Advertising Amsterdam: the rise and growth of an international advertising industry
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Advertising is everywhere. From commercials on television, print advertising in magazines and newspapers, banners and games on the Internet, to more unusual forms such as prints on toilet paper in bars, paintings on cows, prints on sidewalks, or even as little flags in dog excrement on the street. On the one hand, advertisements are seen as disruptive, pushy, cluttering, and motivate many people to protest against the overload of advertisements they have to digest. On the other hand, advertisements are also considered funny and therefore a popular conversation topic, especially as advertising is memorable and people connect it to specific stages in their lives. Moreover, the advertising industry exerts a tremendous influence on our consumption and our lifestyle. All the influence of advertising on our daily lives makes it a fascinating industry to study.

I was not completely unfamiliar with the advertising industry in the Amsterdam region. In addition to my study of Human Geography, with my specialisation as an Economic Geographer, I have been working as a bike messenger in Amsterdam since 2000. Many of our clients are from the cultural industries, including the advertising industry. As I had already visited many of the companies prior to conducting this research, I already had some knowledge of the large networks around this industry and some personal contact with advertising professionals. The advertising related parcels I delivered included tapes from film production companies or post-production companies, portfolios of photographers, sketches of illustrators, model books, print work, film or photography equipment, and even lunch for the crew at a film/photo shoot. This prior personal knowledge of the various actors involved in the production of advertising was very beneficial for my research effort.

My dissertation is connected to the research conducted under my master thesis, which focused on the graphic design industry in Amsterdam, and both were supervised by Robert Kloosterman. After my study, I joined Bart Lambregts and Merijn van der Werff in a European Union-funded research project (Polynet). In the meantime, a PhD research proposal by Robert Kloosterman on the advertising industry was approved and funding was secured by Habiforum. I am very thankful for the confidence Robert demonstrated by inviting me for this research project. Writing a dissertation is not what I would describe as an easy job, and the constructive criticism Robert gave me over the years greatly helped me to meet this challenge. Above all, it was also a pleasure to share conversations and companionship with Robert about other topics, such as music or sports. His enthusiastic monologues about some of his favourite artists, such as Morrissey, Bruce Springsteen or Elbow, over a cup of cappuccino in Kriterion are well known among his PhD students. The same can be said about his enthusiasm for the history of World War Two (and his sometimes doubtful imitations).
The second individual I would like to thank is Mariangela Lavanga, who joined Robert at a later stage as co-supervisor for a while, until departing for maternity leave to give birth to Damiano. Further, I would like to thank all the members of the Space & Economy (today called Geographies of Globalisation) theme group who provided valuable input and feedback on papers or in discussions. I really enjoyed the time spent with several colleagues, sharing lunches together and enjoying a beer in Kriterion after work before the weekend. I send a special thanks to Merijn who accompanied me so many times for a delicious ciabatta sandwich at the Plantage Middenlaan. I do not want to individually name all my colleagues as I am afraid I may inadvertently leave someone out, but special thanks goes to all the members of my first office room, who offered me a warm bath and many cozy times. Other special mentions of gratitude include the supporting staff at the University, Nikola Stalevski for his editing work, but, most importantly, to my sister Karin Röling for the design of this book and Amsterdam Inbusiness (the foreign investment agency of the municipality of Amsterdam) for their financial donation for the book printing.

I would like to thank all the commission members who donated some of their time to read my dissertation and visited the defence of my dissertation. I am also very grateful to the people in the advertising industry who sacrificed hours of their busy schedules for our interviews. I conducted some of the interviews together with Bart Lambregts and Merijn van der Werff from the Polynet project; while a few additional interviews were conducted by Sjoerd Korsuize, a master student under my supervision. Thank you all.

Finally, I have to thank my family and friends for their support and trust. It is a treasure to have so many close friends with whom I have shared so many pleasant dinners, drinks, concerts, holidays, and festivals. These moments have been indispensable at the challenging moments in the past years, and served well to recharge my batteries. And finally, Marloes, I want to thank you for all that we have shared in the past year and for your boundless support.

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