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For Patriotism and Profit: Advertising in Service of the Swedish Government 1935-1985

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Beginning just before the outbreak of World War II, the advertising industry in (neutral) Sweden began cooperating with the government. This cooperation was highly beneficial for the industry during the war as blockades and rationing caused the civilian advertising market to almost disappear. After the war, the cooperation continued, albeit in relation to primarily military matters. Later, however, the government began procuring advertising and media services on largely commercial grounds. Using documents (including previously classified records) from government agencies, trade organizations and individual advertising companies, this study presents the history of the special relationship between private advertising companies and the Swedish government. In the half century after the first examples of government advertising during World War II, distinct phases can be identified. The first phase began with the end of World War II, when government advertising was considered inappropriate during peacetime and cooperation occurred almost exclusively within the National Information Service (an organization similar to the US War Advertising Council), which prepared wartime advertising for World War III. The second phase began in the late 1960s, when the Swedish government began running large public advertising campaigns. The first campaign was connected with the introduction of right-hand traffic in 1967, and later campaigns were aimed at, for example, energy savings and public health. Finally, the third phase began in the late 1970s, when advertising developed into an integral part of public sector activities and government agencies and municipalities became major buyers of media and advertising services. In addition to the history of the relationship between the industry and the government, this paper provides an analysis of the incentives for cooperation and the influence of the public advertising market on the industry structure.

Keywords: Advertising, cold war, Sweden, war information services

Introduction

During the 50-year period after 1935, the development of Swedish advertising agencies was highly influenced by their relation to the government, which was both the regulator and an important customer of advertising agencies, particularly later in the period.¹ By 2005, the government had become the largest advertiser in Sweden.²

Advertising has played an increasingly important economic role and, as such, has been the subject of many business history studies. The government *as advertiser*, however, has mostly been overlooked, and the same applies to the Swedish advertising industry.³ Despite the availability of rich archival sources, business history research on Swedish advertising firms is limited.⁴

This paper aims to examine the relationship between the Swedish government and the advertising industry and to show how the market for government advertising developed over time, with a special focus on the role of the advertising industry (and its organizations) in shaping the institutions and building the market for government advertising.⁵

In addition, this paper intends to further understanding of public-private relations in the advertising industry an area in which research, if not absent, is limited and mainly focused on the democratic implications of the government as advertiser.⁶

Wartime advertising came to have significance for the industry and its relation to the state partly because it helped the industry preserve profitability through the war years and partly because the war changed attitudes towards government advertising and advocacy.

Analysing the corporate side – and the industry's role in promoting advertising – can thus provide a significant contribution to business history research.

In addition to the history of the relationship between the industry and the government, this paper provides an analysis of the incentives for cooperation and the influence of the public advertising market on the industry structure. By functioning as the customer of last

resort (both during World War II and later), the government contributed to preserving the industry structure. Furthermore, the government benefited from using private advertising services instead of producing advertising materials in-house. Therefore, this paper also contributes to the ongoing discussion of when to buy and when to produce in-house (in this case, for the government). In the case of advertising, the issue was influenced by the attitude towards government advertising, which changed over time. When government advertising was considered inappropriate (during peacetime), the choice was limited to buying from private companies.

The paper is organized as follows. First, a discussion of the sources used and previous research is provided. Then, the paper presents a general overview of the Swedish advertising industry, followed by an empirical section that is divided into four subsections. Finally, a concluding discussion focuses on the role of the government as the customer of last resort for the Swedish advertising industry.

Method and sources

Digitization and computer software, such as relational database packages, have greatly improved research possibilities in business history. The new tools and methods make it much easier to handle substantial amounts of archival documents and greatly increase transparency.

This paper is based on extensive research conducted in three significant archive collections and three private collections: the Swedish Labour Movement's Archive and Library (ARAB) in Huddinge, the Swedish National Archives, the Swedish Military Archives, the Swedish Association of Communication Agencies, the Centre for Business History in Stockholm and the Museum of Landskrona in Landskrona. The Archives of the Labour Movement contain the papers of the ARE group (including companies that merged with ARE). The national archives contain papers of the Statens Informationsstyrelse (SIS) ["the National Information Service"], Statens Högtrafikkommission [The Government

Commission on Right-hand Driving], Utredningen om psykologiskt försvar [The Government Study Group on War Information Services] and Nämnden för Samhällsinformation [The Council for Public Information]. The Swedish military archives papers from Beredskapsnämnden för psykologiskt försvar [The Preparedness Board for War Information, BN] (many of these documents have been declassified at the request of the author). The Swedish Association of Communication Agencies possesses papers from the Association of Advertising Agencies. Finally, the depositories at the Centre for Business History and the Museum of Landskrona contain papers from a number of advertising agencies, including Svenska Telegrambyrå, Ervaco and Gumaelius.⁷

All documents in the document series that were deemed relevant for the project were scanned or photographed. As no selection of documents was made at a lower level than complete archival boxes, the researcher can easily retrieve documents. Reviewing the documents made additional visits to the archive necessary.

The digitized documents are searchable through OCR, and a large number of them have been coded in a relational database (Filemaker Pro). For each document, the title, date, archive, archive box, author of the document, and persons or companies mentioned in the document have been coded. Every source post also contains, in addition to the entries above, the complete text in searchable form as well as the original pdf so that the researcher has direct access to the original layout of the document.

The relational database method also makes it easy for the researcher to link other documents to the source database entry. If a document is mentioned in, for example, the minutes of a board meeting, these two documents can be linked (provided that both are found in the archive). In the same fashion, letters can be linked to the replies to the letter as well as where they are found in different archives.

Further, when the documents mentioned are not (yet) found, links can be made and completed with the document when it is found. Other historical sources, such as oral history interviews, photos and films, can also be linked to the source database. In the next step, events are coded. An event may be a decision made at a board meeting, a merger between two companies or a permit received. The relevant source documents are linked to each event (an event may be linked to a large number of source entries as a decision can be mentioned, for example, in official minutes, notes taken by one of the participants, or letters or articles in the media). In the event entries, the person acting (which may often be someone other than the author of the document) is also coded. If projects are identified, they can also be coded. The researcher can therefore easily access, for example, all documents from the depositories mentioned above related to, for example, the Energy Savings Campaign or all board minutes in which energy savings is mentioned and a certain person is present.

The method also makes it possible to be transparent with the material that was reviewed and to determine that no relevant documents are missed. This is otherwise a problem for historical research. It is easy to determine whether there are missing documents in any series or whether the archives are weeded or silent in any respect.⁸

The rich archival sources make it possible to add to the existing literature on the government as advertiser in peacetime, which is limited and mainly focuses on democratic issues,⁹ and in wartime, which is extensive but primarily centred on conditions in the US and UK, where advertising was used not only to boost morale and support campaigns for thrift and the sale of war bonds but also to disseminate information on how citizens could protect themselves (and the country) from sabotage and espionage.¹⁰ Famous campaigns in this regard are "Lose lips sink ships" and "Rosie the Riveter." The same applies to advertising on psychological warfare during World War II, from the Allies, the Soviet Union and Germany,

and during the Cold War.¹¹ The literature on wartime advertising in neutral Sweden, however, is much more limited.¹²

The government and the advertising industry

Contrary to the practice in most countries, the Swedish advertising industry was cartelized.¹³ The cartel was founded in 1915, formalized in 1923, and survived until 1965, when it was declared illegal.¹⁴ The longevity of the cartel can be explained by its design. The trade group representing the cartel members had reached an agreement with the Swedish Newspaper Publishers Association (TU) requiring “certification” of advertising agencies. Only certified agencies could place ads in newspapers on commission.

Since radio (except for the first year) and television (from the beginning) were operated as government monopolies and free from advertising until 1992, newspapers were the primary advertising channel. Thus, a non-certified agency was locked out of the most important part of the market.¹⁵ Non-certified agencies existed but were relegated to work as contractors of certified agencies or to using other forms of advertising, such as posters, film and direct mail.

The certified advertising agencies tried to actively strengthen their position as a serious industry from the mid-1930s. This was done, for example, by publishing trade magazines, organizing educational activities and establishing contacts with government officials. Such contacts were established by arranging a large conference in Stockholm in 1937 with the theme “Advertising serves society.” At the same time, the conference demonstrated the extent of the quest to become an established industry. At the conference, the prime minister gave an address, and the crown prince acted as protector.¹⁶ This initiative was followed the next year by a new conference on public health and advertising.¹⁷

During the 1950s, the cartel was challenged. The cartel members tried to address this challenge by allowing more members to join, and the number of authorized agencies increased substantially during the 1950s and until 1965, when the cartel was declared illegal. The number of agencies then increased rapidly.

During the period before World War II, the cartel was, in principle, a closed group. A small number of new agencies were established, including, most notably, Ervaco (a spinoff of Ervin Wasey, Co., which later became one of the largest companies in the industry). At the end of the war, however, several new agencies were established, including Gunther & Bäck, which became one of the largest and most influential agencies in the 1950s.¹⁸ After 1945 and until 1965, the number of authorized agencies rose steadily. Establishments during this period include Stig Arbmans Annonsbyrå and Wilh. Andersson Annonsbyrå.

Despite the growth of the industry, the average firm size remained constant, which is related to the fact that the agencies that were added were smaller. The average size in both 1930 and 1950 was approximately 70 people (though the largest firms increased in size during the same period). Ten years later, the average size was 68, whereas in 1970, it had been cut in half to 32. In 1980, it was cut in half again to 14.

[Figure 1.]¹⁹

The number of firms grew very slowly during the first decades of the cartel. The number of firms outside the cartel was also low and sustainable.

The history of government advertising in Sweden after World War II can be divided into three phases. The first phase occurred before 1965, when the advertising industry cooperated with the government only to aid defence efforts. The second phase occurred from 1965 to 1975, when the first large public (peacetime) advertising campaigns were launched. The third occurred in 1975-1990, when advertising became an integral part of the activities of public authorities.

Setting the stage: Pre-1945

The first cooperation between the Swedish government and advertising agencies began with the outbreak of World War II. The cooperation was motivated by defence reasons in the form of public service (“preparedness”) advertising during the war under the auspices of the National Information Board (SIS).

The initiative was the industry’s, and the cooperation proved highly beneficial for the industry as shortages caused by blockades and rationing caused the civilian advertising market to almost disappear.²⁰ It can be argued that the cooperation with the government during World War II probably saved many of the established advertising firms, or at least saved the industry structure.

The government purchases during the war benefitted the cartel members almost exclusively. The government even agreed to steer its business to the agencies in proportion to their pre-war market shares. In addition, the government continued to use the cartel’s system for compensation, which meant that the advertising agencies acted as intermediaries between the client and newspapers. This gave the advertising agencies financial support when it was needed the most as the arrangement allowed them to continue charging a commission on all media sales.

Even before the outbreak of war, the industry had tried to position itself as a force that took corporate responsibility. In November 1937, a large advertising conference in Stockholm had been held with the theme "Advertising serves society." This initiative was followed the next year by a new conference on public health and advertising.²¹

When World War II broke out in 1939, however, completely different conditions were created for the industry to show how it could be a useful social actor. "At the outbreak of war in 1939, many advertisers made the reflection that now, if ever, there would be an opportunity to win the state's understanding of modern advertising and organized

propaganda," Gumaelius CEO Frans Lohse wrote in the Advertising Association's Yearbook.²² Folke Stenbeck, CEO of Ervaco, was of the same opinion: "It has made the advertising industry very happy when their services were used for new government information activities. It has made them happy when their professional insights have been widely used."²³

In the summer of 1939, representatives of the industry contacted the authorities and offered their services. In a memo, suggestions were given about how advertising and propaganda could be used in the defence effort.

Total war demands total defence, it was believed, and advertising had an important role to play. In the Advertising Association's Yearbook from 1942, the head of "public preparedness", Ragnar Lund, wrote, "It is equally important to defend the resistance among the civilian populations and to prevent the external defence from collapsing because civilians lose their morale."²⁴ Two years earlier, in the 1940 Yearbook under the heading "To the public benefit," Folke Stenbeck, CEO For Ervaco and the Chairman of the Swedish Advertising Association (SR),²⁵ wrote, "Many forces in all areas of life are also developing in new strong forms. One such force is advertisement. Time and the present crisis have pushed this further. Advertisement, which originally stood exclusively in the service of production interests, now stands out as never before as something that serves the public. Production is now a public service. Modern and socially responsible advertisement will help."²⁶

Immediately after the outbreak of war, on 6 September 1939, a three-man committee was set up to establish a central government information body. This became the State Information Agency (SIS), which was organized later in the autumn and came into being on 1 February 1940.²⁷ The idea of a government propaganda apparatus being activated in the event of war (or risk of war) was not new; it had been discussed at least since 1927, when the first

plan for a “national information central” was drafted.²⁸ The initiative was taken by the army and navy staff.²⁹

Although plans had been made, the organization had not been tested, and the concept of government propaganda was controversial. In a speech to the Advertising Association, the director general of SIS elaborated on this issue: “Government propaganda activities were previously an unknown concept in Sweden. The examples from other countries have not been reassuring.”³⁰

In another speech on national radio on 15 September 1939, one of the members of the three-man committee referred to the operations during World War I. Under the umbrella of the Committee of Supply, “a special information agency led by Doctor Karl Hildebrandt” was then established. “Its mission was to provide newspapers with information from the committee and – as Dr Hildebrandt in this report has stated, ‘[a]s far as we have been able, to correct errors in the newspapers regarding supply issues.’”³¹

According to a memo from 9 September 1939, advertising was not initially a part of the tool box.³² However, TT [the national news wire service] and Radiotjänst [the radio monopoly] were supposed to form the integral parts of the organization.³³ The new body nevertheless came to include advertising from an early stage. From the beginning, it was decided that the productions should be sourced from outside contractors. This point was also emphasized later when the organization was formalized: “It is, as far as I can see, not possible for the government, not even desirable, to quickly create a large advertising and propaganda apparatus that, with exclusive powers, would meet the demands of the new situation.”³⁴

The organization took care of monitoring press issues,³ engaging in “information in war issues” and “contributing to a consumption adjustment, which could make it possible to economize with our commodities and stocks.” The SIS operated until 31 December 1944, when it was disbanded.

The offer of participation from the advertising industry was taken up at a meeting the day after the formation of the three-man committee (7 September), and it was decided that Folke Stenbeck from the Swedish Advertising Association should be given a hearing.³⁶ The minutes from a later meeting on 21 September indicated that a meeting with the Swedish Advertising Association was held and that a “committee for deliberations on the problems that the participation of advertising professionals in information campaigns could cause” was established.³⁷

Representatives of the Swedish Advertising Association met in November 1939, and the newly appointed minister of supplies and the association offered their member services to the government. The minister’s response was positive. However, the first advertising campaign launched after the outbreak of the war were a result not of the industry's initiative but of the authorities.

During the fall of 1939, a comprehensive campaign was conducted to draw attention to the Swedish people to what was called the "silence problem." The crisis situation demanded that the enemy not receive unnecessary information about things that could damage the Swedish defence or supply effort. Gustaf Rosenberg, the Secretary of the Advertising Association, wrote that "familiarity with defense and war production is a non-essential part of a country's defense preparation."³⁸ That is, he continued, it was important that the people did not spread information further, which was easy to do thoughtlessly. Here, advertising was needed. "The psychological 'silence defense' with only logically informative and comprehensive arguments is not enough, but there needs to be a constant “clattering” that is to the point and suggestive reminders that keep the consciousness and existence of the problem alive.”³⁹

On 4 October 1939, the three-man committee met with Tom Björklund on the “silence campaign.”⁴⁰ A further meeting on the same subject was later held with advertising directors

Sven O Blomquist and H Rosenberg.⁴¹ On 21 October 1939, funds were requested for a poster campaign of 300,000 posters to be placed on buses, trams and public buildings.⁴² The design was set at a meeting on 3 November.³³

This first campaign was called the "Vigilance Campaign," and it consisted of a household brochure, radio announcements and a comprehensive poster campaign. Rosenberg described the campaign as "the biggest poster advertising campaign ever made in Sweden."⁴⁴ Approximately 350,000 posters were eventually distributed.⁴⁵

The government's attitude towards advertising became increasingly positive, and proposals for cooperation from the advertising industry were received approvingly. Representatives for the SIS also emphasized that advertising professionals' skills and knowledge could not be replaced by civil servants. "When the Swedish Newspaper Publishers Association and the Swedish Advertising Association offer the Government its services, one assumes that these will be accepted with the greatest satisfaction. Advertising agencies and advertising consultants in this country have great capacities. In their service, they have skilled advertisers, draftsmen and experts in other areas, which can give the government valuable assistance in a pressing situation."⁴⁶

The theme of the vigilance campaign became one of the main themes during the remainder of the war. The famous campaigns were "A Swedish Tiger," with the well-known blue and yellow tiger designed by Bertil Almkvist,⁴⁷ and "The Spy Puzzle, Keep Your Piece." Although the first campaign was not created by a cartel agency, the following campaigns were. They were initiated and designed by advertisers operating within the SIS Advertising Council.

The campaign was launched in 1941, and the main channel was advertising in newspapers. The campaign's ten ads were published in almost all Swedish newspapers. The campaign was aimed at both the public and the conscripted soldiers, the latter by posters at

places and cafes near the military camps. "The Tiger" appeared on various military publications and military stationery.

AF was involved in a series of other awareness campaigns during the war, including the "Pedal master" and "Gasoline Responsibility" to drive the economy and avoid car trips, the "Rubber Waste Collection", and the "Fat Campaign" for households to save on cooking fat. In addition, AF joined a campaign to save electricity, the "kilowatt hunt." However, the Information Agency was not responsible for this; instead, the campaign was implemented and funded by the Industrial Commission and the Technology Association.⁴⁸

The advertising industry's interest in government advertising was not merely a matter of patriotism. The war also meant that the commercial advertising market collapsed. In the spring of 1940, the industry had sought to interest the government in their services by developing and displaying concepts for several advertising campaigns. Among other things, concepts were developed for a Sweden campaign, a campaign for savings, a campaign for strengthening of the sense of togetherness (between civilians and the conscripts who served) and campaigns against rumours and for awareness of spying.⁴⁹

The campaign concepts were shown in the Swedish Confederation of Retailer's premises, and representatives of the government, the parliament, the Information Agency and other authorities – civil and military – were invited. In connection with the presentation of the concepts, the participating agencies were also given the opportunity to present their staff, skills and capabilities for the intended buyers.

On 23 July 1940, an advertising council was established within the SIS. The council would follow and assist the state information activities in the formulation of advertising campaigns and monitor state crisis advertising. It was also agreed with the state that AF should coordinate the advertising for which the Ministry of Education and its subordinating authorities were responsible. Thus, it was also possible to maintain the current organizational

and compensation model. Any advertising that the government ordered should be distributed through AF and shared by all member companies.⁵⁰

Extensive government advertising would otherwise risk undermining the Authorized Advertising Agency's operating model; if the largest advertiser was not included in the commission system while the commercial advertisers sharply reduced their advertising, it would be a hard blow to the agencies included in the cartel system. The government was obviously not bound by the cartel agreement between newspaper publishers and AF. If the SIS or other authorities wanted to advertise without going through an Authorized Advertising Agency as provided for by the agreement with TU, they could have done so. Through the agreement, the authorized agencies gained a special position vis-à-vis the government, and at the same time, the cartel was secure.⁵¹

This was also a victory for the newspapers, not only because of their dealings with the authorized advertising agencies but also because their revenues were secured. Because of the involvement of the advertising industry, the newspapers could expect that future government information would be provided in the form of paid ads. Previously, the government had often sent communications and other information material that the newspapers then published as news. However, it was pointed out early by the industry – although the newspapers initially expressed willingness to publish state information – that the scheme was not sustainable over the long term. The war meant less commercial advertising, and the newspapers were dependent on alternative revenue sources. Government support of not only the advertising industry but also the newspapers was also an official purpose.⁵²

Government advertising had been called for already at the outbreak of war. For example, Bernhard Giertz, the director of the propaganda department of the Office for Public Information, noted in October 1939 to the three-man committee that "during a worsening crisis situation, the newspapers' economics would be further threatened. One has to take into

consideration that the newspapers in such a situation – even if goodwill exists – would not to the same extent as the present time be able to serve the authorities without compensation." ⁵³

The economic threat to the industry was real, and the government tasks were as much about economic short-term survival as an opportunity to demonstrate community engagement in the longer term: "For many advertisers, however, to put it in plain language, the state propaganda campaigns also gave them a welcome relief, as the commercial advertising business, at least at the beginning of the war, was severely restrained and in some areas had largely disappeared." ⁵⁴

A comparison with the role of advertising in warring countries such as Britain shows both differences and similarities. A significant difference is that commercial advertisement came to be significantly greater in Britain than in Sweden, even though the state of supply was even worse there. Just as in Sweden, the industry felt threatened, although the threat in Britain was seen as mainly from the government, and it felt that it was possible to curtail its freedom. To avoid this, substantial resources were devoted to try to win government support and sell the importance of advertising as part of the war effort: "compared to the rest of the British war economy and its constituent parts, the advertising industry appears unique in the extent to which it was able to preserve its autonomy during the war." ⁵⁵ The industry was very successful with this approach: "The very survival of the wartime advertising industry was the result, at least in part, of the extraordinary efforts that the main trade bodies went to in order to demonstrate that commercial advertising had a legitimate role to play in a nation at war." ⁵⁶

An important difference between the warring United Kingdom and neutral Sweden involves the way advertising was used as a means of maintaining a sense of normality.

Advertising in newspapers in Britain was also believed to make them more credible in the eyes of the public: "The press had to retain a pre-war appearance if it was to be read and trusted by the public." ⁵⁷

This perspective was lacking in Sweden, both during World War II and later. Instead, the advertising industry tried to encourage companies to focus on advertising and tried to induce the state to realize the value of commercial advertising. Gerhard Törnqvist, at the Stockholm School of Economics and Sweden's first marketing professor, wrote that advertising could be useful for companies even if there were no goods to sell as it could help consumers to remember brands, which would benefit companies when the war was over.⁵⁸ Törnqvist and Carlsson also argued in the same letter that commercial advertising had social value in times of war or interruption. To inform the public about substitute products, advertising was required; otherwise, consumers would not find or want to use these products.

The war affected not only the content of Swedish ads but also the design. The blockade caused a lack of newsprint, which limited ad volumes and ink. This situation mainly affected multicolour print as the newspapers, through the so-called “technical ad censorship,” were forced to restrict the presence of large colour areas.⁵⁹ Even larger black parties would be replaced by raster fields to save ink.⁶⁰ At the end of the war, more far-reaching constraints were imposed on the use of black ink when imports of carbon black from Germany ceased. At the same time, the import loss caused a shortage of zinc for printing plates.

The use of advertising as a part of the war or defence effort was not specific to Sweden, nor were industry initiatives for government advertising. In the US, the advertising industry during the war had created a body for aid to the war effort in the form of the War Advertising Council, and in the United Kingdom, there was a corresponding operation, although it was governmentally organized.⁶¹

The fact that the American Ad Council (as the War Advertising Council was renamed after the war) was not exclusively a government advertising agency was demonstrated by the fact that it later focused on promoting "free enterprise" and business-friendly values.⁶² This, however, did not apply to the Swedish advertising business. Any interest in the industry to

sell the benefits of the market economy through marketing did not appear to exist. However, Stole (2001) has called the US Ad Council the advertising industry's "PR arm" because the organization also worked to raise the status of advertising.⁶³ Such features can also be found in Swedish advertising organizations. The industry clearly viewed its participation in the defence efforts as a way to raise the status of advertising. Here, the Swedish industry acted in the same way as the British.

Phase 1, 1945-1965

Government advertising had been significant during 1939-1945, but the wind was to change. The 20-year period after World War II would be characterized by a completely different attitude towards government advertising. This period forms the first phase in this study.

The cooperation between the government and the advertising industry continued after the end of World War II. Some government institutions, including the finance and appropriations committee of Parliament, argued that the wartime advertising organization would be made permanent and given peacetime tasks. The opposition to this was nevertheless severe:

“There was enough support in some circles for a permanent agency, but on the other hand, the criticism was very strong against a proposed reorganization of the information board to a government advertising organization with implied significant dangers, a line the experiences from the south [i.e., Germany] lent support to.”⁶⁴

After World War II, there was strong scepticism about government advertising in broad layers. If advertising could be used to make people think or do things that they would not otherwise have thought or done, was it not an overly powerful tool for use in peacetime?

In the Advertising Association's 1942 Yearbook, Ejnar Fors Bergström expressed this view of the power of advertising: "In the long term, no government propaganda can be combined with the citizen's spiritual and economic freedom; in the long term, all materially

overwhelming opinion propaganda is a danger to a social system such as ours, even though it is in the best sense to enter into the service of this society."⁶⁵

Not only were these thoughts expressed by the industry's representatives, but the dangers of government advertising and propaganda activities were also described by representatives of the government. In the government study on war information services ("the Mossberg inquiry") initiated by the Minister of the Interior, Eje Mossberg, in 1948, the same message was given: modern information campaigns are so powerful that they can be used only in extreme emergencies in a democracy. "It is obvious that, under pure peace conditions, government authorities will not conduct any form of propaganda."⁶⁶

Although the attitude towards government advertising was negative, it continued, several times with the initiative of the advertising industry. It was even the case that, from the industry's side, there was a need to educate the government to become a better – and, it may be assumed – more frequent advertiser. Frank Lohse, the CEO of the large advertising firm Gumaelius, said that "for the government and its various institutions as sometimes with private entrepreneurs, they must be *taught* to become advertisers."⁶⁷

One of the campaigns that emerged, which was initiated by the industry, was the Energy Savings Campaign launched in connection with the fuel rationing in 1948. The state introduced rationing and forced stores to extinguish signs and display windows.⁶⁸ The advertising industry created advertising to defend the restriction.⁶⁹ In the same year, the "People's Savings Campaign" was run by the government in collaboration with various non-profit organizations and interest groups. The campaign warned of worse times and urged people to reduce consumption and save for the future.

Although advertising by the government or on behalf of government authorities was seen as inappropriate, this did not apply to wartime advertising. In war, the rules were different. After World War II, advertising agencies organized as the National Information

Service (NIS), which prepared wartime advertising for World War III. The NIS was modelled on both the SIS and US counterparts, such as the Ad Council.⁷⁰ The civilian agencies that formed the cartel volunteered to staff this agency and, in some cases, a significant amount of their executives' time.⁷¹ In the US, however, the wartime advertising organization, the War Advertising Council, continued – under a new name, the Ad Council, with a new broadened mandate – after the war ended.⁷² Sweden took a different path.

After World War II, when advertising had been used extensively to boost morale, sell defence loans and inform about civil defence and rationing, Sweden found that it needed an organization dedicated to the war and to peacetime maintenance of morale and willingness to defend the realm. A government commission's report, called the "Mossberg study,"⁷³ which was completed in 1953 (SOU 1953:27), proposed to establish such an organization, National Information Central. The importance of advertising in wartime was highlighted in several places in the Mossberg study. It was noted, for example, that "advertising could be used to reach people that could not be reached through other communications channels" and that advertising was especially useful "when it is important that the message is undistorted and reached the recipient in exactly the intended verbal form and wording."⁷⁴ In 1954, such an organization was established.

When National Information Central was organized, no provisions for in-house advertising production were made. Instead, it was considered more appropriate to rely on civilian advertising companies, as had been the case during World War II.⁷⁵ The main advantages of external, civilian production were that it was assumed to be more flexible and creative, whereas advertising production within a government agency risked becoming unwieldy and bureaucratic. In the Mossberg study, it is stated that "[t]he professional experience and the skills of the ad men should best be put to use if the production was left to companies within the advertising industry and not performed by the agencies themselves."⁷⁶

The study further claimed that a government agency's "operating capability also for a considerable time after establishment was likely to be fairly insignificant."⁷⁷

A central task was to prepare "canned" campaigns." A canned (or deep frozen) campaign was a pre-prepared advertising campaign ready to be used – with minor changes – when the war broke out.⁷⁸

The massive evacuations of population centres that later formed the centrepiece of Swedish civil defence were not yet proposed at the time of the Mossberg study. Instead, civilians were to be protected from air raids by bomb shelters. This was a contributing factor to the choice to rely on civilian advertising agencies. If cities and towns were not evacuated, the companies would stay in business, as they had during World War II.⁷⁹

After only one year, in 1955, advertising activities were to be organized under National Information Central. The military situation had changed, and it was now expected that any war would involve nuclear strikes against population centres. This prompted massive evacuations; thus, the civil industry was not expected to remain in business after the outbreak of war. Civilian agencies would instead supply staff to an advertising department within National Information Central.

The central role of advertising in psychological defence may have resulted because more than a few of the founding members of National Information Central had an advertising background. Defence Minister Sven Andersson, for example, had a background in the advertising industry as co-founder and later director of the advertising agency Folkreklam in Gothenburg.

The CEO of the then-leading advertising company Ervaco, Folke Stenbeck, was also an expert in the Mossberg study.⁸⁰ Among the first recruits to National Information Central were three heavyweights from the advertising industry: Sture Cederroth (the CEO of Cederroths Tekniska Fabrik, a producer of consumer goods and a perceived leader in

Swedish advertising), Erik Elinder (the owner and CEO of a marketing and advertising group that included advertising agencies Wilh. Andersson Annonssbyrå and Sven Arbmans Annonssbyrå) and Folke Beronius (the CEO of Rygarads Annonssbyrå, another advertising company).

For two decades (1955-1975), civilian advertising companies willingly, and without economic compensation, staffed this organization.⁸¹ Most major Swedish advertising companies took part. The involvement was considered important and honourable. This participation also had economic motives as participating agencies were considered more likely to obtain government contracts. Most participating agencies did not gain anything from their participation, and although participation remained prestigious, interest faded when war was no longer perceived as imminent.⁸² Operations were to be discontinued in the middle of the 1970s.⁸³

Second phase, 1965-1975

The second phase began in the late 1960s when the Swedish government started running large public advertising campaigns. The first was connected with the introduction of right-side traffic in 1967, and later campaigns were aimed at, for example, energy savings and public health.

The first major campaign was the information campaign for the transfer to right-hand traffic as Sweden changed from left to right traffic in 1967.⁸⁴ The campaign for the change was extensive, and it came to include virtually all possible advertising channels: print, outdoor posters, direct mail, stickers, and clothes. There was also a televised competition on the best "right-hand traffic."⁸⁵

The campaign also served another purpose: it was used to test the war organization within the NIS (see above). The assignment went to Ervaco, which used Günter & Bäck as a subcontractor. The campaign was, in principle, the only assignment that was distributed

within the framework of cooperation within the NIS. The participating agencies otherwise had high hopes that their involvement would result in lucrative contracts from government agencies in the future.⁸⁶

Even though the cartel was disbanded in 1965, the government primarily bought campaigns from the large ex-cartel members, thus contributing to keeping (most of) them in business (as newly established smaller agencies were taking over much of the commercial market).

This period was characterized by growing political resistance – especially from the left – against advertising. It was also a period when the regulation of advertising increased sharply. During the 1960s, the left wing of the Social Democrats had advanced their positions further. One of the issues that they pushed for was tougher regulation of advertising.⁸⁷ Advertising was now considered dangerous. This can be seen as a breach of past traditions within the labour movement. Advertising was previously viewed as an example of modernity that could contribute to more efficient production and distribution.

The critique against advertising was multi-faceted. One aspect was a general left-wing criticism of the market system and questioning of the rationale of having a large number of similar products that competed through advertising. Another was that advertising had a sinister manipulative function: advertising could fool consumers into buying products that they did not need or could not afford. This criticism was influenced by books such as Packard's "The Hidden Persuaders" and Sven Lindqvist's "Reklamen är livsfarlig."⁸⁸

The fact that the government began to buy advertising while also perceiving more dangers from it may seem contradictory. However, the right-hand driving campaign should not be seen as an example in itself that the attitude of the state towards public advertising changed. First, it was organized as a test by the war organization. Second, the campaign was unique – it could be said that the campaign was an exception. Right-hand traffic was, of

course, not introduced every year, and it was an advertising campaign aimed not at changing people's perceptions or attitudes but at informing them about an existing political decision.

What can be seen as a breakthrough for public advertising was the Government Study on Public Information (“Informationsutredningen”), which was instigated in the same year as the right-hand traffic campaign. The investigation was completed in 1969, and the results suggested that the public sector should start using information and advertising to a far greater extent than before.⁸⁹

The background for the changed attitude towards advertising was based on the investigation as a result of the expanding welfare state and the increasing centralization of society. "However, the rapid development of society in recent decades has led to a significant increase in information needs. First of all, it is obvious that the public sector's growth is the cause of this. The social institutions have expanded their efforts in traditional areas of activity while at the same time engaging in a number of new issues."⁹⁰

The investigation also noted that urbanization – and, in particular, municipal reforms – increases the distance between citizens and both politicians and officials, which means that they must increase their information efforts.⁹¹ The investigation claimed that both government advertising and information activities are needed to inform people, for example, about access to welfare benefits, and the impact of "the information on society is not limited to transmitting 'neutral' knowledge. The purpose must often be to change or strengthen citizens' own values and behaviours through knowledge transfer."⁹² What the investigation addresses is both in line with the sentiment during the 1940s (i.e., advertising is a powerful tool that the state can use to achieve its goals) and in direct contradiction (i.e., it would be a tool that is too powerful for use in peacetime). The study, however, does not provide any elaboration on this matter, nor does it give any explanation regarding what caused the change in views on the appropriateness of government advertising.

At the same time, the investigation offered a generally positive view of private advertising companies, which violated the advertising-hostile view of the labour movement. Regarding the design and production of advertisements, it was written that the authorities did not have the required experience and competence to act as entities other than clients. Furthermore, "no authority's contact activities are so extensive and evenly distributed over time that one can continuously and fully deploy staff of this kind."⁹³

"The experiences in the industry should be made useful in community information. In these respects, it may not be reasonable to limit the authorities' procurement of consultancy services to a government information agency with the full service of all services. Instead, the authorities should be able to choose from the entire range of consulting services offered by the market. In addition to these services, the investigation considers it important that a central government advisory body for information issues be established. This should not replace the free market consultants but on the contrary improve and facilitate cooperation between authorities and private consulting companies."⁹⁴ Previous suggestions to set up a state-owned advertising agency were also rejected.⁹⁵ The investigation noted that because of the previously limited public advertisement, there were shortcomings in skills in this area: "Since the state information activities so far have been so limited, the information consultants' tasks for the authorities have only been a small part of all the assignments. They have therefore had little opportunity to acquire more extensive product knowledge in the public sector."⁹⁶ However, the study noted that "[i]n recent years, a change has occurred in so far as several advertising agencies set up or plan to set up special units for advice to public authorities."⁹⁷ One of the agencies that did so was Ervaco, the agency for which the secretary of the investigation, James Brade, was previously a director.

In 1971, the CfPI, Council for Public Information (Nämnden för Samhällsinformation) was founded. CfPI was a government agency that would coordinate

national advertising campaigns and advertising purchases. With the introduction of the agency, public spending on advertising also increased.

Industry associations had high hopes for the committee report and the prospects for government advertising, and they expressed disappointment when the state information study group report did not result in the public advertising efforts for which the industry had hoped – 10 million instead of the expected 50-80 million over two years. "Public information is a sector in which the agency industry can make great efforts," stated the Swedish Advertising Association in the annual report for 1970/71.⁹⁸

Third phase, 1975-1990

Finally, the third phase began in the 1970s, when advertising developed into an integral part of public sector activities and government agencies and municipalities became major buyers of media and advertising services. By the 1980s, most of the large agencies that had formed the cartel from 1915 to 1965 had disappeared; some of them had merged with new firms, and others went bankrupt.

The Energy Savings Campaign that ran from 1973 to 1982 was especially important, not only because it was the largest advertising campaign in Swedish history but also since advertising services were provided by ex-cartel firms. The campaign therefore also contributed to conservation regarding the industry structure.

After the 1973 oil crisis, the Swedish government organized the "Energy Savings Committee," which was tasked with informing the public about how to save energy. The committee was organized under the auspices of the ÖEF (the Swedish Agency for Economic Defence), and responsibility for the major advertising campaigns that were part of the energy savings effort was assigned to the advertising company Are Idé 1, which was part of the advertising group Förenade Are-Bolagen. Not only was the committee tasked with running

advertising campaigns, but half of its budget was devoted to “print and billboard advertising.”⁹⁹

The committee’s assignment was described by the cabinet as consisting of “[c]oordinated information activities, including, inter alia, coordination and support for the authorities’ information efforts, planning and implementation of savings campaigns, follow-up and information on the development of energy saving and initiatives resulting therefrom.”¹⁰⁰

According to Lars Billäng, then-director of Are Idé 1, the choice of ARE as the lead agency can also be connected to the advertising industry’s involvement in National Information Central: the director of the Swedish Agency for Economic Defence simply selected an agency that he knew from its participation in National Information Central. Are Idé 1 initially handled the account itself, but when the assignment grew, it was invited to create an agency pool and share the assignment (under the supervision of Are Idé 1). The pool was to consist of five Swedish-controlled advertising agencies. The director of Are Idé 1 – with the approval of the Ministry of Finance – choose SVEA, Hera, Landia and Gumaelius to handle the account together with Are Idé 1.¹⁰¹

The mission came to have great importance, particularly for ARE. ARE Idé 1 was an agency that was part of the group Förenade ARE-bolagen, which in turn was owned by the Social Democratic Party (Förenade ARE-bolagen was primarily an outdoor advertising company but had two advertising agencies, one dedicated to the needs of the Social Democratic Party (ARE Idé 2) and one for other commercial assignments (ARE Idé 1)).¹⁰² Given the assignment size and the longevity of the campaign (more than a decade), the agency had half the public advertising pie after a few years.¹⁰³

ARE’s success (as well as Ervaco’s) in the government sector was based on how assignments were awarded. Before the 1980s and the public procurement laws, personal

relations with prospective clients were the key to contracts. This could, as mentioned above, explain some of the interest in the participation in National Information Central. The war games in which the organization took part also involved many senior political policymakers, who were also potential advertisers.

The ARE Group had advantages here, including the fact that they (through Are Idé 2) were responsible for the Social Democratic Party's election campaigns. They were also engaged in active marketing directed at politicians, including exhibitions at the Social Democratic Party congresses. As the most senior politicians of the party were present and as the Social Democrats ruled the majority of the municipalities and held many senior positions in government departments and authorities, ARE was often thought of first by government advertisers.

The campaigns by the Energy Savings Committee were not the only public advertising campaigns during this period. The revenue from the public sector proved vital for the large advertising companies that had dominated the industry during the cartel period.

Two important commercial advertising segments disappeared in the 1970s: advertising for tobacco products and beer. The large advertising companies Gumaelius, Ervaco and Svenska Telegrambyrå were heavily dependent on revenue from these segments. When regulation requiring that ads for tobacco products also featured prominent health warnings was introduced in 1977, the demand for such advertising dropped significantly. The ban on sales of medium-alcohol beer (4.5 volume percent) came into effect during the same year, which also had a significant negative impact on advertising agency revenues. Since the sale of liquors in 1965, the country's breweries were important customers of the larger advertising companies in Sweden, and when this segment disappeared, it became a significant breach. The 1977 ban followed the introduction of voluntary limitations – introduced by the Swedish Brewers' Association – on the advertising of beer in 1970, which included a total

ban on advertising for beer with more than 4.5 % alcohol as well as restrictions on advertising for weaker types of beer.¹⁰⁴ These changes in the market may have contributed to the bankruptcy of the oldest and largest of the advertising agencies, Gumaeilus, in 1978.¹⁰⁵

The CfPI existed for a decade, and when the council was abolished in 1982, the responsibility for public advertising was shifted to the government authorities. By this time, the last traces of suspicion against government advertising had disappeared. The CfPI had managed to create a culture in which it was considered normal for government agencies to engage in advertising.

The new so-called “creative” advertising companies that captured large portions of the commercial advertising market after the fall of the cartel in 1965 also played a significant part in advertising for state-owned enterprises. The advertising agency Arbmans was, for example, celebrated for its ads for SAS (the National Airline) and SJ (The National Railway monopoly) during the 1970s.

During the 1980s, the expansion of government advertising continued as individual authorities ordered ads in their respective areas and as the government continued the practice of running large public information campaigns. The largest and most well known of these was the “AIDS Delegation” perennial campaigns against HIV/AIDS. The advertising agency Ted Bates initially handled the advertising account, which was later taken over by the advertising agency Garbergs. The campaigns were widely acclaimed not only for the size of the media purchases but also for the content as Ted Bates used a controversial theme that alluded to the possibility that HIV could affect anyone and that “you or your wife” could be the next AIDS victim.

In 1985, the Law on Public Procurement was introduced, and with it, entirely new demands for both buyers and sellers arose. Advertising agencies could no longer rely on favourable relations with government officials to receive contracts; instead, formal criteria

were supposed to be used to select the suppliers of advertising services. The public tenders now usually required the advertising companies to show evidence of, for example, economic stability and the fulfilment of their tax obligations. In addition, references from previous public sector clients were usually required, making it difficult for newcomers to enter the sphere of public sector advertisers. This requirement also led most advertising companies to drop out of the business. They concentrated instead on commercial advertising and left the less lucrative public advertising to specialized agencies.

Concluding discussion: Government as the customer of last resort

The government has served as the customer of last resort on at least two occasions during the 20th century. The first was during World War II. Although Sweden was neutral, the country was subject to blockade, and many goods were rationed. Those available were able to sell without advertising as consumers bought what was available.

Advertisers realized this situation as advertising purchases fell substantially in the autumn of 1939. However, in principle, the government compensated for the entire loss. This allowed the agencies to survive and maintain their profitability as the cartel and the commission system could be retained. At the same time, the arrangement ensured that newspapers were not losing ad revenue.

The possibility of being the customer of last resort was based on the choice of who would be included; it was never everyone. During World War II, the cartel's members were favoured. Even if the government bought advertisements from elsewhere (for example, from Blomqvist's advertising agency, which made the first vigilance campaign), advertising purchases were mainly channelled through the cartel.

The cooperation within the realm of the NIS was also largely based on the cartel, although the sphere of participating agencies there was smaller. Further, after the demise of the cartel in 1965, the organization was staffed almost exclusively with ex-cartel members.

As the first major state-of-the-art advertising campaign after World War II, the information campaign for the transition to right-hand traffic was linked to the NIS. The advertising campaign was also a test of the war organization (the mission went to two cartel agencies). Even the next major government campaign, the Energy Commission's energy saving campaign, went to (former) cartel agencies.

Finally, the Social Democratic Party-owned ARE established itself – by means of contracts from the public sector – as one as the two dominant players in the market for outdoor advertising, a position that it held until it was acquired by J C Decaux in 1997.

The government's helping hand, however, was not there forever. The law on public procurement ended the ability to choose who would receive contracts. When the government no longer provided the large old firms that once formed the cartel with contracts, they finally folded.

None of the big three, Gumaelius, Svenska Telegrambyrå or Ervaco, remained by the mid-1980s. In the early 1990s, ARE and Svea were also bankrupt, and they were acquired by competitors or closed. However, with government aid, these agencies were able to survive far beyond what they would probably have done otherwise. The government was there as the customer of last resort when the market did not demand their services.

What was the government's motivation to support the advertising industry (or at least some companies in it)? This question can be analysed both in terms of the motivation for the individual actions and on a more general level. During the war, the government's recruitment of advertising agencies enabled both campaigns to be produced without delay and the advertising industry and press to receive some compensation for the loss of commercial advertising, which meant that they did not risk bankruptcy. Regarding the press, it was directly stated that the government advertising campaigns had this function.¹⁰⁶

This general question is possible to analyse with tools from industrial organization and public choice. Given that the state should engage in advertising, which was nevertheless strongly questioned in the period up to the mid-1960s, at least in peacetime, it was in favour of choosing to buy services and to produce in-house. This is a choice that both public and private actors face.

There are many examples of government attempts to use in-house production to prevent companies from charging inflated prices for military equipment. However, there is a risk that government production will not start until the war is over and that it will therefore become only a cost.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, it may be difficult to close operations when they are no longer needed. The creation of an organization also means the creation of an interest group that works for its continued and expanding existence.

The reliance on existing companies eliminates the cost of maintaining the business in peacetime while allowing the use of such services in wartime. The cost is that the business can make profits that are higher than normal, which have often negatively affected people.¹⁰⁸ However, in the case of the Swedish advertising industry, profit levels during the war were similar to the pre-war level – about 5 % net margin.

The total cost, even though government officials pay more in wartime than in peacetime, may also be lower. In most cases, the time spent on the business is limited, but a government organization must also be maintained in peacetime. During the period that was more democratically dubious with regard to state advertising, this was no alternative.

This motive is something to which the government commonly refers. Competition makes the results better, and private agencies can more easily cope with the rapid development of advertising. This was noted both during World War II in the Mossberg study from 1953 and in the 1969 study on public information.

In the case of the Preparedness Board, the decommissioning of its advertising activities can likely be largely explained by these two factors. When massive nuclear weapon attacks against population centres were no longer a threat, evacuations were no longer necessary. Advertising companies could thus continue to be active even in war. Furthermore, it was explicitly noted that the advertising organization that it established was unable to produce modern advertising.¹⁰⁹

The advertising activities organized within the Preparedness Board were the closest to a state-owned advertising business that Sweden received. However, this occurred because no private advertising business was expected to continue its operations in wartime as evacuations would lead to companies being forced close their doors. Even though the advertising unit within National Information Central was disbanded and was supposed to be replaced by staff from the newly established Council for Public Information, no provisions for in-house productions were made. The intention from the beginning was for the government to have no other role in advertising than as a client.

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Notes

1. [Funke, "Regulating a Controversy"](#).
2. [Galli, *Varumärkenas följt Produktion*, p. 8](#). Here and throughout the paper, government means public authorities, regions, and municipalities but not publicly owned companies (state-owned banks and the national railway line and airline have, of course, used advertising as any other company).
3. This paper studies the role of the government as advertiser in the role of government. Advertising by state-owned enterprises, such as banks and the National Railroad Company, is outside the scope of this paper, but these enterprises have, of course, used advertising – just like their private equivalents – to sell products and services.
4. For an overview, see, e.g., [Åström-Rudberg, "The Advertising Industry"](#); [Broberg, et al., *Svensk reklam*](#).
5. The government preferred the terms “information” [the same in Swedish] or “enlightenment” [Swedish: “upplysning”] for their advertising. The term *annonsen* [“the advertisement”] was used in Sweden as a general term for advertising or marketing until at least the 1960s. In addition, the term propaganda [the same in Swedish] was used. Propaganda was also used to denote category advertising (or collective advertising), such as ads for whole milk or shoes, in contrast to *reklam* (“advertising”), which denoted specific products or services, such as, “Buy shoes of brand X.” In some other countries, such as the UK, propaganda was rarely used after World War II to denote anything other than enemy propaganda. In Sweden, however, the term had no automatic negative connotation. In some cases, as indicated above, propaganda and advertising were synonyms; in other cases, the terms were complements. “Propaganda is used to create new needs and opinions; advertising, to ‘teach the people to enjoy the new [products]’” [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam 1942*, p. 48](#). However, Birgitta Hallendorff, the author of the chapter, wrote that advertising and propaganda cannot be viewed as opposites: “On the contrary, advertising should be seen as a relatively young branch on an old tree – i.e., propaganda. Both have the same objective: to, by psychological means, influence opinions and further specific selfish interests [...]; propaganda, as well as advertising, is applied to psychological methodology in the service of specific purposes – these may – as in commercial advertising and benign opinion propaganda – be overt – or as always in malign opinion propaganda – covert. It might be the secret mainspring to new and unexpected actions – the invisible decoy who drives the human midge into the den of the troll.” That propaganda was an uncontroversial term was also indicated by Folke Allard, the representative from LO (a confederation of blue collar unions) at the board of the National Information Service 1954-1959

who had the title “propaganda director.” For a discussion of how the term propaganda was used in Sweden, see also [Gardeström, Conceptual Meanings](#).

6. [Dudley, "Molding Public Opinion"](#); [Young, "The Regulation of Government"](#); [Mullen and Bowers, "Government Advertising"](#).
7. To supplement the archival sources, a number of oral history interviews were conducted.
8. [Decker, "Silence of the Archives"](#).
9. [Dudley, "Molding Public Opinion"](#); [Young, "The Regulation of Government"](#); [Mullen and Bowers, "Government Advertising"](#).
10. [Aldgate and Richards, *Britain Can Take It*](#); [Åström-Rudberg, "Service of the Nation"](#); [Berghoff, "Times Change"](#); [Bethune, *A History*](#); [Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*](#); [Fox, *Madison Avenue*](#); [Griffith, "Selling of America"](#); [Lakomaa, "Corporatist Advertising"](#); [Lykins, *From Total War*](#); [Osgood, *Total Cold War*](#); [Risso, *Enlightening Public Opinion*](#); [Risso, *Propaganda on Wheels*](#); [Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence*](#); [Schwarzkopf, *They Do It*](#); [Stole, "Underwriting the War"](#); [Stole, "Salesmanship of Sacrifice"](#); [Stole, *Advertising at War*](#); [Wijk, "Censur och propagandaministeriet"](#).
11. [Barber and Harper, *Magnificent Maps*](#); [Black, *Organising the Propaganda*](#); [Brandenberger, *Propaganda State*](#); [Brooks, *British Propaganda*](#); [Buitenhuis, *Great War of Words*](#); [Campion, *The Good Fight*](#); [Cantwell, *Images of War: British Posters 1939-45*](#); [Chapman, *The British at War*](#); [Corse, *A Battle*](#); [Cruickshank, *Fourth Arm*](#); [Cull, *Selling War*](#); [Daugherty and Janowitz, *Psychological Warfare*](#); [Lashmar and Oliver, *Britain's Secret*](#); [Lerner, *Psychological Warfare*](#); [MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*](#); [Osgood, *Total Cold War*](#); [Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*](#); [Stenton, *Radio London*](#); [Taylor, *British Propaganda*](#); [Vaughan, *Failure of American*](#).
12. See, e.g., [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*](#); [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam 1942*](#); [Åström-Rudberg, "Service of the Nation"](#).
13. There were attempts to cartelize the advertising industry in other countries, including the United States. However, they were unsuccessful in that they did not include a significant proportion of the agencies or did not last long [Keep, et al., "Forces Impinging"](#). The Swedish advertising cartel was unique in that it survived for 50 years and included all the major advertising agencies.
14. [Åström-Rudberg, "The Advertising Industry"](#).
15. [Åström-Rudberg, *Sound and Loyal Business*](#).
16. [Rosenberg, *4:e nordiska*, p. 8](#). As Marchand noted, the participation of the American advertising industry in the war effort during World War I proved important for the industry when it came to gaining influence and respectability. [Marchand, *Advertising*, p. 6](#).
17. *Svensk Reklam* [Year book of the Swedish Advertising Association] 1939 p 11.

18. One agency, Halcks Annonsbyrå, went bankrupt in 1925. Other changes were due to name changes and mergers. Gunnar Stenbeck's Annonsbyrå, which was founded in 1911, changed its name in 1921 to the Annonsbyrå Sten AB. After the merger in 1930 with Annonsbyrå Hugo Krantz AB's Stockholm office with Sten-Krantz AB in 1944, it changed its name to Annons-Krantz AB.
19. [Arnberg and Svanlund, "Mad Women"](#).
20. As in Britain, see [Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*](#). The proactive engagement from the industry could also be assumed to be driven by the risk that non-cooperation could lead to coercion. [Friberg, *Styre i kristid*, p. 355ff.](#)
21. Svensk Reklam [Yearbook of the Swedish Advertising Association] 1939 p. 11. See also [Rosenberg, *4:e nordiska*](#). As Marchand has noted, the participation of the American advertising industry in the war effort during World War I proved important for the industry when it came to gaining influence and respectability. [Marchand, *Advertising*, p. 6.](#)
22. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam 1942*, p. 54.](#)
23. Svensk Reklam 1940, p. 7. A similar statement was made by Stenbeck just after the outbreak of the war to a trade publication: "Swedish advertising and advertising men now have their big chance. Now, if ever, is the opportunity to show to what extent advertising can serve society." Svensk reklam har nu sin chans, Reklamnyheterna, 8 September 1939.
24. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam 1942*, p. 18.](#)
25. "Reklamförbundet"; Stenbeck served 1931-1941.
26. Svensk Reklam 1940, p. 7.
27. In addition, a monitoring agency for Swedish and foreign publications was established by a cabinet decision on 15/9 1939.
28. The same name was used for the wartime organization of BN during the Cold War.
29. Memo titled "P. M. Nr. 1 angående U.C:s tillkomst, för densamma nu gällande planer m.m samt ifrågasatt reorganisation av U.C." no date 1939, SIS, SE/RA/[2703/1](#).
30. Manuscript from presentation given by Bernhard Greitz for Stockholms Reklamförening 17 April 1940. SIS, SE/RA/[2703/1](#).
31. Manuscript to radio address by Director General Björck, 15 September 1939, SIS, SE/RA/[2703/1](#).
32. Memo titled "V.P.M.", dated 1939-09-09, SIS, SE/RA/[2703/1](#).
33. Memo from Nils-Eric Ekblad "Till chefen för försvarsstabens underrättelse avdelning" dated 15 december 1938, SIS, SE/RA/[2703/1](#).
34. Manuscript from presentation given by Bernhard Greitz for Stockholms Reklamförening 17 April 1940. SIS, SE/RA/[2703/1](#).

35. I.e., censorship.
36. Minutes from meeting with the three-man committee 7 September 1939. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1.
37. Minutes from meeting with the three-man committee 21 September 1939. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1.
38. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam* 1942, p. 26.](#)
39. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam* 1942, p. 27.](#)
40. Minutes from meeting with the three-man committee 4 October 1939. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1
41. Minutes from meeting with the three-man committee 17 October 1939. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1
42. Letter "Till Hans Excellens Herr Ministern för Utrikes Ärenden" from the three-man committee, dated 21 October 1939 SE/RA/2703/1.
43. Minutes from meeting with the three-man committee 3 November 1939. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1
44. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam* 1942, p. 27.](#)
45. The posters were distributed not only by public authorities but also by the youth organizations of the political parties. In other campaigns, labour unions, the Confederation of Swedish Employers and private insurance companies helped the SIS with distribution and printing expenses. Manuscript from presentation given by Bernhard Greitz for Stockholms Reklamförening 17 April 1940. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1.
46. Manuscript from presentation given by Bernhard Greitz for Stockholms Reklamförening 17 April 1940. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1.
47. The Swedish Tiger is a pun on the word "tiger," which in Swedish means both "tiger" and "keep quiet."
48. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam* 1942, p. 59.](#)
49. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam* 1942, p. 58.](#)
50. "AF debuterar som reklamdistributör" Reklamnyheterna, 29 November 1940. A similar agreement had previously been made with the Ministry of Supplies in 1939. Letter to the Ministry of Supplies from AF. Bilaga 3 till protokoll vid ordinarie sammanträde med Auktoriserade Annonsbyråers Förening 24 November 1939, Protokoll 1939-1942, AF Archive. Box 2, and with the National Food Commission.
51. There was some cheating within the cartel as agencies bypassed AF and pitched campaigns directly to various government authorities [Åström-Rudberg, "Service of the Nation", p. 15, 18.](#)
52. Manuscript from presentation given by Bernhard Greitz for Stockholms Reklamförening 17 April 1940. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1.
53. [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*, p. 881.](#) Greitz later became the director of the head of the information department of the SIS. He had a background in the social democratic press and was the information director for the Social Democratic Party.

54. [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*, p. 881](#). The Swedish advertising market was, despite Sweden's neutrality, hit harder by the outbreak of World War II than the British market. In the UK, commercial advertising expenditure fell 51 % between September 1938 and September 1939
55. [Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*, p. 45](#).
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid; An important difference that probably contributed to the much larger volume of commercial advertising in the UK and the US concerns the high "excess profit" taxes that were introduced during wartimes. For a company whose profits could be taxed up to 95 %, it was, of course, attractive to invest the surplus in advertising instead of showing profits.
58. [Törnqvist and Carlson, *Reklamens ekonomiska*](#).
59. In contrast to in Britain, ads were never subject to censorship in Sweden.
60. [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*, p. 94](#).
61. For more on this subject, see [Griffith, "Selling of America"](#); [Lykins, *From Total War*](#); [Stole, *Advertising at War*](#); [Stole, "Salesmanship of Sacrifice"](#); [Clampin, *Advertising and Propaganda*](#); [Lakomaa, "Corporatist Advertising"](#).
62. [Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*](#).
63. [Stole, "Salesmanship of Sacrifice", s. 2](#).
64. [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*, p. 881](#). It may be noted that Björklund himself was in favour of a permanent government advertising organization.
65. [Svenska Reklamförbundet, *Svensk Reklam 1942*, p. 44](#).
66. [Kommittén för utredning om det psykologiska försvaret, *Psykologiskt försvar*, p. 61](#).
67. [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*, p. 876](#). See also *Svensk reklam 1944*. At the same time as the advertising industry promoted government advertising, it argued that it was impossible for the government to establish its own advertising department as it was unlikely that it could be authorized and that it therefore, by the agreement between the cartel and TU, would be prevented from placing ads in newspapers. Document titled "Svar till Bilaga 2 till Protokoll vid ordinarie sammanträde med AF 26 February 1943, Remissvar till Statsrådet och chefen för Försvarsdepartementet, AF, Protokoll
68. [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*, p. 879](#).
69. [Björklund, *Reklamen i svensk*, p. 880](#).
70. [Fox, *Madison Avenue*](#); [Stole, *Advertising at War*](#).
71. [Lakomaa, "Corporatist Advertising"](#).
72. [Griffith, "Selling of America"](#); [Lykins, *From Total War*](#); [Nilsson, *American Propaganda, Swedish Labor, and the Swedish Press in the Cold War: The United States Information Agency \(USIA\) and Co-Production of U.S. Hegemony in Sweden during the 1950s and 1960s*](#); [Osgood,](#)

[*Total Cold War; Hixson, Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961.*](#)

73. Named after then-Minister of Interior Eje Mossberg.
74. [*Kommittén för utredning om det psykologiska försvaret, Psykologiskt försvar, p. 118.*](#)
75. See also document dated 1955-06-15 "Till Beredskapsnämndens delegation för UC:s organisation", BN, SE/KrA/0965/Ö/B 1a/1 B1a.
76. [*Kommittén för utredning om det psykologiska försvaret, Psykologiskt försvar, p. 199f.*](#)
77. Ibid.
78. [*Lakomaa, "Corporatist Advertising".*](#)
79. Memo, Riksreklambyrå 1966-08-07, dnr 179, BN, SE/KrA/0965/Ö/E 2/7 document dated 1955-06-15 "Till Beredskapsnämndens delegation för UC:s organisation", BN, SE/KrA/0965/Ö/B 1a/1.
80. Stenbeck was also the representative of the advertising industry in the SIS during World War II.
81. The advertising industry's activities were limited after the early 1970s. Its last exercise on record took place in 1985. However, the organization was not disbanded until 1994. Tubin claims that the advertising organization was "disbanded" in "the late 1970s." [*Tubin, Förfäras ej, p. 19.*](#) This, however, may refer to the fact that it was not staffed, as indicated by Aggefors, interview 2011.
82. As we shall see, some of the participating agencies gained a significant amount of business *after* the demise of BN.
83. Some of the tasks assigned to BN were to be taken over by the NIS, but there is no evidence of any preparatory work or exercises during the existence of the NIS (1971-1982).
84. The issue had been addressed in a referendum in 1955, in which the left-hand traffic alternative won 80 % of the vote. However, the result was ignored by politicians.
85. The competition was won by the group "Telstar."
86. For a thorough analysis of the incentives for participation, see Lakomaa, [*"Corporatist Advertising".*](#)
87. [*Funke, "Busines Ethics"; Funke, "Regulating a Controversy".*](#)
88. [*Lindqvist, Reklamen är Livsfarlig; Packard, Hidden Persuaders.*](#) For a thorough discussion on the Swedish debate on advertising and its regulation, see [*Funke, "Busines Ethics"; Funke, "Regulating a Controversy".*](#)
89. [*Informationsutredningen, Vidgad samhällsinformation, p. 48.*](#) The investigation committee included James Brade, who had a background as director of the advertising agency. He later became the deputy director of the authority that became the Council for Public Information, which was the result of the investigation and was established in 1971.
90. [*Informationsutredningen, Vidgad samhällsinformation, p. 9.*](#)
91. [*Informationsutredningen, Vidgad samhällsinformation, p. 10.*](#)
92. [*Informationsutredningen, Vidgad samhällsinformation, p. 8.*](#)

93. [Informationsutredningen, *Vidgad samhällsinformation*.](#)
94. [Informationsutredningen, *Vidgad samhällsinformation*, p. 65.](#)
95. The Preparedness Board tried to convince the government to transform the NIS into a “state advertising agency” that would be also active in peacetime. Supplement from Kurt Törnqvist to the Government investigative report “Översyn av beredskapsnämnden för psykologiskt försvar” 1971-02-26, BN KrA/0965/Ö/A 1a/4, KrA.
96. [Informationsutredningen, *Vidgad samhällsinformation*, p. 67.](#)
97. [Informationsutredningen, *Vidgad samhällsinformation*, p. 67.](#)
98. ”70 -talet ett spännande decennium i ” Svenska Reklambyråförbundet verksamhetsberättelse 1 april 1970-31 mars 1971. p 13.
99. Document titled ”Inför sammanträdet den 2 september 1975” dated 1975-08-29, Energisparkkommitten SE/RA/323558.01/A 2/2
100. ”Utdrag protokoll vid regeringssammanträde 1975-06-18 ”Tilläggsdirektiv till energisparkkommittén”, Energisparkkommittén, SE/RA/323558.01/A 2/2.
101. Oral History Interview with Lars Billäng, director of ARE *Idé 1*.
102. [Lakomaa, *The Party's Own*.](#)
103. ARE Annual report 1980.
104. Press release from “Svenska bryggareföreningen” [Swedish Brewers’ Association] 24 March 1970.
105. Letter from the CEO of Gumaelius dated 1978-06-02 “Till våra kunder och leverantörer. AB Gumaelius inställer betalningarna”, Energisparkkommittens arkiv, SE/RA/323558.01/A 2/2.
106. Manuscript from presentation given by Bernhard Greitz for Stockholms Reklamförening 17 April 1940. SIS, SE/RA/2703/1.
107. See, e.g., [Wilson, *Destructive Creation*, p. 18.](#)
108. [Wilson, *Destructive Creation*, p. 35.](#) e.g., notes that veterans’ organizations such as Vfw and the American legion after World War I found it unfair that only men, not “capital,” were drafted for the war effort.
109. Document titled: Översyn av beredskapsnämnden för psykologiskt försvar” 1971-02-26, Beredskapsnämnden för psykologiskt försvar, KrA/0965/Ö/A 1a/4, KrA..

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Figure

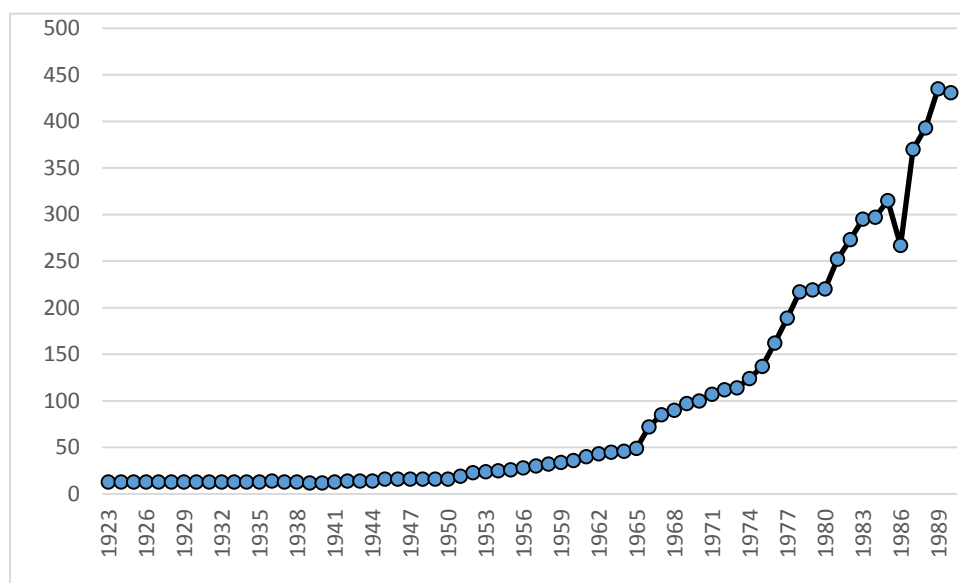


Figure 1 Number of advertising agencies from 1923 to 1990. The cartel ended in 1965 (data for 1923 to 1965 collected by the author and from 1965 from Arnberg & Svanlund).¹⁹