Challenges facing the profession of advertising
in the digital age
– An empirical study of Swedish advertising professionals –

Aiko Takemura
May 25th 2012

Supervisor: Heike Graf
Södertörns Högskola
Media, Communication and Cultural Analysis 2012
Abstract:

This thesis investigates how Swedish advertising professionals experience their work in the digital age. Findings from semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted with 15 people are organized using the concept of “media logic” re-interpreted by Mark Deuze, which covers four aspects of media work: institution, technology, organization and culture. The institution feature covers three developments occurring at the industry level, which are concentration, fragmentation and convergence. How these trends determine the way advertising professionals work is the main topic of this section. The findings show that especially due to extensive pressures from shifts of globalization and digitalization in recent years, an ongoing power struggle is taking place in all three institutional trends. The second feature is technology, in which the focus is to understand how technology shapes the way professionals interact with consumers. Interviewees were well aware of the increasing need to construct an interactive and participatory environment for brands and consumers. However, one should not be naïve and celebrate the powerful role of the consumers, nor assume that all advertising agencies are fully capable of harnessing digital technology. Organization is the third feature, where attention is paid to how professionals organize their projects and work styles. In advertising agencies, a major transformation was evident in the creative department where technologists who understand digital are becoming crucial assets next to art directors and copywriters. The last feature is culture, which examines how professionals perceive the cultures of production that influence the final advertising product. Many referred to positive aspects such as a flat and non-hierarchical culture promoting better collaboration. On the other hand, some interviewees indicated the misrepresentation of gender and ethnicity as problematic. These four features function to critically assess the challenges that lay ahead for Swedish advertising professionals in the digital age.
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1 Introduction

The advertising industry has been in the midst of a restructuring process for the past fifteen years, notably due to the rising potentials of the web, social media and mobile communication technology. The ongoing impact of the new digital technology has been occurring at almost every corner of the industry, disrupting the conventional production and distribution processes as well as the consumer’s media consumption habits. The speed in which these changes are happening does not seem to slow down, but rather is increasing.

Before the Internet became widely available to the public in the mid 1990s, advertising messages were mostly unidirectional, top-down and interruptive, using the limited media channels that were available, such as television, newspapers, magazines and radio. Information could be protected and controlled by the media industries in the form of what Jürgen Habermas (1985) refers to as “distorted communication” (cited in Holt, 2002: 72), where a certain authority creates an imbalance in the interaction between relevant parties. Even when the Internet was introduced, many of the advertising professionals were hesitant of having to squeeze an idea into a web banner\(^1\) instead of a traditional media space (Sandoz, 2010). However, the fact remains that the new media environment has granted the consumers a possibility to be more active and involved with brands. As Fernando Rodés Vilà, the former CEO of the French communication group Havas, puts it:

> The model that started with World War II [referring to the wartime metaphors of ‘campaign, target and launch’] was based on control in a few hands: very few media, two or three relevant brands in each sector and a few agencies … We are [now] facing a very different panorama, which is much more democratic, much more social, much more interesting but much more difficult for marketers. (Bradshaw & Edgecliffe-Johnson, 2009)

The Internet certainly does not create “an abrupt rupture with past history, because the new technologies cannot erase the core nature of the media within modern capitalist society” (Bustamante, 2004: 805). The conventional advertising in the form of 30-second television commercials or print displays is here to stay, and still play an important role along side the digital media. However, as consumers become more skeptical towards advertising, brands can no longer “bully their way in front of an audience” (Burgoine, 2010) by only choosing to

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\(^1\) A web banner is a form of online advertising that appears as an image on the top, sides or bottom of a web page usually in a wide or tall rectangular shape. By clicking on the banner, the user is taken to the website which the image was advertising for.
throw money at television and newspapers. This situation is demanding advertising agencies to respond to the new reality more creatively through reorganizing and developing new skills and techniques (Hackley, 2010). In today’s social context, the technological advancement in the digital field is allowing people to search and find the information they need, check reviews of products and services before purchasing, and easily share information with friends. As for the advertisers, a communication space does not necessarily have to be bought from television or print media, but also “earned” through having the consumers spread the brands’ message within their social network. At the same time, it is also important not to neglect the fact that more and more brands and their agencies are harnessing what Paolo Virno (2002) calls “mass intellectuality” (cited in Arvidsson, 2007: 15) as a productive resource for “user led innovation” systems or “crowdsourcing” through the use of new digital technologies (2007: 20).

According to Andy Sandoz (2010), “Digital is now at the heart of all communication”. The new communication technology has changed the DNA of advertising, both in terms of how the brands and agencies can initiate and maintain communication, and also how the consumers can play a more proactive role in affecting the marketing and production process. This new advertising landscape built around today’s communication technologies is the foundation on which this thesis builds on top of.

1.1 Why media professionals

By using the media logic concept, which is to be explained further in chapter 2, the thesis aims to explore how Swedish advertising professionals experience their work in the digital age. It is the challenges that they encounter today, that are the main concerns of this thesis. Traditionally in media and cultural studies, research into such everyday practices and conditions of cultural production has been given less attention compared to the more dominant concerns in audience research or content analysis. While audience activities have often been celebrated and media content scrutinized for signs and symbols, the media practitioners behind the content have been rather neglected (see Deuze 2010; Garnham, 2000;

Crowdsourcing is an outsourced production process that requires an undefined group of people to solve a task or a problem, which can occur either online or offline. For example, a beverage company may ask the consumers to submit an idea of a new flavor for an energy drink. The flavor that receives the most votes can be produced and sold in stores.

This thesis uses a broad definition of the term “digital advertising”, meaning that it will not only include search or display advertisements, but also any type of marketing communication that advertising agencies may execute with the use of web, social media and/or mobile technology.
Kawashima 2006; Murdock, 2003; Nixon 2003). Even within the studies of cultural industries, the prevalent approach has been from a political economy perspective, focusing on the media institutions and not the media practitioners (Deuze, 2010). Because the political economy perspective tends to “represent economic processes and practices as ‘things in themselves’ – with certain ‘objective’ meanings – people are seen mainly as the ‘bearers’ of these” (du Gay, 1998: 3). Therefore the cultural dimensions of economic activities often end up unnoticed. In line with this, Mark Deuze argues that studies of media tend to neglect:

…an understanding or respect for the moment of cultural production - the complex process of making media, the organization of work, the role of new technologies, the interdependence of issues such as creativity and commerce, and the translation of increasingly precise market orientations to the differentiation of productivity in media organizations large and small (2007: 52-3).

According to Murdock, one of the reasons behind the avoidance of research into the process of cultural production is the methodological convenience of audience research, where for example, “conversations with consumers are generally easier to arrange than interviews with company executives and stressed professionals” (2003: 15). This is not an excuse to disregard the voices of the media professionals, and thus we must shed more light on their thought processes and actual experiences that will provide us with a better understanding of the ways in which they produce culture. Only then will it be appropriate for “those of us who are not entirely happy with the status quo to at least ask whether successful interventions in production and circulation are possible, rather than relying on audience resistance alone as a possible force for change” (Garnham, 2000). Unlike many of the directors and producers of cultural industries such as film and television who may be well known to the public, the existence of advertising professionals have remained relatively faceless. In this thesis, these media practitioners will play the leading roles. At the same time, it should be understood that “the media worker operates in a complex environment, somewhere between the splendid isolation of one’s individual creative endeavors and a constantly changing transnational context of ties, relationships, demands, and pressures of colleagues, consumers, employers and clients” (Deuze, 2007: 91).

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4 Unless one looks at magazines or competitions specifically constructed for the advertising industry, the names of professionals involved are not publicly credited. After all, the message of the advertisements is for the brands to gain attention, not the advertising agencies and its professionals. However, it cannot be completely denied that there are agencies and professionals who make an effort to make creative advertisements so as to add brand value to themselves and to gain reputation from their peers, rather than to dedicate all of their work for the good of their client.
It is also worth noting that this relatively minor field of research that looks into cultural work has often focused on dominant industries such as journalism, television and the music industry, therefore overlooking other important areas of cultural production (Murdock, 2003: 16). In the case of this study, the advertising industry is examined in depth. As equally as any other media industries, the Internet has greatly affected the advertising business. Hence, the restructuring process that the advertising professionals are experiencing today is highlighted in this thesis.

1.2 Why the Swedish advertising industry

It goes without saying that the extent of this digital transformation brought into the industry will depend on the technological, social and economic contexts of a specific location. For this study, Sweden has been chosen as such particular locale that is to be explored in depth. The choice of the Swedish advertising industry as the focus of this thesis is mainly due to its internationally acknowledged status as producing some of the most well-known and awarded digital advertisements in recent years, resulting in their nickname, the “Swedish digital wonder”.

In the advertising industry, success is often measured by the number of awards won at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity – one of the most prestigious advertising competitions for achievements made in the industry – and the Gunn Report – an annual report that compiles data of awards won by agencies in various international competitions. According to the Gunn Report 2010, three Swedish advertising agencies, DDB Stockholm, Forsman & Bodenfors and Farfar, were given exceptionally high scores in the category of

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5 There are numerous articles that highlight the Swedish digital wonder. For more details see:
- Broberg et al. (2012) “Both network and market”

The digital wonder does not only include advertising but also other industries such as gaming.

6 It was formerly known as Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival, but renamed in 2011. When initially launched in 1954, the festival had only a single category for film that covered television and cinema advertisements. Today, with more categories including digital, it has grown into the world’s biggest annual awards festival for honoring creativity in communication, where advertising and communication professionals as well as advertisers gather.


7 Broberg et al. (2012) also use these two elements to measure the success of the Swedish advertising industry. They make note of the fact that there are alternative ways to measure success such as profit and customer satisfaction, and that this issue is an ongoing debate within the industry.
digital advertising. They had outnumbered the scores of other agencies in some of the most influential countries in advertising, such as the UK and the US (gunnreport.com). In the most recent Gunn Report 2011, Jung von Matt, a Stockholm-based agency, was awarded third place in the category of ‘The Most Awarded Digital in the World’ with BMW’s Mini Countryman campaign (Byttner, 2012). When looking back at Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2011, Sweden collected 31 Lion trophies, ranking them in 8th place for the most awarded country (canneslions.com). Considering Sweden’s population of only 9.4 million residents with a relatively small community of advertising professionals, the Swedish agencies have been winning a disproportionate amount of awards in the last few years compared to other countries.

That the Swedish advertising industry is making news outside of its own country is nothing new. The beginning of what came to be known as the Swedish digital wonder took place in 2001 when digital advertising agency Farfar, within only a year after being founded, won its first Grand Prix with “the Milko Music Machine”. This campaign was well appreciated in the digital community and is still being referred to as one of the earliest viral campaigns (Broberg et al., 2011). Ever since, Swedish advertising agencies, the majority of them being the emerging digital advertising agencies rather than the established advertising agencies, have been experiencing many successful moments on the international stage with their innovative and sophisticated advertising works. There are claims that what goes on in competitions such as Cannes Lions is pure politics, with suspicions of submitted works being ‘cleaned up’ for aesthetic reasons (Kawashima, 2006). Although Cannes Lions may not be the most reliable index of creativity in advertising, the fact that Swedish agencies have constantly been winning awards is a suggestive indicator for their high creativity level and success.

In order to reinforce and substantiate the highly admired status of Swedish digital creativity, it is also worth mentioning the names of key individuals who have been successful abroad (Såthe, 2011). Nicke Bergström, nicknamed “the Zlatan” of Swedish advertising”, is a creative director working at agency Mother in New York, after being recruited from Farfar. Mother is the UK’s largest independent advertising agency, and its New York office was actually started by two Swedes, Paul Malmström and Linus Carlsson, along with two

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8 The individuals described here except for Pelle Sjönell are referred from Veckans Affärer on April 14th 2011 within a featured story titled “The Swedish world champions in advertising” (title translated to English).
9 Zlatan is one of the most well-known soccer players in Sweden.
Americans. Calle Sjönell is also one of the renowned Swedish creatives who at the age of 24 co-founded an interactive agency, Moonwalk, in Stockholm. Since 2006 he has been working in the US and in March 2012, was appointed chief creative officer at Ogilvy, New York to handle clients such as IBM, American Express and IKEA (Parekh & Diaz, 2012). His brother, Pelle Sjönell, was a co-owner and creative director of King, a Swedish advertising agency founded in 1994. He also moved to the US with his brother Calle in 2006, and is currently working at BBH, New York (Parish, 2008). Such internationalization process of the Swedish advertising industry is becoming increasingly noticeable. Lately, the Swedish government has been showing great interest in the creativity level of Swedish advertising agencies and has publicly announced plans to support its further growth as an export industry (Duner, 2011).

Despite such remarkable achievements, there is a limit to how much we can understand a particular industry by only skimming through the results of advertising competitions and news articles about successful individuals. What have been highlighted so far are only the positive and favorable aspects of the Swedish advertising industry, with its established international image as the “digital wonder”. However, interviews conducted with the active professionals have shed light on the fact that Swedish advertising agencies are certainly not problem-free, and are facing challenges that can perhaps be commonly shared among professionals in other countries as well.

1.3 Research questions

In this thesis, the main research question and the sub questions to be investigated are as follows:

How do Swedish advertising professionals experience their work in the digital age?
   a. How do they interpret the institutional trends that determine the way they work?
   b. How is technology shaping the way they interact with consumers?
   c. How are they organizing their projects and work styles?
   d. How do they perceive the cultures of production that influence the final outcome?

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10 When Veckans Affärer was issued, Calle Sjönell worked at BBH with his brother. In March 2012, he was appointed to the post of chief creative officer at Ogilvy. In the advertising industry it is not uncommon for advertising professionals to switch agencies several times in his or her careers.
1.4 Structure of the thesis

The following chapters are structured as follows: chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework to be implemented in the analysis and also an overview of previous research in the field. The third chapter discusses the empirical materials and methods used for this thesis, along with limitations that were observed. The fourth chapter presents the empirical findings and its analysis. This chapter is divided into four features of Deuze’s re-interpreted “media logic” concept: institution, technology, organization and culture. Finally, chapter 5 concludes the thesis with a discussion in relation to the research questions, as well as future research possibilities.

2 Theoretical and empirical backgrounds

2.1 Theoretical framework

As a comment on the subject of sociology, Pierre Bourdieu states, “when you do sociology, you learn that men and women are indeed responsible, but that what they can or cannot do is largely determined by the structure in which they are placed and by the positions they occupy within that structure” (1998: 54). To reword Bourdieu’s thoughts, the importance lies in examining the experiences of the media practitioners in relation to the structure of a firm in which they are placed. Therefore in this thesis, in order to understand the experiences of the Swedish advertising professionals, the structure and the process of the production of culture are thoroughly investigated. As a means to conduct the analysis, I draw upon a re-interpreted concept of the “media logic” taken up by Mark Deuze in his book Media Work (2007). He refers to a quote from Peter Dahlgren to describe the concept: “Media logic refers to the particular institutionally structured features of a medium, the ensemble of technical and organizational attributes which impact on what gets represented in the medium and how it gets done. In other words, media logic points to specific forms and processes which organize the work done within a particular medium. Yet, media logic also indicates the cultural competence and frames of perception of audiences/users, which in turn reinforces how production within the medium takes place” (italics added, 1996: 63). From this description, Deuze draws the four features necessary for a holistic and integrated perspective on the nature

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11 This concept was originally developed by David Altheide in the late 1970s.
of media work: institution, technology, organization and culture. Although media logic primarily relates to the production process of a specific medium within a given technological and organizational setting, Deuze recontextualizes this concept as an “equally useful perspectival tool” (2007: 110) to describe and analyze what it is like to work in different types of media professions.

In this thesis, I focus on how Swedish advertising professionals experience their work in the industry and to understand how their actions and beliefs may influence the way culture is produced. In such context, the media logic concept is used in the following manner: the institution feature covers three developments occurring at the industry level, which are fragmentation, concentration and convergence. How these trends determine the way advertising professionals work is the main topic of this section. The second feature is technology, in which the focus is to understand how technology shapes the way professionals interact with consumers. This is followed by the organization feature, where attention is paid to how professionals organize their projects and work styles. The last feature is culture, which examines how professionals perceive the cultures of production that influence the final outcome. The analysis chapter discusses these four features in separate sections. However, they are not purely independent of each other and clear distinctions cannot be made between them. Hence, it should be kept in mind that the analysis may overlap in certain areas.

2.2 Overview of previous empirical research

Although not as much as textual analysis or consumer research, there has been a considerable amount of empirical research conducted about the inner workings of the advertising industry, such as: Leslie (1995) reporting the changing industry structure due to trans-nationalization of agencies; Hackley (2000) who conducts a discourse analysis through interviewing professionals about the work culture in a top UK advertising agency; Ross (2003) with an ethnographic study of a workplace at a digital consultancy firm; Nixon (2003) exploring what ‘creativity’ meant to young male creatives at UK advertising industries; Kawashima (2006) who investigates the business environment in which Japanese television commercials are made; and Pratt (2006) providing a comprehensive case study on the restructuring of the advertising industry in the UK in the last 25 years.

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When viewing the past research specifically from the media logic concept, Gernot Grabher’s theoretical framework of the project ecology has a clear connection to the organization feature. His works (2001, 2002, 2004) based on the field of economic geography have often been referred to in research about advertising industries (for example see Pratt 2006; Röling 2010; Bugge 2009, 2011b). Project ecology is a framework that is used to understand how advertising tasks are organized, through examining the formation of projects that consists of members from not only within the agency but also from outside, including members such as clients, creative professionals and technical professionals. One of the main characteristics of the advertising industry today is that works are most often project-based where diverse skills and competencies are gathered in order to achieve the tasks requested by clients. The organization of projects is context-driven and the layers, such as the agencies, personal relations, localities and corporate networks, are often “stapled” for a limited period of time (Grabher, 2002: 259). Focusing on London’s advertising industry, Grabher has also pointed out that Soho, the “ad village” where agencies are most clustered, is where professionals learn from each other by “rubbing shoulders” (2002: 254). However, what he has not fully explored yet is how the new communication technologies have altered the ways in which advertising agencies organize themselves, as well as how they conduct collective learning.

With regards to the analysis of the institution feature (or the industry structure) in the Scandinavian context, recent works on the Norwegian market by Markus Bugge (2009, 2011a, 2011b) and a working paper on the Swedish market by Oskar Broberg et al. (2011) are most relevant, especially since they both cover the theme of digitalization.

Bugge examines the advertising industry in Oslo with specific interest to the impact of digitalization. From an economic geography perspective, his dissertation covers a case study on how the Internet brought about transformation to Oslo’s advertising industry and also aims to understand the driving forces behind industrial change, urban growth and regional development (Bugge, 2009). He conducted qualitative interviews with relevant actors involved in the advertising business, and supplemented them with quantitative data based on Norwegian employment statistics. The study draws upon four papers, of which the relevant two will be discussed here. The first paper concerns the difficulties faced by the Norwegian advertising industry in which they are not able to fully embrace the new digital technology, resulting in a failure to benefit from collective learning with the web agencies (2011b). Bugge’s second paper describes how an industrial convergence is occurring as a result of
mutation across advertising and Internet-based market communication. In this new regime, the creative, strategic and technical services can no longer be clearly separated (2011a).

A working paper by Broberg et al. (2011) was presented at Svenska Historikermötet on May 7th 2011 and is part of a two-year research project based at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden titled, “The digital wonder in Swedish advertising – network culture, entrepreneurial network, and system of innovation”. Mainly using materials obtained from in-depth interviews, the paper explores the entrepreneurial strategies of the Swedish digital advertising agencies in the first half of the 2000s that led Sweden to be referred to as the digital wonder. Being the one and only academic material that can be found at this moment on the topic of Swedish digital advertising in English, this working paper provides a valuable and useful account of how the advertising industry has been restructured in Sweden. It also serves as a guide to the still recent history of how the Swedish digital wonder came about.

Despite the variety of research listed above, there is still a lack of in-depth analytical research that highlights how the advertising professionals perceive the changing media landscape today. This study investigates the Swedish advertising industry, which, in spite of its recent achievements in international advertising competitions and gaining worldwide attention with their successful digital advertising solutions, is still under-researched. Although the working paper by Broberg et al. (2011) have investigated the Swedish market, they specifically focus on digital advertising agencies and their entrepreneurial strategies over the past decade, along with the life history of the entrepreneurs. This thesis, on the other hand, aims to grasp a larger and more comprehensive picture of the industry by taking various types of agencies into consideration and pays the most attention to how the advertising professionals are experiencing the media environment today.

3 Research materials and methods

Since empirical research into the production process of Swedish advertising agencies is scarce and because it is difficult to capture the current industry status and structure by only referring to existing articles and literatures, a qualitative interview method has been applied in order to explore the research questions in depth and as up-to-date as possible.
In order to conduct a qualitative research interview, the understanding of phenomenology serves as an important foundation. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), “in qualitative inquiry, phenomenology is a term that points to an interest in understanding social phenomena from the actors' own perspectives and describing the world as experienced by the subjects, with the assumption that the important reality is what people perceive it to be” (original italics, 26). In this thesis, the “social phenomena” refer broadly to digitalization and more narrowly to the Swedish digital wonder. However, there are certain limitations to this concept of phenomenology. This is explained in detail in the interpretation section below.

3.1 Interview structure
The conducted interviews have been semi-structured, meaning that it was neither an open free discussion nor a closed questionnaire. The prepared interview guide, described in the appendix, had a set of questions that were loosely categorized according to the four features of the media logic concept (institution, technology, organization and culture). Due to the diverse background of the interviewees, the questions were adapted and customized to fit each individual. As the interview process progressed and various responses received, it became clear that some questions needed to be added while others were dropped due to less relevance. Such semi-structured nature of interviews poses a challenge since comparison of answers cannot always be made among the interviewees. On the other hand, this style was quite fruitful since at times the interviewees provided unanticipated answers and revealed new aspects of the inner workings of the industry. This follows Rubin and Rubin’s (1995) view that “qualitative interviewing design is flexible, iterative, and continuous, rather than prepared in advance and locked in stone” (original italics, 43). Such interview structure has provided rich insights into how the advertising professionals perceive and experience the world they are living in. It is also worth mentioning that this research takes the form of what Rubin and Rubin (1995) calls “topical interviewing”, in which the goal is to connect conversational pieces of different people to form a coherent narrative to explain puzzling outcomes. Therefore, in some contexts of the analysis, the personal accounts of the advertising professionals were weaved to provide a bigger picture.

3.2 Interviewees and selection criteria

These positive and negative aspects of semi-structured interviews were also mentioned by Bugge (2009).
In total, 15 advertising professionals were interviewed within the period from January 31st to April 13th, 2012. The means of the interviews differed in two ways. Face to face interviews were conducted with 10 people: the majority of these interviews took place at their offices in Stockholm while two of them preferred a café. 5 people were interviewed via Skype/phone, which was due to location and time constraints. The range of time length for the interviews was from 40 minutes to 3 hours, with the average length being approximately 1 hour. Before each interview, the interviewees were asked whether they would mind their name, agency and position to be mentioned in the thesis. Everyone agreed to give their full profile. At first, the intention of this thesis was to reveal the identities of the interviewees, but a decision was made during the analysis process not to disclose them, as it turned out that it was not particularly important to do so. Hence, only the agency category and the position are mentioned after each quote. Since some people had the same combination (i.e. two people were ‘planner, independent advertising agency’), each individual is numbered. Detailed groupings of the agency categories and positions, along with the individual numbers are described in the appendix.

For this research, two of the interviewees were contacted through personal connection, while the rest of the interviewees were more strategically chosen and contacted through direct phone calls and e-mails. A pilot interview was conducted with one of the interviewees (#14) who had worked in the Swedish advertising industry since the 1970s and is now retired. This step was taken in order to have a better overall picture of the industry before delving further with the active advertising professionals. Other interviewees were chosen from advertising agencies that have received high recognition in the Cannes International Festival of Creativity and the Gunn Report. In addition, to grasp a wider and more comprehensive understanding of the advertising industry, several interviewees were chosen from a media agency, a PR agency and a digital production company. Almost all of the interviewees approached were very willing and cooperative to participate in the interview. It is important to note that due to the fluidity of employment within the industry, many of the interviewees have work experiences at more than one agency. In some cases, the interviewees were asked questions concerning their previous workplaces.

3.3 Transcription and style
With regards to the transcription method of the interviews, the value was put on facilitating the understanding of interviewees’ personal accounts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore,
a verbatim description such as inclusion of pauses, repetitions and tones of voice, often used for linguistic and psychological analysis, is not given. All of the interviews were conducted in English, but since it was not the mother tongue for the interviewees, some of the personal accounts have been slightly edited for the purpose of providing a better flow. Several interviewees requested to check their quotes afterwards, so as to fix any misunderstandings.

In terms of the writing style of this qualitative research, more weight has been put on the actual voices of the professionals compared to its interpretation. In relation to this, Rubin and Rubin (1995) notes, “In cultural studies, the voices should be more those of the conversational partners, with greater use of extended quotes and a relatively smaller proportion of the researcher’s own interpretations” (267).

3.4 Interpretation

In terms of the interpretation method of interview materials, an attempt has been made to avoid the dominant neopositivist position, which refers to a position of a researcher “eager to establish a context-free truth about reality “out there” through following a research protocol and getting responses relevant to it, minimizing researcher influence and other sources of bias. […] The ideal is a maximum, transparent research process, characterized by objectivity and neutrality” (Alvesson, 2003: 15). In other words, rather than to take the responses for granted, the complex social situation of the interview was also analyzed. As a critique to such dominant view on interview interpretations, Mats Alvesson suggests eight metaphors to take into consideration. Each metaphor is introduced below, followed by its key problem or feature (2003: 19-24):

1. Local Accomplishment – in an interaction between two people, their gender, ages, professional background, appearances and ethnicities may affect the accounts produced

2. Establishment and perpetuation of a storyline – the interviewee may develop ideas about what the research project is about and how the data can later be used

3. Identity work – accounts about the organization he or she represents cannot be produced outside or abstracted from identity

4. Cultural script application – vocabularies and conventions used to talk about certain issues may be shared across society, industry, occupation or organization

5. Moral storytelling – people normally want to give a good impression of themselves and their institution, which may result in an inclination to not break taboos
6. Political action – the interviewee may be politically motivated and act in his or her own interests and/or the institution that he or she identifies with

7. Construction work – it points to the active, functional, metaphorical and contextual character of language that highlights the problems of representation and ambiguity

8. Play of the powers of discourse – rather than interviewee having control over their accounts, a powerful discourse constitute the subject and their responses

Strictly following these metaphors may result in giving too much of a superior position to the researcher over the interviewee. Nevertheless, with careful implementation, these metaphors may serve well to awaken oneself from the dominant neopositivistic view of the interview process. To further elaborate on “identity work” and “moral storytelling”, Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000) comments, “in a very commercialized society, where marketing relations are becoming increasingly important and where it is important to be good at ‘managing impressions’ and regulating images of oneself, one's profession and one's company, contemporary persons have internalized a market-oriented attitude. One has to be able to ‘sell oneself’” (269). They also discuss the advertising industry in particular, arguing that because the evaluation of the professionals' and/or agencies’ performance is often arbitrary, it is important for them to construct an image of themselves as being able to provide a unique and advanced contribution (2000: 269). Slater (1989) further elaborates on the ambiguity of their works’ quality and results (cited in Alvesson, 1994: 543):

… the advertising agency, as an institution, depends for its existence on selling to institutional clients images and media time and space on the rather weak assumption that they further corporate commercial aims: that is, that in some direct or indirect, mediated manner, advertisements will alter public attitudes or behaviour. The agency exists by claiming to sell a form of power – a most nebulous product, as well as an ideologically fraught and somewhat disreputable one.

These remarks that specifically touch upon the advertising industry and its professionals are important to consider when understanding the social context of the interviews.

3.5 Self-reflection

In order to capture the working lives of today’s Swedish advertising professionals, qualitative interviewing was perhaps the most appropriate method to apply. Being able to get a “feel” for the characters of the interviewees as well as the atmosphere of the interview sessions (especially visiting their work places) were valuable experiences. However, the method of
interviewing was met with many obstacles. The quote below from Alvesson best describes a common trap that a researcher is likely to fall into when conducting interviews:

Regarding the interviews as a superior technique for tapping subjects on their knowledge about their experiences and/or social practices neglects the interview situation as a socially and linguistically complex situation. It is important not to simplify and idealize the interview situation, assuming that the interviewee – given the correct interview technique – primarily is a competent and moral truth teller, acting in the service of science and producing the data needed to reveal his or her “interior” [i.e., experiences, feelings, values] or the “facts” of the organization. (2003:14)

This fits my research situation as well since at the very beginning, I was not perfectly aware of such complex layers that exist in the interview process. Having this in mind, there are mainly four challenges or limitations that I encountered, and are described below in relation to Alvesson’s metaphors mentioned in the previous section. Firstly, because I conducted the interview only once for each interviewee whom I met for the first time, there was not enough time to build trust, which may have led some interviewees to produce normative or cautious responses, and also to apply “cultural scripts” and “moral storytelling”. In order to overcome this limitation, conducting more than one interview for establishing better contact and checking consistency over time may have been a better plan (Alvesson, 2003). The second limitation concerns the issue of ethics. Before the interviews, the interviewees were asked whether they would mind their names, agencies and positions to be used in the thesis. The majority of the people were not reluctant to provide their personal data. However, this may have caused them to be more conscious about “identity work” and “establishment and perpetuation of a storyline”, resulting in holding back certain information that could have been of good use for the analysis. Thirdly, there was the linguistic issue where all of the Swedish interviewees were asked to respond in English, which was none of their mother tongue. This concerns the metaphor, “local accomplishment”. Sometimes the interviewee was lost in translation, which could have resulted in hesitation to speak further. Although there was no difficulty comprehending the responses, having them use Swedish may have elicited a more elaborate response. The fourth challenge or limitation once again points to the “local accomplishment” metaphor. My research interest in Swedish culture and the fact that I am a foreigner might have influenced the interviewees’ responses to sounding more positive, than if a native researcher had interviewed them. This situation might also have led them to subconsciously provide a “moral storytelling” and avoid giving any negative comments or

14 3 people were contacted again for a few follow-up questions. 2 were via e-mail and 1 was via Skype.
break taboos about the cultures of their agencies. It is not an easy task to discern whether the
interviewees’ comments were in fact influenced by these limitations. Nevertheless, they
should not be neglected and should be taken into consideration when discussing the interview
materials.

4 Analysis and reporting of results

For the analysis of the interview materials, I use four features of the media logic concept to
organize how Swedish advertising professionals experience their work in the digital age. As
noted earlier, these four features are discussed in separate sections. However, the analysis and
interpretation of each feature cannot be purely independent of each other, nor are they
designed to be in chronological order. The purpose of using the media logic concept is to
examine the nature of media work from four interrelated angles that provide a comprehensive
understanding of the inner workings of the Swedish advertising industry.

4.1 Institution

From a macro perspective, this section serves as a gateway into the Swedish advertising
industry and provides the overall picture of how the industry is structured. Prominent features
that arose from the interview materials were three institutional trends that constituted the
industry: concentration, fragmentation and convergence. They do not occur in sequential steps,
but are rather intertwined in complex ways. Detailed descriptions of each trend along with the
analyses of the interviews are given below.

4.1.1 Concentration

With regards to the trend of concentration, global network communication groups such as
WPP, Publicis and Omnicom have been acquiring agencies worldwide at an increased pace
since the 1980s, with the aim to provide transnational full-service to the clients – meaning
businesses that offer a variety of communication-related products and services, including
advertising, marketing and PR (Deuze, 2007: 115).\(^\text{15}\) In the Swedish context, such
communication groups have been expanding their reach into Sweden especially since the
1990s, as communication business has become increasingly global. In 2010, the largest

\(^\text{15}\) To show the scale of these networks, WPP is the world’s largest agency network with revenue
amounting to $14.7 billion and 146,000 employees stationed in over 100 countries (Collin, 2011).
network group in Sweden in terms of agency income was Interpublic, followed by Edita, Intellecta and Omnicom (Collin, 2011).

What can be observed in more recent years is that the Swedish advertising industry has been enhancing its global presence in the digital advertising field. Their winning streak in the international advertising competitions, mentioned earlier, is quite indicative of their success. With the global spotlight on Sweden, various global networks have either wholly or partially bought top Swedish digital advertising agencies (Broberg, et al. 2011). Farfar was one of the most successful agencies who was keen on international expansion, later acquired by the Aegis group in 2005. This move was part of the group’s plan to build its global digital network. However, it ended up in failure as five years later, the agency was dissolved after all the key people had left the agency (Wentz, 2010). Another illustration is a Swedish digital firm called Daddy, bought by a US based agency, Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP+B)\(^\text{16}\) in 2009. Stationed in Gothenberg, the office has become the European hub under the name CP+B Europe. According to Broberg et al. (2011), both Farfar and Daddy were growth-oriented and had strong ties with big US agencies before the takeover.

One of the interviewees, now an executive creative director at a global network advertising agency, previously owned a digital advertising agency group in Gothenberg that had separate companies for managing the creative, design and production. This step was taken so that each unit could grow their own culture, work style and business models. However, when the global player bought the group a few years ago, the three units had to merge and be integrated into a single office. The interviewee elaborated:

> It was a big change to merge everything into one unit. And I think we struggled a lot with that organizational change. It took us a good year to really get into place. [...] There's always frustration when you do organizational change. (2. executive creative director, global network advertising agency)

This comment depicts the difficulties that the interviewee experienced as a result of the acquisition. However, it was also interesting to hear that besides some of the major organizational changes that were rather unavoidable, the shift from being independent to joining force with a global network had not been a big difference. He recalled that before the

\(^{16}\) CP+B is one of the world’s most award-winning and prestigious advertising agencies with global clients such as Microsoft, Burger King and Volkswagen. (Duner, H., (2009): Världskänd byrå till Göteborg. Svenska Dagbladet, 17 June. p.19)
acquisition, his agency had already been working as a vendor to big global agencies, which perhaps made it easier for them to understand and adapt quicker to the new work process. One of the minor differences he pointed out was now that they are part of a network, for example when press releases need to be sent, he is not the only one to make the final decision and send the e-mail. There are specialists within the agency that communicate with the press, and it is also important to sync the content of the press release with other global offices. For him, it seemed that the acquisition was more a change of scale rather than a change of workflow.

This illuminates the fact that being part of a global network is also about cooperating with offices worldwide. An account manager at another global network agency emphasized Sweden’s success in the digital realm, which had led them to take on more responsibility for the growth of the network:

A half a year ago, because we have done really well in Sweden in the creative work and also on an economic level, the network gave us the responsibility for Norway, Finland and Denmark. So it's basically a new set up. Now we're transferring some people over to the other offices trying to get them to be better. If you look at the digital part, Sweden is so much further in how to make creative ideas and campaigns in the digital area, so that's why they [the network] wanted us to educate the other agencies and lift the competence level up a bit. (5. account manager, global network advertising agency)

When she was asked about her future plans, she showed interest in moving to the network office in Copenhagen because they are “more hungry and quite the same work style” as in Sweden. However, she added that Norway is not her choice since they are “quite behind in digital”. This interviewee’s personal accounts also indicate the scale of global network advertising agencies, as we can see that weak offices are able to receive backup from other offices, as well as the opportunity for employees to experience work in a foreign environment.

4.1.2 Fragmentation

On the other hand, there are cases when advertising professionals break away from the large network agencies to start their own agency – a trend of fragmentation. One of the interviewees fit this criterion as he had recently left the position of an executive creative director at a global network advertising agency to start his own company in Stockholm. His reason for making the move was:

…to expand on what the meaning of marketing is and be able to control it a bit more as the owner of the agency. Also to be able to work with our clients in a way to combine knowledge behind the digital/social consumer behavior, and connect
that with the rest of the marketing activities. My experience is that the larger the agency, the less the overall approach for working across the fields. I think through history it's been more like you have the traditional field and you have the digital field. Here, we try to combine that. Larger agencies, it's obviously more politics, it's a larger group of people, and you're very dependent on the financial situation and status of the agency. Which means that you have to take whatever job that comes to them. (3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency)

The latter half of this comment perhaps would not have been revealed if he were still inside the large network agency. Such account from an outsider perspective goes in line with how Deuze notes that “a key motive for advertising professionals to break away from holding firms of large network companies […] is their real or perceived lack of creative freedom in pursuing different, innovative or experimental forms of advertising, and what can be described as an increased emphasis on annual returns on investment and shareholder value” (2007: 123). His personal account comes more from a management perspective, since he now drives his own agency. Rather than specifically mentioning his previous workplace, he pointed out that large agencies (perhaps not necessarily confined to ‘global network’ agencies) in general have the tendency to be rather rigid and inflexible, with conflicting interests within the agency that may hinder them from adapting swiftly to the changing media environment. Now that this interviewee has broken away from such agency, he seemed to have more freedom and flexibility, being able to look over the entire marketing process for the client. He further commented:

Of course the financial side is always hard and important in the beginning, but I think the smaller you are, the more you try to focus on doing what you want to do, rather than having to do advertising to get the money. (3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency)

His rather strict description of large network agencies does not seem to be too far off, as one of the interviewees from such agency commented on the challenges her firm is facing today:

It's hard to find a process that gives us an overview of everything that is happening within the company. All of the different clients and all of the different clients' projects, it's a lot. It's so much going on every day, and the main thing we have found hard is prioritization of being able to do the best work possible for each client and each project. And that's a challenge. Also another challenge is to be able to prioritize against different values. Sometimes the value is in the money. We might choose to do work in-house\(^\text{17}\) because it gives us a lot of money, and sometimes it's because it's really creative work that we want to do internally so we can go and be part of different awards. Or, it’s just a

\(^{17}\text{In-house means that they have production teams (for TV commercials, digital, etc.) inside the agency.}\)
challenge for the developers to learn new technologies. These are different parameters that you have to balance. (5. account manager, global network advertising agency)

Compared to the creative director/founder introduced earlier who had a clear focus of his agency’s task, this account manager from a network agency showed some of the struggles and difficulties that large agencies must face in terms of prioritizing the vast amount of work and managing the conflicting values that exist within the agency.

In addition to small-scale independent agencies founded by advertising professionals who break away from large agencies, there are also more established and long-running independent agencies that have been quite successful and thus hold a firm position in the Swedish advertising industry. To give an example, according to the Swedish communication industry report of 2010, Forsman & Bodenfors ranked 1st as the agency with the most income, and Åkestam Holst coming in 9th (Collin, 2011). They have been consistently winning various awards in advertising competitions worldwide. One interviewee, working at an independent agency that had in the past received merger and acquisition offers from global networks, responded:

We don’t see the benefit of being in a network. We haven't seen how that would help us come up with better ideas. There has of course been offers, but we never understood how it would help us. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

Another planner from a different independent agency commented:

It feels very safe to not be in a network agency. My boss is my colleague. It's not some guy sitting in New York and looking at me as a cost and nothing else, so in that way as an employee, it feels very safe. (8. planner, independent advertising agency)

Perhaps due to the lack of a strong global network to support them, when a question was asked about what challenges they see ahead, some interviewees from the independent agencies pointed out to the need for more international clients:

I think one of the challenges is how to move abroad and to work with international clients. Finding a really fun and exciting client on the global market, that is our main big challenge. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

We still have to be bold and brave to make hits international. In my mind, independent agencies need to work more and harder then the big networks to convince international clients to come here. And larger international clients should use more independent agencies. If they did, it would be rock’n roll. (9. digital producer, independent advertising agency)
It would be interesting to see what the next step is for these independent agencies in order to attract more international clients. Nothing is for certain – it is still a possibility that a global network may acquire them in the future, or perhaps they will start their own offices worldwide to make their own global network. Another probability is for the independent agencies to join a voluntary international network, where you work with a number of other agencies in the world. In Sweden, more than 25 independent agencies are a member of networks such as Worldwide Partners, Network One, INBA, Dialogue International or United Agencies Network (Collin, 2011). One of the interviewees works at an independent agency that has created a Pan-Nordic collaboration with independent agencies in other Nordic countries. He briefly described how it works:

For example when it's a pitch for an account involving the entire Nordic region, we pitch together. So it's one agency in Denmark, one agency in Norway, one in Finland. They're agencies that don't have a network. Otherwise it would be impossible to win Nordic clients. The pitch is usually for one main market, so if the client was big in Denmark, the Danish agency would be the main agency. (4. art director, independent advertising agency)

As of now, there is no simple answer as to which types of institutions are more preferable – a global network agency or an independent agency. The fact remains that mostly due to globalization, there is a constant power struggle between the trends of concentration and fragmentation.

4.1.3 Convergence

The third institutional trend that has mainly grown out of the increasing importance of the Internet is convergence. What was observed through the interviewees’ personal accounts was the perceived convergence of tasks, occurring in three areas: between digital advertising agencies and established advertising agencies; between media agencies and advertising agencies; and finally between consulting firms and advertising agencies.

Dating back to the early 2000s, technological advancement paved the way for better infrastructure and improved hardware and software (Sandoz, 2010). A major shift to digitalization led to the start up of many digital advertising agencies in Sweden that embodied the digital culture. Most of the leading professionals in those agencies had a head start and a

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18 A pitch is usually held in a competitive manner where several advertising agencies aim to win the client’s contract by providing a marketing campaign and strategy for a product or service.
firm background in the use of computer and Internet technology (Broberg, et al. 2011). However, the majority of the established advertising agencies were lagging behind and struggling to adapt to the new media environment. Rather than restructuring their agencies, most of them stuck to the traditional methods of advertising and regarded digital as something optional. Interviewees from a digital production company and a digital advertising agency frankly commented:

The advertising agencies really didn't grasp it for a long period of time. They didn't understand it. They didn't hire the right people, and I think they threw a lot of money in the sea, just threw it away on really expensive big productions that usually went over people’s heads. (11. digital producer, digital production company)

The advertising agencies, they felt very lost. And they couldn't really figure out how they would navigate this new thing. (10. chief creative officer/founder, digital advertising agency)

This is certainly not a unique situation to Sweden, since Bugge’s recent study also shows how established advertising agencies in Norway have been slow to adapt to the rapid changes of the media environment. According to Bugge, this situation has given the opportunity for small and specialized web agencies to emerge and supplement the lack of digital and technical skills of the established agencies (2011b: 236).

Coming back to Sweden, in more recent years, the established advertising agencies have begun to realize and understand the full potentials of the Internet. As a result, drawing a line between digital advertising agencies and established advertising agencies (including both independent and global network) has become more difficult, causing a convergence of tasks. On this matter, the CEO of a global network advertising agency commented:

So what's happening now, is that you have ad agencies on one hand, and you have digital agencies. And they are all moving towards a new center, where you can call yourself more of a communication agency. (1. CEO, global network advertising agency)

According to him, a clear boundary no longer exists between the two types of agencies. He then gave an elaborate description of one of his agency’s most recent and successful campaigns that involved a digital element, in order to exemplify how advertising agencies are no longer “traditional” and that they have the ability to compete with digital advertising agencies. Furthermore, a chief creative officer of a digital advertising agency did not seem to consider “digital” as something special or that gives them an advantage anymore. This
interviewee’s forward-looking and progressive attitude stands out, as he is one of the leading pioneers of the Swedish digital wonder since the early 2000s:

Personally I don't think digital advertising is as interesting as it has been. Because there's been so much work done, and also it has been integrated into traditional advertising. So you don't have that edge anymore. [...] I've always been more interested in what is happening just slightly under the radar than what everyone else is talking about. So I think digital advertising has become boring in a way. (10. chief creative officer/founder, digital advertising agency)

His comment about digital being integrated into traditional can be linked to the CEO’s earlier comment, about the agency’s recent success with a digitally driven campaign. Due to such convergence of tasks among digital and established advertising agencies, it makes sense that the chief creative officer emphasized that there is no more “edge” in digital. Regarding his interest in “what is happening just slightly under the radar”, interestingly, he pointed out to the possibilities of television – a symbol of “traditional” media:

I think TV is the next thing that will be impacted somehow. So much to be explored. In the mobile space, Apple obviously led the way in and now we have Android and everything, but when it comes to TV, no one has found the way yet. There's a lot of experimentation, but no one has nailed it. There's no leader in the TV space, which is interesting. (10. chief creative officer/founder, digital advertising agency)

In line with this interviewee’s assumption, Proulx & Shepatin (2012) argue that today the medium of television is being redefined and should no longer be considered as just a traditional medium: "The speed, scale, and degree of change call for a rediscovery of TV as a new medium. We now live in a world where television has symbiotically become one with the Web, social media, and mobile. Networks, providers, brands, and agencies must continue to unshackle themselves from dated business and advertising models to view television through a much wider aperture” (2012: 282-3). A decade ago, one can imagine that there existed a clear distinction as to what type of media the established and digital advertising agencies handled. The established agencies were more focused on mass media such as television, newspaper and radio, while the digital agencies were confined to the web space. However, that is not necessarily the case any longer, as it is indicated from the chief creative officer pointing out to the new potentials of television, and the CEO mentioning about the move towards a new center.
Forsman & Bodenfors was the earliest established advertising agency to make the move into the “new center” that the CEO above talked about. Around the year 2000, they started a subsidiary web agency called Virus. Two years later, however, after realizing that the Internet will play a significant role in the future of communication, they decided to dismantle Virus. The website of Forsman & Bodenfors gives a detailed description of what had occurred as a result (www.fb.se):

... and overnight all the creatives at F&B became web creatives. Responsibility for the ‘net moved into the ordinary workgroups and was equal with film and print – no difference. And we etched in stone that web literacy is a requirement to work at F&B. No exceptions. This is the most important decision we’ve ever made and also perhaps the most unusual. Around the world nearly all traditional agencies took an entirely different road. They continued to set up subsidiaries and hire web specialists.

This stance of Forsman & Bodenfors to place themselves against the “traditional” represents a particular mindset of smaller agencies, who have the tendency to brand themselves as non-traditional in their work styles – implicitly criticizing the non-collegial, rigid and frustrating practices of the larger agencies (Deuze, 2007: 123).

Although the extent to which this shift is occurring is likely to differ depending on the agency, personal accounts from the interviewees above as well as the website description of Forsman & Bodenfors point out to the overall trend in the industry that the convergence of tasks between the established and digital advertising agencies is unavoidable, and that they are becoming direct competitors.

The second area where the convergence of tasks is perceived to be occurring is between the media agencies and the advertising agencies. From a media agency perspective, a creative media manager commented that before, when the media landscape was not as complicated as it is today, the tasks of advertising agencies and media agencies were quite clear. The former had the responsibility of creating advertisements, and the latter responsible for negotiating and buying media space. However, today this interviewee believes that the media agencies need to come up with ways to use media more creatively, rather than to be dependent on specific media channels:

19 Broberg et al. (2012) call F&B the outlier as they “established itself as the first traditional agency to fully incorporate the digital perspective” (15).
Media agencies have a very strong hold of the whole chain of the paid, owned, and earned media. And I think when we're moving into this digitalized age, it's a huge benefit. [...] Many of our clients ask us, 'Okay so it seems sort of reasonable or obvious that you're going to help us with these questions.' Which is of course a challenge for us, because then we have to have people like me that actually know a lot about digital. But since we do, then we have it! So we'll see what happens. But maybe it's going to be a completely new type of agency, or media agencies will evolve into something else. I don't know yet but we'll see in a few years. (12. creative media manager, global network media agency)

His identity as the “digital-go-to-guy”, which he refers to himself in social network profiles, may have led him to emphasize the evolving state of his agency. It is rather difficult to tell whether the entire agency also feels the same way, but the convergence of tasks seem inevitable. However, neither the advertising agency side nor this interviewee expressed that they are direct competitors, but rather collaborators at the moment. How this convergence of tasks will change the institutional structure is yet to be determined.

The third and final point discusses the trend of convergence perceived by the advertising professionals as occurring between consulting firms and the advertising agencies. The possibility of the Internet to allow an ongoing interaction between brands and consumers, along with the fragmentation of media audiences and the credibility crisis of advertisements, have been some of the strong motives that are driving the advertising agencies to increasingly expand its task into the strategic area. A business-minded account manager stated:

Digital is no longer something you add to a campaign. It's basically where it starts. It's so widely used and you have to be really careful on how you plan the whole campaign and the user experience and how people interact with your brand, both on campaign level and long-term. So we don't see us as an advertising agency in Sweden any more. We see ourselves as a strategic business partner. (5. account manager, global network advertising agency)

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20 Paid media refers to a media space that can be bought, such as television and print. Owned media can be for example the company’s own website, where they have more control over content. Earned media is often the result of paid and/or owned media when people talk and share about the company’s content on social media.

21 Fragmentation is occurring due to the influence of new communications technology as well as deregulated media markets that have multiplied media channels. This has caused the audience reach of each channel to shrink (Hackley, 2010).

22 Consumers are increasingly relying on word of mouth (mouse) and peer reviews before making purchases. Hence, a general skepticism towards conventional advertisements is growing (Sheehan & Morrison, 2011: http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2239/2121 Accessed 3 January, 2012)
Along the same line, a planner from an independent advertising agency commented:

It's not that you just go and do an ad anymore. The issue of branding got so much more important. That is a massive difference over the last ten years. Before, they were complete ad agencies. Now it's almost moving into strategic management. We're getting very close to becoming Accenture. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

The personal accounts of these two professionals indicate that the identity of an advertising agency is being redefined. The planner mentioning that his agency is becoming more similar to Accenture, one of the world’s leading consulting firms, is quite intriguing in itself, since in the 1990s, it was the other way around: that agencies found themselves facing competition from management consultants with their aggressive moves into the communication field (Nixon, 2011). However, it is important to note here that drawing a conclusion that the colleagues of these two interviewees also have the same perception is too simplistic. In relation to this, the account manager revealed that:

Not everyone understands. Because they still think in their mindset that you can probably solve just by doing TV commercials. So that's also a journey, getting all of the people on the same track and getting everybody to understand what we're doing, what we're trying to achieve, and how we can be a modern communication agency, in a more digital and social playfield. (5. account manager, global network advertising agency)

Although such challenges are mentioned, how these advertising agencies will evolve and further incorporate the strategic logic is something to look out for in the next few years.

By examining the three areas of converging tasks, it has become clear that the maturation of information and communications technology (ICT) has disrupted the nature of the traditional market communication. Today, it is requiring the industry to consider the three services – creative, strategic and technical – as much more intertwined and interdependent of each other (Bugge, 2011a: 525).

To summarize, this section described three main institutional trends that determine how advertising professionals work: concentration, fragmentation and convergence. First of all, as a move for concentration, global network advertising agencies have been extending their business into Sweden since the 1990s, for the aim to provide transnational full-service to their clients. Quite a few Swedish digital advertising agencies caught global attention, as many were either wholly or partially acquired by foreign networks. At the same time there were
professionals who left such networks to start one’s own business – a trend of fragmentation. Moreover, Swedish independent advertising agencies have remained strong and successful without being part of a network. However, they do see a challenge in acquiring international clients. Regarding the third institutional trend, as the media landscape becomes increasingly complex and using digital is no longer an option but a necessity, the tasks of advertising agencies are perceived to be converging with areas such as technical and strategic. Due to extensive pressures from the shifts of globalization and digitalization in recent years, it is clear that in all three institutional trends – concentration, fragmentation and convergence – an ongoing power struggle is in place.

4.2 Technology
Although consumers have always shared opinions about products and services before the advent of the Internet, what has changed in today’s media landscape is the possibility for a large number of people to get together, amplify their voices, influence each other and put magnifying glasses to actions taken by brands. Activities such as sharing information via social media, engaging in discussions within online communities, and collaborating collectively for software developments are occurring daily. This new participatory and interactive paradigm is often referred to as Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2005). Various scholars have redefined the role of consumers and have labeled them as “Pro-Ams” (Leadbeater & Miller, 2004), “Amafessionals” (Penn, 2009), and “produsers” (Bruns, 2008). With the growing convenience of mobile technology such as smart phones and tablet PCs, people are accessing the Internet at anytime and anywhere. As Deuze comments, “we no longer live with media, but in media” (2012). According to Jon Sharpe (2010), the two key factors that have led to the explosion of user-generated content are the means of distribution and the absence of authority. The means of distribution concerns the rapidly decreasing price of technological tools that allows users to create content, share online and be discovered by likeminded audiences. The absence of authority factor refers to the situation that today the brands do not necessarily have an authoritative position over the consumers, and the wisdom of crowds is becoming much more influential. In such social context, advertising professionals are forced to reconsider their roles about how to interact with the redefined consumers.

The first half of this section describes two interrelated “cultural scripts” – one of the metaphors discussed by Alvesson (2003), which refers to a set of vocabularies, metaphors and conventions for discussing certain issues – commonly shared among the interviewed
advertising professionals. The first dominant script examines the active role of consumers mainly due to the spread of social media. The second cultural script discusses the shift from executing short-term campaigns to building long-term relationships with consumers.

The second half of the section takes a step back from the rather positive cultural scripts and critically assess the roles of consumers and advertising agencies in the digital age. The first topic concerns how user interactions of digital platforms are in many ways controlled, monitored and measured for valuable market data by the advertising agencies. The second topic points to the fact that despite drastic changes taking place in consumer behavior and the media environment, some traditional advertising agencies and professionals still seem to be struggling to adapt to digital.

4.2.1 Power to the consumers

The first cultural script that was dominant in the interviewees’ responses concern the fact that consumers today have the power to easily share, speak out and spread their voices with the use of digital tools. One interviewee talked about a study that he conducted as a planner, which showed how the young people’s mindsets have changed with the popular use of social media:

I did a study of young people… ‘If you saw a big car crash outside, what's your first thought?’ And too many were thinking, 'How am I gonna report this?' instead of thinking, 'How can I help them?' Because their brains are set that way now. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

This is indicative of the view among the professionals that people can easily become citizen publicists in today’s network society. Today, information about brands does not only come out of controlled (bought and owned) media, but also increasingly from the mouths (or mouse) of the consumers. One interviewee, who is also a lecturer for marketers, encountered a story from one of his participants about the connected world we now live in:

One of the guys at the lecture, had a problem with some broadband connection company and had e-mailed their customer service, and nothing happened. He got in touch with konsumentverket [Swedish Consumer Agency], and they told him if you tweet about it and make it a public complaint, they will react. So he did it, and one day later it was solved. So quite a bit of power in the consumer's network where they actually communicate, and I think the key is to be a part of their communication. (7. digital producer, independent advertising agency)

Another interviewee similarly commented:
I think the consumer today understands how much stronger their power is. So it's more in their hands now than it used to be. (5. account manager, global network advertising agency)

Prior to the popularity of social media, complaints about products and services were most likely shared among close friends, family and colleagues. Perhaps the main channels to communicate directly with brands were through phone calls or e-mails. From the brand perspective, one could assume that they had more control over any negative sentiments consumers may have had, since there weren’t any convenient and effective tools for such consumers to spread their message. However, in today’s media environment, social media such as Facebook and Twitter have lowered the barrier that had existed between the brand and the consumers, as well as among the individual consumers. With consumers potentially having a bigger influence with their voices, a lot of the corporate actions that used to be hidden from the big crowd are now becoming much more transparent. This connects to a quote from another interviewee, who emphasized the issue of instantaneous disclosure as a result of the Internet:

I think that puts enormous pressure on companies to think again before they do something because you can’t hide any more. It's going to come out, right? If you leak some toxic waste into a lake, it's going to come out sooner or later. If you cut down trees in Malaysia it's going to come out. It's going to be on video, on pictures. You're not going to be able to escape it because sooner or later someone’s going to find out. When they do, it's going to instantaneously be in the hands of everybody. And of course that's an enormous force that everybody has to reckon with. You can't ignore. (12. creative media manager, global network media agency)

In line with these interviewees’ responses, Solis & Breakenridge state, “In this “new world,” companies augment and “let go” of the push and broadcast mechanisms associated with traditional marketing and message control, enabling customers to internalize information and, in turn, share their reaction and interpretation” (2009: 38).

Although the rate at which contents are produced and replicated is rising exponentially,23 what remains unchanged is the fact that there is a finite amount of information human beings can process. Therefore it is becoming increasingly important for brands to find the right context and be “relevant” to the consumers. Many interviewees stressed the term “relevance”

23 According to a recent study conducted by IDC and EMC, the world’s information is doubling every two years. They estimated that 1.8 zettabytes (1.8 trillion gigabytes) of information will be created and replicated in 2011. (http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/idc-extracting-value-from-chaos-ar.pdf Accessed 15 May 2012)
when discussing about the consumer’s motivation to share on social media. An executive creative director elaborated on this point:

In the social context, relevance is usually how well it expresses your image. So if it’s important for me to be a good father, because that is something important to my image, then obviously something that shows that I'm together with my kids, like an image of me and my kids, that will manifest my image. So that's something that I would like to share then. So if I do an app that helps me share my identity as a good father, that will probably be a successful app, if you targeted to people that think fatherhood is important. (2. executive creative director, global network advertising agency)

Others also added that the consumers’ act of sharing content is not always about doing a favor for brands, but also about “building your own brand (5)”, because “you can’t underestimate the ego (12)”. You have to be “proud (11)” that you found something fun to share. One interviewee further commented:

To be honest, it has to be something that tells something about you. I think the sharing that goes on in Facebook, I mean of course there's a lot of things that I like, but I don't share it because I don't think it's cool enough for me. You're building up your own personality on Facebook. [...] I think the things that people share are something that also tells a little story about themselves. It adds to their own personality. (9. digital producer, independent advertising agency)

These interviewees were quick to point out that in order for brand-related content to be shared on social media, it needs to be relevant for the users and to add value to their identities. While advertisements on traditional media have been more about how many people can be reached and how frequent advertisements are displayed in front of the people, social media seem to be giving the advertising professionals other vital questions to ask themselves: How can consumers sympathize and identify themselves with the brand? How do you get them to participate? How can content be shared and spread on social media (Sato, 2011)?

4.2.2 From short-term campaigns to long-term relationships

The second most common cultural script concerns the increasing need for an uninterrupted, constant communication between brands and consumers. Sending a relevant and engaging message to the proper target is crucial in order to turn those consumers into brand publicists, who may share and spread their thoughts on social media. However, no matter how relevant and engaging the message may be, if the brand does not continuously communicate with their consumers, they can easily forget about the brand and move on with their lives. Many of the interviewees have commented on the significant differences between the traditional approach
and the digital approach of reaching the market, where the digital approach facilitates a much more interactive and constant communication between the brand and the consumers. An industry specialist who has decades of experience in advertising, made a clear distinction between the old and the new approach:

This industry was named market communication years and years ago, but there wasn't any communication. How do you communicate with a full spread advertisement in a magazine? You couldn't talk back to it, could you? So it should have been called market information because it was one sided. And now we're trying to involve the consumer. [...] I'm brought up with an ad campaign that starts now and ends now but nowadays we are talking about an ongoing conversation. It's not campaign based. Before, we had two spring campaigns and two fall campaigns and something around Christmas. And now it never stops. Many of the things we have seen on Internet, they go on and on and one thing leads to another. (14. industry specialist)

Along the same line, a digital producer also commented:

The campaigns, they're pretty dead, I would say. I mean the time where you can sit in an agency doing a big campaign and just release and think it's done, it's totally a waste of money. It's over I think. (13. digital producer, PR agency)

Another interviewee used the term “community” to describe the communication platform necessary to bridge the gap between the brand and the consumers:

There's always the challenge of creating a community. I'd like to learn more about that. If you have a product for example, do you create a community around the product? Because there's certainly gains for having that thing. I don't think a lot of people know how to do it. Is it just a Facebook group? Is it a separate website? What are we going to talk about? In the future, it might be better to spend more resources on how to communicate with them. (11. digital producer, digital production company)

Brands have always had fans surrounding them, but in the past it was rather difficult to pinpoint who and where they were. Today, these people have become much more visible in the virtual space, and if brands can be successful in building online communities for such fans, this allows messages to reach only those who find them relevant and therefore becomes an effective way to build long-term relationships.

According to a creative director, in the past there has not been any other way but to be campaign focused. In the media environment we now live in, that is no longer the case:

I think the social structure and the user behavior, especially online, is now influencing everything we do. And what is on and offline? [...] Everything's going digital. So in the future we will see outdoor being digital, and you can start talking,
what is digital? Digital will be our world and I guess it is now, part of how we live and how we consume. Therefore it's very important to understand the role of the consumer and not focus on dividing your relationship with the consumer. That's the reason why we work mainly with looking from the consumer aspect. [...] What is it that makes consumers connect with the brand and amongst themselves? (3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency)

Traditionally, television has been a type of medium where the brand is allocated a certain advertising space that is confined to a specific time, with a lack of mechanism to gather immediate feedback (Whaling, 2011). However, today’s media landscape demands something more and as the quotes from interviewees above imply, the consumers are “always on”. Thinking thoroughly on a more long-term perspective about how and to what extent the brands should interact with such consumers seems to be a key issue that need to be well-managed by the advertising professionals.

From these two cultural scripts, we can see that on one hand, with their active usage of new technologies, the consumers are becoming increasingly influential and their power is growing into something that cannot be simply neglected by the brands and their agencies. On the other hand, there are many more opportunities to maintain constant connection between brands and consumers, which will work to the brands’ benefit if communication strategies are properly executed. Under such conditions, the advertising professionals seem to be working in a challenging but at the same time a very stimulating environment. However, one should not be naïve and simply celebrate the fact that today’s consumers have more control over brands, or assume that all advertising agencies are fully capable of harnessing digital technology. These two points are further discussed below.

4.2.3 Valorizing the productive interaction of consumers

The first issue aims to reassess the active role of consumers in the digital age. In order to grasp the larger context, Adam Arvidsson makes a relevant point as he emphasizes the new economic logic of brands that increasingly relies on external actors (i.e. Internet users) in the shape of immaterial productivity, as opposed to their previous logic with dependence on material production and resources directly controlled by the firm (2007: 7). Incorporating trends such as crowdsourcing and user-led innovation are becoming common ways for brands to design and develop new products and services. Under such condition, it may be assumed that consumers, or Internet users in general, have become much more empowered in the present economy. However, the flipside is that the logic of the brand “builds on including and
managing such free sociality, channeling it into pre-structured platforms\(^{24}\) where it can unfold in *controllable* and *measurable* ways” (italics added, 2007: 25). This partly connects to how Terranova (2000) uses the term “free labor” to describe the important yet undervalued Internet users who are seemingly exploited by companies to conduct a form of labor in the virtual space. Arvidsson further argues that the Internet is a technological tool that gives brands the possibility to valorize and subsume productive interaction, which had been difficult to do with offline branding (2006: 96). Indeed, some of the interviewed Swedish advertising professionals showed their interest and concerns with regards to measuring such “productive interaction” in the digital age:

> We have done Facebook campaigns and I think it's excellent. You get a direct response, and you get all the stuff, so that works really good. And you kind of trust the numbers from the digital a little bit more, compared to a traditional measurement from print and TV. How many people have seen my ad in the morning newspaper? Yeah that's kind of subjective measurement. How many of you read it, and how many actually *saw* it? (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

Merits of digital stand out, as he compares it to the traditional measurement method. However, there are also limitation and challenges that may exist when quantifying social interaction online. The above planner further commented:

> There is however one part that is hard to evaluate. You can see it has been viewed on YouTube one million times. 'Ah, excellent'. But what did they see? How did they interpret what they saw? That one is harder. You need to be fairly close to the consumer in order to understand that. Preferably you would sit beside them and watch it, and then, very carefully ask, 'What did you feel? Was it good?’ because that is the hardest information to find. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

Despite the convenience of measuring digital, there are obstacles that remain unchanged. There were other interviewees who pointed out that agencies tend to measure too much when it comes to digital. One such interviewee argued that one way to avoid the hassle is to make the measurement method of digital as easy and simple as TV and print advertisements:

> Maybe we try to measure too much in digital and that's not helping at all. Maybe we should just back down a bit and say, 'Well perhaps it's not interesting to measure every second spent, every click made. That's not the way because nobody understands it, at least the people who actually buy the services. It's too much and I think that we need something that everybody can agree on, as we have in TV and print. […] Maybe you need to take it one step further and make it even easier. We'll see. Someone's going to come up with that. If it's not us it's going to be someone

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\(^{24}\) This “platform”, for example, can be Facebook where the design of its environment allows users to freely interact with each other, but at the same time permits brands to constantly conduct surveillance on such users and measure their daily activities in order to acquire relevant market data.
else. I mean it wouldn't be surprising if it were Google or Facebook who’s actually going to decide how to do this. (12. creative media manager, media agency)

Another interviewee also commented on the vast amount of data that can be gathered from digital tools, but at the same time the challenge is to define the actual value of each social interaction:

I think it's really interesting with digital that you can measure so much, but the hard part is to measure the right things and then analyze what you are measuring in the right way so you get really key insights about the investment. So the return of investment is what you should really focus on. What is it that we are measuring, and what is it worth? We had an interesting discussion with one of our clients about how much is social interaction worth? Because that is really hard to define. How much is one Facebook like worth for you as a client? Who can answer that? It’s so hard. How much is the interaction of the user engagement worth for your brand? That's also hard. How do we measure that? How do we invest in that? So the whole social currency, the social interaction part, that is something really interesting. (5. account manager, global network advertising agency)

From examining these personal accounts, confusion and uncertainty can be clearly noticed in terms of measuring productive interaction online. Even though Arvidsson makes the claim that “user interaction becomes valuable in so far as it can be measured, and translated into market data” (original italics, 2007: 18), the account manager (5) showed her concern that putting an actual value to the interaction is a difficult task. The planner (6) was also keen to point out that even though productive interaction has indeed become more visible due to proliferation of digital platforms, there are still blind spots that need to be covered by actually meeting the users and asking in-depth questions about their thoughts on brands. Nevertheless, what stays a fact is that although it may not be as blatant to the users, through constant control, surveillance and measurement of user interactions on various platforms (which were a strenuous task previous to the advent of the Internet), brands and their advertising agencies are now possibly able to make better predictions as to what the consumer tastes and potential needs may be. What the brands and agencies must simultaneously keep in mind is that:

The logic of market control rests on absorbing the freedom of actors into a space where it can be subject to measurement and control. But this very inclusion in itself tends to restrict the potential of that freedom, if nothing else by imposing limits to the circulation of objects and practices… (Arvidsson, 2007: 27)

Control and measurement on platforms are certainly important for brands to capitalize on productive interaction, but to what extent and how to execute, so as not to drive away the users, are critical discussions that need to be made by the advertising professionals.
4.2.4 Struggles in adapting to digital

The second point considers the fact that not all advertising agencies are fully capable of harnessing the new potentials of the Internet. Despite the growing significance of skills and knowledge about how digital technology works and how it can be implemented for executing communication strategies, several interviewees viewed that some traditional advertising agencies are still struggling to adapt to the digital side of the business. Not surprisingly, the majority of such strict opinions came from advertising professionals who were early adopters of the computer and the Internet and have a background of working in either digital advertising agencies or digital production companies. It is likely that they were speaking on behalf of their ‘digital entrepreneur’ identity that does not hold them back from speaking freely about the traditional advertising agencies. Two interviewees clearly pointed out that such agencies need to invest more in the digital production process:

They have to change their business model from ‘thinking’ to ‘execution’. Because you can't spend 80% of the money in thinking and then only 20% in execution. It's an iteration process now. You have to do stuff. If it doesn't work you have to do new stuff. They say, 'iteration is the new creative'. (13. digital producer, PR agency)

Coming up with the big idea is an important part of making advertising, but what ad agencies really make money out of is production. […] So I see how the traditional advertising agencies will have a hard time keeping the revenue up. (2. executive creative director, global network advertising agency)

In addition to this lack of technical skills, there also seems to be a lack of communication between the traditional and the digital professionals. Referring to his peers, a digital producer stated:

Some ad agencies are still like they were in the 50s. It's pretty conservative. As a digital guy you're still one of those digital guys that nobody really knows what they do. Maybe not here so much, but I know people in the business that are feeling a bit lonesome in an agency because they feel that no one really understands what they do. (7. digital producer, independent advertising agency)

From this comment, it can be assumed that there is still a knowledge gap between the professionals coming from the traditional side and the digital side, and perhaps even a cultural gap that hinders a collaborative environment within the agency. This situation can be described by what Bugge calls parallel epistemic communities, where a lack of intersection between the two distinct groups of professionals is causing an obstacle to collective learning (2011b).
When a creative director was asked whether he has met any creatives that showed concerns about sharing part of their control to the consumers, he responded:

In my last agency [a global network agency], they didn't understand it. You have creatives that have been working with print and TV and linear communication for a long time and they did well. They are amazing storytellers, but they don't really get the interactive part. How can we connect with the consumers and make them part of the story? (3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency)

In terms of the production process, advertisements for traditional media such as television and print are quite different from those that involve the Internet. Put simply, with traditional media, the creative team at an advertising agency draws a sketch of how a TV commercial or a newspaper ad will look like. Then the production team, whether in-house or a job-shop outside the firm, transforms the sketch into its final format. However, this two-step linear process does not work well with digital advertising. Compared to one-way communication channels, the Internet is interactive and invites a dialogue. There are many different actions that can be taken by the users when an advertisement is on their computer screen instead of a television screen. Therefore, rather than applying the logic of traditional advertising to the new medium, the real opportunity lies in the attempt to benefit from the unique properties of digital (Burgoyne, 2010). “Digital is incremental, experimental, continually optimized – ‘perpetual beta’ – and never, ever finished” (Sacks, 2010). Taking this into account, it becomes clear that the conceptual stage and the complex production processes cannot be understood as two separate steps (Bambach, 2010). They need to integrate and work in unison, which is why production has become such an important discussion topic within the advertising industry today.

Advertising and technology are interdependent, and according to Deuze, in order to understand the role of technology in shaping advertising, one must “look at processes in the workplace where technologies reinforce or amplify organizational changes” (2007: 125). However, what should also be highlighted alongside this statement is the need to look at what is the problem with the organizational structure that is not allowing technologies to reinforce or amplify organizational changes. From the personal accounts of the interviewees, it has become clear that whether advertising agencies can survive in today's media environment depends on the organization's adaptability to digital. This is the topic of the next section.
To summarize the feature of technology, mainly two cultural scripts were observed from the interviews. The first script dealt with the interviewees’ awareness of how powerful the act of consumer sharing can be. The push and broadcast mechanisms described by Solis & Breakenridge (2009) are no longer a viable way to communicate with the consumers. The second script highlighted how the interviewees had emphasized the importance of shifting from short-term to long-term relationships between the brands and the consumers. Acknowledging the fact that the consumers are “always on”, the interviewees seemed to be concerned about how to create an interactive and participatory environment for their clients to connect with the consumers. However, one should not be naïve and celebrate the powerful role of such consumers, or to assume that all advertising agencies are fully capable of harnessing digital technology. User interactions on the Internet are in many ways controlled, monitored and measured for valuable market data, which were apparent from the interviews. In terms of the agencies’ digital capabilities, several interviewees emphasized that despite the drastic changes taking place in consumer behavior and the media environment, there are advertising agencies and professionals still struggling to adapt to digital.

4.3 Organization

Traditionally, the organization of an advertising agency has been mainly composed of three departments: account management, planning and creative. In Grabher’s words, the account manager incorporates the ‘business logic’, the planner the ‘scientific logic’ and the creatives the ‘artistic logic’ of advertising (2002: 248). At the risk of oversimplification, the cultural production process for advertisements can be described as: first of all, an account manager brings a business assignment from the client and controls the time and the budget, the planner finds relevant consumer insights and creates a communication strategy, and then a creative team consisting of an art director and a copywriter generates a creative idea to solve the problem. This idea is then passed onto the relevant production companies and made into its final format. Projects in the advertising business have been more or less executed through this linear process within and across firms. However, this traditional way of understanding the functional differentiation and career structure of advertising professionals is changing, as the media landscape becomes increasingly complex due to the development of digital and mobile communication technology. The major transformation is occurring in the creative department along with its relationship with the digital production companies, and that is the main focus of this section. However, that is not to say that account managers and planners are immune to the changes taking place in the media environment. All advertising professionals are increasingly
required to think both strategically and creatively under the greater pressure for integrated media solutions (Hackley & Tiwsakul, 2011). Nevertheless, what were clearly brought out from the interviewees were organizational changes taking place in the creative department and hence, that is where the paper pays the most attention to.

Bill Bernbach, who co-founded DDB (Doyle Dane Bernbach) in 1949, is a well-known and admired figure in the advertising industry not only due to the successful campaigns that he has led but also for igniting the industry’s creative revolution. Before, the copywriters tended to look down on the art directors. Their works were clearly separated, so to whatever copy the copywriter came up with, the art director’s role was to attach a visual image of it. It was Bernbach who broke this tradition and brought in the idea that the two roles should work together, rather than independently (Advertising Age, 1999). For many decades, this combination worked out fine, but only while the communication landscape was rather simple and predictable with the use of mass media (Bambach, 2010).

Recently, there have been many talks within the industry about how the impact of the Internet is disrupting the structure of the creative team once again. In the Advertising Age, for example, Darryl Ohrt (2012) published an article titled “A Winning Creative Team Needs Developers Alongside the Dreamers”, in which the dreamers refer to the art director and the copywriter. He argues the necessity of developers, who “are the people who determine what's possible, write the code to make it happen and have a keen understanding of the frameworks, platforms and technologies that can make, break or reinvent a solution” (Ohrt, 2012). Rei Inamoto, a chief creative officer at AKQA, put it like this: “The big part of this industry is still relegating technology just as an execution, a production task, and not as a strategic point of view” (2012). He believes that the creative combination of art & copy is from the last century and today it is about collaboration between art & code, meaning that “a team of artists, designers, user-experience people, content creators, and, of course, writers should work together with a team of coders, programmers, developers and even scientists to create tools and experiences for people to use and be part of” (Rooney, 2012). Today, agencies are seeking hybrid talents who can write code and write copy; who are graphic designers as well as information architects (Griffith, 2012). From these statements, we can assume that relations with technical specialists shall no longer resemble “the hierarchical synchronization of an orchestra” that Grabher (2002: 252) talks about, where such specialists are placed subordinate to advertising agencies. These industry articles seem to point towards a pressing need for a
more collaborative environment for professionals with all types of skills and knowledge to come together and work in a collective manner.

4.3.1 Challenges of collective learning

Having this industry trend in mind, this section explores the difficulties and struggles that Swedish advertising professionals are confronting in the digital age, especially with regards to their creative work process. One of the interviewees is an instructor for an art director and copywriter course at an advertising/marketing school in Stockholm. He discussed about the difficulties he faces when teaching at school, and also regarding the changing structure of the creative team, which follows the industry discussions mentioned above:

We have our struggle here because we have another course called interactive communication, and then we have my class, the art and copy. They're pretty similar, you know. So I mean all students here, they are truly digital in their souls. So we're really going to have a problem. […] The traditional way of working as an art director and copywriter is definitely dead. But also you have to bring in the third creative, the technologist. And then you have the magic. So what happens when you take a copywriter and PR person or an art director and a good producer? You have to mix it up a bit so. But everybody talks about it now so I think it's going to be a big difference. And that means we as a school has to follow that as well. (13. digital producer, PR agency)

Although this account highlights the pressing need for such vocational institutions to keep up with the industry needs, the fact that an art director and copywriter course is being taught by a digital producer shows that a reconsideration of the creative roles is in fact taking place. It is also worth noting how this interviewee described his young students. These students, possibly in their early 20s, have grown up using the Internet, social media and mobile phones. He further commented that for them, “digital doesn’t exist. If you give them a task, 95% of the time it comes back with a digital solution for it.” Although these young students may be able to freely and digitally express their work at school, the interviewee was concerned that if they are hired at an advertising agency that hasn’t adapted to digital yet, “they are probably going to die”.

A creative director who recently left a global network advertising agency to start his own business, described his experiences of working with traditional creatives at his previous workplace by criticizing that they need to alter their way of forming creative teams. From a management perspective, it seems crucial to make such organizational changes so as to attract
digitally equipped young talents, such as the students described in the previous quote. The creative director argued:

My experience is that it's been very difficult for a traditional creative personnel to bring in digital talent earlier in the process. Let's say the brainstorm process. You have the traditional set up. Art director and copy writer, they come up with the idea and after they've been working for two weeks they come over to the digital guys and ask, 'What do you think we should do on the digital side, mobile and web?' Which is totally wrong because today even programmers or coders or other kinds of personnel should be there from the start, to feed things and say, 'You can do that, or no you can't do that, that could work’… So you need to look over your team from the start of the brainstorm process. (3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency)

Bugge also emphasizes this point in his study of the Norwegian advertising industry. According to his interviewees from the web agencies, “[…] the art directors or copy writers constituting the creative teams in the advertising agencies have often ordered web solutions that are direct copies of print campaigns without letting the characteristics of the Internet influence the shaping of the idea” (2011b: 239). Why a traditional creative personnel have difficulty bringing in digital talent earlier in the process is an interesting phenomenon. Considering how important digital media has become as a communication tool, it only seems so natural that the creatives would willingly join forces with digital talents to provide the best solution to their clients and consumers. It is difficult to state the reasons for this phenomenon without understanding the actual thought processes of such creatives. However, one assumption may be that the traditional creatives are adhering to what Grabher calls “the hierarchical synchronization of an orchestra” (2002: 252), in which collaborative patterns with providers of technical inputs are understood as not requiring much creative inputs, thereby the technologists having to follow “pre-scripted scores and a single conductor as leader” (2002: 252) to execute a given task. Such specialists are placed subordinate to the advertising agencies and the main notion here is that the technical and creative fields are governed by different logics. Perhaps traditional creatives that this interviewee refers to are still considering digital talents as part of their orchestra members.

4.3.2 Exemplary role models of “technologists”

One interviewee, a digital producer at an independent advertising agency, is an example of a “technologist” or a “digital talent” that the interviewees above mentioned. He began his career as a self-taught HTML programmer in the mid 1990s and later started up his own production company, where they did subcontracting work for the agency he works at now. Today, as a
technologist in the agency, his task is to be involved in every digital discussion and to be a communication hub between the production company and the advertising agency:

For the creatives that I work with, my task is to form the idea to be as good as possible in a digital environment for the interaction of the end-user. Also, since we work with a lot of production houses that is outside the office, we need to combine our ideas with their ideas as well, to form a mixture. So 50% of the work is in-house with the work group, and 50% is with the production agency. We need to defend the original idea and to make sure that the output is becoming like what we wanted, but also see that there's space for the production agencies to do their creative magic, because most of the production agencies we work with have their own creative process when the production starts. That combines with the creatives that I have at the office, and everything needs to come together. […] I have legs in two companies: one in my own and the other in production agencies, so I need to feel and please both. (9. digital producer, independent advertising agency)

As opposed to the traditional creatives that the previous interviewee described, this digital producer expressed his satisfaction with the creatives that he work with, since they are well equipped with digital know-how and have their standards and demands for the production based on what is actually possible to do on the Internet. He added that as a producer, it helps to have such creatives when discussing with the production agencies, “because then they are very near the reality in what output we’re going to see.” His constant use of the pronoun “we” may be indicative of the fact that he feels he has an equal status with the creatives, making it possible for a collaborative relationship.

Another technologist who works at a different independent advertising agency, also had his own production company since 2000. Landing his current position was a direct result of doing 8 years of subcontracting work for the agency he works at today. Similar to the previous interviewee, he described his task as having “one foot in the creative and one foot in the technology part”. After he “develops the creative idea in a digital way”, the production company takes over and realizes the idea. Regarding the role of today’s creatives (art director and copywriter), he seemed to have quite a generous view – that they don’t necessarily have to be experts in the digital field:

Sometimes it helps not to have the technical competence because you're very liberated in your way of thinking ideas. And the best digital producers take their creative ideas and make them work. So sometimes I actually enjoy working with ones who are not into digital at all because that's when you get very naïve thoughts that in the beginning it seems impossible, but in the end just makes perfect sense, and you find a way to do it. That's when you're breaking ground. (7. digital producer, independent advertising agency)
Having a common background of starting up a production company and doing subcontracting work for the advertising agencies, both technologists identified quite well with the production team. According to these digital producers, not just simply having technical skills and knowledge, but to be able to think in the shoes of both the internal creative teams and the production companies seems to be a necessary ability of a technologist inside the advertising agency. In their cases, the dividing lines between the distinct logics that govern the creative and technical realms seem blurred (Grabher, 2002: 252).

As it can be observed from these accounts, the creative process can no longer be isolated from production. The technologists described above, who used to be subcontracting workers for the advertising agencies, are now playing an important role on the agency side as a hub between the creative and the production process. In relation to this, a CEO of a global network advertising agency commented: “If I could hire someone right now, it would be a digital producer (1)”. An executive creative director emphasized that in the future, there will be more programmers or people with programming background in the advertising industry (2). Another creative director pointed out that even if an agency doesn’t have a production team in-house, “what you do need is to have a very good production management in-house who understands the process. So you need to be able to drive the projects and have full control from your agency (3)”. As Hackley & Tiwsakul suggests, “the task of crafting a sense of professional identity in the field is being shaped by new technology and working practices” (2011: 210).

4.3.3 Digital production companies move up the value chain

Recently, there has been a trend where digital production companies that previously did subcontracting works for advertising agencies have moved up the value chain and be contacted by the clients directly.25 Kokokaka, based in Gothenberg, is a good example. They were responsible for the production work of several award-winning campaigns for Forsman & Bodenfors, but at one point clients started to offer work directly to them. In 2010, they won their first Cannes award under their own name (Broberg et al., 2011: 19). One of the interviewees also went through a similar experience at his previous workplace, a renowned digital production company:

25 On the other hand, there are production companies like B-Reel who has strategically chosen to work only via advertising agencies, so as to focus on the production and not on consulting. (http://www.resume.se/nyheter/reklam/2012/02/21/bast-i-varlden-igen/ Accessed 21 February 2012)
The client came directly to us and said, ‘We really want this’. And suddenly we got 2, 3 times more pay than we used to, doing the same stuff. Because the agency wasn't in there. Mainly, if an agency does a campaign maybe 10% ends up at production, because it costs a lot to get the deal and to do the concept and thinking, and in a big agency, they have all this different hierarchy with roles and stuff that needs to get paid. They put more money in thinking than execution. But now it's a big trend in the world that you know, you have to put more into execution because a good idea can be lousy if you execute it bad. But an okay idea can be amazing if you execute it the right way. (13. digital producer, PR agency)

This quote shows that even the clients have begun to reassess the role of the technologists, recognizing them as business partners rather than as outsourced professionals who are only accessible via advertising agencies. Another way to look at this is that now the advertising agencies must face competition from digital production companies as well.

These various personal accounts indicate that Grabher’s (2002) explanation of the three logics – business, scientific and artistic – to describe the departmental tasks of advertising is no longer sufficient. The fourth technical logic needs to be in place, not below but alongside the three logics as part of the core team, which requires a reassessment of the organizational structure in the creative department of advertising agencies. In other words, the relationship between the creatives and the digital technologists should not be understood in the form of orchestration, but rather it should resemble, in Grabher’s term, jazz improvisation. This implies that the key players are performing in a collaborative manner, with “a deliberate interruption of habit patterns and resistance to the temptation to become locked in to routines of past success, thereby squelching experimentation” (2002: 252). What should be stressed is that the technologists do not necessarily do production. Rather, as we observed from the interviewees above, their role is to function as a hub between the advertising agency and the production company, making sure that all voices be equally heard at the proper timing.

It is not difficult to imagine how advertising agencies that can quickly embrace this new organizational logic and instill digital competency across the firm will be better off compared to the slow adopters. This move is not only important for attracting clients, but also for the agency to provide an appealing work environment for the up and coming young digital talents. However, when it comes to the issue of talent wars, there is another pressing concern involving the entire advertising industry, which none of the interviewees commented on. That is, the digital talent war that extends beyond the advertising realm. Borrowing the words of Maurice Lévy, current CEO of Publicis, “We need to fight with the startups, technology and
platform companies for talent, not the banks anymore” (Griffith, 2012). It remains to be seen to what extent the Swedish advertising industry can succeed in luring the young future talents with their “digital wonder”.

4.4 Culture

In order to understand how the ‘production of culture’ works in the advertising industry, it is also crucial to focus on the ‘cultures of production’. As Paul du Gay argues, “processes of production are themselves cultural phenomena in that they are assemblages of meaningful practices that construct certain ways for people to conceive of and construct themselves in an organizational context” (1998: 7). Therefore, it is important to recognize ‘culture’ not simply as something to be produced, but also as something that flows within the organization and shapes the way people think and behave (Negus, 1998). Such cultures of production ultimately influence the way advertisements are produced.

In this section, two elements that stood out from the interview materials are discussed. The first element concerns the interviewees’ positive assessment of their agencies’ flat and non-hierarchical culture. The second element covers a challenge of the Swedish agency culture that some of the interviewees pointed out, which is the misrepresentation of gender and ethnicity.

4.4.1 A non-hierarchical agency culture

When discussing about the cultures of advertising agencies with the professionals, one cultural script was clearly illuminated, which concerns the non-hierarchical nature of the Swedish agencies and how that has worked to their advantage. Many interviewees highlighted the fact that all the staff have an equal opportunity to express their opinions, regardless of age or experience. From an art director perspective, one interviewee spoke about his relationship with the creative director in a flat organizational environment:

It's very flat, no hierarchy, which is really nice. We have a creative director but if I come up with an idea, or as a team, we can show it to the creative director if we want. Then he'd say, 'Oh no I think you should change it to this’, or ‘I don't like this

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26 This article from Adweek describes how desperate advertising agencies are when it comes to the issue of talent. At Ogilvy & Mather and OgilvyOne, 58 employees who lacked digital and mobile marketing skills left the agency in January 2012. AKQA is awarding any employee who brings in new talent to the agency with a cash bonus and a luxury trip. As a countermeasure, some agencies are investing in in-house startups to encourage innovation from the employees as well as to attract digital talents.
idea' or if he says, 'It sucks', I can go anyway to the client and say, 'Ok I want to do this'. And that's not a problem. So it's very flat. But if it doesn't work and you don't listen, then you're fired! [laugh] But if you're really sure that 'This will work!' then you can go to the client, so it's very flat. (4. art director, independent advertising agency)

Status-wise, creative directors are above art directors and copywriters, therefore playing the role of giving directions and suggestions to the works of the creative teams. In the case of this interviewee, it seems quite clear that he and the creative director have an equal and flat relationship. However, although there seems to be an ample space of creative autonomy given to the art director, the way he said “then you’re fired!” (although it was a joke) shows that he cannot entirely enjoy a “splendid isolation of one’s individual creative endeavors” (Deuze, 2007: 91). Even within a flat environment, there are certain demands and pressures that one cannot escape from, as well as a high degree of responsibility that is attached to each individual.

The CEO of a global network advertising agency also commented on the non-hierarchical nature of his agency:

I think it's a very flat hierarchy. Even if I'm the boss, there is no one here that should hesitate a moment to question what I do or challenge me if they think I'm wrong. So it's a very open, very non-hierarchical culture. And I think that leads to a situation where people see that they can contribute. They can be listened to and play an important role. […] So you have the opportunity to work with responsibility and in an open climate, you have the chance to attract people, people from the young generation, people who are used to be independent and to make their own decisions, because that's what you can do in today's world. (1. CEO, global network advertising agency)

It should be noted that his identity as a CEO is likely to have influenced his response to sounding more managerial and growth-oriented than others. He is well aware that having a flat hierarchy and an open environment is the key to maintaining high spirit among the staff and attracting young talents. The fact that his agency has less than 30 employees may also be a contributing factor to encouraging a flat work environment.

An executive creative director at a global network advertising agency explained that the power distance is one of the factors that has strengthened the Swedish advertising industry to become the digital wonder. An elaborate description of this cultural advantage is given below:

In different cultures you have short or you have long power distance. And a typical culture that has a hierarchic society where you do as you are told by people, that is a
society with a long power distance. [...] So, a typical young person that comes out to an agency in Swedish culture, that young person would say what they believe is right or wrong to the boss. And in times of dramatic change, it's important that this change and this situation are described so that the organization can change. And I believe that in cultures with a long power distance, the changes are usually slower because the bosses are preserving an old model. [...] If you have young people coming into an agency, and just a short while after they've started working, say like, ‘Hey, why are we doing this traditional shit? We need to do new stuff.’ Then the change goes fast. And I think that is a benefit of being in Sweden, that the change will be initiated quick because the boss would understand faster that there is a big change, because they are more sensitive to the input from the junior people. (2. executive creative director, global network advertising agency)

It is relevant here to consider a research conducted by Geert Hofstede, which defines organizational culture as being partly affected by the host society and culture. Following what this interviewee has mentioned, Hofstede’s research shows that Sweden scores low on the dimension of power distance. He further elaborates the characteristics of the Swedish style (geert-hofstede.com):

- Being independent, hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, superiors accessible, coaching leader, management facilitates and empowers. Power is decentralized and managers count on the experience of their team members. Employees expect to be consulted. Control is disliked and attitude towards managers are informal and on first name basis. Communication is direct and participative.

Although national culture does play an important role and several interviewees did point out the ‘Swedishness’ of their agency culture, whether explicitly or not, this is not sufficient to explain the cultures of organizations. The previous interviewee has argued that the Swedish culture with short power distance is giving agencies an advantage to quickly adapt to digital, but as I have described in other sections, there are still agencies lagging behind in the adaptation process. Personal accounts of two interviewees are given below, which illuminate distinct characteristics of their agencies in terms of ownership structure and philosophy that clearly differentiates them from other agencies. However, one should keep in mind that the underlying value of national culture still exists.

One interviewee spoke of her agency culture by mentioning the philosophy of four freedoms that are encouraged within the global network: freedom from fear, freedom to fail, freedom from chaos, and freedom to be. She further commented:

These are really something that is key to the agency. You should be able to say what's on your mind to whomever. I can walk up to my CEO any time and ask, 'Do
you have two minutes?' 'Oh of course. Let's have lunch.' And we're really open-minded. [...] I think this agency is a good place for everyone to be creative, even if you are an account person. Everyone is allowed to give their ideas everyday, and it doesn't matter if it's the person answering the phone at the reception or if it's the account manager coming up with an idea, or if it's the copywriter. It doesn't matter. Everybody is allowed. (5. account manager, global network advertising agency)

She also drew attention to the fact that because the majority of the share of the Stockholm office is owned by Sweden, they can be quicker in adapting to the rapidly changing market, compared to other offices that are more controlled by the network. Although her comment partly derives from the Swedish cultural script, perhaps she has shown more attachment to the script offered by the corporate culture, which “may be seen as a set of stories offering guidelines for how organizational employees should talk about the organization” (Alvesson, 2003: 21).

This emphasis on a corporate culture script along with a script shared by the Swedish society, was also the case with a response from another interviewee. His agency is unique in that all the agency owners, which is more than 30 people, own equally much and are active in the office. Because no one owns more than others, this structure allows the agency to maintain a flat organization without a strict hierarchical relationship. With regards to work style, the interviewee stressed that the staff work in a very collective way, which the Americans tend to think of as ‘socialistic’:

We have a working method that is very strange. We don't have any processes. We don't have any, 'This is how we do it'. It's always different. So when we win a competition, it's never one person that is behind the idea. It's always the whole agency. Because even the girl in the reception has been there saying, 'I don't understand it!' That truly means something to us. And that collective way of working has been extremely successful. [...] I think the Americans called it socialist. Of course they got really frightened about it but... [laugh] In Sweden that's a positive thing. So it's very socialist. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

He further elaborated by comparing his agency to the commonly held hierarchical structure in American advertising agencies:

To be honest, the hierarchy comes from Madison Avenue in America, and it's like 60 years old, Mad Men style. It's the same hierarchy. If you look at it and say, ‘Will this organization structure provide us with better tools to come up with good ideas?’ If you can find that, we would immediately move into that hierarchy. But I think the free thought of a person is much stronger than a forced one. [...] So the American people that I've worked with are very shocked. Deeply shocked. They're used to a very hierarchic setting. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)
These personal accounts, whether they refer to the Swedishness or their own agency culture, are closely linked to the way they actually work and produce advertisements. There were also many responses that indirectly allude to the reasons why some Swedish advertising agencies have been able to successfully sustain the digital wonder, such as the short power distance and the sharp contrast to a conservative Mad Men work style.

4.4.2 Misrepresentation of gender and ethnicity

While there were quite a few positive responses about such cultures of production in Swedish advertising agencies, problems and challenges had also been pointed out by some, mainly by lamenting the misrepresentation of gender and ethnicity. In terms of gender issues, when examining the 20 biggest advertising agencies in Sweden, there are almost an equal number of men and women. However, when looking at the role of a CEO or a creative director, the percentage of men taking over such positions are 80% and 95% respectively (Almer & Thomsen, 2012). With regards to such situation, a communication industry spokesperson commented:

I think there's a lack of role models. When we look at the creative director role at an agency, there's too few women. And that is just lack of role model. So we need to inspire, we need to build up the courage to take a step forward. (15. industry specialist)

Another interviewee also highlighted the gender issue and the troubles the agency had encountered when trying to recruit women:

We invested a lot in going to schools and get women to get engaged and start working because they are absolutely needed. But they are very hard to find. We go to schools and we've done specific ads saying we're recruiting, but only women and try to get the attention up for girls to stick in the business. Because they go into it, but they have a tendency of falling out, and changing. (6. planner, independent advertising agency)

It is not difficult to imagine that this gender imbalance is also a problem in the advertising industry of other countries, but it is indeed interesting to hear this situation in Sweden, which the country is well known for promoting gender equality rights. In order to assess this issue more properly, further investigation is clearly needed.
Regarding the ethnicity issue, according to Eurostat, in 2010 foreigners and foreign-born citizens\textsuperscript{27} accounted for 20.6\% of the entire Swedish population of 9.3 million. Out of these, citizens of other EU member states represented 7.9\%, while those from non-EU countries made up the remaining 12.7\% (Vasileva, 2011). In relation to Sweden’s multicultural society, which is well depicted by these numbers, one interviewee expressed his concerns about the advertising industry:

Terribly bad representation of different ethnicities and everyone has Swedish background, which is strange, since we're supposed to speak to an entire nation of different people. But everyone within the industry has the same background and looks the same. I think that's a problem. We need to attract more people with other backgrounds, with other experiences. (8. planner, independent advertising agency)

Indeed, when visiting the agency offices, I hardly spotted any culturally diverse work environment. Another interviewee also mentioned about an increasing need to communicate with consumers of other cultures, which is perhaps implying that more diversity is necessary in Swedish advertising agencies:

It's a very one-dimensional country in many ways. It's not so multi-faceted. [...] We have a million immigrants or non-native Swedes, and there's a big market to connect with other cultures. But in advertising we very rarely see that. [...] It will take longer but you need to address certain types of segments within the market because it's becoming one-to-one communication. (3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency)

Certainly, the vast ethnic diversity in Sweden implies the need to communicate effectively with such people by employing staff from different cultural backgrounds. As this interviewee commented, the fragmented media audience due to multiplying media channels is making “one-to-one communication” a possibility. However, even if this plan is carried out, the next challenge for the Swedish agencies may perhaps be to negotiate how different national cultures can peacefully merge in the work environment. What has been mentioned earlier about the Swedish culture of a short power distance may need to be reconsidered.

This section gave light to the cultures of production, which are powerful in the sense that they affect how advertising professionals think and behave, as well as how the final product will turn out. The majority of the interviewees referred to the Swedish cultural script of flat and

\textsuperscript{27} According to Vasileva (2011), foreigners refer to “persons who are not citizens of the country in which they reside, including persons of unknown citizenship and stateless persons”, and foreign-born refers to “a person whose place of birth, or residence of the mother at the time of the birth, is outside the country of his/her usual residence”. Discerning whether one is “foreign” or not is a complicated issue, but this will not be further discussed in this thesis.
non-hierarchical environment as promoting better collaboration across different generations and work roles. However, national culture alone is not sufficient to explain cultures in organizations. Some interviewees also emphasized their own corporate cultures such as the ownership structure and the philosophy in order to show the advantages they have over other agencies. Overall, there was a positive sentiment towards their agency culture as they referred to both the Swedish and the corporate cultural scripts. On the other hand, a few of the interviewees also commented on the challenges that agency cultures face, which is the misrepresentation of gender and ethnicity – that Swedes and men are too dominant.

5 Concluding discussions

Through conducting qualitative interviews, this thesis investigated how Swedish advertising professionals experience their work in the digital age. The findings were organized using the concept of “media logic” re-interpreted by Mark Deuze (2007), which covers four aspects of media work: institution, technology, organization and culture. Major research findings from each of the four features are summarized below.

5.1 Institution

Prominent features that arose from the interview materials were three institutional trends that determine how advertising professionals work: concentration, fragmentation and convergence. They do not occur in chronological order but is rather intertwined in very complex ways. As a move for concentration, the global network communication groups have been expanding their reach into Sweden since the 1990s, for the aim to provide transnational full-service to their clients ranging from advertising to public relations. As the Swedish digital advertising agencies grew their global presence, many were either wholly or partially acquired by foreign networks. However, at the same time there are professionals who break away from such networks to start one’s own business – a trend of fragmentation. Moreover, alongside the big network agencies, established Swedish independent agencies remain strong and successful, although they see the challenge of acquiring international clients due to the lack of a global network. As the media landscape becomes increasingly complex and using digital is no longer an option but a necessity, the tasks of advertising agencies are expanding and converging at the same time. According to the interviewees, it is becoming difficult to draw a clear
boundary between the advertising agencies and other types of firms including digital advertising agencies, media agencies and consulting firms. Especially due to extensive pressures from the shifts of globalization and digitalization in recent years, it is clear that in all three institutional trends – fragmentation, concentration and convergence – an ongoing power struggle is in place.

5.2 Technology
Recent developments of new communication technology are requiring the advertising professionals to reconsider their ways of interacting with consumers. Mainly two cultural scripts were observed. The first script dealt with the interviewees’ awareness of how powerful the act of sharing can be. The push and broadcast mechanisms described by Solis & Breakenridge (2009) are no longer a viable way to communicate with the consumers. The second script described how the interviewees had emphasized the importance of establishing long-term relationships between the brands and the consumers. With the prevalence of social media and mobile phones along with improved technological infrastructure, consumers are “always on”. In such situation, the interviewees seemed to be concerned about how to create an interactive and participatory environment for their clients to connect with the consumers. However, one should not be naïve and celebrate the powerful role of the consumers, nor assume that all advertising agencies are fully capable of harnessing digital technology. User interactions on the Internet are in many ways controlled, monitored and measured for valuable market data, which were apparent from the interview materials. In terms of the agencies’ digital capabilities, several interviewees were keen to point out that despite the drastic changes taking place in consumer behavior and the media environment, some traditional agencies and professionals are still struggling to adapt to digital.

5.3 Organization
In the organizational structure of the advertising agencies, a major transformation is occurring in the creative department. The use of the web, social media and mobile technology in communication strategies is requiring a lot of skills and knowledge from the “technologists”, thus demanding the traditional creative team – an art director and a copywriter – to collaborate with such specialists. The interviewed digital producers, or the technologists, expressed themselves as the hub between the advertising agency and the production company. What can be implied from their personal accounts is that it is no longer sufficient with an account manager incorporating the ‘business logic’, the planner the ‘scientific logic’ and the
creatives the 'artistic logic' of advertising (Grabher, 2002:248). The fourth 'technical logic' is becoming a requirement as part of the core team within the advertising agencies. It has also become clear that the relationship between the creatives and the digital technologists should not be understood in the form of orchestration, but rather it should resemble, in Grabher’s term, jazz improvisation. The players need to perform in a more flexible and collaborative manner by avoiding habit patterns and routines of past success.

5.4 Culture
Culture structures “the way people think, feel and act in organizations” (du Gay, 1998: 1). Therefore, when studying the production of culture, it is also important to focus on how agency culture affects the advertising professionals and what impact it may have on the final product. Many interviewees referred to the flat, non-hierarchical culture as promoting better collaboration across different generations and work roles. Some emphasized their own corporate cultures to show the advantages they have over other agencies. Overall, there was a positive attitude towards their agency culture as they referred to both the Swedish and the corporate cultural scripts. On the other hand, a few of the interviewees commented on the challenges that agency cultures face, which is the misrepresentation of gender and ethnicity – that Swedes and men are too dominant.

5.5 Future research
I hope this thesis has served not only as an academic contribution to the study of cultural industries and organizational studies, but also as a partial contribution to the practice of advertising as it shed light on the current challenges faced by the Swedish advertising professionals and agencies. There may be some aspects that can also be of good use to the advertising industry in other countries, but this needs further comparative research. In order to give a more in depth analysis of the working lives of the professionals and a greater contribution to the practical world, perhaps probing into one of the four features of the media logic and focusing on specific agencies or occupations may raise more compelling issues that need attention. Regarding the method, in addition to qualitative interviews, conducting an ethnographic research at the agency offices will possibly give the researcher a deeper insight into the work experiences of the professionals.
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**Interviews:**

1. CEO, global network advertising agency, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 27 February 2012. 2nd interview via e-mail on 10 April 2012.

2. executive creative director, global network advertising agency, phone interview to Gothenberg on 3 February 2012.

3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency, phone interview in Stockholm on 13 April 2012.

4. art director, independent advertising agency, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 10 February 2012.

5. account manager, global network advertising agency, face to face interview at café in Stockholm on 4 February 2012.

6. planner, independent advertising agency, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 15 February 2012.

7. digital producer, independent advertising agency, phone interview to Gothenberg on 1 March 2012. 2nd phone interview on 10 April 2012.

8. planner, independent advertising agency, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 14 February 2012.


10. chief creative officer/founder, digital advertising agency, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 17 February 2012.

11. digital producer, digital production company, face to face interview at café in Stockholm on 3 February 2012.

12. creative media manager, global network media agency, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 24 February 2012.

13. digital producer, PR agency, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 21 February 2012. 2nd interview via e-mail on 11 April 2012.

14. industry specialist, phone interview to Gothenberg on 31 January 2012.

15. industry specialist, face to face interview at office in Stockholm on 22 February 2012.
7. Appendix

Agency categories:
- global network advertising agency: 4 firms
- independent advertising agency: 3 firms
- digital advertising agency: 1 firm
- digital production company: 1 firm
- global network media agency: 1 firm
- PR agency: 1 firm

Positions:
- CEO: 1 person
- chief creative officer: 1 person
- executive creative director: 1 person
- creative director: 1 person
- art director: 1 person
- digital producer: 4 people
- planner: 2 people
- account manager: 1 person
- creative media manager: 1 person
- industry specialist: 2 people

Individual numberings:
1. CEO, global network advertising agency
2. executive creative director, global network advertising agency
3. creative director/founder, independent advertising agency
4. art director, independent advertising agency
5. account manager, global network advertising agency
6. planner, independent advertising agency *6 and 7 are from same firms
7. digital producer, independent advertising agency
8. planner, independent advertising agency *8 and 9 are from same firms
9. digital producer, independent advertising agency
10. chief creative officer/founder, digital advertising agency
11. digital producer, digital production company
12. creative media manager, global network media agency
13. digital producer, PR agency
14. industry specialist
15. industry specialist

Interview Guide:
*Note that the questions listed below served only as a basic guide, therefore are not comprehensive and do not include all of the questions asked to the interviewees. This guide was customized for each individual depending on the agency, their positions and their former experiences.

Confidentiality-related question asked before the interview:
This thesis will become public and be accessible by anyone via a digital archive site for academic articles (DIVA). Would it be okay to mention your name in the thesis, or would you like to stay anonymous? If so, how may I refer to you?

Introduction:
- Can you briefly explain your former positions and experiences, as well as your current position?
- What got you interested in the advertising business?
- Why do you think the Swedish advertising industry came to be known as "The Digital Wonder"? How are you different from other countries?

Institution:
- How has the advertising industry structure in Sweden changed in the past decade?
- What would you say are the merits/demerits of being an independent /global network advertising agency?
- What are the central challenges that the Swedish advertising industry is facing today?

Technology:
- In your opinion, how has digital media impacted the advertising industry in Sweden?
- How would you describe the changes in the structure of strategies from pre-Internet to the Internet era?
- How is digital advertising different from other advertising?
- Have you encountered any difficulties/troubles with a digital campaign involving consumer participation?
- How do you think the Internet is affecting the consumer's behavior?
- What do you think is the key to engaging consumer in the digital era?
- What do you think motivates people to "share" advertisements?

Organization:
- Do you feel any generational differences when it comes to the use of digital technology?
- How has the advertising industry structure in Sweden changed in the past decade?
- How do you think the organization structure will change in the future?
- What are new types of careers that formed since the digital age?

Culture:
- How does Swedish culture influence your work style?
- How would you describe the culture of your agency? Has that changed since the digital era?
- What challenges are the company currently facing?