

Advertising of a national importance the Swedish Advertisers' Association and the institutionalization of Sweden's international advertising 1955–1972

Swedish
Advertisers'
Association

1

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Michael Funke

*Department of Economic History, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden and
Institute for Economic and Business History Research,
Stockholm School of Economics, Stockholm, Sweden*

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to analyze the Swedish Advertisers' Association's role in the institutional development of Swedish international advertising during 1955–1972.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative analysis of business association sources is used to explore the institutional development of international advertising.

Findings – A new postwar paradigm that focused on a consumer-oriented brand ideology enabled marketing executives in the Swedish Advertisers' Association to develop a new discourse on international advertising in Sweden, which then was institutionalized within a national network on export promotion. The institutionalization process was supported by a corporatist system typical of smaller export dependent postwar European economies.

Research limitations/implications – While based on a national case, this study points to the importance of understanding how advertising concepts are embedded within other economic, political and cultural systems than in those they originated in and how this contributes to a heterogenous implementation of similar ideas and practices. This study also illustrates how members can use their association to institutionalize a new discourse on marketing and network with other actors to enhance the use and reputation of its ideas and practices.

Practical implications – By highlighting the importance of analyzing both internal and external organizational relations, this study contributes to the research on history of marketing by making salient the importance of an institutional perspective to understand key processes in marketing. In practice neither the institutional perspective nor the explanatory power of discourse has received much attention, therefore the study results should be both interesting and valid for practitioners as well.

Originality/value – The study of the historical development of international advertising is limited and often descriptive. This study contributes to the literature by using a theoretical and methodological approach

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to make salient how the interaction between discourse, marketing associations and other collective actors propelled the institutionalization of international advertising within a specific national context.

Keywords Advertising history, Marketing history, Business history, Export promotion, Export advertising, International advertising, Marketing, Business association, Corporatism, Institutions, Sweden, Post war, History

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

This study will investigate the involvement of the Swedish Advertisers' Association in the institutional development of international advertising in Sweden during 1950–1972. As the history of international advertising itself is understudied (Miracle, 2008), this paper will contribute to knowledge regarding both the history of international advertising, as well as the role that marketing associations played in its development. The paper traces the institutional initiatives of the Swedish Advertisers' Association that emanated from a postwar discursive shift in marketing ideology. It also shows that the association's institutional implementation of these innovative ideas was affected by both the internal mechanisms of the association and by its relations to other actors in a national network of export promotion, the latter contextualized within a corporatist framework typical of smaller export-dependent countries of postwar western Europe (Katzenstein, 1985). The study contributes to further knowledge on the role of marketing associations in the development of international advertising, as well as on how different national contexts can lead to diverging paths of institutional development. The paper first explores the role of the Swedish Advertisers' Association in the formation of a new discourse on international advertising in Sweden. Second, the institutional development of the association's international advertising services is analyzed. Both sections rest on a qualitative analysis, although a quantitative compilation of data on subscriptions of a service is included in section two. Lastly, a conclusive segment closes the article.

Background

In the 1950s, Marshall aid and free trade agreements set off a two-decade period of strong economic growth and expanding international trade (Maier, 1977; Magnusson, 2002, p. 409). At the same time, international markets became more competitive. This put an increasing emphasis on marketing to regain or expand presence on foreign markets. While the term “export advertising” had been in use since the beginning of the 20th century to describe advertising aimed at foreign markets, the postwar era replaced it with a more encompassing concept – international advertising (Agrawal, 1995). Defined as “conceived or initiated in, or at least in part influenced, designed, or executed, in one country for use in at least one other country” (Miracle, 2014, p. 4), the notion reflected an institutional structure emerging in American corporations since the interwar period. By then, their internationalization was supported by the establishment of American advertising agencies abroad. Agencies such as J Walter Thompson aided American corporations in procuring knowledge and data on foreign markets, as well as adapting campaigns to local contexts (Merron, 1999; Woodard, 2002; Hultquist, 2003; Fasce and Bini, 2015). This process of internationalization contributed to a shift in marketing ideology after WWII. The paradigm of production and distribution, which centered on supply-driven sales promotion and innovative distributive channels, was now replaced by a marketing concept that permeated all parts of the business process. Combined with an orientation toward consumer wants, the new paradigm centered on an

industry adoption of a brand ideology (Schwarzkopf, 2009, pp. 20–21; Levy and Luedicke, 2012, p. 60).

Still, the postwar era businesses in smaller export-dependent European countries lacked the infrastructure that drove the expansion of American international advertising. Instead, they relied on close-knit national networks helmed by business associations and the state to develop collective resources to provide for competitiveness on foreign markets (Katzenstein, 1985). Business associations representing various sectors of the exporting industry in countries such as The Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden were integral in the creation of institutions to support exports (Björklund, 1967; van Waarden, 1992; Pestoff, 2006; David *et al.*, 2009). These efforts were in turn enhanced by corporatist institutions that premiered cooperation and national cohesion (Katzenstein, 1985; Campbell and Hall, 2009). Institutional networks of export promotion (Costa *et al.*, 2017) were put into place to professionalize international advertising, among other things. However, it is also known that dissemination and adaptation of American marketing occurred simultaneously in many European countries (Åström Rudberg and Kuorelahti, 2021, pp. 2, 15). The adaptation of these ideas therefore most likely interacted with the development of institutional support for international advertising in specific national settings.

Swedish case

The postwar Swedish advertising industry exhibits economic and institutional features that makes it an attractive study subject. Spurred by economic growth that was driven by Sweden's export-heavy industry and its expanding consumer market, the industry exhibited a robust growth during the first postwar decades. Total real advertising costs almost tripled during 1950–1970, which was reflected in increased profits for the advertising agency sector and a rising number of agencies (Funke, 2015, pp. 60–62). Since the 1930s, business associations with an interest in marketing had also jointly developed institutional arrangements that by the 1950s were among the most advanced in the world. These included support structures for market research, educational initiatives, an advertisement cartel for dailies and self-regulation of advertising (Funke, 2015; Åström Rudberg, 2019). By the 1950s, Swedish export companies, the marketing industry and government agencies had mutually started to develop an institutional 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).

The marketing association studied in this paper, Swedish Advertisers' Association, was a powerful organization. Founded in 1924, the organization counted hundreds of Swedish companies among its members, including most of the major exporters. Just like in the International Export Association and the American Marketing Association (Miracle, 2014, pp. 10–12), marketing executives generally represented the association's members (Funke, 2015). The association was part of an organizational milieu that also included the Swedish Association of Advertising Agencies, the Swedish Newspaper Publishers' Association and the Swedish Marketing Federation, but had a closer relation to the Swedish export sector than these other associations. This was reflected in the founding of the association's Export Advertising Group in 1955, which was initiated by major Swedish exporters (Björklund, 1967, p. 644).

Contribution to research

The literature has voiced a need for more research on the history of both international advertising and export promotion. According to Miracle, historical research on international advertising has:

[...] been characterized by slow progress [...] due in part to the focus of practitioners and scholarly researchers on message standardization issues, especially appeals and message executions, to the exclusion of a broad range of other important topics. (Miracle, 2014, p. 22)

Miracle proposes research on the:

[...] nature and structure of the organizations that conduct international advertising and the relationships among them; and relationships among international advertising activities and the numerous factors in the business environment that influence the effects of international advertising. (Miracle, 2014, p. 25)

Also, Gillespie and Riddle (2004) have called for detailed tracing of the activities of key stakeholders in export promotion, to comprehend institutional change as well as the causes of similarities and differences in national trajectories.

With existing research focusing on the Anglo-Saxon sphere, knowledge is lacking on the involvement of marketing associations in international advertising in other states and cultural contexts. This paper presents new knowledge on the institutional development of international advertising in relation to marketing associations and in a type of country – small and export dependent – which have yet to be studied in this regard. By tracing associational activity over almost two decades made possible by a rich source material, the study consequently adds to research on both the institutionalization of international advertising as well as on these organizations' professionalization and legitimization of advertising and marketing.

Existing research on the Anglo-Saxon sphere highlight how specific conditions in these markets shaped institutional development. Studies on American international advertising have covered how US exporters tried to accomplish a more effective use of international advertising by promoting educational initiatives at American universities (Dunn, 1994; Cunningham and Jones, 1997; Miracle, 2008; Miracle, 2014) and the relationship between American corporations and internationalization of American advertising agencies (Merron, 1999; Woodard, 2002; Hultquist, 2003; Fasce and Bini, 2015). Studies on the involvement of marketing associations in the USA are fairly cursory but suggest that it has lacked quick success and been characterized by a slow progress. Dunn indicates that the academic discipline of international advertising in America was struggling well into the 1970s, despite a decade of support from the International Advertising Association. Students considered it a niche subject and unnecessary for making a career in the advertising industry (Dunn, 1994). Later events suggest a stronger interest from the American associations in awarding international advertising a more prominent position in their activities, although it took until the 1990s for it to occur (Miracle, 2008; Miracle, 2014). Schwarzkopf (2008, pp. 144–149, 199–215) highlights the role of British associations in furthering British international advertising through their involvement with the Empire Marketing Board in export promotion of “Empire brands.” Schwarzkopf (2008, pp. 144–149, 199–215) emphasizes the societal legitimacy conferred onto the advertising industry by the government because of their cooperation with state authorities in conjunction with the promotion of Empire brands.

This paper uses a coherent theoretical model to understand institutional development, thereby advancing the analytical perspective on the history of international advertising. This approach is underdeveloped in the field. Research on American associational initiatives to strengthen the academic discipline and create education and knowledge exchange on international advertising is often largely descriptive (Dunn, 1994; Miracle, 2008; Miracle, 2014). An exception is Schwarzkopf's thesis on the British advertising industry during the first half of the 20th century. His analysis has an institutional perspective as structural change in the industry is seen as “the outcome of a competition for

social authority and cultural legitimacy” taking place in a wider institutional framework including political, economic and cultural contexts (Schwarzkopf, 2008, pp. 2, 21).

Lastly, the paper contributes to studies on nation branding. Research on the current commercial use of the “Sweden” brand discuss how the food industry’s advertising relies on perceptions derived from a romanticized concept of pristine nature (Andersson, 2019; Andersson, 2020) or how the fashion industry’s projection of a nation defined by urban hipness is used to promote products (Östberg, 2011, p. 228). This study illustrates the institutional and historical roots of such practices. It also complements studies on the historical development of the “Sweden” brand and the field of the history of nation branding in general (Glover, 2018; Glover, 2022; Glover and Higgins, 2022), by making salient the significant role of business associations in processes of nation branding.

History of the institutionalization of Swedish export promotion

In 1887, because of concerns about increasing protectionism, several large Swedish exporters with financial backing from the government formed the General Export Association (Larsson, 1977; Glover, 2018). Small- and medium-sized businesses lacked access to such organizational support until 1949, when a government agency was established to provide for their needs (Prop, 1972, p. 31). In the 1930s, because of a resurgence of protectionism (Schön, 2007, p. 360), the Swedish Export Credit Agency was instituted (Sjögren, 2010, pp. 33–41).

As export markets expanded after WWII 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 founded in 1945 (Glover, 2011, pp. 7–11). On the suggestion of a 1948 government inquiry, “secretaries of trade” recruited from business were placed at various diplomatic missions (Glover, 2018). 1953 saw the creation of the Export School, which was inspired by similar institutions in Germany, Belgium and The Netherlands. The school came about after a joint effort by the Ministry for Trade and several business associations, including the General 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 the state and the country’s largest banks to offer loans and contractual guarantees (SOU 1991:3, p. 199).

In 1962, the government set up an Information Committee to coordinate policy on public diplomacy and export promotion. Initially a temporary body, it was replaced by a permanent agency, the Collegium for Sweden Information Abroad, in 1966. These state agencies displayed distinctive corporatist structures, with the export business, tourism, trade and the government being represented on their boards and committees. Still, friction grew between the foreign policy ambitions of the Swedish Government and the business community’s interests in national export promotion. This came to a head during the turbulence of the late 1960s when Swedish foreign policy became increasingly involved in developmental policies while radical leftist views manifested themselves in the activities of the Swedish Institute. The export sector felt unease over these new political overtones in the institutional set up (Glover, 2011, pp. 117–154), which in 1972 contributed to major institutional changes. Many of the smaller corporatist-oriented agencies folded and were replaced by the Swedish Export Council. This centralized agency continued in the corporatist vein of its predecessors, whereas the Swedish Institute from then on focused on political and cultural endeavors (SOU, 1991, pp. 31–33).

Theory

The paradigmatic postwar shift in marketing ideology (Levy and Luedicke, 2012, p. 60) allowed the establishment of a new discourse on marketing thought and practice in international advertising. However, to a large degree the actual institutional implementation of ideas into policies and resources was guided by the actions of organized business. Therefore, the first part of the analysis will focus on the discursive shift in international advertising and the second part on the implementation of policies and ensuing institutional development.

The idea that beliefs and ideals matter in shaping policy and institutions is supported by theory that emphasizes the effects of learning (Sabatier and Weible, 2007, pp. 189–210), legitimacy (Suchman, 1995; Scott, 2014, pp. 71–74) and discursive change (Schmidt, 2008) to enable institutional development. Marketing history literature also points to learning, knowledge exchange and a quest for legitimacy (Cochoy, 1998; Schwarzkopf, 2008; Schwarzkopf, 2009; Cochoy, 2014) as drivers of discourse development and paradigm shifts in marketing ideology (Levy and Luedicke, 2012). These shifts are further contextualized within debates on marketing thought and practices, in part fueled by political and ideological convictions, indicating a struggle to define a new dominant discourse and institutionalize it Tadjewski and Jones (2014).

Following a change in the discursive paradigm, a marketing association must consider the institutional context in which the new discourse's ideas and practices will be implemented and identify the opportunities and pitfalls that this environment can generate for their strategies (Schwarzkopf, 2008, pp. 21–22). The validity of an institutional approach is stressed by the fact that international advertising is integrated into other broader marketing concepts, as integrated marketing communication, international marketing (Miracle, 2014) and export promotion (Lederman *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the institutional structure of export promotion and the interaction of its stakeholders are important for the development of international advertising (Costa *et al.*, 2017). Costa *et al.* identify three types of networks – *social*, *business* and *institutional* – that firms can be part of to further their export promotion capabilities. The last type of network, which is the one referred to in this study, includes a variety of actors, for example, governments, incubators, research institutes, aid development agencies and business associations. However, export promotion activities can also be initiated by single companies, business associations or other nongovernment entities (Costa *et al.*, 2017).

In the study, theory on neo-corporatism is used to contextualize “the rules of the game” of the institutional structure of Swedish postwar political economy. Corporatism is a social order that is distinct from that of the state, market or community (Streeck and Schmitter, 1985, pp. 122, 125). It is an “associative” order, in which interest organizations are awarded influence on state policies in exchange for choosing deliberation with other societal actors over conflict and self-interest. The rationale is that corporatism helps avoid costly political conflicts that can hamper economy output, particularly in small export dependent states (Katzenstein, 1985). This system rests on all three institutional pillars presented by neo-institutional theory – the regulative, the normative and the cultural-cognitive (Scott, 2014, p. 60). The close relationship between the state's regulative principles and the normative ones of the interest groups is underpinned by a cultural cognitive pillar in which cultural beliefs and logic of action highlight cooperation and national cohesion. Although scholars traditionally have made corporatism contingent on the historical context of a postwar era dominated by Keynesianism and Fordism, Molina and Rhodes (2002, pp. 324–325) claim that corporatism is a political exchange taking place in a network environment characterized by hierarchies and integration, which in turn transcends this historical

context. This view enables a good fit between corporatism theory and Costa *et al.*'s network analysis and is adopted by the study.

Sources

The availability of a rich source material of both internal and external nature allows for a thorough tracing of the activities of the Swedish Advertisers' Association. The sources consist of board minutes, internal reports and member newsletters, as well as annual reports, trade publications and newsletters.

The first section of the study analyzes the relationship between the discursive shift in marketing ideology and Swedish international advertising. It relies chiefly on public material, primarily from the Advertisers' Association's trade periodicals *Annonssören* and *Info*. Trade periodicals were forums for the discussion and introduction of new concepts and practices of marketing (Hermansson, 2002). Most of them, including *Info*, *Resumé* and *Den Svenska Marknaden*, were published by marketing associations (Funke, 2015). The articles selected for analysis were all written by marketing executives at major Swedish export companies who were active in the association's Export Advertising Group.

The second section focuses on the role of the association in furthering the institutional development of international advertising and uses annual reports, member newsletters, minutes from board meetings and internal reports to analyze the association's institutional strategies. The documents are kept at the Swedish Advertisers' Association, the Association of Swedish Advertising Agencies, the Swedish Marketing Federation, the Swedish National Archives and the Swedish Royal Library.

Method

In the first section, the study uses Schwarzkopf's historical concepts of advertising as signifiers of change in marketing ideology (Schwarzkopf, 2009). According to Schwarzkopf, the concepts were promoted by leading advertisers and advertising scholars at different points in time and replaced previous concepts that until then had dominated the discourse on advertising thought and practice. The study uses the concepts *advertising as mass distribution and salesmanship*, *as brand management*, *as management of symbols* and *as salience and creativity*. Advertising as part of mass distribution and salesmanship appeared in the 1880s and was based on the idea of marketing mass-produced goods to a homogenous group of consumers. The concept of brand management arose in the 1930s and focused not only on developing brands – commercial personalities – which signified certain values and connotations but it also recognized salesmanship and consumer surveys as important for managing a brand. The concept of management of symbols became dominant in the 1950s and was built on the idea that the advertised brand engaged in symbolic and emotional communication with consumers. The concept of advertising as salient and creative came to the fore in the 1960s and centered on advertising as uniquely perceived in a plethora of advertisements, as well as positioning it as a language projecting cultural and political values (Schwarzkopf, 2009). Building on this, a basic analytical model of argumentative discourse analysis is applied, in which a discourse is created by a rhetorical figure that presents a problem as having a specific cause and a specific solution. To have policy influence, a discourse must, in competition with alternate discourses, become institutionalized. "Discourse" is defined as a specific way of describing reality which is based on an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories which in turn ascribe meaning to objects and phenomena. Meaning is thus produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices (Bacchi, 1999, p. 2; Hajer, 2002, p. 63).

In the second section, to transform the corporatist perspective into an operational model, the analysis will incorporate the theory of associative action of organized business (Schmitter and Streeck 1981, 1999). According to the theory, the agency, strategies and survival of a business association are dependent on both internal and external relations. These are mediated by two logics of associative action. The intermediation between the association's leadership and its members, in which the leadership aims to attract enough members to become representative and functional, is classified as *the logic of membership*. The intermediation between the association's leadership and external actors, for example, with the state, is understood through *the logic of influence*. Here, the aim of the association's leadership is to extract enough resources from external actors (recognition, toleration, concessions, subsidies, etc.) to benefit the survival of the association. The two logics of associative action often compete, forcing the leadership to try to balance demands from members with those coming from outside actors. In essence, the tensions between the two logics can make policy outcomes unpredictable and subject to change. The outcome of the interaction between these two logics in associative action consequently influences the organization and agency of the business association (Schmitter and Streeck, 1981, 1999).

Finally, the investigation necessitates analytical categories to distinguish various forms of supporting activities from each other. To this end, Lederman *et al.*'s categorization of export promotion services is used. The categories are *country image building* (advertising, promotional events, advocacy); *export support services* (exporter training, technical assistance, capacity building, including regulatory compliance, information on trade finance, logistics, customs, packaging, pricing); *marketing* (trade fairs, exporter and importer missions, follow-up services offered by representatives abroad); and *market research and publications* (general, sector and firm level information, such as market surveys, online information on export markets, publications encouraging firms to export, importer and exporter contact databases) (Lederman *et al.*, 2010, pp. 257–258).

Swedish Advertisers' Association and international advertising

Initiatives to coordinate support for international advertising first surfaced in the 1920s, when the General Export Association attempted to convince exporters to collaborate on the creation of educational resources and a marketing research agency specialized in international advertising. However, these proposals were met with little interest from exporters, who saw no reason to devote resources to an endeavor that could benefit their Swedish competitors. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1920s, some institutional progress was made. The Swedish International Press Bureau was formed in 1927. It distributed a weekly newsletter covering economic and cultural aspects of Sweden to over 5,000 publications in 35 countries. The Export Association's marketing research agency was constituted in 1934, but produced smaller surveys commissioned by individual companies (Björklund, 1967, pp. 630–633, 642). As the end of WWII came into sight, Sweden's peak marketing association, the Swedish Advertising Federation, lobbied for more export promotion to regain foreign markets lost during wartime. Such efforts were being planned in Switzerland, the USA and Great Britain, and therefore the federation stressed the need for similar arrangements to strengthen Sweden's exports. Still, attempts by the federation in 1943 to create an "export research and advertising group" with representatives from exporters, marketing and government failed because of the opposition of the General Export Association, which claimed that postwar demand for Swedish products would be so high that there was no need for more efforts in the near future. In 1947, the Advertisers' Association and the Department of Trade again raised the issue with the Export

Association, only to receive the same reply as before – so that initiative was also unsuccessful (Björklund, 1967, pp. 643–644).

The creation of the Advertisers' Association's Export Advertising Group a decade later signaled a new strategy. The group, usually referred to as "the E-Group," was formed at a meeting of representatives from the marketing divisions of major Swedish exporters in June 1955. The group stated that it had as:

[...] a chief aim [...] to bring the country's export advertisers to the point where they would be willing to join forces – and pool financial resources – to fashion an overall more coordinated advertising effort than before. (Swedish Royal Library; Figures 1958-1959).

It was helmed by a working committee consisting of marketing executives at large exporters, whereas the association's CEO Lars Wieve functioned as its secretary. The presence of Wieve underscored the group's prominence, as the CEO usually did not hold a formal position on the association's committees. During the 1960s, the head of the E-Group, Torsten Folin from steel manufacturer Uddeholm, was also a member of the board of the association. The group was therefore intricately connected to the association's leadership (Advertisers' Association Archives; annual reports 1953–1970).

The group also functioned as a members' forum on international advertising. This attracted members to join the group, as it allowed marketeers from various firms and segments to exchange experiences and knowledge. Within a few years after its foundation, around 40 marketing executives had become part of the E-Group (Royal Library; Addo Figures 1958–1959), and by the mid-1960s, its members numbered over one hundred (Advertisers' Association Archives; annual reports 1958–1967).

Creating a new discourse on international advertising

Since the 19th century, the dominant discourse on international advertising in Sweden had adhered to the concept of advertising as mass distribution and salesmanship. Swedish exporters had emphasized the international reputation of the exceptional quality and artisanship of Swedish products as a sufficient form of marketing (Glover, 2023). The ideas that underpinned the creation of the E-Group were part of a new discourse on international advertising that reflected the postwar shift in marketing ideology to a consumer and brand-oriented perspective (Levy and Luedicke, 2012). It emerged in Sweden in the 1950s and was influenced by American marketing, which was avidly discussed in the Swedish trade press (Hermansson, 2002, pp. 31–34, 63, 85).

The discourse stressed that the problems facing postwar Swedish exporters originated in institutional weaknesses because of a lack of innovative advertising knowledge. To resolve these issues, the discourse proposed the establishment of a support structure for education and knowledge dissemination, helping Swedish business to acquire an up-to-date view of world markets and the marketing process itself. The proponents of an overhaul of current practices positioned themselves as a new generation of educated specialists that would enable a professionalization of international advertising. Their critique echoed a clash between established and more recent advertising concepts. Accusations of clumsy one-size-fits-all adverts mirrored the concept of advertising as mass sales, whereas solutions highlighted initiatives that were based on advertising as brand management, as strategic management of symbols and as salience and creativity.

It is striking that although the advertising concepts that underscored their arguments aligned with those popularized by American marketeers, these marketeers did not refer to American institutional structures as role models. Instead of relying on an international presence of Swedish advertising agencies, they advocated coordinated efforts to create a

national brand. Swedish exporters lacked international networks of Swedish advertising agencies, and it would be too costly to copy the American model of a simultaneous international expansion of national businesses and advertising agencies. Therefore, they argued that Swedish exporters had to collaborate on creating collective resources at home and establish close relationships with local marketing actors abroad. The following examples will illustrate how the new discourse on international advertising was constructed and institutionalized in the Swedish Advertisers' Association, thanks to the advent of the E-group.

According to the association, the E-Group was the brainchild of Ragnar Svensson, advertising executive at the agricultural equipment manufacturer Bolinder-Munktell (BM). Svensson was described in the association's periodical *Info* as "An advertising man with ideas" (*Info* 3/1956, p. 31). The periodical also underscored his youth, 34 years of age, and his academic background, with training in the USA. Since the 1920s, Swedish marketers had regarded the USA as a leader in marketing. While a few of them had been educated there during the interwar period, their numbers steadily increased after the war (Björklund, 1967, pp. 12–13), with Svensson being one of them. In the USA, he had studied marketing psychology and met with representatives from major industries, advertising agencies and market survey agencies. 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 international advertising, export marketing, export sales promotion and export public relations" (*Info* 3/1956, p. 31). In April 1955, Svensson authored an article in the association's periodical *Annonssören* which depicted Swedish international advertising as antiquated and unprofessional and in need of innovative practices and industry cooperation (*Annonssören* 4/55, pp. 5-8). A few months later, he was opening speaker at the meeting that constituted the Group and became a member of its working committee. The association then formally thanked him for his key role in the founding of the E-group at its annual assembly in 1956 (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 covering international advertising (Advertisers' Association archives; board minutes April 4, 1955; annual report 1956).

In his 1955 article in *Annonssören*, titled "International advertising – an unknown issue," Svensson presented key arguments for a new perspective on Swedish international advertising. He attacked the preconception that Swedish exports could rely on a reputation of quality and blamed this notion on the country's robust economic growth after the war. It had made Swedish exporters complacent and prone to discard advertising. This was worrisome, he stressed, especially for a small country whose rising welfare depended on successful exports. Svensson blamed Swedish business leadership for this dismal situation. According to him, it was unable to grasp that the market dynamic had evolved in recent years. In short, this had caused current advertising to be of subpar quality, badly translated and inconsiderate of buyers' preferences. Here, collective business efforts could aid especially small- and medium-size businesses in elevating the quality of their advertising and lowering its cost of production. That Sweden's exports were chiefly aimed at Europe and the USA would simplify such measures as these countries belonged to the same Western culture as Sweden, he reasoned. Svensson's view that a standardization of international advertising was possible within a specific European context aligned with ideas that Swedish advertising entrepreneur Erik Elinder would propose a decade later in an influential article in the *Journal of Marketing* (Elinder, 1965). But in general, he supported an adaptation strategy, which at the time was the dominant view in the USA among both practitioners and academics (Agrawal, 1995, p. 29). In this vein, Svensson argued for the

need of careful management of brands to fit local markets. Translations were a key issue: they required improvement, for example, by refraining from using the same copy in countries that shared the same language. Not doing so risked missing cultural differences that were essential to produce effective advertising (*Annonssören*, 4/1955, pp. 5–8). Contrasting international advertising of Swedish products with that aimed at the home market, Svensson acknowledged that the latter was based on good knowledge of consumer behavior. International advertising, however, he claimed, was haphazardly thrown together and rested on hearsay and guess work as to who the consumer was and what sales argument should be used. To make informed decisions, Swedish companies needed more reliable data and better ways to find it. Svensson lamented the lack of knowledge on content, readership and circulation figures of foreign press. In Sweden, such information was obtainable through the business-run Swedish Audit Bureau of Circulations (Björklund, 1967, pp. 129–131). By applying the same standards to international advertising as to that of the home market, many problems could be overcome (*Annonssören* 4/1955, pp. 5–8). These arguments for an adaptation strategy closely resembled those presented in the 1950 edition of the American publication *the Advertising Handbook* (Agrawal, 1995, pp. 27–28). As Svensson had been educated in the USA, it is likely he had read it there, and in that way the book functioned as a conduit for dissemination of these ideas in a Swedish context.

But Svensson also referred to some American strategies as the antithesis of what Swedish Exports should do. He pointed out that American companies often oversaw international advertising, even when actual production was made abroad. However, Svensson claimed international advertising was twice as expensive for American companies compared to that for their home market, as the former generated a smaller sales volume. It was therefore economically sensible to orchestrate a campaign in cooperation with local retailers, who usually spent much larger sums on advertising than the export company proper. Svensson berated Swedish exporters for their outdated methods when signing contracts with local advertising representatives. To succeed in advertising on foreign markets, it was of key importance to have access to locals that were savvy about suitable media for campaigns (*Annonssören*, 4/1955, pp. 5–8).

Other advertising executives made similar arguments in *Info* to support a rejuvenation of international advertising. Writing in 1956, Olle Lidbeck, advertising executive at machinery and energy company AGA, emphasized that export advertisers needed good knowledge of geography and demographics to be able to concentrate campaigns to areas with large populations. He also made a point of acquiring reliable information on local media channels, educational levels and consumer segments before launching a campaign (*Info* 5/56, p. 15). The same year, Nils O. Melin, head of the E-Group's working committee and advertising executive of office machinery manufacturer Addo, wrote that the creation of the group was an important step in solving the problems facing Swedish international advertising, which according to him, 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 in the E-Group, the ground was laid for creating collaborative international advertising. Melin underlined the successful international advertising of Swiss watch makers, “which through coordination, opulent presentation and forceful execution has made Swiss watches synonymous with quality” (*Info* 1/56, p. 21). These campaigns had 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 country, as well as strengthening the good will of the entire nation. By giving the E-Group free reign, the same could be accomplished in Sweden. There was much in the balance, Melin emphasized, as exports were crucial to the high standard of living Swedes now enjoyed. Putting efforts into collective advertising was therefore not only good for business but of national importance as well (*Info* 1/56, p. 21).

Thanks to the vocal advertising executives and the creation of the E-Group, the new discourse on international marketing quickly gained an institutionalized status in the Advertisers’ Association. This was evident by the regular presence of the group’s views and actions in the Advertisers’ Association’s newsletters and annual reports. Another sign of acceptance was that the association awarded several of the E-Group’s leading members with its yearly “Man of the year” prize. In 1956, it was given to Ragnar Svensson, in 1958 to Nils O. Melin and in 1962 it was presented to Melin’s successor as head of the E-Group, Torsten Folin. In all cases, the decision to award the prize was motivated by the recipient’s contributions to improving international advertising (Advertisers’ Association Archives: Newsletter 4/62).

Institutional implementation of the new discourse

During the second half of the 1950s, the E-Group introduced initiatives that merged into an institutional structure offering services that covered all of [Lederman et al.’s \(2010\)](#) categories: country image building, export support, marketing and marketing research and publications. The development of the association’s institutional structure was affected both by the logic of membership, in no small part because of the E-Group’s activities, and the logic of influence through interaction with other associations, the government and state agencies.

Logic of membership and institutional growth

Country image building

In 1957, in an internal report commissioned by the E-Group’s working committee, six advertising executives from different Swedish exporters outlined a revised brand image of Sweden to benefit exports. The report presented a project of country image building that combined the concepts of advertising as brand management and as management of symbols. In short, the general idea was to revamp the image of the country to both “Sell Sweden” and by doing so, making “Sweden Sell.” First, the report stated that the quality of Swedish exports was hard to substantiate in an objective fashion. It consequently suggested dropping the idea of equating Swedish products with quality. Instead, the “Swedishness” of brands would be highlighted through 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 toward 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,” October 14, 1957).

The report discussed how the new strategy for defining country image would impact international advertising. “Sweden” would function as an overarching brand, based on perceptions connected with favorable aspects of Swedish society. In cooperation with the tourism sector, campaigns would associate the country as well as its products with its pristine nature, rich history, modern and egalitarian society and cultural traits such as honesty, industriousness and a healthy lifestyle. This would increase the probability that

foreign visitors returned home with positive experiences of Sweden. The updated national brand would then create fertile ground for firms to produce international advertising that played on these concepts (Advertisers' Association archives, "Förslag till Sverige-propaganda," October 14, 1957). The committee's proposals for fashioning a nation brand were in a sense prophetic, as these principles later came to guide much of the advertising from Swedish exporters. Over the decades, as many of these businesses transformed into international corporations with production facilities spread out over the world (Pestoff, 2006), the country of origin was increasingly taken out of the brand equation. Instead, the notion of "Swedishness" as a value laden concept gained traction, in which presumed national qualities were integrated into brands regardless of where products were made (Glover, 2023). The idea of "Swedishness" was even used by brands that had no tangible connection to Sweden at all (Östberg, 2011, pp. 228–230).

An important E-Group project in line with the committee's proposals for country image building was the creation of a national trademark. As other nations had established successful postwar slogans for collective export promotion, Sweden needed to do this too, argued the editor of the association's trade journal *Info* in 1958 (*Info* 1/58, p. 1). The idea of using a national trademark had been proposed a few years earlier in the advertising industry press but was never realized (Glover, 2023). The 1957 committee report now proposed a trademark based on their idea of embedding it in "emotional values." It advised using the national symbol of Sweden, the Three Crowns seal, as the basis for the visual image of the trademark. However, this was not possible, as the Swedish Heraldry Board did not allow the seal to be used for commercial purposes (Advertisers' Association archives; annual report 1957). The association therefore launched a competition among designers to produce a suitable graphic symbol. In 1958, the winning concept was introduced; a stylized Viking ship by artist Bengt Lundström, with the sail turned into an "S," and the word "Sweden" imprinted on the ship's side (Advertisers' Association Archives; annual report 1958). In a 1961 American campaign, the trademark was accompanied with the slogan "Sweden – where quality is tradition." The catchphrase was selected after three suggestions for a slogan had been evaluated in the US, where even an American advertising agency favored this alternative (Advertisers' Association Archives; annual report 1961).

The choice of slogan showed that the preconceptions of inherent Swedish quality remained. Still, the idea of "quality always sells!" was now accommodated within a new "emotional" setting informed by the concept of management of symbols, as the slogan was juxtaposed with the lighthearted and modern design of the ship's image. The serious message on the ever-present quality of Swedish products was aligned with humorous notions of Sweden's exporters as heirs to the mythical Vikings, who had never feared to set sails to unknown shores with their well-engineered longships. Even the association's periodical *Info* used the notion of Viking heritage to depict a group of Swedish designers present at the 1956 Design in Advertising fair in London. The designers were described as displaying a lively and ambitious attitude which negated the stereotype of Sweden being a country of "a strict bourgeois and cold stainless hygiene." Instead, their "youthfulness and vitality reminded one of the gung-ho Viking spirit of yore" (*Info* 7/56, p. 23). By playing on a Viking legacy, the trademark piggybacked on an internationally well-established brand. Thanks to films, books and comics, the image of the Viking as a bold adventurer and warrior had spread across the globe since the early 20th century (Tveskov and Erlandson, 2007). That especially Americans were enamored with speculations on Viking linkage to the new world did not lessen the appeal, and even Swedish jazz records were marketed in the USA with album covers using Viking themes (van Kan, 2016). The pairing of the trademark and the slogan therefore toppled the primacy of "inherent quality" from its elevated

discursive position in Swedish international advertising and substituted it with a shrewd pop cultural reference better suited for the concepts of advertising as brand management, as manipulation of symbols and as salience and creativity.

To bolster its legitimacy, use of the symbol was regulated. Only Swedish companies could exploit the trademark and had to apply to the Advertisers' Association for permission to do so. The Swedish state early on also assisted in the legitimization process by sanctioning the trademark. At a 1958 trade fair in Berlin, the state-owned Swedish Railways was the first company to display it in public (Swedish Royal Library; Addo, Figures 1958–1959). A year after its introduction, around 60 companies had been granted use of the trademark, and it had also been displayed prominently at international trade fairs. The E-Group also orchestrated an international PR campaign for the trademark by sending information material on it to newspapers all over the world. This strategy appeared successful, as the association's 1959 annual report stated it had received a record number of international press clippings about the trademark (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1959).

Even so, after a few years, interest in the symbol seemed to wane. In a 1962 survey by the association on the willingness of exporters to engage in collective export promotion in West Germany, only half of those that replied would definitely use the symbol, whereas about a third stated that they would probably 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, *Aktuellt om Sverige information*, the absence of a unified trademark for Sweden was discussed. A representative of the Export Association stated that the Advertisers' Association's symbol was based on the impossible idea of being a mark of quality and was therefore only used "in absence of better material." An officer at the Swedish Information Service in New York stressed that although the 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 of the periodical, the Advertisers' Association's CEO Wiege replied that the function of the trademark was to designate country of origin and that it had never been intended to signify quality. Accompanying the reply 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 for international advertising. It arranged discussions, workshops and business visits for members and hosted lectures by representatives from advertising agencies and businesses from countries that were important markets for Swedish exporters. The group also awarded travel stipends for young advertisers wishing to visit and study foreign markets. For a fee, the group also organized courses in international advertising. These courses often had a specific country theme. For example, in 1964, courses on the advertising markets in West Germany and Great Britain were offered to the association's members. To lend credence to their value, advertising experts from both countries were flown in for lectures. By the end of the 1960s, the group tried to develop advertising 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). The E-Group also offered marketing services. By the early 1960s, it engaged in promoting and coordinating cooperation between Swedish companies in international trade fairs and exhibitions, and by the end of the decade, its working committee gave advice to individual member companies. (Advertisers' Association Archives, annual report 1960–1967).

Market research and publications

The E-Group added marketing research and publications to its services by tackling the scarcity of reliable data on foreign advertising markets. On its recommendation, the Advertisers' Association in 1957 initiated the creation of registries on foreign advertising 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. The registries were ordered by country, with each national entry containing information on media carriers, readership, circulation figures and agencies, as well as demographic and economic data. The association also released special editions for the American and Latin American markets, which were especially important for Swedish exporters. By offering this service, the association stressed, even small- and medium-sized businesses could afford strategic information on foreign advertising markets, as the registries enabled them to perform desk studies without having to initiate a costly and time-consuming data gathering on their own (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1957, 1959; Newsletter, 1/1961). The initiative garnered a large stock of subscribers, which remained stable during the 1960s (Figure 1). Nevertheless, it was a selected group of export companies that used the registries, as the percentage of members that subscribed fell from 60% in 1960 to 37% in 1969, whereas the association at the same time almost doubled its membership (Advertisers Association Archives: annual reports 1960–1969).

Logic of influence and institutional growth

The E-Group's actions created utilities that attracted state actors, which gave the association an elevated position in the institutional network of export promotion. In 1957, the E-Group was consulted by the Department of Trade in conjunction with preparations for collective export promotion in the USA. The E-Group was later asked for input by a state committee that was looking into the possibility of creating another information campaign in the USA to promote Swedish technology and science. The committee was founded on the initiative of the Swedish Federation of Industries and was launched at the Department of Trade in 1960. The committee, which counted the CEO of the Advertisers' Association as

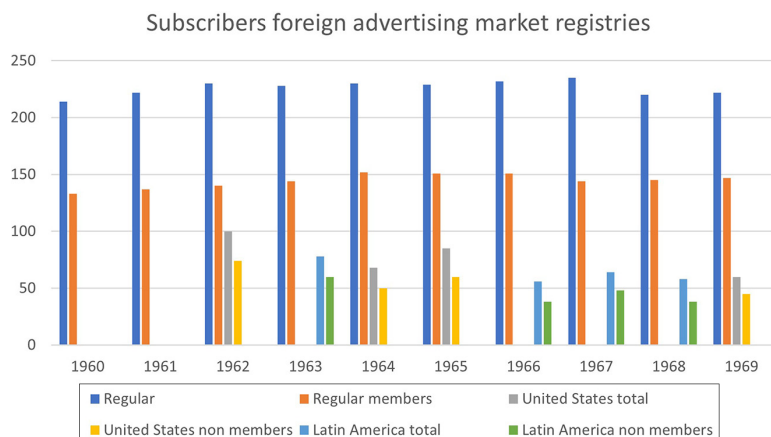


Figure 1.
Subscribers foreign
advertising market
registries 1960–1969

Source: The Swedish Advertisers' Association Archives: annual reports 1960–1969

one of its members, referred profusely in positive terms to the E-Group and the Advertisers' Association's trademark in its final report. In 1967, the E-Group's working committee was invited by the Collegium for Sweden Information Abroad to comment on a presentation of proposed marketing strategies for 1967/68. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Department of Trade, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Radio Sweden, a public service radio broadcast with a worldwide audience. The group's courses also attracted attention from the Department of Foreign Affairs as well as from state committees, which sent representatives to attend them (Advertisers Association Archives: annual reports 1960, 1964, 1967).

As if to confirm the new legitimacy and position of the Advertisers' Association in export promotion, Minister of Trade Gunnar Lange in 1962 delivered a speech at the association's yearly meeting where he voiced the government's gratitude for the organization'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 international advertising. I want to especially mention [...] the registries with information on advertising markets in various countries, which the association has labored with for many years. The registries are used by the government as well as by state agencies and state-owned companies. I have been told that they are some of the most comprehensive in the world. It is heartening to know that Swedish industry has access to such valuable means of assistance. (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1962; Newsletter 4/62)

Lange also called on businesses to adopt the association's trademark:

To achieve a concerted effect of Swedish export promotion, individual businesses must coordinate with each other [...]. I would like businesses to use the Sweden trademark created by the Advertisers' Association, in advertisements and at exhibitions on the trade fair. I am convinced that by [...] cooperating, a larger impact will be achieved (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1962; Newsletter 4/62).

The fair alluded to was part of an upcoming state coordinated export promotion campaign in 1963 on the West German market. Lange added that he here counted on the association's cooperation (Advertisers Association Archives: annual report 1962; Newsletter 4/62).

The Department of Foreign Affairs later contacted the Advertisers' Association to ask if it could guarantee that the business community would raise funds for this campaign. The government would devote SEK400,000 to it and expected business to allot an equal amount. The Association replied it was not interested in collecting money. It also stressed that an internal survey showed that the projected contributions of firms expected to take part vastly outnumbered the state's input. Given the answer, the government agreed to refrain from its demand (Advertisers' Association archives, Newsletter 8/62, 10/62). Regardless of such friction in the logic of influence, it was apparent that the government regarded the association as a crucial partner in export promotion and was therefore not willing to jeopardize this relationship over the issue.

Collaboration with other advertising associations

The Advertisers' Association also collaborated with Swedish business associations in furthering the interests of international advertising. At the beginning of 1956, the Export Association informed the Advertisers' Association CEO that it too planned to create a section for international advertising. The two organizations agreed to keep each other informed of their activities, and the board of the Advertisers' Association recommended its CEO to discuss cooperation between the two organizations, although it is unclear if this came about (Advertisers' Association Archives; board minutes February 6, 1956).

In 1961, the Swedish Association of Advertising Agencies contacted the advertiser organization. The former proposed that the two associations should organize a “Day of International advertising” exhibit cum conference. The idea was to attract representatives from the business community and the state to inform of existing capabilities in international advertising, as well as of challenges to be resolved. Interestingly, the advertising agencies’ association suggested that a topic for discussion could be why Swedish companies did not allow their Swedish advertising agencies to accompany them abroad, which the organization stressed was common procedure for American firms. This indicated that while Swedish exporters appeared to stick to Ragnar Svensson’s advice of using local marketeers, advertising agencies were less happy about exporters prioritizing cooperation with local marketing actors over bringing in Swedish agencies. In other words, either by necessity or by conviction, exporters stuck to working within a foreign marketing environment to be able to adapt their international advertising to specific markets.

The joint venture eventually came to fruition in March 1962, and both associations regarded it as successful (Archives of the Swedish Association of Advertising Agencies: board minutes August 29, 1961, March 27, 1962; “PM rörande exportreklamdag,” August 28, 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 exist among advertisers and advertising agencies” (Advertisers’ Association Archives; Newsletter 4/1962). The statement played on the need to legitimize and international advertising, a project only possible with the participation of the advertising industry.

In 1969, the two associations jointly formed the Swedish Foreign Advertising Agency to manage production and distribution of the registries of foreign advertising markets, as well as the consultancy services. The incentive to form the company came from the Association of Advertising Agencies, which now also provided consultancy in international advertising but did not possess registries of foreign advertising markets. The two organizations decided it was better for financial security and efficiency to pool resources into a single establishment.

The founding of the company signified a development in institutional structure, with the addition of a business venture to oversee member services which were not only too costly to be free of charge but also a potential source of income. The joint venture was in line with other in-house companies formed by the two associations that commercially exploited services in information and education, for example, the Development Institute of the Swedish Advertising Agencies, established in 1968, and the Swedish Audit Bureau of Circulations, which since the late 1940s was jointly owned by the two organizations 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).

The Advertisers’ Association also had a strategic cooperation with organized business from other countries. A major problem for the association was how to get hold of relevant and up to date knowledge on foreign advertising markets. However, thanks to an international network of national advertiser associations, the association could to a considerable extent rely on its international counterparts to provide the information. The network was upheld through common membership in international advertising organizations and through visits. Representatives of the association’s office regularly traveled to sister associations, establishing direct relations. The association’s head office could also produce letters of recommendation for Swedish exporters, allowing them to receive assistance from advertising associations in foreign countries. These services were highlighted when the association presented itself in its annual reports, projecting an image

of an organization whose legitimacy and role in the professionalization of advertising rested not only on domestic efforts but also on its international network as a resource for exporters (Advertisers' Association Archives: annual reports, 1958–1972).

Discourse and logics of exchange in the institutional process of international advertising

A few years after the formation of the Export Advertising Group in 1955, the Swedish Advertisers' Association had evolved into a key player in the institutional network of Swedish export promotion. Besides exporters, the Swedish Government, as well as state owned businesses, used, commended and counted on the association's services and competence. This development no doubt hinged on the E-group's work to institutionalize supportive resources for international advertising. The E-group's initiatives permitted the association to offer services that covered all the categories as defined by [Lederman *et al.* \(2010\)](#): country image building, export support services, marketing and market research and publications. Thanks to this, the association gained comprehensive knowledge of international advertising, positioning it as a guarantor of the production and dissemination of professional and up to date advertising. However, advertisers were particularly interested in resources that were of direct use for devising specific campaigns, for example, the registries on foreign advertising markets or the consultancy services. A branding-related initiative as the national trademark was initially welcomed. Especially the government saw it as a valuable tool in its efforts to rally Swedish exporters to strengthen their exports for the good of the nation. However, exporters did not show the same enthusiasm, and the trademark was openly questioned by other actors in the network as being too vague for practical use.

The creation of the E-group was preceded by a campaign by advertising executives at major Swedish exporters to professionalize international advertising. In effect, the executives took advantage of the postwar shift in marketing ideology to contextualize their arguments within a new discursive paradigm that was informed of consumer-oriented ideas and practice steeped in the belief of advertising being subjugated to serving the brand image. They attacked the dominant production and distribution paradigm, which claimed that exports could resume their strong position before the war by relying on the reputation of Swedish exports being of exceptional quality. To them, this approach would be ineffective in the competitive postwar markets and constitute a peril for the country's prosperity. The dangerous situation was caused by obsolete practices and neglect of knowledge-based advertising, of which the leadership of export companies was to blame. The solution entailed letting advertising professionals refashion Swedish international advertising by using the concepts of advertising as brand management, as management of symbols and as salient and creative. While Swedish advertisers acknowledged America as a pioneer in this change, however, they did not envision Swedish exporters emulating the American strategy of working with internationalized, advertising agencies such as J Walter Thompson, as Swedish agencies lacked a presence on foreign markets. A better, and cheaper, route was to cooperate with local marketeers on foreign markets to adapt the advertising to local contexts. At the same time, this strategy would be backed by creating collective resources at home which would help to professionalize Sweden's international advertising.

Through the formation of the E-Group, the new discourse quickly became institutionalized, which allowed the group to implement initiatives based on ideas from the discourse. To understand the dynamic of institutional development, the study has applied the framework of the two logics of associative action of organized business (Schmitter and Streeck, 1981,1999). It demonstrates that the E-Group had a strong position in the

association through the logic of membership. It was able to use the association to create novel resources, such as knowledge exchange, education, a national trademark and registries on foreign advertising markets. It also used international contacts with advertiser associations abroad in new ways to overcome obstacles in information gathering. The advent of the E-Group also contributed to reshaping the association itself. The experience-exchange forum offered by the E-Group to members created an internal dynamic with greater member participation, which propelled the association forward with regards to professionalization of advertising.

The structure and purpose of the E-Group fitted well with the logic of influence that permeated the association's relationship with external partners in the institutional network of export promotion. Thanks to the large exporters that dominated its working committee, the E-Group had good access to actors in the network. This enabled them to successfully market their innovative ideas and initiatives in that context. Also, while export promotion in a broader fashion was supported by the government and other business associations, as evident in the creation of the Export School, there had not been a concerted effort to develop international advertising. Here, the E-Group offered the right organizational affiliation and professional expertise to take on the task. By supporting the crucial export industry in its efforts to improve international advertising, the association's initiatives also easily slid into the corporatist structures that premised cooperation over conflicts to safeguard the prosperity of the nation, in which the export sector was a crucial actor. In this sense, the study comes to a similar conclusion as Schwarzkopf did on the institutional progress of the British advertising industry, in which the industry won legitimacy "by showing itself as a self-organised and service-oriented profession based on ethical values [...] a profession of business statesmen who offered leadership in economically difficult times" (Schwarzkopf, 2008, p. 21), through providing their "service to community, family, clients, business partners and the state" (Schwarzkopf, 2008, p. 296).

Although Schmitter and Streeck's (1981, 1999) model describes the logic of membership and the logic of influence as competing forms of associative action, the institutional process of international advertising within the Swedish Advertisers' Association has revealed few such strains. The absence of tension can be explained by the fact that the institutional change occurred on the initiative of members and that subsequent development was an intraorganizational process, omitting pressure from external actors. When the logic of influence started to seep into the structure, external actors were attracted to already created resources. The E-group's close ties to the associations' leadership also minimized conflicts, as the group's leading members become part of both logics of associative action. The successful balance between logic of membership and its logic of influence in the association thus helped elevate the legitimacy and the professional reputation of the association in the institutional network of export promotion.

Implications for research and practice

The paper presents an interesting case of how the institutionalization of a key aspect of marketing – advertising of exports – was affected by changes in marketing ideology and their institutional implementation within a specific national and economic context. While research on the development of international advertising often highlight how the USA and the UK during the 20th century established strategies based on their large and globally dominant economies, less is known on how smaller export-dependent countries as Sweden supported efforts in improving international advertising. This study identifies how postwar Swedish marketeers made concerted efforts to create collective support of international advertising to increase the competitiveness of Swedish exporters. As Sweden unlike the

USA lacked an international network of advertising agencies, neither had a vast colonial market like the UK, it chose to rely on other mechanisms to advance international advertising. While calls for reform of international advertising in Sweden came from marketeers that were aware of the postwar changes in market ideology toward a more complex brand concept, Sweden's corporatist structures channeled the initiative of individual marketeers through the Swedish Advertisers' Association. The organization not only became a driving force in institutionalization but also established cooperation with other business organizations and the Swedish state to further the process.

As corporatism was a key feature of many of the small export dependent states of postwar Western Europe, the exploration of shifts in marketing ideology and the role of marketing associations and the state in shaping institutional trajectories of international advertising in such countries allow for an interesting comparative perspective between these countries, as well as between them and states with different economic and political contexts. This would be very much in line with the research objectives proposed by [Miracle \(2014\)](#) and [Gillespie and Riddle \(2004\)](#). Schwarzkopf claims that neither rational economic factors nor purely discursive cultural factors can explain the advertising industry's strategies to gain legitimacy. The key to understanding, he argues, lies in the acceptance that not only individuals, as proposed by Bourdieu but also collective actors can "gain and trade collectively in social and cultural capital in order to establish trust and legitimacy" ([Schwarzkopf, 2008](#), p. 21). This study builds on this statement by proposing a theoretical model to better understand association activity over time by examining both internal and external organizational relations of marketing associations – and their interaction – to understand collective agency of said associations. The study thus adds to research in marketing history, as well as to that on the wider institutional context of marketing. While theoretically drawing on corporatist research on business associations, the study also emphasizes the discursive processes of marketing ideology in creating support for institutional changes within marketing. For practitioners, the study presents an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how discourse can shape marketing ideology and institutional change – mechanisms with considerable influence on the opportunities and constraints facing them in their daily tasks.

Note

1. At this time, "Propaganda" in Sweden denoted both commercial and political communication, as well as public information ([Gardeström, 2018](#)).

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Corresponding author

Michael Funke can be contacted at: michael.funke@ekhist.uu.se