Advertising Amsterdam: the rise and growth of an international advertising industry
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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 cosy 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.

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Amsterdam, February 17, 2011