and monthly magazines have changed over the last twenty-five years (Chapter I). In this way, the hypotheses that have been developed directly from Beck's ideas have had a significant impact on the decisions taken concerning the

selection, collection and analysis of data in this project. These issues are explained in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

Hypotheses, methods and methodology

Based on Beck's 'risk society' narrative, the present thesis has developed hypotheses to test his ideas in the women's magazine sector. The hypotheses are direct extrapolations from Beck's idea that institutionalised relations of definition are replacing orthodox relations of production. Chapter I highlighted the transformations that Beck asserts have been occurring over the last half a century or so, in that new relations of definition have become the underpinning principles upon which our identity formation and life chances are now based (Beck, 2000a; Beck et al. 2003: 9; Chapter I). Chapter II has illustrated the complexities of applying these ideas in the women's magazine sector. The issues raised in Chapter I and Chapter II directly informed the strategies and methodological approaches adopted for the selection and analysis of empirical data.

This chapter is consequently divided into three sections. Section one defines the specific research tasks that were dictated by generating appropriate data to engage with the hypotheses. Section two outlines the implications of these endeavours on the data selection and analysis of food and eating content in the women's magazine sector, while section three provides the same particulars about the decisions made concerning the editorial interviews.

Hypotheses and research tasks

From the examination of the workings of the women's magazine sector and a close reading of Beck's thesis, one can anticipate that significant shifts will have taken place in representations of feminine identity over the last twenty-five years (Chapters I and II). The following sections illustrate how the hypotheses directly informed the research tasks. This is achieved with a description of what the women's magazine sector would look like if Beck's claims are to be substantiated.

Hypothesis 1: The democratisation of social knowledge

Beck asserts that institutional policy will be increasingly involved in fundamental shifts in access to and participation in social knowledge (Chapter I). Beck's assertions in this area give rise to three specific predictions:

- Beck asserts that institutions will increasingly use their lay-client base as an institutional resource (1991; 1999: 148). In line with these predictions, one could predict that readership participation would rise; reader-sourced material would increasingly be presented as legitimate and be increasingly used as a critical institutional resource.

- Beck asserts that expert knowledge will no longer be the monopoly of established 'professional' groups, as alternative expertise is expected to be increasingly included as standard organisational practice (1992: 1999). Thus, one would expect the increasing diversification of sources of expertise in these magazines over the last twenty-five years. Beck (1992) predicts that the presentation of contradiction in expert knowledge will become increasingly evident as standard institutional practice. As a result of this reluctance to treat expert knowledge as infallible, orthodox expert opinion will be expected to be presented in an increasingly contradictory and contingent way and with editorial scepticism over the last twenty-five years.

- Beck asserts that as a result of these changes in the management of expert knowledge, feelings of uncertainty will increasingly frame institutionalised practice (1992). It is thus expected that anxiety-provoking magazine content will rise over the last twenty-five years and be increasingly presented without editorial reassurance and as a result, a vacuum of authority would be identifiable.

Hypothesis 2: The individualisation of social relationships

Beck asserts that shifts in the nature of social relationships will be acknowledged in institutional practice (chapter one). These assertions gave rise to three separate predictions:

- According to Beck, self-interest will become increasingly evident over traditionally family-centred concerns as an aspect of institutional procedure (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). In terms of the magazine sample, the female self will be expected to be increasingly addressed as independent of traditional social relationships over the last twenty-five years. Magazines will be expected to increasingly address a more autonomous self-motivated female reader who is self-characterised by the capacity and will to choose (Fairclough, 1992: 221).

- Beck asserts that elective friendships will be increasingly consolidated in institutional procedures (1999: 149; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 27). One could expect that magazine content referring to elected friendships will rise significantly over the last twenty-five years.

- Beck proposes that the de-monopolisation of the family will be reflected in institutional practice (and Beck-Gernsheim, 1996). It is predicted that mediated assumptions about the traditional

household form will reduce significantly in these magazines over the last twenty-five years.

Hypothesis 3: The disappearance of collective distinctions

Beck (1992) asserts that institutional practice will reflect the disintegration of collective distinction (Chapter I). This idea gives rise to three predictions in the women's magazine sector:

- Beck asserts that economic distinction previously maintained by the social class system will collapse as rising standards of living cause a process of standardisation in the cultural characteristics of style and consumption (Beck, 1999: 87; Pahl, 1998; 2000). An increasing convergence of material status symbols, particularly content concerned with financial or cost orientated messages, is expected to undergo a comparative convergence between weekly and monthly magazines over the last twenty-five years.

- Beck (1992) states that the traditional public/private divide maintained by the industrial system will collapse as the influences of the wider world collide with the private sphere. One could expect a comparative convergence between monthly and weekly magazine content referring to wider issues over the last twenty-five years. This would be captured in the expectation that material concerned with employment, travel, alternative food and

eating practice and wider environmental issues will rise over the twenty-five years. This could be expected to be parallel in both the weekly and monthly magazine titles.

- Beck emphasises that status distinction will become less visible in institutional practice (1992 and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003). These claims could be expected to be illustrated as references to distinct forms of etiquette decline over the last twenty-five years. Content containing distinct notions of food and eating custom, like laying the table, the number of courses per meal (Warde, 1997) and whether alcohol is recommended could be expected to undergo convergence between the monthly and weekly magazines over the last twenty-five years.

Having detailed the direct influence of the hypotheses on the research tasks, the next stage of the process required the collection of specific data that would allow for an effective evaluation of these predictions.

Method and methodologies

As a direct result of the hypotheses detailed above, a sample of food and eating content from women's magazine titles aimed at different socio-economic groups of readers (see pages 91 and 92) was collected and interviews conducted with key magazine editorial staff. This approach to data collection is based on the principle that practice and

policy in the mass media cannot be inferred from an examination of texts alone. This multi-dimensional approach also reflects the complexities of analysing culture that 'is difficult to study because its most significant features are subtle, taken for granted, and enacted in everyday life routines' (Altheide, 1996: 2).

The methodologies chosen were a qualitative, thematic content analysis and qualitative interviewing. A practical adaptation of the basic principles of the tools of textual analysis was conducted on the magazine sample in order to account for the array of objects, symbols and meanings that aid the understanding of cultural artefacts (Berger, 2000). Semi-structured interviewing was undertaken as this approach offers the most appropriate method of examining the working knowledge of this group of media professionals. This approach to mixing interview and content analysis data was adopted in order to clarify different parts of the story about how magazine content has come to be presented in the way it is.

Representation

Sample selection

Beck's claims about the changes in social class differentiation determined the logic of selecting magazine titles that represented target audiences from different social classes (Chapters I and II). However, it is important to note that in terms of trying to compare this kind of data,

this chapter (and Chapter II) talks about social class in a different way than in Chapter I. The A, B, C1, C2, D and E categories employed by mass media analysts are commercially derived terms (see Chapter II) which have nothing to do with relations of production, but everything to do with relations of consumption. Therefore this chapter talks about social class as a conventional proxy for consumption class.

The details of the profiling of each magazine's target audience was identified from British Readers Audited Data (BRAD), which includes information from the Audit Bureau of Classification (ABC) and National Readership Survey (NRS) statistics. These statistics provide a detailed breakdown of readership demographics and circulation figures for each magazine title. For example, from these statistics it can be ascertained that the core readership of *B magazine* are between 15 and 25 years old and belong to social class A, B and C1 (BRAD, 2001: 156). A magazine's editorial profile is also provided. For example, *Take A Break* is profiled as, 'captivating real life stories, prize puzzles and competitions and classic weekly elements combine to give readers an interactive and involving big value package' (BRAD, 2001: 670). This information also includes details of the magazine title's target readership, for example, *Bella's* target readership is: 'B, C1, C2, 25-44 year old housewives with children' (BRAD, 2001: 157).

The potential category of women's general interests magazines totalled thirty-five in 2001. The number of potential magazine titles considered

appropriate for sampling was progressively reduced. The majority of the original thirty-five titles were rejected from the sample on the basis of their BRAD, NRS and ABC data. Magazine titles were also excluded if they focused predominantly on fashion or style, for example, *Vogue, Harpers and Queen* and *Cosmopolitan.* Magazines focussing on celebrity gossip were also excluded, for example, *In Style* and *Now.*

Originally, the titles selected were to include magazines that belonged to different publishing houses to provide as broad a picture as possible. However, this aim could not be achieved. The women's magazine sector contains a multitude of titles, yet the number of publishing houses that own them is small by comparison. It is common for one conglomerate to have several women's magazine titles in their portfolio. For example, IPC (AOL Time Warner) currently own nine women's magazine titles and NatMags (National Magazine Company) seven. Given this reality and the fact that this aim was not central with regard to the hypotheses it was abandoned in favour of concentrating on reflecting the key socio-economic demographics in the readership profiles that would allow for direct engagement with the hypotheses.

The final refinement of the magazine title selection process was based on the social class/age map produced by Ferguson (1983). This aim reduced the number of appropriate magazine titles to choose from, to twelve. This map is reproduced here to demonstrate how the most appropriate twelve titles were reduced to six.

Social class/ age map (adapted from Ferguson, 1983: 211).

Socio-Economic Group						
A B C1	Younger Richer		Mid-life Richer		Older Richer	
C2 D E	Younger Poorer		Mid-life Poorer		Older Poorer	
	15-24	25-35	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+

The time scale of between 1979 and 2003 was chosen in line with Beck's thesis. Beck asserts that although these transformations have been progressing since the Second World War, he claims they have become more obvious since the late 1970s (Beck et al, 2003 and Chapter I). This project was designed to identify progressive developmental shifts since 1979, so it was decided to take a sample of each magazine every three years. The specific magazine editions were taken alternatively between the months of March and September. The first publication of that month was sampled from the weekly magazine titles. These months were chosen to exclude as much seasonal bias as possible, i.e. in February, Valentine's Day material, December, Christmas orientated content and in June and July, overtly slimming pieces related to summer holidays and beach wear.

The most appropriate titles to fit Ferguson's map that were chosen for the final sample are detailed below.

Titles selected

```
Socio-economic group
A                                                              * GH
        * COMPANY
B                                                * PRIMA

C1

C2                              * BEST

        *WW
D

          * CHAT(to replace That's Life!)
E
        15- 24      25-35       35-44       45-54       55-64
65+

                    Profile Index (% readership to national average)
```
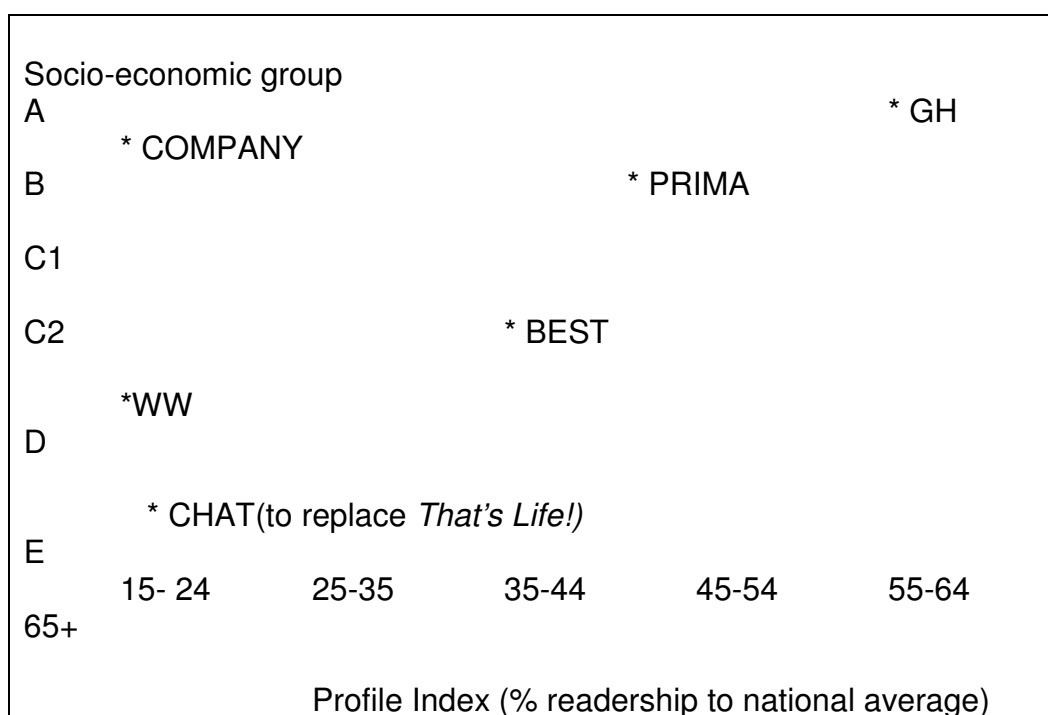
(Source: BRAD, 2003)

GH- Good Housekeeping   WW- Woman's Weekly

Three of the six magazine titles selected for analysis were not launched until the mid-1980s (*Prima, Best and Chat*). These three titles could not be replaced with titles that have been established for a similar time period as they represent specific sections of the readership market. The decision to go ahead despite the lack of 'ideal' comparability spread remains valid as this practical shortcoming is made explicit.

Sample collection

The sample collection stage of this project required locating, accessing and photocopying archived material. The British Library at St. Pancras

holds two of the monthly magazines titles in the sample. The final monthly title is held at the University of Cambridge library, while another collection of two of the monthly titles is located at National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. The Newspaper Library at Colindale holds the three weekly publications chosen for the sample.

During a trip to the British Library it was discovered that written permission from a magazine's publishing house was required before any photocopying could take place. Initially the appropriate publishing houses were contacted by phone. In each case, the publisher asked for the application in writing. The letter highlighted that the material would be used for academic purposes only. A positive response from the National Magazine Company and IPC Connect was received almost immediately. However, no reply was received from H Bauer, who own *That's Life!,* the magazine title required to represent the younger social class D and E magazine readers. The NRS figures were consulted once again and it was decided to replace this title with one of a similar readership profile (*Chat).* The final permission letter from *Chat's* publishing house was received the day before leaving for London.

Before accessing the library collections, a data collection sheet was created to record what was identified as 'food and eating' material. The data collection took place between February and March 2004. Seven of the required magazine editions were not available. The magazine publishing houses were contacted. They provided details of two

collecting bureaus in London, but both proved unsuccessful in locating the editions required. Neighbours and friends produced two of the missing magazine editions and an advertisement in a local free magazine provided two more.

The final data sample contained the required March and September editions in all but three cases. In these instances the 'preferred' month was replaced with the following month.

	Sample requirement:	Replaced by:
PRIMA:	March 1991	April 1991
	September 1994	October 1994
COMPANY:	March 1997	April 1997

The final data collection identified food and eating content in 89 separate magazine editions. Each individual example was catalogued, with a finally tally of 6,563.

Data analysis

The aims of this analysis were tied in directly to the hypotheses to be tested in the data. As different social categories are constructed in the interests of a particular conception of social reality in the media, the

analysis needed to identify the codes and conventions drawn on in the production of these magazines. There are currently twelve methods of text analysis that display both different and comparable developments in terms of relationships between methods and theories (Tichler et al. 2000: 51). Wide ranges of these analytic resources were examined before constructing the document analysis sheet.

Content analysis is generally accepted as an umbrella term for a variety of analytical tools that are no longer automatically associated with directly and clearly quantifiable aspects of text (Gunter, 2000). This more classical approach to content analysis was rejected, given the difficulties of investigating non-verbal or para-verbal phenomena (Tichler et al. 2000: 67) and the significance of the high proportion of visual/photographic content of the women's magazine sector.

A qualitative textual analysis was chosen as an analytical approach that could identify the multi-dimensional ways in which magazines produce meaning and make sense of the social world for their readers. This project therefore required techniques that could be used to analyse language, symbols and the rationales presented, as well as signs concerning what was not immediately explicit.

The frameworks of semiotics and critical and rhetorical discourse analysis were found to be applicable to the aims of a qualitative content analysis. These choices were dictated by the situation that the

hypotheses set in this project were defined outside of the textual sample. Semiotics' procedures provide, in advance, research questions and coding categories, while both critical and rhetorical discourse analysis techniques can be seen as a multi-stage content analysis. More ethnomethodological textual analysis methods (like conversation analysis) can be distinguished from content analysis, as they do not engage with data categorisation (Tichler et al. 2000: 68).

This multi-strategy approach made a substantial impact on the ways in which the analysis took place, as each method has its own characteristic techniques (Deacon et al. 1999). The pilot attempts to conduct three separate analyses on each data sample were time consuming and provided inappropriate data to engage with the hypotheses. It was decided to extract the essence of the techniques described. The more accessible tools of the semiotic approach to analysis of content were adapted (Kress and Van Leeuwan, 1996, Jensen, 1995). This approach was used to identify the frameworks operating in the magazines to represent values, often through signs, which signify something else (Chandler, 2002). For example, a table laid with candles, napkins and place cards is associated with entertaining or a special occasion, or a shopping bag comes to be associated with shopping. During the identification of the social relationships exhibited in the magazine text this approach was particularly useful as photographs of parts of children's bodies (like

hands) were often present when children were not explicitly identified in the written text.

The magazine content was analysed using a modified version of the rhetorical approach to analysis, in that the persuasive devices used in the magazine text were examined (Crowley and Hawhee, 1999; Kahane, 1992). This involved identifying the rationale provided for certain recommendations (see Warde, 1997). This project also adopted a more appropriate version of a discourse analysis, in that the choices in the wording of the magazine content were examined and compared (Carter et al. 2001). The words used to highlight aspects of food and eating content were inspected, as words used to mean the same thing can tell us something about the principles behind practice, such as using the word 'house' or 'residence'. This type of significance is a key component of discourse analysis, in accepting that there are many different ways of saying the same thing in the media, but asserting that they are neither random nor accidental alternatives (Fowler, 1991: 4).

The structure adopted for the content analysis was one of the commonest approaches to qualitative data analysis: searching for themes. The traditional approach to thematic analyses involves the identification of underlying themes from the material being analysed (Bryman, 2004). This project employed the principles of thematic content analysis as a method for evaluating hypotheses defined outside the data, as opposed to themes identified directly from the data.

Utilising textual analysis approaches in isolation can be criticised because of questions about whether you can reduce the meaning of a whole text to its component parts, such as sentences and paragraphs. Can observations made about structural features of a text be ascertained from its micro features? This project took as many features of the magazine material as possible into consideration (from individual words through to an individual magazine title's house style) in order to allow for the validity of the analytical findings. By taking a multi-method, more holistic approach to the analysis of the data, this project anticipates that this conceptual problem has been minimised (Gunter, 2000).

The criteria employed in the identification of themes in qualitative research are often criticised for being left unclear by researchers (Bryman, 2004). A theme is more likely to be identified the more times it happens. In this way, repetitive themes gain prominence, rather than the operation of something else that may be of equal significance, but that simply does not occur as often. Extracted themes are often illustrated with quotations, but not stated explicitly. This project took its themes from the hypotheses generated from Beck's work, which are clearly and systematically stated. It is considered that this kind of approach to a thematic analysis minimises the shortcomings of utilising this kind of analysis.

The aim of this project's adaptation of the thematic analysis is a practical one in which systematic, but not rigid conceptualisation of Beck's predictions are produced. These ideas directly informed the data selection and analysis processes, yet it was neither a neat nor tidy process. A continual movement back and forth between the theory, the hypotheses and the magazine content occurred throughout the development of this research project.

A thematic analysis

The aim of analysing the magazines was to establish the intended and unintended effects of production practices on this sector's output over a twenty-five year period (Chapters I and II). The logic of analysing the magazine data began with the identification of the themes contained in this project's hypotheses. The hypotheses required that three specific areas in the women's magazines were analysed:

1) The representation of social knowledge

2) The representation of social relationships

3) The comparative representation of collective distinction

Each food and eating example was examined in detail and the specific themes outlined in the hypotheses were addressed systematically. This approach also allowed for a comparison of data generated from weekly and monthly magazine titles.

Hypothesis 1: The democratisation of social knowledge

Each example of food and eating related content was examined with regard to their inclusion of knowledge from different sources, an aim directly tied into the hypotheses. In practical terms this meant that the first task was to clarify the source or author of the article. An extensive examination of the magazine sample resulted in three-coded sources of magazine content: editorial, reader-sourced or author(s) of a research report/ expertise external to the magazine title. The magazine content was also examined for the degree or nature of the authority appealed to and subjected to differentiation between two further codes: traditional or alternative authority. Information was examined for indications of editorial scepticism. Magazine content that could be considered as anxiety provoking was identified and examined in detail.

Hypothesis 2: The democratisation of social relationships

In order to engage directly with this hypothesis each example of food and eating content was examined to ascertain any social relationships referred to as significant for a magazine titles 'ideal' readership. Where relationship references were not explicit, inferences were drawn from other aspects of the magazine presentation, such as images of children, recommendations based on the premise of 'spoiling oneself' and the numbers of servings per recipe contained in the article (for example Warde, 1997).

Hypothesis 3: The disappearance of collective distinction

Collecting data to engage directly with this hypothesis involved identifying and examining the magazine content for references to monetary related values and forms of etiquette. Content referring to alternative food and eating practice and environmental issues was also identified. These examples were compared between the weekly and monthly magazine titles in order to identify any similarities or differences in presentational practices.

The process of analysis

The more fine-grained analysis of the textual tools outlined in the previous section were used to categorise the data on to an analysis sheet. These approaches allowed for a greater sensitivity to the nature and content of the specified themes (Bryman, 2004: 378). However, in order to engage with direct quantity claims like those outlined in the hypotheses (for example: readership participation will rise over the sampled time frame), it became clear that the data findings would have to apply terms like, 'more and less' in order to quantify the relative prevalence of the phenomenon described. Therefore the categorised data was collected in a way that could be counted. Where appropriate the statistics created were reproduced in graph form using the Microsoft Excel software package.

The data analysis sheet (Appendix 1) was applied to each individual example of food and eating related content in the sample. The results were then compiled by magazine edition, by magazine title, by year of publication and a comparison *between* the weekly and monthly titles and *across* the time scale of the sample was conducted.

Extensive examples of the kinds of magazine content included under the themed headings taken from Beck's thesis (Chapters I and beginning of this Chapter) are included in the findings chapters for two reasons: First, one example can crystallise what would require extensive explanation and second this option demonstrates my willingness to take the intellectual risk of being challenged (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 11). Examples are also included where possible to show instances of material that are considered as contra-indications to the overall findings.

Production

Sample selection

The editorial staff approached with a request for interview were selected from the six magazine titles chosen for the content analysis. This number of interviews forms a small data set. However, given there were not many magazine titles to choose from (see sample selection of

titles), six is quite a high proportion of the pool. Women's magazine editors are under constant pressure because of long working hours, creating doubts as to whether these people would agree to speak to an academic researcher. Recently, one researcher found it necessary to change her whole methodology to accommodate difficulties in accessing this professional group (Gough-Yates, 2003: 23).

The ideal research situation would be to interview the editor of each of the six magazine titles in the material sample. However, an interview with any member of an editorial team was preferable to no interview, so requests for interviews with editors were drafted and as a fall back position upon refusal, other section editors were identified. The requests for interview were posted in June 2003. The letter outlined the project aims and was followed up by telephone calls three days later. In each case, telephone call-backs were requested for the following week on a set day. Attempting to contact these very busy people was a time-consuming task, involving many rounds of telephone calls, at all times of the day. More often than not, the editor was reported to be on a conference call, abroad on a photo shoot or in an important meeting. A multitude of messages were left on answer phones and with other members of staff. The editors were politely pursued for approximately three weeks until six positive responses were secured.

Interview dates and times were finally agreed with three editors and three section editors. The 'section editors' interviewed were a deputy

editor, a practicals editor (an editor responsible for cookery, craft and fashion sections) and a cookery director, all of whom were responsible for the food and eating content of their respective magazines. However, one of the editors having agreed to a telephone interview was unavailable on the day. Eventually after weeks of attempting to contact her, we agreed to leave our interview until the end of the year. This interview was finally conducted in September 2003.

The interview guide

The rationale for choosing a semi-structured approach to interviewing was predominantly practical: First, the respondents being approached for interview are extremely busy people, who realistically could only be expected to spare an hour of their time. Second, the respondents are professional people with whom the achievement of an equally professional relationship was desirable. It was felt that asking this professional group to agree to an unstructured conversation would not enhance the likelihood of securing an interview. Third, this project wanted to examine topic areas defined outside of the interview data, so these areas of interest formed the rationale for the questions asked at interview. Further, some structure was required in order to enable comparability between editors from the weekly and monthly sectors (Bryman, 2004: 315).

The topics covered by the interview guide came from a desire to understand magazine editorship as a process (see Chapter II). More broadly the interview questions were designed to encourage the respondents to tell me what they deemed as significant in relation to the types of knowledge they present, the social relationships they presuppose and what they consider to be distinctive about their own magazine title's policies and procedures. These questions were redrafted to ensure they were as open-ended as possible. In the interview context, this allowed for the exploration of topics and issues of interest to the researcher, whilst also retaining the flexibility to incorporate any issues that the interviewees felt were important. As it was necessary to interview different members of the editorial team the questions were amended slightly. One magazine title (*Company*) does not contain a distinct food section, so the questions posed for their section editor had to be modified slightly. The modifications to questions 1, 3 and 7 are in bold below:

Interview guide

1) How do you plan what goes into the food sections of your magazine? **Company Magazine:** Most other magazines in the women's general interest market have a specialist section on food. Why has your magazine taken a different approach?

2) How does this relate to your 'typical reader'?

3) **Editor:** What makes a good food editor? **Section Editor:** How is the relationship between you and the editor organised? **Company magazine:** Your magazine contains food related information in your health and beauty sections and occasionally in your features. How is the relationship between different section editors organised?

4) Is the content for the food coverage written by in-house staff, by a regular pool of freelancers or by commissioning from a larger number of freelancers who only work for you occasionally?

5) What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of the system you have adopted for authoring the food content?

6) Women are inundated by all sorts of advice about what to eat. What is distinct about the way you present this information?

7) Do you consider that your readers are better informed about food and eating issues than previous generations of women? **Company magazine:** Do you consider that your readers are better informed generally?

8) If food appears in any other parts of your magazine, how do you go about ensuring coordination across this kind of content?

Data Collection

The interview guide was posted out to the respondents in the week preceding the fixed interview date. Five of the six interviews took place in the magazine title's head offices in London in June 2003. At the start of each interview the respondents were given details of the project's aims and an indication of how the interview data may be used. Assurances of anonymity were given, as the respondent's words are only identified as either '*editor weekly*' or '*editor monthly*'. For the section editors, this was amended to '*section editor weekly/ monthly*'.

Although the respondents may well be in a powerful professional position, issues of identification in the context of how the analysis of the data would represent editorial staff as a group was the ultimate justification for this anonymity (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). Respondents were asked for their permission to tape-record the interview, which was given in every case. All the interviews were transcribed.

The status of interview data

The interviews were undertaken in order to access the body of knowledge employed by editorial staff and to examine what influences the day-to-day tasks of an editor in this sector. The interview data was treated as representing the rhetoric of reality (see Chapter II) routinely

available to editorial staff and during the analysis, this reality was linked to a theoretically informed framework (Chapters II and VII).

The pressure to succeed on any magazine editor is fierce, as "the British magazine market" reports Terry Mansfield, managing director of the National magazine Company, "is the most aggressive, exciting and challenging in the world" (quoted in Fixter, 2005a: 3). The women's magazine editor's place within this market may be powerful and often buoyant, yet it is never really secure (Chapter II). Thus, with all these issues in mind, the interview transcriptions were approached as raw data describing working practices and as evidence of the professional rhetoric of editorial autonomy (Wharton, 1992 and Chapter II).

The position of the researcher

Before entering the interview situation, particular issues with regard to interviews with professionals in an unfamiliar working environment were addressed. The people about to be interviewed are from a powerful group and reflecting on the kind of research relationship one wished to establish with them was important (Silverman, 2001). For example, if a researcher arrives at a formal interview wearing clothes that are too casual, this might suggest that she or he intends to have a casual chat. Although the editors were being interviewed about their professional, not private lives (Oakley, 1981), it was considered that arriving in a suit may have challenged the respondent's authority. Therefore, it was

decided to wear clothes that were smart, but casual which would reflect the desire to establish an equal professional relationship (Finch, 1984; Benny and Hughes, 1984: 221).

There were also concerns regarding the pre-socialisation of the interview respondents. Some people report being nervous about being interviewed (Finch, 1984). However, editorial staff are used to talking to the press, publishers and financiers and are often well rehearsed in many presentational aspects regarding interviews. Wider reading was undertaken in order to prepare for any technical jargon the editors may have used. In the interview situation, this issue did not arise and at no point was it felt that the interview was any thing other than an editor informing a researcher their day-to-day job.

During the interviews, information of a more personal nature was often both included and solicited by the editors. This information was referred back to in terms of comments, such as: 'you have kids, you know what it's like'. It is difficult to say whether this was typical of an interaction with professional journalists, was typical of a conversation between women or as a result of the interviewee's attempts to relate their knowledge to the interviewer's own experiences (Finch, 1984).

Data analysis

The aim of the interview data analysis was to establish the intended and unintended effects of production practices on the women's magazine sector's output (Chapter II). Analysis of the interview data began with the detailed reading of the interview transcriptions. The logic of analysing the interview data began, much as the content analysis of the magazine sample did, with the identification of the themes from the hypotheses.

2) The presentation of social knowledge

3) The representation of social relationships

4) The disappearance of collective distinction

Each section of an interview transcript relating to these themes was copied into a separate document and compared between the weekly and monthly magazine responses. Themes were identified and categorised using the same criteria development used for the textual analysis (see previous section). The interview data focused on specific events, situations, actions and processes associated with the organisational and rhetorical reality of magazine editorship. This approach to the interview data allowed an insight into an organisational culture that made thick description possible (Alvesson, 2002: 189 and Chapter VII).

The specific themes were not addressed systematically in the interview data, but referred to throughout the meeting. For example, question two was originally designed to encourage the interviewees to reflect on their 'ideal' reader. However, during discussions around other apparently unrelated questions, like 'What makes a good food editor?' (interview question 3) responses often included references to reader characteristics as a 'good' food editor is referred to as someone who 'knows' and understands the readers.

The initial influences on the construction of food and eating material for publication were established through questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 (see previous section). By comparing the interview data from weekly and monthly editorial interviews the identification of both similar and different goals of the editorial process were identified.

Hypothesis 1: The democratisation of social knowledge

The open questions 4, 5, 6 and 8 generated reflections on editorial policy towards the inclusion of reader-sourced material and expert knowledge.

Hypothesis 2: The democratisation of social relationships

The responses to questions 1, 2 and 6 provided the rich material regarding the social relationships the respondents saw as significant for their 'ideal' reader.

Hypothesis 3: The disappearance of collective distinction

The collective distinction themes were addressed predominantly from responses to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7. The responses from weekly and monthly editorial staff were compared to identify any similarities or differences in their publication prerequisites.

The status of requested and electively produced data

The editors identified certain areas of influence on their policy not categorised in the interview guide, such as pressure from advertisers. The interview guide had deliberately not included questions on these issues, as it was felt that inclusion might result in a refusal to be interviewed. A number of editorial staff offered this information freely, describing how the pressure of generating profits from advertising revenue influenced their editorial policy in a variety of different ways (Chapter II and Chapter VII).

This situation raised issues concerning the comparative validity of requested and voluntarily contributed information in the interview setting (Kvale, 1995). However, the interviews were constructed to ascertain the respondent's understandings of the setting, not the researcher's. Therefore, this project acknowledges the principle that the researcher, the topic and the sense-making process is interactional and based on the view that the social world is an interpreted, not a literal one (Altheide and Johnson, 1994: 489). In this project both types of interview data are treated as analytically parallel, since the value of trying to accurately represent the social world of the respondent is paramount. Further, this situation authenticated the basic belief that media editors are not autonomous and thus validated the treatment of the interview data as evidence of the rhetoric of autonomy (Chapter II).

The electively produced data mentioned here is presented in the second half of Chapter VII. This chapter is preceded by three findings chapters, which contain the findings of the textual analysis of the magazine content.

CHAPTER IIII

Hypothesis 1: The democratisation of social knowledge

This chapter tests the first hypothesis by evaluating Beck's assertions regarding shifts in definition and orientation to social knowledge (Chapters I and III). The key features of Beck's democratisation of social knowledge premise are in three areas of institutional transformation: increased lay participation, the diversification in expert knowledge and a pervasiveness of uncertainty (Beck, 1992; 1994; and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003).

This chapter is therefore divided into three sections. Section one examines the nature of reader-sourced material in order to evaluate Beck's idea that institutions increasingly involve their patrons in areas of institutional practice previously excluded to them. Section two tests Beck's proposals that traditional forms of expertise are being replaced by a wider variety of alternative experts. Magazine content was categorised as originating from either 'traditional' expert groups or from 'alternative' groups. This was undertaken with the expectation that content sourced from alternative groups would rise over the sampled time frame in both weekly and monthly sectors. Section three tests Beck's claim, that as a result of these changes in the nature and form of

social knowledge, uncertainty will become institutionalised. In order to test these claims, the presentation of magazine material that could *potentially* incite reader anxiety was examined.

The idea that the reflexive modernisation of social knowledge will take place irrelevant of socio-economic distinction was evaluated, since according to Beck we should find similar changes across the range of socio-economic groups represented by the weekly and monthly magazine titles selected. The conclusion of this chapter evaluates whether the cumulative analysis findings can said to be indicative of a breakdown in the hierarchical model of institutional organisation.

Participation as institutional practice

This section tests Beck's predictions through an examination of the presentation of reader-sourced food and eating related content from the magazines sampled between 1979 and 2003 (Chapter III). The key points on which these ideas are tested in this first section are threefold. The first test involves establishing both the incidence and volume of reader-sourced material over the sampled time frame. A rise in the inclusion of reader-sourced material would support Beck's predictions.

Second, the mode of reader participation was examined, as Beck leads us to expect that reader-sourced material will be increasingly presented as equal in authority to editorially generated material. Reader-sourced

material is examined to ascertain if, as Beck suggests, readers are presented as empowered decision-makers. If reader contributions are identified as being increasingly responded to, this would indicate that readers have some influence on decision-making processes and validate Beck's predictions.

Finally, Beck's ideas about the increasing institutional practice of presenting lay participants as the 'expert' was tested. The reader-sourced material was examined to evaluate whether this material can be described as being increasingly presented in an authoritative, rather than a compliant manner. If it is found that the presentation of reader-sourced material predominantly occurs as accommodatingly illustrative knowledge, rather than expert knowledge, Beck's predictions will be undermined.

Patterns of reader participation

The data analysis identified food and eating related content that is reader-sourced in many diverse forms in this media sector. Reader-sourced material is identified as taking the form of readers' letters, stories and in feedback on previously published food and eating related material. These occurrences were identified and counted.

Fig. 4a reveals that the incidence of food and eating related material sourced from readers climbed steadily until 1994. Between the 1994

and 2000 samples the presentation of reader contributions drops off, but by the 2003 editions this material has reached its highest level ever. These findings appear to support Beck's claim that organisations will increasingly supporting more user involvement (see Winship, 1982).

Fig 4a: Incidence of reader-sourced magazine content
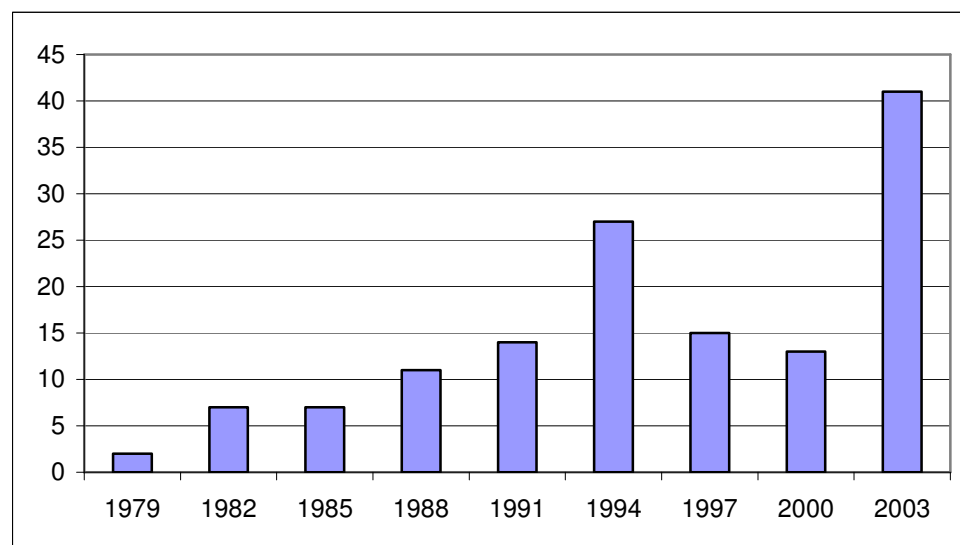
However when these figures are turned into comparative volumes of the total food and eating content in each title, Beck's predicted rise in reader involvement is shown to be absent (fig. 4a).

Of the total food and eating related material, the volume that was reader-sourced in 1979 is minimal, by 2003, this had risen, but not substantially (fig. 4b). In the majority of magazine titles, reader-sourced contributions barely reach over a third of the total food and eating content. The exception to this trend is *Chat's* 2000 edition. This is due to a reader-sourced consumer testing section replacing the cookery

pages in this September publication (Chat, 2000). However, the most significant trend identified was that the magazine titles had not significantly increased the volume of their reader-sourced material in relation to their volume of editorially generated material over the sampled timeframe.

Fig 4b: Proportion of total food and eating content that is reader-sourced
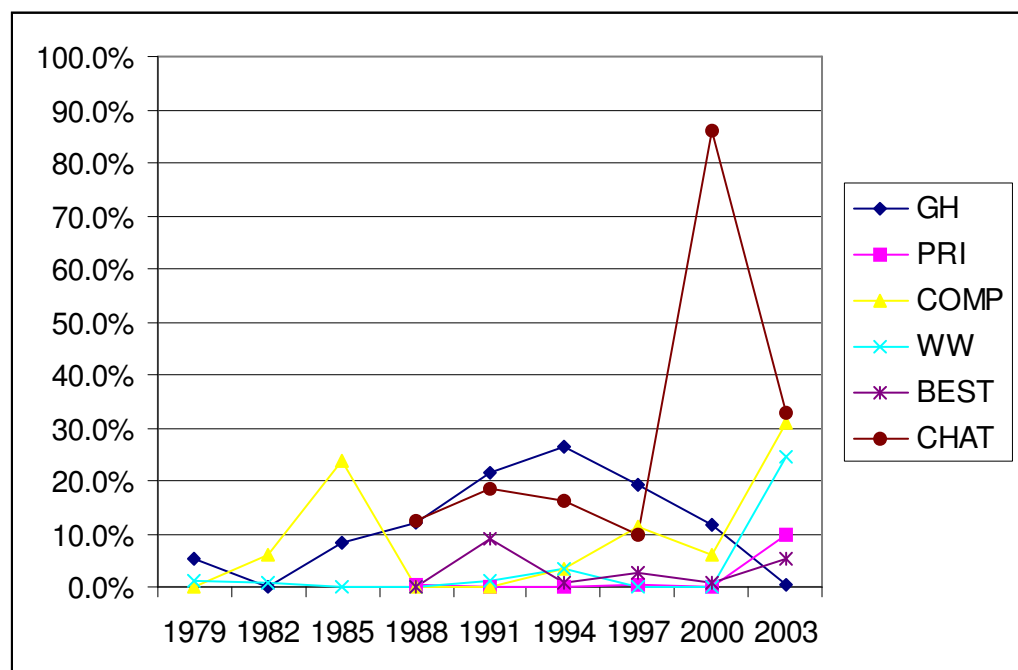
While collating this material, it also became apparent that the presentation of reader-sourced material was approached differently between the weekly and monthly titles. Reader-sourced tips and ideas sections have a history of being presented in women's magazines with little or no editorial comment (Winship, 1987a). However, in the weekly magazine titles, the reader-sourced content was found to be more likely to present reader's contributions in a 'tips and ideas' style genre. A typical example is no longer than two sentences long with many

examples featured together on a small section of a page. The following example is one among eleven reader-sourced food and eating tips that are presented on the bottom half of one page.

> When boiling carrots, add 1 tsp olive oil and 2 tsp sugar. Mix together well to give your veg a delicious taste Mrs (…) from Dagenham (Chat, 1994: 55).

> For a tasty alternative to plain dumplings, add grated
>
> cheese, onions and a pinch of mixed herbs Mrs (…) from St
>
> Albans (Chat, 2003: 6).

By contrast, the monthly magazine titles reader-sourced material is presented in an extended feature format that includes the experiences of at least three readers on a variety of topics.

> Entertaining Everywhere (Company, 1985: 57-60)

> Wouldn't it be fun to run a restaurant, darling! (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 96-98)

> Who had a heart attack? (Prima, 2003: 120-123).

Women's magazine's incentives for readers to contribute also differ between the weekly and monthly magazines. The weekly magazine

titles offer cash incentives for readers to participate, usually in the form of 'A five-pound note for every tip published' (Best, 1988: 14). In the monthly titles a prize is occasionally offered to readers, but it is not monetary, usually taking the form of a bouquet of flowers or a voucher (Good Housekeeping, 1997: 6).

The findings show that the volume of this type of material has only risen by a small amount in proportion to the total volume of food and related content in the sample (fig. 4b). Beck's prediction of a substantial increase in audience participation is not substantiated by the data. The data also reveal a significant difference in the presentation policy accorded to reader-sourced material between the monthly and weekly magazine titles. The inclusion of a two-line reader 'tip', typical of the weekly magazine titles involves a lot less time and money than the detailed interviews with readers undertaken in the monthly magazine titles.

Reader as decisive institutional resource

Beck claims that the character of institutional participation will change as in modernity an institution's end user will increasingly decide what matters should be deemed important (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: 43 and Chapter I). Beck asserts that institutions will foster these increasingly critical exchanges with their consumers, which will occur regardless of economic distinctions. The weekly and monthly magazine

titles selected for analysis have specific sections for reader comment and evaluation. This institutional support for reader-sourced interaction has a long history in the women's magazine sector (White, 1970; Winship, 1987 and Chapter II). However, Beck is quite clear about the changing nature of the changing interaction between institutions and their consumers as being characterised by customers playing a more integral part in policy formation (Chapter I).

The analysis highlighted that editorial space given over to reader comments was characterised by a call for reader participation:

> Your Letters: Send us your views on what you've read in GH
>
> this month and we'll print the best (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 8
>
> and 2003: 10).

This excerpt is however, prescriptive as the topic on which the magazine wishes to hear about are confined to feedback on their own contents. This situation conflicts with Beck's idea that institutions will actively encourage input from their clients with the only topic prohibitions being constructed by the readers themselves (Chapter I).

The following example does illustrate an apparent editorial willingness to publish less-than complimentary feedback:

> I read your interesting and very informative article 'Cutting

the risk of miscarriage' (14th June) and was concerned at the suggestion that toxoplasmosis can be contracted from raw fish. We would like to reassure people that this is not, in fact the case. Fish is a good food for pregnant women. It is high in protein, low in calories and packed with vitamins and minerals (Best, 1994: 4).

However, this turned out to be an industry response as this letter was received from a representative of the Sea Fish Industry Authority in Edinburgh. We can only speculate about any other possibly legal pressures placed on the magazine title to print this letter.

The March 1997 edition of *Good Housekeeping* carries a reader's letter 'Save Sunday Lunch' that does openly criticise the magazine's position in a previous feature.

> As a farmer's wife and ex-health service physiotherapist, it
> was with great interest and some insight that I read '20
> Turkeys, 80 cows, 15 carols and a baby' (December 1996). It
> was the comment made by one of the contributors about
> "being tied to a roast every Sunday" and being 'anti the
> whole preparing, cooking, washing up thing' that has
> prompted me to put pen to paper (…) I don't think that to
> prepare a special meal on what should be a family day is too
> tall an order (Good Housekeeping, 1997: 6).

This example seems to support Beck's idea that institutions increasingly invite criticisms of their practice. However, the above instances are illustrative of only four examples of critical reader-sourced material across the sampled time frame. There are no editorial responses to any of these criticisms, which undermine any consideration of these reader-sourced views as prompting a responsive dialogue between magazine staff and their readers. These data findings challenge Beck's idea that critical comment will become increasingly commonplace across institutional sectors.

Reader as equally authoritative

Beck claims that institutions will increasingly confer legitimacy on their consumers' knowledge (Beck, 1992 and Chapter I). These ideas indicate that institutions will value lay expertise equally with expertise from traditional authoritative groups. These ideas are suggestive of a magazine sector that not only includes readers' experiences, but also presents it in an increasingly legitimate way. The magazine sample contained some examples that are illustrative of Beck's egalitarian ideas. In one case, these ideas are manifest as the traditionally editorial task of testing consumer goods (see McCracken, 1993) is turned over to the authority of the reader in *Chat*'s 2000 edition.

The Great Chat Test

You can't beat a cream cake with your afternoon tea, so we
treated the pensioners at the Out and About club in Waterloo,
London, to a plate piled high with chocolaty, creamy éclairs
(Chat, 2000: 41).

The most powerful example of Beck's ideas is where as readers are asked to help with other contributors' problems in a section entitled 'Your Reply' (Best, 1991: 37). This unique formatting of the traditional problem page removes the narrative closure offered by the agony aunt's solution (see Winship, 1992: 100-101).

If you think you can help any of the readers in a Problem
Shared, write, quoting the date of the magazine in which the
letter appeared and its writer's name, to (…). At a later date
we'll print some of the replies and forward the rest (Best,
1991: 37).

Two replies from other readers offering advice on the reader's predicament are printed alongside (Best, 1991: 37). Beck's claims of institutionally encouraged self-assertion and active decision-making echo through Winship's evaluation of this alternative formatting as where 'the reader must plunge in to assess for herself the merits of conflicting advice and divergent ideologies' (Winship, 1992: 101).

However, these were the only two examples of Beck's ideas in the whole magazine sample. It is more common for reader experience to be included as supporting an editorially sanctioned position on a certain topic, rather than reader knowledge and experience being treated in the editorial, as independent and legitimate expertise.

Summary

Beck makes comprehensive predictions about a new form of institutional practice that nurtures a more collaborative relationship between institutions and their clientele. This collective vision asserts that more democratic forms of institution should now exist in comparison with previous eras (Beck, 1992: 35; 1998). In this way Beck challenges the model of the top-down ethic, traditionally associated with society's organisations.

Beck's predictions concerning an increase in lay participation in institutions are unsupported by this data. The volume of reader-sourced material in magazines over the timescale of the sample has not risen to the degree Beck's ideas suggest. Beck's assertion that institutions will increasingly adapt their practice to enable their users to become more interactive and feed directly into the decision-making processes is also examined in the data findings. The data analysed here reinforces Winship's characterisation of women's magazines' as setting up their relationship with their readers, as a paternalistic friend, in that

magazines do encourage a reader-involvement, but only in a way which leaves the magazine staff in the authoritative position (Winship, 1992: 97).

The de-monopolisation of expertise

A recurring feature of Beck's work is his attention to the changing nature and form of expert knowledge (1992; 1994; Beck et al. 2003). The key feature of Beck's argument is that expert knowledge will be increasingly diversified and come from alternative, rather than traditional sources (Chapter I).

In order to evaluate these ideas in this women's magazine sector sample, the magazines' presentation of externally derived expertise (i.e. not the editorial staff directly) in the sample was examined. Beck's ideas were tested in three ways. First, Beck's ideas about institutions shifting their emphasis from traditional to alternative sources of expertise was tested as one would expect to find that traditional sources of expertise were increasingly displaced over the sampled time frame.

Second, Beck's prediction that expertise will be increasingly contradictory was tested as examples of conflicting material were drawn out of the data. Any identification of an increase in expert dissent would support Beck's predictions. Finally, Beck's ideas about the increasing challenge to expert's 'right to know' was tested, as an increase in a

more sceptical editorial stance when presenting expert knowledge was expected. If however, the data analysis showed that little change has occurred in the ways expertise is included in this sector and that the sources of expertise have remained similar over the sample, this would challenge Beck's ideas.

Traditional and alternative sourced expertise

Within the magazine text, externally derived expertise was taken to be references to other institutions, such as the Health Education Department or Food Standards Agency. An account was made of references to individual experts, like a 'cider connoisseur', 'health specialist' or 'celebrity restaurant owner'. The various research reports referred to in the magazine texts were also included in this category. Occurrences where books were reviewed were noted, although a distinction was made between books that were reviewed and when an author was referred to in support of an editorial position. The 'types' of institutions or individuals referred to were drawn out of the data to assess the proposition that alternative expertise would be referred to as opposed to traditional authority groups, such as doctors, scientists, research personnel, psychologists and government bodies. Alternative expertise in the magazine sample was considered to be references to charities, user-groups, herbalists and voluntary organisations.

In the context of the popular media and women's magazines in particular, researchers have previously examined 'who has said what'. This has been undertaken with the intention of evaluating the validity of claims made in this sector (for example Black, 1995; Gerlach et al. 1997 and Chapter I). This is in line with a generally held belief that the popular press are an influential medium for the communication of *correct* messages about health and healthy lifestyle issues (Elliot, 1994 and Chapter I). The present thesis focused on 'who' says what in order to test whether traditional expertise was being overshadowed by alternative sources, as well as examining 'how' expert advice was referred to and presented, rather than evaluating the validity of any claims made.

In the women's magazines content, food and eating related material has become heavily featured on health pages. These sections are often over-seen by an alternative or complementary health editor. Magazines predominantly referred to UK based research and British institutions. However, the monthly magazine titles included extensive references to research from the US and Europe. In the weekly titles across the sampled time frame, only four instances of research from outside the UK were identified.

Fig. 4c shows a slight increase in alternatively derived expertise referred to, however, this is still disproportionably low when compared to the traditional expertise used in this sector. This data contradicts

Beck's assertion that institutionally endorsed expertise will become increasingly diverse, since alternatively sourced material remains in the minority of expertise credited by the magazines (fig. 4c).

Fig 4c: Proportion of total expert references that is alternatively sourced
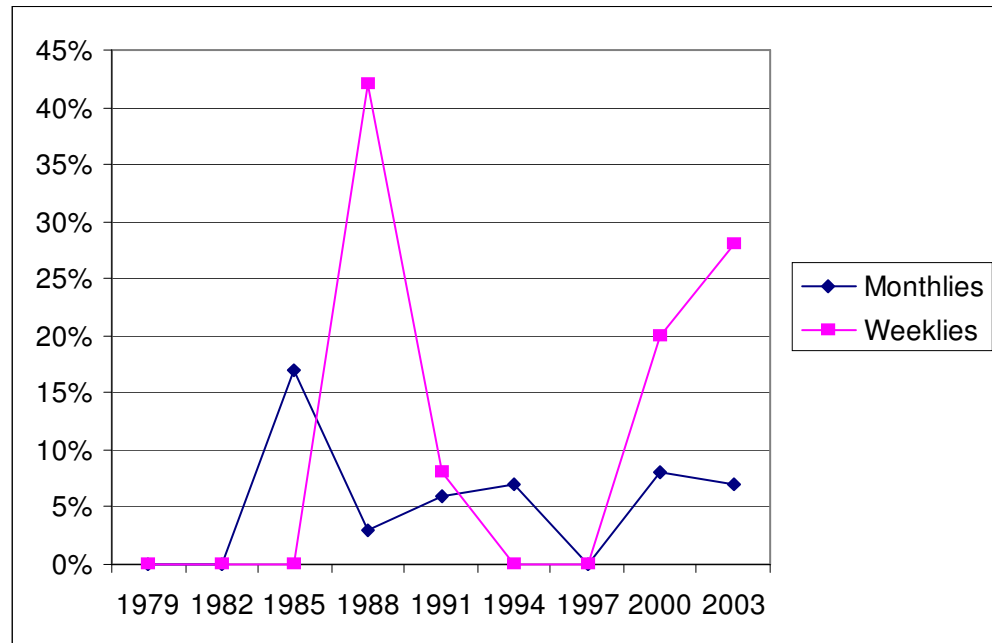
Ironically, the attribution of expertise to traditional sources remained despite any features' explicit claim to be 'alternative'. For example, in *Good Housekeeping's* 2003 edition a section entitled 'Mind, Body and Soul' (133) features the advice of a holistic doctor to a couple experiencing fertility problems. The reader requests information about alternative methods to increase the likelihood of conception. The holistic doctor's reply does include advice concerning the intake of vitamins under the supervision of a qualified herbalist, yet the first line of her reply recommends that the reader consult a traditional GP (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 133). The magazine's producers appear to be

trying to have it both ways. An alternative expert may well be available, but actually reinforces the privileged position held by traditional medical expertise.

As these examples were collated it became apparent that external expert knowledge is presented in two distinct ways. Expert knowledge is either referred to in order to reinforce an editorial stance or in a stand-alone format, with little or no editorial comment.

Fig 4d: Incidence of expert knowledge presented as illustrative of editorial stance
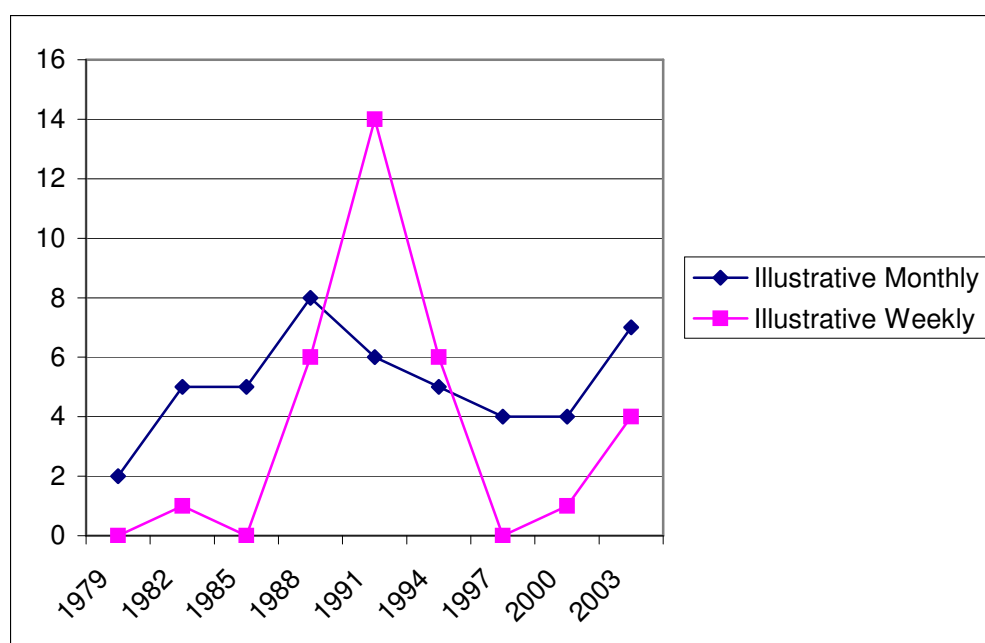
Fig 4e: Incidence of expert knowledge presented as stand-alone
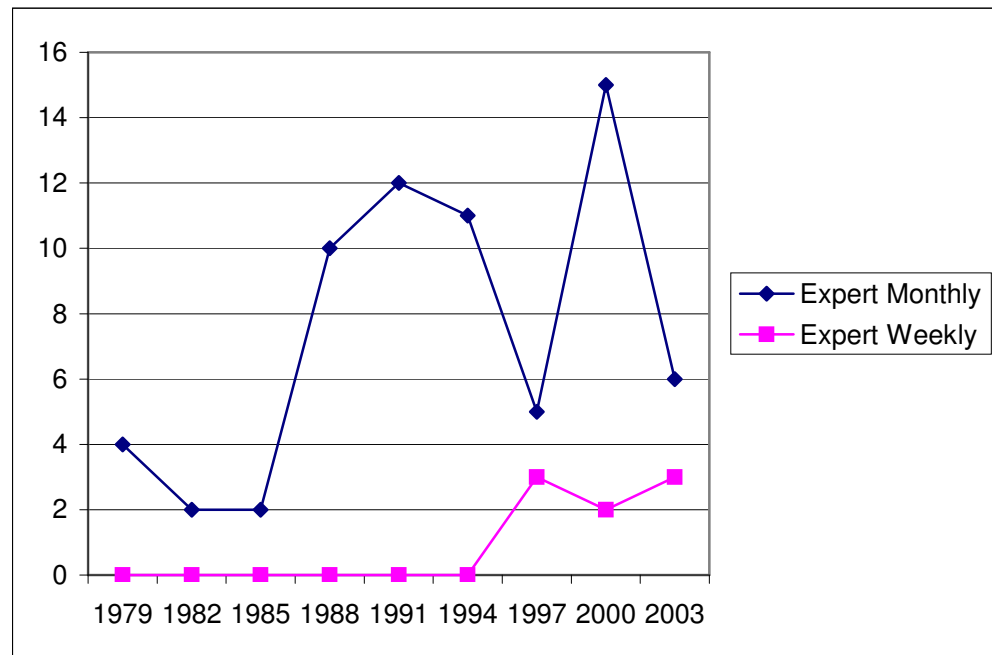
External expertise is less likely to be referred to in the weekly women's magazine sector. However, this data reveals a significant shift in the presentation of external expertise in the weekly magazine titles into the contemporary editions (fig. 4d and fig. 4e). Until the early 1990s weekly magazine titles were more likely to present external expertise as supporting an editorial stance (fig. 4d). By 1997, this presentation style shifted to where external expertise becomes more likely to be presented as a stand-alone piece (fig. 4e). This trend may have however been influenced by changes in organisational practices, like staffing changes and the increasing use of freelancers (see Franklin, 1997: 53).

Best magazine uses external expertise to support editorial positions, until the 1997 edition when the newly introduced *'News update…'* (Best,

1997: 20) features two occasions where research findings are used to introduce topics in a stand-alone format.

> Kids TV- junk diet? (…) a new survey blames (…)

> Full-fat milk is good for you! (…) according to new research from America (Best, 1997: 20).

The monthly titles in the sample showed a similar intensification in presenting externally derived expert knowledge in this way. However, these data demonstrates that rather than being a contemporary development, the monthly titles have consistently presented information in this way since the earliest editions in the sample. This finding is illustrative of the differential resources available to the weekly and monthly magazine titles as presenting summaries of research published in easily accessible journals is an inexpensive way of providing magazine content (chapter two).

Credibility, production costs and expert knowledge

The data analysis identified further differences in presentation styles between the monthly and weekly titles when external expert knowledge was presented. The monthly titles in the sample demonstrate that direct quotes from identified experts have been consistently provided since the earliest editions analysis (fig. 4f).

Fig 4f: Proportion of direct quotation in items based on external expertise
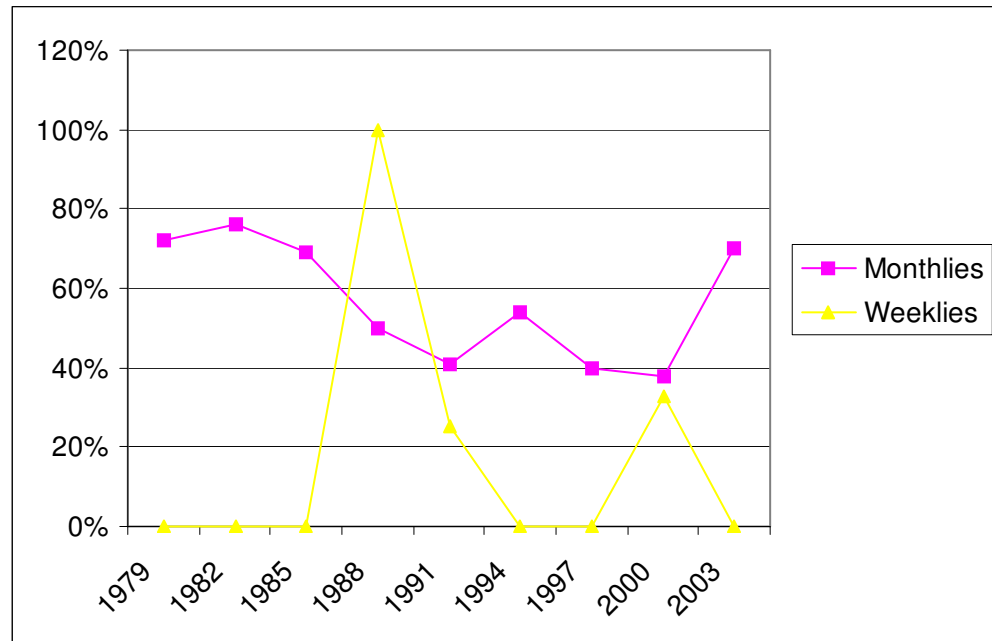
The identification of institutions and the individuals conducting the research was much more likely to be included in the monthly magazine titles (fig. 4f).

> Professor (…), co-author of the original study, says [direct quote] (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 117).

> Research by the University of Exeter shows that only (…). Head of the research team, Dr (…) says that [direct quote] (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 87).

The editorial policy towards the presentation of external expert knowledge has clearly undergone some changes in the weekly

magazine titles. The monthly titles have however consistently retained similar editorial policies concerning the inclusion of external expert knowledge.

Fig 4g: Proportion of external expertise providing identification of research author and/ or institution
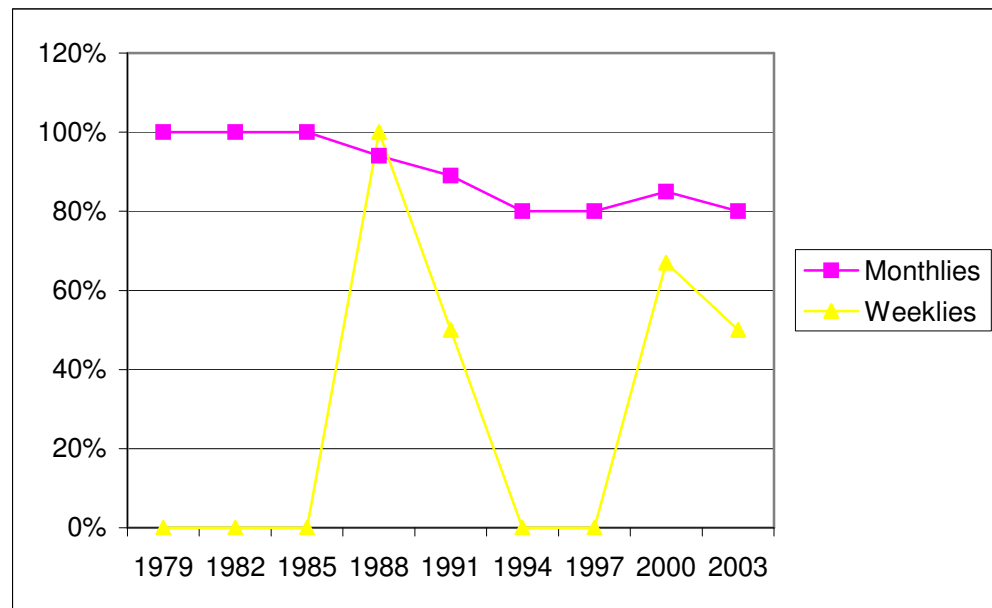
The weekly titles predominantly opted to paraphrase research results or expert comment. Weekly magazine titles were also less likely to include any indication of who wrote, published or conducted any research mentioned (the data in fig. 4g is not a frequency count and does not mean there were no examples of external expertise). For example, *Woman's Weekly's* 1994 edition contains a feature entitled 'Are you happy with your weight?' (Woman's' Weekly, 1994: 28-29). During the feature, three separate research projects are referred to, to substantiate the features position.

> Australian researchers say (…)
>
> A US survey (of 5,000 people for 30 years) found that (…)
>
> Researchers think (…) (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 28-29).

The findings of the research are paraphrased. The original studies were not identified, neither were their authors. Further validity appears to be lent to the US survey reference, as the details of the length and breath of the project are highlighted. However, if one wanted to access the original research mentioned in the feature, the lack of detailed information would make this extremely difficult. This trend was found to be characteristic of the weekly women's magazine sector's presentation of expert knowledge. It is less expensive to paraphrase research published in a journal than to interview the original researcher, which points to the influence of the differential production and resource cycles in the weekly and monthly magazines (Chapter II).

The data analysis also revealed that further reading on subjects concerning food and eating related information were much more likely to be provided in monthly magazine titles (fig. 4h). In a feature concerning the wages of catering staff, *Prima* magazine includes the contact details of the Equal Opportunities Commission (1988: 127). In 1982, *Good Housekeeping's* editorial policy of including further details is unwavering.

> For more information about cider, there is a newly published book: A Taste of Cider by (…) (Good Housekeeping, 1982: 173).

The examination of this phenomenon over the sample revealed that two of the three weekly magazine titles (*Woman's Weekly and Best*) do not provide any further reading details until their 2000 and 2003 editions. This situation suggests that weekly titles are increasingly adopting the practice of providing further contact details for their readers.

However, *Chat's* editorial position appears to resist this tendency as the extensive contact details apparent in their 1988 edition disappears. The 1988 edition of *Chat* demonstrates the publishers' then-aim of producing a tabloid newspaper masquerading as a magazine (see Braithwaite, 1995: 133), a comparison emphasised by *Chat* being A3 sized. The reportage style of journalism apparent in the 1988 edition may explain why further sources of support were provided then, as opposed to the remaining copies in the sample. These changes coincided with the acquisition of Independent Television Publications (*Chat's* launch publisher) by IPC Media in the mid-eighties. This organisation turned *Chat* into a more conventional magazine format in order to 'settle down' circulation figures (Braithwaite, 1995: 133).

Expanding opportunities for knowledge acquisition appears to be encouraged by the editorial stance of the monthly magazine titles (fig.

4g and fig. 4h). This may be indicative of an editorial expectation that the decision-making capacity of their readership will be extensive.

Fig 4h: Proportion of external expertise providing further reading and/or contact details
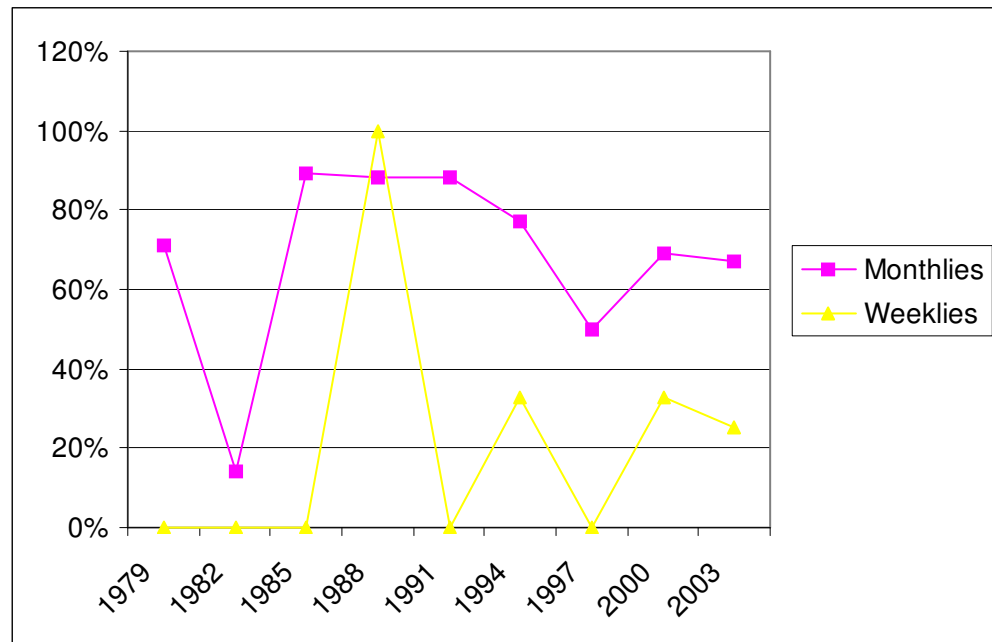
One could argue that the lack of further references provided in the weekly magazine sector indicates the expectation that their readers do not require this extended option of consideration before making decisions. However, a simpler explanation would be that presenting summarised un-referenced reports is a more cost-effective strategy than the extended editorial resources required to contact original researchers and recommending further reading (Chapter II).

Beck asserts that in the 'risk society', not only will increasing 'amounts' knowledge be available but also that more alternative information will be

accessible to all, as we are now forced into making more and more life decisions. The findings highlight that the weekly magazine producers do not seem to think their readers need a large amount of information or as much alternative information on which to base their decisions (Chapter VII). The monthly magazine producers in contrast appear to think that their readers need supplementary information in addition to what is available in the magazine text, as providing further details is commonplace.

The presentation of contradictory expertise

Beck claims that expert knowledge will become increasingly contradictory, contingent and insecure in the 'risk society', as 'several equally valid modes of justification operate simultaneously' (Beck et al. 2003: 16). In the magazine sample, one would expect an increase in the presentation of contradictory expert knowledge in the contemporary magazine editions. The analysis identified four such instances. One example in the *Woman's Weekly* 1997 edition is a feature discussing ultraviolet treatment for people suffering with psoriasis or eczema.

> A recent research report suggests they should avoid eating celery, parsnips and parsley during the course of treatment (Woman's Weekly, 1997: 39).

A contrasting position on these research findings is provided, not by an alternative expert, but by the editorial:

> This makes me wonder could eating celery, parsnips and parsley and getting a safe daily dose of daylight on affected skin help psoriasis and eczema gently and naturally? It might be worth a try (Woman's Weekly, 1997: 39).

Another example was identified in the monthly magazine *Company*'s 1994 edition. This example begins with the findings of an American research report concerning the proposition that the consumption of alcohol can be used as a slimming aid. Conflicting comments from a representative of a UK-based institution are also presented shedding a more sombre light on these research findings.

> Dr (…) of the Dunn Clinical Nutrition Centre in Cambridge says, "We must be careful not to give the impression that alcohol is a slimming aid (Company, 1994: 18).

The weekly title *Best* contains the most significant example of the presentation of opposing positions in the whole magazine sample (Best, 1994:16). The feature in question outlines the controversy surrounding whether giving vitamin supplements to children results in an increase in their IQ. A section devoted to the explaining the views of the pro-vitamin

lobby is provided along side the counter-arguments from the anti-vitamin movement (Best, 1994:16). As both sides of the argument are presented and the editorial makes no further recommendation, this feature can be described as a classic example of how Beck's ideas may be manifest in media.

This rare finding is also substantiated by Winship who examined *Best* in 1992. She claims that this magazine title's increasingly open editorial stance is indicative of a new relationship opening up between magazine readers and producer (Winship, 1982 and Chapter II). *Best* is a European import that included often-subtle difference in address (Chapter II). Overall however, throughout the sample period examples of magazines presenting contradictory certainties is scarce.

This finding does not support Beck's forecast of an institutional drive to increasingly include expert information that is contradictory. The implications of this finding are that Beck may have over estimated the inclination of organisations to present contradictory certainties to their audiences.

Sceptical institutional stance

According to Beck, we are becoming ever more aware of the fallibility of expert opinion (Beck, 1992; 1995). Beck talks about the 'right to criticism within professions and organisations' as an institutional priority

that 'ought to be fought for and protected in the public interest' (Beck, 1992: 234). The consequences of this, for Beck, are that the previously privileged position of traditional expertise will be reduced and these shifts will contribute 'to the political economy of uncertainty' (Beck et al. 2003: 29). These ideas suggest that institutions will be caught up in the general trend of social misgivings about expert knowledge.

In the women's magazine sector one would expect these ideas to be manifest in instances of a more sceptical editorial stance towards the presentation of expert information. One would expect that when writing about expert information the editorial may increasingly question or even challenge the 'right to know' of expert groups. Of the few instances identified in the analysis, all were found in the monthly magazine titles. In 1991's edition of *Good Housekeeping,* a small feature indicates a sense of uncertainty about the authority of expert advice.

> In recent years there has been much speculation about the possible role of fish oil in the prevention of Britain's number one killer, coronary heart disease. (…). But are they a miracle cure or simply a red herring? Many scientists are still undecided (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 147).

The analysis located editorial material that explicitly delighted in situations where knowledge claims were retracted.

Experts have come full circle and now believe that high-cholesterol foods such as shellfish and eggs have little effect on blood cholesterol levels (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 69).

However, rather than challenging the expert 'right to know', the editorial simply replaced one set of expert advice with other, albeit more recently published expert advice.

(…) in fact, research has shown that five cups a day may even have a protective effect (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 69).

Thus validating the editorial framing of the example in question:

A little of what you fancy
Here's good news for gourmets. Many of the things you've been told are bad for you can actually help your health (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 69).

An example of editorial staff asserting their despair at the lack of decisive expert advice was also available, in this case regarding a cure for the common cold.

Despite years of research, scientists still haven't found a cure (Prima, 1997: 77).

The final of only four examples that were identified in the data undermines Beck's idea that the privileged position of traditional expertise will be replaced by more diverse alternative knowledge-sources.

New research suggests (…) for years the message has been (…) but research has shown that (…) as a result, experts are now re-classifying these foods (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 107-108).

This last example demonstrated that although editorial pieces may appear to be accepting that knowledge positions can and do change, there is nothing to suggest that this situation undermines the authority of the expert group. In these examples, reservations about expert knowledge actually reinforced traditional expertise, as it was still traditional experts that were expected to manage the situation. These findings support the arguments of others who have attempted to point out how conservative society's relationship with expert knowledge can be and 'how deeply dependency relationships are enculturated into social habits and identities' (Wynne, 1996: 51).

Summary

This section has tested Beck's ideas in three ways. First, the data show that Beck's expectation that institutions will displace traditionally derived expertise with alternative sources is not upheld. Second, Beck's prediction that expert knowledge will be presented as increasingly contradictory is directly challenged as the analysis identified a distinct lack of expert dissent. Finally, the analysis identified that Beck's ideas on challenges to expert's 'right to know' are nonexistent. Little change has occurred in 'whose' expertise is legitimated. The analysis also identified that significant differences between the weekly and monthly titles approaches to presentation of expert knowledge still exist, which contradicts Beck's predictions.

The institutionalisation of uncertainty

Beck describes people in Western society as being in a constant state of anxiety and concern, which is positive, as modern society needs to be increasingly self-reflexive because these anxieties serve to pose fundamental questions about current practice (Beck, 1992 and Chapter I). According to Beck, even the most accepted reliable expert knowledge is now open to radical doubt. The institutional responses to these shifts are said to be far reaching, as 'internally, this implies a redistribution of the burdens of proof and externally, the liberation of doubt' (Beck, 1999: 61).

This section tests Beck's ideas in the women's magazine sample in three ways. First, the prediction that institutional practice will show an increase in the incidences of anxiety provoking content was examined. Food and eating related content linked to potentially precarious circumstances was collated. If anxiety-provoking material is presented with less editorial closure than previously, this would support Beck's claims.

Second, the predicted reduction in institutional reassurance-giving mechanisms was considered by examining whether editorial presentation devices reduced potential anxiety. If Beck's ideas were to be substantiated, a reduction in these reassuring techniques would be expected. Finally, Beck's ideas about institutional processes encouraging individuals to 'make their own mind up' are tested as content presented without editorial closure was expected to become increasingly evident.

Potentially anxiety-provoking content

The data analysis identified *potentially* anxiety-provoking content in many diverse items in the magazine sample. These magazines contained material dealing mainly with the health risks associated with food. However, the analysis found that this material was presented along with supplementary claims, enhanced by reassuring framing

techniques. For example, the *possible* anxiety of getting insufficient iron in your diet was allayed as the editorial presented the issue in an amusing way. For example, 'Say yes to soggy veg!' (Prima, 2000: 131). The potential of this feature to be anxiety provoking is dissolved by the editorial stance taken. The analysis found that potentially anxiety provoking features contained reassurances, often in the title: 'Wine and breast cancer: the truth' (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 117). Alternatively, titles included a promise of ways of managing the anxiety: 'Ten tips to help you beat the craving' (Prima, 1994: 106).

All magazine content featuring *potentially*-anxiety provoking items were collated. The analysis revealed that the number of *potentially* anxiety-provoking articles associated with food and eating had risen over the sampled time frame (fig. 4i). This finding appeared to support Beck's prediction.

However, it is immediately apparently that when these statistics are broken down between monthly and weekly titles we can see that potentially anxiety-provoking content was more likely to appear in the monthly magazine titles (fig. 4i). This finding does not support Beck's prediction that these shifts will occur across the socio-economic spectrum.

Fig 4i: Incidence of *potentially* anxiety-provoking material
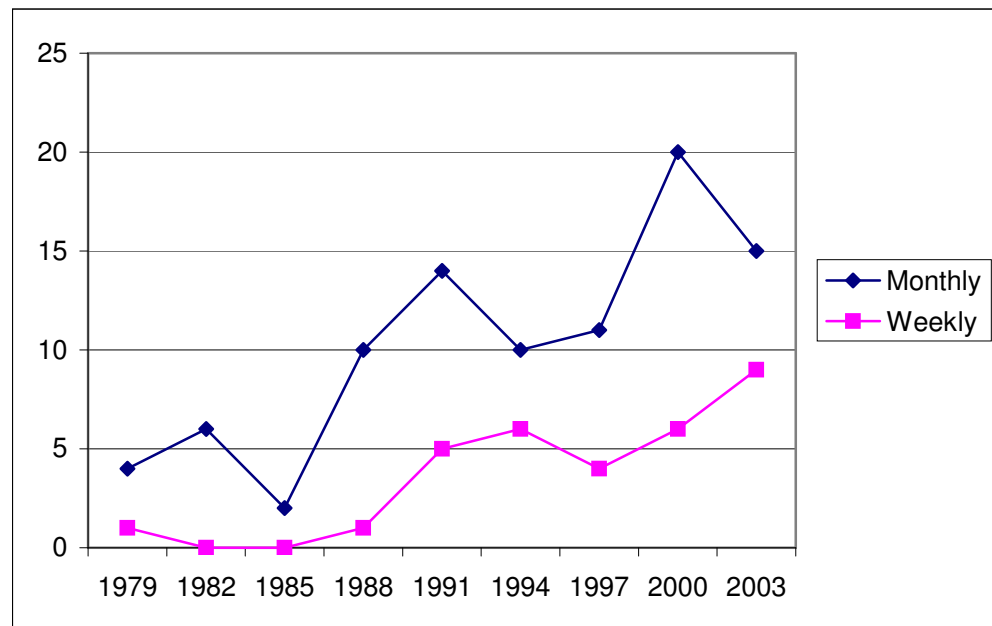
Further, the analysis identified reassuring techniques in every example of the presentation of anxiety-provoking material. For example, the reassuring action of identifying editorial staff with photographs had occurred most noticeably in sections of the magazines where readers were encouraged to write in with their most personal problems. *Best's* 2000 edition presents a photograph of their resident medical doctor, with the reassurance that, 'Whatever your worry, our own Dr (…) is here to help you' (Best, 2000: 52). The same doctor features in *Best's* 2003 edition. A photograph is again provided. On this occasion, the doctor's authority is fine-tuned to include credentials that lend a feeling of intimacy: 'He's a full time GP, a family man and he's waiting to help you with your medical problems' (Best, 2003: 20).

The supportive framing of potentially anxiety-raising situations was identified as most magazine content is presented as never being too difficult or too time-consuming for the imputed readership.

> All recipes devised and double-tested by our cooks in the Good Housekeeping Institute (Good Housekeeping, 1997: 211).

In other words, two people at the Good Housekeeping Institute (GHI) have successfully completed the recipe, therefore reassuring the reader that if they attempt *these* recipes, nothing can go wrong. By *Good Housekeeping's* 2003 edition, this reassurance to would-be-cooks is surpassed by the guarantee that recipes are now triple-tested.

These techniques were found to be so extensively used in the magazine sample that the original collation of data for this section was distorted. Editorial formatting that increases confidence by ensuring certainty of success indicates an increasing focus on control and predictability for the imputed reader (for example Warde, 1997: 157-158). This was not a situation that fitted with Beck's ideas. The data analysis identified no examples of anxiety provoking content across the whole magazine sample that could be described as adhering to Beck's ideas. This finding significantly undermines Beck's assertions.

Vacuum of authority

According to Beck's predictions, the editorial priority of *not* closing down anxiety eliciting content would be manifest in the provision of alternative choices, but leaving the decision to the reader, which effectively signals a vacuum of authority (Beck et al. 2003: 29). According to Beck, organisational practice will be under increasing pressure to review their routines as these 'routines and institutions have an unburdening function which renders individuality and decision-making possible, it becomes clear what kind of encumbrance, exertion and stress is imposed by the destruction of routine' (Beck and Beck- Gernsheim, 2003: 31). In the data sample, one would expect that assertions of editorial authority would diminish in the contemporary magazine sample. These notions were tested as the magazine content was examined for presentational features that could be said to indicate a void of authority developing, as decisions are increasingly delegated to the reader.

One excellent example of the predicted vacuum in editorial authority identified was entitled, 'Do vitamins really make clever kids?' (Best, 1994: 16). The piece began by explaining the controversy raging about this subject, whilst reassuring readers that the following text would provide them with the information from which to make up their own minds.

Here you can read the evidence and decide for yourself

(Best, 1994: 16).

This feature went on to outline why the claims made had been so controversial, concluding that despite a lot of activity in this area from representatives of both research and legal professions, any potentially confident outcome was not possible.

So it looks as though parents will have to make up their own minds for themselves. Here are the arguments for and against (Best, 1994: 16).

The piece did not make any recommendations. It just stated the views of the opposing sides. This was the most explicit example of Beck's ideas found in the sample: an open editorial narrative devoid of judgement and apparently fostering a make-your-own-mind-up scenario. However, despite detailed examination, only five similar examples were identified across the magazine sample (three from the same edition of Best and two from Prima in 1988).

Summary

Beck's predictions regarding the institutionalisation of uncertainty were tested in two ways. The analysis showed that although a rise in *potentially* anxiety-provoking content had occurred over the sample, the

shape of these rising concerns had been offset by the continued use of reassuring framing techniques. The findings show that editorial techniques have constantly functioned to allay, rather than enhance feelings of insecurity, as Beck's ideas predict. The vacuum of authority one would expect to accompany Beck's proposed shift into insecurity has not emerged in the magazine content analysed.

Conclusion

Beck's democratisation of social knowledge premise has been discussed in three areas of organisational transformation: increasing reader participation, the diversification of expert knowledge and the pervasiveness of uncertainty. The findings have established that Beck's expectation that institutions will increasingly involve their readers in areas of institutional practice from which they were previously excluded is not up held. Beck's proposal that the nature and form of expertise is changing has been shown to be inaccurate. Beck's idea that institutions will have an increased propensity to frame content in terms of provoking anxiety and uncertainty has not been identified.

The data analysis confirms that reader contributions and research report summaries have been increasingly included in the women's magazine sector. Beck would describe these changes as evidence to support his idea of a realignment of the hierarchy of this media sector. However, an alternative explanation of this phenomenon would

consider the economic factors influencing these organisational practices, as publishing more reader's letters and research reports, whilst also retaining definitional authority are inexpensive ingredients of magazine production (Chapter II).

Ultimately, this findings chapter has established that the presentation of social knowledge has been consistently framed as conforming to, rather than disrupting the established hierarchy of media institutional practice. These findings call Beck's assertion that new relations of definition will be identified into question. The findings illustrate that it is continuity, not change that characterises the way in which the women's magazine sector have approached the presentation of social knowledge over the last twenty-five years.

The next data chapter presents the data analysis findings regarding Beck's assertion that the nature of social relationships will change as they become increasingly subjected to processes of individualisation.

CHAPTER V

Hypothesis 2:

The democratisation of social relationships

The previous data chapter tested Beck's ideas about the effects of reflexive modernisation processes on organisational procedures regarding social knowledge presentation. The second hypothesis generated from Beck's thesis is tested in this data chapter. Beck asserts that social relationships in class society were ascribed and inevitable however, new relations of definition to social affiliations emerge as processes of individualisation characterise modernity as a time when all social relations become optional (Chapter I). The women's magazine sector has historically provided contents concerning social relationships, such as family orientated food features and menu's for entertaining others at dinner parties and picnics (White, 1970; Warde, 1997: 138).

The data presented in this project is not about 'real life', but reflects the representations of social relationships in this popular cultural genre. Beck's ideas are applied to the magazine sample to establish if the transformations he describes can be observed in the representations of the independent female 'self', the family and friendships in the twenty-five year magazine sample.

This chapter is split into three sections. Section one examines the food and eating related content of the magazine sample to ascertain whether notions of the increasing centrality of the 'self' have become a prominent framing mechanism in this sector. This was undertaken in order to test Beck's prediction that mediated material will increasingly be framed in terms of the female 'self' as autonomous and self-determining, as opposed to the female 'self' being constructed in terms of the traditionally familial or domestic context.

The second section tests Beck's proposal that a new basis for social connectedness, in the form of elected relationships, will have become increasingly salient. This proposition was evaluated as references to relationships outside the family were collated. The final section examines the nature and form of food and eating references with a familial rationale. This was undertaken to evaluate Beck's predicted rise in increasingly competing conceptions of the family and of the increasingly democratised place of the female 'self' within it.

Duty to one's self as institutional practice

Beck describes the new individual female biography as being focussed on self-enlightenment and self-liberation as women are encouraged to explore what they want for themselves (Chapter I). In the sample, references to the 'self' were identified. One could expect to find a rise in messages aimed at the 'self' as being manifest in recipes, either explicitly aimed at the female dieter or implicitly by the recipe providing

only 1-2 servings (see Warde, 1997). One would also expect to find an increase in messages encouraging women to take ever-increasing control over their own food intake, whether that be in turning to food for comfort and pleasure or to ensure no unwanted increase in weight (Charles and Kerr, 1988). A confirmation of these findings would substantiate Beck's predictions. However, if the analysis reveals that 'self' orientated messages have remained reasonably consistent over the time scale, this will contradict Beck's ideas.

Second, Beck's ideas are tested with regard to the independence and freedom of the female 'self' from social responsibilities to others (Chapter I). According to Beck's predictions, magazine content would be expected to increasingly encouraging women to manage their own health, their own career or 'treat' themselves independently of others. If, however, the analysis shows that women are consistently addressed as the household cook, as responsible for family health or as the household manager, then this would undermine Beck's prediction that the female 'self' is no longer expected to submit her own needs to those she traditionally cares for.

Food, eating and the female 'self'

The initial data collection for this chapter was subject to a simple three set code. The food and eating material was separated out between messages directed at the 'self', the family and friends/entertaining. At this point, all the consumer pieces were coded as directed at the

individualised 'self', as it is acknowledged that an ideology of individualism informs consumption features, no less than any other part of these magazines (Winship, 1992: 56 and Chapter II).

Each recipe was counted as one and examined individually. Any material that focused on women's health issues was also coded as messages to the 'self'. For example, a feature entitled: 'Cranberry cure for cystitis' (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 70) clearly involves a feminised health issue. Any dieting advice or low-fat recipes and any features covering kitchen techniques or cooking skills were likewise coded as addressing the 'self'. A more complex teasing out of whether these references can be described as manifesting as an independent female 'self' is returned to in a following section.

A quick glance at the magazine editions sampled suggested that there has been an increase in magazine content dedicated to the needs of independent modern women, much as Beck forecasts. Singularised messages appeared in section headings throughout the sample:

Your Health (Company, 1991: 15).

Treat yourself (Best, 1991: 50).

Just for You (Prima, 1997).

Spoil yourself (Prima, 2003: 150).

The data analysis identified obvious examples in the food and eating related material that supports Beck's idea that the female 'self' is addressed as autonomous with needs of her own to satisfy. For example:

My idea of luxury: Watching a black and white film with an afternoon tea of lemon curd sandwiches and freshly baked scones. Perfect! (Prima, 2003: 150).

The female 'self' in this example is being pampered with no reference to anyone else, but even here we could hazard a guess at who the baker of the scones is. However, the majority of 'self' references regarding food and eating unsurprisingly falls into the diet genre (see Charles and Kerr, 1988).

Trying to lick that chocolate habit? (Company, 2000: 45).

Feel wound up, down in the dumps, fat and frumpy or just worn out? (…) Then turn the page for the self-help day that's right for you (Best, 1997: 29).

The weight loss plan you wanted (Prima, 1991: 76).

The analysis identified health-related food and eating content that was addressed directly at the female 'self'. Topics covered many health issues particular to women, like breast cancer, menopause and menstruation.

What your headaches are telling you (Best, 2000: 16).

Don't be a cancer statistic (Good Housekeeping, 2000: 63).

Some food and eating messages also revolved around addressing the female 'self' as engaging in paid employment outside the home.

Long hours (…) is it a wonder today's twentysomethings are so stressed out (…). It's Monday morning, and you've hardly slept a wink (…) you down a mug of strong coffee to wake yourself up (Company, 2003: 68).

Now, thanks to cook (…) seven year wrangle, there's no reason why a woman shouldn't receive the same pay and perks as a man if her job is as skilled and demanding (Prima, 1988: 127).

Your own catering business (Good Housekeeping, 1988: 156).

However, the framing of 'woman as worker' is predominantly aimed at the female 'self' as a consumer in the workplace: 'Pate in a tube is

easily accessible and great to keep in your drawer at the office for lunchtime snacks' (Company, 1988: 114). Indeed, the most significant rise in messages apparently framed as the 'self' was identified as addressing the independent female 'self' as consumer.

> Shop News:(…) range of vegetable soups are two new delicious varieties (…) (Best, 1991: 52).

> Which is the best sieve? (Prima, 1997: 97).

The data presented in fig. 5a appears to confirm Beck's predictions, in that when applying a simple three-code (self, family, friends) analysis to the magazine content, references to the 'self' have risen across the whole range of magazine titles since 1979. However, when examined as a proportion of the total food and eating content, references to the female 'self' illustrated some significant differences across the magazine titles (fig. 5b).

The data in fig. 5b implies that age is a significant factor in this phenomenon, as in the titles aimed at the younger and older age groups, references to the 'self' have risen dramatically. However, both *Prima* and *Best* magazines, aimed at 25 to 40-year-old women with a family have not followed this trend to the same extent. One might suppose that it is not just age, but imputed family responsibility that influences the amount of references to the 'self' deemed appropriate in

a magazine title (chapter two). This issue is returned to later in this section. Interestingly, of the post 2000 magazine editions, all but one magazine title displays a downturn in the 'self' as a frame of reference.

Fig. 5a: Incidence of references to female 'self'

Incidence of references to 'self'
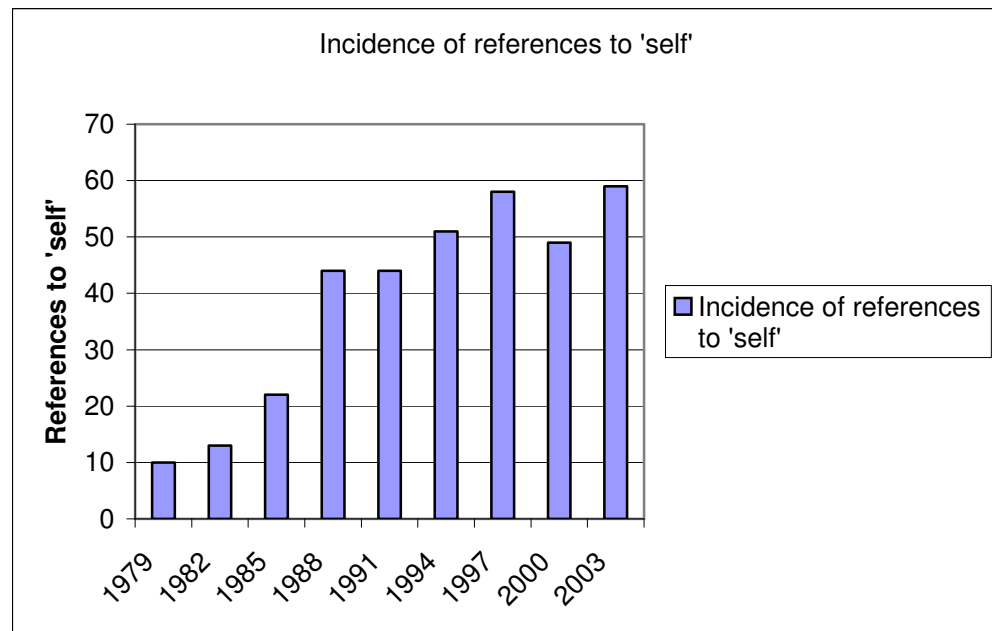
Fig. 5b also shows that the deployment of the 'self' as a framing mechanism began to rise dramatically between 1985 and 1988. The women's magazine sector at that time was a very turbulent and saturated market (Braithwaite, 1995: 115 and Chapter II). The market situation of this sector has a huge influence on the address adopted in the magazine sector at any one time. These market forces may well elucidate the sudden rise in references to the 'self' in the 1980s (Chapter II).
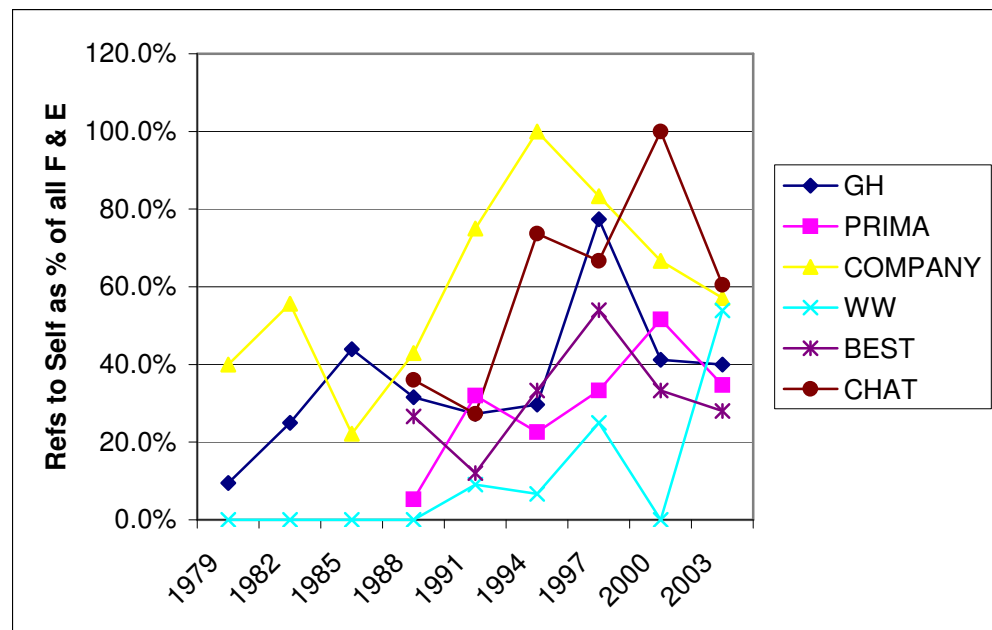
The female 'self' as autonomous and independent

As the food and eating material apparently aimed at the autonomous female 'self' was being coded, it became apparent that in most cases the superficial individually framed address eventually tied the female 'self' into household responsibility messages. For example, the 'diet' discourse in many of the magazine titles highlighted that despite the explicit presentation of recipes for the individualised dieter, more often than not, the meal servings indicated family sized portions. More explicit examples of how low-fat recipes were ultimately aimed at household consumption are available:

> Have you heard pork's gone leaner and healthier? Try one
> of these family meals and find out how tasty it is too (Best,
> 1997: 42).

Low cal family favourites (Prima, 1997: 84).

One could argue that the female 'self' is being presented here as asserting her own needs, but only within the context of keeping the family happy. Some baking recipes, which make explicit reference to the pleasure of cooking to the female reader alone, were revisited. This type of material was difficult to cross-reference because of the lack of distinct servings, yet contained other intimations of 'who' the female 'self' was baking for. Some were more explicit than others: '*A simnel cake for mum and for Gran'* (Woman's Weekly, 1997: 31).

The following feature initially appeared to be informing readers of a health risk, yet this individual message is effectively diluted right at the end of the piece, as it ties into responsibility for other people's health.

Doctors are becoming worried about the amount of

sodium consumed (…) so keep a check on your child's

consumption of processed and take-away foods (Good

Housekeeping, 1985: 39).

The coding of consumer content as 'self' was also revisited as these references were not as clear-cut as initially thought, as for example: 'Try new (…) In four different varieties they will be very popular with the kids' (Prima, 1991: 156). Even explicitly self-indulgent pieces were identified

as eventually tuning into the pleasure 'treats' can provide for other people a few pages later.

> Indulge yourself - How can you resist it! Creamy and wickedly rich (…). (…) individual servings are always popular with children (Best, 1988: 36 and 41).

The material referenced in the original coding as 'self', were re-assessed, resulting in the construction of a more detailed coding system:

1. The 'self' as independent: to include

   a) just for me, self-indulgent

   b) as responsible for *my* health

   c) as food/ eating preparation specifically for me

2. The 'self' as responsible for others: to include

   a) as the household cook

   b) as responsible for 'others' health

   c) as the household budget holder

   d) as responsible for household consumption

   e) as the household manager and organisational aspects

This re-coding had a profound effect on the initial data findings and reflects more harshly on Beck's prediction that the female 'self' is

increasingly addressed as autonomous, as opposed to the traditional address to women as responsible for the domestic setting (fig. 5c).

Fig 5c: Proportion of references originally coded as 'self'
        broken down into:

1. 'Self' as independent
2. 'Self' as responsible for others
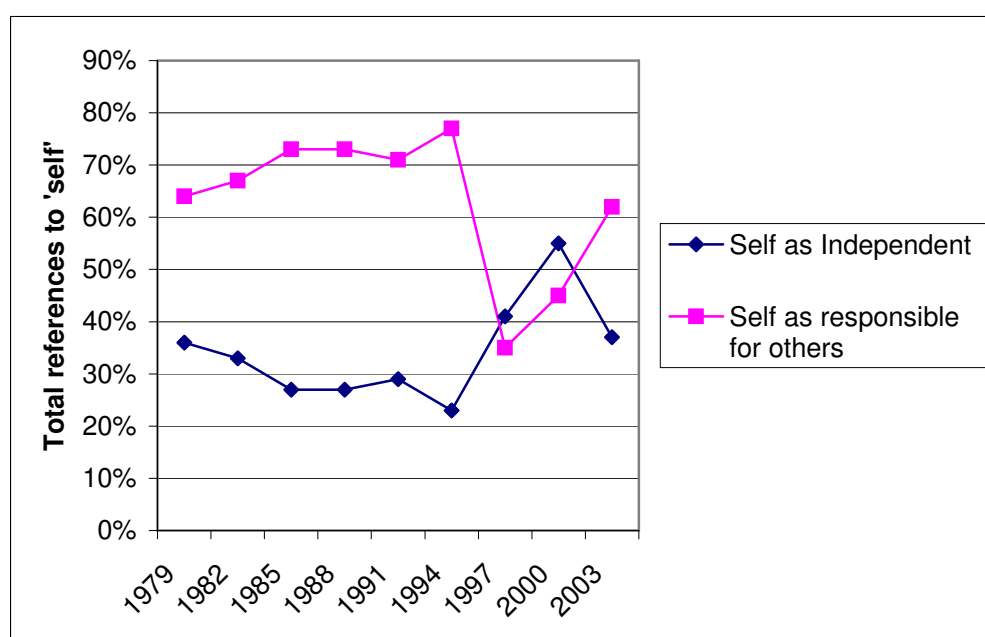
References to the independent female 'self' rose sharply between the 1994 and 2000 magazine editions, corresponding with a significant drop in references to the female 'self' as responsible for others. However, by the 2003 editions they had settled back to a similar level of incidence as the 1979 editions.

Summary

In general, the sampled magazines did project a positive picture of assertive, capable women. The initial data analysis found that food and

eating references framed within the context of the 'self' had indeed risen, supporting Beck's prediction. However, when examined in more detail, it was apparent that the female 'self' is still being addressed in her domestic role, a role that is apparently inescapable. These findings reinforce the view that in this sector domestic labour is often disguised as leisure (Ballaster et al. 1991 and Chapter II).

Ultimately, Beck's assertions are seriously undermined by the finding that, far from issues of the independent female 'self' overtaking messages about responsibility for others, this responsibility to 'yourself' has simply been added to the endless list of things women must attend to (Chapter II).

The consolidation of elective friendships

Beck highlights the new social currency afforded to elected social friendships, as individuals are said to increasingly enter into calculative exchange relationships, as opposed to the ascribed social relationships dominating previous eras (Chapter I). The proposal that dominant styles and symbols of contemporary culture are increasingly mediated through friends (Pahl, 2000: 3) is evaluated across the magazine content referring to friendships.

Food, eating and friends

This section tested Beck's assertions in two ways. First, Beck's prediction that friendships will become increasingly significant was tested as references to entertaining and or friends are expected to rise in the contemporary magazine sample. Second, these references were examined in the weekly and monthly magazine titles to test Beck's proposition that these changes will be identified irrelevant of any social class differences. If it is found that the elected friendship discourse between the weekly and magazine titles is similar, this will reinforce Beck's predictions. Whereas, if it is found that this discourse is differentiated between titles, this will contradict Beck's argument.

The women's magazine sector has historically provided recipes for entertaining guests for dinners, parties and picnics (Chapter II). The data analysis revealed that food and eating related content referring to friendships and entertaining was also manifest in other more diverse ways in this media sector. References to friendships were identified in readers' letters, consumer pieces and material reporting health-related food and eating material.

The data analysis identified cookery sections explicitly labelled as entertaining guests early on in the sampled editions.

March dinner party menu (Good Housekeeping, 1979: 199).

On easy eating in (Company, 1979: 33).

Entertaining in grand style (Prima, 1988: 132).

However, by the early 1990s these sections referred to entertaining in a less explicit way.

Menu of the month (Prima, 1994: 141).

Supper's Ready! (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 180).

One could say that this change is because entertaining is becoming less important to magazine readers than before. It has also been suggested that cookery in women's magazines reflects a general relaxation of formality around entertaining, as recipes are presented as being adaptable to any eventuality (Warde, 1997: 139). This seems likely as the commercial imperative of this sector demands that content can be interpreted as openly as possible, ensuring that readers who are not intending to entertain are not put off purchasing the magazine (Warde, 1997 and Chapter II).

References to the importance of friendships and entertaining guests were also identified in reader's contributions.

'A moist cake that's popular with all my friends' says Mrs (…)
from Lincolnshire (Chat, 1991: 46).

Mrs (…) from Ayrshire, sent us her cheat's dinner party dish for
four (Best, 1997: 44).

I've since made a pact with my friends to have a sober night out
at least once a week (Company, 2003: 8).

Consumer reviews occasionally framed recommendations in terms of
friends or entertaining, whether guests were invited or not.

For unexpected guests, it's always handy to have something
sweet in the freezer on stand-by' (Best, 1994: 36).

The following example illustrates Beck's ideas about the increasing
importance of 'self', covered in the first section of this chapter. In this
case, the context of entertaining friends was visited to ensure the
guests have a good time, but not at the expense of the female 'self'
enjoying it too.

Stop entertaining merely to please others. Start entertaining
to please yourself (…) serve the blighters shop-bought frozen
gourmet dishes. They save enormous time and trouble, are
easily disguised with some superficial garnishes and your

guests almost certainly won't know the difference (Company, 1985: 63).

However, this exception can be explained as *Company* magazine is targeted at younger women who are perceived as not having a family, but having the income to purchase these goods (Chapter II).

Friendship references were also identified in the presentation of health advice. In the following example friends are identified as being important as readers are warned that their relationships with them may suffer if they are ill.

If you want to avoid catching a cold this autumn (and who doesn't?), then make sure you don't fall out with your mates- arguing destroys the immune system (…). Too late - already blown your top? Knock back a quick glass of fresh OJ to replenish your supplies (Company, 2000: 45).

All examples in the magazine sample were collated and counted. Fig. 5d illustrates that incidences of food and eating related material referring to entertaining and friendships dropped dramatically between 1979 and 2003. These findings dispute Beck's prediction. Do editorial staff not consider entertaining as such an important concern for women in contemporary society? This could be for a multitude of reasons, for example: we eat out more, women who work are subject to more time

constraints, and there is said to be a general reduction in the formalities considered appropriate around eating with friends (Warde, 1997: 139).

Fig.5d: Incidence of friendship/entertaining reference
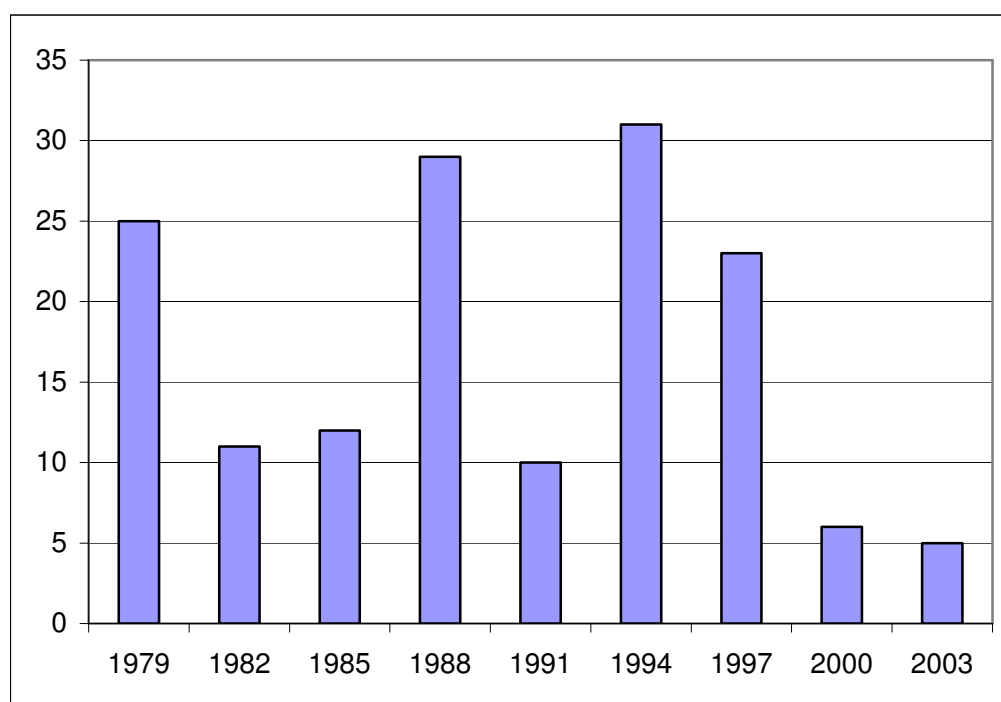
The friendship/ entertainment discourse

It was expected that some evidence suggesting that women either cooked or ate together as friends would be identified by the analysis. Occasional restaurant reviews referred to lunchtime menus, but they remained non-committal as to the identity of the dining guests. Cookery content gives little indication as to 'who' is coming to dinner, nor reflects on the marital status of the chef. Beck's ideas in this area would direct us towards viewing an increase in dinner party content as an indication of the increasing salience of friendships. An alternative explanation

would still view these social interactions as women entering relationships, which are to a large extent mediated by their partners, Charles and Kerr (1988: 212) interviewed women who indicated that they hardly ever shared food with friends on their own. This could contradict Beck's ideas about the changing face of friendship and its democratising effects, as entertaining at home can also be viewed as reinforcing 'social relations constituting the couple or the family rather than any other social relations' (Charles and Kerr, 1988: 234).

A significant finding of this section of the analysis was the striking difference in the discourse of entertaining and friends between the monthly and weekly titles (fig.5e). Of the weekly titles in the sample, the food and eating material referenced to either friends or entertaining has remained well below 20% since 1979 (fig. 5e). The monthly titles in the sample clearly retain by far the largest percentages of content that refers to others outside the family (even though *Company* magazine stopped containing any recipe content by 1988). One explanation could be that readers of weekly magazines seek elective social friendships and entertainment outside the home while, for readers of the monthly magazine titles, entertainment is home-based. However, it is more likely that the lack of an entertaining discourse in the weekly magazines is due to the added expense involved when providing food for others (Charles and Kerr, 1988; Chapter II and Chapter VII).

Fig. 5e: Proportion of total food and eating content referring to friends
and entertaining
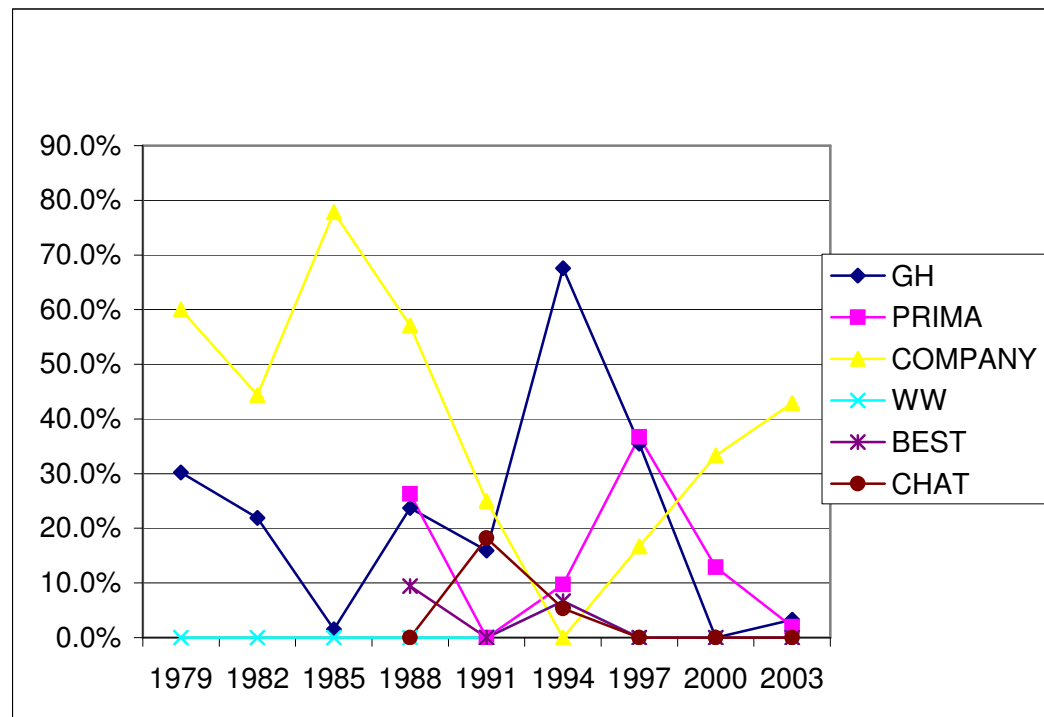
This material explanation was reinforced by the observation that on the rare occasion when entertaining recipes were presented in the weekly magazines, the number of servings provided was smaller than in the monthly titles. When the monthly titles present entertaining recipes the average servings were between six and eight, whereas it was extremely rare for the weekly magazines to present recipes for visitors that provided servings of more than four. This data suggest that not only do readers of monthly titles entertain more often, but also when they do, it is for substantially larger groups. This suggests that the framing of entertaining and friendship content is heavily influenced by the material and status positions of a magazine's target readership (Chapters II and VII).

Further, the monthly titles give far more attention to the elaboration of the meal than the weekly titles. Monthly titles included additional information on ways to lay the table for guests (Prima, 2003: 76: 84; Good Housekeeping, 1994: 212; 2003: 271) and included recommend wine to go with different meal courses (Good Housekeeping, 1979: 99; 1988:233; 2003: 174). The family status of a magazine's readership did not seem to militate against these trends either, as *Prima* and *Best* magazines (both aimed at women with young children) demonstrate these differences (Chapter II).

The monthly magazine titles' elaboration of the entertaining discourse underscores the principle that time, energy and ultimately money is more likely to be spent on guests to display a certain amount of affluence that 'is a material demonstration of the family's status' (Chares and Kerr, 1988: 224). If we consider the fundamentally commercial context of the women's magazine sector, this material based explanation is sustained by this finding (Chapter II). This account of the organisational practice in the women's magazine sector elucidates the shortcomings of Beck's account of the motivation behind any change in organisational address.

Summary

Beck's ideas concerning the increasing significance of elective friendships are not supported by the data. However, this is not to say

that people simply do not go out more when entertaining and there may well be other references to female friendships taking place outside the food and eating related material in these magazines (Winship, 1987). However, the data reveal that despite the evidence that social connectedness outside the family does occur, this does not happen in a way that is unrelated to the material status of the magazine's readership. Ultimately, this finding supports Winship's observation that outside of the magazines pages, many women may 'lack any friends to be intimate with' (Winship, 1987: 77). The data analysis also raises questions concerning whether this statement is true of all 'women' per se, or as the data has highlighted, only economically disadvantaged women addressed by the weekly magazine sector.

The de-monopolisation of the family

The key features of Beck's ideas about changing social relations are that individualisation processes will be fostered through society's institutions and this will have democratising effects within the family (Chapter I). This is said to be evident as the subordination of the female 'self' in favour of ensuring family cohesion evaporating as we enter late modernity.

This section tests Beck's assertions about changing household relations in three ways in the women's magazine sample. First, Beck's prediction that the family will become less significant was tested as the underlying

principle for food and eating content were counted with the expectation that references to the family would decline (Warde, 1997). However, if it is found that these references have remained constant, Beck's ideas will not be substantiated.

Second, one would expect to find that the expectation that the family will eat together will reduce in the contemporary sample or possibly that the assumption that each member of the household will eat the same thing will disappear (Warde, 1997: 181). Beck's idea that each member of the post-familial family will adopt different behaviours, which are not subordinate to other members of the household, was tested in this way.

Finally, one might expect food and eating related material to reflect changes in household composition. If the data analysis reveals this to be the case, this would strengthen Beck's predictions. However, if it is found not to be the case, this would weaken Beck's claims about institutions responding to the changing shape of the family. Beck's ideas concerning the universality of these transformations were examined in the context of a comparison of the weekly and monthly titles presentations regarding the familial context of food and eating messages. If it is found that this discourse is differentiated between titles, this will further undermine Beck's argument.

Food, eating and the family

References to the family were identified in material concerned with family health, in readers' letters, consumer pieces and material aimed at cajoling the family into healthy eating habits. These references were identified in two ways. Initially, explicit references to family-based rationales were identified, and then the sample was re-examined to access less explicit family references. Implicit family references were calculated by the number of servings recommended and other less tangible indications, such as alterations to recipes to entice children to eat certain products or special family occasion food or appeals to family based recollections of cooking (for example Warde, 1997).

The initial data analysis confirmed that explicit references to a family-based rationale for food and eating have declined since 1979 (fig. 5f). However, the data analysis illustrates that the proportion of explicit and implicit references to the family have remained reasonably equivalent over the magazines sampled in this project (fig. 5f). Further, the findings illustrate that implicit references to the family have also risen (fig.5f). This demonstrates a remarkable symmetry between the explicit and implicit references to the family as a framing mechanism over the last twenty-five years.

The data analysis identified magazine content with explicit references to the family:

Cook it today, eat it tomorrow (…). (…) selects some delicious main meals to keep on stand-by for the family (Woman's Weekly, 1982: 18).

Try one of these family meals and find out just how tasty it is too (Best, 1997: 42).

Family favourites that can be prepared in minutes (Prima, 2003: 96).

Fig.5f: Proportion of family references explicit and implicit
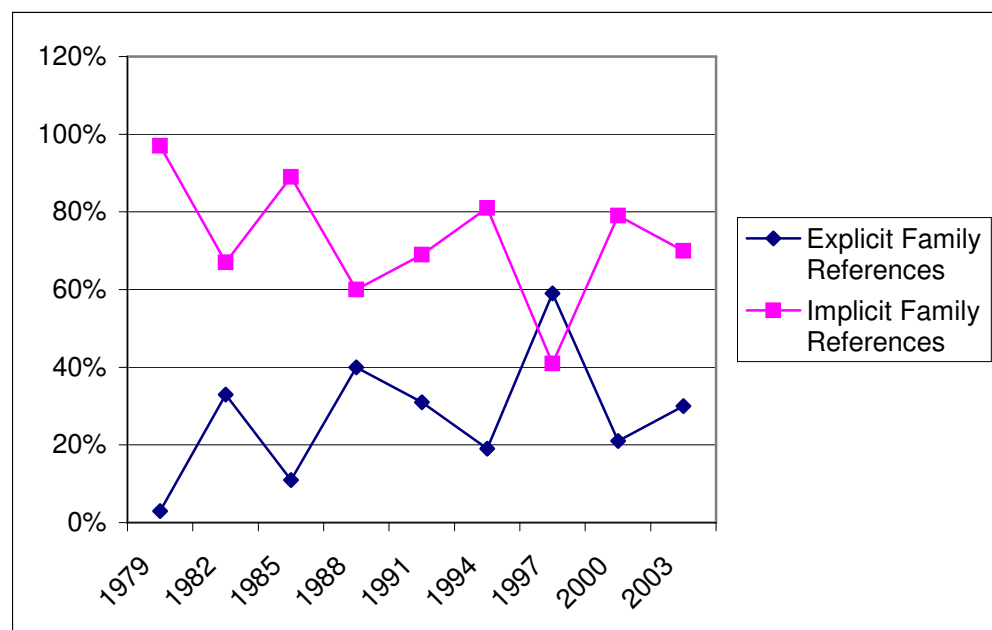
Explicit family-based rationales for cooking were, more often than not associated with the incentive of pleasing the family.

(…) for family suppers (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 56).

Tempt the family to good health with these succulent fish dishes (Chat, 1988: 25).

Easy to make dishes your family will love (Chat, 1997: 30).

If your being badgered to help out with the kids homework (…) drink a glass of cold water. Studies at Bristol University show downing a glass means you'll perform up to ten per cent better (Prima, 2003: 131).

These examples are clear about whose needs are attended to, revealing the strong connection between feeding and family life (DeVault, 1991). Traditionally, women like to give pleasure to the family members by providing them with food they enjoy (Charles and Kerr, 1988). The existence of this type of framing indicates the continuity of mediated assumptions that the target readership requires food that will ensure the family will eat enthusiastically (DeVault, 1991: 85).

When implicit and explicit references to the family were added together the data analysis revealed that food and eating material framed as providing a treat for the family or as cajoling them into eating healthily has proved relatively consistent since 1979 (fig. 5g and Warde, 1997). The data findings revealed that the incidence of food and eating content

employing a familial rationale reached its peak between 1988 and 1991 editions (fig. 5g). However, since 1997 familial references have begun to rise (fig. 5g). These findings are not consistent with Beck's prediction that the family would become less relevant in the face of processes of modernity.

Fig. 5g: Incidence of family references
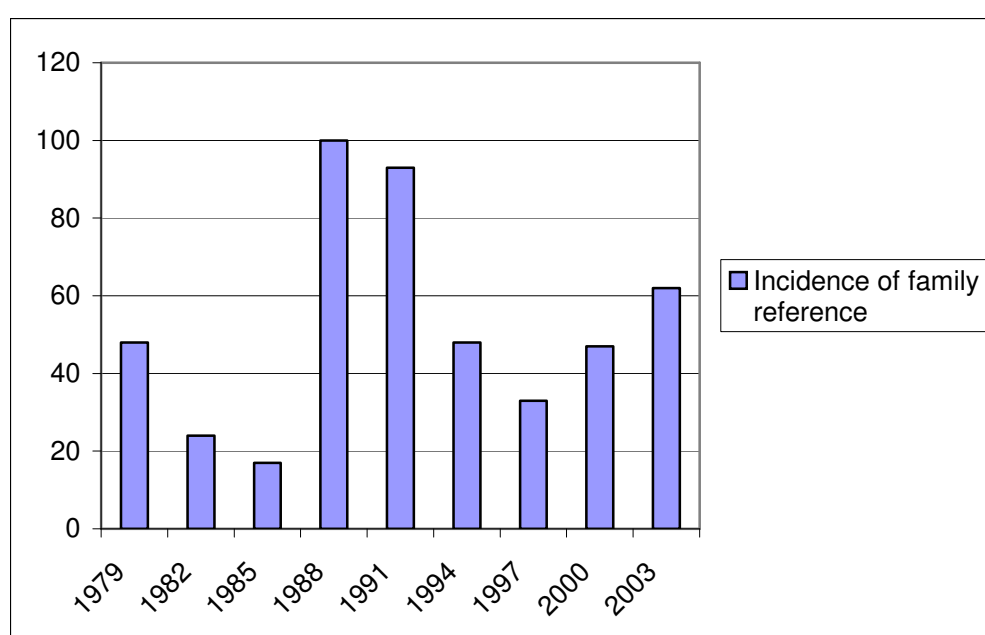
The reconstitution of the independent female 'self'

However, Beck is not asserting that the family will not continue to play an important role in women's lives, he is arguing that what is new is that the values of autonomy and independence will be emphasised much more strongly in the family, than in the past (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003: 102). These ideas suggest domestic set ups where the family's

competing demands are set out more equally between household members and in this study, the chef.

Some material illustrating Beck's ideas about changing family relations was identified, for example, 'These biscuits are so popular with my family I make double quantity so I get some myself!" says Mrs (…) from Aylesbury' (Chat, 1997: 32). This is an example of a reader asserting her own needs within the family nexus. The reader is affirming her right to share in the products of her labour by doubling the quantity of biscuits she makes.

The family significance of the Sunday meal is well documented (Murcott, 1982; 1983). However, there is evidence in the magazine sample that this sector is beginning to acknowledge the different needs of the individual household members (for example, see Warde, 1997). In 2000, *Good Housekeeping* runs a feature titled 'Make Sunday lunch really special' (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 171). Here the feature actively engages with many of the complications of modern family life that Beck describes.

> Sunday lunch seems to belong to a bygone era. (…) Nobody lives like that anymore, but in the rush of takeaways, pasta and sandwiches, with the family dashing in and out and all eating at different times, there's perhaps even more of a need to designate just one meal on one day of the week as a time

when we'll always come together to eat as a family (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 171).

In the same edition, *Good Housekeeping's* editorial team also provide a week's worth of menus that reinforce the message that editorial staff are aware of changing family life. This is an example supporting the idea that individual family members may now eat at different times.

They're full of flavour and flexible enough to serve up at different times to suit your busy lifestyle (Good Housekeeping, 2000: 160).

Indeed, the whole feature is set out as acknowledging the very different households within society, as the results of a national survey are published alongside the recipes.

We tend to eat alone. Around 85% of ready-meals are sold as individual portions (…) The dining table is in decline, and eating in front of the TV is now the norm for 43% of all adults (…). The family mealtime is also in decline. While a third of all families still feel it's important to eat at least one meal together a week, work and leisure activities get in the way (Good Housekeeping, 2000: 161).

However, the recommended solution is tied into the traditional female role of providing for the family or household members, whatever time they arrive. Readers are deterred from turning to shop-bought solutions as, 'There's no need to reach for a ready-meal when time is short' (Good Housekeeping, 2000:161). Thus, families are catered for at the expense of the chef's time as she is urged to repeat the cooking process at different times for different people. The feature provides a solution after each recipe entitled: 'Feeding a latecomer' (Good Housekeeping, 2000: 163) which involves the chef reserving a portion of the originally cooked meal to heat up in the microwave or, as in over half the recipes presented, the ingredients are cooked afresh. However, this edition contains the only two examples of this kind in the sample. This indicates that the assumption that the family will eat together and indeed eat similar things has been retained throughout the sample.

A surprising finding in this part of the data analysis was that there were only minor presentational differences identified between the weekly and monthly magazine titles using the family as a frame of references. One general observation is that in the weekly magazine sector children are featured to a significant extent. The monthly titles also include direct references to children; yet appear to concentrate on doing things *with* children, rather than *for* them as in the weekly titles. Ballaster and her colleagues (1991) noted that that in the weekly titles they examined, the family references were 'particularly instrumental in creating this commonality, largely through humour. Children, partners and

sometimes pets (also treated as family members) are funny, infuriating, but always essentially loveable' (Ballaster et al. 1991: 56). This was also found to be the case throughout the weekly titles sampled.

> 'All the children were asked, "Why do you love your mummy?" My five-year old son James replied, 'Because she takes me to McDonald's"' (Chat, 2000: 58).

However, the overall trend surprisingly identified little difference in the use of this framing mechanism in the monthly and weekly titles. This suggests that the family is a universal frame for the female 'self' that has remained as consistent as ever over the last twenty-five years.

Fig. 5h: Incidence of family reference, monthly and weekly titles
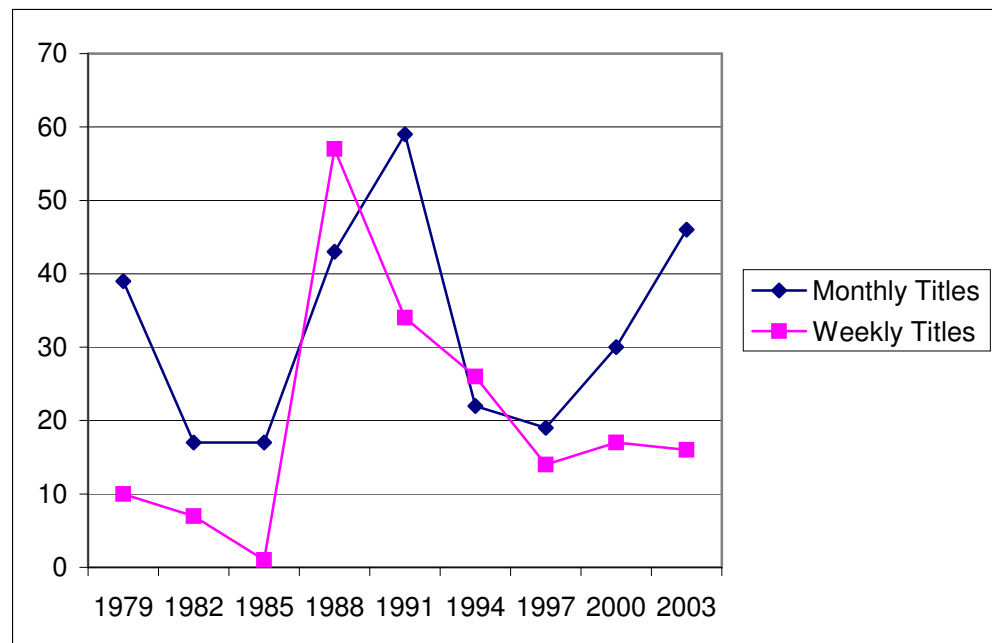
Both the weekly and monthly titles in this analysis remained similarly committed to relating responsibility for the family or household to the female 'self' (fig. 5h). The incidence of food and eating material referring to the family has altered over the last twenty-five years, the launches of the family orientated *Prima* and *Best,* undoubtedly affecting the sharp rise in family references in the 1988 editions (Chapter II). Yet, by the 2003 editions, the levels of family orientated material have almost returned to the levels identified in the 1979 magazines (fig. 5h). This illustrates a remarkable continuity across this sector, which is supported by advertisers that would not want the magazines to address readers as any thing other than responsible for the household budget (see, Steinem, 1995 and Chapter II).

Summary

The traditional nuclear family, as a directional force behind gendered domestic food provision, has traditionally operationalised 'unspoken conceptions of the family and the extent to which individuality will be excepted as legitimate within it' (Murcott, 1983; DeVault, 1991: 88). This analysis revealed that explicit and implicit references to the family have remained reasonably consistent over the sampled time frame, indicating an institutionally resolute confidence that the female 'self' will be diligently responsible for domestic relationships of some kind.

Beck argues that processes of individualisation challenge and disrupt the assumption that the female will be responsibility for the family, to the detriment of her own needs (Chapter I). However, the data analysis demonstrates that the practical experience and emotional significance of cooking for household members has remained a preponderant force behind food preparation through the twenty-five year sample of magazine content.

Conclusion

Representations of women in the media have traditionally tended to highlight them in the context of 'other' relationships as opposed to frames indicating independence or freedom (Gauntlett, 2002). Beck predictions about the effects of reflexive modernisation and institutional individualisation processes assert that this situation will change as we enter late modernity (Chapter I). Ultimately, Beck's predictions suggest that the social bonds holding society together today are qualitatively different than in previous times, a position which is not upheld by the findings of this project. The acknowledgement of new forms of self-regulation for the female 'self' were also not found to be consistent with Beck's predictions, as the findings establish that the female 'self' continues to be addressed as being responsible for wider household and family duties.

Beck's predicted emphasis on elected friendships was not identified, particularly in the weekly magazine sector. This situation also raised questions about the characteristics of elective friendships as they can also be used to illustrate the persistence of collective ties that are consequential in sustaining the existing social order, rather than challenging it (Pahl, 2000: 10). However, it is also important to acknowledge that the weekly and monthly magazine sectors work to different planning and budgeting cycles (Chapter II).

The analysis has established that references to the family are as commonplace in 2003 as they were in 1979. Food and eating is shown to be still important to family ideology as the sharing of meals by families consistently symbolises their existence as a social entity (Charles and Kerr, 1988: 1-7: 235).

The magazines in the sample rarely mention partners or give specific details of the structure of family relations, over and above references to children. This could possibly reflect an institutional acknowledgement of the different shapes the 'family' now take, yet the underlying assumption that the reader is almost always preparing or buying food for others is never far away. Even magazines for younger career minded women (*Company*) which could easily be described as epitomising Beck's ideas, rarely encourage women to step outside their carefully imagined boundaries of the sexy, stylish and fashionable (Ballaster et al. 1991; Gauntlett, 2002: 206- 207). This is reinforced as

the majority of food and eating references in *Company* consistently remain within the realms of the food as the 'enemy' of slim, successful women (see Charles and Kerr, 1988: 212).

Advertisers trade on women's responsibility for the household budget and do not want things to change (Chapter II). Across the magazine sample is seems that affiliations, whether achieved or ascribed are generally ignored. In the women's magazine sector, household responsibility and the family are used as a consistent framing mechanism that assumes every woman will eventually identify with.

The findings suggest that any differences in organisational address are arguably underpinned by commercial interests and are not as a result of an institutional shift to aid the democratisation of previously ascribed gendered relationships. In this way, the small numbers of examples of female magazine readers being addressed as independent and self-asserting identified in the data can be seen as operating 'within the parameters and constraints of existing (class and gender) systems rather than dismantling them' (Warde, 1997: 125).

CHAPTER VI

Hypothesis 3: The disappearance of collective distinction

Data Chapter IIII investigated the way Beck envisages individuals relating to, and identifying with, social knowledge in the authority or command aspect of social class in terms of new mediated relations of definition available in the women's magazine sector. Data Chapter V looked for evidence of new relations of definition regarding the mediated orientation to social relationships, which Beck asserts are now negotiated and maintained in a different way than in previous eras (Beck et al. 2000: 15 and Chapter I). The third hypothesis, operationalising Beck's notions of changes in identity orientation, stresses that people will no longer understand or, indeed, experience overtly class-based economic and status distinction. This chapter evaluates whether or not the women's magazine sector can be said to reflect, reinforce or least incorporate a version of Beck's ideas regarding the increasing invisibility of economic and status factor distinction (Chapter I).

Elements of economic relations and status or lifestyle factors of social class and their manifestation in collective distinction are, according to Beck, becoming increasingly invisible (Beck, 1992: 96 and Chapter I).

Therefore, in the women's magazines sample, one would expect that the representation of economic and status distinction, once inherent in collective class-based social experience and identity, would increasingly disappear between the weekly and monthly magazine titles.

Content in the magazine sample was examined as an indication of how institutional discourses present the everyday world for readers from socio-economically derived readership categories, and to assess whether any convergence has occurred between the weekly and monthly titles (Chapters I and II). In this chapter, the characteristic values associated with the magazine's framing mechanisms are extracted and the social and cultural resources drawn upon identified (Lash, 1993).

According to Beck's proposals contemporary mediated framing mechanisms will no longer call on distinct collective understandings and as a result distinctive cultural markers are expected to be less identifiable in the contemporary magazine editions (Chapter I). If the data analysis reveals that magazine content has been increasingly released from divergent collective endorsements, detached from different norms and differentiated standards or communal aspirations, this will support Beck's predictions. The data analysis concentrates on identifying whether as Beck predicts, the structuring forces of collective distinctions, in line with notions of social class differences, have progressively disintegrated over the last twenty-five years.

In terms of the women's magazines sampled, this aim was reflected in three monthly magazines included (*Good Housekeeping, Prima* and *Company)* which are taken as representative of audiences grouped into socio-economic groups A, B, C1 (Chapter III). The other half of the sample is made up of weekly magazine titles (*Woman's Weekly, Best,* and *Chat)* that are taken as representative of socio-economic groups C2, D and E (Chapter III). The magazine sample can thus be subjected to a comparative analysis to test whether, as Beck suggests, practice between the weekly and monthly titles has converged to accommodate transformations in the orientation of modern identity.

This data chapter tests Beck's ideas in three ways and is thus split into three sections. Section one examines the food and eating related content in the magazine sample in order to ascertain whether issues of a readership's economic circumstances no longer result in distinctions being made. Magazine content was examined which referred to appropriate expenditure values from the weekly and monthly magazine titles. It is expected that the values associated with issues concerning expenditure between the weekly and monthly titles will converge. A confirmation of these findings would substantiate Beck's predictions. However, if the analysis reveals that 'cost' orientated connotations have remained distinct between the monthly and weekly magazine titles, this will contradict Beck's ideas.

In the second section, Beck's proposal that standardising processes will manifest as private and public spheres increasingly overlap is tested (Beck, 1992; et al, 2003: 18; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; 2003). In the magazine sample, one could expect to find that messages will be increasingly framed in the context of bringing the 'wider world' and the domestic sphere closer together. Where Beck insists that this is a two way process, the data sample is used to evaluate whether magazines have become increasingly occupied with issues of a more globalised nature. This could be manifest in an increase in features addressing women as working outside the home or as global citizens in material that highlights ecology, fair trade and humane farming practices.

The final section of this chapter tests Beck's predictions about the increasing invisibility of collectively distinct practice through the examination of mediated representations of the principles of style, ambience and etiquette. According to Beck's position, any distinction in these areas should become increasingly blurred both across and between the weekly and monthly magazine titles. If it is revealed that social norms surrounding these issues have been continually presented differently between the weekly and monthly magazine titles, this will further undermine Beck's predictions.

The democratisation of material status distinction

Beck proposes that in 'risk society' the unequal relations of production characterising class society no longer curtail individual choice (Chapter I). As instituionalised statements about the 'real' world typify Beck's new relations of definition, it would be expected that in the magazine sample, the readerships of the weekly and monthly magazine titles would be increasingly addressed in a similar way regarding issues of a financial or economic nature.

The material basis of the family group's connections to wealth and income has been established as having a huge impact on the construction of different conditions for the conduct of household work (DeVault, 1991: 168). Material conditions affect the type and amount of foodstuffs consumed (Blaxter and Paterson, 1982; Warde, 1997). However, rather than concentrating on 'what' foodstuffs are chosen, this part of the analysis focuses on any material expenditure-based principles used to frame food and eating related magazine content over the last twenty-five years.

Magazine content containing 'money' related keywords, and derivatives were examined to ascertain the connotations present (for example: expensive, inexpensive, economical, cheap, budget, cost, good value, luxury, best buys, financial). A product-testing piece that simply includes the price of the item is excluded, while examples such as the following

were included, 'Fantastic- meaty and spicy with a real kick. And great value too!' (Chat, 2003: 38). The data analysis collated and counted examples referring to financial concerns in proportion to the total food and eating related items. The associated connotations used to frame financial references are returned to in a later section.

Fig. 6a: Proportion of food and eating content with reference to expenditure by weekly/ monthly sector
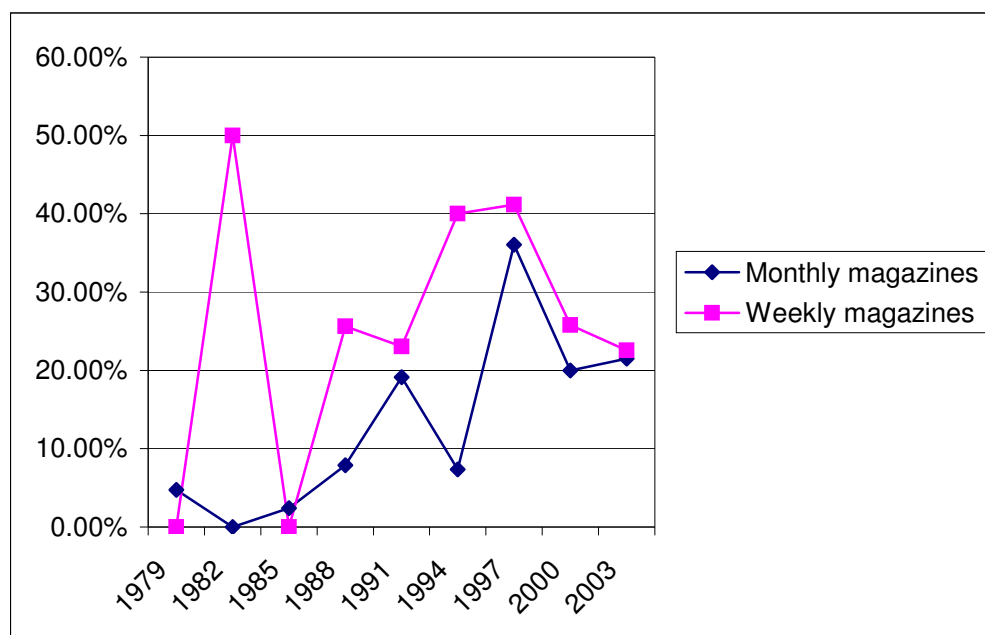
Since the 1997 editions it is clear that some kind of 'coming together' has occurred regarding the proportion of material framed with material factors (fig. 6a). This appears to support Beck's prediction that magazine titles will increasingly present financial issues similarly, despite the material conditions and social class of the imputed readership.

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Food, eating and expenditure

There were however, fundamental differentials identified in the explicit presentational values associated with financially orientated messages between the weekly and monthly magazine titles. The everyday provisioning of food for the household in an economically sound way provides numerous examples of economically motivated framing practices in the sample. Many cookery sections were constructed with this particular value in mind, although these were generally restricted to the weekly magazine titles.

> If you're cooking for a family of four, herrings can make a satisfying economical supper (Woman's Weekly, 1988: 31).

> A lovely, cheap supper dish (Chat, 1988: 25).

> They're cheap, plentiful and delicious (Best, 1994: 34).

> Cut the cost and eat well in September (…) Budget meal for four people (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 56).

> The cookcard collection: Cheap meals (Best, 1994: 38-39).

Some cookery sections contain a 'cost per person or serving' that is displayed on each recipe. However, this technique was used

predominantly in the weekly magazine titles and one of the monthlies, *Prima* magazine presents this kind of information.

Only eight examples of recipes explicitly aimed at cooking economically were identified in the monthly magazine sector. Both were marked by section headings (four recipes in each).

> Low-cost cookery (Prima, 1988: 145-146). 1991: 149

> They're fast, they're easy and they're economical (Prima, 1991: 134).

These examples originate from the 'practicals,' family orientated title *Prima*. No examples were identified in the titles *Good Housekeeping* and *Company*. It is noticeable that, in the weekly titles, the word 'cheap' is used extensively, while in the monthly magazine titles, terms like 'low cost' are favoured.

Clearly, there are distinctions that separate the *kinds* of economic values employed to frame food and eating material between the weekly and monthly magazine titles. The weekly magazine sector concentrates on the value of economy throughout the sampled time frame, coming up with solutions to keep costs down.

> Packaging need not be very expensive (…) they are probably

the most economical and useful of all wrappings (…) they

have several lives if used and washed carefully (…). Even

more economical are other food containers such as (…). Also

use foil dishes from Chinese or Indian take aways (…).

Freeze foods as they come into season- when they are at their

best and cheapest (Woman's Weekly, 1982: 18).

If a box of goods is too much for you, why not share with a

friend or neighbour? (Woman's Weekly, 2003: 57).

A major proportion of financially motivated framing was identified

consistently through the product testing and various consumer pieces in

the sampled women's magazines.

Expenditure and product promotion

This situation may appear quite logical, but 'although editorial

promotions may appear to readers to be objective information on new

products and services, market forces underlie the editorial statements'

(McCracken, 1993: 61). McCracken's comments highlight the influence

on magazine content from advertising revenue (Chapter II). Covert

advertising raises revenue for magazine titles. However, this analysis

highlights that, even given the pressure from food manufacturers, it is

the perceived material status of the readership that is fundamental to

how this kind of material is presented editorially.

In the women's magazine sector, it is not unusual for the editorial staff to conduct a product evaluation on a variety of brands of the same product. However, when this type of food and eating related material was collected and compared, it was the differential framing mechanisms concerning financial issues that were most significant between the weekly and monthly titles. For example, the following two excerpts are taken from one such test in the weekly magazine *Chat*.

We felt cheated by these (…) and even then it was a bit chewy. But, they were very light and one of the cheapest, so good value for money (Chat, 2000: 41).

They're a lot smaller than some of the others and more expensive, so we'd only buy them for a special occasion (Chat, 2000: 41).

The first example is striking. The taste testers are saying that despite the fact this product tastes pretty awful, they will purchase it again simply because it is cheap, whereas the much nicer-tasting product will only be bought on special occasions due to its expense. This situation highlights the significant value placed on economy both in preparing and in shopping for food in the weekly magazine sector.

By contrast, the monthly magazines in the sample take a very different approach to product testing and consumer pieces, which rarely included any references to economy. The following example illustrates a common presentational style in the monthly sector. The price of the item was of minor importance as the emphasis was on the sensory value of a product.

> Garlic, on test: There's a wide range of garlic products in the shops, but which one has the best flavour? In a recent GHI tasting, none of the products matched the taste, texture and smell of fresh garlic, which costs just 1p per clove- 20 times cheaper than some of the alternatives (Good Housekeeping, 1997: 185).

When presenting food and eating material, there remains a distinct difference in the values associated with, most noticeably, consumer pieces. The monthly magazine titles focussed on informing their readers about exciting new opportunities to access specialist products and considering, not as in the weekly titles, 'what is the cheapest?' but 'what kind of quality do we get for our money?'

Health and expenditure

The differential focus in framing mechanisms described above continued into magazine content concerning healthy eating issues.

If you're worried about how to eat healthily on a tight

budget, the National Dairy Council has produced a great

booklet to help. (…) is available by writing to (…), enclosing

a large SAE (Chat, 1994: 24).

'The Wholefood book' by (…) is pricey at £8.95 but an

absolute mine of information for healthy eating. (…) Each

section begins with a description of the product and a run

down on its nutritional value (Good Housekeeping, 1979:

163).

Clearly, the recommendation for finding out how to eat healthily involves

spending money in one instance, while in the other this information only

sets you back the price of a first class stamp.

Another topic framed in financial terms were editorial features

encouraging conscientious consuming practices.

Whether people will be willing to pay the premium for these

products (five to 50 per cent on the price) to cover land and

labour costs remains to be seen (Prima, 1991: 156).

Although they're expensive (about £8.00 each) they are well

worth every penny (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 215).

This discourse was almost exclusive to the monthly magazines titles. The data findings showed that there was a distinct difference between magazine content framing expenditure related material. This difference can be summed up by the terms 'economically motivated' and 'cost capable' framing practices.

Economical and cost capable framing

In the weekly magazine sample, a discourse of cost-cutting measures involving a 'waste-not-want-not' attitude was immediately apparent.

> Don't waste the left over syrup from tinned fruit. Simply add to your gravy mix to make delicious flavoured stock (Chat, 2003: 6).

> Boiled potato water makes an effective natural weed killer (Chat, 2000: 8).

> Save the sweet and sour vinegar from a jar of dill pickles to use when making a salad dressing (Chat, 2000: 8)

Similarly, practical cheap solutions to everyday problems are often the subject of food and eating related material in the weekly women's

magazine sector. The following is a good example of this evident concern with saving, rather than spending money.

> Always have trouble getting cakes out of the tin? Try putting a carrier bag, folded length ways, in the tin first, then place the cake on top of it. When you want to get it out, just lift the carrier bag out and the cake will follow! (Chat, 1997: 15).

Similarly, free products in the form of 'giveaways' accounted for a substantial part of the food and eating content in the weekly magazine titles. One can imagine that a significant factor influencing any product's inclusion in the weekly magazines is the food manufacturers' willingness to provide free samples.

> Great value (…) to give away to our first 1000 readers (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 52).

> (…) we've got 500 full-size bottles to give away (Chat, 1988: 24).

> Free! Free! Free! If you'd like to try them send a (…) (Best, 1994: 36).

The weekly magazine titles were also concerned with knowing where things are going to be on special offer, as *Best's* 2003 sampled edition demonstrates:

> Best Buys: All the best offers that can be found in your supermarkets this week (Best, 2003: 40).

An extensive list was also included of the 'buy one, get one free' offers available at the supermarkets accompanied by a further detailed list of 'Other offers and reduced prices' (Best, 2003: 40).

Interestingly, the types of enticement offered to readers to participate in this sector are also differentiated. The weekly magazines also offer monetary rewards for participation, while the monthly magazines do not (Chapter V). In the monthly magazine sector however it is clear that spending money is the favoured solution to problems, albeit in a well-informed way.

> Which is the best sieve? (Prima, 1997: 97).

> One of the most frustrating things for any cook is not being able to find ingredients (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 191).

The monthly magazines in the sample seemed more interested in the quality of the product they were purchasing, rather than the price (Charles and Kerr, 1988).

> From humble haddock to regal salmon- take the bait from
> the ocean's riches or create a fresh water feast with
> succulent and nutritious fare (Good Housekeeping,
> 1991:163).

> This may seem a little expensive, but I promise you it's
> worth it for a real treat to accompany the Sunday
> roast (Prima, 1991: 152).

In the monthly magazine editions, a more positive value was placed on food and eating material that emphasised a moneymaking, rather than money-saving focus.

> The reds of (…) and the whites of Corton Charlemagne can
> increase in value as fast as a cab meter ticks over! (Company,
> 1985: 33).

Here, spending money is presented in a positive light, with a 'you have to spend money to make money' feel. Indeed, a discourse of financial investments in food and eating type ventures was evident in the

monthly title *Good Housekeeping* (1985: 1988). These issues are discussed further in the next section.

A financially related discourse was also identified in the monthly magazine sector when issues of flavour enhancement were presented.

> Making your own mustards doesn't necessarily save you money but you can produce the strength you like and create some interesting flavours (Good Housekeeping, 1985: 165).

From the example above, one can deduce that in the monthly magazine titles, saving money is not high on the agenda. This is in direct contrast to the weekly titles sampled, where magazine giveaways and economy-related advice form a substantial part of the food and eating content.

Two expenditure models

The findings presented above led to the reconsideration of the initial coding system. The magazine content was reassessed to establish the degree to which these differentials between the weekly and monthly magazine's occurred. The analysis recorded the references according to whether the reader was addressed in economically motivated terms (as being responsible for reducing the household budget) or as responsible for a household budget that could be more flexible (cost capable). Content addressing the reader as responsible for household

consumption, but without a focus on reducing expenditure is excluded from this data (fig. 6b).
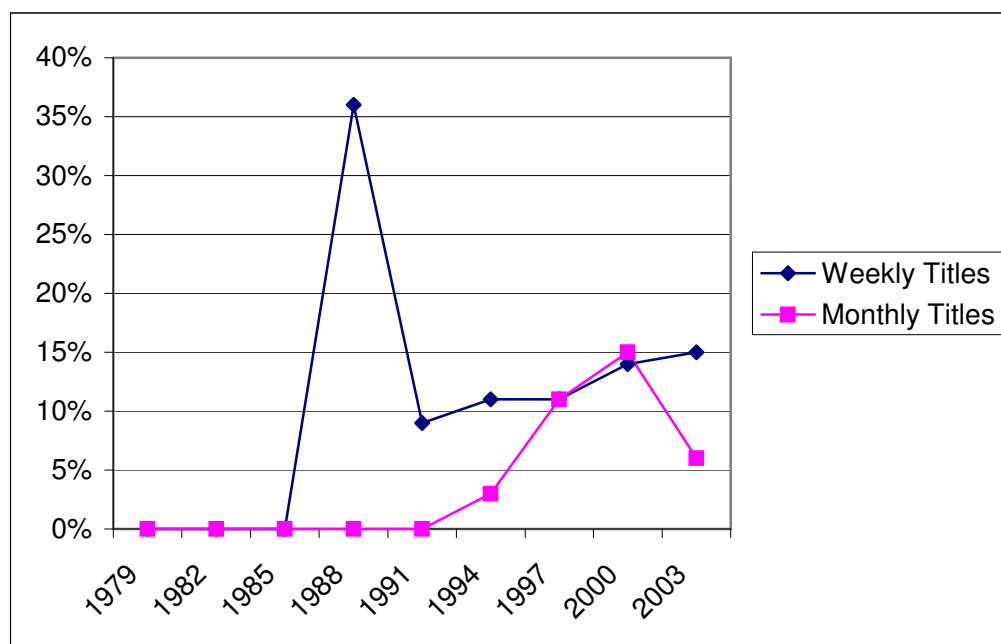
If the references from the monthly title *Prima* were excluded from fig. 6b, the monthly titles in the sample would contain even fewer references to economy. Given the unique editorial profile of this magazine, this is not surprising (Chapter II). From fig. 6b we can deduce that the monthly magazine titles are more likely to address their readers as discerning and having the aspiration, and the affluence, to go out and buy quality merchandise. In the weekly titles, the consumption of household goods is not so much a matter of appearance or concern with the goodness of a product, but of economy.

If we return to the original graph (fig. 6a) we can see that the propensity to frame content in financial terms has converged over the period of the sample. However, the differential framing of expenditure-related content between the weekly and monthly titles has particularly illustrated that we cannot assume that editorial teams from both the weekly and monthly magazine sectors share the same editorial values when presenting food and eating material within expenditure based frames (fig. 6b).

The data analysis shows that weekly magazines continue to speak to their readers as resourceful controllers of the household budget, where cost is an important criterion for shopping (Chapter II). The monthly magazines have consistently addressed their readers as being more interested in the quality of the product they are purchasing, rather than the price. These findings demonstrate the continuing influence of material status distinction on representations in the women's magazine sector.

Summary

The data analysis has shown that when food and eating material is presented, different framing mechanisms are employed when expenditure values are highlighted. This finding accords with Charles and Kerr's (1988) interview data, that poor women reported more concern for the price of food products and less concern with the

'goodness' of a food product than more affluent interviewees. Further, this section of the chapter has illustrated the existence of different editorial framing mechanisms, which show how the different priorities motivating social organisation of the household are reflected in the institutional practice of this sector and can be implicated in the reproduction of class as material-based relations (DeVault, 1991).

Beck asserts that the lives and worldview of modernity's citizens will no longer be curtailed by material circumstances and social class legacies (Chapter I). These findings suggest that the individuals Beck is describing are the already socially and economically privileged middle classes (Lupton, 1999: 114). Organisational policy distinctions may either be responding to, or reflecting the idea that many people 'lack the resources and techniques with which to engage in the project of self-reflexivity' (Lash, 1994: 23 Lash and Urry 1994). These findings demonstrate the weaknesses of Beck's argument that, in late modernity, institutional practices will increasingly become immune to distinction based on material factors.

The merging of public and private spheres

According to Beck, the dissolving of the barriers between public and the private spheres will result in people will no longer being dependent upon local proximity or social class for orientation, as their experiences become more inclusive as global citizens (Chapter I). The result of this increasingly blurred interchange of public and private spheres, in the

context of women's lives will be identified as actions and practices happening outside the domestic setting increasingly interleave with the traditionally domestic domain (Chapter I).

A wider world brought into the domestic sphere

In the women's magazine sector, it has been observed that recipes are often commended because of their limited preparation time (Warde, 1997: 134). The issue of time saving, coupled with the rising number of women working outside the home, could be evidence of magazine content increasingly reflecting the wider world of work alongside the domestic sphere. According to Beck's characterisation of contemporary society, this will increasingly happen in the contemporary magazine editions and across both the weekly and monthly titles.

This section tests Beck's predictions in two ways. The first section evaluates the nature of mediated messages around the sense of a wider world being brought into the individual's domestic sphere. This is expected to be manifest in an increasing inclusion of magazine material with reference to the spheres of employment, foreign travel and situations outside the home, be they national or international.

Second, Beck's ideas about the increasing acknowledgement of other ways of doing things are tested. One would expect Beck's ideas to manifest in a rise in magazine's coverage of alternative food and eating

practices, like vegetarianism, organic farming and coverage of environmental issues.

Employment outside the home

This part of the data analysis involved collating food and eating material explicitly referring to employment. Interestingly, the most significant number of references to work was identified in the context of being, or thinking about or becoming self-employed caterers.

> The hours are endless, the financial risks immense. But for many couples it is a dream come true (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 96-98).

> In the autumn of 1976 (…) sold their comfortable mortgaged house in Richmond and moved with their two tiny sons into a second hand mobile home plonked in the middle of a two-acre walled garden (…) to sow plants for culinary use (Good Housekeeping, 1985: 199-202).

> Your own catering business, there is a lot of unsung talent plodding a weary path between the stove and the kitchen sink and back again. But before you decide to cook for money, are you up to the challenge? (Good Housekeeping, 1988: 156).

The material in question also consistently included contact recommendations to both internal information, such as a 'cook school' list held by the magazine title, and external organisations like Government Enterprise Allowance Schemes and Restaurateur Associations (Good Housekeeping, 1988:156-157). Chapter IIII contains further discussion on the division of expert references between monthly and weekly titles.

The data analysis also identified magazine material that related to the world of prospective employment by recommending cookery training, whether opening your own business or improving your culinary skills for food preparation at home.

> (…)- that stylish cookery school, is running a series of short courses (…) (Good Housekeeping, 1982: 34).

> (…) owner of top cookery school (…) is running six-day courses (Good Housekeeping, 1988: 28).

> Guide to wine tasting course (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 187).

The data analysis also identified one reference to the more politically orientated issues of women at work.

(…) there's no reason why a woman shouldn't receive the same pay and perks as a man (Prima, 1988: 127).

The monthly title *Company*, aimed at twenty-somethings took on the issue of stress at work, in relation to food and eating habits:

Generation stress, "I couldn't read, decide what to wear or even what to eat. I just couldn't cope" (…). Take half an hour for lunch and don't eat at your desk (…)' (Company, 2003: 68- 70).

Consumer related pieces were identified in *Company* that recommend products for their appropriateness for the world of employment. Considering that this title is aimed at young middle class women, this was not surprising. However, most significantly for this part of the data analysis, only a single reference to the world of work was identified in the food and eating related material in the weekly magazine titles. Further, even this example had more to do with the home than the work place: 'Is your time off work spoilt by splitting headaches?' (Best, 1991: 21).

This part of the analysis refers directly to the debate about whether women's magazines reflect the practicality of women's lives or act as an escape into a fantasy dimension (Chapter II). Many women reading these magazines are in some form of paid employment outside the home. Therefore, a question about why paid employment is obscured in

the magazine sector brings the complexity of the practicality and fantasy dimensions of this sector into sharp relief (Chapter II). One might also take the inference from this data that, despite their participation in the employment market, the roles and tasks women have to conduct at home remain the same.

Fig. 6c demonstrates the differential acknowledgement of the world of work between the monthly and weekly magazine titles. This minimal acknowledgement of the large number of women now working outside the home does not support Beck's ideas. Despite fundamental shifts in the participation of women in the labour market, the magazine titles sampled have retained their focus on the domestic provision of food.

Fig. 6c: Proportion of total food and eating content referring to the world of work by weekly and monthly titles
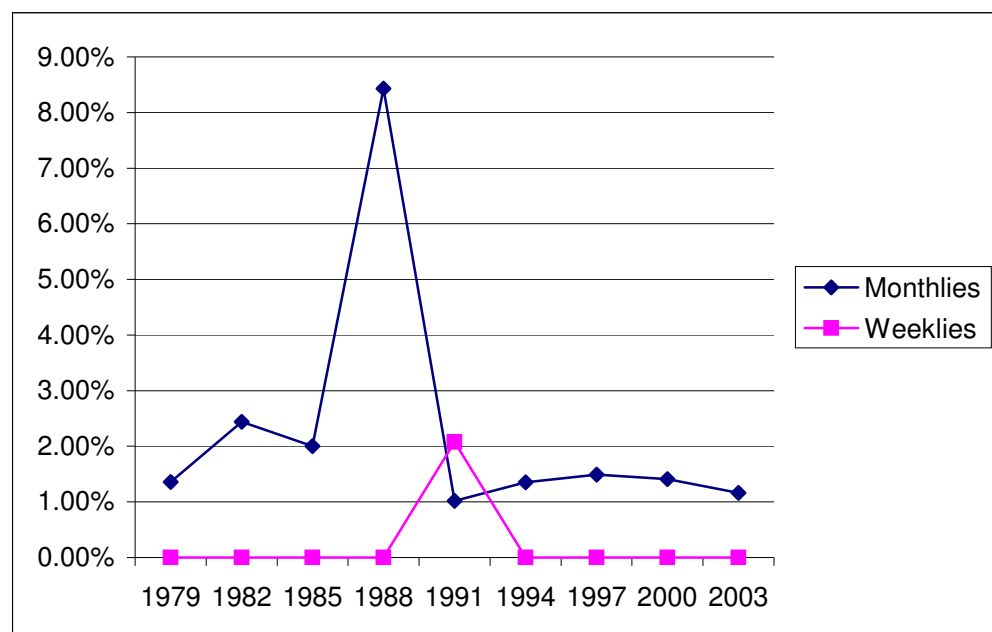
Foreign travel, culture and influence

The data analysis identified the framing of distant influences, in a way that tries to get to a sense of the wider world that we are increasingly involved in. This part of the data analysis collated material explicitly referring to the influence of food and eating practices from other cultures and continents. The findings identified various 'undertones' in a variety of food and eating content framed as non-British.

The most interesting finding is that the differential between the weekly and monthly presentation of this kind of material illustrated that weekly titles 'imagine' going to the far away places mentioned.

> Pour a glass and imagine you're in sunny Spain (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 52).

> Gen up on Ginger, (…) from Far Eastern and West Indian cookery (…) but you don't have to go that far to benefit from a pinch of ginger (Woman's Weekly, 1994).

While the monthly titles address their readers as seasoned travellers.

> Bacon sandwiches at 3am (…) who wouldn't get a thrill out of the pampered carefree world of the hotel? (Company, 1982: 38).

> A villa in Provence (…) with the usual arguments about who
>
> is going for baguettes and croissants in the morning?
>
> (Prima, 1991: 122).

> We've known for a few years now that the Greeks, Italians
>
> and French are considerably healthier than us in Britain
>
> (Prima, 1997: 74).

The weekly titles in the sample present non-British foods as daring and out of the ordinary.

> Try something more adventurous (Woman's Weekly, 1988: 31).

> They're great with salads, curries- even oriental meals
>
> (Best, 1988: 51).

In the monthly magazine titles, there are recurring features on the importance of the 'right' kitchen in the holiday home you may be buying (Good Housekeeping, 1979: 86 and 1997: 36). This situation suggests that the imputed readerships are not strangers to non-British foods and experiences. This assumption is sustained by the everyday detail that is presented along with travel content, which appears to work on the supposition that the reader will eventually need to know these things.

Provence, surrounded by olive trees, the ruined town of

Oppede-le-Vieux makes a dramatic setting for a Provencal

picnic of bread and cheese, cooked meats and olives (Good

Housekeeping, 1988: 90).

Have lunch at the 10 year old, blue tiled Pandeli's (…). The

best restaurant in Tunisia is (…). Start with a coffee at one of

the terrace cafes (…) (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 184-186).

On Wednesdays and Saturday mornings, there's a colourful

open market (…) where you can buy traditional French

cheese, pates, fruits and vegetables (Prima, 1988: 128).

Food and eating content framed by influences outside the UK illustrate a significant distinction between the experiences, and indeed life expectations, presented in the weekly and monthly magazines.

Alternative food and eating practice

According to Beck's predictions, one could expect that food and eating content would increasingly be framed in terms of alternative food and eating choices and practices being embraced by the mainstream (Chapter I). One would expect explicit references to issues like vegetarianism to become commonplace, material reporting the effects of our food and eating practices on the environment to rise, and the

increasing inclusion of alternative practices, like organic produce in the contemporary sample.

Vegetarianism

In the weekly magazine sample, only two references to vegetarianism were identified since 1979.

> What is tofu? My 15 year old daughter has become a vegetarian after watching a film about animal husbandry at school. She keeps asking me to buy some tofu for her meals. She says it is made from soya beans, but I'd like to know more about it before trying it (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 53).

The editorial response to this enquiry is interesting in itself as the magazine title's doctor, not any member of staff with any cookery experience, answers this question. The reply describes what tofu is in a bland, descriptive way, and includes no information about the benefits and drawbacks of this product (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 53).

In the monthly magazine sample, however, vegetarianism is covered more comprehensively and features regularly from the early nineties onwards. One example is a three-page feature including information about the teething problems that one can encounter when faced with having to alter existing cooking systems to accommodate feeding a

vegetarian (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 101; 147). This example is also cross-referenced to the nutrition page of the same edition, which includes coverage of maintaining a diet high in nutritional value and concludes by recommending various publications to assist.

A more politically enthused slant on these issues comes from *Company* magazine.

> If you gave up meat because of the BSE scare, but are now craving bacon butties, you're not alone. Around 20% of the UK's three million vegetarians have put meat back in their diets (…). Experts believe the change is due to tighter food laws, the availability of free-range and organic meat (Company, 2003: 49).

These findings demonstrate that the treatment of alternative food and eating choices is distinct between the weekly and monthly and titles. The final example of how vegetarianism is presented in the monthly titles also leads into an examination of how the women's magazine sector present material on the environmental effects of our production and consumption practices.

Environmental issues

One would expect Beck's ideas about the democratising effects of the environmental discourse to be manifest as an increase in magazine content featuring green issues (Chapter I). One might also expect an increase in magazine features discussing either national or global effects of our consuming practices. The data analysis identified a relatively consistent environmental discourse in the monthly magazine sector.

> Go green- not with envy but out of concern for the
> environment (…) as a consumer of goods, you can influence
> the way in which our environment is treated (Company,
> 1988: 50).

> How green is your home? (…) you've got to give people an
> understanding that being green might mean things they don't
> like. It means a fundamental shift (Good Housekeeping,
> 1991: 196-199).

> If you cannot bear to live without meat, at least buy it
> humanely reared (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 214-215).

> Spring clean without damaging the environment (Good
> Housekeeping, 2003: 21).

The monthly magazine titles also contain features recommending growing your own salad stuffs (Good Housekeeping, 1979: 197 and 1988: 101) and reviews on organic food production methods (Good Housekeeping, 1988: 28). Most interestingly, the monthly magazine titles focus, not solely on doom and gloom for the environment, but concentrate on everyday action to reduce these problems:

(…) is a straightforward guide to 'kinder' meat, explaining why it's better for us, as well as the animals (…) Hens don't have any influence: our only weapon is the shopping bag (Prima, 1991: 156).

Faced with holes in the ozone layer, trees dying from acid rain (…) its easy to feel an overwhelming sense of despair (…). In fact you are more powerful than you probably realise. As a consumer of goods, you can influence the way the environment is treated (Company, 1988: 50-51).

Every year 13 million trees are cut down to cope with the demand for paper. And the biggest waste lies in packaging, which we simply throw away. (…) goes through the dustbins of three British families and shows us how to kick wasteful habits (Good Housekeeping, 1988: 118-120; 1991: 196-199).

Magazine content referring to alternative food and eating practice and environmental issues were collated and counted.

Fig.6d: Proportion of total food and eating content referring to alternative practice/ environmental issues
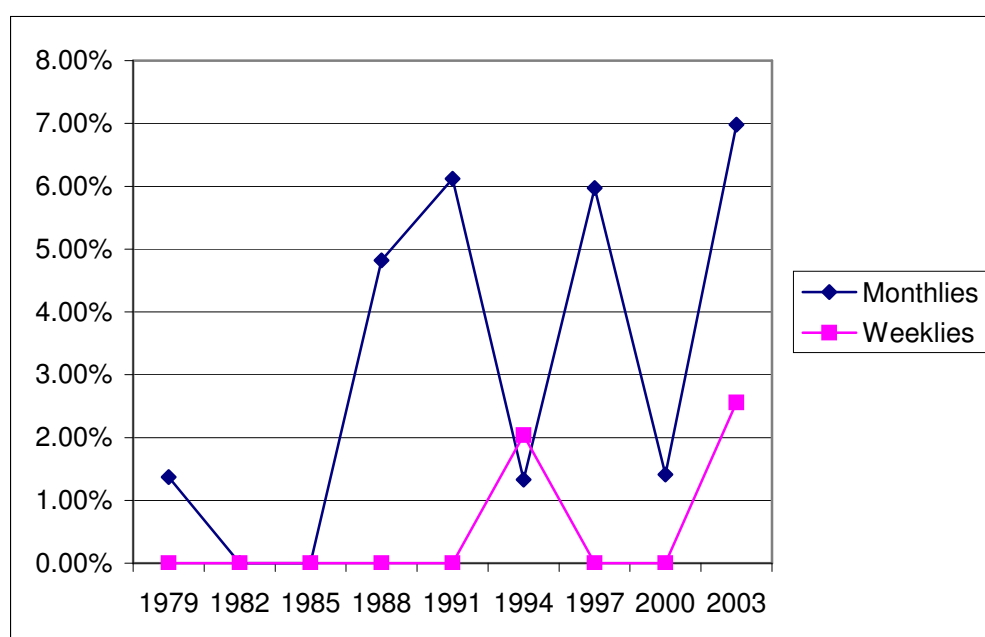
Fig. 5d shows that the environmental discourse is almost totally absent from the weekly magazine sector. Only one example of concern for the environment was identified in the weekly titles sampled.

Food that is produced locally means less transportation, which of course means less environmental pollution another health bonus, globally as well as nationally (Woman's Weekly, 2003: 57).

Beck's ideas about the globalised nature of the environmental discourse are evident in the above passage. However, these sentiments only occur towards the end of the feature after other issues like, 'Will organic food make me healthier?' and 'Where can I get organic food?' are covered. In this way, the comments about the more worldwide benefits are added as an extra addendum to persuade the imputed readership of the benefits of this change in consumption in the weekly magazine sector.

National identity

The data analysis identified a discourse of national culture, encouraging the feeling that practice in the private sphere increasingly includes a sense of doing something along with other people in the same nation. A variety of national campaignswere identified, such as 'British food and farming Year' (Good Housekeeping, 1988: 28), 'National bread week' (Prima, 1994: 144 and Good Housekeeping, 1994: 191), 'National breakfast week' (Prima, 2000: 8), 'National wake up to milk campaign' (Prima, 1991: 156), 'New campaign: the British tomato grower's association' (Prima, 2000: 129) with a sole contribution to this genre from the weekly sector being: 'Celebrate national prune week' (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 52). This theme appears consistently in the monthly magazines, whilst barely materialising in the weekly magazine sector. These findings suggest that the interest in national and international food and eating practice is an exclusive terrain into which

only the monthly magazine titles will venture. Further, this kind of content was always accompanied by a product promotion piece in some form, highlighting the commercial nature of decision making in this sector (Chapter II).

The references to environmental issues, alternative food and eating practice, foreign travel, employment and national identity were added together to get an overall sense of the extent to which the merging of public and private has occurred.

The data analysis finds a differential inclusion of references suggesting the merging of private and public spheres in the magazine sample since 1979 (fig. 6e). The weekly magazine sampled in 1991 contained barely half the references to the outside world contained in the monthly magazine titles highest percentage in 1988.

Monthly magazines have consistently presented food and eating material in a routine, but affirmative, light. By contrast the weekly magazine sector barely mentions outside influences on private practice. A discourse of alternative food and eating practice was also identified in the monthly magazine titles, suggesting that socio-economic groups A, B and C1 are more likely to be responsive to this kind of content. The type of content, however, is rare in titles aimed at lower socio-economic groups C2, D and E (Chapter VII).

Fig. 6e: Proportion of total food and eating references suggesting the conciliation of private and public spheres
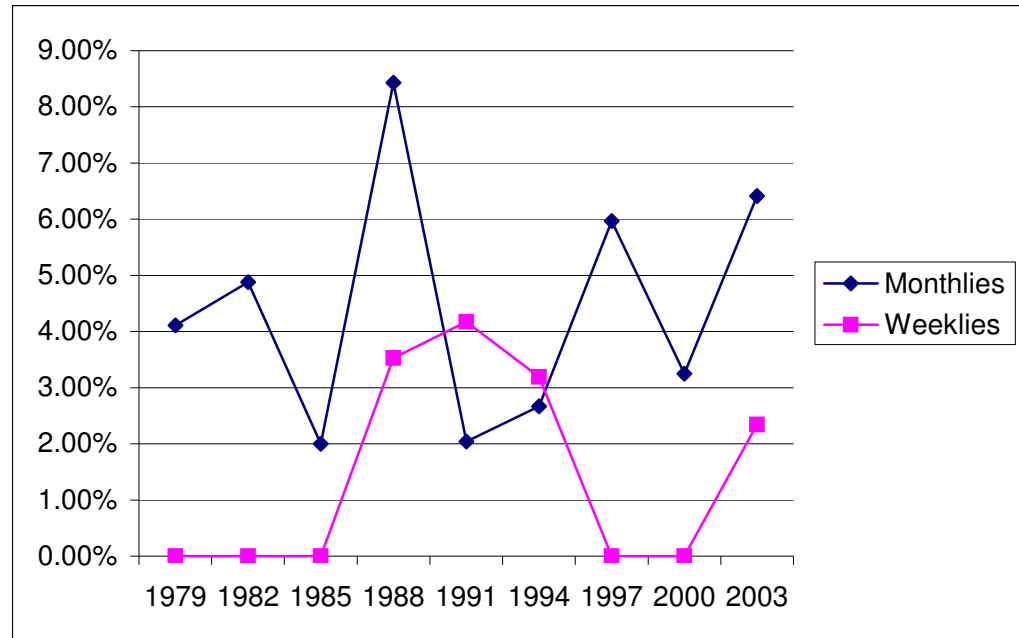
Summary

The analysis establishes that a discourse bringing the wider world into the domestic sphere does exist in the monthly women's magazine sector. This reinforces the idea that Beck's notions of an increasingly globalised citizen describe an already economically privileged individual with an established pool of cultural capital to draw upon, who already engages with alternative practice, and has an established cross-over between public and private spheres. However, the analysis did not find the weekly and monthly titles converging in their presentations of patterns of consumption, nor was any evidence identified to suggest that these distinct life expectations between the weekly and monthly

titles have converged. The analysis identifies a continuation of distinct differences between the presentational practices of the weekly and monthly magazine sectors. These findings suggest that these practices are related to different expectations of the target readership, which are institutionalised. These findings are not consistent with Beck's predictions.

The disappearance of status distinction

In this part of the analysis, the representational values apparent in the magazine representations of food and eating issues were examined in order to establish if certain values are framed as important to one group of magazine readers, but ignored for other groups. Any awareness presented in the magazine content about the right way of doing things was examined and analysed comparatively between the weekly and monthly titles. This part of the data analysis concentrated on issues of the structures and sequence of meals in order to evaluate if there was an increasing sense of convergence between the weekly and monthly titles in terms of style and taste, as taste is both an 'aesthetic and a moral category. It is a means of distinction, a way of subtly identifying and separating refinement' (Lupton, 1996: 95).

According to Beck's predictions, structures of food and eating practice should converge in the contemporary magazine editions (Chapter I). Beck's ideas are tested in two ways. First, the data analysis established

if references to the structures of food and eating practice have become more comparable in recent magazine editions. One could expect to find increasing similarities in practices that indicate equivalent approaches to the appropriate styles and similar focuses on ambience of meal times between the weekly and monthly magazine titles (for example, laying the table, number of meal courses offered and wine to accompany meals).

Second, the nutritional components represented in food and eating practice in the weekly and monthly titles were collated (Warde, 1997). Values associated with food and eating presentation were identified, such as whether the significance of foods being balanced and healthy was given similar weight in both weekly and monthly titles. This was undertaken in order to evaluate Beck's ideas that social class distinction in these areas of practice will increasingly disappear. A confirmation of these findings will substantiate Beck's predictions. However, if the data analysis reveals that distinctions in these areas according to the imputed social class status of the readership have remained reasonably consistent over the time scale, this will contradict Beck's ideas.

Status distinction and practice

Style and ambience

Magazine content referring to issues of style and ambience was identified in the magazine sample in the context of certain practices, like laying the table and the kinds of settings in which food and eating atmosphere can be enhanced. The data analysis identified magazine content referring to laying the table as appearing consistently across the sampled time frame in the monthly magazine titles.

> Napkins make colourful and pretty accessories (Prima, 1988: 134).

> There's lots of advantages to entertaining in a dining room, but no excuses if you don't have one (Company, 1985: 57).

> (…) our tray table is pretty and functional (Prima, 2003: 76).

> Set the scene: Make beautiful table decorations (Prima, 2003: 84).

Further, in the monthly magazines the atmosphere that one can create around a meal is often covered in great detail:

Pack a picnic basket and head for the boat yard at Mill Lane-punts, rowing boats and canoes (Company, 2000: 199).

A funky hangout that's often packed by early evening (Company, 2000: 199).

A 'foodies' paradise that's not for the weak willed (Company, 2000: 199).

No such parallel examples were identified in the weekly magazine sample. Where menus for entertaining were present in the weekly sector, no attention was given to either table setting or atmosphere.

Alcohol and meal courses

During the late eighties a study on food choice and social class established that English working-class families did not take alcohol with meals (DeVault, 1991). This data analysis can corroborate these findings. In the weekly magazine sector, only three instances of wine coverage were identified (*Chat*, 1988: *Woman's Weekly,* 1994: *Best,* 1988). In the monthly magazine sample the inclusion of material recommending appropriate wines to accompany not only meals, but also different courses, is consistent and commonplace. Of the twenty-four monthly magazine editions sampled, only four did not contain any

references to alcohol (*Good Housekeeping*, 1985: *Prima,* 2003: *Company,* 1991: 1994).

Framing mechanisms like the ones described above were collated and counted in order to ascertain if this type of style-orientated discourse was distinctly different between the monthly and weekly magazine titles (fig. 6f). The data analysis also identified an interesting difference in the number of courses in menus devised by the weekly and monthly titles. The monthly magazine titles consistently included a menu plan containing at least three courses: starter, main course and dessert. This has remained unchanged between 1979 and 2003.

In the weekly magazine sample however, there were only three instances where any more than one course was presented in any one cookery section (*Best,* 1991 and 1994). On these occasions, the choices suggested were restricted to main courses and there was only one dessert option, while a starter course was never discussed. When weekly magazines' cookery sections include recipes, they are almost always a multitude of main course options around a theme, such as 'British Apples' (Woman's Weekly, 2000: 40-43).

Fig 6f: Proportion of total food and eating content referring to

wine, table or 'setting' for eating
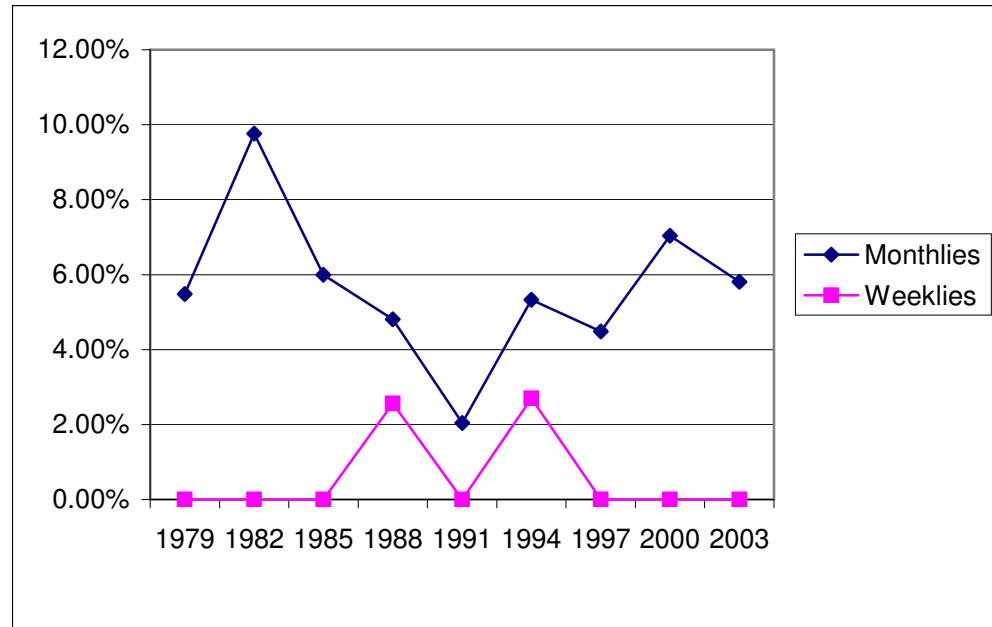
The data findings show that significant distinction is maintained between the monthly and weekly magazine titles when issues around structures of food and eating are presented. Basically, elements such as laying the table, ambience and alcohol are absent from the weekly magazine sector. These findings suggest that the differentiated social status and clearly financial position of the imputed readership retains a significant bearing on the framing of food and eating material in the women's magazine sector.

Purpose, distinction and practice

This part of the data analysis examined the significant constituents of food and eating representations, such as what is deemed to be healthy and unhealthy (Lupton, 1996; Warde, 1997). This was conducted in order to evaluate whether the imputed social status of magazine readers can no longer be identified as influencing institutional expressions about distinctive components of food and eating practice, in line with Beck's ideas.

Fat, fibre, carbohydrate and calorific values

This type of information content appeared in a diverse variety of features, cookery sections and health pages across the magazine sample.

Food for health (Company, 1979: 10).

Low in calories and packed with vitamins and minerals (Best, 1994: 56).

They're packed with protein and beneficial fatty acids (Chat, 1988: 25).

Healthier than a take-away, home made pizza is the ultimate convenience food (Prima, 2003: 90).

Despite this apparently increasing link between health and diet, a differential occurs concerning the presentation of fat, fibre, carbohydrate and calorific values stated in the magazines cookery sections between the weekly and monthly titles. Of the weekly magazines in the sample, two out of the three titles contained explicit nutritional information broken down by recipe. This started in the late 1980s in *Best* magazine, but only appeared in *Woman's Weekly* since the 2000 edition. Further, the calorific value of a dish was consistently featured in the weekly magazines while fat and carbohydrate content only appeared in recipes in the weekly magazines in the 2003 editions.

In the monthly magazine sector, the titles *Good Housekeeping* and *Prima* began to consistently include fat, fibre and calorie content in 1991 and 1988 respectively. *Company* (aimed at a younger market) does not include fibre or fat information, but has consistently highlighted the calorific value of specific food products since the 1979 edition. A further presentational difference between the weekly and monthly magazine titles was identified as weekly magazines consistently presented a distinct concern with meals being substantial, for example,

A filling meal in a pan (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 52).

Rustle up (…) for your hungry family (Best, 1988: 16).

Plentiful and filling (Best, 1994: 26).

Serve them generously for family suppers (Woman's
Weekly, 1994: 56).

In contrast, in the monthly magazine titles the dominating concerns are focused around the sensual and earthly aspects of food products throughout the sample.

Allow your guests to 'unwrap' their parcel when served, releasing the glorious aroma of the seafood (Good Housekeeping, 1997: 198).

Exquisitely presented (Good Housekeeping, 1994: 206).

Luxurious ingredients (Good Housekeeping, 1997: 188).

(…) when the joint emerges, glistening and regal, the hot oil sizzling and spitting, leave it to rest and capitalise on the pan juices for a good gravy (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 171).

This finding illustrates that distinctions between the values placed on healthy food and eating practice have remained reasonably consistent over the sampled time frame. This suggest that the monthly magazine titles place more importance on whether food is high in fat and low in

fibre, while the weekly titles concentrate on the need to have 'three square meals a day' (Lupton, 1996: 81).

Processed foods and natural ingredients

The differentiated presentation values described above continue into the consumer and product recommendation sections of the women's magazine sample. In the monthly magazine titles, news that a specialist cheese, only available between November and March, is being introduced to a number of supermarket shelves is cause for attention,

Don't miss this cheese (Good Housekeeping, 2003: 181).

Epitomising the monthly magazine's approach to food and eating are features where specialist food outlets are reported. For example, a small specialist cheese outlet in Wales, whose products are now accessible by mail order, are presented in *Good Housekeeping's* 1988: 32). These framing values were also identified in their 1991 edition, where we are told that we can get a hamper and a mail order service.

Independent seafood smoke house in Orkney (Good Housekeeping, 1991: 32).

This type of differential focus is maintained into the most recent editions of the sample.

Congratulations to (…) for their French Delice tomatoes-ripening on the vine, they are bursting with flavour (Good Housekeeping, 1997: 191).

Further, the monthly titles sometimes almost lyrical presentation style is highlighted as a feature in *Good Housekeeping's* 1985 edition '*Looking at Leeks'* (205) includes a poem by Thomas Tusser from 1573. It also refers to the Welsh Laws of Hywel Dda in relation to this produce and includes the views of the eminent cook Mrs Beeton and further quotes Lady Grisill Baille, an eighteenth century woman of note (Good Housekeeping, 1985: 205).

By contrast, in the weekly magazines sampled, fresh produce is rarely featured in consumer sections and a positive discourse is identified around processed foods.

Tinned soup (Woman's Weekly, 1994: 52).

Boil-in-the-bag rice' (Woman's Weekly, 2003: 28).

Delicious frozen pizza range (Best, 1988: 16).

We put (…) frozen blackcurrant cheesecake against the supermarkets' own brands (Best, 1994: 36).

It is apparent that in the monthly magazine titles' editorial policy focuses on the possibilities of accessing specialist food producers rather than on the tinned or packaged products covered in the weekly magazine titles which are available on supermarket shelves.

The findings illustrate that even in the consumer sections of women's magazines the values placed on the products featured are distinct between the weekly and monthly titles. This reinforces suggestions that members of the working classes demonstrate a more instrumental than aesthetic approach to food and eating practices (for example, Bourdieu, 1984). The monthly magazine titles representations emphasise the value of refinement, which suggests that more privileged groups prefer more delicate, healthy and natural qualities of food and eating products.

Summary

The monthly magazine titles contained many presentational values that were non-existent in the weekly magazine sample. No concerns regarding the setting for the eating of meals is identified, and the magazines appear more concerned with filling up their readers than providing a balanced diet, like in the monthly magazine titles. Beck's ideas about the increasing decline in collective distinction are not supported by the data.

Conclusion

This data chapter has shown that the weekly and monthly magazine sectors present content with very different expenditure values, different life expectations (concerning travel and employment) and different norms concerning expectations of style, ambience and the elements that make up appropriate food and eating practice. The findings show that issues of social distinction, linked to economic factors, retain their influence as an organising system in the context of the institutional practice of this sector (Chapter III). The direction of the cause is a complex issue, which will be examined in the context of institutional priorities in the next chapter.

The findings have shown a remarkable consistency of ideas expressed in magazine titles aimed at readers of the same social class. The analysis did identify choices in the women's magazine sector; however, between the weekly and monthly sectors the choices available are different. These findings are not new. Ferguson found that it was not homogenisation, but increasing differentiation that marked the consumption patterns of social classes between the 1960s and 1970s in this sector (Ferguson, 1983). The findings of this project confirm that these practices continue into the early twenty first century.

The findings are not consistent with Beck's predictions and raise questions regarding Beck's insistence that the forms of living revealed

in new relations of definition will reorganise social relations to the point that they 'cannot be adequately comprehended by following either Marx or Weber' (Beck, 1999: 98). These findings suggest that dismissing economic factors is an error, as the continued existence of social distinction based on economic aspects is an important factor affecting, not only the ability to choose, but the choices made available in this sector.

CHAPTER VII

Relations of definition and organisational culture

in the British women's magazine sector

The three previous textual analysis chapters have established that social contrasts associated with distinct socio-economic determinants have continued to influence representations of food and eating in the women's magazine sector over the last twenty-five years. With this in mind, the underlying principles of the production processes that maintain these social distinctions are evaluated in this chapter through the examination of data from six interviews with women's magazine editors (Chapters I and III).

A traditional organisational-studies approach to understanding institutions examines both the internal and external environment and the impact of the market (Morgan, 1990). However, by adopting a more specific organisational culture approach in this project, the editorial interviews are examined in terms of the ways in which people working in an institution, think, feel, value and act and how these people are 'guided by ideas, meanings and beliefs of a cultural (socially shared) nature' (Alvesson, 2002: 1). However, there are different ways of understanding the nature of 'culture', which Alvesson's definition seems to conceal.

Culture can be understood as independent and objective, in the sense that we can reduce it to a set of rules. However, this understanding leads to the conceptualisation of culture as all determining. Conversely, culture can be understood as being an internalised resource that is maintained and expanded by individuals who refer to it. Bittner (1965) proposes that organisations are orientated through generalised principles that are used by members to co-ordinate, but not to determine action. In this chapter, organisational culture is considered to be 'the product of members' actions in circumstances, that are not entirely of their own making, although allowing scope for manipulation or manoeuvre' (Dingwall and Strong, 1997: 143). In the interview data, the editors can be seen to be 'talking' a determinist view of culture into existence. The editors may well experience culture and certainly do talk about it as if it were objective, but culture is also essentially subjective as we will see how the editorial staff use, reuse and constitute their own personal editorial style to explain why they do what they do. In order to acknowledge the complex nature of the term 'culture' in this project, the interview data is treated, not as literal description, but as part of the construction of the rhetoric of autonomy, which is characteristic of the way people working in the mass media perceive their role (see Chapter II).

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section one presents interview data concerning practice in the three areas highlighted in Beck's thesis and encapsulated in the hypothesis to be tested (Chapters I and III).

This approach to the interview data seeks to identify the assumptions and normative beliefs embedded in mediated practice that relate directly to the themes examined in the previous textual analysis findings. Section two contains data that addresses the three overriding assumptions concerning people working in media organisations (Chapters I and II). This section provides an overview of a working environment where practitioners share understandings, feelings of clarity, direction, meaning and purpose (Tunstall, 2001: Turner, 2004a).

The data sample

The previous chapters have shown that women's magazine texts manifest different codes and conventions that place the reader in a particular relation with everyday life that, to all intents and purposes, appear neutral and natural. Three of the editorial staff interviewed work in the weekly magazine sector, considered to be representative of magazines marketed at socio-economic groups C2, D and E (chapter two and three). The remaining three editorial staff members work in the monthly magazine sector, considered to be marketed at socio-economic groups A, B and C1 (Chapter III). In order for Beck's propositions to be substantiated, a convergence between the points of reference used by both the weekly and monthly sector practitioners when framing content would have to be identified.

Interviews were conducted with three editors and three section editors. The section editors comprised a deputy editor, a practicals editor and a cookery director, all of whom were responsible for the food and eating content of their respective magazines. The interview questions aimed to identify whether an editorial policy existed regarding the inclusion of food and eating content. This was found to be the case and subsequent questions sought to isolate the various factors influencing this policy. To respect confidentiality, the names of editorial staff and magazine titles identified in the text have been removed and replaced with italics indicating a person's role and whether they work in the weekly or monthly sector.

The first section of this chapter is split into three sub-headings in order to correlate directly with the themes of the previous three textual analysis findings chapters. Findings from the interview data analysis relating to current editorial practice regarding knowledge presentation, social relationships and collective distinction are introduced. Data relating to these areas is presented in order to evaluate the three hypotheses generated from Beck's thesis.

First, Beck's expectation that readers will be increasing involved and challenge established forms of expertise are evaluated in the interview data. Second, interview data with which to evaluate Beck's proposed institutional recognition of women as increasingly independent of traditional family roles is presented. The examination of the data

identifying how editors address their readers is undertaken with the expectation that editorial staff from both weekly and monthly sectors will recognise similar conceptions of the family and friendship and the increasing significance of the female 'self'. Finally, interview data about editorial framing practices and collective distinction is examined to consider whether the socio-economic status of a title's target readership affects everyday media practice. Interview data from weekly and monthly editorial staff is compared and contrasted throughout.

Hypotheses 1: The democratisation of social knowledge

Beck predicts that in contemporary society, institutions will become more democratically shaped (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003 and Chapter I). This is predicted to occur as institutional practice changes to encourage lay participation, the diversification of legitimate knowledge and, as a direct result of these shifts, social insecurity will become increasingly pervasive (Beck, 1992; 1994; and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003 and Chapter I). The conclusion of this section will scrutinise whether the interview data provides any evidence to suggest a breakdown in the hierarchical model of institutions.

Reader participation

Chapter four presented the textual analysis evaluating Beck's predictions about the institutional encouragement of lay participation in

the magazine sample. The most significant trend identified was that despite an apparent increase in frequency, the magazine titles have barely increased the volume of their reader-sourced material in proportion to their volume of editorially generated material. Beck's notion that institutions increasingly involve their consumers in areas of institutional practice previously excluded to them was also examined in the interviews. All the editorial staff felt that their organisational style encouraged reader participation. However, editors described readers writing in to comment on minor issues or to highlight mistakes in the text.

> They are a responsive audience, they tell us by the sack load if they don't like something (editor weekly).

> We don't get…I don't get masses of readers writing in, you get the odd one when you've done something wrong (section editor weekly).

> I had 27 letters about my new hair colour (editor weekly).

> If they have questions they can write in (section editor monthly).

These data suggest that a Beck-influenced understanding of institutions employing the reader as a critical institutional resource is quite different from the editorial definition of appropriate reader input. Readers are not reported to have any influence on the selection of topics to be covered in magazine texts and reader-sourced material is not described as a resource that is incorporated into policy formulation. However, this project is treating these responses as part of the account of the construction of editorial autonomy rather than literal description (Chapter II). Therefore, while editors insisted that readers were encouraged to communicate with the magazine title, there was little indication in the interview data that reader-involvement challenges the magazine staff's authoritative position.

This position was reinforced as an editor described how she had the job of sorting through the reader-sourced material.

> I had to sit and rewrite them all day, you know- put them into [magazine title] style and that what I was doing all day long and it was boring (section editor weekly).

This description highlighted that reader-sourced material is used to reinforce institutional control, not challenge it. Another section editor was quite frank about their organisation's approach to reader

interaction, namely that using reader-sourced material was cheaper than employing a freelance journalist.

We pay £500 for a lead story, but only £50 for a small one (section editor weekly).

Beck's expectation that consumers will increasingly decide which topics are discussed and will become progressively more significant in policy formulation was not upheld.

The de-monopolisation of expertise

Beck predicts that changing institutional policy will challenge the traditional dominance of professional expertise by including a wider array of alternative expertise (Beck, 1992: 234 and Chapter I). The textual analysis presented in chapter four reveals a striking continuity in magazines referring to what can be labelled as traditional groups of experts. The suggestion that alternative experts are replacing traditional forms of expertise is challenged as the interviews bring out the high value editors place on the formalised credentials of their contributors.

We do only use expert nutritionists, we have a GP that writes the health stuff for us and expert cookery people (editor weekly).

We always say you should consult a Doctor before

going on this or any other diet (editor weekly).

Obviously all the people we use are properly

qualified and trained (editor weekly).

These comments are unsurprising, as no editor would admit to using less-than-competent contributors. These comments should be seen as part of the construction of the magazine titles as authoritative, responsible and legitimate. It is interesting to note however, that if we chose to take these accounts literally, authority claims appear to be constructed by appeal to traditional rather than alternative authority.

The editor's comments underline that when 'alternative' advice is included, confirmation is always sought from a resident, more traditional expert before publication. This finding challenges the idea that a wider array of lay or alternative expertise will be increasingly legitimated in the women's magazine sector.

All the editors reported using research reports and journal articles in their magazines, albeit in a summarised form. This is not surprising as summarising this type of material is also considerably cheaper than commissioning a freelance journalist (Chapter II). The editors' priority

was to present this information in an entertaining way, which was also unsurprising as lack of entertainment, suggests a boring publication.

> It shouldn't be like reading an A level paper. It
> should be a pool of information and entertainment
> (editor weekly).

Significantly, however, the editors disassociate themselves from this kind of information.

> You will say somebody say a professor, has found
> something or 'they say that' (section editor monthly).

> We say 'it has been found', or 'researchers have
> found' (section editor monthly).

The editors indicated that they did not consider that including more formal information in the text to mean that content would become more contradictory.

> Healthy living and healthy eating information is as
> basic as it's always been. There aren't any quick fixes
> and everyone knows that deep down really. But, that's
> just too simplistic isn't it. That's not going to sell any
> books now is it (section editor monthly).

This finding reflects poorly on Beck's assertion that that even the most widely accepted expert knowledge will be subjected to 'contradictory certainties' (Beck, 1999: 125).

However, the editors did acknowledge that different sorts of advice came and went. They maintained that these movements did not affect their autonomy and reported that they did define themselves against traditional authorities, like the government.

> We are trying to reflect our reader's concerns and interests so rather than say being a mouthpiece (…). If you just follow the Department of Health guidelines, it could quite easily be wrong. What we would encourage would be a questioning, informed and intelligent approach, rather than a sort of: 'this is what I must do because this is what the government says' (editor monthly).

These comments, if taken literally, could be said to be supporting Beck's thesis. However, these comments are illustrative of the rhetoric of autonomy that characterises journalistic self-concept as editor's talk about their effective veto over 'whose' knowledge is legitimated (Chapter II). These points were further substantiated as one editor

distinguished her title's treatment of expertise by comparing it with her own definition of 'universal truth'.

> It's about encouraging readers to be as guided by things that have worked over a long period of time. I mean things that have only appeared to be good over the last 10 years (editor monthly).

The 'universal truths' that magazine editors rely on concerning food and eating have far more to do with the past than with the present or future. These comments point to nature and nostalgia in knowledge about food as cultural phenomena. Editors describe how this self-proclaimed authority is constantly reinforced, as all prospective content is 'modified' by editorial staff to fit in with their own requirements.

> I mean, the nutrition expert did the recipes, and then I [*titleised*] it you know, I topped and tailed it and put it together and made it sort of fun (section editor weekly).

The editors reported heightening their skills of selection and modification of knowledge in the face of the proliferation of food and eating information over the last few years.

> I think there is a danger of having to cut through too much information (editor weekly).

> We approach it (…) it's got to be not too off the wall
> and be practical and stick to what we really do know
> (section editor monthly).

> It's about practical, trustworthy knowledge that
> will really work (section editor monthly).

> We don't make such broad statements (…) you don't
> put anything there that's very controversial or isn't
> proven to be right ….so we haven't got all these
> swings and roundabouts (section editor monthly).

Ultimately, editors adjust all material in order to sharpen its appeal to the reader and can thus be seen as operating as an effective classification board (see Morrish, 1996: 6).

The editors acknowledged that a wide variety of expert sources are included in their magazines. However, their editorial preferences are for contributors to have traditional, formalised credentials. This is somewhat ironic since journalism as an organisational culture strongly resists formal structures of training. More importantly however, these comments tell us more about the rhetorical construction of journalistic autonomy (Chapter II). The editors talk about their own 'practical wisdom' and 'common sense', which you cannot get credentials for, but

allows the editor to appear closer to the reader. The 'common-sense' that these editors talk about is ultimately nothing of the kind; it is the rhetoric of the occupational culture of media practitioners and their workplaces (Chapter II).

Vacuum of authority

Beck asserts that the certainties held in previous eras have disintegrated (Beck, 1992). The proposed processes that he claims to have identified, of widening knowledge sources and the presentation of contradictory information, add to this general sense of unease (Beck, 1999: 107). He suggests that such unease will become a characteristic of institutional processes (Beck, 1994). If he is correct, we should expect that magazines will increasingly contain anxiety-provoking content that is not subject to editorial closure: an institutionalised vacuum of authority may be expected to materialise.

The findings from the textual analysis in chapter four demonstrate that the potential of magazine content to be anxiety provoking is effectively removed by a parallel process of reassuring editorial framing. Beck's claim that uncertainty will become institutionalised seems to be recognisable, as editors maintain they do not make authoritarian demands of their readers.

It would be hugely nonsensical for us to try and

dictate what a woman of fifty should eat, shop,

wear or buy (editor weekly).

We certainly don't push about what they should be eating

(section editor weekly).

As far as our readers are concerned it's a

recommendation from a trusted friend. They value our

opinion they trust us. Why would we dream of

betraying that trust? (editor weekly).

Editors claim that they do not 'tell' their readers to do anything. The editors describe their job as framing information appropriately for their readers so that they can make up their own minds.

We give them practical, factual information,
so it's up to them to decide, instead of swinging them
any particular way (section editor monthly).

We're not preaching to you. It's your choice and
your lifestyle and you can make your own mind up, but
there is the advice first (editor weekly).

One could view these comments as indicative of the loss of the authoritarian tone of women's magazines since the 1950s (Chapter II).

However, one editor admitted that turning decisions over to their readers is not her magazines editorial policy.

> We try not to be so completely 'make your own mind up', because that's not helpful at all (editor monthly).

The emphasis that editors place on remaining helpful and practical to their readers in their editorial address ultimately includes helping women make purchase choices. Remaining authoritarian is however, difficult at the cost of advertising revenue (Chapter II). Ultimately, these kinds of commercial pressures might be seen to be influencing the existence of these less authoritarian editorial tones, as much as Beck's ideas about an institutional commitment to democratise and individualise.

Summary

The interviews demonstrate the editorial priority of maintaining definitional authority. Editorial staff approached issues of readership participation, expert knowledge presentation and presenting uncertain knowledge claims in a practical way.

Hypothesis 2: The individualisation of social relationships

According to Beck, ascribed, traditional family-centred social relationships increasingly lose their significance (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; 2003 and Chapter I). This is expected to be manifest as editors acknowledge the widening of alternative female roles, place increasing significance on elected friendships and a decline in the prioritisation of the family over the female self.

Self-interest as institutional practice

Beck's ideas were evaluated in the textual analysis in chapter five. The majority of references to the female 'self' remain deeply embedded within the needs of others. Initially, all editors carefully explained that they did not assume their readers were primarily mothers or housewives. However, once this statement was completed, all but one spoke about their readers, not as autonomous subjects, but in relation to traditionally female roles (Chapter II).

> Food is a major thing in women's lives and in most households it's women that do the weekly shop, it's women that do the preparation of the meals (editor weekly).

> Most of them are mothers (…) looking after the
>
> family (section editor monthly).

> (…)…they tend to run the home. She is the one that
>
> runs round with the kids and all that stuff (editor weekly).

The apparent robustness of addressing women as independent of familial responsibility in the women's magazine sector has yet to infiltrate actual framing practices.

The consolidation of 'elected' friendships

Beck's ideas, along with Pahl's (2000) treatise on friendship highlight the new social currency attributed to elective social relationships. The interview data is examined with the expectation that practitioners in both the weekly and monthly magazine sectors will acknowledge the increasing importance of elected friendships on their content framing practices.

The textual analysis in chapter five showed that the incidence of food and eating related material referring to friendships dropped dramatically between 1979 and 2003. These findings directly contradict Beck's claims. The analysis also highlighted that, in the weekly women's magazine sector, the 'friendship' discourse is barely existent. These findings were confirmed in the interviews. The weekly editors barely

acknowledged these issues, whereas the monthly magazine editors accepted the influence of elected friendships on the framing of their magazine content.

> The way we pitch it is if you're having a really good dinner party and people are talking about food (editor monthly).

> (…) when they are entertaining, they are probably kind of go round for 'sex and the city' nights with friends and having a nibble or pizza and fun things like, you know like making cocktails (section editor monthly).

> The way we try and discuss food is the kind of way in which a group of friends at a dinner party would discuss it (editor monthly).

These findings emphasise that policy and practice in the weekly women's magazine sector has not concentrated on elected female friendships, unlike the monthly magazine sector. This finding is not consistent with Beck's prediction.

The democratisation of the family

Beck asserts that family relationships will change as today's individuals are encouraged by institutions to live a life of one's own (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1996; 2003). These ideas suggest that the female 'self' will become reconstituted as independent of familial responsibility, in the sense that it will not automatically be expected to be the woman's sole responsibility (Chapter I). The textual findings in chapter five show a resolute confidence that the female 'self' will be diligently responsible for domestic relationships of some kind throughout the twenty-five year sample. This could be considered unsurprising as the majority of magazine titles sampled are aimed at women with families (all except *Company*).

However, Beck asserts that relationships within families will also shift as women increasingly make their own plans which are not necessarily focused on the family but on their own personality development (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 60 and Chapter I). Further, the issue of whether women buy a magazine for self-identification or for aspirational reasons is an intricate one (Chapter II). This thesis is however focused on the complex logic of the women's magazine sector and is unconcerned with the reader.

When reflecting on their female readership the editorial staff maintain the premise that they will in some way be relating content to their reader's place in the family.

> I think the difficulty is for families to take the time to
>
> sit down and eat together (…) I happen to think it is
>
> symptomatic of really deep problems (editor monthly).

> If you sit a kid in front of the telly and you are all
>
> talking about the programme, that's a good family
>
> moment (editor weekly).

> (…) because it should be, 'Oh I could do that before
>
> the kids come home from school' (editor weekly).

The only exception to these kinds of explicit family-orientated influences on framing is made by a monthly title aimed specifically at the younger female market. Yet, even here the editor's comments suggest that the family 'life stage' has not disappeared, it is just being held off.

> I mean if you look at magazines like [list of other
>
> magazine titles] which aim at the early thirties and
>
> that's where you're going to have your readership
>
> that's more likely to….well, they're getting into that age-
>
> group range, looking at people who've got kids

(section editor monthly).

The interview data shows that Beck's ideas about the reconstitution of the female self within the family cannot be identified in the women's magazine sector's institutional policy.

Summary

As society changes, organisations gradually modify their practice to encompass and sometimes encourage these changes (Alvesson, 2002). However, the editors working in the women's magazine sector did not talk in ways that support the claim that women are now more independent in their formation of social relationships.

Hypothesis 3:   The disappearance of collective distinction

Beck claims that the influence of ascribed collective structures is becoming far less obvious over time (Beck, 1992: 135 and Chapter I). Distinctions maintained by the social class system are alleged to be collapsing, as this cultural reality is replaced by a more diverse system (Chapter I). These ideas are operationalised here in the expectation that differential standards will no longer be endorsed in organisational practice. This prediction has been evaluated by examining interview data that refers to the influence of material circumstances, the

convergence of the public and private spheres and 'appropriate' structures and constituents of food and eating practice.

The disappearance of income distinction

Beck emphasises that our life-chances and view of the world are no longer primarily determined by unequal access to material resources, as characterised by classic conceptions of social class (Chapter I). The interview data was examined in order to find out whether economic status demarcation influences editorial content decisions.

It became immediately apparent that weekly magazine editors considered their readers to have little in the way of disposable income and address them accordingly:

> We assume our readers, well, they're thinking 'I've got this much budget'. They are all on minimum wage, I don't know taking home maybe £100-£150 a week, if they're lucky (section editor weekly).

> They buy something (…) then pay for it on the never-never (…).They don't have much money (…). They need to do it on a budget (section editor weekly).

The monthly magazine editors indicate that their readers are not so deeply concerned with budgeting their money.

> So we're not talking about cheap and cheerful here
> (…) so it's no good just doing beans on toast or
> something (editor monthly).

> All of their money is going on going out and enjoying
> themselves (…). If they want to eat a lovely meal,
> they'll probably go out and pay for somebody else to
> cook it (section editor monthly).

The interview data illustrates significant discrepancies in editorial address between the monthly and weekly magazines related to the distinct economic status of expected readers. The editors' responses highlight that the financial status of magazine readers retains its influence on organisational practice, as income is seen as an external fact, one that is 'imposed on the setting and, at the same time, defining it' (Zucker, 1977: 730).

The convergence of public and private spheres

Beck asserts that the barriers between public and private spheres will dissolve (Beck, 1999). These ideas were examined in the interview data with the expectation that media professionals will refer to wider

experiences (outside the domestic sphere) as standard practice when framing food and eating content. The assertion that institutional practice will increasingly acknowledge 'outside perspectives and rationalities' (Beck, 1999: 131) was examined through interview data referring to the worlds of work, foreign travel and alternative food and eating practice.

The world of employment

One could expect that the situation of an increasing number of women working outside the home would increasingly influence the way editorial staff frame magazine content. The textual analysis in chapter six, however, found no increasing propensity to frame content in terms of the world of work over the sampled time frame. The interviews demonstrated that all the editorial staff were aware that many of their readers work.

> Most of them are working women (section editor monthly).

> They've got their foot on the career ladder (section editor monthly).

However, the weekly magazine editors describe their readers in different working patterns than the monthly magazine staff.

A lot of them don't work full time (editor weekly).

I mean, not so much career women (editor weekly).

It became clear that the monthly magazine editors view their readers as professional women, albeit in a traditionally female occupation:

(…) I look at my readership as being well, I kind of view her as a teacher or nurse (section editor monthly).

The weekly magazine staff are just as clear about the type of work their readers do.

I mean they're the people on the check out tills and in the factories (section editor weekly).

The traditional distinctions employed by the monthly and weekly magazine employees suggest that they retain different expectations about their reader participation in, and opportunities of, the employment market. This finding challenges Beck's assertions.

Foreign travel, culture and influence

According to Beck's ideas, one could expect editorial staff to refer to other countries and cultures in the list of things that increasingly influence magazine content. Chapter VI showed that the use of this kind of material suggests that weekly magazine readers 'imagine' going to the places mentioned, while in the monthly titles their readers' are already seasoned travellers. The editorial interviews echoed these findings as the weekly editors describe their approach:

> (…) wild and exotic recipes are inappropriate for our audience (editor weekly).

> The recipes have to be very simple with ingredients that they know and love (section editor weekly).

While the monthly magazine staff indicate that their readers have more experience of world travel.

> We bring in bits of new research or things they have seen in other countries (editor monthly).

This finding demonstrates that editors reference very different experiences and expectations when presenting magazine material concerning travel.

Alternative food and eating practice

Beck's ideas about the collision of public and private spheres could also be expected to manifest in the inclusion of increasingly alternative food and eating practice. The interview data was examined in terms of the respondent's views on including food and eating material like vegetarianism, organic produce or environmental related issues. The monthly editorial staff confirmed that these kinds of issues had a profound influence on policy.

> For us, things like organic food and so on are
>
> very important (editor monthly).

> I try to position the food pages to be very seasonal,
>
> against the corporate…to support the farmers and
>
> against the supermarkets (section editor monthly).

The weekly editorial staff barely registered alternative practice as important to their framing of content. A weekly section editor provided an example of how much 'alternative practice' was included in their magazine, having just written a feature on other types of fish that can replace more expensive cod.

> We've said, 'It's been over fished' and that was it.
>
> We leave it at that. I saw a feature recently in [a monthly

magazine title]. They had a whole page about the

species you should be eating and all about ethical

fishing. Our readers aren't interested in all that

(section editor weekly).

Another weekly editor was quite frank about the influence of alternative

practices on their editorial policy:

Our readers wouldn't give a toss about that! I mean

it's just- 'can they afford it, is it cheap?' (editor

weekly).

These statements corroborate the findings in chapter six, that

alternative practice has been practically non-existent in the weekly

magazine sample. These findings suggest that Beck's ideas about

institutional policies opening up the world for their readers are in this

case, confined to the economically privileged middle classes, whose

world is assumed by editors to be already open.

The disappearance of social status distinction

Beck asserts that status-based signification is less important in the

orientation of modern identity and the characteristics of collective

distinction will recede as more democratised signifiers emerge (Beck,

1992: 1999). In the interview data, responses were examined for

indications of the cultural signifiers editorial staff refer to when constructing magazine content. In this way, the editorial values associated with food and eating presentation were identified. These values were then compared between the weekly and monthly editorial staff.

The interview data was littered with discrepancies between the weekly and monthly magazine staff on the institutional philosophy behind magazine content. This came across in the monthly magazine editor's more aesthetic descriptions of the food and eating content appropriate for their readers.

> We kind of look at deeper feelings about food within
>
> our culture and within society as a whole, without
>
> making it sound very grandiose (editor monthly).

> The way that it works for us is that this feeds
>
> back to using the freshest, best quality ingredients. It's
>
> about celebrating the quality of the ingredients (editor
>
> monthly).

The weekly magazine editors identified their main priorities when selecting appropriate food and eating content with the same clarity, but highlighted very different concerns.

> (…) they want cheap food to fill you up fast (section editor weekly).

> You can't ask our readers to take a piece of fresh ginger…I mean please… I mean asparagus: 'what's that then? Foreign muck'…they're really very down to earth (section editor weekly).

The interview findings illustrate the different identification systems employed between the weekly and monthly magazine editors. The editorial staff went on to discuss the influences of social class on their day-to-day decisions in a frank manner.

> There are class aspects to this as well, broadly speaking our magazine is read by people who fit into the ABC 1 demographic (editor monthly).

> A lot of magazines, well they all aim to be for ABC1 readers. I mean, our readers are D and E and we're proud of it (section editor weekly).

An important observation is the very matter-of-fact way in which these influences were discussed by editorial staff.

Summary

The findings from the textual analysis in Chapter VI show that the contrasting framing mechanisms used in the weekly and monthly magazine titles have remained consistent over the twenty-five year sample. Editorial policies operate within very different classificatory systems between the monthly and weekly titles that have fundamental effects on content and framing policies that are based on their audience's economic status.

The interview data establishes the rhetoric around the values and assumptions about social reality that are held in the women's magazine sector (Alvesson, 2002 and Chapter II). The interview data refers to practices around social knowledge presentation, social relationships and collective distinction, which demonstrate the continuing influence of social contrasts, that Beck asserts will diminish in modernity, continue to influence institutional practice.

The interview data has illustrated that editors retain definitional authority over both traditional and alternative expertise. The social relationships through which women are addressed remain predominantly family-centred and Beck's ideas about the increasing decline in collective differentiation in organisational policy are not supported. These findings suggest that contemporary organisations, rather than offering a greater degree of choice about self-identity and enhancing reflexivity, agency

and instrumentalism on the part of their readers, as Beck proposes, can be seen as operating to increase readers' individual responsibilities without relinquishing organisational discretion, authority or autonomy (Webb, 2004: 723).

Editorship and organisational culture

Members of organisations, especially senior ones, are always 'managing culture', in that they underscore what is important and frame how the world should be understood (Alvesson, 2002: 1). The interviews permitted an examination of the production side of the media communication process that illuminates the forms of constraints and freedoms this group of media professionals self-identify as affecting day-to-day practice and their professional identity (Chapter II).

Data from the editorial interviews concerning the influence of commercial realities, like advertising, on the framing of magazine content is provided. A discussion of the theme of the professional discourse regarding issues of actuality is included, as the pressure placed on media practitioners to provide entertainment as well as information was examined (see Meyer, 2004; Preston, 2004). Finally, the circulation of tacit knowledge to other members of the organisation was examined to discover how media professionals achieve common interpretations of situations so that coordinated action is possible (see Tunstall, 1971, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003). In this way, the level of

surface behaviours and external pressures is opened up to examine how this set of professionals interpret and relate their actions to seemingly practical matters (McNair, 2000; 2003; Harcup, 2004).

Commercial realities

At interview it became immediately apparent that commercial realities underpin many framing decisions made by editors in the women's magazine sector (Chapter II).

> My job is to sell magazines. They have to sell to the reader, but serve my commercial interests too (editor weekly).

> All magazines are supposed to make money (editor monthly).

> You have to work closely with advertising, as there are certain things they want done (editor weekly).

> It's all about- 'Will that sell? Will that sell?' (…) What she [the editor] needs to know is that there is something to sell on the cover (section editor monthly).

One staff member explained how difficult these pressures made it difficult for her to be honest about certain products:

> When we do a children's feature and say, 'do not feed your children with [named brand of children's drink]' then I've got [named brand children's drink] advert withdrawn from the magazine and its like 'agghh!' (section editor monthly).

However, other editorial staff argued they had the ultimate say in what adverts the magazine would take.

> Sometimes they come down and say, 'would you be happy taking this advert?' But there may be some things that you think, well actually, some things are more controversial or the way the artwork or the particular campaign that they are running and we think- 'no that's not for us' (editor weekly).

Another member of staff related that this was not a problem, when advertisers have not understood their readers.

> We've had advertising people saying: 'Are you going to do a tried and tested on fresh orange juice?' Our readers

> simply buy the cheapest orange juice they can! They're
>
> not going to buy fresh orange juice (section editor weekly).

The same section editor explained that on the other hand, she relied quite heavily on commercially produced recipes to fill up her fifty-two cookery pages a year.

> We haven't got a budget, we have no money to spend
>
> on our food pages (…), so I spend quite a lot of my
>
> time looking for recipes that maybe manufacturers
>
> have come up with (section editor weekly).

Another editor states that the only problem advertising raises for her is ensuring that advertising and editorial content are positioned in a way that does not offend the audience.

> I liaise with the adverting people to make sure you
>
> don't have say, an anorexic story facing a weight
>
> watchers advert because that could cause offence and
>
> upset to our readers and the advertiser isn't going to
>
> be happy either (editor weekly).

The following comments illustrated the paradoxical position occupied by media professionals (Chapter II).

There is nothing I can do- I will say if I want to be

truthful about a product but I can't because you know

we get sixty grand for this. So, we have to temper our

content so we don't alienate our advertisers so that's

the balance (section editor monthly).

These almost contradictory comments showed that these professionals continually attempt to maintain a balance between their desire to be honest with their audience and the commercial necessity of retaining essential advertising contracts (McKay, 2000: Morrish, 1996 and Chapter II).

In the interview data, the commercial success of any woman's magazine title was identified as the single most important thing the editorial staff had to maintain. We live in a market-driven society, yet Beck's ideas ignore the circumstances of an institution as a commercial enterprise operating in a capitalist system.

The rhetoric of actuality

During the examination of material framed in terms of 'the world of work' in both the textual and interview data, the question of whether magazines reflect reality or fantasy kept emerging (Chapter II). The textual analysis found minimal attention to women's employment, although the editors themselves appear to have been aware of the

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rising numbers of women working outside the home. One could argue that if your goal is to entertain or provide escapism, ignoring your reader's working lives is understandable. However, as the textual analysis findings show in Chapter VI, the work and employment discourse predominates in the monthly magazine sector. Does this suggest that it is mainly working class women that perform work that they do not enjoy and thus need escape from? Or does this situation highlight that whether you work outside the home or not, it makes no difference to your responsibilities to the family as a woman?

The following interview data illustrated how the editors approached their magazines role of fulfilling both fantasy and reality functions.

> You buy your magazine to entertain you foremost and then secondly it's great if it informs you (editor weekly).

> We just try and make the recipes as generally useful to our readers as possible (editor weekly).

> We shouldn't overplay the importance of magazines in people's lives. They're a lovely flick they're nice to read they're an escape, they're entertainment, you know… you tend to…not to…save lives or lose lives (editor weekly).

I'm not here to change the world you know… I would

not feel at ease if that was expected (editor weekly).

You might never ever cook it, what people do is look at it

and think 'Ooh I'll make that', they never do, but it's like

enjoyment. It's like a travel feature. The whole point of

travel features is you look at the picture and think 'I want

to go on that beach' and the whole point is you look at it

and you think 'Ooh, I could eat that now' and if they do

make it, then that's a bonus (editor weekly).

It's just…just realistic things (editor weekly).

These comments illustrate that as an organisational mores in the

women's magazine sector manage both reality and fantasy material in a

practical and seemingly unproblematic way. However, it can, and has

been argued that this has always been the case in this sector (Chapter

II).

The circulation of tacit knowledge

The development of a system of training that facilitates the transfer of

organisationally defined ways of doing things, illustrates how common,

taken for granted ideas and meanings are necessary for the successful

continuation of organised activities, as 'this makes interaction possible without constant confusion or intense interpretation and re-interpretation of meanings' (Alvesson, 2002: 2).

The interview data was used to examine how other members of staff are introduced to, and interact with, working practices in this sector (Chapter II). The editorial responses showed striking parallels in all these areas, despite the fact that interviews were conducted with different individuals, working to different deadlines, working for different corporations and using different operational practices. The similarities of the responses at interview are evidence of the construction of a shared understanding of the respondent's professional situation (Chapter II). In this context, this is most obviously manifest in the editors' own descriptions of how this tacit professional knowledge ensures everyone working on the publication knows exactly what is expected from them.

> She knows the magazine exactly and knows exactly the formats we use and all that sort of thing and she's very in tune with our readership. So she generally turns in flawless copies (…) and we kind of stick with that formula (editor monthly).

> It's just me (…) and its up to me to find the right elements (section editor weekly).

> We've worked with [named celebrity chef] but again he had to do it my way because he doesn't understand my brand (…) they do not know how your woman ticks (section editor monthly).

> The majority of my team are in-house. But there are some key things that we tend to freelance out and we have a pool of reliable, regular freelancers who we like to use (section editor monthly).

> We have a pool of freelancers (…). We use the same pool of people, some we've had for years, so we have complete control in house (editor weekly).

A striking finding here is that despite different working practices, all the editorial staff acknowledged that they have ultimate control over the content, whoever authored it. Where freelances are used, the editors specify that they use the same people: people who clearly share this tacit knowledge.

It also became apparent that these media professionals operated in a community where long-term working relationships flourished.

> We've worked together for four years- she trusts me (editor monthly).

We used to work at [another magazine title] together (section editor monthly).

The existence of these long-term working relationships highlighted the significance of the filtering-through-the-ranks of a magazine's existing editorial policy. The last data example demonstrates that although editorial teams can and do work together for a long time, it can often occur on other magazine titles, with very different readership profiles. Further, editors and editorial teams move quite frequently (Chapter II), yet despite the comings and goings of a variety of editorial members of staff, the magazine titles carry on framing material in a remarkably equivalent way.

Through the interviews it became clear that, when starting a new editorial post, staff were quickly introduced to the finer points of that particular title's readership profile.

When I first started, I asked my editor: 'Who is our typical reader?'. He said 'The Royle Family' (…) Barbara and Jim, so you have to ask yourself: 'Would Barbara cook that?' (section editor weekly).

It was her first job out of college and she'd never done shoots before, (…) but what she's learnt since

she's been here well…working with our

photographers (…) because actually that could be

different you know…she would go there and her and

[named staff member] have worked together a lot and I

went with her on the first couple of shoots and we go

'ok this is what you do' (editor weekly).

The significance of accumulating this kind of tacit knowledge was reflected in the following example, where a section editor explained how, as a new member of staff, she learnt her title's editorial approach.

Nobody says 'you did it wrong' or you don't get

called up to the office, but when I first started, nearly

every feature I wrote came back. An associate editor

just brought everything back and said, 'this is

not…you haven't quite got the hang of it'. I hardly get

any back now so, it's just knowing who they [the

readers] are, It's easy now because I just have this in my

mind exactly what they are (section editor weekly).

Clearly, professional socialisation is fundamentally important in ensuring that a magazine's established orientation to food and eating presentation is maintained. These findings concur with Ferguson's twenty-year-old description of this process (Ferguson, 1983: 131; and Chapter II).

The interview data confirms that the sharing of tacit knowledge is essential to the smooth running of the whole editorial process. However, when asked about the specifics of their editorial policy, the editorial staff members all agreed they could not really describe it.

> I couldn't sit down and think 'we've got to do this, we've got to do that, we've got to do blah, blah', but basically it's got to conform to what our understanding of what the majority of readers want (editor monthly).

Editors did try to describe their policy, but actually ended up by talking about what they avoided rather than what they aimed for.

> Among the things I hate are pictures with soft focus- which has been very fashionable lately I don't think it works, pictures on a tilt, um…folded up napkins (…), yeah, so it's, as I say if [named staff member] has done the pictures herself we tend to, you know, we know… we understand (editor monthly).

All the respondents repeatedly indicated how much they relied on other members of staff to consistently provide the appropriate content.

Where it is the cookery editor who is involved in devising recipes and photographing it (…) we've worked together for so long, these things are unspoken between us. It's not an issue, it's only an issue where someone else comes into the mix like with a celebrity chef or something and that's when you kind of go 'Er, you know that particular things too fussy for us or we need it simpler' (editor monthly).

We've worked together now for five years, it's instinct (editor weekly).

It comes to me and then I'll approve it or go- 'yeah' (…) or 'not sure', in which case you'll re-shoot, which is very rare because we…well I've been editor here for five years and the cookery editor been here all that time. So they know what I like, so it's very unusual (editor weekly).

The interview data indicates that tacit socialisation of staff members occurs through 'in house' training systems. Relating this finding back to Beck's predictions, it is clear that for institutions to be able to enact the kinds of changes he predicts through their procedures would be a more practically complex and theoretically challenging issue than he advocates.

Conclusion

The interview data has been used to demonstrate that current editorial policy concerning the inclusion of social knowledge cannot be described as challenging the existing institutional hierarchy in the way that Beck proposes (Chapters I and II). Magazine staff responded to the potential problem of information overload by increasing their existing selection processes. The institutional practice of addressing women primarily in their roles of mother and responsible for household duties rather than the wider array of alternatives that Beck suggests is evident. The findings challenge Beck's idea that institutional policy will increasingly demonstrate an active disappearance of collective distinctions. The data confirms that editorial framing practices use collective distinctions that are informed, first and foremost through their readerships' income potential. The interviews indicate that editors treat the link between income and status position as analogous. This is in direct contrast with Beck's claim that relationships between income, status and access to knowledge are becoming increasingly insignificant (Chapter I).

The influence of the commercial imperatives of competition and the role of journalists as market actors is shown to fundamentally inform organisational practice. These issues are ignored by Beck's narrative. The rhetoric of actuality exposed by the interview data illustrates that the fundamental institutional goal of providing both information and entertainment is conducted un-problematically by magazine staff. The

deeply embedded nature of social practice in institutions is exemplified by the passing on of tacit knowledge through the organisational ranks. The interview findings illustrate that the decisions professionals take are not simply the product of editorial autonomy but are both constrained and constituted by the commercial goals of the mass media as an organisation (Chapter II).

The interview findings show that production concerns permeate the women's magazine sector so pervasively, that even the most indiscernible commercial content is relayed as favourable to their readers. These pressures contradict the ideals of autonomy and non-materialism, as the promotion of 'things', whether material, cultural or personal, legitimates the commercial goals of this sector. The data presented sheds light on the contradictions inherent in an occupational culture dependent on advertising revenue, retaining definitional control and the transmission of these occupational values through an 'in-house' training system. These issues challenge the traditional mythology surrounding assumptions about working in a mass media organisation (Chapter II).

Performance in the women's magazine sector is measured through economic success in the context of the discipline of the capitalist market. Consequently, the scope for modifying meanings in media institutions must be seen as being in the context of commercial organisations unwilling to threaten their own profit margins. These

issues underline that, before predicting fundamental changes in institutional policy, Beck needs to show a greater appreciation of the logic of for-profit organisations operating within a capitalist system.

CHAPTER VIII

Ulrich Beck's 'risk society' thesis and the British general interest women's magazine sector

Beck's 'risk society' thesis contains some strong universal statements about the nature of contemporary society and its direction of change. The theoretical premise is that since the 1950s the 'shared life experiences mediated by the market and shaped by status, which Marx and Weber brought together in the concept of social class, [have begun] to break apart' (Beck, 1992: 96). Beck argues that since this time, new relations of definition have steadily unfolded, which have accelerated in the last twenty-five years (Beck, 2000a: 224). At the same time, processes of individualisation and reflexive modernisation have put increasing pressure on institutions to promote the devolution of strategic control and open up choice and autonomy in an age of social uncertainty (Beck, 1992: 96; 2000a: 224 and Chapter I).

This project has taken three separate statements made by Beck, about: democratisation, individualisation and the disappearance of collective distinction, which are all processes he asserts can be universally applied to all institutions in contemporary society, and operationalised them into hypotheses. These hypotheses have been tested in the women's magazine sector over a twenty-five year period, with the

expectation that specific changes would have occurred in this institution over this time period.

The women's magazine titles selected for the data sample were chosen through the socio-economic groupings of their target audiences (Chapter III). Half of the samples were taken from the monthly magazine titles, *Good Housekeeping, Prima* and *Company*. These titles have been taken as representative of audiences grouped into socio-economic groups A, B, C1. The second half of the sample is taken from *Woman's Weekly, Best,* and *Chat* magazines, which are taken as representative of socio-economic groups C2, D and E (Chapter III). Editorial staff from each of the six magazine titles in the sample were interviewed regarding their editorial policy, which were detailed in data Chapter VII. The shifts Beck predicts in relational positions to social knowledge were examined in data Chapter IIII. The changes argued to be affecting social relations as points of reference were evaluated in chapter five. Finally, Beck's assertion that unequal economic or status relations no longer determined life chances was tested in data Chapter VI.

The following discussions chapter is divided into two sections. Section one reviews the original hypothesis and summarises the data findings. Section two directly evaluates Beck's claims in light of these empirical findings.

Hypotheses and findings

The theoretical framework for the thesis was generated directly from the sociological composition of Beck's 'risk society' thesis (Chapters I and III). Specifically, Beck's ideas about the transformations in the three key aspects of class-based distinction have been evaluated through a twenty-five sample of food and eating content from the women's magazine sector.

Hypothesis 1: The democratisation of social knowledge

Beck's premise is that organisations are becoming less hierarchical and this will be evident in shifts in lay participation, and a diversification of knowledge sources. As a result of these changes, anxiety will become a feature of routinised institutional practice (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003). Data Chapter IIII evaluated whether a democratisation of social knowledge has occurred in this sector. In the women's magazine sample, the democratisation of social knowledge hypothesis gives rise to three predictions:

Hypothesis 1:

1) Readership participation will rise and be increasingly presented as legitimate and as a critical institutional resource

2) Sources of authoritative knowledge will diversify, resulting in the increasing fragmentation of expert knowledge, which will become contradictory, treated as contingent information and subject to institutional scepticism

3) Anxiety-provoking content will rise as a vacuum of authority materialises

Findings

1) Reader participation

- As a proportion of the total food and eating related items, readership participation has remained static
- This material is consistently presented as entertainment and illustration rather than as a critical resource or as increasingly authoritative
- The form in which this material is presented remains different between the weekly and monthly magazines

Summary

The majority of reader-sourced material cannot be described as feeding directly into institutionalised decision-making processes (Chapter IIII). This evidence suggests that, despite editorial rhetoric that readers are

continually encouraged to interact with their magazine title, empowering readers as a management practice is as likely to be driven by the rationales of cost cutting and market efficiency.

2) Expert knowledge

- Sources of expert knowledge external to the editorial staff have increased slightly in the monthly magazine sector. The sources of this knowledge have not diversified over the sample
- The presentation of contradictory expert knowledge remains minimal and expert knowledge presented with editorial scepticism has not risen across the sample
- The differential inclusion of expertise between the monthly and weekly magazines is explained by editors as conforming to the different knowledge and educational requirements of their audiences

Summary

Beck's ideas about the increasing involvement of alternative expertise becoming an institutionalised dynamic are not sustained. The ways in which these experts are included does nothing to upset existing institutional priorities and remains differentiated between the weekly and monthly sectors. This evidence suggests that interaction with alternative, contradictory and contingent expertise as a management

practice is likely to be driven by the different planning and budgeting cycles of the weekly and monthly magazine titles rather than an institutionalised dynamic of legitimating uncertainty (Chapter II).

3) Anxiety-provoking content

- P*otentially*-anxiety provoking content has risen in the monthly magazine sector over the sampled time frame
- However, this content is consistently subject to editorial reassurance and therefore cannot be described as being presented as left open for individual decision-making.
- Editorial staff confirm the emphasis is on providing the 'known' facts rather than intentionally unsettling their audience

Summary

The potential of anxiety-provoking content is reduced by the continuity of reassuring practice. Content rarely simply presents the choices available thus leaving the reader to make up their own mind, as Beck envisages. Thus, Beck's proposal that an increase in the presentation of issues to be anxious about that will result in a 'normalised' state of institutionalised uncertainty is not upheld.

Conclusion

Readers' contributions, external expertise and research reports have become an increasing feature in the women's magazine sector over the sampled time frame. However, closer analysis of the framing practices utilised in this sector undermines the significance Beck places on these phenomena. Publishing more heavily edited reader's letters and research reports is an inexpensive editorial strategy that ensures the maintenance, not the delegation of hierarchical organisational authority. Additionally, the data findings illustrate that the phenomena discussed consistently have been presented differentially between the weekly and monthly sectors over the sample. These finding contradict Beck's prediction that collective material-based distinction will have little effect on the democratisation of social knowledge.

Hypothesis 2:   The individualisation of social relationships

As traditional social ties have progressively become more relaxed, Beck asserts that self-discovery, self-assertion and a quest for self-fulfilment will characterise the new forms of regulation for the modern individual (Beck, 1999: 149). Beck asserts that new relations of definition will move away from the centrality of the ascribed, predominantly family-centred relations binding society (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995: 2003: 37). Data Chapter V examined whether an individualisation of

social relationships could be said to be occurring as Beck's premise gives rise to three specific empirical predictions:

Hypothesis 2:

1) The female self will be increasingly addressed as independent of wider social relationships

2) An increase in references to relationships with friends will occur

5) A reduction in references to relations with the family will be apparent

Findings

1) Increasing address to the female self

- Magazine content addressing the female self has risen over time and across the magazine sector. However, as a percentage of the total food and eating content, a more complex picture is presented

- When examined comparatively, the proportion of content addressing the female self as independent and the self as responsible for others have remained constant over the selected time frame

- Women are not being increasingly addressed as autonomous and as independent from the needs of others. This is confirmed at interview, as members of the editorial staff spoke about their

readers in the context of their familial and domestic roles rather than as autonomous and self-actualised individuals

Summary

The female 'self' continues to be addressed as being responsible for household and family duties. Beck's ideas about new forms of self-regulation appearing in new relations of definition are not supported by these data findings. The minimal differences in address to the female self, identified in the younger monthly magazine title, *Company* can also be explained as operating within the constraints of existing class and gender systems rather than challenging them (Warde, 1997: 125).

2) The consolidation of elected friendships

- Magazine content referring to elected friendships has decreased both over the sampled time frame and across this sector.

- Content referring to elected friendships is significantly more evident in the monthly magazine sector

- The interview findings illustrate that weekly magazine editorial staff see their readers' 'friendships' as sourced from their geographic location or their family and that the financial implications of feeding friends exclude entertainment possibilities for their readers. In contrast, the monthly magazine staff

acknowledge that their readers regularly provide dinner parties for friends.

Summary

Beck's prediction that elected friendships will increase in importance is not supported as references to friendships outside the family have reduced overall, rather than expanded. However, this phenomenon is also dependent on the target age group of the magazine title. The sample predominantly contains magazines aimed at women with families. The findings illustrate that the discourse of friendship remains relatively consistent in the monthly magazine sector. When issues of social differentiation are introduced, one can see that the characteristics of elected friendships can also be used to illustrate the persistence of collective ties that are significant in sustaining the existing social order, rather than challenging it (Pahl, 2000).

3) Decreasing address to the family

- Material explicitly addressing family relations has declined over the sampled time frame. However, this is accompanied by a rise in implicit references to the family as a rationale for food and eating content. The assumption that the family will eat the same thing and together are found to be consistent over the sampled time frame and across this sector

- Editorial staff talk about their readers as women caring for others, with the exception of the representative from the younger women's monthly magazine title. She confirmed that the self, heterosexual romance and female friends are the relationship focuses in this title. This is confirmed by the textual analysis. However, at interview it is stated that marriage and family, while being beyond the remit of this particular magazine title are just as inevitable for their readers in the fullness of time

- These findings demonstrate the remarkably universal character of the female self as positioned as responsible for caring for others. The fundamental significance of the family to feminine identity is retained, if not sometimes delayed by social-economic distinction

Summary

References to the family have remained relatively consistent over the sampled time frame, albeit more implicitly. The magazines in the sample rarely mention partners or give specific details of the structure of family relations, over and above references to children and family. This could be taken as evidence to suggest that the women's magazine sector acknowledge the existence of different family forms. However, the underlying assumption that the reader is almost always preparing or buying food for others is never far away. The number of servings provided in food and eating related items are consistently indicative of a

family dimension, rather than a person or couple living without dependants.

Conclusion

Beck's prediction that institutional practice will increasingly encourage and support the individualisation of social relationships is not supported by the data findings. Female readers are consistently addressed in the traditional familial nexus of the female self (Chapter II). The data findings do not uphold Beck's assertion that the gendered and socio-economic origins of feminine identity have been either challenged or changed reflexively over the sampled time frame in this sector.

Hypothesis 3: The evacuation of collective distinction

Data chapter six examines whether collective distinction traditionally maintained through the social class system could be described as undergoing a measure of convergence in the face of the processes of modernisation. With the breakdown of many traditional certainties that were structured predominantly through class, Beck predicts that practice in society will lose its sub-cultural basis as processes of individualization deprive class distinctions of their social identity (Beck, 1999). Beck asserts that collective distinctions will recede in relation to newly-emerging more democratised relations of definition in modernity. Beck asserts that changing organisational practice lies at the heart of

the reworking of class relations, as collective meanings around issues such as material status disappear, private and public spheres collide and style or status based differentials converge. Therefore, the disappearance of collective distinctions hypothesis gives rise to three predictions:

Hypothesis 3:

1) Economic distinction will disappear. This will be apparent in both weekly and monthly magazines.

2) A convergence of references to the wider world will occur, i.e. references to employment, travel and alternative food practice will be equally apparent in the weekly and monthly titles

3) A convergence of dietary and style content will also occur between the weekly and monthly magazine titles

Findings

1) The disappearance of economic distinction

- Content associated with money are framed with very different values in the weekly and monthly titles

- The weekly sector has consistently retained a focus on spending as little money as possible, whilst the monthly magazines focus on ensuring a good quality product

- Weekly magazine editors confirm that their readers are fundamentally interested in keeping costs down, while monthly

staff state that more aesthetic and value for money issues are significant goals for their readers.

Summary

Economic distinction retains a significant influence on the mediated framing of food and eating content between the weekly and monthly sectors throughout the sampled time frame.

b) The convergence of public and private spheres

- Employment and training are barely referred to in the weekly sector and although the world of work is referred to in the monthly sector, this remains minimal
- Foreign travel in the weekly magazine titles sector is referred to as places their readers 'dream' of visiting, whereas in the monthly magazines their readers are addressed as already being influenced by other cultures
- The percentage of the total food and content including references to environmental issues has risen, almost solely in the monthly magazine sector

Summary

References to the wider world (work, travel, alternative practice) have not converged between the weekly and monthly magazine titles. When

added together the three variants, taken as references indicating a merging of public and private spheres, are almost solely accounted for in the monthly titles.

3) The convergence of dietary and style distinction

- The monthly magazine sector demonstrates a consistently high number of references to distinct aesthetics and atmospheric issues. These are non-existent in the weekly titles
- The weekly titles concentrate on the substantiality of a meal, while the monthly titles retains a focus on the healthy and natural qualities of food
- The interview findings confirm that there is a deliberate and consistent editorial policy that ensures distinction in content presentation to specific magazine audiences

Summary

These findings do not support any convergent trends with reference to dietary or style distinction between the monthly and weekly sectors. The monthly magazine sector has consistently provided more in the way of content concerned with elaboration of economic status, the public sphere and distinction in style over the sample. Fundamental distinctions remain concerning the values used to frame magazine content.

These findings do not support Beck's claim that institutional policy increasingly supports the disappearance of collective distinction. These data findings cannot 'prove' the direction of cause, i.e. whether media practice reflects or constructs distinction. However, these findings suggest that collective distinctions retain their influence as an organising system in the women's magazine sector.

Relations of definition in the women's magazine sector

The three hypotheses testing Beck's assertion that new democratised relations of definition (as opposed to class-differentiated relations of definition) can be identified in cultural organisations have been tested against the data generated by this project. According to Beck, new relations of definition function in the 'risk society' to encourage competing identities, choices and different forms of knowledge so that the ways in which individuals relate to and identify with alternative identities multiply. In his thesis, new relations of definition are considered to be characterised by changing institutionalised definitional management that damages the reliability of traditional social knowledge and expertise and effects the way we re-negotiate traditional affiliations and collective distinction.

Beck would expect new relations of definition to have been evident in the women's magazine sector, as knowledge, relationships, economic

and status distinction (inherent in class-based experience) would disappear in the face of the new distributional logic of risk (Chapter I). However, the data findings have illustrated that over the last twenty-five years, the women's magazine sector has retained a remarkable consistency of distinction in relations of definition, which are articulated in magazine titles aimed at readers of the same socio-economic group (Chapter II).

The way women's magazines relate to their audiences and frame content has been shown as conforming to, rather than disrupting the existing hierarchy of institutional practice and social knowledge legitimation in this sector (Chapter IIII). The findings demonstrate that diversity in systems of expertise is restricted to the monthly magazines (Chapter IIII). Expertise in this sector cannot be described as fragmented knowledge, which is presented as being contested by experts from both inside and outside the relations of definition (Chapter IIII). The findings show that differences in the presentation of expertise between the monthly and weekly magazine sectors is more likely to be explained by the different budgeting and planning cycles of these different sectors (Chapter II). At the end of the day it is cheaper to paraphrase a report from a medical journal, than it is to interview the researcher and find out which books can be purchased to follow up the topic in more detail (Chapter II).

The findings have shown there is little evidence to support institutional recognition that family forms are diversifying or that women's domestic responsibilities are changing (Chapter V). These findings suggest that the commercial environment of the women's magazine sector can account for this position, as potential advertisers want to address women in their potentially lucrative role of being responsible for household purchases (see Kahn, 2001 and Chapter II). The data findings have also shown a remarkable consistency of ideas articulated in magazine titles aimed at readers of the same social class, indicating that collective distinction informs editorial framing practice into the early twenty first century (Chapters VI and VII).

The women's magazine sector has a commercial rationale, which must influence or indeed maintain established working practices which are formed around the economic, social, cultural and cognitive schemas already recognised by a title's target readership (Chapters II and VII). The interview findings have established that the commercial environment in which these popular publications exist has the potential to negate any pressure on existing institutions to articulate more complex and fragmented identities.

This thesis shows that relations of definition in the women's magazine sector are structuring and managing not new, but repetitively similar modalities of sense making and self-identity construction for their female readers. As relations of definition are characterised by Beck as

accepted instituionalised statements about the 'real' world, the empirical data shows, that in terms of relations of definition in the women's magazine sector, little has changed in the 'real world' for women since 1979.

In terms of institutions addressing new and increasingly alternative relations of definition the data findings show that cultural differentiation between socio-economically grouped audiences has remained basically unchanged. These findings pose serious objections to Beck's theory of social change. At a practical level, this project shows that institutions cannot simply enact the kinds of changes that Beck predicts overnight. The findings highlight that institutional change is an economically sensitive, practically complex and more theoretically challenging issue than Beck acknowledges.

This thesis questions the adequacy of Beck's conceptual framework, in as much as he has been proved fundamentally wrong in his assertion that in relations of definition in modernity, money does not matter.

Reflections on Beck's thesis

Beck's thesis offers a seemingly plausible account of the choice and deliberation characterising modern self-identity and relations of definition in 'risk society'. His institutionalised individualisation thesis offers insights into the interplay between modern selfhood and society's

organisations (Chapter I). However, the data findings of this project have highlighted the continuation of differentiated limits on self-reliance and control associated with feminine identity in the women's magazine sector. The boundaries set around the development of a modern female identity have been shown to be disturbed by the constraints of a political economy on the one hand and apparently immutable classed and gendered life trajectories on the other. The continued existence of collective distinction identified between the weekly and monthly magazine titles shows that social class remains a significant feature of institutional practice (Chapter VI). The only characteristic that appears unrelated to socio-economic distinction in the findings is the immovable assumption that women will, eventually, look after others. These findings provide an empirical basis for a critique of Beck's assertion that changing instituionalised practice will support a new basis for self-awareness and self-identity.

The findings of this project illuminate three significant problems with Beck's theoretical premise, which are outlined and discussed in this section of the chapter. First, the implications of the research findings on Beck's claim that we are experiencing something fundamentally new are highlighted. Second, the findings are used to critic Beck's insistence that all society's institutions have oppositional potential. Finally, the implications of Beck overstating the democratising force of modernity are outlined.

Inflated claim of an historical break

The longitudinal scope of this research project has provided empirical data that refutes Beck's claim that identity is now being founded by historically unique processes. Beck's theoretical premise excludes any serious consideration that these 'new' processes may simply be filtering through existing social divisions. As the findings of this thesis have highlighted, all the shifts Beck predicts are just as likely to reinforce hierarchies of power, proliferate inequalities and social exclusion, as they are to break them down (Chapters IIII, V, VI and VII). Beck fails to give sufficient sociological weight to the possibility that these processes may actually embody systematically asymmetrical relations of patriarchy and class power (Elliott, 2002: 304).

Beck's account of cultural experience concentrates so much on social transformation that it lacks receptiveness to issues of social order. His theoretical premise overlooks existing social structures and their reproduction, consistency and continuity. This has resulted in the durable structure of social knowledge relationships, the resilience of ascribed social relations and the enduring significance of class as a benchmark for social experience and existing expectations and orientations to identity formation being largely ignored. This position is reinforced by the findings of this project, which has found no evidence to suggest that development in the women's magazine market over the last twenty-five years, that could not be analysed largely in the terms

set by the nineteenth century founders of sociology (see Dingwall, 1999).

This project has show that reflexivity is more likely to occur in the monthly magazine sector than the weekly sector (see Lash, 1994; 2003 and Chapters IIII, V and VI). This highlights that the socio-cultural conditions of the wealthy and poor still drastically affect the ways in which individuals are drawn into the project of modernity (Chapter VI). This situation challenges Beck's assertion that capitalism and consumption are features or side effects, not motors of 'risk society' (Chapter I). The unrelenting reproduction of collective distinctions illustrated in this project suggests that social class remains a significant yardstick of life chances, while access to material resources continues to be a key determinant of organisational policy (Chapter VI). The findings reinforce the argument that lay voices are still rarely granted an opportunity to develop an argument, let alone challenge authority (see Cottle, 2003: 29 and Chapter IIII). Beck's over-emphasis on common experience regarding the uncertainty of expert knowledge systems illustrates that he has failed to deal with difference and structural location in the ways that commercial institutional policy respond to and understand their consumers (Tulloch and Lupton, 1997). Beck has failed to contextualise how information is packaged and disseminated (see Yadlon, 1997).

According to Beck, traditional social divisions have been fully transformed into a new logic of risk, as if the latter disconnects the former from its institutionalised biases and processes (Elliott, 2002: 304). Beck's conception is of a new form of modernity, involving an alternative organisation of social practice, including self-criticism in all its forms. The findings of this project show that contemporary institutional policy relies on social disparities as a matter of routine economic existence (Chapter VII). Relations of definition in the magazine sector are therefore indelibly linked to the distribution of wealth in society, as access to money is as significant as ever been (see, Rustin, 1994: McGuigan, 1999 and Chapter VI and VII). Indeed, there is little in the 'risk society' thesis to assure us that the emergence of processes of modernity will automatically provide an improvement in our conditions of existence (Smart, 1999: 73). The findings of the present thesis add empirical weight to the improbability that the radical restructuring of cultural experience that Beck proposes has occurred (Elliott, 2002: 304).

For example, Beck focuses on the particular significance of rising economic activity rates among women, yet he fails to acknowledge that the stimulus to work may be differential between different groups of women, a choice that is again tied firmly into material status and educational resources (Chapter VI). A working identity may not be choice, but a necessity for some women as some groups of people are not building portfolio careers or constantly changing jobs, whether

through choice or necessity. In terms of an autonomous identity, 'if you align yourself with one kind of low paid job rather than another, this can be interpreted as a reduction, not an expansion of choice to a narrowly circumscribed level' (Webb, 2004: 734; Warde, 1994).

In Beck's preoccupation with change rather than continuity we can see that, far from the unintended consequences of industrialism transforming the world, we are just as likely to be witnessing the intensification of the effects of a capitalist market. Beck has ignored the ways in which the continuity of existing social relations operate and influence modern identity formation and institutional practice. The findings of the present thesis reinforce that risks of inequality and social exclusion are still real and still relate to relations of production and distribution of wealth in society (see Rustin, 1994).

Exaggerating the oppositional potential of society's institutions

Beck's thesis conceives of all society's institutions and their employees as serving in an advocacy or voluntaristic role, despite the reality that many institutions primary and explicit function is to maximise return for profit. This is somewhat surprising as Beck began his career as a sociologist of institutions. This thesis' findings illustrate that Beck's thesis is depreciated by a lack of acknowledgement of the disciplines of the market economy on the existence of the processes he describes. Beck's subsumes social units, such as social relationships, social

knowledge and collective distinction as being affected in similar ways under the same unifying forces of modernisation without examining their localised contextual effects (Chapter II). As the present thesis has demonstrated, a 'relational' analysis of the social contexts and forms of meaning making inscribed in different institutional fields emphasises the less than sophisticated nature of Beck's theoretical premise (see Elliot, 2002: 301).

Beck has produced an extravagant and economically naïve sense of the potential of institutions to foster individual self-growth by over-accentuating the extent of change in organisational practice (Webb, 2004). While he positions the media as an institution central to his 'risk society' narrative, he fails to appreciate that mediated practice cannot be understood outside of the media that have brought it into existence (Warde, 1994: chapter two and seven). As this project has illustrated, uncertainty does not fit with journalistic practice (Mythen, 2004: 85 and Chapters IIII and VII). Beck has under-theorised the effects of established structural features, like the situated nature of the audience and the embedded cultural contexts of institutions and their practices (Chapter VII). As Beck ignores these contextual features that underpin institutional operations, this can be taken as a direct challenge to his idea that society's institutions have the capacity to perform as a lever of oppositional action. In other words, the practicalities of enacting these shifts may be possible. However unless it can be shown to be economically favourable, some institutions are unlikely to enact any

changes in their policy to encompass these shifts (Chapter VII). Beck ignores the sphere of capital in his work, as it is not subject to his critique, yet it is the stark economic reality of the capitalist market that stunts his model of the oppositional potential of society's institutions.

The findings of the present thesis have established that institutions are just as likely to be continuing to reproduce traditional orientations to class and familial structures. By focussing on the universally individualised development of a personal biography, Beck has downplayed the institutionally legitimised relational, economic and class-based sources of selfhood. As a prescriptive statement one can see the convenience of this description with regard to the commercial basis of the media, as more choice may equal more advertising to be sold (Chapter II). However, as the findings of this project illustrate, despite the apparent initiatives that promise or promote empowerment or self-fulfilment, these shifts can be seen as simply delivering only more intensive institutionally legitimised demands. In the magazine sample this point is illustrated in the way that readers are addressed as having individualised needs, like treating themselves (Chapter IIII). However these needs are simply added on to the endless list of other household responsibilities the readers already have.

Beck fails to consider consumerism as an instrumental logic of a capitalist society. This omission fails to account for the possibility that any shifts in address to the individual are more likely to be endorsed for

corporate purposes (Chapter IIII). Mediated presentation is not produced in any 'simple, linear sense but is the result of continuous negotiation between production rhetoric, institutional values and constraints and inter-texts' (Tulloch and Lupton, 1997: 223). Beck's view of selfhood is one of a project for continuous improvement (Chapter I). When capital is introduced to the debate, we can see that any account of changing tendencies in modern social relations needs to be sensitive to the existing economic pre-requisites of the institution examined (Chapter IIII, VI and VII).

Beck has also made an unqualified leap from identification to explanation without dealing satisfactorily with issues of motivation. Women's magazines are published for profit and Beck's predicted shifts in address may be apparent to some degree, but this does not mean that the editorial motivation for these changes are any thing other than for-profit (Chapter VII). For example, the motivation behind including more reader-sourced material in the women's magazine sector can just as easily be explained as a purely economic one. It is cheaper to fill a page with reader tips than it is for a member of staff to fill it (Chapter IIII). Therefore, rather than this phenomenon being an institutional drive to devolve authority as Beck suggests, it is illustrative of the continued existence of a hierarchical communication structure where participation in knowledge systems is supported, but only as far as it supports the profit-making rationale of the identified institution. This issue can be

seen as capable of wider generalisation to tensions in the public sector (for example Du Gay, 1996: DuGay and Salaman, 1992).

Overstating the democratising force of modernity

Beck is adamant that he is well aware of the possibility of the negative potential of modernity, yet insists that any growing gaps between rich and poor will not be traced through groups differentiated by social class, but individuals who have made the wrong decisions. Yet he gives us no direct, even theoretical connection, between his insistence on the public acceptance of risk and the public and political action necessary to deal with it (Stevenson, 2001). You may know that you are excluded, as a single parent on benefits and be reflexive about how you could change your situation, but this does not mean you have the resources to enact any of the alterations you think up.

Beck's insistence on the ambivalence associated with reflexive modernisation is taken as being positive, when, as Smart points out, there is little to reassure us of this (Smart, 1999). Beck's predictions may actually turn out to have more negative than positive consequences. As this thesis has shown, the very institutionalised discourse that Beck asserts will offer a wider variety of alternative self-actualising identities may actually simply reinforce differentially resourced and gendered subjects in a more complex way. Increasingly sophisticated cultural institutions and an increasing focus on

consumption may blur the picture, but underlying structures still determine the boundaries of modern identity (Warde, 1994 and Chapter VII).

Beck asserts that identity is no longer colonised by economic necessity. We are no longer constrained by our material resources, as he predicts a decline in income inequalities. This assertion implies that Beck positions the market as replacing the state as an integrating force. This can be further translated into an optimistic hope that a democratisation in patterns of consumption will ensure equality. This analysis of the women's magazine sector has illustrated that collective distinctions influence the representations of appropriate or socially legitimate life chances and opportunities (Chapter VI). Rather than encouraging alternative life opportunities, institutions may doggedly present traditionally divided perceptions of appropriate goals and aspirations depending on gender, age, life course stage but most primarily, distinctions based on the economic dimension of class. Therefore, as this project has shown, the self-reflexive individual Beck is describing is already a socially advantaged and economically privileged person who has the cultural and material resources to engage in self-inspection (Lupton, 1999: 114 and Chapter IIII).

Beck's democratisation of social knowledge hypothesis also reveals his implicit assumptions about the knowledge/power nexus. This theoretical premise promotes the view that by sharing knowledge more

democratically, we can break down existing hierarchies. Beck is proposing that in order to challenge and transform relations of domination, institutions must provide 'more' knowledge claims. He describes knowledge as more proactive and does not explicitly privilege dominant knowledge. However, Beck's thesis has already been observed as concentrating on the professional knowledge of scientists, politicians and government officials (Lash, 1994).

A serious attempt at transforming the existing knowledge/power nexus would involve privileging knowledge that is disadvantaged and dominated, rather than the marginalised or oppositional knowledge Beck's narrative focuses on. He implicitly places value on high status knowledge that must be made accessible to all, effectively privileging the knowledge of the middle classes and ignoring the different ways in which knowledge is translated into more popular forms of understanding (see Wynne, 1996). Here Beck's ideas can be seen as implicitly reinforcing the hierarchy of power relationships (Smart, 1999). In this project, this issue is underscored as in the monthly magazine titles, the persistent inclusion of further reading materials is based on the assumption that reader will be financially able to go out and buy the books they recommend (or be able to access a public library, see Chapter IIII). Rather than suggesting that Beck is expressing a conspiracy theory of knowledge production, these issues illustrate his lack of acknowledgement of the complex and often subtle mechanisms

that influence differential institutionally legitimised knowledge production (see Yadlon, 1997).

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that Beck's predictions have not materialised in the women's magazine sector and that his arguments are empirically unsound. Beck's theoretical premise neglects issues of inequality and the effects of this on access to and command over communication structures. The optimism of the 'risk society' literature concerning the break down of the expert-lay knowledge divide is premature (Wynne, 1996). Beck has ignored the economic basis of institutions and exaggerated the extent of change in organisational practice. Thus, one is forced to consider that the new times we are living in are as likely to be a result of the intensification of modernity rather than the arrival of the 'risk society' (see McGuigan, 1999; Smart, 1999).

The phenomena Beck claims to explain do not exist, indeed Beck's theoretical premise does more to make inequalities invisible than anything this empirical study has been able to identify. Beck's statements have been demonstrated to be false, at least in the institution examined, however Beck's statements cannot then, be true universals. This project has established that material factors and class structures are still important in the ways that classic sociological

traditions dictate. Social theory proves its worth by what it tells us about the world and whether it relates to the reality we live in.

This thesis has identified a gap between what Beck has claimed to be real and what can be demonstrated empirically. At best, Beck's work detracts from, and at worst pathologises, the continued existence of inequalities in society. Given the accumulation of empirical evidence illustrating the incorrectness of Beck's arguments, there is a real issue about why his ideas are being taken so seriously. One should ask why British sociology is so enamoured with Beck? Seen in this light, the popularity of the 'risk society' thesis is a problem for the sociology of knowledge rather than for the sociology of culture.

Data analysis sheet

Social knowledge

Reader Participation	
Source	Reader
	Reader question
	Reader story
	Other
Legitimated	Reader as expert (no editorial closure)
	Reader experience as illustrative of editorial stance/ story

Expert knowledge	
Source: **Internal experts**	A member of 'our' cookery team
	A member of 'our' health team
	'Resident' Doctor
	'Resident' Nutritionist
	'Resident' Alternative practitioner
	'Resident' other
Source: **External expertise**	A professional chef
	A health professional
	An alternative practitioner
	A research report
	News/ current issue
	Named (external) individual/ institution
	Quoted directly
	Named publication/ journal
	Referenced/ unreferenced externally collected statistics
	Other

Anxiety-provoking	
Editorial stance	Judgement made (editorial closure on anxiety)
	Vacuum of authority (no editorial closure)
Anxiety **reduced** **or enlarged**	Solutions given
	Left open
	Reassurance given

Social relationships

Address	Self	Friends (s)	Family
Explicit			
Implicit			
Number of **servings**			

Collective distinction

Economic inheritance	
Economic indicator **references**	Cost
	Price
	Value
	Cheap
	Investment
	Other
Taste/ style/ etiquette	Table decoration
	Number of courses/ sequence
	Table setting
	Atmosphere
	Appropriate behaviour
	Alcohol
	Other

Specialist values referenced	Weight loss
	Specialist health associated diet (low salt/ irritable bowel syndrome etc)
	Balanced
	Healthy
	Other
Fat, fibre or calorific values included	Fat
	Fibre
	Carbohydrate
	Calories
	Other
Value rationale	Instrumental (full, cheap)
	Aesthetic (visual, smells, consistency)
Wider world ref	Employment
	Travel
	Other cultures
	Other culinary influences
	Alternative practices:
	Vegetarianism
	Organic products
	Animal cruelty/ food production issues
	Green/environmental issues

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