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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

What's our reputation?

- A study of organizations practical work with
Reputation Management

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And for anyone who wonders, the writers of this thesis are not siblings, just very good friends.

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Abstract

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In the society information has become more accessible for all its actors. This process has increased the importance of how organizations present themselves and work with their reputation. During the last decade a new management paradigm has emerged called Reputation Management. This field of management focus on the whole spectra of how organizations present themselves and are being perceived.

In this Bachelor thesis we will contribute to the research of Reputation Management as we study how and why Swedish organizations in different contexts practically work with their reputation, a field that is poorly explored. The organizations we have chosen to study are Ving Sweden AB, the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre, Malmö City Theatre and Gothenburg Research Institute as they operate in different contexts and have different stakeholders.

This research is based on a qualitative study were we have collected data using interviews. The data has then been analysed using new institutional theory, focusing isomorph forces and the conflict between legitimacy and efficiency. The empirical data describe how the organization practice different reputational activities and our analysis show how these activities come from different pressures in the organizations context.

In our conclusion we discuss our findings of how and why the studied organizations work with presenting themselves, which is mainly to gain legitimacy from their surroundings. We also give suggestions for further research such as doing the same kind of study but on organizations within the same context.

Keywords: management, reputation, CSR, legitimacy, institutional theory.

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1. Introduction

In this introduction chapter we intend to give the reader a context and deeper understanding, of the issues presented. First we will present the background on the subject and the purpose of this thesis. Then we will give some background information about the organizations chosen for the thesis.

1.1 Background

During the last decades information has become more accessible for the whole society, a process where people are becoming dependent on the mass media (Yang 2010). We are constantly fed with news, advertising, updates, opinions, health-tips, fashion-tips and exhortations on how we should act. This process has affected the society and all its actors in how they organize their activities and are being perceived by others. Reflecting this universities have more communicators employed than before, companies information departments are growing larger and hospitals are not just treating patients but also working with “strategic communication” (Pallas & Strannegård 2010). Counselling in how to handle communication and reputation during the last 20 years has expanded greatly when looking at consultancy companies (Wæraas 2004).

As the accessibility to information and dependency on the mass media grows, external groups hold many new tools of which they can threaten the reputation and legitimacy of large organizations. An example of this is the great economic loss that the oil company Shell experienced in 1995 as their products were boycotted when Greenpeace's raised concerns about the planned disposal of oil containers in the North Sea which resulted in negative publicity for the corporation (Power 2007). An organization that wants to succeed in the 21st century needs to understand the importance of managing reputation, i.e. how others experience them. This was emphasised in 2004 as the World Economic Forum declared, “*corporate brand reputation outranks financial performance as the most important measure of corporate success*” (Power 2007:129). As the significance of reputation flourish organizations are forced to focus on their public appearance as well as how they are perceived internally. This is not only a matter of marketing, which focus on selling, but also a consideration of what other stakeholders such as the government, suppliers, competitors, owners, banks and employees think about the organization.

We, the authors of this bachelor thesis, are students with relatively small budgets to live on each month. Despite this we do not look only to the price as we choose which

products or services we want to consume. With the help of social media, news and marketing we more often choose to buy locally eco-labelled products, products from companies we know have good working conditions with no child labour, companies that express that they care about the environment. The companies seem to know this as we are frequently fed with this sort of information. We may be fooled but their sales technique seems to work, we see the organizations as trustworthy and spread good opinions about them.

As we can see how much we are affected in our choice in how to consume we find it interesting how the organizations actively works with building a good reputation. As two management students we have looked to the existing literature and found a lot of theories within marketing, corporative branding, storytelling and corporative social responsibility. These theories and their activities separately build a good name of organizations, but we wondered how great the effects could be if these activities were synchronized and worked together?

We then found Reputation Management that focus specifically on this. This is a relatively new trend within management that looks to the whole spectra of how organizations present themselves. In the litterateur on Reputation Management we mainly found theories discussing what reputation management includes and little information on how and why organizations work with this practically. This seems to be a poorly explored field, especially when it comes to Swedish organizations.

We find it hard to see that there would be one theory that is generally applicable on all organizations, as we believe that different types of organizations must present themselves in a positive way for different reasons. For example, a state-funded organization within its context has different needs and different involved stakeholders than a profit-maximizing company or an institution with a specific focus.

In this thesis we aim to contribute to the research within the field of Reputation Management as we study how and why organizations *in practice* present themselves in a positive way. We have chosen to base our analysis on New Institutional theory as it focus on organizations process of gaining legitimacy. We want to see if the context effect organizations work with reputation and have therefore chosen to study four different Swedish organizations operating in different context, on different markets, with different missions. These organizations are; Ving Sweden AB, Gothenburg Research Institute, Malmö City Theatre and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre.

1.2 Purpose

In today's society organizations can not only be technically and economically efficient, they also need legitimacy in the environment to succeed (Meyer & Rowan 1997). Reputation is a valuable asset which organizations need to cherish, it's easy to lose and hard to gain (Turner 2004).

Our purpose with this thesis is to empirically study and theoretically analyse how and why Swedish organizations operating in different contexts work with Reputation Management today.

1.3 Background information about the organizations

In this next part we will give the reader some background information about the organizations we have chosen to study.

1.3.1 Ving

Ving is the largest tour operator in Sweden and covers 30 percent of the market. Ving arranges typical charter trips where flight, hotel and transport are included as well as more flexible packages with scheduled flights and separate flight tickets and hotel reservations. They sell trips to more than 500 different locations in 50 different countries. Their packages are mainly sold through their own website but also through call centres, the Ving shop and through selected travel agencies on the Internet and in Sweden. There have about 660 000 passenger traveling with them every year. Ving's business idea is *"We are producing and selling holidays that give our customers the best weeks of the year"*. Ving together with Globetrotter make Ving Sweden AB, which is part of the international travel group Thomas Cook Group PLC, listed on London stock exchange. The company has around 170 employees and a turnover at 4 724 million SEK (2011/2012). They run their business autonomously, except when it comes to big business changes and decisions, which affect not only their company but also Thomas Cook Group (ving.se).

1.3.2 Gothenburg Research Institute

Gothenburg Research Institute (GRI) is multi-disciplinary research institute that has existed since 1990 at the School of Economics and Law in Gothenburg. At GRI researchers from within and outside the school can participate in research programs to develop special competence in specific areas. The researchers at GRI come from different disciplines such as business administration, ethnology, sociology and linguistics. The specific areas and

teamwork are important factors for GRI's quality output according to themselves (gri.gu.se). There are 50 researchers at the institute and the director of the Institute is Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist. The board of directors contains business representatives and researchers. They meet four times a year to discuss current research projects (handels.gu.se).

GRI cooperate with research institutes and departments within similar areas and they have a wide network internationally. Except for working with School of Economics and Law, GRI also cooperates with Chalmers University of Technology and The School of Public Administration at the University of Gothenburg. GRI also has many ad-hoc cooperation initiatives outside of Sweden (gri.gu.se).

1.3.2.1 Centre for Consumption Science

The centre for Consumption Science (CFK) is a part of Gothenburg Research Institute and was founded by the University of Gothenburg in 2001. At CFK the researchers conduct interdisciplinary research focusing on consumption and consumption patterns. CFK's aim is to develop new knowledge about consumption that is relevant for researchers, authorities, organisations and consumers and they work and cooperate both nationally and internationally. The research is funded by grants from national and European funders (cfk.gu.se).

1.3.5 Malmö City Theatre

Malmö City Theatre (Malmö Stadsteater AB) plays about fifteen productions a year on one of their three stages in Malmö. The purpose of the company is to perform dramatic pieces, generally using their own ensemble, and operate related acts. The theatre has to function in line with the overall cultural political objectives and goals set by Malmö municipality as well as appropriate national and regional ones (malmostadsteater.se).

The City of Malmö owns the theatre and it is the municipality's cultural committee that holds responsibilities for the overall cultural policy, the organizational and economical matters of the theatre. The Board of Directors consists of eight elected representatives of the City. The theatre is managed by two Theatrical Directors (Teaterchefer) that share the responsibilities for the finance, administration and artistic activities. The Malmö City Theatre is publicly founded. This money is 75% from the City of Malmö and 25% from the Region of Skåne, including government subsidies.

In 2012 theatrical performances attracted about 60 000 visitors but the theatre also arranged different types of public events and projects which had 11 222 visitors (Annual report Malmö stadsteater).

1.3.6 The Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre

The Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre is one of Scandinavia's largest organizers of trade fairs and conferences with more than a million visitors each year. It also owns and operates the hotel Gothia Towers, which manages five restaurants. There are more than 500 employees in the 145,000 square foot building. The Swedish Exhibition Centre is expanding its hotel business with a third tower where about 500 rooms are to be completed in 2015.

Swedish Exhibition Centre is an economically independent foundation which purpose is to promote trade and industry in western Sweden. The legal structure of the group consists of seven different companies. (Josefsson 2012)

Swedish Exhibition Centre's business idea is to provide a creative scene with world-class hostmanship and thereby create and deliver successful meetings to their guests. This they do by offering services to companies who want to organize conferences, business meetings, congresses and other similar events. There are also annual exhibitions, big and small, and both national and international, with many public visitors (svenskamassan.se).

2. Method

In this chapter our choice of approaching our study is justified. Firstly our choice of research method is presented, further it outlines our choice of research approach, the reason for our choice of research objects and the procedure regarding the collection and analysis of empirical data. Lastly we discuss the trustworthiness of our research.

2.1 Research method

Our purpose with this thesis is to empirically study and theoretically analyse how and why Swedish organizations operating in different contexts work with Reputation Management today and thereby require an *understanding* for this phenomenon. As a hermeneutic scientific perspective helps to *understand* what people say and do, and why (Myers 2008), it was natural for us to have this perspective in this thesis. This means that we are interoperating our data to get an understanding for the material we use. The basic idea of a hermeneutic method within social science is that people act according to how they perceive reality. With the understanding of people's perception of reality you can get knowledge of how and why they act as they do. In hermeneutic studies the researcher use his/hers own experiences and understandings as a tool to interpret others (Hartman 2004). We are going not to describe an objectively perceived reality, called positivistic approach. Rather we want to gain a deeper understanding of the subject and have room to interpret our results.

There are two ways research can be conducted, using quantitative or qualitative research method. In a quantitative method you use experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalizations. Qualitative method uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings (Hoepfl 1997). In this thesis we want to understand how organizations work with Reputation Management and the driving forces behind this work, rather than measure this. According to Holme and Solvang (1997) a qualitative study should be used when you want to get at broader view on the subject and increase the understanding of different processes. With the chosen method we will focus on the understanding and interpretation of words and text. The qualitative method allows the interviewees to be studied in depth, which would not be possible in a quantitative method (Bryman & Bell 2005). As we, the authors, do not seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings as quantitative researchers would (Hoepfl 1997), but rather seek illumination, understanding, and estimation as qualitative researchers (Hoepfl 1997), we consider a qualitative research method to be the best-suited method for this thesis.

To justify, validate and simplify the process of interpreting our data that we received in our interviews we follow the guidelines that Alvesson (2003) presented as a “reflexive approach”, more thoroughly described below.

2.2 Research approach

We are doing our qualitative research method having an abductive approach, using systematic combining. Dubois and Gadde (2002) describe the abductive approach as a mixture of deductive approach, which focuses on developing propositions from existing theory testing them on empirical data, and an inductive approach, which systematically generate theory from the empirical data. They explain the abductive approach as a process where you repeatedly switch focus between empirical data and theory. They define the systematic combining as a process where *“the researcher, by constantly going ‘back and forth’ from one type of research activity to another and between empirical observations and theory, is able to expand his understanding of both theory and empirical phenomena”* (2002:555). This is what we aim to do in this thesis, having an abductive approach.

Collier (1983) means that by doing a comparative study you are more descriptive and it enables you to find similarities and contrasts among cases. We do a comparative study to be descriptive in our theoretically analyse of why Swedish organizations operating in different contexts work with Reputation Management. By comparing the different organizations we can highlight the differences or similarities between the organizations that we have chosen as research objects and thereby understand what impact the context have on the organizations.

2.3 Choice of research objects

Due to our purpose with this thesis it was essential for us to find different types of organizations in different contexts to examine. We chose to limit our investigation to Sweden due to the geographical proximity advantages of being able of coming close and gaining a deeper insight of the organizations. We also wanted to make the comparison nationally so the organizations operate under the same conditions, e.g. are exposed to the same laws and same type of economy.

To see how different contexts affect the work of Reputation Management we aimed to find organizations that have different goals, are financed in different ways and have different stakeholders. We looked to our contact-network and found four interesting organizations that fitted these criteria and differed in their operations. These four organizations we contacted

with instant success are Ving Sweden AB, The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre, Malmö city Theatre and Gothenburg Research Institute.

We chose to study four organizations due to our aim of making a comparison on how context affect organization work with Reputation Management. One organization does not work in a comparative study and two organizations would have been too few to say that we had compared different contexts.

On account of our research method of doing interviews, we chose to do two interviews at each organization. For reflective interviews in bachelor thesis it is recommended to do 5-8 interviews to be able to connect to the purpose and to develop knowledge and still be manageable considering the limitation in time (Thomsson 2010). We decided to contact the communications managers at each organization and in the case of GRI where they do not have one responsible, we contacted the Director. We chose to contact these because we believe that they have the best knowledge of activities that lay within the field of Reputation Management. After being permitted a first interview at each organization we asked our interviewees to recommend a person in the organization that could provide us with relevant information for our purpose and to get a second opinion widening our view. In this way we reached a total of 9 interviewees.

At Ving Sweden AB we first interviewed Magdalena Öhrn, the Information Director, and she recommended us to talk to Claes Pellvik, the Marketing director. As mentioned above we spoke to the Director of GRI. Her name is Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist and as GRI does not have a communicator she recommended us to talk to the communication manager at Centre for Consumer Science, a part of GRI, whom could provide us with relevant information about communication at a research institute. The communicator's name was Malin Tengblad. At Malmö City theatre we first spoke to Jenny Bång who is the Marketing Director and she recommended us to speak to Jesper Larsson, the Theatrical Director. At the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre we started by talking to Jenny Jardefur and Louise Arvidsson, whom both work as Communicators. Jenny and Louise recommended us to interview the CEO, Carin Kindbom, to get a view from the top of the organization.

2.4 Data collection

We have used both primary and secondary data in this thesis. The primary data comes from nine interviews that were conducted during writing this thesis. The secondary data is material published by or about the organizations we have studied.

2.4.1 Primary data: Interviews

Our data consists mainly of the material we have collected during nine interviews. We will in the parts that follow describe the procedure before, during and under these interviews. We will also describe the guidelines of a reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research, which we have aimed to follow during this process. We chosen these guidelines, which are further described below, as we want to treat our data from the interviews in the most reliable way, avoid being naïve believing that the data is an exact description of reality (see our argumentation under "Research Approach" above). Using the reflexive approach you aim to avoid the naïve belief that data completely reflects the reality and gain creativity as you search for the meaning of the empirical material (Alvesson 2003).

2.4.1.1 Procedure before the interviews

To get a hold of the relevant persons to interview, which had been chosen due to their work within the field of Reputation Management, we started of by contacting the communicators within Ving and The Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre. At Malmö City Theatre we contacted the Marketing Director and at GRI the Director, everyone via e-mail. In this e-mail we introduced ourselves and explained the purpose of our study. As all four of the organizations responded and showed their interest in participating, we sent a response with further information. In this e-mail we gave additional information about our thesis; where it were to be published, what we mean by Reputation Management and that we would follow the scientific ethical principals of the Swedish Research Council in the writing of our thesis. We also attached a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) with example of questions that could come during the interview. This we did to give the respondents an idea of what to expect at the interview and the chance to prepare themselves. As we had contacted and gotten response from the first interviewee within every organization we asked these if they could recommend a person that they though could be of interest for us to do an additional interview with. As every one of the first interviewees gave us names of persons in positions where they most likely would work with the organizations reputation, we decided to contact these. In the case of the Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre, Malmö City Theatre we got the opportunity to interview the CEO's. As we already had spoken to the Director at GRI we where now to speak with the communicator at Centre for Consumer Science, which we had been recommended to talk to by the Director. In the case of Ving, we spoke with the Marketing Director. We contacted these people in the same way we had done with the first interviewees, by e-mail, giving the same information about the purpose of our thesis and adding that we

already had one interviewee that had recommended us to speak with them. As we got positive response from every person we booked a meeting and planned our second interview with the organizations.

Before we started off doing our first interview we had read literature on the subject of how to conduct research interviews, what to think of before, during and after. We ended up focusing on the guidelines of Mats Alvesson presented in his article *Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research*. (2003). Alvesson recommends that qualitative interviews, such as ours, should not be structured questionnaires but preferential open. In this type of interviews it is good to let the interviewee talk about what he/she feels is relevant and important within the field of the subject. By having this rather flexible approach Alvesson means that the interview is enriched as you can document and study the interviewee's experiences, knowledge, ideas and impressions, things that may not be brought to the surface during a hardly controlled and structured interview.

With the recommendations from Alvesson (2003), we explained in our e-mail conversations with the interviewee's that the examples of questions that we gave them in advance only were to be seen as questions that may occur during the interview. We also said that the interview were to be more as a conversation, where we could speak freely about the subject, than a questioning.

Even though we were not to follow the examples of questions, we sat them in an order so the easier and superficial questions were at the top. The questions that required some thinking and would go in-depth of the subject we had placed further down. At last we had some "sensitive" questions that may require the confidence of the interviewee. The aim was to address the subject in this way during the interviews.

We had studied the theoretical aspect of reputation management, and activities within this field, to be able to read about the organizations and their reputational activities to be informed about this before the interviews. This gave us the possibility to in advance know what matters that could be interesting to ask about during the interviews.

2.4.1.2 Procedure during the interviews

As we met with our first interviewee at every organization we started off by introducing ourselves and asking if we could record the conversation. As we wanted to ease into the subject of how and why the organization work with reputation management, we continued by asking the interviewees about their position within the organization and what they work with.

As the conversation had begun the interviews ran smoothly with the follow-up questions. At the moments where the answers were finished, we paused the conversation and let it be silent so the interviewee would have the opportunity to add what ever was in his/hers mind. In this way we sometimes got additional thoughts on the subject that led to a more in-depth perspective.

With our follow-up questions we guided the interview towards subjects within the field of Reputation Management. Often we asked about activities or projects, such as marketing or CSR, and how they were carried out by the organization. Then we tried to talk about the background and purpose of these activities.

When we had interviewed the first person at every organization we listened to the recordings of these to be able to ask questions about interesting topics that we had spoken about in the first interview but wanted more information about. We then had the opportunity to get this information in our second interview.

The second interview at every organization was conducted in almost the same way as the first. We had the same procedure but added questions about the topics of interest from the first interview.

At the end of every interview we asked if the interviewee liked to add something and often got the response that we were welcome to contact them again with any further questions.

2.4.1.3 Procedure after the interviews

After we had done all interviews we had nine recordings of about one hour each. We then listened through the material separately, writing down our own notes and transcribing large parts of the interviews. We then put together our material and used the reflexive approach on this data as described below.

After using the reflexive approach we had a great amount of data to select information relevant for our purpose. How we did this is described below under the title Analysing the empirical material.

2.4.2 The Reflexive approach to interviews

Mats Alvesson (2003) presents his reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research as a framework of thinking about the research interview. This reflexive approach helps to explain an active and flexible way of working with the empirical material that makes you create new ways to study it and its underlying meaning. Alvesson describe the reflexivity as

“working with multiple interpretations in order to steer clear of traps and/or to produce rich and varied results” (2003:25). He also sees that this way of working has to involve some pragmatism. This means that the researcher has to be aware that time, space and patience are limited and therefore there sometimes is a need to postpone some doubts and use the material you have for the best possible purpose. It also means that you acknowledge the complexity of the interviews by understanding that there is no definite meaning or truth.

The practical procedure when working in a reflexive way is challenging but still not that complicated. It is not only a process of interpret and select which data to use, but also a way of trying to find new ways to understand the interviews as you analyse. This latter part is the hard one as it takes time to constantly try different interpretations as you analyse.

Alvesson presents eight metaphors that you can use as you tried to study and interpret our interview data in a reflexive way. We have used these eight, as suggested, when we in our own procedure have interpreted out data. These eight metaphors are:

- 1. the social problem of coping with an inter-personal relation and complex interaction in a nonroutine situation*
- 2. the cognitive problem of finding out what it is all about (beyond the level of the espoused)*
- 3. the identity problem of adopting a contextually relevant self-position*
- 4. the "institutional" problem of adapting to normative pressure and cognitive uncertainty through mimicking a standard form of expression*
- 5. the problem (or option) of maintaining and increasing self-esteem that emerges in any situation involving examination and calling for performance (or allowing esteem enhancement to flourish in the situation)*
- 6. the motivation problem of developing an interest or rationale for active participation in the interview*
- 7. the representation/construction problem of how to account for complex phenomena through language*
- 8. the "autonomy/determinism" problem of powerful macrodiscourse operating behind and on the interview subject.*

(Alvesson 2003:18)

Using these metaphors Alvesson states that you can discover and define available positions to the research interviews. Below we will give an example of how we have worked with the metaphors as we interpret our interviews.

“The fact that we are doing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and have people from ethnology, pedagogy, psychology and business administration among others, makes us not fit exactly under the School of Business and Economics. We have widened and have more subjects and disciplines represented.” (Quotation from interview with Ulla Eriksson-Zetterqvist, Director at GRI, 2013-04-24, 03:35 in the recording)

This type of statement can be seen a typical one as it is an organizational description of structure and operational activities. We will now use this as an example to show how we have interpreted the interview data to get a deeper multi-angled understanding for it.

The statement can be seen as declaring a truth about GRI or the true beliefs of the Director Ulla. We will now show an example of how we use the eight metaphors. Number 1: The statement may be read as related to the specific scene, i.e. in an interview with a professor (and director) from an interdisciplinary research institute, this seems to be an appropriate statement. Number 2: The interviewee Ulla may assume that this is the kind of thing that fits our study. Number 3: In the talk the interviewee, a researcher and director, constructs herself as organization-structure oriented. Number 4: She follows scripts for talking: having one academic discipline is out-dated, and interdisciplinary is what one should be. Number 5: The statement gives a favourable impression by adopting a superior position of doing multi- and interdisciplinary research rather than having one single academic discipline. Number 6: By giving a favourable impression as described in nr 5, the interviewee adopts an assumed legitimate and politically correct position. Number 7: In terms of trying to represent what the interviewee perceives to be correct, or what should be correct, academic research generally performed at the School of Business and Economics have a smaller and more narrow research than the wider research represented at GRI *“We have widened and have more subjects and disciplines represented”*. Number 8: The contemporary dominating discourse on academic research, i.e. interdisciplinary research, speaks through the interviewee.

It is important to understand that the above eight interpretations are just interpretations. We cannot claim that we have discovered the truth about the statement of Ulla Eriksson-Zetterqvist, but we have used the reflexive framework of Alvesson to get a better and wider understanding of the empirical data. We can now use these interpretations in our hermeneutic qualitative research and keep in mind the reflexive approach as we do our analysis.

2.4.3 Secondary data

In addition to interviews we have collected empirical data in from of material published on the organizations websites, in annual reports or other publications such as information hand-outs. These data we have mostly used in the search of information about our chosen organizations as well as in the preparation before the interviews, as described above.

2.5 Processing the empirical material

In the empirical chapter of our thesis we are going to present the information we got from the interviews we had. When selecting the relevant information to present in this thesis out of the massive collection of data, we decided to think in themes. Due to our definition of Reputation Management we focused on the conscious work that the organizations do in presenting their organizations advantageously. We also focused on how organizations depend on different stakeholders and their objectives and how this affects the organizations operation and thinking. Using themes we aim to make the work clearer, easier to understand and relate to. From looking at the interviews and processing them as described above (Data collection), we could distinguish three themes that were obvious in the interview data and suitable for the presentation of our empirical data. We have chosen to present each organization separately. This we have done to make it clearer and more understandable how each organization operates.

2.5.1 Important aspects of the organization

Under the theme *Important aspects of the organization* we chose to present relevant information presented by the interviewees describing the goals of the different organizations, important stakeholders for the organizations, formal and informal claims on the organizations and possible necessary information when presenting the organizations.

2.5.2 Externally focused Reputation Management activities

Under the theme *Externally focused Reputation Management activities* we chose to present the conscious work of the different organizations that aim to affect the perception of the organizations held by external stakeholders.

2.5.3 Internally focused Reputation Management activities

Under the theme *Internally focused Reputation Management activities* we chose to present the conscious work of the different organizations that aim to affect the perception of the

organizations held by internal stakeholders. Generally these stakeholders are the employees at the different organization.

In the analysis chapter we will process the empirical material through the lens of our theoretical framework. Our purpose of this thesis was not only *how* the organizations work with Reputation Management, which the empirical chapter presents, but also *why* organizations work with Reputation Management. This is processed in the analysis chapter.

2.6 Analysis procedure

We began our analysing procedure during the processing of the empirical data, as described above, and knowing what relevant empirical data we had we could start with our analysis chapter. We were able to distinguish how the three isomorph forces coercive-, mimetic- and normative isomorphism described in New Institutionalism theory by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), see “Theory” chapter, were underlying causes to why the organizations presented themselves in the way they did. This also became clear as we compared and looked for common points between the different organizations. We could place all the different conscious activities the studied organizations did within one or many of the isomorph forces.

As we had done this part of the analysis we found that there was another important aspect described in New Institutional theory, which we wanted to highlight. This aspect was also clear in the empirical data. We therefore discussed the conflict between legitimacy and efficiency. Here we described how some of the reputational activities conflict with the efficiency goals of the organizations and some do not.

2.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an essential aspect in qualitative study such as ours. Rather than looking at reliability and validity, which is common in quantitative studies that focus on tables and statistics, we will focus on the trustworthiness of the text as it bears the meaning of the research. How a text is perceived is subjective, different people interpret text in different ways. Hence this we have tried to describe in detail our theories. In our theoretical chapter we have only used academic literature and articles. This we have done to assure ourselves of that the information is reliable and to keep high credibility.

In our empirical chapter we have tried to compile the interviews into a format that to the highest degree reflects the respondents' own answers. This we have done so the reader can see and understand how our theories and empirical data is connected to each other in the

analysis. The reader can thereafter decide if our conclusion is legitimate and accurate. The interviews were done in a rigorous matter. In five of nine interviews we were two interviewers and we used two methods of collecting the data from our contributors; mobile phone recorder and notes by hands. The remaining four interviews we did separately with the same methods of collecting data. To make sure that the other thesis-author understood the data collected we went over the recordings a few times. We tried to conduct the interviews with open questions and by letting the contributor think and talk in its own pace, so that the outcome of the interviews would give an consistent description of the reality.

As we have used a reflexive approach we have tried to interpret our empirical data from different perspectives and tried to find the underlying meaning of what our contributors are saying. How we have done this is described in “The Reflexive approach” part above. By being aware of the fact that what is being said in the interviews is not always true, and by our thoroughly processing of the data we have tried to describe the most truthfully reality. We are also aware that what we say in this thesis regards the organizations we have studied and it does not always apply for all situations.

Ethics is also an important aspect when it comes to making of a study, not only for the writer, but also the reader and the participants in the study. We feel a great responsibility to the people that takes part of our study and therefore we strive for a high trustworthiness as possible. For this reason we have chosen to keep our interviewees public, calling them by their real names, which they have agreed to. Our interviewees have also had the chance to read and approve the parts about them before we completed the empirical part. We sent a mail to all our interviewees with their respective part, we asked them to read it and then return to us with their response so that we could fix possible mistakes and misunderstandings. This also to be sure that the information we present is correct.

3. Theory

In this chapter we will present the theoretical framework we have used. We will first describe the concept of Reputation Management and set the definition used in this thesis. Then explain the term legitimacy, as it is an important part of both our theories. At the end of the chapter we describe the concept of New Institutional theory.

3.1 Reputation Management

'A good reputation is more valuable than money.' Latin maxim

Studying the idea of Reputation Management we want to start by focusing on the definition of organizational reputation. We want to clarify the difference between organizational reputation and reputation management, the latter referring to the active control and overseeing of reputation. After we have given a background of the reputation management literature looking at earlier studies and research within the area, we will establish which definition we are using in this thesis.

3.1.1 What is organizational reputation?

In definitions of organizational reputation we often stumble over two other concepts; organizational identity and organizational image. As these are closely connected there is a need to start by working out what is what.

The identity of an organization can be described as the core features that are persistent over time and distinguish the organization from others. This description includes two identity requirements, continuity and distinctiveness, that often are incorporated in conceptions of organisational identity (Whetten & Mackey 2002). Considering organizations to be social aggregates with groups of individuals, these core features that form the identity are shared beliefs, attitudes, feelings and behaviours that form the organization (Hogg & Terry 2000). Using the definition of identity scholars, identities are categorical self-descriptors used by social actors to satisfy their identity requirements. One of these basic requirements is to be able to separate the self from others. This way the identity becomes a self-definition that shows how the organization is similar to as well as different from other organizations (Whetten & Mackey 2002).

The organizational image is often mistaken for the organizational reputation, these two terminologies both have the common reference point to organizational identity. The

distinction between the two of these is not always clear. Gray and Balmer (1998) explain that image often refers to the instant picture or impression of an organization while reputation is an outcome of a long value judgement that the organization stands for. Turner (2004) holds a similar definition but adds that reputation is about the integrity of an organization. Whetten and Mackey (2002) have summarized four different scholars views on the relationship between the three concepts identity, image and reputation. They say “(a) reputation is a combination of identity and image; (b) identity leads to image, which leads to reputation; (c) image is the equivalent of what some define as reputation; and (d) identity is the equivalent of what some refer to as image.” (Whetten & Mackey 2002:399). Presenting that there is no consensus about how the terminologies relate to each other, Whetten and Mackey still argue that they are all components of a process that they call “the self-management project”. This project is essential for the effectiveness and success of organizations as social actors. Here image and reputation are a part of the two-way communication between the organization and relevant stakeholders. Organizational image is the self-presentation used by members of the organization in their communication with non-members. It is the organizations central, enduring and unique characteristics of which organizational representatives do their best to present the organization to external stakeholders. Reputation is the feedback from stakeholders concerning the credibility of an organization’s self-definition and identity claims. It is an important component of the organizations self-regulation (Whetten & Mackey 2002). The concept of the self-management project is portrayed in figure 1.

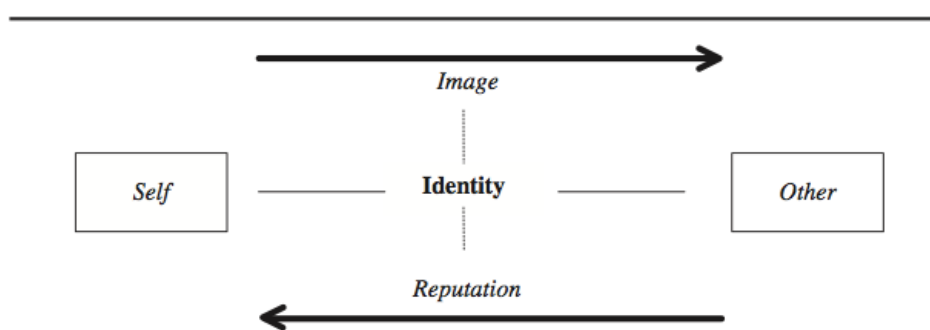


Figure 1: The Self-Management Project Consisting of Identity, Image, and Reputation

Source: Whetten & Mackey 2002:401

With background of how scholars have related reputation to image and identity and how they differentiate these from one and other, we look further on the different definitions of organizational reputation. We have already presented how Whetten and Mackey (2002) define

reputation as feedback from stakeholders concerning the credibility of an organization's self-definition. Similarly, Larkin (2003) claim that "*reputation is a reflection of how well or how badly different groups of interested people – stakeholders – view a commercial name.*" (Larkin 2003:1). Larkin means that organizational reputation is no different from personal reputation that is the associations attached by other to our name and that this takes time to evolve. Grey and Balmer (1998) also argue that reputation has to do with the organizations stakeholders, saying that reputation effect the willingness of the stakeholders to support the organization. This means that reputation is a value judgement about the company's attributes. They also suggest, like Larkin (2003), that good reputation takes time to establish and comes from dependable performance.

The connection with performance can also be found in other definitions of reputation. The Global Corporate Reputation Index uses performance as a variable together with citizenship in as it evaluates consumer perceptions of company brands. In its measurements the Global Corporate Reputation Index specify performance as the success of a company's product and services and citizenship as a less tangible aspect looking beyond the company's basic business functions. An example of good citizenship could be a company that emphasize community outreach, volunteerism, health and human services, culture and so on (GCRI 2012). Power (2007) has a good definition summarizing the different definitions above as he describes organizational reputation as a socially constructed perception of an organization.

Røvik (2008) states that the best expression that prevails with organizational reputation is legitimacy. Both concern the acceptance of organizations and the confidence of the actors in their surroundings. Organizational reputation, or using Røviks term legitimacy, is dependent on being able to integrate and externally display institutionalised norms and values that exist in the organizations surrounding. If the organization makes use of institutionalized patterns they are to gain more legitimacy and a greater reputation.

Within the literature on organisational theory reputation is often considered to be an asset (Jackson 2004; Larkin 2003; Pallas & Strannegård 2010; Power 2007; Turner 2004; Whetten & Mackey 2002). The value of this intangible asset cannot be properly measured, but using a crude measure it can be placed under the title Goodwill (Jackson 2004; Turner 2004). As this asset is of great importance for organizations to succeed it needs to be taken cared of and managed. Therefore a new management paradigm with the focus on reputation has been created. This is called Reputation Management.

3.1.2 Reputation Management

During the 1990s organizational reputation grew to become a popular expression filled with both fear and opportunity for the larger organizations (Power 2007; Røvik 2008). Gray and Balmer argues in their article *Managing Corporate Image and Corporate Reputation* published in 1998 that smart executives are starting to recognize corporate reputation as a critical asset directly linked to competitive success. In the article they also explain that the concept of corporate reputation earlier had been seen as ambiguous and unclear, but at that time, in 1988, the need to strategically manage reputation was being highlighted. In the years following many organizations acknowledged this. In the year of 2000 Asia's Most Admired Companies survey, published in *Asian Business Review*, emphasized that reputation was more important than ever before. In 2004 the World Economic Forum made the same statement adding that it had become more important than financial performance for corporate success (Power 2007). Røvik (2008) gives two ideas for the existence of reputation management. The first idea being that there are strong connections between an organizations reputation and the financial result. This saying that reputation can be crucial for reaching good financial results. The second idea being that an organizations reputation can improve or deteriorate, as it is a result of a process of interpretation and opinion.

The importance of reputation management is not expected to decline in the future but rather the opposite. Pallas and Strannegård (2010) speculate that as journalists becomes more professional and investigating there will be a greater audit pressure on companies. Companies will then increase their investments in communicators, informants and consultancies. As a response to this the media will feel the need to increase their audit competence. And so on it goes.

3.1.2.1 So what is reputation management?

Jackson (2004) describes it as a new management paradigm that represents and communicates values such as human rights, corporate responsibility, credibility and character. He neglects reputation management to be a temporary trend and enunciate the importance for firms to gain a strategic advantage by proactively building their reputational capital. To manage your reputation is according to Jackson (2004) to manage your relationships, meaning to respect integrity and fair play by maintaining authenticity, trust, dignity and compassion in relationships between the organization and its stakeholders.

Similarly Larkin (2003) explain that to get the competitive advantage that comes with a good reputation your main focus should be the relationships outside and inside the business.

This Larkin calls “*effective management of stakeholder relationships*” (Larkin 2003:41). He describes this as a process partly consisting of studying stakeholders, which are to be viewed as people gathered in groups that hold the same perceptions of an organization. The different stakeholder groups are using their own measures as they assess the organization and will therefore represent different reputations. As stakeholders consists of individuals’ organizations need to look at the factors that shapes the individuals perception of them. These factors are; how the individual experience the company’s activities and employees, an overall perception of the character of the organization, other people’s information and social networks opinion about the organization. Therefore an organization can have several reputations and the overall reputation would develop in a dynamic process where individuals and stakeholders perception are all taken into consideration. Larkin (2003) also argue that there is another side of reputation management connected to his opinion that reputation is a fundamental aspect of business performance. He says the goal of effective reputation management is to coordinate activities such as company’s vision and leadership, strategy, communication, marketing, human resource management and customer service that all directly influence how the business expresses itself to the outside world. By the latter idea that Larkin (2003) presents, reputation management becomes a broad and complex concept involving almost all parts of an organization.

There are more studies that points out the wide and complex area included in reputation management. Power (2007) suggest that “*the potential scope of efforts to manage reputation is very great and may reach into every corner of organizational life with insistent demands for capacities for external responsiveness and 'reputational attention'*” (Power 2007;129). This means that almost all activities within an organization and the effect of these activities are possible to view from a reputational perspective. Powers (2007) also draw connections between reputation management and risk management, reputation can be seen as an important variable for organizations stakeholders as they use this variable to know what they can expect from the organization in the future. This defines the practise of managing reputation as constructing social perceptions where the dynamic relation between organizations, their environments and society are important. This signify, Power (2007) suggest and refers to Meyer and Rowan’s article from 1977 *Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony*, that the value of reputation management comes from the constant struggle for organizations to gain social legitimacy in their institutional fields.

Røvik (2008) holds a well-defined and precise description of reputation management; *“Actions that are focused on a conscious, planned presentation of an organization towards relevant stakeholders in the surrounding with the purpose of strengthen their opinions about and trust in the organization”* (Røvik 2008;166). All organizations have a reputation even though they do not conduct strategic reputation management, he also adds. Røviks definition narrows down the concept of reputation management to activities that have the purpose of presenting the organization. By this the concept becomes more comprehensible.

3.1.2.2 How do you manage your reputation?

There are numerous studies and examples giving methods and plans on how an organization can manage their reputation. The short, summarized version would be creating a favourable reputation in the minds of the stakeholders by consciously work to control the organizations internal and external communication. This involves looking at some main channels through which organizations reach their stakeholders and using them to create the desirable reputation. These channels are branding, graphic design, formal statements, architecture, media relations and the broad category of routine interactions (Gray & Balmer 1998). This restricted description of how to manage reputation does not give enough information to understand the concept, but paint a broad picture of the measures involved.

Looking deeper into the concept of reputation management, Whetten and Mackey (2002) suggest that the organization needs to self-manage by asking themselves some hard questions. These should clarify how they want to be perceived, what they consider to be the essence of the organization that makes it distinctive from others, what type of feedback from stakeholders is of most value and what the organization is willing to change in response to demands from these stakeholders. As these questions are responded the organization can start to working on fulfilling the answers.

Røvik (2008) explain reputation management as consisting of three things, reputational metrics, communication strategies and profiling actions, which need to be incorporated in the general operational activities. Some of the reputational management actions become extra clear in Røviks study of organizational reputation literature and the consultant industry. He divides the main ways in which organizations works with reputation management in three categories; branding, storytelling and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Branding is the activity of adding an identity to a product, company or person (Southerton 2011). It comprises the importance of displaying the uniqueness of an organization, which thereby receive competitive advantages (Røvik 2008). Storytelling is a

term for using stories to within an organization create a shared vision for the future. For example, storytelling can unite and activate employees within a company and thereby overcome difficulties with organizational structure (Shultz et al. 2002). This tool can be used both external and internal to better an organization and its reputation. There are two sorts of stories; “natural” ones, concerning something that someone within the organization has experienced and often passed on vocally, and fabricated ones that often involves how to secure success by overcoming resistance within or outside the organization (Røvik 2008). CSR includes a whole range of activities within an organization and is a rather vague concept with many definitions that focus on the organizations impact on different stakeholders. Simply explained it is how a company consider and manage the impact of their actions on the economy, society and environment (Simpson & Taylor 2013). Another definition presented is Holmes and Watts (2000) saying; “*Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large*” (Holmes & Watts 2000;8).

Klewes (2009), in his description of how you manage your reputation, focus on the communication and how it is conducted. He suggest that organizations need to look at how they express themselves in various issues and against stakeholders, look at the type of language they use and set clear rules for this. Then internally organize and implement these rules and write them down. So how the organization express itself in messages and other communication with stakeholders reflects the values, believes and trustworthiness of the organization, which affect the stakeholders expectations of the organization in the future – the reputation.

Larkin (2003) presents a checklist of six rather straightforward exhortations that organizations need to do when managing their reputation. The first advice is that the highest leaders within the organization need to understand the importance of reputation and its management. This means to recognize your responsibilities against different stakeholders, reducing their uncertainty and realising the good that will come doing this. The second advice is for the organizations to start to listen to their surroundings. Doing this you need to acquire a method by which you can see individuals, groups or organizations that have or will have an interest in the organization. This method has to be more than just market research groups. It has to involve all type of stakeholders such as environmental groups, human rights organizations, employees, policymakers, community leaders, journalists and customers. The

third recommendation is to build a reputation management system that is stable and well defined. This should be integrated with the organizations routines on how to manage risk when crisis occur. It should be a system that manages the task of understanding, assessing and organizing the response against information presented by the media, or other stakeholders, that the organization may have to deal with. The fourth advice is to create a code of conduct that will show that the organization understands that it have to contribute to society by behaving responsible. This can be done by establishing an easily defined and explainable CSR program that stepwise is included in the whole organization. The fifth instruction that Larkin (2003) presents in the process of managing reputation is for organizations to treat their stakeholders intelligently. By this he means to treat stakeholders with respect, giving them the information and options they need to build their relationship with the organization. The sixth and last advice concerns the organization work, that should be conducted like everything they say and do was public. This means to encourage openness and communication inside and outside the organization, pushing yourself to work on your bad sides and acknowledging your good sides.

3.1.2.3 Critique against the concept of reputation management

In the literature on reputation management we have studied we have not only found definitions of and instructions in how to manage reputation but also criticisms of the concept. To get a whole picture of the subject we feel that it is important to bring attention to some of these opinions.

Most of the critique against reputation management lies in the opinion, which new management discourses often are exposed to, that it is a concept constructed by academics that aim to get in the spotlight for some time and consultants that want to sell (Røvik 2008). It has also been criticized for being unspecific and too broad. The element of reputation is in its essence a constructed outcome of many practices, it exists because of a wide spectrum of things that organizations do. So creating a practice of management that try to organize reputation directly and exclusively is impossible. Reputation Management then becomes a description of a collection of operational practises which all have impact on reputation (Power 2007).

Hutton et al (2001) presents eight interesting points of discussion, or criticism you may say, about the practice of reputation management. The first concerns the problematic of how an organization can manage reputation. This connects to the above statement that reputation is an outcome of all an organizations activities. Is there a department that can claim

to have such control over an organization? The second point is the various ways of measuring reputation, none of which are alike the other. This critique comes from the constant need for measurability in economics and ends up in the discussion about the broad and many definitions of reputation. The third point aims to question the relevance of reputation from a management perspective. The criticism mean that reputation is something an organization has with actors in the periphery while relationship should be of greater concern, as this is what you have with friends and associates. Therefore relationships are far more important for long-term success and stability than reputation. The fourth critique is that having a good reputation cannot be the ultimate goal, as many proponents like it to be, because it only helps accomplish overall organizational goals such as financial performance. The fifth point highlights the fact that not all organizations should focus on their reputation, as it is not relevant. This meaning that for organizations such as universities a good reputation can be eminent, as they continually need to attract new students, whereas a company with one important key stakeholder do not need to care for their reputation, only for their relationship. The sixth point concerns the relationship between having a well-known CEO and a good reputation. Here the direction of causality is unclear and this makes it hard to determine if an organization should focus on building a reputation around their leader or not. The seventh critique of reputation management is that its academic spokesmen often forget the already existing public relationship (PR) establishments. Focusing of human resources and other fields, trying to reinvent PR in a new figure called reputation management. The eight and last point of critique is that if reputation management is to succeed there will be huge consequences for education and practice, especially within the PR field, as the concept differs much from the existing organizational managing.

3.2.2 Our definition in this thesis

As we have seen in our study of the literature on reputation, reputation is not a homogeneous object. Neither is reputation management a homogeneous subject with a clear definition. As we are to conduct a research within this subject we do need to relate to it by setting our definition for this thesis. So with the background of reputation management and its different definitions we are going to use Røviks definition. This definition is; reputation management is *“actions that are focused on a conscious, planned presentation of an organization towards relevant stakeholders in the surrounding with the purpose of strengthen their opinions about and trust in the organization”* (Røvik 2008;166). We use this as we think it is the most extensive but still clear-cut definition. With this we can more easily determine which

activities performed by the studied organizations that can be classified as reputation management measures.

3.3 Legitimacy

In our theoretical framework we have two theories that point out the importance for an organization to gain legitimacy. New Institutional Theory, which will be described later in this chapter, describes how organizations act to gain legitimacy from its surrounding. This work is based on the aim of the organization on becoming isomorphic to other organizations in the same context to gain legitimacy. In the same way Reputation Management implies, as Røvik (2008) also claims, that organizations need to gain legitimacy from its surrounding to succeed and survive (Røvik, 2008;166).

Both Reputation Management and New Institutional theory emphasize the meaning of legitimacy, but the theories have different basic assumptions on how people function. Reputation Management theory see the people as rational human beings while New Institutional Theory assume that people follow obvious norms, which may be irrational.

The theories are aiming for the same goal but differ in the process of reaching it. Reputation Management is a strategic and active work for gaining legitimacy by presenting the organization advantageously whereas New Institutional theory focus on the passive and the “taken-for-granted” actions that bring legitimacy to the organization. This is an important distinction between the theories as they have different perspectives of the thinking of people, hence *how* and *why* people and organizations work with Reputation Management.

Due to the importance of legitimacy in this study we will describe the term legitimacy before we explain our second theory. Legitimacy is a term that is frequently used in organizational studies but it is few researchers who define it (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). Max Weber introduced the term legitimacy into sociological theory and organization studies. He pointed out the importance of practise being consistent with social norms and rules. After him many other researchers have emphasized the importance of legitimacy and many different aspects has been fronted.

An organization is legitimate when it is not questioned. This means that its structure, process, product and so on are accepted by the mass. One can say that an organization is legitimate when it has cultural and societal support. Legitimacy keeps external pressure away and gives the organization easier access to resources (Deephouse & Suchman 2008)

In published material one can find a few stated definitions of the term legitimacy. Scott (1995) defined legitimacy as: *“Legitimacy is not a commodity to be possessed or*

exchanged but a condition reflecting cultural alignment, normative support, or consonance with relevant rules or laws” (Scott, 1995:45) And Deephouse and Suchman (2008) defined legitimacy as: “The acceptance by the general public and by relevant elite organizations of an association’s right to exist and to pursue its affairs in its chosen manner” (Deephouse & Suchman 2008:51).

Legitimacy is a property that organizations gain from others, it is something that makes them acceptable. An organization can gain legitimacy from both internal and external stakeholders. An external and powerful stakeholder that can give legitimacy to the organization is the state with its ability to confront and mobilize the organization. Another stakeholder which opinions are important is from professions such as lawyers, accountants and intellectuals because of their collective authority. Media is also an important source. Some researchers say that society-at-large is a source of legitimacy. A few examples of how to gain legitimacy are to donate to charity, to form director interlocks and to obtain external approval and acceptance (Deephouse & Suchman 2008).

Legitimacy is socially constructed and formed together with rules, norms and values in the society. The consequences of gaining legitimacy for an organization is that it enhances organizational survival, it affects the competition for resources and positively affect performance measures such as stock prices and stakeholder support (Deephouse & Suchman 2008).

In the next part of this chapter we will describe how legitimacy is gained in the thoughts of New Institutional theory.

3.4 Institutionalism and background

To understand the New Institutional theory we find it essential to understand its origin and therefore we will start by describing Institutional theory and its development through history.

Institutional theory has since 1800’s been a direction within organizational theory as well as national economy, sociology and political science. The Institutional theory’s cornerstone is that institutions arise when individuals construct their social reality, interact with one another and thereafter form approved patterns on how to act. There does not exist a consistent definition of what an institution is but researchers in Organizational theory use the term institutions as a result of people’s actions, conscious as well as unconscious (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009). Institutional theory describes the surroundings impact on an organizations behaviour and means that an organization follows what is taken for granted. The theory focus on how organizations affect, and are affected by the context they operate in. It also

emphasizes the economy as evolutionary. The economy is a process and its actors are constructed by the institutional conditions as well as they form the institutional conditions (ne.se).

Institutional theory is more of a framework than a theory, it is a perspective of organizations and its operation and a way of thinking about social life. Institutional theory contradicts earlier organization theories that say that organizations always function rationally to achieve their goals. The theory defines other reason for organizations actions that are driven by both formal and informal rules created by the surrounding. Institutional theory also contradicts the “contingency theory” which says that an organization’s formal structure reflects what the organization is operating with and what technology it uses. Institutional theory explains the organizations formal structure as an adaption to its surrounding.

Within institutional theory different directions have developed since the 1800’s. These are Early Institutional theory, New Institutional theory and Scandinavian Institutional theory (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009). In this thesis we will use New Institutional theory, which is described below.

3.5 New Institutional theory

The New Institutional theory is based on two articles written in the late 1970’s and in the early 1980’s. John Meyer and Brian Rowans article *Institutionalized Organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony* (1977) is one of the articles that define how organizations acquire legitimacy and why organizations de-couple. The other article *The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and collective rationality in organizations fields* (1983) is written by Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell describes how organizations become isomorph in organizational fields (Eriksson-Zetterqvist 2009).

The main focus in New Institutional theory, that both articles emphasize, is the organizational structures and processes and the organizations remarkable similarity and complexity.

3.5.1 Meyer and Rowan, 1977

Earlier theories has claimed that the formal organizational structure reflects the internal activities in the organization, that rational thinking leads to the most efficient way to coordinate activities in complex networks both internally and externally, and that the bureaucracy is the way to success. The assumption that organizational activities are like their

formal structure, that control is a routine and that rules and procedures are always followed, has proven to be misleading in many research works (Meyer & Rowan 1977).

Due to these research results about formal structure being misleading Meyer and Rowan wanted to find the reason to why organizations act the way they do (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009).

3.5.1.1 Formal and Informal structure

Meyer and Rowan (1977) declares a clear distinction between the organizations formal structure and its everyday work-activities, named the informal structure. They mean that the formal structure of an organization does not reflect the internal activities, it is something that the organization must have to get legitimacy, in other words the formal structure reflects the institutional myths that arise from the society that the organization must follow to survive. The myths, also called the institutionalized rules are classifications interpreted in the society. The interpreted myths are formed by the law, the public opinion or can simply be taken for granted.

The reason for the clear distinction between the formal and the informal structure is that some of the parts of the formal structures are so institutionalized that they actually do not work in praxis. The formal structure and the activities within this is what make the organization seem reliable. It provides the organization with legitimacy by acting and adapting to what the society considers to be correct (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

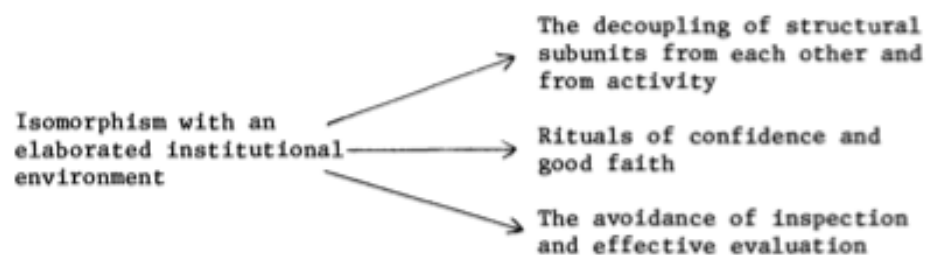
These myths are often not the most efficient way of working but they are essential for surviving, there is a conflict between legitimacy and efficiency. The implementation of institutional myths in an organization can actually cost more than it will bring back in value. The organization will implement these for the reason that they will give the organization legitimacy and contribute to its survival. It is not enough for an organization to be efficiently successful if it wants to survive. The myths have grown in the society and formal structure has become more common due to the fact that all organizations want to succeed, this leads to that they are all implementing the same myths. If an organization does not implement a myth it will be considered as inadequate, irrational and illegitimate and might not survive. Becoming institutional isomorphic with the society is therefore crucial for the organizations success and survival and it gives some crucial consequences for the organization: “(a) *they incorporate elements which are legitimated externally, rather than in terms of efficiency;* (b) *they employ external or Ceremonial assessment criteria to define the value of structural*

elements; and (c) dependence on externally fixed institutions reduces turbulence and maintains stability“ (Meyer and Rowan, 1977:348-349).

The fact that organizational survival depends on the organizations ability on adapting to the institutional society brings up two general problems; the first one is linked to the technical and efficiency requirements that conflicts with institutional myths. The second one is that different institutional myths arise from different parts of the society and that these might conflict with each other. These problems between efficiency and institutional myths can be solved by implementing two strategies in the organization, De-coupling and the logic of confidence and good faith (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

3.5.1.2 Strategies

De-coupling is a strategy where the organization separates the formal structure from the informal structure. The formal structure becomes the part that easily can adapt to external changes and the informal structure is the part that coordinates the organizations activities (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009). *The logic of confidence and good faith* is based on that the organizations internal participants and their external constituents all believe that everything is functioning as it should and therefore inspection and control is seemed to be unnecessary. Inspection and control can find activities that can lead to illegitimacy and therefore institutionalized organizations minimize and ceremonialize inspections (Meyer and Rowan 1977).



—The effects of institutional isomorphism on organizations

Source: Meyer & Rowan 1977:360

3.5.2 DiMaggio and Powell, 1983

In contrast to many other researchers in the organizational research Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell (1983) was interested in studying what makes organizations similar rather

than studying their differences. DiMaggio and Powell agree with earlier researchers that bureaucracy is the most common organization structure however they do not agree in the terms on how bureaucratization arises. Instead of thinking that bureaucracy and structural changes arises from an efficient force and from competition in the market, DiMaggio and Powell state that bureaucracy and change is the result of processes in an organizational field, so called structuration processes. These processes make organizations more similar, “homogenised”, but not necessarily more efficient (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). To describe this homogenization process DiMaggio and Powell uses the terms Organizational field and Isomorphism.

3.5.2.1 Organizational fields

An organizational field occurs from different activities from diverse organization in that specific field. The organizational field consists of all organizations that the organization has a connection to, not only the organizations primary competitors or its closest network but also all relevant actors in its environment (DiMaggio & Powell 1983).

Due to the arisen hierarchy during the construction of the field some organizations that are in the centre have more power and thereby influence the field’s rules, deciding how organizations should be structured.

3.5.2.2 Isomorphism

The other term that DiMaggio and Powell describe is Isomorphism, which is the process that in the best way describes how organizations become more alike on the organizational field. *“Isomorphism is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions”* (DiMaggio & Powell 1983:149).

There exist two types of isomorphism, the Institutional and the Competitive. The Institutional isomorphism is the process that DiMaggio and Powell focus on. This describes the importance of political power and institutional legitimacy for organizations. There are three types of mechanisms, referred to as forces or pressures that lead to organizational isomorphism, the coercive-, the mimetic- and the normative-isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). These mechanisms do not necessarily have the same strength and affect on the organizations. Organizational isomorphism does not always lead to efficiency but the similarity to other organizations makes it is easier to accomplish transactions and recruit career oriented workforce and gain legitimacy.

3.5.2.2.1 The Coercive mechanism

The first mechanism that DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe is the Coercive. The Coercive Isomorphism comes from both formal and informal demands from other organizations in the field. Most coercive pressure comes from political forces and the state with the law that controls activities of the organization. Annual reports and other financial reports are examples that make organizations isomorph by coercive mechanism and so is also technological claims and claims coming from diverse charity organizations. These claims and demands can be very explicit but also subtle, coming from the most powerful organizations that have the most influence on what demands should be fulfilled on the field. The organizations that are lower in the hierarchy adapt to these demands by persuasion or by being invited to join in diverse agreements (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009). Out of this perspective DiMaggio and Powell have derived to two hypotheses about organizational action on a field. These two are; *“The greater the dependence of an organization on another organization, the more similar it will become to that organization in structure, climate, and behavioural focus.”* and *“The greater the centralization of organization A's resource supply, the greater the extent to which organization A will change isomorphically to resemble the organizations on which it depends for resources”* (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:154)

3.5.2.2.2 The Mimetic mechanism

The next mechanism that DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe is the Mimetic. The mimetic force appears mainly in uncertainty. Uncertainty makes organizations imitate or, as it also is called, model other organizations to find a solution to the current problem. Less successful organizations imitate successful organizations for example when they have problems with understanding the current technology, when their goals are vague or when they want to solve a problem to a less cost. An imitation can also give legitimacy to an organization by showing that the organization at least is trying to change (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The imitation can be done both consciously and unconsciously by the modelling organization (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009).

Another source to why organizations become more alike through imitation is because of that organizations imitate other organizations in a way when they use the same consulting agencies (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009). Organizations can also imitate other organizations within the same field that they think of as legitimate and successful “role-models” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Out of the mimetic prospective DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have derived to two further hypotheses on organizational action on a field. These two are; *“The fewer the*

number of visible alternatives organizational models in a field, the faster the rate of isomorphism in that field” and “The greater the extent to which technologies are uncertain or goals are ambiguous within a field, the greater the rate of isomorphic change” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:155-156).

3.5.2.2.3 The Normative mechanism

The final mechanism that makes organization homogeneous that DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe is the Normative. The normative force mainly comes from professionalization. Professionalization is when members of an occupation seek to define the methods and conditions of their work to control their producer’s production and create a common understanding and legitimacy for their occupation. Professionalization arises from two sources: education and professional networks. Professional networks contribute to isomorphism by spreading working models and education contributes by teaching the students the “right way”. Having an education is important in the society and it has become more important to hire people with a University degree. Hiring people from a few schools will lead to isomorphism due to that these people have had the same education and will most likely use their knowledge in a similar way.

Hiring new workforce also leads to isomorphic organizations due to that people often hire people from the same type of organizations and that these people bring with them their earlier experiences on how to organise and operate (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009).

Socialization is another normative force, which means that members of the same profession behave and talk in the same way. This leads to what is called the *homosocial reproduction in management* where men in top positions in collar hire other men in collar because they believe that is the best for the organizations future success (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009).

More examples of normative forces that make organizations alike are when careers start in some few central organizations or trainee programs and later the workforce spread between different organizations. Organizations also become more alike when workforces are sent to workshops to learn about new trends. The fact that organizations use the same consulting agencies also contributes to their similarity (Eriksson-Zetterquist 2009). Out of this normative perspective DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have also derived to two hypotheses on organizational actions on a field. These two are; *“The greater the extent of professionalization in a field, the greater the amount of institutional isomorphic change”* and

“The greater the extent of professionalization in a field, the greater the amount of institutional isomorphic change” (DiMaggio and Powell 1983:156).

Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and their New Institutional theory

3.6 Theoretical summary

In this theoretical chapter we have given an overview of the literature on the concept of Reputation Management and set our definition of Reputation Management used in this thesis, see “Our definition in this thesis”. We have also given a description of legitimacy, a short background of Institutional theory and a more detailed description of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) New Institutional theory. They describe organizations actions from a different perspective than the theories that describe organizations as rational and efficient. They present new forces that drive the organizations that are grounded in the will of getting legitimacy from the organizations surrounding and thereby succeed. In our theoretical analysis we will use these forces, the coercive-, the mimetic- and the normative, as well as activities that show the conflict between legitimacy and efficiency, to analyse our empirical data.

4. Empirical data

In this chapter we will present the information about the organizations that we gathered through interviews. Each organization is portrayed individually and within each part we categorize the data in different themes: Important aspects of the organization, External focused Reputation Management activities and Internal focused Reputation Management activities. We have conducted the interviews in Swedish but will translate direct quotes to English.

4.1 Ving Sweden AB

Interviewees': Magdalena Öhrn, Information Director
 Claes Pellvik, Marketing Director

4.1.1 The important aspect of the company

Ving Sweden AB has a very appreciated product and Magdalena, the Information Director, describes her work on representing the organization as an easy task. Vings mission is to conduct sales and every part of the organization shall in everything they do generate to the mission. Both she and Claes, the Marketing Director describes a close relation within the company's different functions as the entire company work in a process where they want to send a unified message to the mass. Progress reports, newsletters and decisions on what to publish on the web and on their social media forums are some parts of the process, Magdalena exemplifies.

Ving has an information department with four employees who mainly work with information and communication. This department emerged in 2007 due to the former CEO that felt a need for a more structured and professional work with communicating both internally and externally. Their competitor Fritidsresor was strategically ahead with their informant Lotti Knutsson who had put Fritidsresor in a good position since she represented the whole travel industry during the Tsunami crises, Magdalena describes. Magdalena and her crew daily work with handling the media and what they write about Ving, they talk to journalist and inform through the website Ving.se as well as internally on the intranet. Claes and his crew daily work with marketing for Ving in Sweden and build campaigns, articles and commercials.

Vings primary stakeholders are their customers, both Claes and Magdalena clarifies, but they also value their employees and potential employees highly. They want to obtain and attract good employees by being a good place to work at. Other important stakeholders are

media, international colleagues within the Thomas Cook group, cooperation partners and potential cooperation's partners. Claes describes that his work with campaigns is important for cooperation partners by giving an example on how partners may react to a good and well thought through campaign, *“Wow, how fun to work with Ving, what a great campaign for my hotel on Crete, this is a nice partner for me to work with or them will I continue to work with.”*

When it comes to role models, Magdalena explains that she sees Ving as the role model for other actors in the industry. Claes says that Ving looks to other companies in other industries more than in their own industry. Claes continues and mentions IKEA and H&M as good examples as role models especially when it comes to environmental impacts and working conditions in developing countries. He considers IKEA and H&M handling media well and he finds H&M's idea on recycling clothes inspiring.

Ving Sweden AB is a limited company and therefore must follow some certain rules when it comes to annual reports and similar activities, Magdalena describes. Thomas Cook Group, which Ving Sweden AB is a part of, is also listed on the London stock exchange so there they also have some rules and restrictions that they must obey. Except for that, Claes says that they do not have so many rules but even more expectation that they have to live up to and which strive their work.

4.1.2 Externally focused Reputation Management activities

Ving has four core values; thoughtfulness, innovation, safety and quality and these pervades both internally and externally, Claes says. He explains that they are frequently working to be at “top of mind” of their customers. By top of mind he means that when people want to travel, Ving should be the first alternative that comes to mind. He continues to explain that they want the brand to stand for innovation and he says that *“safety is one of our primary core value, in all our communication we show that we are a tour operator that one can trust, that knows how the guest want it and understands the guest and its needs, this shall pervade all our communication”*.

Knowing that the company's business has a negative impact on the environment and on some societies it is very important to compensate, inform and to emphasize the good that comes from travelling, Magdalena clarifies. On the company websites, ving.se, which is the hub of all communication they work strategically and frequently on informing about everything that considers the travellers and the business. Magdalena describes that it is important to be transparent and that it is very important to give an honest picture of the truth,

both when it comes to hotels and other circumstances on the travel destinations. She says that Ving knows that some of their destinations are located in countries with no unions and hard living conditions, but instead of not arranging trips to these destinations they inform and link to Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Utrikes Departementet). All-inclusive trips that Ving offer are also known as something bad for the country inhabitants, but by informing, being understanding and compensating Ving becomes a caring company according to Magdalena.

Ving is also active in many social responsibility projects. Together with Mentor, a non-profit organisation, they work to prevent violence and drugs among young people. They have another project called “Min stora dag” where they work together with a foundation giving children with serious diseases the chance to have their “best vacation ever” with their family. A third important project is ECPAT that work against child pornography, trafficking and child sex tourism. They also follow the guidelines from Travellife which is an impartially actor within the travel agency business. Ving also support schools, libraries and orphanages on their travel destinations. In that way they give back to the society that they are active in, Magdalena describes. She gives an example of when they freighted water in their airplanes, as it was shortage of water in Haiti.

The projects they have chosen to work with are mainly targeted towards children, as their main customers are families. Magdalena describes the importance of working with social responsibility because if they do not, they could be deselected and receive a lot of bad-will. Claes explains this by saying *“As a consumer you expect that as the leading travel agency in Sweden you take responsibility and is a nice actor in the traveling business due to as a consumer you do not want to feel as a bad person”*.

These projects, described above and awards they have received, are very important for Ving. They publish and show these very clear on their most important forum ving.se. They also show their activities on their social media channels, in inspiration magazines, newspapers, information mail before departure, information folders on the hotels and their transfer busses, Magdalena says. She adds that all their guides are also educated in these matters. Both Magdalena and Claes emphasize the meaning of ving.se and Magdalena states *“the website is most important for us, it is our hub in the communication”*.

Ving does not present their work with the environment in the same degree as they do with their social responsibility work. Magdalena describes why by saying that environmental awareness has turned into a hygiene factor that many consumers not question anymore. They

present their environmental work on their website. There they also show their organization as ECO-label and that they have ISO-certified their airplanes, Magdalena says.

Claes explains that *“CSR is a part of the base of who we are at Ving, it is part of all our communication but it is not the primary message in our commercials and campaigns”*.

Magdalena develops her work with representing Ving with saying that another important part is to ensure that the Media write correct and preferably positive news about them. Magdalena as the Information Director try to influence the media, she says that *“we want them to write about what is important for us, that drives our business, and the published material should make people visit ving.se and book a trip”*.

4.1.3 Internally focused Reputation Management activities

Magdalena explains that the intranet is the hub for the internal communication in the same way that ving.se is in the external communication. On the intranet she publishes all the information relevant to all employees and it communicates both small and large news. *“To make notice on our intranet on our cooperation with Min stora dag and Mentor are two examples that bring incredible pride internally”* Magdalena says. The intranet helps employees be updated and makes them feel important, Magdalena explains. Claes addresses a recent example when one of the employees had sold a trip for 250 000 SEK to Mauritius, this was announced on the intranet so that it would trigger other employees and make the one who sold it feel appreciated and rewarded for doing a good job.

In addition to the intranet, Magdalena explains, they communicate by having monthly meetings where all employees are present. The CEO and one other employee run blogs to tell all the employees on what is currently happening in the organization. Magdalena says that they quite recently they arranged a question-box where anyone anonymously can ask or say what ever. Magdalena tells a story about an employee who had a question about why they served Scampi at their hotels, when scampi is endangered. This lead to that all the hotels stopped serving Scampi. This was in the perfect moment as currently there was an anti-scampi campaign going on. So Ving got a lot of positive attention in the press.

The company frequently work with educating the employees in their core values. They give examples and use storytelling to teach their employees on how to behave and how they want the organization to be presented. Magdalena says that they pointed to their core values when launching their new logotype that has the shape of a heart.

Magdalena says that there are two other Swedish travel agencies that Ving generally measures and compares themselves with, these are Fritidsresor and Apollo. Claes describes

one trademark tracking measurement called “BUZZ” that they strategically work towards to gain good results. It is an external benchmark that shows the extent of how much people have heard or seen the trademark in other situations than commercial ones.

“The best travel site” and “The best family hotel” are two examples of recurrent awards given to the company. Magdalena describes these as bonuses, as “receipts” on their good work that will encourage internally.

4.2 Gothenburg Research Institute

Interviewees: Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist, Director, GRI
Malin Tengblad, Communicator, CFK

4.2.1 Important aspects of the organization

According to Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist and Malin Tengblad, being a part of the University implies that GRI has to consider the three missions stated by the University. The first one is to educate and lecture, the second one is to conduct research and the third one is called “the third mission” which means sharing of knowledge to the public. GRI however has a specific mission to conduct multi-disciplinary research. Ulla emphasizes the importance of performing good research while Malin, as being a part of CFK, focuses more on the third mission.

GRI does not have their own communication department with employees working mainly with communication. Nor do they have a pronounced Communication manager, Ulla clarifies. At the moment, Malin explains, the University is working on a communication strategy as a part of Vision 2020. This is a policy document for how the University of Gothenburg should present itself as one organization in the future.

GRI is only financed externally, director Ulla explains. Researchers apply for grants and scholarships from different funds, which constitute their salary and research funds. Mainly they turn to the Research Councils with an idea for a research project. Malin says *“when you apply for money at the big research financiers it is important to have a good idea, that you can express it clearly, and that it is finished”*. Ulla says that the financiers are one of GRI’s most important stakeholders along with potential researchers and other collaborative partners both national and international. On behalf of CFK, communicator Malin also emphasizes the public, in connection to the third mission.

As a research institute at University of Gothenburg GRI has do follow the guidelines of the University and participate in mandatory evaluations, Ulla explains. She describes that GRI worked actively to gain good results in the most recent evaluation of the research

conducted at the University called RED10. Another mandatory action where GRI is presenting themselves is in the annual report and they have to follow the University's policies when it comes to the environmental work, Ulla says.

In the work of how to present the organization and find inspiration in ways to do this, Ulla finds it hard to have role models as GRI is a multi-disciplinary research institute and there are not many others in Scandinavia but she says that they glance on other research institute structure. Malin on the other hand looks at other research institutes for inspiration in her work. She gives an example on how CRESC, a British research institute, present and structure their website with themes on their research, easy to access.

4.2.2 Externally focused Reputation Management activities

Director Ulla represents the institute in some forums but she describes GRI's work on presenting themselves is mainly exercised through the work of the researchers. It is not only in their publications that they present their institute, but also in other contexts such as seminars, presentations of research and investigations, applications for foundation and lectures within the University and in contexts such as the International Science Festival Gothenburg. Ulla says that all researchers gain from one another as published and acclaimed research enhance the name of GRI and all its employees. Both Ulla and Malin claim that conducting good research, which is the aim of GRI as a research institute, is the main contribution to build a well-known name. Ulla says, "*an important part of the visibility is that we have very good researchers*". Renowned researchers also attract other well-renowned researchers. Even though having reputable researchers is good for the institute when building their name, Ulla explains that the most reputable and "best" researchers are not always the ones who conduct the most interesting, relevant and attractive research that generates money.

Ulla emphasizes the importance of presenting the organization by "*frequently applying for research grants and these approved so that the colleagues at the research councils know who we are. It is very important.*" Another important aspect that Ulla highlights when it comes to the visibility of GRI is "*to have very skilled researchers that are nationally and internationally acknowledged*". Malin also expresses the researchers' part in the work with building of the institutions name, "*it is the researchers that does this, as it is the researchers that sits in the preparations panels, and the researchers network that can contribute to it*", she says.

GRI wants the research they conduct to be exposed in the media for different reasons, Ulla says. She clarifies by giving an example of how people can note a project like Bank

Management that they have an interest in, which can enable cooperation's. Malin also speaks about this, telling a true story of when an external researcher saw another researchers work presented in the media, which lead to a collaboration with a research project worth 7 million SEK. Ulla also says it is important for showing the financiers that GRI is up to date and reliable in their research.

Malin as a communicator describes how she produce newsletters and maintain the CFK website, where CFK is presented externally to the public and to the University of Gothenburg. About the newsletter she says, "*who ever you are, you should be able to read it*", once again referring to the third mission. Malin claims that the website needs to be updated continually to attract readers. During the latest evaluation RED10 the CFK website was criticized for being too broad, with texts that were not sharp on the subject. These criticisms made the institute improve its weaknesses, Malin says. She also describes how she has been inspired by the website of University of Sheffield. They have a good follow up on completed research projects, which enable anyone to read about the implemented studies.

GRI has recently constructed and presented an information sheet about the institute. This information sheet is targeted towards the financiers in the purpose of presenting the organizations and its operations when applying for money.

4.2.3 Internally focused Reputation Management activities

When it comes to presenting the organization internally for the employees, Ulla says that GRI has undertaken some measures in order to make GRI an attractive ethical workplace, which attracts reputable researchers improving the name of GRI. The institute also aims to have a gender balance of employees and have since the start worked with green management and sustainability. Internally CFK communicate at their Monday meetings where each employee informs the others of his/hers activities, Malin says. GRI has weekly meetings on Fridays in which all employees, including representatives from CFK, are expected to take part. Other important topics concerning the organizations are also discussed..

4.3 Malmö City Theatre

Interviewee's: Jesper Larsson, Director
 Jenny Bång, Marketing Director

4.3.1 The important aspect of the organization

"Our mission is to take money and put them into experiences for taxpayers in Malmö district. And you must to have demands on us for this to be performed in a good way and so we can

develop to do more and better things”, says Jesper Larsson the Director at Malmö City Theatre. Jesper explains that the city owned theatre gets directives they are to follow from the city that are interpreted by Jesper and Petra Brylander, the two Directors of the company.

As the organization is public and the access principle applies to the business all documents and actions are accessible for the public, explains the Marketing Director Jenny Bång. This means there are journalists that can monitor the theatre and write about it. The organization does not work actively with displaying good or bad results for the public, says Jenny.

Jenny explicates that as Marketing Director she is responsible for the marketing department where 7 people work fulltime and 20 people on hours. Their marketing plan is focused on the theatrical performances. This she says, means that the marketing department does not work directly with the name of the theatre, but focus on the plays and repertoire, *“Its the performances that is the brand”*.

The audience is the single most important stakeholder of Malmö City Theatre, Jesper says. He explains that within the audience all the other stakeholders should be represented, such as politicians and other decision-makers.

Jenny says that the stakeholders, especially decision-makers, expect the theatre to deliver on time, manage the business in a proper way and do good, interesting performances. The latter she says is the hardest part as everybody has his or her own idea of what good theatre is, *“someone wants more classics, another wants more experimental, someone says the theatre has to many old guys, another one says there are to much young people”*. To solve this Jenny says the theatre is working according the motto that the repertoire should be as a smorgasbord, *“everything is not for everyone, but there should always be something for everyone”*.

Both the Director Jesper and the Marketing Manager Jenny talks about how the whole culture industry is in an economical crisis as there are less government grants. But Jesper describes how Malmö City Theatre *“right now we are getting pretty much ‘credd’ in different contexts for the business, for how we manage it, and I believe that in many contexts, it comes from the broad work”*. He says that the theatre during the last year has build their brand even more by having attendance records even though there has been a lot of newly written plays. But he also says that doing good theatre is expected from them and that this *“is the basis and foundation, but then you have to do other things as well”*, referring to the theatre activities when not on stage.

4.3.2 Externally focused Reputation Management activities

Director Jesper Larsson explains that the theatres work and his work in presenting the theatre can be seen in two time-perspectives, the short and the long one. The short one, he says, is about making a good show tonight. In Jespers case he is expected to be there to represent the theatre. In the long term is about building the brand of theatre to attract the artists that are difficult to get to come to Malmö. Jesper says that both the artistic and the economic parts are related to one and other in the brand profiling. *"We have to use the brand name and the status of our brand as we are to attract an attractive director to want to come here... And in the same way when we are working against politicians as it comes to economizing and grant distribution, etc., which is our main source of income... All work that you do contribute to the brand building, both the negative and the positive"*, Jesper says.

Jenny says that during the last year there have been much positive medial attention as the theatre has had three plays being displayed in national television and got to participate in the "Theatre Biennials" where only the best shows get to perform.

Jesper highlights other large and successful projects that, according to Jesper *"add positive value to the brand."* Jesper describes how the theatre made an event of the release of a book based on research about the projects. He says that the book and its event *"is really a brand-building work"*. At the event there were people from the industry, politicians, officials and researchers. Similar event have been hosted at the theatre before, as Jesper believes that *"One should not underestimate the value of these kinds of activities and their value in relation to overall experience of operation"*. Jenny describes the projects as communication projects with the purpose of trying to attract a new audience that could come from Copenhagen.

Jesper finds the most important part of these projects as being able to keep deadlines and do what you have promised, except from attracting the a large audience. Keeping deadlines and promises are important, says Jesper, as the politicians know that Malmö City Theatre delivers. *"Right now we are reaping the effects of a brand-building efforts against politicians and officials when it comes to being awarded by grants"*, Jesper gladly says. He explains that you have to perform really bad for the politicians to suspend the organizations financial support, but you can reach new money if you put an effort in it. This money consists of project-funds or reform money as the politicians call it, he says. Their purpose is to be used to reach political goals. Jesper says that to get this money it is important to have personal relationships to the one who makes decisions. *"When you meet them on the street or in other*

contexts, you have a natural reason to go up to them and settle something and then pitch the next thing. It takes time to achieve the personal contact and in relation to the brand, to be combined with the brand so that when they see Petra and me, they will see the Malmö City Theatre and not something else."

Jesper describes the work with the board as *"little bit of storytelling, me and Petra communicate positive stories about the business that they can pass on"*. He sees one part of the work of the representatives in the board as being good ambassadors on behalf of the organization.

The marketing that Jenny does is divided in two parts, which she describes as traditional and modern marketing. The traditional consist of advertising in papers and on the street. The modern marketing is based on social medias and the building of a customer database. Jenny calls it relation marketing when you reconnect to your customers after the first contact. In the cases they do use social media they have established the concept of always responding to criticism, which Jenny and her employees work with, she says.

When talking about marketing Jesper focus more on the overall picture. He says that a theatre needs to think of how they can attract people in the same way a television channel needs to stand out to get viewers. Looking at these aspects Jesper says he focus on doing what is obvious. He gets inspiration from all kinds of business such as how the Opera in Barcelona makes it possible to see how the stage look from the seat you are about to buy or present shows in a paper specific for the theatre, as Stockholm City Theatre does.

The Marketing Manager Jenny also says she gets inspired by how other business work. She says that the Malmö City Theatre should be referred to as the city's theatre in the same way every inhabitant in Malmö knows that MFF is the city's football team. She also says that the aim of the organization is to be as Svensk Film (SF), meaning that when you want to go to the theatre this is the first and only place you turn to.

The work with CSR within Malmö City Theatre mainly consists of social responsibility and not that much environmental work, says Jesper. He explain that the organization work under mandatory directives from the city of Malmö but nothing more. But social responsibilities the theatre work with thorough different assignments, Jesper explains. One example he gives is how the "Big Theatre Course" where actors do workshops in schools, then invites the schools to see a play. After this the children with their families, especially children from underprivileged families, are invited to come and see the play and this time the children can work as guides and ambassadors for their families. Jesper gives

another example of a workshop where Roma actors and musicians met actors of the Malmö City Theatre to exchange experiences. Jesper says; *“looking at it from a strictly business perspective, it's really helping to build the brand. Often those who are the decision makers for project funding, if we also can tell them about a collaboration with a Roma association they become very positive”*.

The Marketing Manager Jenny Bång calls the type of work “public availability”. She says that it aims to reach people with disabilities, language difficulties, class issues like if they have grown up without the chance to visit the theatre. She says the reason why the theatre works with this is that it is municipally funded and has to be there for all people in Malmö, *“everyone should have the opportunity to come here and feel welcome”*. Jenny also describes a project called “Threshold Project” (Tröskel Projektet) which aims to get the theatre to reach across the threshold into the community and vice versa. Jenny argues, *“Since we are tax-funded, we feel that we should work in this way.”*

4.3.3 Internally focused Reputation Management activates

To make a good show is important, Jesper says, but he knows that every one cannot like every thing. Therefore he emphasizes that even though the play does not fit you, you should be satisfied with your visit to the theatre. This satisfaction Jesper says will come from the nice and listening personnel working as public hosts and selling tickets. Jesper explains that the theatre educate their personnel in how to be flexible and clear, he gives an example of how the personnel needs to understand that even though they have made everything *“by-the-book”*, an angry but important customer can effect the name of the theatre more than it costs to give a refund.

Jenny describes an education that is provided for the one who works as a host during the plays and performances. This education is called “Branding Customer Care” (Varumärkesbyggandekundvård). She explains that this is needed, as these personnel are the direct face of the theatre, disregarding the actors. She says it is important *“to dealing with the audience in a way, if there are conflicts, so the audience leave without getting the brand of Malmö City Theatre ruined.”*

Malmö City Theatre has weekly meetings with their employees. They also educate their entire personnel once in a while, says both Jesper and Jenny. They both speak of an education carried out a few years ago called “The audience in Focus”, where a British consultant held sessions talking about how everybody who works within the theatre should focus on the audience. Jesper describes that he and his partner Petra, the Directors of the

theatre, went to a similar session held by the City Management of Culture (Kulturförvaltningen). There they thought that the consultant with “The audience in Focus” would be perfect for the employees at Malmö City Theatre. Jesper says that the purpose of this education was to inspire the whole staff. He also adds *“if you do not understand that it is the core of the product, you can not develop the business so the product becomes as good as possible”*. Jenny believes that the purpose of the staff education was to get them thinking of questions like *“Who we work for? In which way we want to be viewed? What do we want the audience to think of us?”*

4.4 The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre

Interviewee’s: Jenny Jardefur, Communicator
 Louise Arvidsson, Communicator
 Carin Kindbom, CEO

4.4.1 The important aspect of the organization

The Swedish exhibition and congress centre is strongly driven by their purpose stated in the statute of the foundation, Carin the CEO clarifies. Carin explains their mission as the tool to achieve their purpose by defining their mission as: to create profitability to be able to achieve their purpose. *“If we don’t manage to be profitable in our business, we cannot reinvest and then we would not be able to continue to create a growth on the market”*, Carin says.

Both communicators, Jenny and Louise, believe that all actions connected to presenting the organization is done in the intention to gain profit that is consistent to the exhibition centres purpose.

The most important stakeholders for the organization are also connected to the organization’s purpose. The stakeholders are the academy forum, the political forum and the business and trade forum. Carin explains the importance of the relation to these forums and relevance of representing themselves in all connections to achieve their purpose. She continues to describe other important cooperation partners such as Gothenburg Convention Bureau.

At the moment the exhibition centre does not have a communication department for the entire group. The communication is divided between departments and each business area, such as the Gothia Hotel and the restaurants, takes their own responsibility for handling information and the process of spreading it, Jenny and Louise describes. However the centre is currently working on a communication strategy for the entire group to implement in the

near future. Due to big investments, problem with communication during the reorganization in 2012 and especially the construction of the new tower has clarified the need of a central communication department for the entire group, Carin says. Louise explains the need and the importance of a central communication department by underlining the affects of synchronizing the external with the internal. Between the internal departments communication is important to prevent misunderstandings and mistakes from earlier incidents as information has come from wrong departments and spread in the wrong directions. She talks about the synergy effect that the centre is reaching for. The different businesses within the group shall work in synergy and help each other and gain from one another. By communicating information through different channels and in the different business areas the entire group will work in a synergy and present the different parts through one another. When one of the restaurants have a special happening it will not only be published on their website but also for example on the TV-screens in the hotel and on the exhibition centres Facebook page, Jenny exemplifies.

When it comes to role models for the Swedish Exhibition Centre, Carin explains that it is always important to see to other companies success to improve their own business. It is mostly service-producing companies that they take inspiration from as well as businesses working with facilities where great amounts of people reside, such as shopping centres.

4.4.2 Externally focused Reputation Management activities

The CEO Carin Kindbom explains she sees the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre as working with presenting itself in two ways, proactively and re-actively. She says, “*we work the proactively to show what we are creating to gain benefits externally*”. These benefits come in the form of goodwill as the organization gets medial attention. Carin describes her work in presenting the organization externally as divided in three different forums where we find the most important stakeholders; the political-, the academic- and the business-forum. She gives many examples of how she present and network within the different forums. In the political forum she explains that she sits in different boards and collaborations such as sitting in the board of Gothenburg Convention Bureau, being a member of a group called “Evenemangsområdets Samverkningsgrupp” and a collaboration to develop the infrastructure of the flights. She says that in these contexts it is all about showing how the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre can participate and contribute to the region by attracting more people. In the academic forum she sometimes gives lectures or participates in seminars where she presents the work of the organization. In the business forum she say that she

presents the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre by being a member of the Organisation Committee of Gothenburg Horse Show, networking at the different exhibitions held in their own facilities as well as going to other companies events. By participating in these external forums she says that *“you create the conditions for collaboration, so it is important to be outside”*. Carin clarifies that *“For us it is quite obvious and important to present our organization as we base our whole business on collaboration”*. In these presentations she says that the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre wants to be a part of the city, so they have to present themselves as a part of the city.

Communicator Jenny says that the marketing departments are responsible for the social medias where the organization is visible for any one who visits them. These are Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. On some occasions Jenny says that they also use the big screen displayed for the public on Korsvägen.

Jenny also defines the work with CSR as a competitive advantage as it is free marketing and branding to be seen helping others. She describes how the organization instead of throwing leftover bread rolls and buns, gives these to the café at the Rescue Mission of Gothenburg.

Other work in the collaboration with the Rescue Mission of Gothenburg is the large Christmas gift collection that is held every year. Jenny explains that in this event both employees and external parts are able to donate gifts to children in need. *“This event we get a lot of media, last winter we had Channel 4 sending live from the hotel lobby. It is heard and seen a lot, especially in the social medias.”*

The environmental part of the work with CSR is a must to attract customers, especially big international events, Carin says. As an example she explains that in the negotiations before the start of the construction of the third tower, an international recognized environmental standard was a demand. *“The environmental work within the organization is presented to customers in sales materials, it can be the critical advantage that determines whether we win a congress or not”* she says, and continues *“it's not just a unique selling proposition any longer, but a must, a hygiene factor that we have ”*.

Carin mentions a few ways that the exhibition centre measures themselves and compares them to other organizations in the same industry. The measurement that they consider as the most important is the one that the trade research institute at does where the visit nutritional effects are measured, due to the fact that this is strongly connected to their purpose to promote Gothenburgs trade and industry. This number is also presented in their

annual report. The trade research institute is an impartial actor and their measurement shows how much the exhibition centre has generated to the city by bringing guests to Gothenburg which then spend money on shopping, taxis and restaurants and thereby it contributes to the city's growth.

4.4.3 Internally focused Reputation Management activities

Carin lists the different internal communication channels, for example the organization's own paper "Läget", the intranet and TV-screens. As a communicator Jenny says she works with presenting the organization in the internal communication channels. She writes most of the articles of "Läget" and the updates on the intranet.

Carin explains that there are many reasons for keeping the employees informed. The most important reason is that the employees are the ones who will have the possibility to inform the customers of different matters like if there are any disturbances due to the construction or on-going exhibitions.

Another reason to keep the employees informed is connected to the CSR-work of the organization. Carin says; *"proud personnel naturally delivers better results as they feel better, have more engagement in their work and talk better of their employer"*.

Communicator Jenny also speaks of engagement in connection to CSR. She says; *"Employee branding is pride and engagement, that 'where I work my company is doing these things', our staff becomes good ambassadors for us and talk good about us to others. We have very engaged employees and engagement is one of the aspects, when we do our annual employee survey, where the results are very high"*. She sees the purpose of the work with CSR is to make the current staff proud and engaged, but also make the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre an attractive workplace for others.

Jenny describes collaborations with other partners such as Children's Rights in Society (BRIS), where they recently sponsored the distribution of a scholarship, and a project called "Mitt Liv", which they continuously work with by employing people with foreign background.

Jenny describes how the organization works with storytelling. A few years ago they made a collection of stories through which the employees could understand the values that the organization stands for. This collection had both real and fictive stories with the focus on how to be a good host. Carin on the other hand says that she uses storytelling when she presents the organization externally. *"We have a 95 year old story of collaboration which we*

can share”, she says, (this makes storytelling an activity that could be presented in both External and Internal Reputation Management.)

The exhibitions centre has a hosting-training program that every employee has to participate in. Carin explains that by educating the employees with focus on the customer improve the perception of the organization.

5. Analysis

In this chapter we will analyse our empirical data using our theoretical framework. The empirical data will be interpreted, and linked with the theories presented in the theoretical framework. The construction of the analysis is based on the following areas from New Institutional theory: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism. We will compare the organizations work with presenting themselves within these themes. We will finish the analysis with a discussion about the conflict between legitimacy and efficiency.

5.1 Coercive isomorphism

As presented in the theoretical framework coercive isomorphism comes from informal and formal demands from other organizations in the field. Examples of these demands are annual reports, technical claims, political claims and claims from charity organizations.

All of the organizations we have studied in our research are operative in Sweden. This means that they all have to follow the same law and rules. Therefore they all are exposed to coercive forces demanding them to publish annual reports, which not only present the results of the year but also the organizations in total. These reports makes the organizations look serious and legitimate, not only towards the state of Sweden but also towards stakeholders. Due to that Ving Sweden AB is a part of the Thomas Cook Group listed on the London Stock Exchange, they also need to follow British rules as they present their annual reports and differ from the others in this aspect.

Another clear coercive force on the organizations we have studied is the environmental demands. Here we can see two separate blocks formed as the organizations depend on different expectations, an informal demand. GRI and Malmö City Theatre are dependent on their control organs, GRI on the University of Gothenburg and Malmö City Theatre on the City of Malmö. They mainly present their environmental work towards these organs. As Malmö City Theatre has to be available for all citizens of Malmö, this is another aspect that they have to present to answer to the demand of Malmö City.

The theatre is active within the field of culture that undergoes major cutbacks so to gain money the theatre has to do social projects such as workshops and the “threshold-project”. The dependency on this money we see as resulting in a political formal demand, exposing Malmö City Theatre to coercive pressure.

Ving and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre are both dependent on their customers, which are the most powerful “organization” or actor within the field. As their customers expect that Ving and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre are working with environmental measures, the organizations see this work as an obvious activity. The CEO Carin Kindbom at the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre says it is a must to be able to attract congresses and the Information Director Magdalena Öhrn at Ving Sweden AB sees this work as a hygiene factor that they need to present to attract customers. The organizations present their environmental measures on their websites and in sales materials to display it for their customers. We see the pressure from the organizations customers as informal coercive forces as their customers are necessary for the organizations survival.

Due to the dependencies of these organizations on the same resources, their customers, Ving and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre becomes alike in their presentation of the environmental work. For example they both present that they follow environmental standards. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explains that organizations dependent on the same resources are exposed to the same forces, which makes them look more alike and thereby gain legitimacy.

As Ving has a business that could be argued to affect the society negatively, environmental as well as social conditions for inhabitants, they have to compensate for this to gain the trust of their customers. We see this social responsibility work and the work with presenting it as a response on the expectations of the customers, an informal demand and thereby a coercive force. Ving presents their social responsibility at ving.se, in sales material, social media, airplanes, transfer busses, which is almost everywhere they reach their customers. This appears to be one of the most important things when it comes to presenting the organization towards their customers as it gives them legitimacy.

Both the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre and GRI are controlled by their missions. This affects them as they have to present how well they fulfil their missions. The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre have to measure visit nutritional effects and GRI’s research is being evaluated by the University of Gothenburg. Presenting how well the organizations fulfil their mission indirectly becomes a formal demand as the organizations are tied to their missions.

5.2 Mimetic isomorphism

As presented in the theoretical framework mimetic isomorphism appears mainly in uncertainty. Uncertainty makes organizations imitate other organizations to find a solution to a current problem.

All of the organizations we have studied in our research are looking at as well as taking after other organizations that they perceive as successful and legitimate in their actions when presenting themselves. Imitating like this, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) classify as a mimetic force. Ving gives examples of how they use H&M, Ikea and Fritidsresor as role models. The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre look to other service-producing companies and businesses like shopping centres. Malmö City Theatre is inspired by Stockholm City Theatre and the Opera in Barcelona. They also strive for being as well known as Svensk Film (SF) and connected to Malmö City's name as MFF is. GRI has looked to British Universities and institutes as outline their website and write their newsletters. We see these copied activities not only used because of the imitation of role models, but also as a less costly solution to a current problem.

The use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social medias by all our studied organizations, except GRI, is another less costly solution in how to present yourself. We think the organizations use these forums because it is the easiest way today to reach the masses and inform about activities, thereby gaining legitimacy.

The studied organizations not only use social medias but also other information channels to present themselves in a desirable way. Ving use their heart shaped logotype representing their values in almost all the forums where they appear, such as marketing. The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre present information on their big screen displayed for the public on Korsvägen. Malmö City Theatre use traditional and to some extent modern marketing such as advertising in newspapers and posters on the street to reach their audience. GRI try to get medial attention and has created an information sheet to present the institute for potential financiers. All these activities we see as ordinary solutions when you are in the need of presenting yourself and reach the masses with information. Some of these actions, such as newspaper advertising and logotype as symbols, we think are used because of the same reasons that DiMaggio and Powell exemplifies the use of technology, i.e. when organizations do not understand how to use technology and therefore imitate a successful method used by another organization. To clarify, some marketing methods have been acquired by organizations that are successful in their use of them. Other organizations then look to the

successful ones and implement their methods, without understanding or having to understand the use of the methods. Only using the methods gives them legitimacy.

All the organizations we have studied have some kind of employee working with communication and information, but only Ving and Malmö City Theatre have whole departments for communication. Having a communication department shows the importance of presenting yourself in a way that strengthens the opinion and trust in the organization. Ving has a communication department as they saw the benefits their competitor Fritidsresor got from it, a typical mimetic force from looking at successful organization to solve a problem. The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre have seen the need for a central communication department and are planning to implement a new communication strategy for the whole group. This, according to DiMaggio and Powell, is a mimetic force as it is a common way to solve communication problems. By implementing the concept of a central communication department the organization also gives the impression of that it is trying, which according to DiMaggio and Powell brings legitimacy to the organization. Even though GRI cannot have a communication department, they are planning to improve their communication by participating in the communication strategy “Vision 2020”.

Internal communication in the organizations is important not only to inform employees but also to affect the perception of the organizations held by these important stakeholders. At Ving Sweden AB and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre the both use an intranet for communicating. Both of them are large organizations and the intranet is a less costly solution modelled from an existing technology, which solves their need to communicate. Once again this makes it a mimetic force according to DiMaggio and Powell.

The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre’s newspaper “Läget” can also be seen as a mimetic force as it is an already existing technique of communicating and presenting the workplace for the employees.

All of our organizations have weekly meetings for the employees. This communication method and opportunity to affect the perception of the organization held by the employees we see as a mimetic force as it is a less costly and a “taken-for-granted” solution.

Ving Sweden AB measures their benchmark by participating in “BUZZ” to be able to compare their brand with others. We assume that due to problems with understanding the current technology, Ving uses “BUZZ” as it is an instrument used by others and therefore seem like a suitable measurement.

Malmö City Theatre has used a consulting agency in their education program “Audience in focus”. DiMaggio and Powell say that organizations become more alike when using the same consulting agency, which leads to that the organization becomes legitimate by this mimetic force. Using a consulting agency can also lead to similarity by a normative force which will be described below.

5.3 Normative Isomorphism

As presented in the theoretical framework normative isomorphism mainly come from professionalization, meaning that members of an occupation seek to create a common understanding and legitimacy for their profession.

By educating the employees you affect their view of the organization. The main purpose of doing this is that the employees are the ones in direct contact with other stakeholders. Ving educates their employees in their core values. The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre work with Employee Branding and hosting-training to make the employees good ambassadors. Malmö City Theatre has Branding Customer Care as their employees are the ones meeting the theatre audience. DiMaggio and Powell express professionalization as a struggle by members of an occupation to define the methods of their work, to control the production of producers. As managers and HR personnel educate other employees to control their production of services, it becomes a normative force. We assume that if you do not educate your staff you might become illegitimate.

Presenting your organization and thereby giving it legitimacy, is a task which lies within the profession of a CEO. Carin Kindbom as the CEO of the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre represents the company in many different forums. Jesper Larsson as the Theatrical Director of Malmö City Theatre also represents the theatre, especially focusing on the politicians of the city. Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist, the Director of GRI, represents the institute and we can only assume that the CEO at Ving has the same task. This is a clear normative force as we are educated to believe that within the profession of a CEO lays the responsibility of representing the organization. In the same way representing their research institute at seminars, lectures and in publications lies within the profession of a researcher. This we see in the case of GRI.

The trend of using storytelling within organizations is found in educational literature and taught through consultancy agencies. DiMaggio and Powell explain how organizations become similar from normative forces as they send their employees to workshops to learn about trend and use the same consultant agencies. This as well as the fact that the educational

systems teach the concept of storytelling, puts normative pressure on the organizations. Ving educate their employees in core values with storytelling. The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre use storytelling both internally and externally to present their organization. Jesper Larsson use storytelling as he present the Malmö City Theatre. Neither Ulla nor Malin at GRI use the term storytelling but they both explain how the institute depend on presenting its record of good research.

Some organizations have a clear purpose with their activities, the purpose comes naturally from the profession. We can see this when looking at the theatre as the purpose of the theatre is to produce plays. At Malmö City Theatre the plays are the activities that present the organization. By making good plays they attract not only more audience but also opportunities to produce more and better plays, as they can present themselves as attractive for famous directors. When it comes to research institutes, such as GRI, it lays within the profession to conduct research. If GRI presents good research they can attract more reputable researchers. Both are therefore exposed to normative pressure. If you have good directors at the theatre or reputable researchers at the institute it gives the organizations legitimacy and this legitimacy attracts new directors and researchers.

5.4 Summarizing the isomorph forces

By categorizing the organizations activities in presenting themselves in the three different isomorph forces we can see that depending on the organizations context, with its stakeholders, the organizations are exposed to different isomorph forces. Like DiMaggio and Powell (1983) say we can see that the isomorph forces have different affect and strength on different organizations.

All of the organizations are exposed to coercive forces but we find that Malmö City Theatre is under most coercive pressure. This is due to that the theatre is financed and controlled by the municipality, which means that they have formal demands. Ving and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre are mainly exposed to informal coercive pressure in form of expectations from their customers. To respond to this pressure they work more actively in presenting themselves online than GRI and Malmö City Theatre. See appendix 3 for a table where the reputational activities of each organization are summarized and placed within suitable isomorphic force.

We also find that all of the studied organizations are exposed to mimetic pressure. Many of the activities of representing the organization preferably are copies from successful activities performed by other organizations. We can see that many of the activities are used as

they are less-costly solutions, traditional marketing methods and an answer to how to use new technologies.

Just as the other forces we find that all the organizations are exposed to normative pressure, as people want to legitimize their profession. As we have interviewed people that sit on relatively high positions within their organization we can assume that they have higher education degrees and have been educated within their profession during their career. This is one of the main reasons for normative pressure on organizations. Informants, communicators and especially directors and CEO's represent the organization as it lies within their profession, this is also an example of normative pressure.

All the isomorph forces make organizations become alike, giving them legitimacy within their contexts. Activities giving legitimacy are not always the most efficient activities for the purpose of the organization. In the next part of this chapter we will discuss the conflict between legitimacy and efficiency that we found within the organizations we studied.

5.5 The conflict between legitimacy and efficiency

Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that there is a distinction between organizations formal structure and its everyday work-activities. They mean that the formal structure of an organization does not reflect the internal activities, it is something that the organization must have to get legitimacy, something the organization must do to survive. Looking at theories about Reputation Management we found that Røvik (2008) states that the best expression that prevails with organizational reputation is legitimacy, as both terms concern the acceptance of organizations and the confidence of the actors in their surroundings. If we combined Meyer and Rowan's assumption with the definition of Røvik we find that activities within the formal structure of an organization is something that the organization have to get organizational reputation i.e. legitimacy.

In the organizations we have studied we find activities, myths Meyer and Rowan (1977) would call them, that are not always the most efficient way of working but essential for surviving. We find conflicts between legitimacy and efficiency.

Ving Sweden AB works actively with social reasonability such as "Min stora dag", freighting water to Haiti and supporting schools, libraries and orphanages at their destinations. These activities cost more than they bring back in money value but Ving implement them for the reason that they will give the organization legitimacy and contribute to its survival. The same goes for Ving's ISO certification and ECO label, they have to

perform all these activities to strengthen their customer's opinion about and trust in the organization, to gain legitimacy.

The Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre have the same type of activities. Their social responsibility work, such as Christmas gift collection, their collaboration with Rescue Mission of Gothenburg and Children's Rights in Society (BRIS), make the organization seem reliable and provide the organization with legitimacy by acting and adapting to what the society considers to be correct. In the same way as Ving the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre use international recognized environmental standard to legitimate themselves in the eyes of the customers. These activities conflict with being efficient as it is a cost, which does not result in any direct income.

At GRI we find a conflict between efficiency and legitimacy as they seek to employ reputable researchers to gain legitimacy even though these are not always the ones doing the most efficient research in terms of generating money to GRI. Having reputable researchers may not provide the institute with the most money but it will be good for their name.

We find it important to acknowledge that there are reputational activities within the organizations we have studied that are both efficient and provide legitimacy. Such activities are the social responsibility work done by Malmö City Theatre as they get reform money from the municipality to perform these activities, which also gives them legitimacy. GRI present themselves mainly through their research. This research is also their "every day activity" bringing money to the organization and therefore also efficient.

6. Conclusion

In this final chapter we will reconnect to the purpose and discuss our results further. First we give a conclusion of this thesis. Then we describe our contributions to the field of Reputation Management and give some suggestions for further research. Lastly we have a final discussion where we share our thoughts with the reader.

6.1 Conclusion of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis was to empirically study and theoretically analyse how and why Swedish organizations operating in different contexts work with Reputation Management today. To get the data we needed for our purpose we interviewed nine different people from four different organizations in different contexts.

We have found that the reputational work of presenting the organization within the organizations we have studied is strongly linked to their stakeholders and context, as the theories on Reputation Management suggest.

How the studied organizations work with Reputation Management is explained in detail in the empirical chapter. Here we find that Ving Sweden AB and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre are similar in many of their activities in presenting themselves. This is a result of that they are in similar contexts with similar stakeholders. They are both dependent on their customers and must therefore communicate an advantageous picture of the organization. The many activities they do to gain trust is mainly presented through their website and social media. As they both are companies with many employees they both have a need for a well-functioning internal communication such as the intranet to present themselves in a positive way to their personnel, also an important stakeholder. Neither GRI nor Malmö City Theatre work as strategically as Ving and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre with communicating a positive picture of the organization.

Malmö City Theatre differs from the other studied organizations, as they are controlled and dependent on the City of Malmö. The theatre's reputational activities are mainly directed towards decisions makers and politicians as they provide the theatre with the necessary funding. The theatre is also dependent on the audience as they legitimate the theatre in the eyes of decisions makers and politicians.

GRI also differs from the other studied organizations but in an even greater extent. GRI mainly presents themselves through their researchers and they have few reputational

activities presenting the entire institute. Their most important stakeholders are financiers and other researchers, which they reach by conducting good research.

We have chosen to answer *Why* organizations work with Reputation Management by using New Institutional theory. The short answer to this would be to gain legitimacy, but by using DiMaggio and Powell's three isomorphic forces we can categorize and identify the reasons to why organizations work with Reputation Management and how organization thereby gain legitimacy.

We have found that different organizations in different contexts are affected by different forces to different extents. In our study we see that Malmö City Theatre is exposed mainly to coercive forces as they are in a context where they have demands from the city that they must follow. This pressure affects how and how much they work with reputational activities. Studying Ving Sweden AB and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre we have found that these organizations reputational activities mainly come from mimetic pressures. We believe that Ving and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre are operating in contexts where they, as commercial companies, can imitate other similar companies to a greater extent than GRI and Malmö City Theatre can. The coercive forces that Ving and the Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre are exposed to are mainly informal demands in form of expectation from their customers. GRI on the other hand is mainly exposed to normative forces as it is in a context where the professionalization is strong. We think this is because of the fact that almost all the employees have academic degrees, which affect how and how much they work with reputational activities. The institute do not need to present their research in a commercial way, but rather inform the public about some research and build their name in academic forums.

6.2 Contributions

In the existing literature on Reputation Management we mainly found theories on the subject and little information on how organizations work with this practically. With our research we believe that we have contributed to the field of Reputation Management by giving four *practical* examples of how organizations can work with reputational activities.

We also believe that our research may contribute to the field of Reputation Management by using a New Institutional perspective, distinguishing underlying forces that affect organizations to perform certain reputational activities. Hence the field of Reputation Management is viewed from a new angle.

6.3 Further Research

In this thesis we have done a small case study with a couple interviews at each organization and cannot make any generalizations. A suggestion for further research would be to do a similar but larger study with more organizations and interviewees, which would provide empirical findings that were statistically safer and thereby contribute to the generalizability of the study.

We have used a definition of Reputation Management where we only focus on the conscious work and planned presentation done within the studied organizations. A suggestion for further research is to widen the spectra and include the unconscious work done by the organization in presenting themselves.

We have chosen to use New Institutional Theory, which partly aims to describe why organizations within *the same* context become more alike as they strive to become legitimate, to analyse organizations within *different* context. A suggestion for further research would be to compare the reputational work of organization within *the same* context to see if organizations are becoming more alike in their performance of these activities.

6.4 Final Discussion

In this thesis we see that all of the studied organizations work with their organizational reputation to gain legitimacy. We want to clarify that none of the organizations use the term Reputation Management for their reputational work. This has been an implication in our study and in the writing of this thesis as we are naming activities that present the organizations, with a term that the organizations are not using. As presented in the theoretical chapter this is one of the critiques against the concept of Reputation Management. Whether you call it Reputation Management or not, organizational reputation and legitimacy are important assets that need to be managed as they are hard to gain and easy to loose (Larkin 2003; Turner 2004).

Managing your organizational reputation is a growing trend (Røvik 2008) and organizations will most likely employ and value communicators more in the future (Pallas and Strannegård 2010), as the importance of managing your reputation is not expected to decline. If we look to the findings in this thesis the growing number of communicators will have an affect on the organizations reputational activities, as the normative pressure on the organizations will increase when a higher number of the same profession are employed within the organizations.

In the future we can expect the technical development and the use of new technologies to increase. This would result in higher mimetic pressure on organizations as they imitate other more successful organizations when having problems with understanding the current technology.

During the last years of studying economics we, the authors, have learned that the market, especially in Europe, is becoming more liberalised. This could result in organizations being less exposed to coercive pressure. However we believe that organizations are being more exposed to subtle informal demands deriving from the expectations of their customers, which would lead to higher coercive pressure.

Having these thoughts in mind when looking into the future we may expect organizations to become more alike in their reputational activities. Furthermore we can almost for certain say that caring for your organizational reputation will continue to be of great importance, as the society's access to information and people's dependency on mass media is not likely to decrease.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview questionnaire

- What is a typical workday like for you?
- Do your organization have a special department / employee working with communication?
How long has this department / employee existed and why did it start?
- Where is this department / employee in the organisations structure?
- How does the department / the employee with the other parts of the organization?
- How do you work with presenting your organization?
- How does the rest of the organization work with the organizations reputation? How do you communicate with external parts to show what you are working with? What forums do you focus on?
- To which stakeholders / groups do you target information about the organization? (i.e. whom do you think is important to communicate with?)
- Do you measure in any way how you are perceived? (So-called opinion surveys)
- Are there any role-models that are particularly good at "presenting" themselves within your industry?
- Has your organization had training in how to work with their reputational activities? Has your organization taken help from consultants in this issue?
- If there is a particular work with the goal is to "introduce" the organization in a favourable way, who is the driving part behind this work?
- Why is it important to work with your organization's reputation? What benefits does it provide?
- How do you work towards the community (and other parts of the environment)? Please give examples of specific projects.
- What do you want people to say and think about your organization? What values should your organization stand for in the eyes of the beholder?
- Are there any requirements on your organization? What kind?
- Has your organization recently been in some kind of crisis? Please exemplify.

Appendix 2: Interview table

	Organization	Interviewee	Profession	Interviewer	Place	Date	Recorded
Interview 1	Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre	Jenny Jardefur & Louise Arvidsson	Communicators	Max Svahn & Victoria Svahn	Mässans gata 8, 412 51 Göteborg	2013-04-23	Yes (55 min)
Interview 2	Swedish Exhibition and Congress Centre	Carin Kindbom	CEO	Max Svahn & Victoria Svahn	Mässans gata 8, 412 51 Göteborg	2013-05-08	Yes (37 min)
Interview 3	GRI	Ulla Eriksson-Zetterqvist	Director	Max Svahn & Victoria Svahn	Övre Fogelberg, 6, 405 30 Göteborg	2013-04-24	Yes (51 min)
Interview 4	GRI	Malin Tengblad	Communicator	Max Svahn & Victoria Svahn	Viktoriegatan 13, 405 30 Göteborg	2013-04-29	Yes (72 min)
Interview 5	Malmö City Theatre	Jenny Bång	Marketing Director	Max Svahn	Kalendergatan 12, 211 35 Malmö	2013-05-02	Yes (76 min)
Interview 6	Malmö City Theatre	Jesper Larsson	Theatrical Director	Max Svahn	Kalendergatan 12, 211 35 Malmö	2013-05-02	Yes (54 min)
Interview 7	Ving Sweden AB	Claes Pellvik	Marketing Director	Victoria Svahn	Rålambsvägen 17, 112 59 Stockholm	2013-05-03	Yes (49 min)
Interview 8	Ving Sweden AB	Magdalena Öhrn	Information Director	Victoria Svahn	Rålambsvägen 17, 112 59 Stockholm	2013-05-03	Yes (30 min)

Appendix 3: Reputational activities and isomorph forces

Organization	Coercive Isomorphism	Mimetic Isomorphism	Normative Isomorphism
Ving Sweden AB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National and international rules and law -Environmental demands -Expectations from customers -Social responsibility demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolemodels: H&M, IKEA, Fritidsresor -social media -communication departments -intranet -weekly meetings -“BUZZ” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -educating employees -storytelling
The Swedish Congress & Exhibition Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National rules and law -Environmental demands -Expectations from customers -Mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolemodels: other service producing companies -social media -newspaper -communication departments -intranet -weekly meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -educating employees -CEO representing -storytelling
Malmö City Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National rules and law -Environmental demands - Social responsibility demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolemodels: SF, MFF -social media -traditional marketing -communication departments -weekly meetings -audience in focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -educating employees -CEO representing -storytelling -representing within profession
Gothenburg Research Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National rules and law -Environmental demands -guidelines from the Universtiy -Mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolemodels: British Universties and Institutes -informationsheet -communication departments -weekly meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -CEO representing -representing within profession