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A Celebration of Communication:
A qualitative case study on the importance of communication in
an agile organization

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Abstract

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In a world colored by change, being agile is considered one of the most important traits for communication professionals in a modern corporate landscape. However, research concludes that the concept of agility stills lacks clarity to the profession and what being agile actually implies to the profession. This study problematizes this and explores the implications of agility and how communication professionals in an agile organization understand these implications. Through a qualitative case study of a communication team in an agile public organization, where empirical material was collected from qualitative interviews combined with analysis of central communication documents from the team and organization, this study contributes to knowledge of how communication professionals of the case organization understand the implications of agility. Results from the case study show that communication professionals understand agility in a large organizational context, however, the concepts still lack clarity concerning how communicative work is conducted explicitly agile. The analysis further shows that organizational sensemaking of what being agile implies in a large organizational context is created through processes of communication and communicative actions stemming from the communication professionals. Finally, communication professionals in the case organization understand themselves as facilitators of agility due to the profession's close relationship to agility. Through the professional communicative logic, communication professionals conduct dialogue with stakeholders, sensemaking procedures, and ultimately become strategic partners to help facilitate an agile mentality throughout the organization.

Keywords: agile, agility, communication professionals, sensemaking, professional communicative logic

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1. Introduction

Agile: [to be] able to move quick and easily.

(Oxford dictionary, n.d.)

Society and organizations experience change across all aspects in today's societal climate. This changing climate is sometimes conceptualized as the 'VUCA-world', a world defined by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). Rapid turns and quick alternations have become part of everyday existence, and as a result of the VUCA-world, agile perspectives have been valued across organizations (Werder, 2021). The agile mindset allows organizations and the people within them to embrace change as a natural part of the organizational culture and adopt ways of working that promote flexibility, encourage collaboration, and that is less dependent on hierarchical structures (Zerfass et al., 2018a; Ragas & Ragas, 2021). Having an agile mindset becomes an important tool for organizations that aim at staying relevant and responsive to a landscape that suffers from global crises, fast movement, and increased demands on flexibility (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Large corporate organizations that are stuck in hierarchical structures especially tend to suffer from this changing landscape, and to be able to survive in a highly fluctuating world requires adopted measures that help to exist in such a world. A macro perspective on corporate trends tells that agile perspectives and methods could be one such measure, especially when it comes to small- and large-sized organizations (Zerfass et al., 2018a).

Scholars have recently turned their attention toward the role of communication professionals and the implications agility has on practices of strategic communication. The most compelling academic journal related to strategic communication, the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, released in 2021 a special edition completely devoted to agility and strategic communication. This shed light on a global organizational trend and its connections and implications to the field of strategic communication.

In a report from the global consultancy and strategy firm McKinsey, Comella-Dorda et al. (2018) concluded that being agile is considered one of the top priorities organizationally, where the corporate function of communication is highly affected and involved in the shift towards agility in the way that it is a highly central organizational function (Cornelissen, 2017; Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2015), as well as deeply involved in, and affected by, change in the internal and external organizational environment (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; Wiencierz et al., 2021). How communication is affected by agility could involve new types of working structures in an organization, such as agile vertical project groups and demand on stakeholder interaction related to coping with external change (Ragas & Ragas, 2021). In this way, communication professionals in organizations become a vital part of how organizations cope with and adapt to change in a VUCA-world (van Ruler, 2021).

Strategic communication is often conceptualized as, in its best form, a dialogic process where two-way communication is highlighted (Zerfass et al., 2018b; Falkheimer & Heide, 2018), and it could further be understood that it is through interaction among involved parties that meaning is created (Hallahan et al., 2007). In the same way as strategic communication emphasizes a dialogic perspective, agile perspectives also emphasize a dialogic mentality as a driver for, for example, innovation and change management (Ragas & Ragas, 2021). Examples of this could, as mentioned by Ragas and Ragas (2021), be ongoing stakeholder feedback, organizational communication practices, and environmental scanning – processes highly governed by communication professionals which further are key activities for agile organizations' ability to quickly adapt their strategy and become more effective. In this sense, communication professionals become a substantial part of agile organizations' ability to function in how they infuse external matters into the organization.

The role of communication professionals is a role that suffers from a lack of status and recognition of their organizational importance (Falkheimer et al., 2016). As a result of this, communication professionals have strived towards a *managerial logic*, a logic where the aim has been to act as a management function in organizations (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). Simonsson and Heide (2021) suggest that this removes communication professionals from their actual competence – *communication*. Instead, Simonsson and Heide (2021), propose a *professional communicative logic*. This latter logic represents many of those aspects that are highlighted in research concerning communication in relation to agile organizations, such as the

importance of sensemaking, ongoing stakeholder focus, communication with the organization as a whole in center, and communication professionals as strategic partners in organizations (Simonsson & Heide, 2021, p. 266). Through examining and building knowledge about the role of communication professionals in agile organizations, progress regarding the journey towards professionalization within the role could be made. Although, current research does not offer sufficient ground for understanding communication professionals' role in agile organizations, and further what implications this has on the profession connected to the field of strategic communication, arguably an extensive literature gap (e.g., Ragas & Ragas, 2021; van Ruler, 2021; Dühring & Zerfass, 2021) and further, scholars argue that more research is needed due to the fast implementation pace of agility in organizations across the corporate landscape.

While agility is largely implemented across organizations throughout many different sectors, the concept is still plagued by ambiguity and inconsistency. It is a concept that acts holistic and to some extent lacks a common understanding, both among researchers and practitioners, where it is important to find individual components which are clear to organizational members (Podsakoff et al., 2016; Walter, 2021). Related to the ambiguity, Ragas and Ragas (2021) argue that there not only is a theoretical gap, but also a practical gap between the fast implementation of agility in organizations and communication professionals' ability to adapt and understand agile ways of working with communication, as well as their knowledge of what implications agility has on their profession. The organization that lands in the center of this thesis, and which further on will be introduced as the case organization from which empirical material will be collected, acts as a strong example of the shift towards agile mentalities in society. The municipal organization in focus, located within the public sector, is a large-sized organization with over 3000 employees and has since 2015 adopted agile structures and working methods across the whole organization. Being both a public organization where hierarchies and bureaucracy tend to be especially present (Cheney et al., 2011), this organization has as a way of adapting to the VUCA world, taken a holistic approach and implemented an agile structure, and becomes in this manner a strong example of the wide implementation of agility across multiple industries and sectors. The communication professionals this thesis focuses on in this particular organization therefore experience

a presence of agility on a dual level, both from an organizational perspective as well as in their roles as communication professionals.

Research concerning agility and its implications for strategic communication are yet in its early phases, but the aspect and importance of the dialogic perspective of being aware of what is going on in the surroundings of an agile organization to adapt to change have been emphasized throughout existing literature (example: Ragas & Ragas, 2021; Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; van Ruler, 2015; van Ruler, 2018; Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021; Wiencierz et al., 2021). This is described as an implication that often lands in the knees of communication professionals. Problematically, agility is such a large corporate trend at the moment, which results in a lack of critique as well as fear among practitioners to even ask questions about the actual value of agility (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Agility and being agile sort of becomes an organizational hegemony, which is not further questioned by organizational members in terms of value and implications. This does not contribute to clarity on what implications agility has on the role of communication professionals, and the rapid implementation of agility across organizations will practically enhance the need for knowledge related to communication professionals understanding of agility for the profession to stay a key-function in a changing landscape, as well as continue the journey towards professionalization. This creates space and need for further research on, and understanding of, agility and its implications on strategic communication, both concerning communication professionals practical understanding of the implications of agility on their profession, as well as the theoretical perspective of building upon the research on agility and strategic communication.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this research is to increase knowledge of communication professionals' understanding of the implications agility has in their roles as communication professionals. Through the analytical proceedings, the study strives at discussing these implications and how these affect communication professionals' journey towards professionalization. This aim will result in a more nuanced understanding of agility's implications to the field of strategic communication, as well as contribute to insights regarding communication professionals' value and status within organizations. Through a qualitative case study focusing on a communication team within a

public sector organization in Sweden as the study's subject where the whole organization has adopted an agile structure, the hope is to contribute with practical and theoretical insights on the role of communication professionals within this agile organization, a novel field of research concerning strategic communication. Thus, the study will contribute to widening and deepening the current field of research and knowledge, as well as practically investigating the implications for practitioners. Through a qualitative case study, a complex understanding of communication professionals' comprehension of the implications agility has on their roles will be reached.

1.3 Research question

The thesis strives to pose the following research question to fulfill its aim:

- *How do communication professionals in an agile large-sized public sector organization understand the implications of agility in their role as communication professionals?*

The answer to this research question will contribute to the field of strategic communication by enhancing knowledge about communication professionals' roles in organizations, specifically in organizations identified as agile, a field of study where tension between theory and practice exists. The study will practically contribute with a foundation for communication practitioners to deepen the understanding of their organizational role in such organizations, adding to the discussion regarding their status and role within the theoretical and practical arena of strategic communication.

1.4 Delimitations

This study is limited to a case study located within the public sector, in a municipality in Sweden. It is my belief that the results of this particular study could serve as an in-depth study of a specific case, contributing to useful insights and knowledge concerning communication professionals' understanding of the implications of agility. Further introduction to the case study organization and its specific

communication professionals who act as participants can be found in section 4.3.1, *Introducing the case study organization*.

2. Literature review

This chapter will present an overview of current research on agility and its connections to the field of strategic communication. Literature is collected from academic journals and texts concerning communication, organizational communication, public relations, management, and business. The literature review is organized into three themes to create a logical following and to help paint a vivid image of the research field, both based on those publications that have led up to the current stage of the field, as well as an overview of more recent research. Literature in the themes is not chronologically ordered timewise, rather, they are presented in a way that thematically presents the topic of the study, starting with a section where agility and agile organizations will be conceptualized based on previous literature. Secondly, a section focusing on research concerning organizations' relationship to a changing external environment will be revised, continuing with a larger section concerning agility and its connection to existing research on strategic communication specifically, both theoretically and practically. Since the field of research on agility and strategic communication is in such an early phase, themes in the literature review are collected from different perspectives that collectively help paint the image of agility's connection to the field from multiple angles.

2.1 Conceptualizing agility and agile organizations

To fully understand the concept of agility, it is necessary to look at the reasons of, and understand why it has become a concept organization across the world has adopted to such a large extent. As known, the world changes in unfathomable ways, and a conceptualization of such a changeable world is, as mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the concept of the 'VUCA' world. 'VUCA' is an acronym that represents the four words *volatility*, *uncertainty*, *complexity*, and *ambiguity* (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). These four words are all related to situations that are unpredictable, and even though they might seem to hold the same essence, the four words in the acronym do contain different meanings. Bennet and Lemoine (2014)

continue to describe that a *volatile* situation does not necessarily have to be *complex*, rather it is a situation characterized as a “relatively unstable change” (p. 313). *Uncertainty*, on the other hand, entails that there is a lack of knowledge related to the situation, and a high level of interconnected parts in a situation makes it describable as *complex*. Further, *ambiguous* situations are situations where it is hard to identify “the nature of cause-and-effect relationships” (p. 316). The acronym of ‘VUCA’ is said to collectively describe the environment where organizations exist today (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Ragas & Ragas, 2021), an environment that requires measures to stay relevant (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). One measure to tackle this change is to implement agile ways of working (Ragas & Ragas, 2021; Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021; Werder, 2021). Already in 1982, Brown and Agnew (1982) stated that for an organization to be effective in a rapidly changing landscape, it has to be able to quickly react to change, meaning that it has to be agile (Brown & Agnew, 1982). In contemporary academic literature, agility is conceptualized in the same manner, as a mentality where agile organizations are more responsive to societal change by the embrace of new ways of planning, a high degree of flexibility, responsiveness, speed, and also conduct interaction with stakeholders and the external environment to a higher degree compared to more traditional organizations (Zhang & Sharifi, 2000; Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; van Ruler, 2021). Traditional organizations, meaning organizations that are colored by bureaucracy and hierarchical structures (van Ruler, 2021; Cheney et al., 2011). Change, in an agile organization, becomes something organizations embrace rather than fight against.

The agile approach as we know it today stems from the IT sector, where one of the most influential documents called the *Agile Manifesto* (Agile manifesto, n.d.), in 2001 was created by a group of software developers who aimed at finding a structure for successful software development (Ragas & Ragas, 2021). The manifesto concludes four principal values; 1) Individuals and interactions over processes and tools; 2) Working software over comprehensive documentation; 3) Customer collaboration over contract negotiation; 4) Responding to change over following a plan (Agile manifesto n.d.). These values stem from the IT sector but are implemented in other businesses and sectors that work with an agile mentality as well (Ragas & Ragas, 2021). These values all characterize a shift in organizational culture which could be described as a move towards enabling, rather than controlling (Denning, 2016). Ultimately, agility is often applied in organizations through

certain management methods, such as Scrum, where cross-functional and self-organizing teams work in a way that enables flexibility, executes planning that is adaptive and has a high level of external and internal stakeholder input (Denning, 2016; Maximini, 2018). Further, these teams often work with a so-called “definition of done” (van Ruler, 2021, p. 120), an agreed-upon list with criteria for the finished project or product to create consensus among and within the working group for when a satisfactory result is accomplished (Maximini, 2018).

To create consensus among the conceptualizations of agility that research seeks to articulate, the overall conceptualization that provides a foundation for the understanding of agility as well as a guidance for the analysis in this study is the conceptualization stated by Dühring and Zerfass (2021, p. 95):

Agility is the overall capability of an organization to respond to and take advantage of the changes initiated by the drivers in the internal, and external environment. It includes the ability to identify relevant changes and to respond proactively, efficiently, and effectively, employing the right personnel based on competence, not hierarchical status. Additionally, it includes the ability to implement flexible structures and processes suited to the immediate tasks at hand and to employ the appropriate resources in the shortest possible time.

2.2 Organizational relationships to a changing environment

Studying organizations’ relationship to change in an external climate is not a novel topic in research. Scholars have for a long period of time tried to identify and study how an external changing climate affects organizational dynamics. In 1961, an article later published in 1994, Burns and Stalker identified that innovative organizations in the forefront tend to embrace both change, technical progress, and research to a higher degree than traditional organizations (Burns & Stalker, 1994). Lawrence and Lorsch aimed in 1967 at studying complex organizations and their relation to a demanding external environment, and furthermore the organizations' ability to cope with such a surrounding. Lawrence and Lorsch found that integration of change is necessary in these cases, as well as the need for differentiation to stand out to stakeholders (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Further, in 1982, Brown and Agnew published a scientific article in *Business Horizons* that stated that in a world colored by

uncertainty in the external environment, organizations need to be able to respond effectively, and hence, be agile (Brown & Agnew, 1982). In the same manner, Nagel (1992) stated in a report which studied, then, important managers from U.S organizations and their beliefs regarding how organizations would be governed in the future. The study concluded that agile management principles will be the future keys to staying relevant and prominent in a world driven by change (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; Nagel, 1992). These four mentioned studies are all studies that examine organizations' relationships to their external environment and how it affects organizations' ways of working. Concretely related to strategic communication, one could say that results in studies similar to these precursors agree upon the notion that organizations benefit from integrating change into the organization rather than working against it, in line with the agile mentality (Werder, 2021). This will be further developed in the following section.

2.3 Agility and the field of strategic communication

The section above describes a shift towards a world lined with constant change and that organizations with the help of agile methods and mentalities can cope with such a societal shift. This section will dive deeper into agile and its connections to the field of strategic communication. In the article by Ragas and Ragas (2021), the two authors draw conclusions from several empirical sources that Chief communication officers (CCOs) in organizations mean that having an agile mindset as a strategic communication professional will be, and is, among the most important traits in the modern organizational climate. And even though a large empirical base for the need and importance of agility among communication professionals exists, research on agility and its connections and implications to the field of strategic communication have not been studied to a large extent yet (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; Ragas & Ragas, 2021; Werder, 2021). The topic is although gaining interest through, amongst other, prominent academic journals that dedicate space and resources to it. Dühring and Zerfass (2021) argue in the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, that studying agility's implications on communication is relevant due to its central organizational function (Cornelissen, 2017), as well as its tendencies to be affected by change in the corporate landscape. Dühring and Zerfass (2021) further state in the same study that the world as we know it has transformed from

postmodernity to hypermodernity, a move that is signified by drastic change in society. In their article, Dühring and Zerfass (2021) quote Verhoven et al. (2018) who argue that in hypermodern society “change and flexibility are the normal state of being, not only for individuals but also for organizations” (Verhoeven et al., 2018, p. 1, in Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). With being such a central organizational function, Dühring and Zerfass argue that corporate communication will be, and is, highly affected by the shift towards hypermodernity which comes with certain working methods that serve this new reality, agile methods being one of those.

Ragas and Ragas (2021) argue that agility, as working method that apply the aspects of a changing external climate, or hypermodernity as stated by Dühring and Zerfass (2021), is implemented across a growing number of organizations. Despite this large implementation, there seems to be a gap between the fast implementation of agility across organizations and the field of strategic communication’s understanding of the implications agility has on their profession as well as duties and tasks strategic communication professionals carry out (Ragas & Ragas, 2021). Many strategic communication professionals have not received any formal training or education in agility (such as the mentioned *Scrum*) related to their role as communication professionals, meaning that practitioners will not fully understand the effects of agility on their profession (Ragas & Ragas, 2021). Relevant to this, and as mentioned in the introduction to this study, since agile is such a trendy buzzword at the moment which, as research states, is being implemented throughout organizations at a quick speed, practitioners are unlikely to even pose questions regarding what agility means, or what value it creates, for their specific role (Ragas & Ragas, 2021). In the same manner, agility is sometimes mentioned as weakly conceptualized (Walter, 2021), while also being an understudied phenomenon in strategic communication research (van Ruler, 2015; van Ruler 2021; Wiencierz et al., 2021). This creates a negative spiral of unknowing and builds upon a potentially unhealthy organizational climate where practitioners work according to a mentality which they do not fully grasp the value of.

With the corporate shift towards agility, communication departments are highly involved. With new working structures, such as cross-departmental collaboration, communication professionals experience new demands in terms of competence and management. In the study by Dühring and Zerfass (2021), they conclude three elements that are present when discussing agility; drivers (external contextual

elements), capabilities (what organizations need to positively take advantage of change stemming from the drivers), and providers/enablers of agility (factors an organization need to become more agile) (Vázquez-Bustelo et al., 2007). Communication can be found throughout all parts of this framework but from different perspectives. Tseng and Lin (2011) argue that in a successful agile corporation, there has to be an effective internal process of coordination to make sure that “the agility providers can satisfy the agility capabilities and cope with the drivers, ultimately transforming all of these attributes into strategic competitive edges.” (p, 3693). As mentioned, a core feature in the agile perspective is to keep track of societal change that might affect the organizational strategy, a process that puts focus on communication functions in agile organizations (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). As stated by Nothhaft (2010), communication management becomes a *second-order management function* in how it “institutionalizes certain concerns in the organization” (p., 113), concerns related to organizational agility could certainly be such a concern (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Further, van Ruler (2018) states that communication acts as an arena for strategy building and implementation and conceptually works as an “agile management process” where communication becomes “an ongoing process of meaning construction” (p., 367). How Nothhaft (2010) states that communication professionals have a role in institutionalizing certain concerns into the organizations connects to the research by Tseng and Lin (2011) in how it emphasizes the importance of processes of communication that cut through the organization as a provider to keep a high level of agility. Hence, keeping the level of agility becomes a process of sensemaking where drivers, capabilities, and providers/enablers of agility must be addressed communicatively by the organization. Relating to the notion of CCO, *Communicative Constitution of Organizations*, where communication as a process cuts through all aspects of an organization and where communication ultimately becomes what constitutes organizations (Heide & Simonsen, 2011).

2.3.1 Practical implications of agile – agility and communication planning

Holtzhausen and Zerfass (2015) argue that the time when communication could be controlled and regulated through careful planning is over. With the agile mindset in a VUCA world, implications regarding planning and practically executing

communication will be highly palpable. Van Ruler (2015) presents a novel approach to how agility can be incorporated and influence the communication planning process and poses that traditional and current communication planning has no procedures, and little space, for implementing change into the model. To be successful in a changing landscape, and be agile, communication professionals need to implement change as an obvious part of the planning process (van Ruler, 2015). This puts focus on how communication professionals need to absorb agility on a role-specific level and also acts as an example of how agility possibly could practically influence the work of communication professionals.

Organizations exist in a changeable world where there is continuous construction of meaning, which implicates that organizations can no longer see change as a hurdle, rather they have to see it as a possibility to implement change and thus design communication planning models with this in mind (van Ruler, 2015; van Ruler, 2021). Concretely, van Ruler (2021) argues that communication professionals should, to be able to adapt to a changing environment, use communication planning models which are open to change. This is developed by discussing current planning models as interested in evaluation as a process at the end of planning models. Instead, van Ruler (2015; 2021) introduces an agile approach to planning where communication as a multi-way diachronic process cuts through the organization and makes evaluation a continuous process. With implementing this mentality, (in the article this is exemplified by using Scrum as an agile working method) results show that it requires a high level of self-awareness among employees, and a professional mentality stemming from communication professionals to show what communication can accomplish in such an environment (van Ruler, 2015). This is in line with the arguing of Zerfass and Viertmann (2017) regarding the ability to demonstrate the value of communication, known as the *CVC model*, as well as the professional communicative logic posed by Simonsson & Heide (2021), which will be further addressed in paragraph 2.3.2, and the latter in the theoretical framework.

Summative evaluation, evaluation that is conducted once a process is finished, has been considered the standard in communication planning. With the shift towards agility, focus is put towards embracing formative evaluation, evaluation that helps *form* processes. Although van Ruler (2021) argues that formative evaluation is not fully applied as a tool for adjusting strategy, but it has to some extent traits that function well with the agile mindset. This entails that evaluation should, in its

most agile form, be used continuously throughout a process by communication professionals to infuse feedback into the communication process, which makes the communication more agile and open to a changing landscape. Choices in a strategy should therefore be seen as potential *hypotheses* which could serve as a possibility to adjust the strategy and adapt to a changing environment (van Ruler, 2021).

2.3.2 Practical implications of agility - strategic and organizational listening

Practices of strategic communication emphasize a dialogic way of seeing communication (Falkheimer & Heide, 2018), the same goes for public relations where dialogue and relationships between the public and organizations are of interest (Macnamara, 2016). Dühring and Zerfass (2021) argue that PR practices act as a bridge between the external environment of an organization and its change implementation, building toward the survival of organizations overall. The activity of listening outwards towards the external environment has been highlighted throughout this thesis, as well as the importance (especially in organizations that apply an agile mentality) to infuse those activities of listening into the organization, an act of two-way communication. Zerfass and Viertmann (2017) describe through a descriptive framework of defining the value of corporate communication, known as the Communication Value Circle (the CVC model), that “corporate communication is an integral part of a company’s value chain” (p. 72). The function of corporate communication hence does not solely create value for itself, it also acts as a resource that creates value throughout the organization, especially, as mentioned by Zerfass and Viertmann (2017), by listening and learning from the environment, and later infusing those learnings into the organization. Even though Zerfass and Viertmann (2017) does not specifically mention any connection to how agile organizations work, it is possible through conclusions done in research on the topic to see that agility tends to aim at creating such value in how it values infusion of external movement in society, even though it might not be outspoken.

In the extensive study *The Organizational Listening Project* done by Macnamara (2016), a gap between theory and practice is highlighted regarding how scholars often seem to focus on practices of one-way communication when studying listening related to communication practices. Examples of this include how emphasis often is put on the “architecture of speaking” (Ragas & Ragas, 2021), or on

how communicated messages are perceived by the receiver, rather than promoting interest in the *dialogic* essence of communication. Macnamara (2016) states that “communication in its recommended two-way form as dialogue must involve speaking and listening” (p, 150). Current research points towards that facilitating and keeping a high level of organizational listening promotes stakeholder trust, engagement, reduces crisis and conflicts, increases productivity (Macnamara, 2016), is a key trait for organizations to keep up with trends, promote diverse and respectful communication, and build trustworthy relationships both externally and internally (Place, 2019). This relates back to how research suggests agile organizations aim at using dialogue and two-way communication as a tool for coping and keeping up with change to stay agile. The research on organizational listening connects to the study of agility and strategic communication as stated in the earlier foundations of the conceptualization of agility. As a practice, agility puts large effort into interaction with the environment in order to keep up with change and adjust strategic decisions accordingly (Agile manifesto n.d.; van Ruler, 2015; van Ruler, 2021), this makes the aspect of a dialogic perspective of communication related to agility relevant and also adds to the importance of communication practices in agile organizations.

2.4 Synthesis

Literature on agility and its various connections to strategic communication is yet shallow. This review serves as a spectrum of perspectives relevant to the notion of agility and its connection to strategic communication where the purpose of this study, to create knowledge of how communication professionals understand the implications of agility in their roles, acts as a foundation for reviewing literature that contributes to explaining the surfaces of contact between agility and the field of strategic communication. Scholars have since long time studied organizations relationships and the impact of change (such as Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Brown & Agnew, 1982), which could serve as a foundation of understanding why agility has been such a successfully implemented working mentality, moving from IT and manufacturing, into a broad spectrum of individual implementation across organizations and businesses as seen today. Although agility has risen throughout the broad business climate, the concrete implications of agility related to

communication professionals have not been understood fully. The review has posed theoretical and practical arguments regarding the gap between theory and practice that exists among communication professionals and the implementation of agility across organizations. Further, practical suggestions by scholars have been presented regarding how communication activities can become more agile in how it understands practices of evaluation and stakeholder interaction. Finally ending in a review of arguments from scholars regarding the importance of understanding practices of dialogue, and further its connections to how agility emphasizes the importance of continuously mediating external information to the organization, a process highly governed by communication professionals.

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I will provide an overview and explanation of the theoretical framework this study rests on. This will provide a foundation and create an arena of concepts and standpoints from which the study takes its starting point and analytical stands from. Firstly, I will present how *sensemaking theory* will act as a base for creating knowledge and analytical stands of communication professionals' understanding of the implications agility has in their roles. Through the sensemaking perspective, ontological assumptions regarding society and organizations' existence within it can be made, such as seeing communication as a continuous process throughout organizations. Lastly, the theoretical perspective of the *Professional communicative logic* will be presented as part of the theoretical framework from which further analysis of communication professionals' organizational role and journey towards professionalization will be discussed. This framework rests on a social constructionist foundation which further is elaborated throughout the study.

3.1 Sensemaking theory

The theoretical perspective of sensemaking puts emphasis on the “active production and negotiation of shared meaning at the organizational level” (Cornelissen, 2017, p. 91). In this sense, it entails that organizational members together fabricate an understanding of the organization and who they are within it. The process of sense-making further serves as a base for understanding organizational identification and belonging (Cornelissen, 2017). This theoretical perspective will thus be fruitful to apply when analyzing communication professionals' understanding of the implications agility has in their roles. The frame further allows for analytical stands to how professionals perceive their organizational identity and the shared meaning that comes with applying agile methods and mentalities. It further allows for an understanding of how communication professionals adapt and shape their roles within the organization in line with making sense of their roles within it. This study takes

its theoretical stands about sensemaking from Karl E. Weick (1995; et al., 2005) and does so due to its rich description and theoretical complexity that embraces the complexity of organizations.

Weick (1995) means that, put simply, the concept of sensemaking means “the making of sense” (p. 4). This entails that sensemaking is an ongoing process of rationalizing and understanding of what organizational members are doing (Weick et al., 2005), and members of an organization are through processes of sensemaking trying to construct meaning of what is not known (Weick, 1995). Central to sense-making theory is that an organization as an entity is not something stable or constant, rather it is in continuous movement. Weick, therefore, argues for the use of the word *organizing* as a verb (Weick, 1995; Heide et al., 2018) when talking about sensemaking in relation to organizations. This emphasizes the active participation of organizational members where organizations come to be through their communication.

In line with the VUCA world, organizations are, just like society, becoming more and more complex and in line with this, the need for making sense of what organizational life is all about increases. Heide et al. (2018) argue that managers enact important roles as sense makers in this complex organizational environment regarding how they help organizational members to translate and communicate messages, as well as “invite coworkers to talk about complex issues” (p. 461). This puts communication in the center of sensemaking and connects to agile organizations in how they require a high level of communication to be able to work effectively with change (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021), further adding to a perspective of strategic communication as an important aspect of facilitating sensemaking in organizations. Since I in this thesis aim at creating understanding of how communication professionals understand the implications of agility in their profession, the perspective of how communication becomes centralized in the processes of sense-making becomes a vital aspect.

Weick et al. (2005) argue that sensemaking can be constructed through different aspects. Arguably, sensemaking starts with actions in organizations. Through actions, employees can quickly grow a deeper knowledge about the outcomes of certain actions performed. Through these, a process of making sense of the consequences of such actions can take place, and through interaction in social activities, meaning is created (Weick et al., 2005). Concerning organizational life, Weick et

al. (2005) mean that sensemaking is created in three steps, firstly, sensemaking appears when circumstances in an organizational environment are turned into words and clear categories. Secondly, organizing (as a verb) appears in written and spoken text, and finally, in processes of reading, writing, conversations, and editing (p. 409) which serves as a mediating force. Through this process, institutions are shaped (Weick et al., 2005). This process points toward the importance of understanding organizations as a *process of communication*, something that is in constant movement and under construction through communication, usage of language and talking, in organizations (Weick et al., 2015). Sensemaking is also a process that is easily taken for granted since it is everyday activities that take place on a regular notice, which adds to the importance of highlighting and looking upon these everyday circumstances that become a core feature in the being of organizations (Weick et al., 2005). Such everyday activities could be agile organizations' mentality of taking agility and its value for granted. Lifting the lid off of these processes could help build understanding of organizational members ability to make sense of such methods.

As described, communication acts as a central part of the functionality of agile organizations (example: van Ruler, 2018; van Ruler, 2021), just as it works as a central function in organizations overall (Cornelissen, 2017). As part of the sense-making perspective with communication as an inevitable part of organizations existence, it is worth mentioning that there is a theoretical perspective stemming deeply from sensemaking theory called *CCO*, Communicative Constitution of Organizations, – a collection of beliefs and perspectives that further puts communication as a grounded and foundational part of the existence of organizations (Putnam & Nicotera, 2010; Taylor, 2009).

In this study, the perspective of sensemaking aims at being applied in analyzing the empirical material to understand how communication professionals *make sense* of the implications agility has in their roles as communication professionals, as well as gain understanding of their role within this process. Through this, it is possible to create knowledge of how they understand their roles and how that contributes to creating the organizations as a whole.

3.2 The professional communicative logic

In the introduction of this study, the concept of the *Professional communicative logic* was introduced. This concept, presented by Simonsson and Heide (2021), will further act as a perspective within the theoretical framework from which analytical and theoretical stands related to the discussion on communication professional's role and status within organizations could be drawn, based in the aim of the study of creating knowledge of how communication professionals understand the implications of agility in their roles. Although there is no explicit theoretical perspective regarding what the implementation of agility has done to the perceived value of, and journey towards professionalization among communication professionals, there is theoretical stands regarding the discussion concerning the status of communication professionals in organizations. These theoretical stands with foundation in Simonsson and Heide (2021) will here be presented as a starting point in analyzing and understanding the outcomes further on from the empirical material later presented.

Simonsson and Heide (2021) argue that communication professionals struggle with their status within organizations. This is explained to be a result of the role being connected to “superficial” activities, such as building intangible assets like brands, reputation, and image, and as a result, communication professionals struggle with obtaining organizational status. As previously described, this has led to the slant of communicators taking on a *managerial logic* where the profession aims at taking a position within the management of organizations. Simonsson and Heide (2021) state that this might come with positive effects, such as organizational status in the short run. On the other hand, this will move communication professionals further away from their core capabilities as communication professionals. While also creating a negative impact on communicators' journey towards professionalization, the *professionalization project*. Instead, Simonsson and Heide (2021) present an alternative logic, a *professional communicative logic*, where the framework acts as an invitation to further reflect upon the possibilities for an alternative logic among communication as a profession. The framework explains that a professional communicative logic would be epistemological based in social constructionism (whereas the managerial logic is based in rationalism), communication contributes to creating sensemaking and social construction in organizations, communication

has a stakeholder focus, communication is conducted by the whole organization where there is an indirect relationship between business goals and communication, and communication practitioners act as enablers and developers – they ultimately become strategic partners of the organization (Simonsson & Heide, 2021, p. 266). The idea of this conceptualization is to move communication professionals closer to their core capabilities as communication professionals, which will work in their favor in terms of creating organizational and role-related value.

There are many surfaces of contact between the professional communicative logic presented and how the field of strategic communication explains the operation of agility and the importance of communicative processes within it (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; van Ruler, 2021; Ragas & Ragas). This becomes relevant in connection to agility, as argued throughout this study, that agile processes, mentalities, and operations put large emphasis on communicative actions in order to stay agile. One such aspect is the obtaining of organizational goals, where Dühring and Zerfass (2021) state that CCOs often feel that their communication department only are a part of communicating *about* the goals, rather than being part of *obtaining* organizational goals. Communication becomes through that view only a separate function of the organization instead of an integrated strategic part of the organization as a whole (Simonsson & Heide, 2021) and ultimately what organizations are constituted of. The framework of the professional communicative logic will therefore serve as a framework for understanding the contribution of agility to communication professionals, discussing the journey towards professionalization in relation to the agile case organization and empirical focal point of this study.

3.3 Theoretical synthesis and reflection

This chapter has provided a description of the theoretical framework this study rests on. The common ground for all perspectives is that they rest on the notion of organizations as entities that continuously are created and made sense of through processes of communication. Given the aim of this study, I argue that the theoretical perspectives presented provide a foundation for analysis, and creating further knowledge concerning the study's aim. It allows understanding of both how communication professionals make sense of their understanding of agility and its

implications, but it also opens up to perspectives of understanding their role in creating such sensemaking.

4 Methodology

In this chapter, I will provide a description and overview of the method and scientific approach used to conduct this study. The purpose of this study is to create knowledge of how communication professionals understand the implications of agility in their roles within the case organization, and I therefore argue for the use of a qualitative approach that enables such understanding. The chapter will explain the social constructionistic epistemological beliefs that guide the study and further how I practically conducted the research strategy of conducting qualitative interviews and document analysis to create rich understanding of the case study. Further, I will describe the rationale and selection of the case study following with a descriptive section of the case organization, interviewees and documents, ending with a description of the analytical proceedings and ethical reflections upon the research method.

4.1 Social constructionism

This study rests on the epistemological beliefs of social constructionism where society is socially constructed through social interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). In line with the sensemaking perspective where communication is part of an organization's existence, organizations are in the same manner constructed by these interactions guided by communication (Weick et al., 2005; Heide et al., 2018). If applying this to the notion of agility, we also add to the picture that organizational life has become immersively more complex due to the VUCA world where organizational structures need to work outside of traditional bureaucratic structures. The social construction of organizations hence rests on the construction of multiple actors in a complex formation, negotiated by the historical and socially constructed understanding of society (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). Regarding methodological stands and choices, this becomes relevant through how research, as well as the own interpretation, is colored by social interactions and thus how knowledge is created

and made sense of through interaction between me as a researcher and the field of study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

I agree with the discussion posed by Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2008) in how they describe reality as in how no researcher can look upon research or the object of study from an entire plain view without any preconceptions. Empirical material, as well as interpretation of it, will always be interpreted through a lens of own experiences. But it is my assignment as a student who aims at conducting a master thesis to use the theoretical and methodological stands chosen to conduct a study that can create knowledge relevant and interesting for a broader audience. Through the social constructionistic view, it becomes important to create understanding of how constructions of reality appear in these interactions (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). Meanwhile, I would like to claim that, as in the case of social constructionism, the knowledge created here is also created and constructed through social interactions among individuals that will be colored by experiences and social interactions. Reflexivity lands in the center of the research process, where maintaining a reflexive mindset and viewing the topic and empirical material from several different perspectives becomes central (Alvesson, 2011). By continuously reflecting upon this notion, a high level of reflexivity toward the study as whole aims at being kept alive and ultimately contribute to a nuanced understanding of the field of research.

4.2 Qualitative research

With this study's aim, and the research question being posed and concerned with *how* communication professionals in the agile case organization understand the implications of agility in their roles as communication professionals, I have scientifically chosen to have a qualitative approach to the research. This allows understanding of underlying meaning and how individuals and groups understand their experiences, as well as how they construct their world based on those meanings they add to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Together with the conceptions of Alvesson & Sköldbberg (2008), a qualitative research approach allows seeing the understanding of the experiences an individual mediates as interpreted. As stated by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "the overall interpretation will be the researcher's understanding of the participant's understanding of the phenomena of interest" (p. 25),

meaning that qualitative research is concerned with gaining an understanding of individuals' interpretation. This could potentially be a risk where the research process gets stuck in making assumptions regarding interpretations. To avoid this and to create clear focus and knowledge relevant to the field, I have continuously throughout the study been making theoretical groundings and connections to the empirical material back to those societal constructions that might affect the interpretations of individuals. I here wish to illustrate awareness of the potential risks with qualitative research, but also show upon its strengths that through continuous connection to empirical and practical findings as well as theoretical stands, I am aiming at creating a discussion with the aim to expand the knowledge concerning the field of strategic communication relevant for its audience.

4.3 Conducting a case study

The empirical material in this study rests on a conducted case study. Case studies are commonly used in the field of strategic communication due to the fields close link to understanding organizational processes and the role of communication in such processes (Heide & Simonsson, 2014). Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that a case study is a careful study of a single example, a bounded system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which is why a part of the academic field argues that using case studies for research would not contribute to generalizable, reliable knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006) on the other hand argues that case studies can produce qualitative, context-dependent knowledge, which is important for obtaining advanced expert activity, which further helps to develop knowledge. In this specific case, knowledge of the field of strategic communication. This relates to the arguments of Zerfass et al. (2018b) who argue that strategic communication as a field needs specific research objects from whom an advanced body of knowledge can be extracted. Given the fact that I in the introduction to this study state that there is a need for building upon the current, shallow research on the contextual implications of agility in the practice of strategic communication, conducting a case study serves the purpose of creating a richer understanding of these implications, focusing on a case which can contribute to rich knowledge. As part of obtaining quality in the conducted case study, I have been guided by the discussion by Heide & Simonsson (2014) on different factors of obtaining quality in qualitative case studies, where factors such as choice of

organization, choice inside the organization, multiple perspectives, work process, multiple methods, and validation from participants are considered. These are reflected upon and discussed in the rest of the method chapter.

4.3.1 Introducing the case study organization

When deciding upon a case organization, the choice was directed towards a public municipal organization in Sweden and its communication team. This was chosen due to the organization's well-known engagement in agility, as well as its holistic commitment to agile structures internally, information obtained through their website. The organization has since 2015 worked with an agile organizational structure across the entire organization and has since been growing a thorough organizational understanding and knowledge of agility. It was important for the study to find an organization that had not newly started working with agility, but rather find an organization which have had agility as a core feature of its organizational functioning for a few years, and thus has built a thorough understanding of agility and its implications which ultimately could provide a rich foundation for analysis. The specific unit within the case study organization I have studied is the communication team, given the study's purpose of creating knowledge from the perspective of communication professionals. The organization has throughout adopted an agile structure where the organization as a whole, no matter employees' position within it, has conducted an education on agility in order to implement an agile working mentality throughout the organization. Through a project funded by the EU, the organization, which consists of around 3000 members, conducted an organizational restructuring from a traditional public sector organization with vertical departments and strong hierarchies (Cheney et al., 2011), to a fully agile structure with horizontal "focus areas" instead of closed departments. The communication team of the organization functions as part of the focus area "Service and Support" which also include teams such as HR and economy. Anonymity was an important aspect of the employees' willingness to participate in the study, which is why the organization only is mentioned as "the organization" throughout the paper, and the communication professionals only as "communication professional/-s" and "communication manager/-s".

I initially contacted the communication manager of the organization's communication team via email to initiate a dialogue. The manager introduced my research

project to the employees in the communication team through a written project description that I submitted. Continuously, employees from the communication department gave their approval to participate in the study. Through this process, I was given access to purposeful subjects within the team who could contribute to empirical material through the interview and document process. A more thorough description of the selection of case organization and empirical material can be found in paragraph 4.4.3.

4.4 Methods for collecting empirical material

In order to create understanding of how communication professionals understand the implications of agility in the case organization, a combination of semi-structured interviews and document analysis concerning the case organization's internal and policy documents on communication were chosen as empirical material collection methods. Combining these two enabled the study to gain a deep and rich understanding of the case organization and the topic and phenomena of interest. Using more than one source of empirical material allows for strengthening the internal validity and credibility of a research study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and combining document analysis and interviews is often used in qualitative research as a way of obtaining multiple perspectives of the same phenomenon, especially in qualitative case studies where empirical material preferably are looked upon from several directions (Bowen, 2009). When conducting a qualitative case study, combining interviews with another empirical material collection method such as document analysis is relevant in order to extract as rich description of the case as a single phenomenon as possible (Bowen, 2009).

4.4.1 Qualitative interviews

To fulfill the aim of the study, I chose to conduct qualitative interviews as part of the method for collecting empirical material. I consider qualitative interviews a suitable approach when collecting empirical material based on the theoretical perspective of sensemaking as well as the social constructionistic approach where reality is constructed through social interactions through communication (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this manner, I and the interviewees were able to, together and in conversation, create new knowledge constructed through our social interaction.

Alvesson (2011) argues that interviews allow for theoretical understanding through their complexity where reflexivity towards theoretical assumptions can be made. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews where I used a prepared interview guide (Appendix 1) as a foundation for the interviews. In a semi-structured manner, the questions were written in an open way with multiple follow-up themes and questions, allowing for answers and dialogue that promotes flexibility and possibility for the interviewee to make connections and reflections outside of the particular question stated (Alvesson, 2011). Alvesson (2011) states that structure is only a “matter of degree” (p. 9), where semi-structured interviews land somewhere in the middle of the scale with a general structure that allows for coherence as well as possible connections, sub-themes, and reflections outside of the stated questions.

4.4.2 Analyzing and selecting policy documents

As part of obtaining and gaining a rich understanding of the implications of agility, the choice of combining empirical material collected from interviews with analysis of organizational documents (i.e. printed, digital documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016)) concerning communication in the case organization was made. The decision to combine interviews and document analysis was made to create a rich description of the qualitative case study from multiple angles (Bowen, 2009; Heide & Simonsson, 2014) as well as a way of gaining knowledge of what the organizational context outside of the interview proceedings might look like (Alvesson, 2011). By examining different types of empirical material related to the case study, I aim at corroborating and bolster the empirical material of the case study in order to reduce potential bias in conducting a single case study, contributing to building a research method with robust quality (Alvesson, 2011; Bowen, 2009). Documents will in this instance act as a fruitful complement to the qualitative interviews to both enrich the empirical material and add to the knowledge base of the case study (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis relates to the theoretical perspective of this thesis in how the documents become part of the sensemaking process of the interviewees. They both become products of the sensemaking process of the team as well as an active indicator of the process in how the team is making sense of organizational agility. The documents consist of official communication policy documents from the

organization and communication plans written by the communication team (a total of 154 pages). All documents are rich descriptions of the case organization's communication strategy from various angles, the documents are owned and produced by the communication team and thus represent the ongoing construction of their professional work. Solely analyzing the documents would not have provided sufficient ground for conducting analysis since it does not provide empirical material deep enough for analyzing the understanding of communication professionals related to the aim and theoretical stands of the study. But combining document analysis and qualitative interviews created ground for a thorough analysis where I could move back and forth between the two empirical platforms, compare, and ultimately draw analytical stands in relation to theory and earlier research.

4.4.3 Selection of case and empirical material

The case organization in this study was selected using a purposeful sampling technique. The purposeful sampling approach was conducted based on its compatibility with qualitative research, where participants and content of a study, or a case, is selected based on its suitability and ability to create as much knowledge as possible for the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In conducting a case study, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that when using a purposive sampling approach, there are two levels of purposeful sampling. Firstly, there are criteria for choosing the case study itself, and in this case, the criteria to be chosen had their foundation in the aim and purpose of the study, hence why the criteria are rather straightforward. To be chosen, the case organization should; 1) have worked with implemented agile methods for more than 3 years; 2) the organization should have a communication department/team that also had adopted agile ways of working. It was important for the case organization to have adopted agility for a period of time, since that would mean that the organization would have formed an organizational understanding of agility, as compared to if an organization just recently had adopted an agile structure. In the latter example, the empirical material would rather reflect an organization's understanding of the implications of switching from one organizational structure to another, which is not what this study aims at creating knowledge about. Secondly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that a second rationale for the specific chosen interviewees and material within the case should be provided. The criteria in

this second step were that the interviewees should be communication professionals (given the aim and research question), either in a managerial position or not. The rationale was further to interview all communication professionals within the communication team in order to create as rich empirical foundation concerning the purposeful sampling technique as possible. The purposive sample technique resulted in nine interviewees, but due to organizational circumstances, two could not participate in the study. The seven participants expressed, as stated by Alvesson (2011), willingness and ability to communicate about the research problem they had been invited to discuss, providing both representative insights as well as deep experience and reflections. A full rationale for the interview proceedings can be found in section 4.4.5 Interview proceedings.

Table 1: Overview of interviewees

Role	Duration of interview
Communication manager	68 + 26 min
External communication manager (such as customer service)	47 + 25 min
Communication professional (Web focus)	72 + 22 min
Communication professional (Web focus)	49 + 27 min
Communication professional	52 + 38 min
Communication professional	61 + 24 min
Communication professional	56 + 22 min

Ultimately, this also provided a rationale for selecting the documents that served as part of the empirical material. The documents chosen were, given the purposeful sampling approach, supposed to be constructed by the members of the communication team and act as central sources of empirical material relevant to the aim, such as important steering documents in the communication team's daily work in the case organization, thus part of their organizational understanding in their roles as

communication professionals. The documents provided completeness in their comprehensiveness (Bowen, 2009) where they jointly cover the topic of the study in a broad way. The search function of the case organization’s website was used to localize relevant documents for analysis, keywords used were “*communication policy*”, “*brand policy*”, and “*communication*”. After reviewing the results of the search, documents that fulfilled the purposive sampling approach were chosen. I further used my contact with the communication manager to find further relevant documents to build to the richness of the case. Through this, I was given access to the team’s communication strategy/plan documents where I made a selection based on what documents would provide the richest data, according to the purposeful sampling approach. As part of the reflexivity, it is important to take into careful consideration the potential bias in such documents. Part of these documents has been through an internal process of reviewing their official status which possibly could affect their authenticity (Bowen, 2009). However, they do represent an important part of the case understanding and contribute to the understanding of communication professionals in the case organization. The complete list of documents used for analysis is:

Table 2: Overview of documents (my translation)

Document	Relevancy and content
Communication policy	Current communication policy guiding the work of communication professionals in the organization, understanding of goals and mission.
Brand policy	Existing brand policy based on brand profile. Focus is directed towards text
Dialogue policy & handbook	Guiding principles for how the organization works with dialogues
Communication plan for sustainable development	Understanding of a communication policy that is in development
Communication plan (pilot study) for a new municipal city hall	Explore the pilot study phase and how communication professionals work with the initial phase of a communication plan
Communication plan for digital city proposals	Further understanding of the dialogic work within the communication team

As part of the reflexivity towards the sampling approach, it is my hope that my assessment of the empirical material serves as a good foundation for obtaining interesting results. A purposeful sampling technique allows for in-depth understanding of a specific case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) which in this case will contribute to the central purpose of the study. The technique will also affect the results of the study to a large degree since the established criteria will affect the outcomes of the study, ultimately requiring a high level of reflexivity and careful consideration.

As with social constructionism and conducting qualitative research, a lot of focus is put on interpretation. Concerning qualitative interviews, Alvesson (2011) argues that this could be problematic, although interviews as instruments are fruitful for developing understanding and knowledge related to the social world and human experiences. Analyzing interviews for research purposes requires a self-critical approach and careful consideration of how the empirical material is collected as well as analyzed, ultimately it requires reflexivity (Alvesson, 2011). Reflexivity concerning qualitative research centers around the fact that as a researcher, one must be aware that there always will be more than one way of understanding or interpreting something. Thus, it is important in the analytical process to work with multiple interpretations and to twist and turn the outcomes. Alvesson (2011) means that one can either let the finished text in a study be the result of a reflective process, or one can allow the finished text to show the reflexive process “behind the scenes” (p. 120) and let the reader be part of the consideration of different interpretations. The analysis here shows the first example of an analysis, where I consequently have tried to be as explicit and exemplifying as possible in the analysis of the empirical material to illustrate this reflexivity.

4.4.5 Interviewing proceedings

The semi-structured interviews were conducted by creating an interview guide (Appendix 1) with concepts stemming from the literature review and theoretical perspectives presented together with case-specific questions. Through this, I was able to connect theoretical stands and empirical material. Concepts that acted as a foundation of the interview guide were participants understanding of agile and agility; their understanding of potential drivers, capabilities, and enablers of agility (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021); and stands stemming from the professional

communicative logic posed by Simonsson and Heide (2021) where sensemaking and stakeholder focus were some of the concepts that were highlighted. Further, the interview included questions which not directly stemmed from the theoretical perspectives in order to allow for the interviewees to draw upon novel connections and possible themes. The interviews were divided into three themes which covered different aspects of the topic. Each theme consisted of about five questions and almost every question had probes or follow-up questions to keep the interview semi-structured and open to possible connections for the interviewee (Alvesson, 2011). Before initiating the interview proceedings, I conducted a test interview with an external communication professional outside the case organization to find possible communicative errors in the guide or instances of unclarity.

I interviewed 7 employees in the case organization's communication team, two in managerial positions and five which are in non-managerial positions. To create further richness from the empirical material collected through interviews, I approached each interviewee two times and thus conducted 14 interviews in total. This approach represents what Alvesson (2003) concludes as a "social understanding" (p. 16) of interview proceedings where the researcher aims at allowing reflection of what has been said, look for consistency over time, and create insight into the interaction. Going back to the interviewees further allowed me as a researcher, as well as the subjects, to keep a reflexive approach where acknowledging uncertainty and claims was possible, contribute to understanding of assumptions and beliefs in a reflexive way (Alvesson, 2003), build up a rich knowledge of the case to go deeper into themes (Alvesson, 2011), as well as acknowledging the social construction of such processes. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest, after the initial interviews were finished, I transcribed and carefully examined the transcripts, and localized themes and thoughts among the interviewees that would be suitable for a subsequent interview. Such could be themes and concepts that were in need of clarification, thoughts that I found valuable for the interviewees to elaborate further on. This gave me a rich understanding of the communication professional's understanding of the phenomena of study and provided interesting insights into the social constructivist approach to qualitative interviews. Important aspects to think of when conducting such interviews to keep a high level of reflexivity is to think carefully of the wording of the follow-up questions. The follow-up should be guided by the interview guide from the initial interview, and to create coherence I summarized

what the interviewee had stated during our initial session prior to the questions where I wanted to learn more (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), this created context and allowed for reflection among the interviewees.

Interviews were individually conducted via the digital video-call software Microsoft Teams, or via telephone during the end of March and April 2022. Interviews were also recorded in the software. Before recording, I made sure to inform the participants that the recording was about to start and also stated the possibility to withdraw once again. The introduction to each interview can further be found in Appendix 1. The video-call software allowed me to see body language and the face of the interviewee which helped to further understand arguments and understanding. Conducting interviews over telephone naturally lacks the possibility of seeing one's face, but to allow flexibility for the interviewees it became a necessity to conduct phone interviews as well. Preferably, I would have conducted all interviews via video-call software, but the time perspective of allowing phone interviews became an important aspect of the case organization's possibility to participate. Prior to the interviews, each participant was sent a digital consent form (Appendix 2) to sign where they were informed about the purpose of the study as well as ethical considerations regarding anonymity of participants and case organization, as well as their freedom of withdrawing from the study at any given time.

4.5 Analytical process

In this study, an abductive approach was taken when analyzing the empirical material which laid the ground for the qualitative thematic analysis further presented (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The abductive approach, where both inductive and deductive reasoning is used, was chosen based in the methodological choices of looking at documents and semi-structured interviews where theoretical stands can guide the analysis, while also being inductive where new categories and themes were added to develop theory and potential analytical stands (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Sköldbberg (1991) argues that an abductive approach is recommended in case studies given its way of combining theory and empirically driven research. I want to emphasize, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also does, the importance of conducting the analysis of qualitative empirical material simultaneously as it is collected. This process allows for refining analytical stands along the

conducted study, it also allows a deep study of the gathered material, and continuous reflection upon the empirical material, theory and earlier research. With the aim of this case study being to create knowledge about communication professionals understanding of the implications of agility in an agile organization, the analytical proceedings were anchored in this aim.

4.5.1 Transcription of interviews

To be able to analyze the empirical interview material comprehensively, I transcribed the conducted, recorded interviews. Alvesson (2011) means that although it is time-consuming to carefully, word by word, write down what has been said in an interview, the transcription provides a solid foundation to conduct a careful analysis and it is in principle, optimal to do so. The transcription did not include “sounds” such as “ehm’s” and “ah’s”, but sometimes the interviewees paused and thought about the question for a while, those longer pauses are marked with continuous dots in the transcript (...), as well as laughter which is shown as “haha”. Transcription was done within 24 hours after the interviews to keep a clear image of what had been communicated during the interview.

4.5.2 Thematical analysis

The analytical proceedings started as mentioned as soon as the empirical material began to be collected and was conducted through a thematical analysis with an abductive approach where theory and empirical material co-exist in the analytical proceedings, a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By interpreting, analyzing, and studying the material carefully multiple times continuously throughout the process, I strive towards a rich understanding where theory and empirical material collaboratively create such understanding. The transcriptions of interviews and documents were used for conducting a thematical analysis where the aim was to identify themes that could be analyzed and interpreted to ultimately answer the stated research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This requires an active role as a researcher and requires careful investigation of the collected material and theory. Given the social constructionistic approach in this study, the analysis aimed at understanding how the collected material of the case organization represented their constructed reality, and such, their understanding of

the same. Through the abductive approach, themes were both constructed from the material itself, as well as through the theoretical stands of the study.

I followed the six steps to thematic analysis as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) including the following steps: 1) Familiarizing yourself with the empirical material; 2) Generate initial codes; 3) Search for themes; 4) Reviewing themes; 5) Defining and naming themes; 6) Producing the analytical discussion (p. 87). Through these steps, I engaged in the analysis through a broad approach where both interview transcriptions and documents were analyzed side by side. This enabled comparison between what had been constructed during interviews and what the same participants had concluded in written text. Through the initial coding procedures, I organized and sorted the material which both were derived from the material itself, given the social interaction during the interview proceedings, and theoretical stands found in literature. Coding was done manually in the transcripts and documents.

Through the initial sorting and construction of codes, I began grouping these into potential themes for further analysis, look for potential re-grouping, and points of contact. Some themes presented in the analysis are larger over-arching themes that holistically approaches the research question, whereas others needed to be more precise and stood out as sub-themes. Through refining and revising the themes, I managed to find three themes that together fabricated a coherent story of the communication professionals' understanding of the topic of study, together with sub-themes that narrows down the scope in certain sections. Since this study is concerned with one research question, it was important to create an as holistic answer with theoretical and empirical foundation as possible. The themes are presented in the first section of the analysis, in chapter 5.

4.7 Ethical considerations and language translation

The interviews and documents collected as empirical material in this study were conducted in Swedish and quotes used in the analysis are translated by me, a non-native English speaker. As a way to obtain an as correct translation of the empirical material as possible, an English native-speaking person has proofread all the translations used in the thesis from the collected material to decrease the risk of potential grammatical incorrectness that possibly could affect the analytical clarity.

Most importantly, there are ethical considerations to be made when conducting qualitative research. Concerning the collection of empirical material, interview situations might affect interviewees in a way where they feel stressed or put into a corner or uncomfortable in the situation. As Alvesson (2011) states, two strangers are supposed to build trust among each other in a situation where there is a clear power relationship in favor of the researcher. This requires careful consideration and practice while also maintaining great respect for the situation and the position I am within. Through informing the interviewees about their full anonymity as well as the case organization's anonymity, I hoped to create a safe space where the interviewees were able to freely state answers to my questions. The recordings were made with full consent where participants were informed that they are given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Recordings were also deleted once the material was transcribed with full anonymity.

5 Analysis and discussion

This chapter will present the empirical material together with an analysis and discussion of the empirical material of the study with the aim of answering the stated research question: *How do communication professionals in an agile large-sized public sector organization understand the implications of agility in their roles as communication professionals?* Through the analytical proceedings, the formation of three themes was created to construct an as holistic answer to the research question as possible. The first theme, *communication professionals' understanding of agility*, will describe how studied members of the case organization conceptualize and understand agile connected to their roles. Secondly, the empirical material indicates that the case organization uses communication as a process for creating organizational sensemaking of agility where communication professionals take on a clear role in this process, this will be analyzed and interpreted in the theme *organizational agility is created through communication*. Thirdly, analytical stands of how communication professionals understand themselves as facilitators of agility within the case organization will be presented in the theme *Communication professionals as facilitators of agility*. Here, focus will be specifically turned towards the role of communication professionals and the close relationship the role has to agile principles. This theme also includes implications related to communication professional's status in agile organizations where focus is turned towards the intertwining of agility and communication.

The empirical material presented consists of interview transcripts from 14 interviews with 7 communication professionals (P1-P7) (Table 1). The empirical material from the interview transcripts is combined with empirical material stemming from organizational documents (Table 2). Material from the empirical material presented in the following chapters is translated from Swedish to English by me, language translation is addressed in section 4.7 *Ethical considerations and language translation*. The themes will be presented individually with content from the empirical material intertwined with theoretical stands and earlier research.

5.1 Communication professionals' understanding of agility

The first theme of the analysis is going to present the understanding of agility among communication professionals in the case organization and what they identify that agile means in their roles. This theme is presented to create a basis of understanding to further connect to how their understanding of the concept acts as a foundation for their understanding of its implications. Part of the problematization of this study was Ragas and Ragas (2021) argumentation that there is a practical and theoretical gap between the knowledge of what agility implies among communication professionals and the large implementation of agile across organizations globally. This gap was illustrated through the analysis of the empirical material through several aspects. When interviewees were asked to conceptualize the concept agile and agility, several of them were able to reflect upon what the definition was in an organizational context but had further issues to practically state what the definition meant to them in their role as communication professionals. One communication professional stated when asked how he would define agility: “*Movement I would say. This is probably something one should know on your own five fingers, but I do not, and that probably says something.*” (P3). Another elaborated somewhat further and stated that:

What we have defined, and what I also think is good, is that the agile way of working is about flexibility. About being able to move, to be able to adapt to new assignments but also change in the outside world. [...]. The agile way of working is also about not being alone [...]. You need more competencies to solve an assignment. In today's situation, societal issues are so complex, so we have moved from a vertical hierarchy with experts towards working together with different competencies. [...], we do not want long time plans as we had a lot before. We want to dare to test and say no, this was not so good [...]. (P1)

To be flexible (van Ruler, 2021) is something the interviewees collectively state as an important cornerstone in agility. Another communication professional said:

Well, I would like to say that we all put different values into that concept. But for me, an easy way to describe agility would be to be 'easy on the feet'. Meaning

to be quite quick and smooth, to be flexible. And to be flexible does not mean to push rules and boundaries, but instead of saying 'no this is not possible', you can instead say 'how can we do this instead?'. (P4).

Interviewees reflected upon agility and acknowledge a good recognition of the conceptualization as well as an organizational understanding of agility which goes in line with what is stated by Dühring and Zerfass (2021) which further acts as a foundation of the theoretical understanding of agility in this thesis. In the same manner as Dühring and Zerfass (2021), participants state that the complex surroundings of the external environment need organizational actions where flexibility and fast responsiveness is key. Involving the right personnel based on competence and not hierarchical status is also reflected upon as a core in agility among interviewees, as well as openness to change and cooperation which is a theme found throughout the empirical material. Cooperation, or “working together” as the case organization names it, is a foundation in the agile mentality within the case organization. One employee stated that this is noticeable in how close the different instances in the organization are to each other mentally. Even though instances and employees might be far away physically, the agile horizontal structures allow for closer communication which calls for a higher degree of collaboration. One employee concludes:

[...] we try to be close to each other [...]. If you would be at another public authority, I think you would notice the difference. It is closer between the communication team and the building permit group and it is closer between the communication team and the elderly care, they talk more to each other than I would guess you do anywhere else. (P5).

I interpret this quote above that it illustrates that the agile structure in the case organization allows for closer communication between groups who usually might not carry out a high level of communication, something that was found throughout the empirical material from various angles. The employee who stated the quote above further continues to describe that an implication related to this is that given the agile mentality that stretches over the whole organization, employees tend to take communication paths that are known to be fast, which possibly can create

communication paths that are bound to a certain person. In the long run, this creates implications when those employees quit their position or are out of reach. Another communication professional further reflects upon this implication during our second interview when asked about these communicative paths and further stated a will to extend the communicative paths outside of those that are known to be fast. But usually, there is not enough time for that since there is a lot of focus on conducting assignments fast in an agile manner:

I might have my given people that I tend to go to and that I know I can turn to to do things. I might be able to extend those maybe. But on the other side, we usually do not have time for that, you constantly struggle with managing the time and doing everything you are supposed to do. So yes, it might be wishful thinking. (P3).

The alleged gap that Ragas and Ragas (2021) describe is shown when members of the case organization are asked to define what agility actually implies in their roles as communication professionals, and not solely on an organizational level. Here, the communication professionals have difficulty identifying examples of when tasks related to communication were carried out as agile. In the analysis of the communication policy, it is visible that the organization does believe that communication is a foundation for an agile municipality, and what signifies agile communication according to the policy is *information and knowledge sharing*. These are rather generalizable statements that show communicative *values* rather than *practical implementations* of agile communication. This somewhat diffuse conceptualization is shown among the communication professionals as well. P2 when asked to describe how agility takes its form specifically related to his role as a communication professional stated: *“I think it is difficult to... it is easy to find a definition in a lexicon and to find synonyms [...]. But the hard thing is to find examples of what we are doing and say, “that was agile!””*. Another communication professional stated that *“It might not be crystal clear”* (P5) when asked to identify how communication was carried out in an agile way. One way to interpret this is that communication professionals find it difficult to distinguish between agility on an organizational level and a more role-specific level. Other interviewees conclude that the educational effort all organizational members were given when the

municipality re-organized into an agile setting in 2015 gave some explanation about the concept on an organizational level, but that it still lacks some clarity. The lack of sensemaking as to how communication efforts are carried out as agile is visible through the document analysis as well. The communication plans thematically show clear goals and activities connected to each goal as a recurrent theme, as well as target group conceptualizations, but there is little room for acknowledging what van Ruler (2021) states as important in adjusting strategies depending on turn-out and external monitoring to keep an agile approach to communication activities. Through the interview proceedings, it was noticeable that this possibly could be derived from a lack of time within the team. Interviewees stated that lack of both personnel and time resulted in difficulties of keeping up with such communication efforts, such as adjusting strategy based on the outcomes of communicative efforts. A possible reason for this might be the global pandemic of Covid-19 where the communication team has been involved in spreading municipal information to its citizens regarding the pandemic. Strategy adjustment and implementation of agile communicative approaches have possibly been left out as a result of many “ad hoc” communication efforts connected to the global crisis. When asked about this, one employee concludes: *“These two last years, there is always an ambition and then there is a reality. I cannot say that I have had much time during the last two years to conduct external monitoring”* (P3) and another state: *“Well, it is something we have large ambitions doing. [...]. But the working days only has so many hours and sometimes external monitoring is one such thing that is a little bit less prioritized”* (P4). This shows a recognition of the importance of such activities that van Ruler (2021) argues are important to keep communication activities agile, but the written communication plans show a different construction of reality where these activities are sparsely mentioned.

To create further understanding of this alleged gap, the communication professionals were asked to explain how it varies to work with communication in the case organization compared to earlier work experiences in other organizations who not outspokenly worked agile. With the understanding of agility as a somewhat diffuse concept as Walter (2021) concludes, interviewees agreed with this notion and several stated that it was difficult to explicitly state what the difference was. The steering documents collected as empirical material although identify communication as a basis for an “agile municipality”. Communication professionals stated that *“It’s*

difficult to measure how well we have succeeded.” (P2), and *“I think it is difficult to put my finger on it.”* (P4), and *“Before this major educational effort, it may not have been... it may not be now either... quite crystal clear what it means.”* (P5). Walter (2021) does conceptualize organizational agility as a holistic concept, but meanwhile also states that such a holistic concept needs individual components which are clear to organizational members. What can be learned from this is that if agility is considered by research as one of the most important traits among communication professionals in the years to come (van Ruler, 2021; Zerfass et al., 2018a), I believe that it is not only necessary to create a strong organizational understanding of agility, but it is equally important to clarify the concepts down to specific roles.

As Walter (2021) and Ragas and Ragas (2021) conclude, agility seems to practically be a diffuse concept related to communication professionals. Here, the analysis of the empirical material indicates that an understanding of what agility means exists on *two levels*. Communication professionals understand agility in a wide organizational context where communication professionals understand implications such as required flexibility, working over departmental boundaries, and trying to see possibilities instead of issues. I interpret this understanding as rather clear in a general organizational context. Yet, when it comes to the other level, understanding of agility at a role-specific level and what it actually translates to in terms of communication efforts, the concepts seem somewhat more diffuse where the analytical stands drawn give sparse manifestation as to what communication professionals make sense of what being agile explicitly translates to in their strategic work as communication professionals.

5.2 Organizational understanding of agility is created through communication

The previous chapter described how communication professionals of the case organization’s understanding of the concept of agility exist on two levels. The first being the organizational level which is reflected upon in a rich way. The professionals here understand implications such as required flexibility and that the agile structure allows for horizontal cooperation, or “working together” as the case organization identifies it. The second, being the role-specific level and what agility

mean specifically in their role as communication professionals, which acts through the empirical material as a somewhat more diffuse concept.

This second theme of the analysis further concerns the organizational understanding of agility based on the understanding among communication professionals in the case organization presented in previous sections. It suggests that making sense of agility on an organizational level becomes a process highly governed by communication where communication professionals in the case organization take on a prominent role in creating such understanding. Related to the case organization, communication professionals identified that during the re-organization starting in 2015, when the organization implemented an agile organizational structure, communication became a process used for the organization to make sense of agility and its meaning connected to the organization as a whole. Further, communication is reflected upon as a valuable and important tool in continuing the sensemaking process of the organization's understanding of agility.

Weick (1995) argues that organizational members through processes of sense-making try to construct meaning of what is not known, and this process became visible through the analysis of the empirical material. Communication professionals in the case organization reflected upon that their knowledge of the concept of agility before entering the case organization was limited, and several of them concluded that their knowledge was limited to sparse references from the IT-sector. The interviewees who worked in the case organization during 2015 or earlier were part of a conducted large-scale educational effort that aimed at educating all organizational members on what agility and being agile entailed. This educational effort took place across the entire organization and the after flow of this educational effort was lined with communication activities and instances. While analyzing and interpreting the empirical material, it became visible that the communication professionals have realized that many of them have worked in an agile way before entering the case organization, but in organizations that not explicitly have labeled themselves as "agile":

[...] does everyone work like this and the only difference is that we have decided to put a name on it? And I think there is a purpose in that. If that is the case, that we only have put a name on it, I think it is useful because then we have a way of working to relate to and we know that there is a desire that we

should work in that way. So even if it is only a word, I think that it is stuck in the walls here and that shines through. (P5).

Above, one communication professional stated that working agile most likely is obvious for other organizations as well, but that the difference in the case organization lies in the fact that the organization has decided to put a name on the mentality and structure. Several interviewees stated that it might seem trivial to put a name on something so obvious as being flexible, but at the same time concluded that the communicative process of assigning a clear name to it has helped the organizational understanding. As the quote above displays, the communicative aspect and effort of assigning a clear name to a concept that evidently lacks some clarity (Walter, 2021) contributes to sensemaking within the organization among its members. Through the interview proceedings, it was possible to see that the communication professionals felt positive about this and they further mentioned that even though it might be obvious for some organizations and sectors to work in this way, the communicative act of assigning a name to it contributes to sensemaking of its organizational implications. Another professional stated when asked how agility is part of her work as a communication professional that: *“It is not like we have come up with something unique. But we have assigned it a name and that has helped us to keep up with these questions.”* (P1). Another interviewee said, *“I do not think there is anything wrong with using concepts and trying to assign meaning to certain words and use it as a way of conveying a message.”* (P4). Further illustration of this comes from another interviewee, who realized during the interview that earlier workplaces had offered the same work structure: *“I had not heard about agility before. On the other hand, I realize that I have worked like this before, and it made me realize that we have put a name on how I have worked before”* (P6). Another communication professional also lands in the understanding that this is an organizational approach that the person has experienced before but without assigning a name to it:

But in our organization, we have pinpointed what we mean by collaboration and taking advantage of competence across organizational boundaries. We have talked about it and we have sort of lifted it up and formulated it. So, in

that way, I think we have been aware of where it begins, and in that way, the concept has also become even more clear for us. (P5).

These quotes above represent something several interviewees expressed in the same way or with similar words. This shows the first step in the sensemaking process as stated by Weick et al. (2005) where sensemaking initially appears when circumstances in an organizational environment are put into words and categories. Through initiating a concept with low recognizability among the studied communication professionals, the organization put the concept of agility into words and initiated a sensemaking process. Weick et al. (2005) state that “*To work with the idea of sensemaking is to appreciate that smallness does not equate with insignificance. Small structures and short moments can have large consequences*” (p. 410). This seemingly small gesture of assigning a name to structures who was known subconsciously to the employees initiated a sensemaking process where the communicative activity created organizational understanding of the phenomena among the studied professionals.

The sensemaking process is further illustrated practically where interviewees stated that they as communication professionals have an important role in contributing to organizational agility as a *process*. Weick (1995) expresses that organizations as well as the process of sensemaking within them is not a stable unit, I interpret that the case organization’s communication professionals recognize this process and thus contribute to the process through their roles. One such aspect is how the team has been part of producing communication material regarding agility where they have been writing texts, produced films, held and produced workshops about organizational agility and what it means in the organizational context at large. One communication professional stated that the team has had large part in producing communicative content such as films and internal communication material and in that way has been part of this *process* of making sense of agility. The communication manager has especially held a prominent role in this as she has conducted workshops throughout the organization regarding the importance of communication, this is concluded by both herself as well as her employees. As Heide et al. (2018) state, managers enact important roles in organizational sensemaking through communicative processes of translating complex organizational circumstances. This is noticed as a process that exists within the case organization as well. But the

employees, the communication professionals, also become strategic partners in the organization through their active participation in creating communication efforts linking to, and creating, the overall organizational goals of maintaining the agile structure. Something which I further recognize through the steering documents where the organization understands communicative efforts as important factors in the existence of the organization as agile. As Simonsson and Heide (2021) argue, organizational visions are brought to life through communicative activities, but the communicative efforts do not solely create value in terms of how it helps the organization reach its goals. Communication processes on their own create value for their own sake, and these two processes can co-exist while the organization through communication creates sensemaking which forms both organizational identity (Weick, 2005), here, the case organization as an agile organization, as well as building upon organizational, meaningful, relationships (Simonsson & Heide, 2021).

The sensemaking process has not stopped after the implementation of an agile organizational structure, the communicative processes to create organizational understanding have continued over the years as a way of creating organizational understanding of what being agile means in the context of the case organization. To state examples, the communication team has captured video content from the organization where employees are invited to record themselves and explain how they look upon being agile and working in an agile organization. This content has been published on the organizational intranet by the communication team where the videos have continued the sensemaking process of organizational agility. One communication professional stated that through these videos *"[...] we try to spread the image of the agile way of working and many times these small video clips coincide with what some have picked up during the educational effort on agility."* (P2). Through these communicative efforts, sensemaking continues as a process throughout the organization where the intranet is used as a mediating communicative tool.

As Tseng and Lin (2011) state regarding the importance of processes of communication that cut through the organization to keep a high level of agility is here illustrated through the eyes of communication professionals. How I interpret the empirical material is that organizational understanding of agile is recognized as a process highly governed by communication where communication becomes a foundation for sensemaking of agility as a process. I interpret that communication professionals in the case organization understand that through communicative

activities guarded to some extent by communication professionals, organizational members are given a foundation of what agility means in their organizational setting as a whole and are also provided with possibilities to use communication as a sense-making tool where communication cuts through the organization as a whole where all organizational members become communicative actors. Communication becomes as Simonsson and Heide (2021) conclude a “critical success factor” (p. 268) where the communication professionals enact roles as mediators of the organizational understanding of agility, as well as organizational members who continue the sensemaking process and become communicative actors through the creative initiatives of the communication team. Focus is turned towards enabling, rather than controlling (Denning, 2016), which corresponds to the theoretical belief of the professional communicative logic where communication professionals become enablers of communicative actions coming from all organizational members (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). The implication communication professionals in the case organization understand this as is how they become strategic partners in the organization, enabling communication activities across all members of the organization where communication cuts through the organization to create sensemaking of the organizational understanding of agility. This becomes a strategic activity through how the communication professionals through the flow of information throughout the organization construct processes of sensemaking (Weick, 1995), not solely for themselves, but for the organization as a whole.

5.3 Communication professionals as facilitators of agility

The analytical discussion has thus far focused on the two levels of understanding of agility among communication professionals in the case organization, as well as how communication is understood as highly important for creating organizational understanding of agility where communication professionals become strategic partners in enabling such understanding. This third theme will provide further analytical discussion of how communication professionals understand one of the implications of organizational agility to be that they become facilitators of agility in their roles. Through the close relationship between agility and the role of communication professionals, they help to maintain the level of agility within the organization. Through focus on dialogue, sensemaking, and communication professionals as

strategic organizational partners, communication ends up as a major aspect of an agile organization's ability to stay agile. The perceived high value of communication in the case organization among the communication professionals further results in practical implications which the communication professionals reflected upon and these will thus be discussed. This theme is divided into three subheadings to create an overview.

5.3.1 Highlighting the importance of communication

Communication professionals explain that communication ends up high on the agenda in the case organization. The role of the communication manager did not exist prior to 2015 when the organization re-structured into an agile organization and a distinct example of this shift is illustrated when the communication manager expressed thoughts concerning the shift in the organization's interest in communication:

I think the interest, and if I follow this interest since 2015... my role did not even exist in the organization prior to 2015. The communication department did not even exist, there was one communication professional plus another one in a department. So, in that sense, we have made a huge journey. (P1)

The importance of communication in the organization is illustrated throughout the empirical material. The communication policy document states seven pillars on which the communication strategy rests and one of these explicitly encapsulates the importance of communication in an agile organization, "*Well functioning and good communication is a basis for an agile municipality*". An appearing theme throughout the documents that steer the communication efforts is also agile principles which communication paves the way for, such as dialogue with stakeholders, to communicate across departmental and hierarchical borders, and promotion of efficiency and flexibility (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021). Although, this is not explicitly recognized by the employees as agile communication activities as discussed in the first section of the analytical discussion. Communication should also facilitate and promote an agile approach throughout the organization. That communication lands high on the agenda in the organization is recognized by the employees of the

communication team which all reflect upon that the organization where they work values communication to a large degree. *“Communication is the alpha and omega and I think everyone has understood that without good communication, we cannot work in this way”* (P6), one communication professional concludes. The same employee continues and illustrates why communication lands high on the agenda concerning agility:

[...] there is an expectation that if you see a problem or an issue arises, or there is a potential solution where you need to collaborate with people outside of your own box, then you should. It is misconduct not to. So that puts large demands on communication and being communicative, it lands very high on the agenda. (P6)

This quote illustrates the need for communication across the organization and its members if issues are to deal with in an agile way. One employee especially highlights the importance of seeing all members of the organization as communicative actors and states that all members in the organization have expectations based on the agile organizational structure to use communication as a way to be agile and allow for horizontal agile structures to prosper: *“Since agility is required of all of us, it is required that we need to communicate outside our own box. That is, outside our unit and our business areas”* and *“So all in all, communication is the key and the prerequisite for us to be able to work agile”* (P1). All members of the organization are required to use communication as a way to keep the agile organizational structure alive, no matter if it is external communication towards inhabitants or towards colleagues. Agility helps the horizontal collaboration within the organization and its existence become reliant on communication. Thus, the organization can keep up with the external VUCA climate, and communication lands high on the organizational agenda.

Through the organizational structure in working agile, the empirical material shows upon a perceived focus towards dialogue with both colleagues and stakeholders to promote agility on an organizational level. This is a recurrent theme throughout the material, and it is also a factor that has been emphasized through research as an important factor in being agile (Dühring & Zerfass, 2021; van Ruler 2015; van Ruler, 2021; Zerfass et al., 2018). The need for stakeholder interaction

adhering from dialogue is important for organizations' ability to stay agile (Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021; Wiencierz et al., 202) and dialogic essences further promote communication activities of good quality where both speaking and listening takes place (Macnamara, 2016). In the case organization, dialogue appears as a topic that concerns and is acknowledged by the communication team. The communication professionals are involved in processes of both *conducting* dialogue activities as well as communicating *about* them. The dialogic perspective is through the empirical material presented as a large part of the municipal overall goals where communication is pointed out as a central part in keeping up with, and encouraging, the dialogic perspective of the organization as a whole, both as a democratic institution, but also for the organization as agile. I interpret this as that the communication professionals of the case organization become continued strategic partners in the organization through their activities in contributing to such organizational goals (Simonsson & Heide, 2021). The dialogic strategy is not only emerging from the organizational top layer, rather it is enabled and developed by the communication professionals in line with the professional communicative logic as posed by Simonsson and Heide (2021). On the other hand, one communication professional in the case organization, who among other things works with social media, emphasizes the importance of the dialogic perspective in his work, but also points out the difficulty of communicating in a dialogic way in a public sector organization where content sometimes just needs to be informative. This was derived when I asked about the dialogic essence of his work with social media:

Sometimes it is just information that we need to publish where we [the communication team] might not think it is the most exciting thing or the content that we think will create the most dialogue. But it might be a decision that affects a large number of people, many might not care or get engaged with the content, but we still need to publish it. (P5)

This employee further states that there is an expectation from the organization that such information should be communicated, even though it might conflict with the quality assessment from the communication professionals:

Sometimes you might already know beforehand that this will not work out well on the social channels, it will not work. Still, there might be an expectation from the organization that it should be visible everywhere. And then it is partly difficult as a communication professional to create that kind of content. (P5)

That content “*will not work*” is here interpreted as that it will not create engagement and dialogue on the social channels. Even though the organization emphasizes dialogic qualities as a strong contributing factor to agility which concerns communication professionals, there is still a resistance in how pervading such activities can be in the case organization. The public sector environment does come with certain demands of communicating pure information towards inhabitants, which do not always invite to dialogue with stakeholders on for example social media, as reflected upon by the communication professional above. This becomes a conflicting reflection in how the organization continuously strives toward dialogue.

5.3.2 Communication and its closeness to agility

Content from the interview proceedings illustrates that communication professionals in the case organization understand that the role of communication professionals lies closely to the agile mentality. When asked about the relationship between agility and communication, one employee stated that “*I am thinking that as a communication professional, you kind of become some sort of ambassador for an agile perspective, because it lies in the whole idea of agility that it is about communication*”. (P1). These thoughts were expressed throughout the interviews. One interviewee expressed when asked if he could identify any difference from previous workplaces in how agility takes place in his current role in the case organization compared to other workplaces where he also was hired as a communication professional and answered that he could not do that, since: “[...] *I do not think there is any difference since it lies in the nature of things as a communication professional. [...] I see it as natural that we should be agile and solution-oriented*”. (P3). One employee expressed that it would be difficult to even conduct his assigned tasks without being agile, another stated that: “*For us, working agile is rather simple, because our mission fit with an agile mindset*”. (P4), and another expressed: “*It is a completely natural way of working for me and I do not see that I could work in*

any other way. I usually tell my managers that I do not see any other way of working with communication” (P7). If comparing this to the rather shallow understanding of what agility entails on a role-specific level as discussed in the first chapter of the analysis, it could be interpreted that the agile mentality of communication professionals’ rests so close to their role as communication professionals and the professional communicative logic as presented by Simonsson and Heide (2021) that it becomes difficult for professionals to distinguish where one ends and another begins. The subconscious question professionals in the case organization ask themselves becomes: *what is it to be an agile communication professional and what is it to solely be a communication professional?* The empirical material shows upon this as discussed throughout the analysis in the way that it emphasizes several aspects of the logic as posed by Simonsson and Heide (2021), such as the importance of social constructionism in the cross-organizational dialogues, communication as a sensemaking process in the organizational understanding of agility, emphasis on stakeholder focus with dialogue, and communication professionals as enablers and developers in the organization. Simonsson and Heide (2021) do emphasize the importance of not solely seeing communication professionals as the only communication competence of the organization through their framework. The agile perspective, as seen in the empirical material stemming from the case organization, lifts up the importance of communication as something that concerns the existence of the organization as agile. All organizational members become commutative actors as presented throughout the analytical discussion where communication becomes highly valued and important for the organization to stay agile.

Communication professionals understand themselves as facilitators of agility through several aspects. Throughout the empirical material, there is thematical focus on agile aspects where communication professionals take on a role in forming relationships and co-creation with organizational stakeholders, in this case, the inhabitants of the municipality, while also promoting and facilitating a high level of organizational communication. Interviewees describe that they conduct dialogue in several ways to infuse input into the organization and in that way stay agile towards their external surroundings. Yet, as illustrated, these activities are not consequently recognized by professionals as agile communication activities. Rather, they are seen as a ‘natural part’ of solely being a communication professional.

5.3.3 *A critical approach*

In this final section, I will present an angle that sees agility and its implications as understood by the communication professionals from a more critical approach where the organization's high value of communication is translated into effects that the communication professionals reflect upon in a negative manner. Given the large organizational value of communication that has been illustrated through the empirical material, the importance of communication in the case organization creates high expectations where communication professionals expressed stress towards always being expected to find solutions and work in a very fast way, because otherwise "they are not agile".

I can certainly say that expectations of us, they exist. And sometimes the expectations are perhaps exaggerated. We are not that many, and we may be expected to solve problems that are not only related to communication but are purely operational challenges. (P2)

Through the organizational emphasis on communication that comes with being an agile organization, communication professionals are expected to solve issues and tasks rapidly. These aspects, such as being quickly responsive and flexible, are traits that lay within the definition of agility, and communication professionals as stated also understand agility as something that lies closely in their roles as communication professionals. Yet, communication professionals understand the implications of these aspects as somewhat stressful, and that agility sometimes is used as an excuse for not being able to say no. One communication professional when asked about what expectations the agile organizational structure comes with reflected upon agility as a sort of excuse for bad foresight:

[...] it is a way of saying "Just solve this", and in that way, it becomes a way... I experience, to put mildly, to say "now you should be agile", a mild expression for "solve this task, that is what you should do". (P4)

The same employee also concludes that this is not strange, since the organization he works for is explicitly agile, being flexible comes with the role and assignment. This theme is recurrent in the empirical material where communication also lays

the foundation for a high level of service, both externally as well as internally. Another employee stated that saying no to tasks or suggestions is not something that goes in line with the agile mentality, instead, they work with reformulating questions to find solutions:

One cannot say “No, we cannot do that”. We do not work in that way, rather we say “No, that is not possible based on the policy document, but maybe we can do this instead! Or we can work like this! If we take your idea and then put it into that framework, then we will be able to reach your goal” [...]. That is what flexibility is all about. Flexibility is not about just letting everything go all the time. (P4)

This avoidance of saying no to colleagues is reflected further on by another communication professional who states that there is a fear of saying no within the organization related to the outspoken agile structure:

Well, it is more difficult to say no to things because then you are “not agile”. So, I think the tendency of saying “We will solve this” is bigger here because one does not want to be “non-agile” in an agile organization. So, this might have resulted in a bit of pressure, I might say. (P2)

Van Ruler (2015) states that being agile related to conducting communicative tasks requires a high level of self-awareness. To implement agility in an organization, and to do it successfully, requires employees who understand their professional standards to be able to show organizational members what communication is prepared to perform. Although the high value of communication is acknowledged throughout the empirical material, it certainly comes with effects on the communication professionals where they occasionally find the situation stressful. To be afraid of not being perceived as agile in an agile organization is of course a natural effect, and communication professionals of the case organization do recognize this as a natural effect and further as a legitimate demand stemming from the agile organization.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to create knowledge of how communication professionals understand the implications of agility in their roles as communication professionals and further what this leads to in their organizational, professional context. The study has through a qualitative case study of an agile organization's communication team problematized the wide implementation of such methods and the assumed lack of theoretical and practical knowledge among the field of strategic communication of what implications agility has both practically and theoretically to communication professionals. This chapter will collectively conclude the study and discursively summarize its results.

6.1 Contributions to research and practice

As concluded by Dühring and Zerfass (2021), the function of communication in organizations is highly affected by the dramatically changeable society, and this study has shown upon a need and recognition of taking measures of such change among communication professionals in the studied case organization. This study contributes with knowledge of that communication professionals in the studied organization understand the implications of agility through different levels in their organizational context. Through processes of communication that takes place in the organization since the organizational restructuring into an agile organization took place, communication professionals understand the conceptualization of agility in a large organizational context. Implications such as being flexible and collaborative towards colleagues and stakeholders, work horizontally across the different focus areas, and recognition of that a complex and changeable world requires organizational structures that allow flexibility and fast responsiveness were aspects reflected upon. Linear to how research encapsules agility (Ragas & Ragas, 2021; Denning, 2016; van Ruler, 2015; van Ruler, 2021; Seiffert-Brockmann et al., 2021; Tseng & Lin, 2011). Yet, the more role-specific implications of aligning strategic and practical communicative work to such aspects appears as more complex to grasp among

the professionals. Walter (2021) concludes that organizational agility does act as a holistic concept, but to be successfully implemented it still needs individual components based in organizational roles which act clear to organizational members. In this specific example, the communication professionals. Professionals found it difficult to reflect upon how communication activities are carried out as agile and while looking at communicative actions carried out by the team, it became visible that it translates further than to only reflections. Meanwhile, being a communication professional entails and requires agility as stated by the professionals. Theoretically, this study contributes to uncovering this dichotomy where light is put on the professional role of communicators where their natural logic as communication professionals is understood as closely intertwined with the agile mentality. It becomes difficult for the professionals to distinguish and separate agility from the role of being a communication professional. To carry out the role of a communication professional in a modern organizational climate requires a high level of agility among the professionals, and ultimately, being agile as a communication professional becomes something self-explanatory.

Through the sensemaking perspective and the professional communicative logic (Simonsson & Heide, 2021) it is possible to draw conclusions upon that professionals understand the implications of agility closely to those that rests near the logic, such as required stakeholder focus and dialogue, social constructionism in the cross-organizational dialogues, and professionals as enablers and developers of communication in the organization, even though they might not be explicitly reflected upon as '*agile communicative activities*'. Further implications are also understood as how the professionals become important actors in creating organizational understanding of agility through processes of sensemaking governed by communication stemming from all organizational members. Communication that cuts through the organization allows for the organization to stay agile (Tseng & Lin, 2011). Through this, communication professionals ultimately become strategic partners and facilitators of agility in the organization in how they enable the agile organizational structure through their roles, as well as inspire organizational members to creatively use communication as a tool for making sense of agility on an organizational level.

Communication becomes highly valuable in the case organization. The high value is illustrated through various angles and being a prerequisite for agility,

communication professionals experience an organizational setting which values their core capacity as *communication professionals*. Agility encapsulates communicative values which contributes to allowing professionals to stay close to their given logic. Communication becomes fundamental for the existence of the agile organization where the agile shift in the specific case organization has created both space for a communication team to professionally operate, as well as promoted communication activities which agility becomes highly dependent on. Here, implications closely connected to the conceptualization of agility becomes visible. Required flexibility and to operate in a fast and agile way in an organization which seemingly values communication leads to practitioners being afraid to say no to colleagues, where a fear of being “un-agile” is present.

The inevitably complex world makes organizations see great potential in communication (Falkhemier et al., 2016), moving professionals closer to their own logic. As Simonsson and Heide (2021) states, is it equally important for the professionals to acknowledge the logic as it is to adhere time and reflection as to what the logic actually entails, where this study has illustrated that how communication practically is executed in an agile manner acts as somewhat diffuse. Although, this study contributes with recognition of communication as how it become one of the most important, strategic, and celebrated processes for an organization to stay and operate agile where communication professionals become valuable strategic partners in the agile corporate landscape. This notion could be cultivated by communication professionals in a corporate landscape where agile traits are desirable currency, where the intertwining of agility and the professional communicative logic paves the way for further professionalization.

6.2 Future research

This study has opened up to the notion of the closeness between agility and the role of communication professionals. Here, future studies could continue to explore the communicative logic and agility related to the role of communication professionals. Possible future connections could be drawn upon “*The art of strategic improvisation*” (Falkheimer & Sandberg, 2018), where connections could be made further to understand how communication professionals within an agile context explicitly work with strategy, strategizing and conducting agile communication. This could

be obtained through qualitative studies using observations as a method to collect empirical material where research practically could observe how communication professionals involve agile strategies into their work to see the nuances in improvisation. It would further allow for interesting entrances if further organizational members would be studied outside of the communication function in an agile organization. This would contribute to understanding regarding this study's belief that communication becomes an important cornerstone in an agile organization's being.

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7 Appendix 1 – Interview guide

Interview Guide	
Theme	Questions
General information	
<p>Hej och välkommen till denna intervju och tack så mycket för att du deltar och bidrar till mitt uppsatsprojekt som handlar om agilitet och strategisk kommunikation. Den här intervjun kommer pågå i cirka en timma och kommer att spelas in. Inspelningen görs endast i syfte att jag som student ska kunna transkribera intervjun, inspelningen kommer inte delas med någon annan och efter transkriberingen kommer filen att raderas.</p> <p>Jag vill understryka att det inte finns några rätt eller fel i den här intervjun när du svarar på mina frågor. Jag är intresserad av din upplevelse och förståelse av ämnet vi ska prata om och hur du som arbetar med kommunikation ser på det från olika perspektiv.</p> <p>Precis som vi tidigare kommit överens om är allting som sägs här helt anonymt, både du som deltagare samt organisationen du arbetar för. Vi kommer nämna organisationen vid namn under intervjun, men det kommer anonymiseras när jag transkriberar vårt samtal.</p> <p>Intervjun är indelad i tre olika teman som har olika fokus, men först kommer jag starta att ställa lite generella frågor om dig och din roll inom organisationen. Om allt känns bra kommer jag nu att börja spela in intervjun.</p>	
Introduktion	Frågor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skulle du vilja berätta lite om dig själv? • <i>Hur länge har du arbetat med kommunikation och hur kom det sig att det blev ditt yrke?</i> • <i>Hur länge har du arbetat i X kommun?</i> • <i>Vad är din roll inom kommunikationsteamet?</i>
Tema 1 - agilitet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hur förstår du, eller hur skulle du definiera begreppet agilitet? • På vilka sätt hade du hört talas om agilitet innan du började arbeta i X kommun? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vart hade du hört talas om det? I vilka sammanhang?</i> • Hur tycker du att det varierar att arbeta med kommunikation i X kommun som arbetar uttalat agilt i jämförelse med andra arbetsgivare du haft? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Om personen arbetat i X sedan innan 2015: hur skiljer sig arbetet åt nu efter er omorganisering?</i> • Har du fått någon utbildning inom agila arbetssätt? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Om ja – hur behandlades kommunikation i den utbildningen?</i>

Tema 2 – agilitet och kommunikation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hur är agilitet en del av din vardag som kommunikatör/i ditt arbete? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vilka följder får agiliteten i ditt arbete?</i> • Kan du beskriva hur en kommunikationsprocess/process ser ut hos er och hur du märker av agiliteten i de processerna? • Finns det delar i ert kommunikationsarbete som är extra viktiga för att kommunikationsarbetet ska bedrivas på ett agilt sätt hos er? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vilken är den viktigaste faktorn?</i> • <i>Exempel: interaktion med invånare, omvärldsbevakning, god internkommunikation osv.</i> • Hur arbetar ni med att ta in förändring som händer i X omvärld för att kunna vara agila? Och vad har ni som kommunikatörer för roll där? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Har ni några processer för det som du skulle kunna beskriva?</i> • I er kommunikationspolicy skriver ni om dialog, exempelvis i sociala medier, i medborgardialoger och i målet att kommunikationen ska skapa en dialog med medborgarna: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hur arbetar ni med dialogerna?</i> • <i>Hur används den kommunikation/information ni får av invånarna för att vara agila?</i> • <i>Hur tror du att invånarna/de ”kunder” ni arbetar för märker att ni arbetar agilt?</i>
Tema 3 – agilitet och påverkan på kommunikatörsrollen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upplever du att det finns annorlunda förväntningar på kommunikationsarbetet när organisationen är uttalat agil? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kanske kan du jämföra med tidigare erfarenheter från andra arbetsgivare?</i> • Hur diskuterar din organisation/kommunikationsteamet nyttan av ett agilt arbetssätt? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ifrågasätts mentaliteten/arbetssätten av er som tjänstemän?; ses den agila strategin över?; Kommer agiliteten nerifrån eller uppifrån i organisationen?; Vem skulle du säga gynnas av agiliteten?</i> • Hur upplever du att förväntningarna från ledning (arbetsmässigt/politiskt) ser ut från ett agilt perspektiv? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Har ledningen specifika förväntningar på hur ni utför ert arbete eller saker de lägger extra vikt vid?</i> • <i>Hur anser du att det agila arbetssättet påverkar kommunikationsarbetets status i er organisation?</i> • Skulle du önska att nästa eventuella arbetsplats du kommer till skulle arbeta agilt? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Varför ja/nej, utveckla gärna.</i>
Avslutande	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finns det något vi inte har pratat om som du skulle vilja nämna?

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tack för din tid och för dina svar, de kommer vara till stor hjälp i mitt uppsatsprojekt. Jag kommer nu att avsluta inspelningen. |
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8 Appendix 2 – Consent form

Samtycke för deltagande i masteruppsats vid Lunds universitet

Detta dokument är en del av processen för etisk behandling av deltagare i forskning vid Lunds universitet. Detta dokument bör ge dig som deltagare en grundläggande förståelse av vad forskningen handlar om och vad ditt deltagande kommer innebära. Om du önskar veta mer om genomförandet av denna masteruppsats, tveka inte att fråga.

Studiens syfte

Syftet med min forskning är att skapa förståelse om hur kommunikatörer i en agil organisation förstår följderna och implikationerna av agilitet i deras roller som kommunikatörer. Masteruppsatsen genomförs av mig, Elin Nilsson, för en masterexamen i Strategisk kommunikation vid Lunds universitet år 2022.

Forskningsmetod

Genom ditt deltagande i studien kommer du att delta i kvalitativa intervjuer där jag som student kommer ställa frågor om din förståelse av agilitet ur ett kommunikationsperspektiv från flera olika infallsvinklar. Dina svar kommer att presenteras tillsammans med svar från de andra deltagarna i studien.

Nytta av denna forskning

Agilitet är ett ord och koncept som allt mer frekvent återfinns i forskning om kommunikation just nu. Dock är forskningen för tillfället grund och fler exempel behöver förstås för att skapa en bredare bild av vilka följder agilitet får för kommunikatörer. Som en central funktion för en organisations existens är kommunikation viktig att studera, både ur ett kommunikationsperspektiv, men också ur ett organisatoriskt helhetsperspektiv.

Anonymitet

Ditt deltagande i denna studie är helt anonymt, likväl organisationens identitet kommer att anonymiseras. Allt insamlat material kommer att anonymiseras och endast användas i syfte för denna masteruppsats. Efter uppsatsens examinering kommer all data som inte återfinns i den slutgiltiga texten att raderas

Valfritt deltagande

Du har blivit tillfrågad att frivilligt delta i denna studie och om någon del av informationen inte är tydlig är du varmt välkommen att ställa vidare frågor till mig. Om du vid ett senare tillfälle bestämmer dig för att du inte önskar delta i studien kommer ditt beslut inte att påverka framtida relationer till Lunds universitet och du är alltid fri att dra tillbaka ditt deltagande.

Signatur

Din signatur innebär att du samtycker till att delta i ovan nämnda studie för mitt, Elin Nilssons, examensarbete för masterprogrammet i Strategisk kommunikation vid Lunds universitet.

Deltagarens signatur

Datum

Namnförtydligande

Studentens signatur

Datum

Kontaktinformation till student:

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