

CATCHING THE AUDIOWAVE

**A STUDY ON THE AUDIOBOOK'S EFFECT ON SWEDISH
PUBLISHING HOUSES**

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Abstract:

Through a qualitative study, this thesis aims to investigate how Swedish publishers have managed the adoption of the disruptive audiobook innovation. Semi-structured interviews were held with nine managers in Swedish publishing houses. The theory on Disruptive Technology, complemented by Institutional Logics, Isomorphism and Legitimacy, served as a basis for an analysis of the perceptions of the interviewees. Though facing different obstacles, Swedish publishing houses have done a good job managing the adoption of the audiobook. The analysis showed that the fit of the audiobook innovation with publishers' values on acceptable size has been improved, and that the margins remain acceptable, to a point where audiobooks are now a sustaining innovation. Additionally, divergence in institutional logics was found, some adhered to a commercial logic while others followed a higher purpose logic. Those employing a higher purpose logic evaluate the fit with an additional value, resulting in an amendment to the disruptive technology theory. The additional value offers another adoption obstacle for these publishers, however the analysis indicates they too have managed to turn the audiobook innovation from disruptive to sustaining. This has been achieved by using a number of legitimating strategies. Publisher's have also increasingly improved their processes to fit with audiobooks. The findings of this thesis contributes further insights for organizations where managers are evaluated on more objectives than profitability.

Keywords:

Audiobooks, Publishing industry, Institutional Logics, Disruptive Technology, Legitimacy

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Definitions

Audiobook: An audio recording of a published, or soon to be published, written book, performed by a narrator (Pedersen & Stougaard, 2020).

Digital subscription service: A digital service based on a business model where consumers are charged a monthly or annual amount for a subscription (Rappa, 2004).

Publisher: A company that produces and sells books (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Institutional logics: Socially constructed, historical patterns in form of symbols and material practices, including assumptions and values, by which organizations and peoples create meaning to their activities, experiences and lives (Thornton et al., 2012).

Legitimacy: A generalized perception that within a socially constructed system of beliefs, values and norms, some actions are appropriate or desirable (Suchman, 1995).

Disruptive technology: Technology that has disruptive effects on established structures and products which affects the operations of a market or industry (Bower & Christensen, 1995).

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The audiobook's rapid growth when it became digitalized streamed content has firmly put it in the realms of disruptive technologies. The sales of audiobooks are increasing every year and as of 2020 the digital subscription services have surpassed the physical books in sales measured in volume (Wikberg, 2021). The rate at which the audiobook innovation has grown, once it was combined with the appropriate business model (see 2.2 below), has made its strategic significance to Swedish publishers critical (Bower & Christensen, 1995).

Further, the audiobook's increasing popularity has generated a cultural debate involving many aspects, inter alia, the role of the written word in a democracy and the amplitude of published literature, whether listening to an audiobook bears the same legitimacy as reading a physical book, remuneration levels, and the power of the streaming platforms (Nilsson, 2021; Granath, 2018; Rotböll & Gassilewski, 2019).

How the Swedish publishing industry has managed the disruptive effects of the streamed audiobook is important to explore to gain understanding on what the changing field looks like today, as well as hopefully providing valuable insights to managers anywhere when implementing disruptive innovations.

1.2 Purpose and research question

Given that publishers are organizations who historically have undertaken a higher purpose of educating the masses, rather than just earning profits, it is our objective to find out how the audiobook innovation interacts with these objectives (Steiner, 2018; Thornton, 2002). The study aims to investigate how managers in the industry perceive and act in relation to the technological shift (Bower & Christensen, 1995).

The research question is stated as following:

How has the Swedish publishing industry managed the adoption of the audiobook innovation?

1.3 Research gap

Since the streamed audiobook's increasing popularity is a recent trend, management studies concerning the impact of the technology's effect on the publishing industry are sparse. Pedersen and Stougaard (2020) do look at the effect of audiobooks on publishing circuits in Denmark, but more research on organizational implications is needed. There is, however, previous research regarding the history of audiobooks, streaming services impact on record labels, management and economics research on digitization through e-books and publications in *Publishing Research Quarterly* on the effects of technology (Carreiro, 2010; Lee, 2015; Magadán-Díaz & García, 2019; Richard, 2015; Rubery, 2016; Wlömert & Papies, 2016; Øiestad & Bugge, 2014). To our knowledge, therefore, there is a research gap in the field of management regarding audiobooks' effect on the organizations of the publishing industry.

Since the phenomenon of streamed audiobooks is fairly new, it is understandable that its effects on the publishers' organizations have not generated much research. Deeper understanding of the publishing industry's future is not only of interest for the publishers themselves, but also for other stakeholders that become affected by the increasing importance of the audiobook for publishers. Therefore, the authors' intention is to fill this gap by researching how the disruptive audiobook has impacted the Swedish publishing field.

1.4 Delimitations

The study is limited to the heads of publishing, or roles close to the head of publishing, at Swedish publishers. Since professional networks play an important role in neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) the study is delimited to publishers who are members of Svenska Förläggareföreningen¹.

We chose to study publishers instead of other parts of the industry as the publisher is situated between the author and the distribution channels, and its operation depends on actors from different directions.

¹ eng: Swedish Publishers' Association.

Bower and Christensen's theory (1995) on disruptive technologies centers around the managers ability and desire to release new technology's full potential. Hence, the study is centered around the perceptions of the heads of publishing, the managers, as they possess an overview of how streamed audiobooks affect both the industry as a whole and the organization they manage.

2. Background

The background is intended to provide a context for the thesis. The different sections are structured to illustrate the setting in which the publishers work.

2.1 Swedish sales statistics

Regarding book sales in 2014, Wikberg (2015) wrote that the sparse data and information at hand indicate that the shift from physical to digital audiobooks remained unchanged in 2014. Now the story is different, in 2019 all market channels decreased in sales except the digital subscription channel which accounted for the whole increase of book sales in the Swedish publishing industry (Wikberg 2020; Wikberg, 2021). The statistics show that there is a large difference between different distribution channels and that the book market is going through a comprehensive digitalization (Wikberg, 2020). For example, the digital distributor Storytel had around 50 000 subscribers in 2014 in the Nordic countries, while reaching over 900 000 subscribers in 2020 (Storytel, 2020).

In 2016 sales through digital subscription services measured in volume stood for 21 percent of the market (Wikberg, 2017) while in 2020, digital subscription services had reached 57 percent of the volume, see figure 1 (Wikberg, 2021). The digital audiobooks saw the biggest increase regarding formats and grew by 32.2 percent in value and 41.5 percent in volume during 2020 (Wikberg, 2021).

To conclude, the reports show a distinction between different distribution channels and that the book market is going through a comprehensive digitalization. There is an ongoing trend in the form of increasing sales of digital formats combined, with decreasing sales in physical bookstores (Wikberg, 2020; Wikberg, 2021).

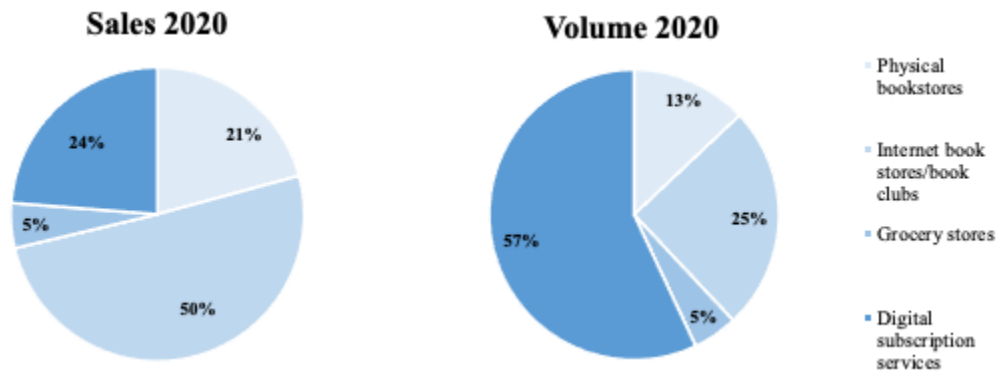


Figure 1. Different distribution channels' share of sales and volume sold (Wikberg, 2021).

2.2 The digital distributors

Digital subscription services is the most common distribution channel for audiobooks, where the most prominent actors in Sweden are Storytel, Nextory and Bookbeat (Wikberg, 2020). The digital subscription service is built on a business model where consumers pay a fee, for a period of time, to have excess to an unlimited amount of content, instead of getting the ownership of a single copy (Rappa, 2004; Wlömert & Papies, 2016). In general, sales of digital audiobooks carry lower margins than hard copies (Dahlgren, 2020, August 7). Storytel, who is the market leader, uses a revenue share model where the revenue depends on how much has been listened to a book per hour. If the publishing house and Storytel have a standard contract, 50 percent goes to Storytel and the other 50 percent goes to the publisher to share with the author (Dahlgren, 2019, April 17; Dahlgren, 2019, July 18). In 2020 a standard contract led to circa 2.00 SEK per listened hour of an audiobook for publishers (Dahlgren, 2020, August 7).

Bookbeat and Nextory use a different business model and simply pay the publisher a sum per listened hour on a book on their platform. The income for one listened hour on a book on Bookbeat is circa 2.00-3.00 SEK (Dahlgren, 2019, April 17).

2.3 The cultural debate

According to Suddaby and Greenwood (2005), adapting new innovation to existing cultural structures and technology is an important tool for organizations to receive legitimacy.

Furthermore, regarding institutional logics another aspect is the ability to cope with historical patterns within the industry (Thornton et al., 2012).

The past years there has been an ongoing cultural debate about the effects of the audiobook (E.g. Boman, 2021; Bengtsson, 2021; Richert, 2021). One aspect of the debate regards which type of literature that benefits, and which gets neglected due to the audiobooks' rising popularity, but also if audiobooks should be regarded as literature (Johansson, 2021; Lenas & Cederskog, 2018; Lind, 2019). Another part of the debate regards whether listening to or reading a book is the same and if audiobook discussions are a matter of status (Borg, 2021; Nilsson, 2021; Richert, 2021).

Furthermore, Svenska Författarförbundet² argues that the power of streaming services affects the freedom of speech and democracy negatively (Rotböll & Gassilewski, 2019). While on the other hand Storytel and Alexandra Borg, Associate Professor in Comparative Literature, argue that the audiobooks enable more people to enjoy literature (Borg, 2021; Henley & Panas, 2019). The last main aspect of the debate is authors' and publishers' remuneration, where Storytel has responded that their business model reflects how literature is consumed today. (Eklund, 2021; Henley & Panas, 2019).

² eng: Swedish Writers' Union.

3. Literature review

3.1 Research overview and our focus

Friedland and Alford (1991) laid the groundwork for institutional logics, and the theory grew big after it was rediscovered in 1999 by Thornton and Ocasio (1999) (Thornton et al., 2012).

According to Hinings (2012) and Thornton et al. (2012), later research shows several institutional logics can be present simultaneously, which is what we, based on the different decision and strategy guiding frameworks our interviewees use, assume in this thesis. Díez-Martín et al. (2020, pp. 1018-1019) present four main streams emanating from a publication on the role of legitimacy in organizational development: “organizational legitimacy foundations”, where they mention Suchman (1995) among others; “institutional change”; and the final two, both part of “symbolic management”, where they for example refer to Suddaby and Greenwood (2005), which is split into institutional logics and works on “corporate social responsibility” as well as “environmental disclosure”. Since we are interested in what publishers find legitimate and how they manage legitimacy, we focus on Suchman (1995) and Suddaby and Greenwood (2005). Institutional change is left aside since we use the theory on disruptive technology.

Neo-institutional theory has its roots in the works of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Zucker (1977). In response to their findings, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) developed their variant of isomorphism. Since then, Scott (1995, 2001, 2008) has developed three pillars of institutions in which DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) three isomorphisms are sorted as mechanisms. Since we are mainly interested in the underlying mechanisms of isomorphism (in our case coercive pressure and professionalization), we use DiMaggio and Powell (1983). Christensen et al. (2018) refer to Markides’s (2006) research, indicating disruptive technologies not only surface in low-end markets, but in new markets as well. They also refer to Kapoor and Klueter’s (2015) findings, indicating that whether an innovation is disruptive or not is relative to the given firm. This research has resulted in amendments to the originally proposed theory, which we have used to determine if the audiobook innovation is disruptive or sustaining.

3.2 Disruptive Technology

Bower and Christensen (1995) derive their theory from Schumpeter's (1941) concept of creative destruction. Bower and Christensen (1995) present two types of technologies: sustaining technologies, in which the attributes already valued by customers are improved at a steady rate, and disruptive technologies, offering a new set of attributes usually performing worse if applied the same as existing technologies, which is why they usually gain foothold in new applications or markets. Generally, investment processes, where new proposed ventures are selected, are guided by systems for analytical planning and budgeting, and managers are evaluated based on their ability to choose the most profitable venture (Bower & Christensen, 1995).

Christensen and Overdorf (2000) present three factors affecting whether incumbents fail to adopt disruptive technologies or not: resources, processes and values, of which we focus on the latter two. Employees use processes to guide how they translate inputs into finished products, supplying surplus value. Therefore, it is vital that organizations promote stable processes, making the behavior of their employees consistent, to cope with disruptive change. Finally, values are defined as the standards guiding employee decision making. Two values are emphasized: one that guides what profit margins an organization deems acceptable, and another that concerns what size a project has to be for it to be desirable.

Christensen and Overdorf (2000) plot the fit of an organization's processes and values on two axes, ranging from a good to a poor fit, with the new innovation they need to respond to. The important implications of this is that the fit with values determine whether the innovation is disruptive or not, a good fit means it is a sustaining innovation and a poor fit means it is disruptive.

3.3 Institutional Logics

According to Thornton et al. (2012), actors' choices of vocabulary motivating action, alternatives for sensemaking and sense of self, are conditioned by institutional logics, acting as a framework, and moderating what organizations attend to when reaching decisions on strategy.

Social actors vary in their embeddedness and commitment to established institutional logics, e.g. based on network position or identification as a professional. Changes that are exogenous to established institutional logics, such as a disruptive innovation, can lead to the development of alternative logics in the institutional field. Some changes might result endogenously from an institutional logic, depending on the nature of said logic (Thornton et al., 2012).

3.4 Legitimacy

Suddaby and Greenwood (2005) state that legitimacy is crucial if new organizational forms are to be created and survive. They refer to two variants of cognitive legitimacy: comprehensibility — how legitimacy is acquired early on in an organizational evolution, and to what extent an organizational form is taken for granted. For example, actors might use symbolic devices in order to connect innovations to established cultural accounts. The main takeaway is that cognitive legitimacy is achieved, more on the basis of accommodating existing cultural schemas, than on technical superiority.

Suchman (1995, p. 578) writes about dispositional legitimacy, the tendency for organizations to be personified, which leads audiences to react as if they were individuals. Although this concept is implied in Suchman's paper as occurring when audiences judge organizations' moral character, since audiobooks are unlikely to cause ethical implications, we focus on the "tastes, styles, and personalities" of organizations.

3.5 Isomorphism

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that while an innovation might be rational for individual organizations to adopt, as it spreads, causing homogeneity in the field, a threshold is reached beyond which adoption provides legitimacy rather than improved performance. They argue that the structuration of organizational fields causes the emergence of these processes. Organizational fields are constituted by organizations that are seen as a recognized area of institutional life, in our case: the book reader, audiobook streaming services, printers, publishers, the state as a regulatory agency, the Swedish Publishers' Association, industry magazines (sometimes even more general news outlets, see 2.3) and other similar organizations.

DiMaggio and Powell outline three mechanisms of isomorphic change: coercive isomorphism, mimetic isomorphism and normative isomorphism. We focus on coercive and normative isomorphism, because mimetic isomorphism holds less value since the interviewees do not express high levels of uncertainty and poor understanding of technologies.

3.5.1 Coercive Isomorphism

DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 150) define coercive isomorphism as:

“result[ing] from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function”.

Organizations must conform to laws and regulations imposed by the state, and regarding subsidiaries, to the rules imposed by a parent company. Coercive isomorphism can also be less direct: organizations can be driven to adopt structures and functions in order to gain support from or interact with other organizations, e.g. book distributors.

3.5.2 Normative Isomorphism

Normative isomorphism is primarily driven by professionalization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Thornton (2002) refers to sources of professional autonomy and authority as stemming from a mission’s social legitimacy, and that the tasks performed require expert and esoteric knowledge. Publishers have a mission, moderating the singular pursuit for profits, and editors are described as holding the power to gatekeep knowledge and shape culture. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) consider professionalization to be occupational members’ collective struggle to define how they conduct their work, as well as giving their occupational autonomy a cognitive base and legitimacy. Two important aspects of professionalization lead to isomorphism, formal education and professional networks. We focus on professional networks, such as Svenska Förläggareföreningen³, which span organizations, providing a venue where new models rapidly diffuse and normative rules about professional behavior are spread.

³ eng: Swedish Publishers’ Association.

3.6 Limitations and contributions of the theories

Since publishers traditionally also evaluate the extent to which pursued ventures enables them to pursue a higher value, and that the theory on disruptive technology only considers ventures' margins and sizes, it falls short. It is in this complicating factor our main contribution will be made, as we bring in neo-institutional theory, legitimacy and institutional logics to see how publishers cope with the sometimes conflicting objectives of achieving profitability and working toward a higher purpose, and allow for alternative ways of evaluating managers' choice of ventures in the disruptive theory. Further, neo-institutional theory is apt at explaining homogeneity, however less applicable when there is heterogeneity in the field (Thornton et al., 2012). In order to account for such deviations, we supplement our theoretical framework with institutional logics. Thornton et al. (2012) also highlight neo-institutional theory's shortcomings at explaining agency, which we have accounted for by Suddaby and Greenwood's (2005) work on legitimacy-achieving rhetorical strategies. Cloutier and Langley (2013) outline a blind spot in institutional logics, the failure to consider legitimacy struggles. We handle this limitation by complementing with legitimacy theory. We present our theoretical framework in Figure 2.

3.7 Theoretical framework

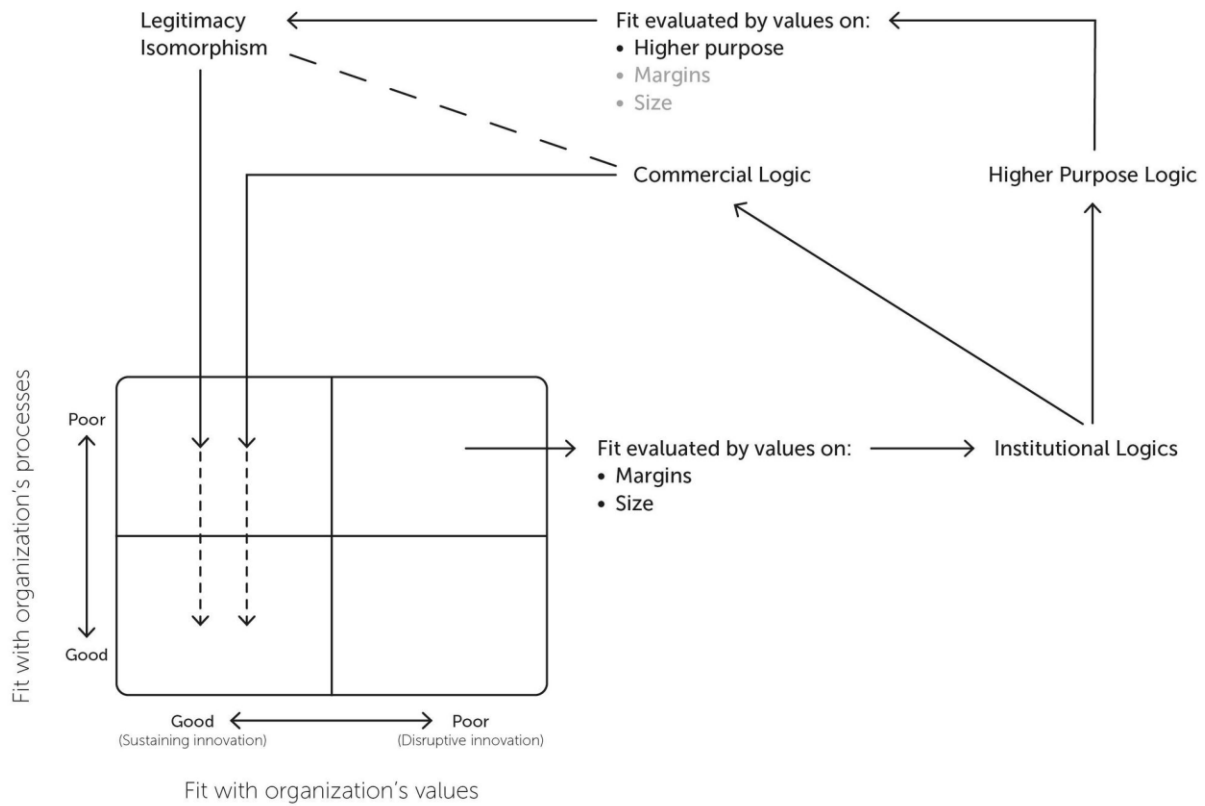


Figure 2. The impact of the audiobook technology on Swedish publishers, including an adaptation of Christensen and Overdorf's (2000) matrix (Johansson & Schreiber, 2021).

4. Method

4.1 Ontology

Our constructionist ontological position underpins an interpretivist logic of research which concerns itself with understanding human behavior (Bell et al., 2019). More closely, we aim to understand the actors we study in the wider context of their group's culture (O'Reilly, 2009). As qualitative research emphasizes words, rather than numbers, it goes well with the interpretivist approach of the thesis and was therefore chosen before a quantitative research model (Bell et al., 2019).

4.2 Trustworthiness

4.2.1 Credibility

To ensure credibility we used respondent validation (Bell et al., 2019). After the interviewees responded to the questions we asked follow-up questions to ensure that we had understood them correctly. We did not allow censorship, but simply validated that the response represented the perspective of the interviewee. All interviews were concluded by asking if there was something they wanted to add or develop that had not been correctly understood or brought up. One of the authors had previous knowledge on the history of Swedish politics and publishing, which might have influenced interpretation. However, having two authors meant our different preconceptions could be checked by the other.

4.2.2 Transferability

To allow the readers of this paper to make their own judgments on whether our findings are transferable to other milieux, we used thick description (Bell et al., 2019). We have done this by providing excerpts from our interviews of richly detailed accounts of lived experience that we found representative of our findings (Denzin, 2001).

4.2.3 Dependability

Since auditing is cumbersome and therefore seldom used in qualitative business research, we have not attempted the approach ourselves (Bell et al., 2019). However, through the written accounts of our progress we've provided for group supervision, which follow a laid-out path of incremental progress, we have a paper trail of accounts that can be disclosed to others in case they seek to replicate our study, and also assures we are consistent in our research process, following rules and conventions (Bell et al., 2019; Guest et al., 2012)

4.2.4 Confirmability

To ensure confirmability in our study the two authors independently coded the empirical material. Given our interpretive approach, we wish to understand digitalization in the publishing industry from our interviewee's perspectives by rooting our interpretations in the participants' constructions (Given, 2008). We believe that abductive reasoning is a way of achieving this, therefore, we have done our literature review in tandem with our collection and analysis of data (Bell et al., 2019).

4.3 Sample

4.3.1 Organizations

As described above, Sweden is a country that has experienced a growth in consumption of audiobooks (Wikberg, 2021) and therefore this study focuses on publishers in Sweden. To gain a more comprehensive picture the publishing houses represented in the study are of varying sizes, where the companies' turnovers have been used as a measurement for categorizing their size. The organizations have been chosen in tandem with emerging theoretical considerations, in line with theoretical sampling (Bell et al., 2019; van den Hoonaard, 2012). Since the audiobook and the streaming services seem to have had the biggest impact on consumption of fiction and nonfiction literature (Wikberg, 2020; Wikberg, 2021), educational publishers or publishers with a focus on other forms of literature were excluded.

4.3.2 Participants

One of the most common features in a publishing house, independent of size, is the position of head of publishing. As the thesis took its shape, the emerging theoretical considerations led to the selection of participants that had the position of head of publishing or head of fiction literature (Bell et al., 2019;). According to Powell and DiMaggio (1983) leaders in the same positions often become similar to one another and form their organizations in the same direction and Bower and Christensen's theory (1995) is focused on top and mid-level management reactions to disruptive technology. Therefore the main aim was to interview people in equivalent positions and receive knowledge on their reaction regarding the streamed audiobook. Including the pre-interview, nine heads of publishing and one head of fiction literature have been interviewed from ten different publishers, see **appendix 1**.

4.4 Empirics collected

4.4.1 Pre-interview

Before the main interviews, a pre-interview was conducted through email with a head of publishing whose answers are not included in the empirics. The reason for the pre-interview was to achieve basic knowledge about the industry and to create a narrower framework for the thesis and the interview guide. See the interview guide in **appendix 2**.

4.4.2 Main interviews

The main semi-structured interviews were conducted through telephone, due to the current pandemic in 2021. The semi-structured interview format is intended to create a free flowing interview, allowing concepts to emerge from the empirics, without being tied up by the interview guide and limiting the possibility of follow-up questions (Bell et al., 2019). As more data was collected, some topics recurred in the interviewees' answers. After going through the empirics, complementation questions were sent to P2 and P3 regarding concepts that started crystallizing more toward the latter part of the data collection.

During the last two interviews, it became clearer that the interviewees did not bring up new themes or topics for coding that the past interviewees had not brought up. As the interviews did

not generate any further insights, it was concluded that empirical saturation had been achieved (Bell et al., 2019).

4.5 Empirical analysis

The empirical material was analyzed through grounded theory (Bell et al., 2019). Firstly the research question was written, the interviewees were theoretically sampled and afterwards, data was collected and later coded (Bell et al., 2019). Using an abductive approach, we moved back and forth between the different steps in the process of the thesis. Through thematic analysis, we were searching for repetitions, idioms, metaphors, missing data, similarities and differences in the empirics (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Using Nvivo, the data was openly coded through first-level labeling which generated concepts, then second-level labeling which led to categories, presented as subheadings in section 5 (Bell et al., 2019; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The last coding of the empirical material led to theoretical saturation (Wiener, 2011) and the final theoretical framework.

4.6 Limitations of the method

One main negative aspect of not conducting an interview face-to-face is that the sense of vision cannot be used to observe the respondent's body language (Bell et al., 2019). Zoom could have been an alternative to decrease this limitation, but seemed to be a barrier concerning participation; therefore, to generate uniformity, all interviews were performed orally through telephone. On the other hand, positive aspects of a telephone interview is that sensitive questions could be answered with better effect, since lack of the physical presence may have let the interviewees feel less stressed (Bell et al., 2019).

A difficulty with open coding is the risk of losing context and the narrative flow of the empirics when the data is fragmented. To avoid this, evaluations between the original data and categorization were done through the whole process of the thesis (Bell et al., 2019).

4.7 Ethical considerations

The ethical rules, nonmaleficence, beneficence, respect for persons, fidelity and justice were taken into account during the interview process (Strohm Kitchener et al., 2009). All respondents have received anonymity to ensure that the thesis is not in conflict with the GDPR⁴. The anonymity has been of importance considering some interviewees had concerns regarding sensitive questions about their business. However, anonymity has also been a limitation for the thesis as a whole (see 7.3). Further, only interviewees who accepted it were recorded and all respondents were assured the recordings would be deleted at completion of the thesis.

⁴ Short for European Union's General Data Protection Regulation.

5. Empirics

5.1 Publishers' values

Whether the audiobook technology can be deemed disruptive or sustaining; the current fit of publishers' organizations' values to the audiobook technology is presented below. Hence the interviewees views on streaming services' power, and its effects on margins and sold volumes is also brought up. An additional value, higher purpose, is explored, since it is an important factor for some interviewees.

5.1.1 Exclusivity and consolidation

A majority of the interviewees have concerns regarding that they seem to see a pattern of consolidation and that streaming services promote their own products. P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9 and P10 all feel some sort of worry regarding exclusivity and consolidation in relation to the platforms.

According to P8, consolidation is a worrying factor in the industry:

“Maybe we are dramatic, but the democracy problem when something becomes more platform controlled is highly relevant. What happens when these services become more and more market leaders in the only segment of the business with clear growth? What things do they prioritize and why?”

P7 is of the same opinion as P8, and stresses that the streaming services who are vertically integrated have too much power:

“For our sake, I think we receive relatively good exposure, but if it's something I wish that's problematized it's the shift, the power the services now possess, and Storytel in particular, who produce and promote their own content. What responsibility comes with that and how should one relate to that?”

5.1.2 Remuneration

One of the most frequently discussed topics is lower margins and how to make deals with Storytel. P3, P5 and P6, P8, P9 and P10 all stress the importance of terms of the deals with the streaming services.

P8 regards the shrinking remuneration as one of the greatest threats for middle-sized publishers:

“This is a big fucking problem for the middle-sized publisher. The remuneration has been cut in half since the beginning and it’s not like we’re sitting with a golden opportunity here. Now you receive 2.3 SEK per hour, which is like 20 SEK per book which also changes every quarter.”

P7 describes the power of Storytel and the importance of a good relationship with them in the following:

“There exists respect. We have more consumption on Storytel than on any other streaming service and in all other formats together. In principle, every single publisher can say that. And if a distributor stands for more than half of all consumption, they become extremely important.”

5.1.3 Higher purpose as a value

5.1.3.1 Higher purpose

A majority of the interviewees regard it as important that the literature they publish in one way or another has another purpose than simply generating profit.

P8 is of the perception that there is a complexity in the industry, where there are more factors than just selling books:

“I do not have a very clear picture of other publishers as a whole, but most still seem to have driving forces that go beyond getting their bread and butter. The industry is about making money on books, but some books may be more important than others.”

P10 and P4 are afraid that the trend in the industry will affect the cultivation of the public, and P10 says the following:

“Personally, I love to follow the international literary world, which I believe can create opportunities to give new impressions and perspectives to Swedish readers. It is incredibly sad if there will be even greater concentration on Swedish literature where you honestly publish books of much lower quality because you know that it will work in Sweden.”

5.1.3.2 The audiobook versus the physical book

All of the interviewees regard the audiobook and the physical book as separate, but parallel mediums. But there seem to be two different views, one where the two formats are regarded different but equal, and another where the physical book possesses a higher status.

P7 and P10 are of the opinion that the audiobook and a physical book does not uphold the same status and P10 regards the audiobook, if it appears in itself in this format, as second-rate literature:

“No, I most definitely do not regard them as having the same status. If your work doesn't get published in physical form, it's considered a little like second-rate literature.”

“It's not like I want to be posh. But if you talk about status, it is undeniable that it does not have the same status.”

The other fraction, with P2, P3, P4 P5, P6, P8 and P9 are careful in saying that there is a difference in status, but presses on that there is somewhat of an equality between the two formats.

P4 for example thinks it is important to make a division between readers and listeners, but still perceives the reader and the listener as equal:

“I call everyone who listens to audiobooks listeners, they are not readers. I do not regard them as readers, I regard them as listeners. Without valuing this. A reader or a listener is just as nice, or just as good for me, I do not judge or put any value in this, but it's just that I'm very careful that it's completely different things. Because they are completely different things. You have an interpretation between you and the text. The text is interpreted by an actor, even when the author reads it himself.”

P5 puts it like the two formats represents different, but equal mediums:

“There are differences. The actor adds something on the one hand. The typography and physical appearance add something on the other side. That is definitely my opinion.”

5.1.3.3 Range of published literature

All interviewees from P2 to P10 have opinions on what they perceive as a current debate about the impoverishment of literature and the increasing consumption of genre literature.

P4 is of the view that the classical novel has lost some of its role because of the digitalization:

“When I entered the Swedish literary world, people were worried about the position of poetry and today you can say that the novel, which is not the genre novel, is roughly where poetry stood 30 years ago. It does not carry its own costs; it has a very vulnerable position right now.”

All the interviewees are of the opinion that the audio format does not allow for demanding storytelling and that simpler stories and narratives often are better suited for audiobooks.

P10 has the following view on genre literature and audiobooks:

“Everyone who follows the debate knows that it is a certain type of literature that works better as audiobooks. Many people talk about impoverishment and I can understand that to some extent. There is a lot of entertainment literature that has proven to work well as audiobooks.”

5.1.3.4 The diminishing role of the culture critique

P4, P7 and P10 also witness that the cultural critique regarding literature is not what it has been and that classical literature gets fewer windows to be discovered.

P4 is of the opinion that the cultural conversation is falling apart and that critics have problems to evaluate literature that is not genre literature:

“The whole literary infrastructure in Sweden has in some sense fallen apart. Earlier there was a big conversation and discussion around different journals and magazines. Today there is an exuberant and lovely discussion in Facebook groups, but they become partial or fragments for

some who are devoted and find their way to them. The public conversation around literature has become divided, difficult to find and be a part of.”

P10’s view is that the diminishing role of the culture critics are speeding up the movement towards best-sellers and moving consumption to already strong players:

“It’s the streaming services who’s the winner in this development, that you search for what you already know.”

5.2 Different paths: Institutional Logics

As shown, all interviewees did not put emphasis on the importance of publishing literature serving a higher purpose. The next section displays differing views regarding what path to pursue.

5.2.1 Inspirations and differentiation

A clear majority of the respondents said they have to relate to traditions or other publishing houses. Either to find inspiration in what processes they perform well, or to see what they don't do well, to create a process that differentiates them from others. P2, P3, P4 all talk about how tradition and heritage makes them publishing houses that differ from the rest of the industry.

For example, P3 states that:

“I would say that we have an USP in our brand and that we are somewhat of a cultural institution. There is a lot of heritage and tradition in that. It attracts authors, but there are also more commercial and established authors that want to join us.”

P7 states that they often look at other publishing houses and specifically Bonnier:

“I often say that we should do everything better than Bonnier. If we’re doing a catalogue, we should do it better than Bonnier, if we start an Instagram account, we should do it better than Bonnier. We want to beat them regarding the product. It’s something you do; you look at the ‘best practice’ and try to go further.”

At the same time as many publishers feel respect toward Storytel, P5, P7 and P8 express another form of admiration for the subscription service.

For example, P5 admires Storytel for creating new customers and P8 also talks about Storytel as a fresh breath of air who doesn't act like a traditional company in the publishing industry.

5.3 The path to Legitimacy

Here, we present the views on what it takes to be legitimate, what might influence these views and how they justify audiobooks.

5.3.1 Reputation

The labeling of oneself and also others seem to be a common part of an evaluation process for all interviewees. Many publishers identify themselves in relation to what role in the food chain they have or which type of literature they publish, as P6 puts it:

“It’s not only the author’s work, but it also becomes a part of the publisher’s persona in a way when it reaches the public.”

Publishers have different opinions on what creates legitimacy and status, but they all have ideas about how themselves and others are perceived.

P10 is of the experience that once you get a reputation it is difficult to change it:

“As I said, I worked for a long time before at another publishing house that was seen as commercial, and regardless of whether we published all sorts of Nobel laureates, the stamp was there, and it is very difficult to wash that stamp away.”

5.3.2 Relations

All of the respondents represent publishers who are members of the industry organization Svenska Förläggareföreningen⁵. A majority of the heads of publishing presses on that relations

⁵ eng: Swedish Publishers’ Association.

with authors, distributors and agents are of importance in the industry. The Swedish publishing industry is a rather small network of associations and P2, P4, P6, P7, P9 describe it as a collegial industry, where there are many formal, and informal exchanges of information.

P6 describes it as there is a fierce competition but at the same time a beneficial atmosphere:

“You know quite a few and that means that there is an exchange of information within the industry at different levels. At the same time, it is a tough competition. It is not the case that everyone is friends, but at different levels you talk about different challenges and issues.”

5.3.3 Cultural pages and industry publications

All of the interviewed publishers also say that they follow the cultural pages and industry publications like Boktugg, Svensk Bokhandel and other forums, like Svenska Förläggareföreningen⁶ regarding the literary discussion.

For example, P6 says that a recurring point at their weekly meetings is to bring up what has been the latest news in the media:

“We follow the media that writes about the industry very closely and a standing point at the weekly meeting is that we talk about what has happened in the outside world, movements in the industry and so on.”

5.3.4 Availability

Whilst the power position of streaming platforms is talked about as a democracy problem (see 5.1.1), on the other side of the spectrum, P2, P3, P4, P6, P8 and P10, all witness a greater availability for stories and that they work more on their backlist as a consequence of the availability the streaming services and the audiobook creates.

P10 has a generally positive view on these effects on the industry:

⁶ eng: Swedish Publishers' Association.

“I see an incredible advantage in that the books have a much longer life than before. Before a book disappeared after a year or two. Now every book exists forever. From a democracy perspective that’s fantastic.”

5.3.5 Swings and roundabouts

Regarding the topic of the new structures and institutions there is also a common feature that many heads of publishing think that the new format is just a repetition of history; the publishing business has always been about swings and roundabouts⁷.

P3, P5, P6, P8 and P10 all, in different ways, lift that the publishing industry has always operated in a way where you win some, you lose some.

P3 for example states the following:

“But I would say that the publishers have always worked in a way where there have been swings and roundabouts. It’s always been a few titles that finance, and to a certain length subsidizes the literary amplitude. “

P8 also states that, in one way, there is nothing new under the sun:

“These types of investments have always happened. Take Lydia Sandgren as an example, it’s like buying a lottery ticket and maybe you’ll win. Bonnier still gives out over 100 debutants, and you get back every penny and more thereafter with one hit, it’s always been these kinds of swings and roundabouts. That stuff is often the thing that creates big business.”

5.4 Publishers’ processes

Despite the different paths taken, all interviewees have adopted the streamed audiobook. In the following sections the views of our interviewees on its processual implications are presented.

⁷ The idiom “What you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts” is used to say that the positive and negative results of a situation or action balance each other, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

This will guide understanding of the fit between the audiobook technology and publishers' processes.

5.4.1 From books to stories

A recurrent theme of the respondents is that they do not simply talk about literature, the common word for the purpose of their work is the production of stories. Since stories are not necessarily limited to the written word, it seems to have changed the perception of the publisher's role, especially for P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9 and P10.

P9 expresses an opinion that represents the shift to more focus on stories as a whole than books per se:

“I think it’s a industry-wide thought. It’s really about the story being content regardless of form. You think more of entertainment as a bigger concept. Like we do not compete with other books, but we compete with Netflix and everything that takes people’s time, leisure time in particular, is some kind of competitor. You can also turn it around and say that it is also an opportunity if you want to expand the story, and say: I not only want the right to a book in printed form, I want it in audio format, e-book but also stage sets and film adaptations. You are trying to incorporate more and more rights into the contracts.”

5.4.2 Reorganization

Regarding the increasing impact of the audiobook there are some divisions among the respondents on to what extent the audiobook has affected the organization of work and the tasks the workers perform. For example, P3, P5, P7 and P8 are not of the opinion that they have had to reorganize their organization or that there are new processes in place.

For example, P3 states the following:

“The process of a publisher and a writer, and an editor developing a script, has really been the same as long as the book industry has existed. Now that we’re getting to the launch and release date, it’s a question: ‘Okay in what format should this be released?’ But the process to get there, to either print a book or record it has not changed much.”

On the other side of the spectrum there is P2, P4, P6, P9 and P10 who are of the opinion that the audiobook has changed the way the working force is organized and their internal process.

From P2's point of view the audiobook has completely changed how they organize their work:

"You simply have to change the way of work. Today we have fewer people working with physical books. You have to rationalize and automate that business. We have reduced the number of employees as part of this process. This is a significant effect of the fact that margins are smaller for streaming and e-books. It is also required that the books when they are to be published in audio format be recorded and so on, and more resources are then put into it."

P10 also experiences some structures as rigid and which need to be changed due to the new environment:

"An example that is very interesting, Akademibokhandeln has previously been our most important customer and much of our work is based on how Akademibokhandeln wanted to work. When it comes to cycles, for example, various release lists, etc. Now in recent years the importance of Akademibokhandeln has decreased enormously and these streaming services are much more important, and yet our way of working is bound by previous truths."

5.4.3 The narrator – a new power player

All of the respondents in the interviews regard the choice of narrators as a part of the publishing process which takes up time through discussions at the workplace. There seems to be a high demand for popular narrators and publishers often want to pair a popular reader with an unknown author to create discoverability.

P5 expresses how they encourage their workers to always to be on the lookout for popular narrators:

"It is very important. It's like a cornerstone of the project. We have no problem with the audiobook coming out sooner or later if it is due to the narrator. We are on all the time and say that everyone at the workplace should be on one of the services a couple of times a day and checklists and comments on what is moving. It is also something we have in our DNA"

5.4.4 New competences

P4, P6, P9 and P10 discuss the way the shift affects what new talents the organizations need.

For example, P6 says that digital competence is now more highly valued in a recruitment process:

“I would still say that it has changed, for example when we recruit, which we are doing right now. Then we look much more at digital competence, but we do not reorganize as in the sense that we redo the entire organization. Now [digital competence] is a particular ability we value. This is probably what all publishers think about and do.”

6. Analysis

6.1 Fit with publishers' values

Back in 2014, the audiobook innovation's size was not nearly as large as it is today (see 2.1), and as our empirics allude to, the audiobook hasn't always been widely adopted. As it entered the market in the shape that prevails today (see 2.2), it can be classified as a disruptive innovation, given the poor fit with organizational values on acceptable size held by publishers.

In 5.1.2, many interviewees stress how important remuneration deals are and one interviewee, P6, uses profanities, indicating the seriousness of the matter in terms of survival. How P7 outlines the economical position of Storytel in relation to publishers, further emphasizes, not only audiobook streaming services, but Storytel in particular as a power player. In 5.1.1 we see that there is a feeling among many of our interviewees that streaming services hold too much power. The publishers' dependence on streaming services is a driver of coercive isomorphism toward the adoption of audiobooks, which we have witnessed in almost all interviewed organizations. Given the difficulty expressed in literature for incumbents to successfully adopt disruptive innovations (e.g Christensen & Overdorf, 2000), how this adoption could take place requires investigation.

The effects of streaming services' power position is brought up in 5.1.2, P7 says Storytel consumption makes up the majority of volume across all platforms and formats, emphasizing how important this makes them. Over time audiobooks, with Storytel as lead distributor, became sizable enough for publishers to adopt (see 2.1). At this point, then, audiobooks are a good fit with publishers' values. Another effect that streaming platforms' power position (see 5.1.2), along with their business model (see 2.2), result in, is low margins for publishers. In 5.1.2, we can see the distress it causes publishers, indicating publishers would prefer margins higher than prevailing ones. However, since publishers have adopted the audiobook technology, margins must be acceptable enough to fit with publishers' values, even if margin levels are a friction point frequently discussed across forums (see 2.3 and 5.1.2).

Thus far, we have established that the current fit of the audiobook with organizational values on acceptable margins and size of innovation is good. In this regard, the streamed audiobook is now a sustaining innovation which enables a smoother adoption. As stated in 5.1, we have found higher purpose to be an additional value against which to evaluate the fit of audiobooks, since a majority of our interviewees openly express the view that literature should serve a higher purpose, see 5.1.3.1. In section 5.1.3.2, two out of nine main interviewees outright say they consider the audiobook to be of lower status than the physical book. The other interviewees tread carefully, saying listeners and readers are equal, as P4 illustrates by repeatedly pointing out they do not value one over the other. P5 exemplifies by emphasizing intrinsic features of the mediums. Also, claims of difference between listeners and readers tended to be justified by inevitable characteristics of the medium, disavowing that any pointed out differences originate in a view that one is better than the other. Judging whether they say this to legitimate themselves toward audiobook customers or because they really think so is thus not entirely straight forward, it is possible that some of our interviewees hide their views behind euphemisms.

The theme discussed in 5.1.3.3 highlighted by P4, where the novel is now in the same vulnerable position as poetry was 30 years ago, indicates a shift toward more low status literature being published. The interviewees tie this shift to effects of the audiobook innovation (see P10). In 5.1.3.4, the advent of the audiobook, along with other innovations (such as social media), is connected to the declining role of the cultural critique, which in turn decreases exposure for classical (higher status) literature. Thus, it would seem the audiobook innovation is incongruent with the values of those of our interviewees who value higher purpose publishing. This poor fit indicates that at this point in the analysis, the audiobook innovation remains disruptive to some, and not all guide their actions by higher purpose values.

6.2 Institutional Logics

In 5.2.1, P2, P3 and P4 see themselves as different, because of the tradition and heritage they espouse, indicating the value they place on these qualities. P5, P7 and P8 on the other hand praise Storytel, perhaps indicating a different opinion on the importance of heritage and tradition. P7 emphasizes Bonnier as a benchmark for what they consider best practice, expressing

themselves in terms of rational business decisions, i.e. referring to marketing and the book as a product. This balancing act between being cultural and being commercial, is a recurring theme where many see audiobooks as more commercial. These differing views indicate different interviewees adhere to different logics, logics we will refer to as *higher purpose* and *commercial* (cf. Thornton & Ocasio, 1999).

Several interviewees talk about what they call swings and roundabouts in 5.3.5. P3 and P8 both refer to this way of operating, however P3 refers to a few titles allowing there to be a literary amplitude and P8 talks about it more in a sense of investment. P8 thus takes a business perspective, indicating a commercial logic, whereas P3 appeals to the higher purpose of amplitude in literature, indicating a higher purpose logic.

In 5.4.1, P9 mentions they perceive Netflix as a competitor. Seeing Netflix as a competitor might signify the start of the structuration of an expanded organizational field, possibly explaining why publishers adopt a commercial logic, since new constituents in the emerging field, distanced from tradition (see 5.2.1), introduce more commercial thinking for diffusion.

6.3 Combining Higher Purpose Logic with audiobook innovation

Section 5.1.3.1 indicates that striving for a higher purpose is a legitimating factor in the eyes of the interviewed professionals. If the publishing of lower quality books were to increase, it would make P10 “incredibly sad”, indicating that higher purpose personally resonates with them. P8 expressing that “most still seem to have driving forces that go beyond getting their bread and butter” reflects striving for higher purpose is appropriate within their socially constructed system, i.e. legitimate, and that this value serves as a cognitive base for their occupational autonomy.

What P6 says in 5.3.1 shows publishers consider how their publishing affects how they are viewed. It preoccupied all of our interviewees, indicating there is a commonality between them, a normative pressure toward thinking alike. However, the similarities driving normative isomorphism only partly explain why it is a legitimating norm amongst publishing professionals.

What P6 and P10 outline could be further examined by dispositional legitimacy. It is irrational for audiences to esteem the work of a literary author, that is published by a publisher viewed as more commercial, lower, than if published by a less commercial publisher, yet this is the logic of the industry according to P10. A reasonable explanation is that publishers are viewed as having “tastes, styles, and personalities.” Upon attributing this individuality to a publisher, audiences expect a certain behavior, publishing books that are in line with their perceived personality. Since audiobooks are seen as more commercial, publishing these might clash with publishing houses’ personalities and could pose problems to those operating by the higher purpose logic.

What has been gathered about the relations between the interviewed publishers, summarized in 5.3.2, indicates there is an ongoing collegial conversation taking place, which organizations in all three size ranges partake in. This provides a venue for diffusion, where new models and normative rules on behavior in the profession are spread. The justification of the legitimacy of the audiobook innovation can thus have spread among publishers in this venue. All of our interviewees, as outlined in 5.3.3, follow the media, which provides another venue for diffusion.

When talking about swings and roundabouts in 5.3.5, P3 refers to a few titles allowing there to be a literary amplitude, suggesting that the subsidizing titles are not the ones contributing to literary range, which in line with previous analysis indicates these titles are more commercial. Further, many of our interviewees emphasize they have always worked this way, indicating they are used to having to justify publishing more commercial literature. Thus, swings and roundabouts is a symbolic device publishers following a higher purpose logic can use to justify adopting the audiobook innovation.

Refer back to section 5.1.1, here the interviewees connect the issue of consolidation and exclusivity to a matter of democracy. Framing it as a democracy problem is a symbolic device, employed to appeal to the socially constructed norms within their profession. Democracy is also invoked when the interviewees speak about the positive availability factors in 5.3.4, this furthers the suggestion that democracy is a legitimating norm that can be utilized to achieve legitimacy.

In 5.4.2, P3, P5, P7 and P8 do not think they have implemented any new processes as a result of the audiobook, yet, as shown in 5.4.3, they have started to engage in a narrator evaluation

activity. In P3's mind there seems to be a divide between producing versus releasing a book and P3 does not qualify any changes to the process of the latter as a new organizational process. P3 refers to the history of the book industry, indicating a strong sense of what publishing is, grounded in a historical theorization of change, in which change should be slow to be legitimate (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Given the preference for slow change, it is entirely possible that P3 chooses a definition of publishing which leaves out the parts of their organizational reality where change is quick. Interviewees P2, P4, P5, P9 and P10 are of the opposing view, thinking that the audiobook has changed the way they are organized. P2 describes it as inevitable, "you simply have to change", a cosmological theorization of change (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

6.4 Fit with publishers' processes

P10 gives an example in section 5.4.2 of obsolete organizational structures in their own organization, where they have historically adapted themselves to Akademibokhandeln, in a way resemblant of coercive isomorphism. As seen in 5.4.3, publishers also engage in new narrator picking processes. In 5.4.1, P9 describes how the audiobook has changed what rights they negotiate, and in 5.4.4, changes in recruitment processes are outlined. The need for change expressed by P10, and the fact that many of our interviewees have added or altered a range of processes (see section 5.4), indicates that the audiobook innovation initially had a poor fit with organizational processes in the publishing houses we have interviewed. The changes made are thus a result of publishers trying to improve the fit of their processes with the innovation, improvements that have advanced unevenly between publishers and which are not yet complete.

7. Discussion and conclusion

7.1 Answers to the research question

Aiming to understand how the audiobook innovation has affected the Swedish publishing industry and how they have responded, we have conducted a qualitative study with nine main interviews to answer the research question:

How has the Swedish publishing industry managed the adoption of the audiobook innovation?

The initially disruptive audiobook innovation has grown rapidly and today, the audiobook commands the largest volume share in the book market (see 2.1). Through our analysis we have seen that the fit of the audiobook innovation with publishers' values on acceptable size has been improved, and that the margins remain acceptable, to a point where audiobooks are now a more easily adoptable sustaining innovation. However, as our analysis shows some adhere to a commercial logic while others follow a higher purpose logic, we have found that evaluating the fit with these values is not enough for all our interviewees. The ones employing a higher purpose logic evaluate the fit with an additional value, resulting in an amendment to Christensen and Overdorf's (2000) capability framework, with the addition of the higher purpose value. The higher purpose value offers an additional adoption obstacle for these publishers, however our analysis indicates they too have managed to turn the audiobook innovation from disruptive to sustaining. This has been achieved by: using swings and roundabouts as a symbolic device; referring to the innovation's positive effects on democracy; and focusing on a definition of publishing which isn't affected by the audiobook at the same rate. Through these ways of legitimating the audiobook, which by normative isomorphism and diffusion has spread sweepingly among them, the ones following a higher purpose logic can justify the adoption of the audiobook to themselves. The fit of audiobooks with publishers' processes further determines ease of adoption, here we can see that it started off as poor but that the needs for change have been identified and improvements have been made to where the fit is better today, although uneven across our interviewed publishing houses.

All in all, we can see that, facing varying adversities, the Swedish publishing industry has done a good job managing the adoption of the audiobook, despite the usual difficulty to do so (see Christensen & Overdorf, 2000; Bower & Christensen, 1995).

7.2 Contributions and implications

This thesis has offered understanding of the audiobook adoption process. It has also offered an explanation on differences regarding how it has been adopted in different publishing houses, depending on what institutional logic they adhere to. Devices publishers use to achieve legitimacy have also been outlined, which can offer guidance to heads of publishing trying to legitimate the adoption of the audiobook. This is particularly important because within the Swedish publishing field, a higher purpose aim, beyond profitability, has traditionally prevailed (Steiner, 2018). Through studying this interesting field, guided by different logics, an amendment to Christensen and Overdorf's (2000) capability framework has been proposed, which can hopefully provide more insight into organizations where managers are evaluated on more than profitability.

7.3 Limitations

A criticism of qualitative research and the interpretivist approach is that it is subjective (Bell et al., 2019). Another limitation for this thesis is the lack of transparency the anonymity causes, since some parts of the publishing industry are vertically integrated. For example, since Storytel owns several publishing houses and Bookbeat is a part of the Bonnier concern; there is a possibility that some respondents have a positive biased attitude regarding the streaming services or streamed audiobooks, consciously, or unconsciously, which could not be analyzed without giving up their anonymity. Neither can the effects of vertical specialization on the salience of different environmental aspects be delved into (Thornton et al., 2012).

While qualitative research can be criticized for being subjective, it provides an opportunity to get deep perspectives and thoughts of a participant, which is not possible in a quantitative study. Even though the anonymity has negative aspects it also comes with positive consequences; it

may have generated an environment that made the respondents feel safe, enhancing the possibility to receive rich expositions about thoughts and feelings.

7.4 Transferability and future research

Getting a larger spectrum of perspectives through performing more interviews and from more actors at different positions in the publishing industry, could have enhanced the transferability of the thesis. However, an inherent difficulty with qualitative studies is the aspect of generalization (Bell et al., 2019). Nevertheless, that is not the core aim with qualitative research, the purpose is rather to achieve high quality conclusions situated in a well established theoretical setting.

Future research on whether our amended capability framework can be applied to other publishing organizations than the ones we've interviewed, and in extension, whether it can be applied to other organizations than publishing houses who also have missions beyond the singular pursuit for profits, is needed. Further, more research is needed to see whether the legitimacy devices our interviewees use can be employed to adopt other disruptive innovations, aside from the audiobook, and whether they can be used by managers in industries other than publishing. Since our interviewees are still in the process of adopting the audiobook, by adapting their processes to better fit with it, we can't give the full story on how it has been adopted by the Swedish publishing field. To give a full answer to this, future research is needed once the audiobook innovation is more settled in the publishing field. In this thesis we have focused solely on the effects of the audiobook as a technical innovation on the publishing field, research comparing how different industries respond to similar technical disruptions can be made to understand which responses sets different industries apart, and which are similar across the board.

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8.4 Database for annual reports

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1. List of interviewees

Publishing house	Turnover 2019	Role of occupation
Publishing house 1 (P1) (<i>pre-interview</i>)	> 100 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 2 (P2)	> 100 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 3 (P3)	> 100 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 4 (P4)	> 20 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 5 (P5)	> 20 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 6 (P6)	> 20 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 7 (P7)	> 20 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 8 (P8)	< 20 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 9 (P9)	< 20 MSEK (2019)	Head of publishing
Publishing house 10 (P10)	< 20 MSEK (2019)	Head of fiction literature

Turnovers retrieved from Retriever Business (2019).

Appendix 2. Original interview guide

Etiska åtaganden och allmän information

- Alla svar som kommer genom intervjun kommer endast användas för vår C-uppsats och du kommer försäkras anonymitet genom uppsatsen.
- Tillåter du oss att spela in intervjun så vi kan transkribera den?
- Efter att inspelningen har transkriberats kommer ljudfilen att raderas för att försäkra att ingen personlig data lagras utifrån GDPR.
- Intervjun inleds med några allmänna frågor för att sedan gå över till mer specifika frågor.
- Är det något du undrar över innan intervjun påbörjas?

Allmänna områden

Vilka är de största möjligheterna i förlagsbranschen för tillfället?

Vilka är de största utmaningarna för tillfället?

Följdfråga: Vilken av utmaningarna lägger ni som förlag mest tid på att lösa?

Vad har ni för styrkor och fördelar gentemot andra förlag?

Tittar du på andra förlag när ni står inför en utmaning?

Följdfråga: Vilka förlag i så fall?

Följdfråga: Skiljer det sig hur mycket du tittar på andra beroende på vilken typ av utmaning det rör sig om?

Specifika områden

Följer ni någon branschorganisation, branschtidning eller kultursidor för att hämta information och värdera information om branschen?

Har ljudboken förändrat synen på vad ett bokförlag är?

Anser du att en fysisk bok och uppläst bok uppbär samma legitimitet?

Hur stor roll spelar inläsaren av ljudböcker i ert arbete kring ett boksläpp?

Hur påverkar valet av böcker ett bokförlags legitimitet inom förlagsbranschen?

Tittar ni på andra branscher som film- eller musikbranschen för att hämta inspiration, alternativt det motsatta, avseende hur man ska förhålla sig till streamingtjänsterna?

Hur ser ert förhållande ut till streamingtjänsterna?

Har ljudboken inneburit en förändring om vad för egenskaper som utgör ett bokförlag?

Är det något du anser vi borde ha frågat om eller i övrigt du vill tillägga?