



SSE Working Paper Series in Economic History
No. 2022:1

Business Associations and Institutional Development of Swedish Post-War Export Advertising

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Abstract

The study highlights the importance of business associations in institutional development in a political economy. Utilizing Streeck & Schmitter's concept of two logics of collective action, in which interest group action is explained by internal relations (logic of membership) as well as external relations (logic of influence), the paper analyzes the Swedish Advertisers' Association role in the institutional development of Swedish export advertising during 1955-1972. Using qualitative analysis of associational material to trace institutional development, the paper demonstrates that thanks to the logic of membership, expressed in bottom-up member engagement, the association's leadership together with members established new institutional resources and services for export advertising during the second half of the 1950s. Among the initiatives were educational efforts, knowledge-exchange forums, national trademarks, and registries with information of foreign ad markets. As the competitiveness of Swedish exports was of national interest, the services attracted external actors, as the government, state agencies and other business associations. Here the logic of influence, conveyed in increasing contacts between the association's leadership and external representatives, embedded its institutions in a wider network of stakeholders in export promotion. This process was facilitated by the post-war dominance of corporatism, which emphasized cooperation between collective actors. The contributions of the association grew in size and importance until the formation of the Swedish Export Council in 1972, that redrew the institutional landscape of export promotion by forming a more centralized form of cooperation between the government and the export business community.

Keywords advertising, business association, business interest organization, corporatism, economic history, export promotion, institutions, marketing history, post-war, Sweden

Introduction

The paper studies the role of a marketing association in the development of collective export advertising in Sweden during the Post-war period. More precisely, it aims to analyze how and why it shaped institutional structures for this endeavor.

Marketing business associations arose at the beginning of the 20th century and were early on particularly active in the Anglo-Saxon world, as well as in Sweden (Björklund, 1967; Åström-Rudberg, 2018). They have had a crucial role in the historical development of advertising, for example regarding establishment of marketing thought and concepts (Cochoy, 2014; Jones and Tadjewski, 2018, pp. 9, 162; Arnberg, 2018; Åström-Rudberg, 2018), professionalization and education (Schultze, 1982, Laird, 1992), regulation (Miracle and Nevett, 1987; Harker, Harker & Volkov, 2001; Funke 2015) cartelization (Åström-Rudberg, 2019), public debate, legitimacy, political propaganda and political influence (Pope, 1991; Funke, 2007; Funke, 2011; Schwarzkopf, 2005; Schwarzkopf 2008; Clampin, 2014; Lakomaa, 2019). For a business association, successful results rely on efficient institutions, and the effects marketing associations have on institutional development have been studied in self-regulation of advertising (Miracle and Nevett, 1987; Gao, 2007; Dahlberg, 2010; Beard, 2012; Funke 2015), fostering of a framework and language of marketing (Cochoy, 2014), or coordinated means of PR for advertising legitimacy (Schwarzkopf, 2005).

This study covers a hitherto overlooked subject of institutional development among advertising associations – their involvement in export promotion, and more succinctly, export advertising. The literature commonly identifies export promotion with state initiatives (Serinhaus, 1986; Lederman et al, 2010; Leounidou et al, 2011) although recent research has highlighted the role of institutional networks, of which business associations are part of, as an understudied part of the field (Costa et al, 2017). In line with Gillespie and Riddle, there is need for historical studies of the associations that shaped export promotion to understand institutional growth and its various patterns in an international perspective (Gillespie and Riddle, 2004). The study will hence generally further knowledge of business associations' role within the institutional network of export promotion, as well as more specifically in export advertising.

The Swedish Case

The Swedish case presents good opportunities for contributing to the field. A small country dependent on exports, it has made organized efforts in export promotion since the end of the 19th century. After WWII both free trade agreements and growing economies increased international competition, and Swedish export companies, the marketing industry and government agencies were drawn into developing a network of export promotion (Björklund, 1967, pp. 644-648; Glover, 2011). This process culminated with the creation of the Swedish Export Council in 1972, jointly co-owned by the state, and organized business interests (SOU 1991:3, pp. 31-33) However, little is known about the influence of market associations on the institutionalization of Swedish export promotion up until the formation of the council.

The post-war export sector was dominated by large exporters within manufacture and raw materials. Their economic importance was reflected in Swedish business associations. They held the Swedish Federation of Industries as well as the Swedish National Export Association in a firm grip. Of all Swedish business associations, the Federation of Industries was the most influential when formulating policy initiatives, barring labor market relations, which was the responsibility of the Employers' Association, that, however, also was controlled by the same group of companies. (Glover, 2011, pp. 75-85, 129-138; Funke 2015, pp. 177-178; Westerberg 2020, pp. 4-5,11, 59-60).

A major association in institutional development was the Swedish Advertisers' Association. In 1955 it formed the Export Advertising Group; a group tasked with coordinating and developing resources and services in export advertising (Björklund, 1967, p. 644). The association was founded in 1924, gathering press circulation figures and giving members advice and information on the Swedish ad market. It was also engaged in influencing and building institutional functions. The association took part in advertising self-regulation (Funke, 2015 p. 35), worked for the dismantlement of the advertising cartel run by Swedish ad agencies and dailies, and advocated the introduction of commercial TV (Funke, 2015, p. 170; Åström-Rudberg, 2019, p. 239, 252-254). It had hundreds of member companies, which included many of the major exporters. The organization also grew strongly in the post-war era, with an increase from 264 members in 1955 to 652 members in 1972 (Advertisers' Association Archives, annual reports

1955-72). Consequently, it was a powerful representative of advertising interests. Accordingly, the paper aims to analyze the institutional development of export advertising in the Swedish Advertisers' Association from the foundation of the Export Advertising Group until the creation of the Swedish Export Council.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, the association's role in formation of a new discourse on export advertising is explored. Secondly, the association's institutional development of export advertising services is analyzed. Both sections rest on qualitative analysis, although a quantitative compilation of data on subscriptions of a service is included. Finally, a conclusive segment closes the article.

Previous research

Existing research highlights cooperation between marketing business associations and other actors to further both political and economic goals as well as the legitimacy and professionalization of advertising. In the 1960s, the US-dominated International Advertising Association backed introducing export advertising, also known as international advertising, at American universities. The subject had until then been discussed by practitioners and business associations, while being absent from higher education and research. By supporting academics interested in the field, for example by having them speak at key meetings, the association contributed to export advertising developing its own literature and scholars, so that by the early 1970s it was a distinct discipline in marketing studies (Miracle, 1984; Agrawal, 1994; Dunn, 1994).

Shortly after WWII, the Export Advertising Association, a predecessor to the International Advertising Association, had together with US associations the Advertising Council and the Committee of Economic Development played an important part in attempting to promote market liberal values and "the American way of life" in European nations receiving Marshall aid. This was done in cooperation with the US State Department, facilitated by increased involvement of corporate America in state affairs during the war. The aim was to secure loyal allies and good export markets while keeping threats of communism at bay. The State Department had initially considered producing its own propaganda, but finally opted for a more subtle approach by channeling the messages through corporate advertising. Advertisers were

advised to market products within a context accentuating the superiority of America's economic and cultural system. However, due to the department's lack of experience of working with advertising, its guidelines for advertisers became at once both too vague and too detailed to interest business participation. Advertisers also complained to the Advertising Council on the scarcity of data on European ad markets, something they lacked resources or ability to collect themselves. Also, the State department became dissatisfied with what it saw as the absence of planning and association on the part of the Advertising Council, while the council shortly realized it did not have the resources to honor their commitments. The project was consequently a failure and terminated in 1950, although the Advertising Council soon found a successful role in cooperating with the State Department on propaganda directed at countries behind the Iron Curtain (Stole, 2016; Stole, 2021).

The Association of British Advertising Agents was intimately involved in the inter-war efforts to create "Empire brands" to tie together the market of the "the mother country" with those of its colonies (Barnes, 2014; Barnes & Higgins, 2020). It staged exhibits as part of the Empire exhibition in London and formed a Trade Exhibit Committee to coordinate these efforts. The association was also embedded in key government agency the Empire Marketing Board (EMB), as the head of the association also served as the head of the board's publicity committee, which devised campaigns to increase consumption of empire products (Schwarzkopf, 2008, pp. 144-149, 199-215). Although these were not successful due to absence of consumer awareness of the origin of brands as well as brand loyalty, causing the termination of the EMB in 1932 (Higgins & Varian, 2021), the participation of organized advertising in state affairs helped the industry gain legitimacy and recognition, elevating its societal position from simple advertisers to vital experts in communication (Schwarzkopf 2008, pp. 231-236).

Definitions and theoretical standpoints

Export advertising in an institutional setting

Export advertising is defined as "run in foreign media. But which is planned, prepared, controlled, coordinated, directed, or influenced from the outside the boundaries of the country in which it is run, or/.../ which is run in international media" (Miracle 1984, p.136). It is part of a broader concept, export

promotion, which is usually defined as state supported efforts for exports of goods from one country to international markets. Export promotion can cover a variety of activities. Lederman et al describe four types of services offered by export promotion agencies: 1, *country image building* (advertising, promotional events, advocacy); 2, *export support services* (exporter training, technical assistance, capacity building, including regulatory compliance, information on trade finance, logistics, customs, packaging, pricing); 3, *marketing* (trade fairs, exporter and importer missions, follow-up services offered by representatives abroad); and 4, *market research and publications* (general, sector, and firm level information, such as market surveys, on-line information on export markets, publications encouraging firms to export, importer and exporter contact databases). According to the authors, most resources are directed to the last two services, indicating the importance of marketing in export promotion (Lederman et al, 2010, pp. 257-258). Lederman et al's service categories will be used in the analysis of the extent and type of the association's institutional contribution to collective export promotion.

However, export promotion activities can be initiated by single companies, business associations or other non-government entities (Costa et al, 2017). Costa et al in turn identify three forms of cooperation businesses can be part of to further their export promotion capabilities: social, business, and institutional networks. The last form of network includes a variety of actors; for example, governments, incubators, research institutes, aid development agencies and business associations (Costa et al, 2017). An institutional network for export promotion can encompass policies including both national efforts to strengthen a country's economic standing on the world stage, as well as direct help for businesses to succeed on international markets. The paper utilizes the concept of institutional framework but emphasizes that business associations can develop collective export promotion both through internal mechanisms and in interaction with external actors.

Business associations and the institutional context

Institutional change can be triggered by various forces, as diminishing returns, punctuated equilibriums, and external shocks. (Norman, 2015). However, beliefs and ideas also matter in shaping policy and institutions (Sabatier and Weible, 2007, pp. 189-210). Consequently, it should be expected that

institutional changes can be preceded or aided by shifts in discourses. However, as focus is on organized interests, a complementary theoretical understanding of institutional formation is supplied by the two logics of collective action in a business interest association. The interaction between the association's leadership, staff and its members are termed the logic membership, while that between the association's leadership, staff and external actors is defined as the logic of influence. The interaction of the two logics can cause tensions, as leadership tries to balance demands from members with those from outside actors (Schmitter and Streeck, 1999).

Additionally, the two logics of collective action fit well within the historical context, as post-war Sweden was dominated by corporatism. Corporatism is a national social order in which interest associations are awarded considerable influence on state policies, in exchange for choosing deliberation with other societal actors over open conflict and self-interest, avoiding costly political conflicts, and promoting an efficient economy. For a business association, corporatism entails vying for political influence on behalf of members and accepting to discipline members to abide by agreements made by corporatist actors, trying to accommodate the two logics of collective action with each other (Schmitter and Streeck, 1999).

Research suggests corporatism is more likely in countries like Sweden; small and export dependent with a strong national cohesion (Katzenstein 1985; Campbell & Hall, 2009). In Sweden, Social Democracy was instrumental in development, in no small part due to it staying in power for much of the second half of the 20th century. In effect, the government included trade unions, business associations and cooperative movements into formal positions in many tiers of the state. As of the 1990s, however, corporatism has been scaled back in Sweden due to market liberalization and internationalization of many Swedish exporters, in effect lessening their interest to uphold its structures and practices (Fulcher 1987; Rothstein 1992; Johansson 2000; Pestoff 2006).

Concepts of advertising techniques to understand advertising history

To grasp the role of advertising innovation, the study employs some of Schwarzkopf's historical concepts of advertising, which were introduced by leading advertisers and advertising scholars, competing with, and replacing a concept that until then dominated the discourse. The study uses the

concepts of advertising as mass distribution and salesmanship, brand management, management of symbols and advertising as salience and creativity. The concept of advertising as part of mass distribution and salesmanship appeared in the 1880s, based on supporting mass-produced goods to a homogenous group of consumers. The concept of branding management arose in the 1930s and focused on developing brands – commercial personalities – that signified certain values and connotations, but also recognized the use of salesmanship and consumer surveys as important for managing a brand. The concept of management of symbols, which became dominant in the 1950s, built on the idea that advertised brands engage in symbolic and emotional communication with consumers. It applied motivation research in mapping consumers' preferences to discover the psychological traits of different consumer groups, that became a point of departure for the creative process. The concept of advertising as salient and creative came to the fore in the 1960s, centering on making advertising uniquely perceived in a plethora of advertisements, as well as positioning it as a language projecting cultural and political values. (Schwarzkopf, 2009).

Research questions

The study asks the following questions:

- 1) What discourse on export advertising underpinned institutional change in the Advertisers' Association, and what concepts of advertising did it highlight?
- 2) What type of services were developed within the association?
- 3) In what way did the logic of membership influence institutional development?
- 4) In what way did the logic of influence affect institutional development?
- 5) Did the association's involvement contribute to the legitimacy and professionalization of advertising?
- 6) How can the Swedish development be compared to that in other countries?

Method and sources

The study uses a qualitative method, but a quantitative assessment is also utilized in one case. Initially, argumentative discourse analysis is applied, in that a particular framing of a problem is seamlessly linked

to a specific cause and ensuing solution, which competes with other discourses, presenting alternative solutions and causes to the problem, to become institutionalized and wield policy influence (Hajer, 1993, p. 66; Bacchi, 2000).

Analysis of institutional development is inspired by interpretive process tracing, in the sense to supply a thicker description of the process behind institutional development and its outcomes, analyze the causal mechanisms, while viewing intersubjective discourses as important for policy formation (Norman, 2015).

Sources are drawn from internal documents, minutes, and reports, as well as external ones, as annual reports, trade publications and newsletters. The documents are housed at the archives of the Swedish Advertisers' Association, the Association of Swedish Advertising Agencies, the Swedish Advertising Federation, the Royal Archives, and The Royal Library.

Advertising industry development in post-war Sweden

During the 1950s and 1960s, Swedish advertising exhibited a vigorous market expansion. Total real advertising costs almost tripled between 1950 and 1970. This was reflected in the advertising agency sector, with growing profits and a rising number of ad agencies (Funke 2015, pp. 60-62). Swedish marketers also exhibited an interest in fresh marketing concepts as for example motivation research and discussed them in trade press and other publications (Hermansson, 2002, pp. 70-73), mirroring similar discussions in the UK and US (Schwarzkopf, 2005). By the mid-1960s, due to the abolishment of an advertising cartel, the protected market position of its large "full service" ad agencies was removed, and they were soon superseded by smaller "creative" agencies led by advertising professionals that were heavily inspired by contemporary American advertising (Funke, 2013, pp. 95-96).

Historical development of Swedish export promotion

Modern Swedish export promotion can be traced to the end of the 19th century, as increased protectionism (Schön, 2007, p. 264) made trade important for Swedish diplomacy (Larsson, 1977). In 1887, a private business association with some financial backing from the government, the Swedish National Export Association, was formed (Glover 2018). Small and medium-sized businesses lacked

access to associational support until 1949 when a government agency was formed to provide for their needs (Prop 1972:31). In the 1930s, protectionism arose again (Schön 2007, p. 360). Noting other countries had export credits, the government launched The Swedish Export Credit Agency in 1933 (Sjögren, 2010, pp. 33-41). Swedish government inquiries into collective export promotion followed in 1938 and 1948 (Glover, 2018).

Throughout the inter-war years advertising became increasingly important for both Swedish export promotion and cultural diplomacy, for example in the production of national exhibits at international fairs (Glover and Hellenes, 2021). This reflected advertising's growing professionalization and power (Schwarzkopf, 2008; Gardeström, 2018), a development also echoed in the increasing association of advertising interests (Funke, 2015, pp. 317-319). As the end of WWII came into sight, the Swedish Advertising Federation, an umbrella association for organized advertising, tried to boost export promotion to regain foreign markets lost during wartime. Such efforts were being planned in Switzerland, USA and Great Britain, and Sweden needed to act as well, it stressed. Nevertheless, attempts by the federation in 1943 to create an export research and advertising group made up of representatives from exporters, business, marketing, and government came to nothing as the National Export Association claimed demand for Swedish products after the war would be so high that no further coordinated promotion efforts were needed. When the Swedish Advertisers' Association in 1947 again raised the issue together with the Department of Trade, the answer was given by the Export Association – and that initiative also failed (Björklund 1967, pp. 643-644).

The resistance of the Export Association to new and more pro-active marketing can be traced to long standing ideas of Swedish quality being both a hallmark of Swedish exports, and the most important sales argument. Notions of “Swedish quality” would persist for much of the 20th century, and the concept's connotations would change, going from perceived inherent qualities tied to both cultural and geographic contexts before the war, to being embedded in modern marketing on competitive post-war markets, and, finally during the end of the century, transformed into corporate branding, “Swedishness”, that was not constrained by the fact that many exporters by then had become international corporations with global production (Glover, 2022).

During the post-war period, the character of exported goods changed. The share of raw materials, which had made up the bulk of exports, decreased and machinery's share increased. While business to business products made up the lion's share, consumer products such as cars, fridges and typewriters, and furniture, grew as well (Schön 2007, pp. 381-384). As export markets expanded through free trade agreements, government involvement in export promotion intensified, often in collaboration with private interests. The Swedish Institute, responsible for both public diplomacy and export promotion, was formed in 1945 (Glover, 2011, pp. 7-11), and on suggestion of the 1948 inquiry, "secretaries of trade" recruited from business were placed at various diplomatic missions (Glover, 2018). In 1953 the Export School was launched, based on institutions in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. It was a product of cooperation between its initiator the Ministry for Trade, and business associations, among them the National Export Association and the Swedish Advertising Federation (Swedish Advertising Federation archives: annual report 1953). In 1962, the Swedish Export Credit Corporation was established in cooperation between state and the country's largest banks to offer loans and contractual guarantees (SOU 1991:3, p. 199). By the early 1960s the government decided to set up an agency with a coordinating policy role for public diplomacy and export promotion. A temporary body, the Enlightenment Committee was formed in 1962, that in 1966 evolved into a permanent agency, the Collegium for Sweden Information Abroad. These corporatist bodies included representation from the export business, tourism, trade, and the government. Still, friction between Swedish foreign policy and the business community appeared in the late 1960s, as political radicalization and increased state interest in development in the third world collided with business interests of supporting competitiveness on foreign markets. (Glover 2011, pp. 117-154). This led to an institutional make over, as a new central agency for export promotion, Swedish Export Council, in 1972 replaced previous agencies, while the Swedish Institute from then on focused on political and cultural endeavors (SOU 1991:3, pp. 31-33).

A new discourse on export advertising takes hold

The ideas leading to the creation of the E-group were part of a new discourse on export advertising that emerged in Sweden after WWII; directly influenced by American ideas on advertising (Miracle, 1966, pp.1-2; Glover and Funke, 2017; Glover, 2022). Until then, the dominant discourse had long emphasized

exceptional quality and a high innovative level as innate traits of Swedish products, invoking the concept of advertising as mass distribution and salesmanship. Applying argumentative discourse analysis on the reasoning of the National Export Association, it regarded halted trade due to WWII as the problem, with the war as cause, thus allowing the solution to be a return to “business as usual” once peacetime returned.

The idea of inherent Swedish quality as the cornerstone of export advertising was thus challenged by advertising professionals who claimed that extensive and innovative marketing was the way forward. To them, the problem was institutional weaknesses and shortcomings in advertisements, which could have serious long-term effects – if no action was taken to remedy the situation, the prosperity of the small export dependent country was in jeopardy. The cause of the situation was directly or implicitly linked to companies’ lack of professional cutting-edge knowledge in advertising and marketing. The solution was in turn presented as creating an effective support structure for education and knowledge dissemination, helping Swedish business acquire an up-to-date view of world markets and the marketing process itself. Those supporting an overhaul of current practices positioned themselves as a new generation of educated professionals that were the enablers of a more professionalized export advertising. The new discourse’s critique echoed a clash between older and more recent advertising concepts, as accusations of clumsy one-size-fits-all adverts mirrored the idea of an overplayed concept of advertising as mass sales, while solutions highlighted the need for survey-based segmentation, brand management, strategic manipulation of symbols and salience and creativity to craft successful export advertising. A number of examples will illustrate how the discourse was created and perpetuated in the association.

According to the Advertisers’ Association, the establishment of its Export Advertising group in 1955 was due to the actions of Ragnar Svensson, advertising executive at agricultural equipment manufacturer Bolinder-Munktell (BM). The association’s periodical *Info* described him as a young “ad man with ideas” (*Info* 3/1956, p. 31). The periodical also underscored his academic background, highlighting his studies in the US. In America he had studied marketing psychology, and met representatives from major industries, ad agencies and market survey agencies. Swedish marketeers had as of the 1920s regarded the US as a leader in marketing, and while a few key figures in Swedish Marketing had been educated

there during the interwar-period, the numbers of these steadily increased after the war (Björklund, 1967, pp.12-13). Svensson was characterized as familiar with cutting edge American marketing, and many of the concepts he referred to were not translated into Swedish, thus emphasizing their weight and provenance. After being hired by BM, he noticed that while there was plenty of information on licenses, current exchange and technical issues relating to exports, there was “virtually nothing on export advertising, export marketing, export sales promotion and export public relations.” (*Info* 3/1956, p. 31).

Svensson had authored an article in the association’s periodical *Annonssören* in April 1955 that depicted Swedish export advertising as antiquated and unprofessional, highlighting a dire need of innovative practices, structured information on foreign markets and increased cooperation between exporters to accomplish this (*Annonssören* 4/55, pp. 5-8). He was opening speaker at the June 17th meeting the same year when the group was constituted and became a member of its working committee, as well as officially thanked at the association’s annual assembly in 1956 for being the impetus in its creation (Advertisers’ Association archives: newsletter 6/1955; annual report 1956, 1960). Svensson also took part in the makeover of the association’s periodical *Annonssören*. When its successor *Info* appeared in 1956, it included a recurring section for export advertising (Advertisers’ Association archives; board minutes April 4th, 1955; annual report 1956).

Although the short timespan between Svensson’s article and the founding of the E-group indicated he acted in concert with others inside the association, Svensson deftly summarized many of the key arguments made by the group and its proponents. In his 1955 article in *Annonssören*, “Export Advertising – an unknown issue”, Svensson leveled criticism of the absence of brand management. He stated that the English slogan “Export or Expire” had often been cited in Sweden a few years back, but that it currently, seldom was mentioned. Svensson blamed the good economic growth of recent years: it had made Swedish exporters discard the importance of export advertising. This was worrisome, especially for a small country whose welfare depended on the export sector. He attacked the preconception that Swedish exports could rely on reputation of quality alone, stressing that Sweden lagged in export advertising. Current export advertising, Svensson continued, had drawn criticism in the press. He shared this critique: the advertising was of subpar quality, badly translated, and did not consider the preferences

of the foreign buyer. Svensson blamed business leadership, who according to him was unable or unwilling to grasp that the market dynamic had evolved a lot in recent years. Particularly small and medium size businesses needed assistance. He proposed collective business efforts to both elevate quality of export advertising and lower its costs. That exports predominately went to markets in Europe, UK and the US, countries Svensson regarded as belonging to the same cultural sphere as Sweden, would simplify implementation of such measures, he reasoned.

Svensson then discussed specific segments of export advertising in more detail, pointing out faults and deficiencies, as well as solutions. Contrasting advertising for the home market with foreign ones, he acknowledged that the former was based on good knowledge of consumer behavior drawn from well executed market surveys. Export advertising, however, was haphazardly thrown together, made without reliable consumer facts, resting on hearsay and guess work on who the consumer was and on how to argue a purchase. To make informed decisions, Swedish companies needed more data, and better techniques to get them. Svensson lamented the lack of detailed facts on foreign newspapers and magazines, listing type of content, readership, and circulation figures. In Sweden such information was obtainable through the Swedish Audit Bureau of Circulations (Tidningsstatistik AB), a survey agency launched in 1937 (Björklund 1967, pp. 129-131). By applying the same standards to export advertising as that of the home market, much of the problems could be overcome (Annonssören 4/1955, pp.5-8).

Another issue raised in his article was if a Swedish or local agency would produce the campaigns, and if responsibility ought to rest on the head office in Sweden or local representatives. Referring to the US as a benchmark, Svensson stated American companies often oversaw export advertising, even when actual production was made abroad. However, he pointed out that American export advertising was twice as expensive for US companies compared to that for the home market, as the former had to contend with a smaller sales volume. Svensson lambasted Swedish exporters for having outdated methods when signing advertising contracts and communicating with local ad representatives. It was of key importance to have local representatives savvy about suitable media for a campaign, and it also made sense to orchestrate a campaign in cooperation with local retailers, who usually spent much larger sums on advertising than the export company proper. He also highlighted the need for Swedish advertisers to

carefully manage their brands to fit local markets. Translations required improvement, for example by refraining from using the same copy in many countries that shared the same language. Not doing so risked missing cultural differences that were crucial for making effective advertising (Annonssören, 4/1955, pp. 5-8). After the E-group had formed, Svensson continued to write in trade journals, but in a more instructive fashion, as in the Export Association's periodical *Svensk Export* in 1957, where he in three lengthy articles presented a manual on how to produce effective export advertising (*Svensk Export* 1957 No. 12, pp.10-12; *Svensk Export* 1957 No. 13-14, pp.14-15, 21; *Svensk Export* 1957 No. 15, pp. 12-13).

Other advertising executives also utilized *Info* to make arguments based on the same ideas presented by Svensson. Olle Lidbeck, advertising executive at machinery and energy company AGA, emphasized that export advertisers needed good knowledge in geography and demographics, to concentrate campaigns to areas that had large populations. The advertiser also had to gather reliable information on local media channels, educational levels, and consumer segments (*Info* 5/56 p. 15). Earlier the same year, Nils O. Melin, head of the E-group's working committee and advertising executive at office machinery manufacturer Addo, wrote that the group was still in its infancy, but that its creation was an important step in solving the problems facing Swedish export advertising, that at the moment suffered from "absence of planning and coordination, temporariness, insufficient resolve, lack of understanding and respect for other national markets, insufficient market information, carelessness when choosing media, lackluster artistic design and incorrect use of local language" (*Info* 1/56, p. 21). By allowing exporters to discuss and compare notes, the ground was laid for creating collaborative export advertising. Melin underlined the successful collective export advertising of Swiss watch makers, "that through coordination, opulent presentation and forceful execution had made Swiss watches synonymous with quality." These campaigns opened the world for other Swiss exports, as the notion of "quality" was so successfully marketed, that it rubbed off on other products from the same country, as well as strengthening the general good will of the nation. He painted the Swiss achievement of successful export advertising in war-like terms: a decisive victory that left the field open for the competitive skirmishes between the individual watch makers. By giving the E-group free reign, something similar could be

accomplished in Sweden. There was much in the balance, he emphasized, as exports were crucial for the high standard of living Swedes now enjoyed. Putting efforts into collective advertising was not only good for business, but for the country as well (Info 1/56, p. 21). That the association's leadership aligned itself with the views of these advertising executives was made salient by board's yearly prize "man of the year." In 1956, it was awarded to Svensson, In 1958 to Melin, and in 1962 to Melin's successor as head of the E-group, Torsten Folin. In all cases, the award was motivated by their contributions in export advertising (Advertisers' Association Archives: Newsletter 4/62).

"The emotional value of Sweden" and a national trademark

The new marketing ideas propagated by the E-group clearly underpinned the policy suggestions made in a 1957 report commissioned by the E-group's working committee. Authored by six advertising executives at export companies, it outlined how export advertising could create an all-encompassing brand for Swedish exports, a form of country image building based on advertising as brand management and management of symbols. First, the report stated that Swedish products were no longer inherently tied to production in the homeland, also adding that quality was hard to substantiate in an objective fashion. It consequently suggested dropping the concept of equating Swedish products with quality. Instead, the "Swedishness" of brands would be highlighted by associating them with emotional perceptions: "Collective propaganda [1] should therefore primarily seek to direct the buyers' attention to Sweden and Swedish conditions. The committee has consequently reached the conclusion that collective propaganda primarily ought to be angled towards the emotional value of Sweden. It should on the basis thereof create opportunities for the Swedish producer and sales representative to get a foothold in the market" (Advertisers' Association archives, "Förslag till Sverige-propaganda," Oct 14th, 1957)

Based on these inferences, The report proposed new methods in constructing the country's image in foreign markets. It suggested the concept of "Sweden" should serve as an overarching brand, based on perceptions emanating from various favorable aspects of Swedish society. National characteristics would function as transmitters of a positive emotional values of Sweden. Specific product segments and brands would then make use of the "Sweden" brand as added value to their own specific campaigns. In

short, the general idea was to revamp the image of the country to both “Sell Sweden” and by doing so, making “Sweden Sell.” To accomplish this, the committee suggested a three-phased approach. The first entailed a common “goodwill propaganda on behalf of the Swedish name,” the second was advertisements for groups of products on a branch level, and the third advertisements for specific products. The first would aim to highlight Sweden and its citizens, the Swedes, in which the brand of “Sweden” would be created using a strategic manipulation of symbols. In cooperation with the tourism sector, campaigns would associate the country as well as its products with its pristine nature, rich history, progressive society, and specific culture. By involving tourism, foreign visitors would return to their home countries with positive experiences of Sweden, informing their general attitudes towards the country. This, in turn, would create fertile ground for advertising that played on the very same values and concepts (Advertisers’ Association archives,” Förslag till Sverige-propaganda,” Oct 14th, 1957).

The logic of membership and institutional growth

The logic of membership, i.e. the associational actions based on the internal interest of members, clearly was central in the inception of the institutional development in the Advertiser’s Association. Having established an institutional foothold through the E-group, the discourse on export advertising quickly gained institutionalized status in the association. Apart from convincing the leadership of the importance of the ideas underpinning it, the institutionalization process was also supported by the fact that the group’s views and actions were frequently and favorably covered in the Association’s newsletters, annual reports, and periodicals. From the very start, the group worked on introducing initiatives built on their ideas and were soon able to realize several of these. As they were implemented, the projects rapidly coalesced into a growing institutional structure, covering all of Lederman et al’s (2010) service categories: country image building, export support, marketing, and marketing research and publications.

While the Advertisers’ Association attempts in 1947 to muster a concerted effort by organized business and the government to expand export advertising had failed, the creation of The Export Advertising Group signaled a new and independent strategy. The group was constituted by representatives from the advertising divisions of Swedish companies meeting on June 17th, 1955. It was led by a working committee that was made up of representatives predominately from larger exporting companies and also

included the association's CEO acting as secretary. The presence of the latter underscored the group's prominence, as the CEO usually did not sit on the various sections and committees of the association. During the 1960s the head of the E-group, T. Folin from steel manufacturer Uddeholm, also sat on the board of the association. The group was therefore intricately connected to the association's leadership (Advertisers' Association Archives; annual reports 1953-70) The committee's head underscored that the group had "a chief aim /.../ to bring the country's export advertisers to the point where they would be willing to join forces – and money- toward a more coordinated over-all advertising effort than earlier" (Royal Library; Figures 1958-59). The group would also function as a members' forum for discussion and knowledge exchange on export advertising. Within a few years, around forty advertising managers or export-division executives had joined the group (Royal Library; Addo Figures 1958-59), and by the mid-1960s numbered over a hundred. The Advertisers' Association's leadership also quickly noticed the potential of this model for member participation (Advertisers' Association Archives; annual reports 1958-1967). Until then, the association's structure had consisted of a board, CEO and accompanying office, and various permanent committees. To most members, the yearly meeting was the only chance of socializing and discussing with other members (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1960). The E-group, on the other hand, allowed members from various firms and segments who shared a common interest to regularly exchange experiences and knowledge. The association consequently fashioned similar experience exchange groups for members interested in consumer, retail, industry, and PR-issues. By doing so, the association not only complemented the association's formal education programs, but also offered selective incentives to become or remain a member of the association.

Country image building

An important E-group project in line with the service of country image building was the creation of a national trademark. As other nations had established successful post-war slogans for collective export promotion, Sweden needed to do this too (*Info* 1/58, p. 1). The idea of using a trademark had been proposed a few years earlier in the industry, but it had been based around the trademark acting as a stamp of approval for Swedish quality and was never realized (Glover 2022). The 1957 committee report had now instead proposed a trademark based on the idea of embedding it in "emotional values" of

Sweden. The report had suggested using the national symbol of Sweden: The Three Crowns seal. However, this was not possible, as the Swedish Heraldry Board did not grant permission for its use in a commercial setting (Advertisers' Association archives; annual report 1957). After the association launched a competition, the winning concept was introduced in 1958; a stylized Viking ship in modern design, with the sail turned into an "S", and the word "Sweden" imprinted on its side. In a 1961 American campaign, the trademark was also accompanied with the slogan "Sweden – where quality is tradition". Together with two other suggestions, it had first been presented to various business representatives in the US, where it received a majority of positive views, with even an American ad agency favoring it (Advertisers' Association Archives; annual report 1961). The outcome thus indicated, somewhat contrary to the E-groups views, that the preconceptions of the inherent quality of Swedish products was not restricted only to exporters, but also existed in the foreign markets targeted by them. Still, the idea of "quality always sells!" was now accommodated within an "emotional" setting informed of the concept of management of symbols, by juxtaposing the slogan with the image of the Viking ship, disarming it in a slightly comical way. The lighthearted design of the ship aligned with a slightly humorous notion of Sweden's exporters as heirs to the Vikings, not fearing to set sail to unknown shores thanks to the amazing engineering of their longships. Even the association's periodical *Info* used this concept to depict a group of Swedish designers present at the "Design in Advertising- fair in London 1956. The designers were described as displaying a lively and ambitious spirit that negated the stereotype of Sweden being a country of "a strict bourgeois and cold stainless hygiene." Instead, their "youthfulness and vitality reminded of the gung-ho spirit of the Vikings of yore" (*Info* 7/56, p. 23).

Playing on Viking heritage also piggy backed on a by then well-recognized international brand: the daring Vikings of Scandinavia. The idea of the Viking as a bold adventurer and warrior had spread across the globe since the early 20th century thanks to films, books, and comics (Tveskov and Erlandson, 2007; Kelly, 2011; Hoffman, 2011). That especially American were enamored with myths and speculations on Viking linkage to the new world did not lessen the appeal, and even Swedish jazz records were marketed in the country using Viking themes on album covers (van Kan, 2016). The pairing of the trademark and the slogan therefore aimed at gently toppling the latter from its elevated discursive

position in Swedish export advertising, substituting it with a shrewd pop cultural reference better suited for brand management and manipulation of symbols, and hopefully also reflecting the salience and creativity of advertising in creating a unique and noticeable symbol of Sweden in a commercial setting. To bolster the symbol's legitimacy, the association also regulated its use. Only Swedish companies could use the trademark and had to register their wish to do so with the Advertising Association, and in doing so promising to adhere to the international rules of self-regulation for advertising. The Swedish state early on sanctioned its use, and the state-owned Swedish Railways was the first company to use it, when displaying it at an exhibition in Berlin in early 1958 (Royal Library; Addo, Figures 1958-1959), and the Swedish consulate in Houston and the Swedish Trade Secretariat in Chicago were other public agencies that used the trademark in the late 1950s (Glover and Funke, 2017). A year after its introduction, around 60 companies had been granted use of the trademark, and according to the association, it had also been prominently displayed at trade fairs. The E-Group also orchestrated an international PR-campaign for the new trademark, sending press releases and information material to newspapers all over the world. This appeared to have been a successful strategy, as the association claimed it thereafter had received a record number of international press clippings about the mark (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1959).

Even so, after a few years, interest in using the symbol seemed to have waned. In a 1962 survey regarding the willingness among exporters to engage in collective export promotion in West Germany, only half of those who replied stated they were "definitely ready to use the symbol", while about a third concluded that they "probably would do so" (Advertisers' Association Archives: newsletter 9/62). By 1970, the trademark's prominence had fallen even further. In an article in a periodical from the Collegium for Sweden Information Abroad, the absence of a unified trademark for Sweden was discussed. A representative of the Export Association stated that the Advertisers' Association's symbol was the most recent attempt at creating one, but that it was based on the unrealistic idea of functioning as a seal of approval for high quality. It was therefore, according to the representative, often used "in absence of a better material." An officer at the Swedish Information Service in New York stressed that although the Advertiser Association's trademark had been used to some effect, it did not possess "the

authority of a generally accepted symbol” (*Aktuellt om Sverige information*, 5/70, pp. 16-17). In the following issue, the Advertisers’ Association’s CEO replied that the trademark only designated country of origin and was never intended for any other use. Accompanying the article were images of the trademark, as if to drive home the point that the search for a replacement was an unnecessary endeavor (*Aktuellt om Sverige information* 1/71, p. 17).

Export support and marketing

The E-group spent considerable resources on supplying export support services, mainly in various forms of knowledge transfer. It arranged discussions, workshops and business visits for members, and hosted lectures that included representatives from ad agencies and businesses from countries that were important markets for Swedish exporters. It also awarded travel stipends for young advertisers to visit foreign markets and study them. At times, its working committee organized courses in export advertising that were offered for a fee. These often had a specific country theme: for example, in 1964, West Germany and Great Britain were covered. To lend credence to the courses’ value, advertising experts from covered countries were flown in for lectures. The E-group’s courses also drew attention from the Department of Foreign Affairs as well as state committees, whose officials and committee members attended some of them (Advertisers Association Archives: annual reports 1960, 1964, 1967).

At the end of the 1960s, the group supported export marketing aimed at the eastern bloc and invited a Soviet representative to hold a lecture on trade with the Soviet Union (Advertisers Association Archives: annual reports 1955-1972). By the end of the 1960s, the E-group also started to offer marketing services. For example, its working committee gave advice to individual member companies, on the condition that there was not a competitive relation between the company and committee members. By the early 1960s the committee was also involved in promoting and coordinating cooperation between Swedish companies that participated in international trade fairs and exhibitions (Advertisers’ Association Archives, annual report 1960-1967).

Market research and publications

By tackling scarcity of reliable data on foreign ad markets, the E-group also added marketing research and publications to the association's roster of services. On its recommendation, the association in 1957 initiated the creation of registries on international ad markets. By 1959, it was decided that for a subscription fee, the association's head office would regularly produce updated registries available to members as well as nonmembers, with members having a reduced fee. The registry was ordered after countries, with each national entry containing information on media carriers, readership, circulation figures and ad agencies, as well as demographic and economic figures. In a year, approximately eight separate entries and updates were dispatched per week (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1957, 1959; Newsletter, 1/1961).

The initiative garnered a large stock of subscribers, with about a third being nonmembers, that remained stable during the 1960s (Figure 1). The association also released special editions covering the US and Latin American markets, that were of extra importance for Swedish exporters. By offering this type of knowledge, the registries made strategic information on foreign ad markets affordable even for small and medium sized businesses, enabling them to perform desk studies without having to initiate costly and time-consuming data gathering. Nevertheless, it was a select group of export companies that utilized registries, as the percentage of members that subscribed fell from 60 percent in 1960 to 37 percent in 1969, while the association at the same time almost doubled its membership. Nevertheless, just as with the trademark, the service also attracted users within the state sector, as both state-owned companies and state agencies utilized it (Advertisers Association Archives: Newsletter 4/62). As of 1970 the service was transferred to the company the Swedish Foreign Advertising Agency (Svensk utlandsreklam AB), co-owned by the association and the Association of Swedish Advertising Agencies (Advertisers Association Archives: annual reports 1960-1969).

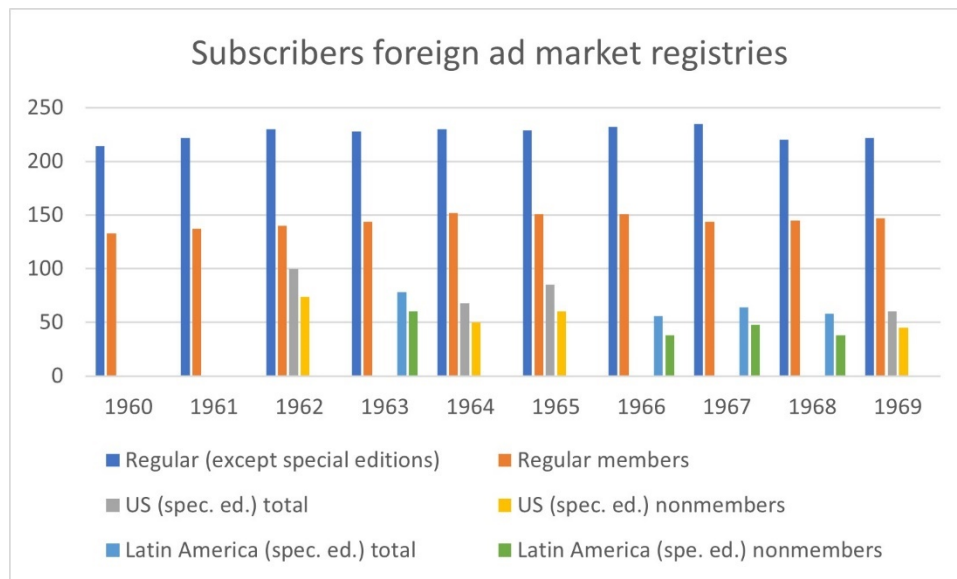


Figure 1. Subscribers export advertising registries 1960-1969, source: Advertisers' Association Archives: annual reports 1960-1969.

The logic of influence and institutional growth

A valuable resource – the welcoming embrace of the state leadership

The wide range of export promotion services created by the E-group had quickly drawn interest from the state representatives, as witnessed by their usage of the trademark symbol and registries on international ad markets by state actors, as well as their attendance of the E-group's courses. The new initiatives in collective export advertising gave the association a more elevated position in the institutional network of export promotion, leading to an increased importance of organization action being affected by the logic of influence, i.e., relations between the association's leadership and leadership of external organizations. At the same time, state officials also saw the E-group as a valuable business partner in formulating strategy and policy for the state's collective export promotion efforts. For example, the 1957 committee appointed by the E-group was consulted by the Department of Trade in conjunction with preparations for collective export promotion in the US. The E-group's committee was later contacted on a similar matter by the same department in 1960. The Department of Trade had at the request of the Federation of Industries launched an investigative committee to look at the

possibility of creating a concerted information campaign in the US to promote Swedish technology and science, and now wanted the E-group to cooperate with the committee. The invitation was probably in some part due to the presence of the Advertisers' Association's CEO on the investigative committee. The committee's final report also mentioned the E-group profusely and in very positive terms and recommended the use of the Advertisers' association's trademark symbol. In 1967, The Collegium for Sweden Information Abroad invited the E- group's working to comment on a presentation of proposed marketing strategies for 1967/68. The meeting was attended by a large group of specialists, among them representatives of the Department of Trade, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and Radio Sweden, a public service radio broadcast aimed at a worldwide audience.

At the association's 1962 yearly assembly, Minister of Trade Gunnar Lange delivered a speech where he voiced the government's gratitude for the association's achievements – comments that were reported in the Swedish press, radio and newsreels: "I am well aware of the work the association has done to improve export advertising. I want to especially mention /.../ the registries with information on export advertising in various countries, that the association has labored with for many years. The registries are now used by the government as well as by state agencies and state-owned companies. I have been told that this registry is one of the most complete of its kind in the world. It is heartening to know that Swedish export industry has access to such valuable means of assistance." (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1962; Newsletter 4/62). Lange also called on Swedish businesses to adopt the association's trademark: "To achieve a concerted effect of Swedish export promotion, individual businesses must coordinate with each other, using an overarching Swedish motto. I would like businesses to use the Sweden trademark created by the Advertisers' Association, in ads and exhibitions on the trade fair. I am convinced that by thusly cooperating, a larger impact will be achieved." The fair alluded to was part of an upcoming state coordinated export promotion campaign in 1963, aimed at the West German market, and Lange added that he counted on the association's cooperation: "The association's members would do wise in following the wider planning for Swedish export promotion in Germany and see which strategies will finally be chosen." (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1962; Newsletter 4/62).

The government here wanted the association to use its influence to secure financial contributions from businesses regarding the projected German campaign. The state would devote 400 000 SEK to the campaign and expected business to allot an equal amount. The Department of Foreign Affairs contacted the Advertisers' Association to ask if it could guarantee that the business community would raise these funds. The Association replied it was not interested in collecting money, and that a survey it made showed that the projected contributions of firms expected to take part in the campaign vastly outnumbered the state's input. Given the answer, the government agreed to refrain from this demand (Advertisers' Association archives, Newsletter 8/62, 10/62). Regardless of such friction in the logic of influence, it was apparent the government regarded the association as a crucial partner in export promotion and was not willing to ruin it over this issue. The E-group had consequently created utilities that attracted both business and state actors, acknowledging the rising importance of the association among other stakeholders in the institutional network.

Collaboration with other advertising associations

A major challenge for the Advertisers' Association was procuring relevant and up to date information on foreign ad markets. However, thanks to an international network of national advertiser associations, the association could to a considerable extent rely on its equivalents in other countries to gather this data. The network was upheld through common membership in international advertising associations, and through visits. Representatives of the association's office regularly traveled to sister associations, establishing direct relations. The association's office also informed members it could give letters of recommendation allowing them to receive assistance from advertising agencies in countries Swedish companies were active in. These services were highlighted when the association presented itself to a wider audience, as in its annual reports, projecting an image of an association that was part of an international network (Advertisers' Association Archives: annual reports 1958-1972.)

The Advertisers' Association also collaborated with other Swedish business associations in furthering the interests of export advertising. At the beginning of 1956, the Export Association informed the Advertisers' Association CEO that it too planned to create a section for export advertising. The two associations agreed to stay connected on the issue and the board of the Advertisers' Association

recommended its CEO to discuss cooperation between the two associations, although it is unclear if this came about (Advertisers' Association Archives; board minutes Feb 6th 1956).

In 1961, the Swedish Association of Advertising Agencies contacted the Advertisers' association. It represented the largest ad agencies in the country, who had a very advantageous competitive position thanks to a long-standing advertising cartel that incorporated most of the country's dailies (Åström-Rudberg, 2019, pp. 61-66). It suggested the two associations organize a "Day of Export Advertising" exhibit cum conference. The aim would be to attract representatives of both the business community and state agencies to inform of existing capabilities in export advertising, as well as of challenges to be resolved. Here it was obvious that the association wanted to use the event to create business opportunities for its members, as it suggested a topic for discussion could be why Swedish companies did not allow their Swedish ad agencies to accompany them abroad, that was common procedure for American firms. The joint venture came to fruition in March 1962, and both associations regarded it as successful (Archives of the Swedish Association of Advertising Agencies: board minutes 1961 Aug 29th, 1961, March 27th 1962; "PM rörande exportreklamdag", Aug 28th, 1961). In an internal newsletter after the event, the Advertisers' Association described its purpose as "informing state agencies and opinion makers about /.../ the necessity of international campaigns for Sweden be entrusted to those experts that existed among advertisers and ad agencies (Advertisers' Association Archives; Newsletter 4/1962). The conference thus played on the need to legitimize and elevate the standing of export advertising, a project only possible thanks to the advertising industry's professionalization and expertise.

In 1969, the two associations also decided to form the aforementioned Swedish Foreign Advertising Agency. It would manage production and distribution of the registries of foreign ad markets, as well as consultancy services. The company signified a development in institutional structure, with the addition of a business venture to oversee services, although the Advertisers' Association kept member discounts. The incentive to form the company came from the fact that the Association of Advertising Agencies, through its commercially operated Development Institute of the Swedish Advertising Agencies (Reklambyråernas utvecklingsinstitut, aka RUI) also provided consultancy in export advertising but did not possess registries of foreign ad markets. The two associations therefore decided it was better for

financial security and efficiency to pool resources into a single establishment. The judgment was in line with other in-house companies formed or linked to the two associations to cater to needs sought out by many businesses that had commercial potential, as for example RUI, that formed in 1968, and the Swedish Audit Bureau of Circulations, that since the late 1940s was jointly owned by the two associations and the Swedish Newspaper Publishers' Association (Björklund 1967, pp. 129-131; Advertisers' Association Archives: Newsletter 12/1969, annual reports 1970; Funke 2015, pp. 234-235).

Discourse and logics of exchange in institutional collective export advertising

The activity of the E-group quickly made the Advertisers' Association a key player in the collective efforts for Swedish export promotion. The creation of the group was a reaction to what its founders, mainly made up of heads of marketing departments of major exporters, regarded as an uninformed and naïve view on advertising and marketing that permeated many of the exporters. By relying on the misguided idea of the inherent high quality of Swedish products being the tried and tested means of advertising, the export sector clung to ideas that was a sure path to failure. The advertising professionals centered around the E-group thus started to push a new discourse on export advertising, that advocated the use of extensive and innovative means of advertising, using it as battering ram to motivate development of collective support for export advertising in the Advertisers' Association. It pictured the current situation of Swedish export advertising as untenable in the competitive post-war markets,' and a peril for the long-term prosperity of the country. This was due to obsolete practices and neglect of current knowledge-based advertising. The solution entailed letting advertising professionals entrench export advertising in contemporary marketing, utilizing new concepts of advertising as brand management, management of symbols and as salient and creative.

The dynamic behind ensuing institutional development can be understood by applying the framework of the two logics of collective action. The E-group had a strong position vis-a-vis associational leadership in the logic of membership and were therefore able to convince the association's leadership to let it create new institutional structures and resources, such as knowledge exchange between members, the trademark, and the registries on foreign ad markets, while utilizing existing ones, as international contacts with advertiser associations abroad, in novel ways. The advent of the E-group within the logic

of membership also contributed to reshaping the institutional association of the association itself. Member input into strategic areas through new experience-exchange groups based on the organizational template of the E-group created a new dynamic that propelled the association forward and increased its role in furthering knowledge creation, professionalization, and legitimacy of advertising.

The structure and purpose of the E-group also fitted in well with the logic of influence that permeated the association's interaction with external organizations. Thanks to the large exporters that dominated its working committee, the group had good access to their associational leadership as well as to other actors in the institutional network of export promotion. This enabled them to successfully market the new discourse and institutionalize it both within the association and in the institutional network. Also, while export promotion in a broader fashion had its champions in the government as well as major business associations, for example backing the creation of the Export School, there had not been a concerted effort to professionalize and develop export advertising. Here the E-group offered the right associational affiliation and professional expertise to take on the task.

By representing the efforts of the crucial export industry to support collective resources for export advertising, the association's initiatives easily slid into existing corporatist structures. That other Swedish business associations and the Swedish government, as well as state owned businesses, used, commended, and counted on the association's resources indicated external actors had a strong interest of cooperation, and that they highly valued the association's services and competence. A reason for the association's successful ascendancy in the institutional network can be found in the E-groups rapid and ambitious initiatives. Considering Lederman et al's categorizations of services offered by an export promotion agency (country image building, export support services, marketing, and market research and publications), it is evident that the association quickly covered all four. This gave it comprehensive knowledge of the various aspects of export advertising, positioning the association as a guarantor of the production and dissemination professional and up to date advertising.

The institutional process reveals few strains between the logic of membership and logic of influence. A key reason was likely that institutional growth occurred on the initiative of members, and that subsequent development was an intra-associational process, omitting pressure from external actors. When the logic

of influence started to seep into the structure, external actors were attracted to already created collective resources, as the trademark, the registries, and educational courses. The fact that the E-group was close to the associations' leadership also minimized conflicts. The dynamic between the E-group and the leadership of the association on the one hand, and the dynamic in interaction with key external actors on the other thus helped elevate the legitimacy and the reputation of the association, as well as that of export advertising in particular and advertising as such in general.

A comparative perspective

The Swedish case displays similarities with collective export advertising and business associations involvement in the US and UK. In all three countries, concerns over overseas trade facilitated arrangements between business and the state and provided opportunities for business associations to push their agenda of legitimacy and authority for the advertising industry. Likewise, concepts of advertising that were propagated by the American and British industry came to the fore, as export advertising was embedded in what the industry and its associations presented as the latest knowledge and most effective practices of advertising. However, the Swedish case exhibits not only success in gaining legitimacy for the advertising industry at home and ensuing a strong societal position, but also success in the outcome of actual projects. Unlike the failure of its American and British counterparts in building an institutional structure through government involvement, the Swedish Advertisers' Association were able to establish functional ties with the state. This occurred thanks to relying on their own resources in building services developed to cater to members' desires, that then attracted external actors, rather than being involved in government projects whose goals were fashioned by the state, lessening the ability of advertising associations and willingness of their members to realize them. While US companies in vain complained to the Advertising Council about the lack of information on foreign ad markets, members of the Swedish Advertisers' Association used their association to create such services, that were praised in the small export dependent country. The association thus avoided the mistakes of the American associations, who were not in charge and unable to match the expectations of the State Department. However, while not exhibiting a clear failure, Swedish initiatives present a mixed bag. Knowledge exchange, education, consultancy services and the registries on foreign ad market were

in demand – even leading to the formation of commercial entities regarding the two last services – while the trademark lost its appeal after a few years. This indicates that Swedish exporters were willing to pay for services that supplied practical and up to date knowledge and figures, while giving a lukewarm reception to a graphic symbol with a vague slogan that was free, but whose usefulness was not highly rated.

Notes

1 At this time the term “Propaganda” in Sweden denoted both commercial and political communication, as well as public information; Gardeström, 2018.

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