

Why Unheard Voices Matter
The narratives of British *Playboy* models
(1958 – 1990s)

Marjolein Van Bavel

PhD candidate

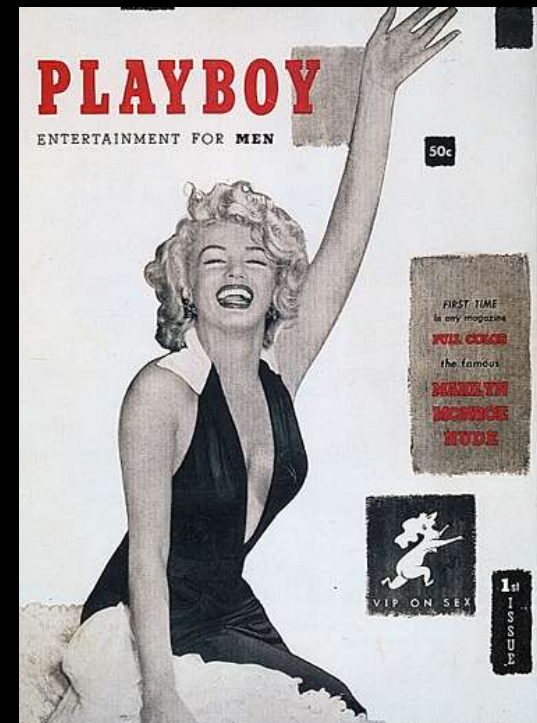
University College London

Supervised by Dr Helga Satzinger (UCL)
and Dr Henk De Smaele (University of Antwerp)

My project:

Semi-structured interviews

- 10 *Playboy* models
 - End 1950s – 1960 (1)
 - 1970s (6)
 - 1980s (1)
 - End 1980s – Beginning 1990s (2)
- 1 former *Playboy* editor
- 1 former *Playboy* executive



Playboy (1953-)

'The Sexual Revolution'

Post-1960s debates

'The Sexual Revolution'

Post-1960s debates

Commercial market of sexualised nudity:

Liberation vs. Exploitation

'The Sexual Revolution'

Post-1960s debates

Commercial market of sexualised nudity:

Liberation vs. Exploitation

No attention for the voices of the models:

Sexual objects / victims vs. liberated sex kittens

Why Unheard Voices Matter

Nude models are silenced (spoken for)

Nude models opt to remain silent

Why Unheard Voices Matter

Nude models are silenced

Lived experience is complex:

Vulnerable, underprivileged, unprotected

Agency in navigating pressures

Why Unheard Voices Matter

Nude models opt to remain silent

Silence as a coping mechanism

What is shared?

Importance of the interviewing
relationship

Well-established narratives vs. opening up

What do narratives teach us?

Narrative as narrative

Pressures and power dynamics