



SCIENTIFIC FINAL REPORT

Regnr Östersjöstiftelsen: 717/3.1.1/2015

Project manager: Karin Winroth

Project title: Brands resonating Co-authors

1. Purpose of the project

The project aims at scrutinizing the making of brands by analyzing the interactivity of crucial stakeholders that become co-authors. Not least the use of Internet and the digital markets re-write the terms for co-authors contributing when giving meaning to a brand. The questions are: *How do brands as an interface re-structure interaction between stakeholders? How do co-authoring of importance take place and why?*

Following Lury's (2004) suggestion that a brand is not a commodity set but 'a set of relationships between production and services' in time, this project focus upon how the brand emerges out of a network of relationships. Wishing to include also the resonance of culture, politics and ideology in the analysis, the project design is a comparative methodological approach.

The empirical research strategy combines the notion of brands as having an unfolding character (Knorr Cetina, 2000) and the notion of brands emerging out of a network of relationships (Lury, 2004). Hence, we will use specific brands as research objects and map diverse relations crucial in the branding process.

2. The three most important results of the project and what conclusions can be drawn from them

One interesting result from using 'the model of co-authors' from a network perspective, is how the model illuminates this network and how it evolves over time. This means showing what co-authors (stakeholders) that are important in the branding process and why they become important during that period of time. The operationalization of the model does of course primarily show the case at hand. However, it also illustrates the networks within the business and how similar brands has evolved supported by corresponding stakeholders. By following the branding processes of a blogger and lifestyle-magazine entrepreneur, the cases show how the personas and brands are turned into beneficial capital for other actors within the fashion industry (Winroth under review). Thus, the study also reveals the restructuring of the fashion industry due to changes caused by the digitalization (Winroth 2020a).

Secondly, when studying the co-authoring process, the benefits of collaboration for various stakeholders becomes evident. It is a dynamic process between the brand under scrutiny and the co-author, involving the exchange of status, trendiness, relations to consumers, appearance, contacts and financial capital. Thus, the co-authoring becomes a dynamic



relation where cultural capital and financial capital is involved, creating a positive result for both parts of the collaboration. Thus, the co-authoring become a double resonance. In the cases chosen also international politics, being gatekeepers to important markets, a wish to promote a country/region and sustainability became aspects for how the network and branding process evolved (Winroth 2020a, 2020b). Thereby the expression of values and connections to regions or markets are possible outcomes of the co-authoring process. The branding and co-authoring process therefore include also expressions of politics and ideology.

How branding resonate with politics and ideology is also shown in discussions of branding processes being of interest for other actors than corporations. Branding has become an idea and a practice used in many contexts including non-profit organizations, individuals and how to positions within subcultures (Preholt and Svendsen 2016, 2017, under review; Svendsen (under publication); Winroth 2019).

Finally, while studying the process of branding it becomes evident how this process is closely linked to entrepreneurship. Building brands is usually related to building corporations, even though this link is usually missing in theories. The cases make illustrative examples of how branding is closely involved with the digital arena of today, but also how entrepreneurship on the Internet take various forms and often include involvement in building parallel firms. This means that brands of today often evolve in a re-making process where the brand itself, or the persona presenting it, change over time. During these changes also new firms are established (Winroth 2020a; Winroth, Larsson and Lönnberg work-in-progress). Thus, the missing gap in theory combining branding and entrepreneurship processes is something this project try to contribute to (Winroth, Larsson and Lönnberg work-in-progress).

3. The project's contribution to the international research frontline

The primary contributions to the international research frontline are:

- Illustrating how the use of the concepts co-authoring of brands and the notion of career of objects can contribute to our understanding of branding processes
- Showing how the idea of the co-authoring of brands can be used to trace the network of relations in which brands evolve
- Adding to the earlier model of co-authors (presented by Holt) how the co-authoring process establish benefits for both stakeholders involved (that is the brand and the co-author). The model is used to illustrate gaining processes for instance of status, trendiness, consumer contacts, financial rewards, access to new markets etc.
- Illustrating how branding process are in resonance with ideology and politics
- Contributing to theory integrating branding processes is to entrepreneurial processes



- Offer insight to the difference in terms for Eastern and Western corporations on an international arena
- Offer insight in how social media transformed the conditions for marketing

4. New research questions that the project has led to

How can the intertwined processes of branding and entrepreneurship be modelled theoretically?

What are the consequences of digitalization profoundly changing business sectors?

Social media seem to have considerable effect on ideals of today. What other sources compete for attention in peoples' reflections on and inspiration of lifestyles and ideals?

What possibilities and challenges do entrepreneurs from Eastern Europe encounter when integrating with Western Europe? How do they meet these challenges? What possibilities and challenges do entrepreneurs from Western Europe meet when integrating with Eastern Europe?

5. The contribution of the research to the knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe

By using a comparative study-design the contrast of the context in Sweden/Western Europe and Russia becomes visible. The countries offer quite different terms and ideals for the entrepreneurs and for the branding processes. As the project compares cases the varied conditions for the Swedish and the Russian entrepreneurs were exposed. It shows how the Russian entrepreneur:

- Gained status and attention as being exotic (together with her friends from Russia)
- Was playing the role of being gatekeeper to a large and financially strong market (Eastern Europe)
- Appeared as ambassador for her country, as Russia had not been acknowledged in the fashion business earlier. She also took advantage of playing this role.
- Had quite another network of political circles and financial resources (ministries and the State Duma) than the Swedish entrepreneur
- Seem to be influenced by quite different ideals. While the Swedish entrepreneur were building an international business, the Russian entrepreneur were building a global Empire.
- The Russian entrepreneur also experienced tension when trying to display ideals of both Russia and the Western World. That turned out to be a difficult task.

Thus, the study contributes to knowledge about Eastern Europe by illustrating and discussing the terms for entrepreneurship for Russian actors. It shows how entrepreneurs can benefit from their origin as well as meet challenges when developing contacts in the



Western World as well as globally. It also illustrates how social media is a tool sensitive for ideals, culture and expectations. Further, the study shows how Russian entrepreneurs successful in an international setting can be experienced as a political threat that might not be so obvious for Western entrepreneurs.

6. Dissemination of the results of the project within and outside the research community

Research seminar:

- 'Fashionable brands and passionate entrepreneurs' at Department of Media Studies, Stockholm University 2020 27th February. Presenter: Karin Winroth.
- More seminars on the book 'Fashionabla varumärken och passionerade entreprenörer' were planned, for instance at Stockholm School of Economics. Due to Covid-19 they were however temporarily cancelled.

Webbinars for the business sector:

- 'Sociala medier – vad kan vi lära av celebriteterna på nätet?' For Sydsvenska Industri- och Handelskammaren 2020.12.04. Presenter: Karin Winroth
- 'Sociala medier – att nå ut på nätet' Naturens Medicin – projektkurs. Nordens Biskop Arnö. 2021.03.25. Presenter: Karin Winroth.

Debates:

Panel debate on Global Goal 12 Sustainable consumption and production. Karin Winroth, Fredrik Timour, Swedish Fashion Council and Sabina Du Rietz, Assistant Professor at Örebro University. By UR Samtiden and Södertörn University. 2020.10.02

https://urplay.se/program/219265-ur-samtiden-sodertorn-samtalar-om-de-globala-malen-konsumera-mindre-konsumera-ratt?fbclid=IwAR0hN6IMOR91wiNklyKLrCmISwIyyktLdMz60_4aBCPiGOHp4iZCE1VKYjQ

Presentation Forskartorget Bok och biblioteksmässan 2020: En kultur av konsumtion och digitala äventyr. Karin Winroth. 2020.09.23.

https://play.sh.se/media/Karin+Winroth+på+Forskartorget/0_fvxe949q

Pod *Lära från lärda* by Fredrik Hillerborg 'Fashionabla varumärken och digitalt entreprenörskap' Karin Winroth.

<https://larafranlarada.com/karin-winroth/>

Pod 'Ulfs lunch – min bästa idé' Karin Winroth.

<https://play.acast.com/s/ulflunch/2dde428a-03fc-4ece-a71b-a114f6e66ba3>

The monograph 'Fashionabla varumärken och passionerade entreprenörer' was presented on a full page in the daily paper Dagens Industri:

<https://www.di.se/nyheter/hennes-bok-djupdyker-i-modevarldens-digitala-tidsalder/?fbclid=IwAR1o9vWSI5jEt3CWnbaekLOUgCHNjbQVDUwP2LpjZyqKrH9mbvNPtdhtXus>

Planned panel-debate: 'Fashion as Politics?' (seminar) and mingle including the article 'Russian fashionistas and international politics'. Arranger Joakim Ekman, director of CBEES in collaboration with Karin Winroth. The activity is planned for Spring 2021, however due to Covid-19 the arrangement might be delayed.



Monographs:

- Winroth Karin (2020a) *Fashionabla varumärken och passionerade entreprenörer*. Stockholm; Ekerlids Förlag.
- Svendsen Martin (under publication) *Vade Mecum*. Stockholm; Korpen.

Articles:

- Preholt, Håkan and Martin Svendsen (2016) Towards a more Profound Understanding of the Problem of Criminality and Recidivism in Terms of Consumption and Fashion. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 9 (1), 1-12. https://soh-primohosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primohosted-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_swepuboa:DiVA.org:su-134827&context=PC&vid=SOH_main&lang=sv_SE&search_scope=blended_scope&adaptor=primocentral_multiple_fe&tab=blended_tab&query=any,contains,international%20journal%20of%20criminology%20and%20sociological%20theory
- Preholt, Håkan and Martin Svendsen (2017) Consumption in Crime: Fashion as the Construction of a Criminal Self in Society. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 10 (1), 1-15. https://soh-primohosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primohosted-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_swepuboa:DiVA.org:su-147632&context=PC&vid=SOH_main&lang=sv_SE&search_scope=blended_scope&adaptor=primocentral_multiple_fe&tab=blended_tab&query=any,contains,international%20journal%20of%20criminology%20and%20sociological%20theory
- Svendsen, Martin and Håkan Preholt (2017) Towards a Conceptualization of Recidivism and Repetitive Behavior. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory*, 10 (2), 1-13. https://soh-primohosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primohosted-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_swepuboa:DiVA.org:su-147632&context=PC&vid=SOH_main&lang=sv_SE&search_scope=blended_scope&adaptor=primocentral_multiple_fe&tab=blended_tab&query=any,contains,international%20journal%20of%20criminology%20and%20sociological%20theory
- Svendsen, Martin and Håkan Preholt (under review) Ideology and the Expression of Brands: fashion brands and attitudes in the domain of enterprise development and consumer strategies. *Journal of Enterprise Culture*.
- Winroth, Karin (under review) Brand in the making – the resonance of Co-authors. *Journal of Cultural Economy*.
- Winroth, Karin, Tommy Larsson Segerlind and Mikael Lönnborg (work-in-progress) Co-authors of branding processes intertwined with digital entrepreneurship. Planning to be sent to the journal: *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*.



Popular science publications:

- Winroth, K (2020b) 'Russian fashionistas and international politics', i *Baltic Worlds*, August Vol XIII: 2-3, 131-135. <http://balticworlds.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BW-2020.2-3-OpenAccess-Version.pdf>
- Winroth, Karin (2019) Besatta av varumärken. Organisation och samhälle, 2, 50-55. https://org-sam.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/OS_nr_2_2019.pdf

The five most important conferences:

- Winroth, Karin, Tommy Larsson Segerlind and Mikael Lönnborg (2019) Co-authors of branding processes intertwined with entrepreneurial processes in the digital world – From 'likes' in social media to international entrepreneurship. Presented at 23rd McGill International Entrepreneurship Conference, 28-30 August, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark.
- Fekis Ämneskonferens 2018 *Arrangerade sessions: 7B: Utbildning, inblidning och avbildning – om företagsekonomins föreståelseformer*. Sessionchair: Assistant Professor Pamela Nybacka Schultz. Contributors: Professor Jacob Östberg Stockholm University, Associate Professor Karin Winroth Södertörn University and Assistant Professor Martin Svendsen Stockholm University.
- European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (2017), 9th workshop on Interpretive Consumer Research 27-28 April 2017-04-27 Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden. Participants: Professor Pamela Nybacka Schultz, Assistant Professor Martin Svendsen and Associate Professor Karin Winroth.
- Fekis Ämneskonferens 2017 *Arrangerade sessions: Metod och resonans*. Sessionchair: Assistant Professor Martin Svendsen. Contributors: Professor Jacob Östberg Stockholm University, Associate Professor Karin Winroth Södertörn University, Assistant Professor Pamela Nybacka Schultz.
- Winroth, Karin (2016) paper 'Co-authors adding status: on the benefits of analysing the career of a brand', Consumer Culture Theory Conference 2016, 6 – 9 juli, 2016 vid Université Poitiers i Lille, Frankrike. Participants also Assistant Professor Pamela Nybacka Schultz and Assistant Professor Martin Svendsen.