Foreword

What is the role of media in society? This was the initial question when Scandinavian media research was conceived during the 1970s. The answers differed according to national contexts. However, in Sweden and Norway, questions and answers were articulated in fairly similar ways. Media research developed along parallel lines in these two countries in the early days. Both traditions were based on a social science perspective with roots in the political sciences.

After all these years we have seen development and fragmentation – as well as change – in both media research and in the research field itself. While the different media – as for example books, press, radio, film and television – originally were separated into different social institutions, digitization of production and distribution has radically changed the area of communication. The resulting convergence of the means of communication is not only technical; the Internet forms new markets and challenges nationally established structures and practices in ways which were unthinkable only a few years ago. The means of communication have become global in their distribution and use in ways which format both communication and research.

The early political science perspective in Sweden and Norway was based on research on structural aspects of the media. The "cultural turn", with a focus on "texts" as well as reception of the media, resulted in an expansion – but also a fragmentation – of the research field. As a consequence, the overall question about the role of the media in society can now be raised from other perspectives than before. However, new perspectives and new media have also resulted in a fragmentation of the field which produces many different answers to this overall question. Moreover, another consequence of fragmentation is that relevant questions at an overall level might be neglected, for example when it comes to "marketization" of the media as well as of the research itself. Is media research playing the critical and overall role it should ideally play?

New media structures raise new challenges in asking about the role of the media in society. Accordingly, phenomena like Google and You Tube are not only challenging established national media structures, they are also challenging media research. With media expansion, the need for analyses and research on the social role of the media is more pressing than ever.

In 2006, two pioneering representatives of the early media research tradition turned 60 years old; Lennart Weibull of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, and Helge Østbye of the University of Bergen, Norway. Both grew up in the aftermath of the Second World War; both were children of the new education society and first in the ranks when higher education exploded; both saw the electronic mass media expand; and both became founders of the new discipline known as "mass communication research" at their respective universi-

ties. Lennart's and Helge's entry to this field was political science. Hence, the corresponding development of Swedish and Norwegian mass communication research is reflected in the analogies between Lennart and Helge. They were both pioneers in the establishment of media departments during the second half of the 1980s; Lennart of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication in Gothenburg, Helge of the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Bergen.

As institutional entrepreneurs, they have had a significant impact on later generations of media researchers at their respective universities. Both have assumed great responsibilities in the recruitment of students as well as new colleagues. And both have headed their respective institutions through several periods. The responsibility behind this institutional entrepreneurship has been manifested through a great will to contribute textbooks to the field. Their own research efforts have concentrated on media politics, media structures, media economy and media activities in general. An explicit interest in journalism and journalism studies has furthermore resulted in comprehensive research in this field.

As early entrepreneurs they were central in establishing national and Nordic research infrastructure on the field: From 1973 the bi-annual Nordic research conferences and the Nordicom centre for documentation and publication, where they have both acted as chair members. They have also both been heavily involved in European comparative research.

Then to the initial question of the role of mass media in society. This special issue of *Nordicom Review* intends to raise that overall questions to well established and new forms of media. It is edited to congratulate Lennart Weibull and Helge Østbye, and to appreciate their contributions to the research field. As editors we hope that the contributions will stimulate further Nordic research co-operation, and also stimulate the area of research, both in national and international contexts.

Let us conclude by thanking all the contributors who have made this issue of *Nordicom Review* possible. Thanks also to the departments of media studies at the universities in Bergen and Göteborg, and to the Norwegian Media Authority, who have given their financial support to the book.

Göteborg and Bergen in May 2007

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Broadcasting Regulation vs. Freedom of Expression and Editorial Independence

A Contradictory Relationship?

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Abstract

This article discusses the relationship between forms of broadcasting regulation and the principle of freedom of expression. The argument is that there always is a tension between how to regulate the media through administrative and political measure on the one hand and how to secure a free independent broadcasting media on the other.

By referring to the report of the arguments of the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Commission and the subsequent new freedom of expression article in the Norwegian constitution the author maintains that the only reasons for regulating broadcasting can be found in that frequencies are a limited resource, or in arguments that have to with safeguarding a plural and independent media situation against the threat of monopolisation and 'corporate' censorship.

The article ends up by identifying six possible threat to an independent broadcasting situation: The state; the courts; commercial owners; advertisers; sources; networks of actors.

Key Words: broadcasting regulation, freedom of expression, editorial independence, the regulatory system in Norway, threats to a free and independent broadcasting situation

Introduction

The principles behind freedom of expression in a democracy can be summed up in the following points: 1. Everyone has the right to express oneself freely in the medium of one's choice. 2. This implies the right to access, receive and disseminate information, ideas and messages of all types regardless of border, through all communication systems and media – be they oral, print or electronic. 3. The media shall enjoy editorial independence from undue influence from both state and corporate actors.

On July 14 2004 the then newly established British communications regulation authority – Ofcom – presented a consultation document on its proposal for a Broadcasting Code. Section2, point 2 of the document states:

> Broadcasting and freedom of expression are intrinsically linked. The one is the life blood of the other. Nowhere can that tension between the right to freedom of expression and its restriction be more acute than in drawing up a Code which seeks to regulate broadcasting. (Ofcom 2005)

This is an interesting and statement coming from a broadcaster regulator because there have been few discussions of how to make broadcasting regulations compatible with a fundamental adherence to freedom of expression within regulatory frameworks.

The perspective of how broadcasting regulation relates to the principle pf freedom of expression has never really been central to the discussion of why it is necessary to regulate this sector. In her overview of the regulatory regime in Norway from the 1980s and onwards Trine Syvertsen (Syvertsen 2004) does not emphasise this aspect, but it is possible to maintain that it is indirectly present in the discussion of the relationship between the state and the regulator organs. Looking back at the situation when the Nordic public service broadcasters enjoyed a monopoly, it was only die hard economic liberals who questioned the situation also in the perspective of freedom of expression. When the monopolies were dissolved around 1980 (in Norway in 1982), the discussions leading up to the dissolution of the monopolies were only marginally concerned with whether a state broadcasting monopoly could be said to be in line with the fundamental principles of freedom of expression. Rather, the debate to a large degree was centred on the need for building a commercial broadcasting sector and to open up the airwaves to local communities and organisations in the form of community broadcasting. In addition technological developments in relation to cable and satellite broadcasting were used as arguments for breaking the monopoly. There were, however, very few concerns raised about whether to regulate a whole media sector as such could be said to be compatible with fundamental principles of freedom of expression. Regulation was regarded as necessary because it constituted a way of administrating limited natural resources in the form of frequencies.

Trine Syvertsen (2004: 17 ff) has identified four types of arguments for how to regulate the media in general and broadcasting in particular. The first is linked to cultural politics. The second concerns media business interests. The third is based on consumer politics. And the fourth has to do with competition regulation.

One of the most important arguments used to defend a continuous regulation of the broadcasting sector in the digital era has been related to cultural policy considerations. This is clearly the case in Norway and other Scandinavian countries, but also a general trend in Europe. The public service principles that were the basis of regulation in Europe in the era of limited frequencies both for the state owned public service corporations and the private commercial ones with special privileges (the British ITV system and similar) are now to be continued in order to secure cultural pluralism in the sector. In addition come the European demands for a certain percentage of European or national programming. One can sympathise with such a policy as an attempt to strengthen the European and national cultural industries and agree that it is important to counter the American dominance particularly in TV-entertainment.

The interests in regulating and stimulating broadcasting as a business have been pronounced at a European level, particularly as a means to strengthen European media industries – TV, film, and, to a certain degree, music. Thus the focus of the EU directive *Television without Borders* (originally from 1987, revised in 1997 and continued in a proposed *Audiovisual Media Service Directive* 2006) emphasises both the business interests of European audiovisual industries and as cultural aspects of regulatory regimes (European Commission). Thus it is possible to argue that the reasons for regulating media industries are based more on cultural arguments rather than strict economic considerations.

These arguments are also related to concerns over consumer politics where regulation exists in order to protect the audience from advertising that is deemed to be offen-

sive and harmful. Examples may be commercials for tobacco and alcohol, gender discrimination advertising, political commercials etc. In addition measures to protect the general audience against violence and pornography may be viewed in such as perspective, and outcome is the so-called watershed policies, where certain programmes are not shown till after children are supposed to be in bed.

Competition regulation has as its aim to protect the market from the formation of strong monopolies and other results of a free media market that might form a threat to pluralistic media. Thus in relation to this form of regulation one is up against three different forms of partly contradictory interests. Firstly regulation is supposed to promote fair competition between different media businesses, and see to that marked mechanisms are not unduly hampered. Secondly regulation has as an objective to prevent one or a few actors from creating a situation of strong market dominance or monopolisation, even if this development has its bases in market competition. Thirdly to regulate competition and prevent monopolistic ownership is aimed at securing a multiplicity and plurality of voices in the public sphere. Thus also in this context we have to do with a culturally based argument for regulation.

Seen in the perspective of a principled stand on freedom of expression all these regulations may be problematic, because they do imply in some form or other interference in the total editorial independence of the broadcaster and thus constitute a form of a priori control with the content, because the "provider" does not have full control of what is presented to the public. This is for instance very much the case when it comes to provisions for securing quotas of national or European programmes on TV. But it may also be argued in the case of political advertising, as well as aspects of the way that ownership control is practiced in Norway.

Is Regulation a Form of Censorship?

Concerns over whether one can and should regulate broadcasting differently from other media have rarely been raised. It has up till now been generally accepted that broadcasting regulation is not in conflict with fundamental freedom of expression issues. Now, however, with digitalisation we are facing a situation where the arguments for regulation on the basis of limited frequencies no longer hold water. If there is to be regulation in the future it must be based on other arguments and considerations. In the debate over whether to regulate or not, the principle of freedom of expression is perhaps the most fundamental.

Consequently the issue of broadcasting regulation and a principled view of how this practice is to be viewed in relation to what constitutes freedom of expression figured prominently in the report of the Norwegian Freedom Expression Commission (NOU 1999:27.)[1] The commission regarded it as a paradox that one type of media were to be regulated differently from others. If the same form of regulatory regime were to be used in relation to the print media for instance it would have been considered to be in breach of fundamental principles of freedom of expression. In its deliberations the commission sought to come up with proposals that implied that freedom of expression principles ought to be practiced in a media neutral manner. To have special provisions for some media, and not for others, might in itself put freedom of expression in peril.

The commission treated the question of broadcasting regulation in Chapter 7.[2] There are reasons to believe that the views of the Commission have had their effects already the following year when the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs issued its White

Paper on media policy in 2001 (St.melding. nr 57. (2000-2001). Her it is stated that to regulate the media raises particular problems regarding freedom of expression and the free role of the media in relation to the political authorities, In view of such considerations it may be principally unacceptable that the political authorities themselves enforce the regulations that control the media (St.melding. nr 57. (2000-2001) Chapter 4.).

The Commission treated the issue of broadcasting regulation as part of their discussion of prior control with utterances, that is, in its most drastic form, synonymous with direct censorship. This indicates how serious the issue of broadcasting regulation may be regarded in relation to freedom of expression principles. The prohibition of all forms of prior censorship is the basis for all legislation concerning freedom of expression. Citizens have the right to make their own decisions concerning what information and messages they wish to communicate to others. All reactions to possible infringements must come a posteriori, after the expression has been uttered and only through court procedures, never as administrative measures. The principle of subsequent accountability is fundamental and must be kept separate from where the boundaries to the right to freedom of expression are to be drawn. The debate over where the boundaries shall be drawn must take place in full openness. If an utterance is declared unlawful this must be made known in an absolutely transparent manner so that the citizens themselves are informed about the reasons for the declaration of a ban on that particular utterance in order for public to be able to form their opinions about the issue. This is a principle that often is overlooked in relation to the practice of temporary injunctions against the media by courts of law (See later in this article).

It is, however, necessary to distinguish between censorship of individual utterances on the one hand, and control that is the result of the collective total of utterances in the public sphere or in one particular medium on the other. It is this matter that enters the debate when we deal with broadcasting regulation, where concerns regarding limited access to a natural resource such as frequencies play a role. In this context consequences for cultural and democratic diversity might also be taken into consideration. The problem about broadcasting regulation is: regardless of all good arguments in favour, it nevertheless constitutes a form of prior control. Concessions for the right to issue newspapers, publish books or magazines would be in breach of the Constitution, and would be regarded as being in conflict with the rules of any democratic system. In addition in Norway, NRK (Norsk Rikskringkasting) – the state public service broadcaster – is the only broadcaster that has a legal right to broadcast. This is set out in the Broadcasting Act. All other broadcasters need a concession. In principle this is a ban on anyone except for the NRK and a few other licensees to use the broadcast media. If we were to apply the same principle to the print media it would mean that only a limited number of publishers would have the right to publish newspapers, magazines and books. Such a system has not been legally possible in Norway since the passing of the Constitution in 1814.

There exist two sets of rules in relation to the regulation of broadcasting: One for the operation of a broadcasting company, and one for the transmission of the signals. Both types of regulation potentially constitute a form of prior control by the state of the content of radio and TV transmissions, even if it does not involve direct editorial interference. The first form of regulation directly concerns broadcasting content by stipulating what type of programming is desirable and being within the framework of the license. As this is a form of control that specifies rules for what content that in principle should be transmitted – cultural, linguistic, types of programmes for different audiences etc., it is a complex issue.

The second form of regulation does not directly pertain to a freedom of expression issue, as it does not deal with the content of what is being broadcast, only with issues of a technical character. It concerns regulation of telecommunication and the operation of the net itself. However, as there are certain moves in several countries to merge telecommunication and broadcasting regulators into one body, this distinction might in the future not be as clear-cut as it in general is now. Examples are Ofcom[3] in Britain and ICASA[4] in South Africa.

In addition there is a tendency that telecommunication companies now also operate as broadcasters. The activities of the Norwegian telecommunication company Telenor is but one example of this development. The company has ownership interests in a number of satellite channels and has entered into agreements with the commercial public service TV channel TV2 about rights to transmit football matches. The same tendency is also clear in relation to the convergent activities of other telecom companies as well as cable and online companies. It is obviously an issue that is absolutely central in relation to the development of Internet and phenomena such as webcasting etc. As long as the regulation only is concerned with the distribution of limited resources such as frequencies and access to the net, one cannot classify this as being contrary to freedom of expression principle, but a soon as it moves into other areas, it becomes problematic. The principle of transparency is, however, fundamental in this as in other regulatory contexts. All forms of regulation must take place in absolutely open manner and be conducted by an organisation independent of the State, not by an administrative authority of the State.

Freedom of Expression and Infrastructural Considerations

As regards various forms of control with broadcasting, maybe one of the most principally difficult issues is that individual broadcasters are treated differently. In order to illustrate the problems arising from this I will use the situation in Norway as an example. As referred to above the Broadcasting Act stipulates that the state public broadcaster the NRK with its two national TV-channels, three national radio-channels plus specialised radios, and various Internet services has the legal right to broadcast. All others must apply for a license to broadcast, which is granted by the Ministry. Some broadcasters are regarded as public service broadcasters and subject to particular rules in relation to the license – TV 2, and the radio channels P4 and Kanal 24. They also enjoy important privileges such as access to the national terrestrial net. Others again are purely commercial broadcasters that transmit their programmes by cable and satellite – in Norway this is the case for TVNorge and TV3. Furthermore there are the different Pay-TV channels, in one of which Telenor is a prominent owner. In addition there are local and community broadcasters – with a background in organisations as well being commercial. Different rules and regulations apply for the different types of broadcasters. With the coming of digital broadcasting and a competitive situation where the differences between the broadcasters will diminish, it is a question whether it is reasonable to continue to have different regulatory regimes for the different broadcasters.

If broadcasting is to be regulated, there are some principles that must be observed. Regulations must be prescribed by law, and not be contrary to the principles laid down in the second paragraph of Article 100 of the Norwegian Constitution.[5] Any limitations, that is also regulations of media, must be tested "(…) in relation to the grounds for freedom of expression, which are the seeking of truth, the promotion of democracy and the

individual's freedom to form opinions" (The Norwegian Ministry of Justice & The Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO (2005): 14).

In the Norwegian case broadcasting regulation may be applied in accordance with the last paragraph of Article 100, which states: "The State authorities shall create conditions that facilitate open and enlightened public discourse." (The Norwegian Ministry of Justice & The Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO (2005): 14). This paragraph ensures that it is the responsibility of the state to secure that citizens as individuals and in groups enjoy a situation where they are able to express their opinions and receive information in a well-developed public sphere. This may serve as a ground for giving particular responsibilities to public service broadcasting and to establish rules that prevent monopolised ownership of the media. The State should promote the development of broadcasting in a manner that furthers diversity, and does not impose restrictions that may inhibit the growth of the sector. This implies that broadcasting regulation may be in accordance with the principles of freedom of expression only as far as such regulations promote freedom of expression, and are "(…) transparent, accountable, proportionate, consistent and targeted only at cases where action is needed." (Ofcom. (2004)).

In the international debate over the relationship between freedom of expression and regulation of broadcasting there are some aspects that always are being highlighted as being fundamental. Regulation must be in the public interest. It must be constituted in such a manner that it cannot function as a possible tool for state control of the broadcasting sector. At the same time it should prevent commercial interests from growing to be too dominant. All forms of regulation imply a balancing act between the interests of citizens coming together as a public and having the right to receive as varied a range of programmes as possible, catering for all interests (Article 19 (2002)). This means that the promotion of diversity and pluralism must be a central element of all forms of broadcasting regulation. Diversity presupposes that there exist many and different types of independent broadcasters that provide programmes that represent and express the interests of society as a whole. Regulation must thus promote both the audiences' right to be able to choose between many forms of broadcasting and programming as well as the competition between the broadcasters. This will serve the public both as citizens in a democratic polity as well as their interests as consumers of commodities, services, entertainment and information.

On the one hand a policy of regulation must thus both restrict tendencies to monopolisation and promote the interests of an inventive and lively broadcasting sector. Thus it may be necessary to institute ownership regulations that prevent media conglomerates to develop into monopolies, which represent a risk of 'corporate censorship'. Thus it may be necessary to intervene in the market in such a manner that pluralism is not undermined by a concentration of economic and symbolic power. On the other hand the regulation must not be so strict as to prevent opportunities for investment in broadcasting. This implies that ownership regulations must not stifle the possibilities for further growth and development. The measures should take into account the need for the broadcasting sector as a whole to develop and be economically viable. This is of particular importance in an era of convergence where there is a need for investment in new platforms.

Whether this form of ownership regulation is to be covered by special laws for the media sector or only be subject to regular competition laws is debatable. In some countries such as Norway there is ownership regulation for the news-media (newspapers and broadcasting), but not for other media. And the legislation does not apply to the public broadcaster the NRK. In other countries the regulation only covers broadcast media and

telecommunications e.g. South Africa. In yet other countries such as Denmark there are no special provisions for the media, they fall under the general competition regulation.

All forms of broadcasting regulation should respect the principle of editorial independence. All decisions of what to broadcast and what types of programmes that are to be transmitted is the sole responsibility of the broadcasters and should be made on the basis of independent professional criteria. It is up to the broadcasters, not the government, nor regulatory bodies, nor commercial entities to decide over the content and programming of the broadcasts. This applies both to general policies and specific attempts at interfering in programmes, such as demanding that the broadcaster serves as a voice for the government, especially at election times. Internationally there are unfortunately many examples of this.[6] It is not for government or anyone else to promote a certain way of covering important events. Nor should the broadcasters be obliged by the state or economic powers to carry specific forms of programming that are contrary to the ethos of editorial independence. Broadcasters should respect and act according to the fundamental rules of media ethics such as they are expressed in journalistic codes of conduct. Freedom of expression and editorial independence presuppose ethical responsibility.

Threats

There are six instances that potentially may constitute a threat to the freedom and editorial independence of broadcasters. First there is the government and possible sanctions vested in the state in the form of licenses, regulatory decisions and laws that go against the principles of freedom of expression and information – such as public secrecy acts. Secondly, there are the courts, which may stop programmes prior to being aired. Thirdly, commercial owners that demand high economic returns on their investments may unduly influence programming. Fourthly there are advertisers and producers that may threaten with economic sanctions or try to influence the productions and contents. Fifthly sources may try to define how programmes are to be focused and try to influence what is being broadcast. And finally there exist more diffuse possibilities of undermining editorial independence in the form of networks and the double roles of actors in the broadcasting sector. Below follow reflections on these six challenges to editorial independence.

1. Broadcasters must be free from all forms of interference, and be independent of direct state, political and commercial influence in the programming. Broadcasting content should be the sole responsibility of the broadcaster's editorial staff. The content and programming must never be subject to prior control or censorship, neither from state authorities, nor from any regulatory institutions or supervising bodies. However even countries that usually are regarded, as beacons of freedom of expression do not totally adhere to these principles.

The threats of state interference must be countered by establishing strict rules for the separation of the state interests in the ownership of the public broadcaster and the control over authority that is to give licenses and concessions for broadcasting. The granting of licenses and the supervision of the broadcasting sector must be conducted in a manner that ensures independence and transparency, and without any form of doubling or confusion of roles and tasks. The situation in Norway as regards this issue is unclear indeed. In Norway it is the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs that is the owner of the public service broadcaster, which grants licenses to all other broadcasters, even if they in re-

ality are competitors of the state public service broadcaster. This is in breach with the principle of an open and fair and transparent process when it comes to granting broadcasting licenses. Furthermore it is the Ministry, which appoints its board of directors of NRK. In 2006 the new board had a former Minister of Culture from the governing Labour Party as its chair, and the immediate predecessor to the present minister as its Vice-Chair. This means that the relationship between the Ministry and the Broadcaster informally, if not directly formally, is too close. The connection between a Ministry and the editorial leadership of the broadcaster is often complex, and does not always in principle confirm with a strict separation of functions. Sometimes it is formulated as part of the duty of the board of directors of the broadcaster to oversee that the remits stated in the public service license are being fulfilled. But this is to grant the board some form of editorial responsibility. In Denmark for example the board of the Danish state-owned public service broadcaster has such duties.

The powers of the regulator must be provided for in the legislation that establishes the authority. Regulatory bodies should be formally accountable to the public through Parliament rather than a minister. All processes of issuing and overseeing of concessions should be transparent. Decisions that affect individual broadcasters should be subject to the principles of administrative justice and be accompanied by written reasons. In line with the principles of freedom of expression legislation, all supervision of regulatory bodies is only to deal with broadcasts already transmitted (*a posteriori*) and should never try to influence individual editorial decisions.

As regards this issue the situation in Norway is far from being in adherence with the principles laid out above. It is the task of the Norwegian Media Authority, which is an administrative body, placed under the Royal Ministry of Cultural and Church Affairs to oversee all regulations in relation to media ownership and film control. The Authority also processes applications for broadcasting licenses for local radio and television, and satellite broadcasting. Furthermore it monitors advertisements and sponsorship in broadcasts, and impose sanctions for transgressions of rules (Medietilsynet Homepage). The problem here is of course that The Media Authority is not an independent organ, it is an administrative body under the Ministry. And the way it implements and makes its decisions is according to a government department's administrative practice and thus not entirely transparent.

2. If there have been transgressions of any rules or regulatory principles they must be judged after the controversial programme has been broadcast, not prior to it. It was this important principle, which was at the centre of interest when the Norwegian public service broadcaster the NRK in October 2005 decided to broadcast an investigative documentary about a spectacular attempt at bank robbery in the city of Stavanger. The court was still hearing the case at the time. The programme had prior to being transmitted been brought to the Oslo tribunal for interlocutory (temporary) injunctions, that is the court for enforcement of claims.[7] The tribunal decided to stop the programme and banned NRK from transmitting it. It was a ruling based on among others the interests of the attorney general and on the protection of the safety of one witness. The court decision was made in a closed hearing and the parties of the case and their lawyers were instructed not to divulge anything about the court proceedings. It is clear that this a form of prior control that has many aspects that resemble outright censorship. There is furthermore reason to believe that if it had been a report in any other medium than TV – print or radio – the injection against the programme would not have been passed. Con-

sequently the NRK televised the programme, and was later brought to court for contempt and fined a considerable sum. The decision was appealed to a higher court[8], which refused to hear it. But the case was appealed to the Supreme Court who on March 15 2007 decided that it was wrong of the Tribunal for interlocutory injunctions to stop the programme. This ruling must be interpreted as strengthening of the freedom of expression in Norway, and particularly within the area broadcasting.

3. The threat from commercial ownership interests to editorial freedom is a complex issue, particularly as there in many countries – including Norway – exist different regulatory rules for different broadcasters and different financial models. This means that competition between the broadcasters is not even, and this may prompt owners to demand that a certain type of popular programmes should be prioritised over others aimed at narrower audiences. Pressure from owners may also come in the form of demands for higher profits, which again may have as a consequence that the broadcaster aims at transmitting programmes that attract high revenues in the form of much advertising and that are cheap to produce. Entertainment is prioritised over critical journalism. The uneven competition may be particularly acute when the public service broadcaster, which is financed through license fees, also enters into the commercial market in the form of attracting sponsorship and establishing pay per view channels in the new digital environment. Such developments may squeeze the commercial public service broadcaster's revenue, particularly if this broadcaster also has to compete with commercial channels that do not have to fulfil public service remits. This is the situation in Norway, and the question remains how one is to regulate the field in the digital future. If one is to adhere to infrastructural requirements of Article 100 of the Norwegian Constitution, it should be the total broadcasting sector that should be subject to some sort of public service demands or none. To maintain a system with dissimilar regulatory practices for different broadcasters may create conditions for commercial pressures that in the end might undermine the principle of editorial independence for the sector as a whole.

4. It is not so easy to identify the potential threat to the editorial freedom of broadcasters that may issue from advertisers. It is, however, possible to view the situation from two perspectives. One is the direct influence that is related to certain programmes being sponsored in a manner that does not make it absolutely clear who pays for the production, and what is the relationship between the broadcaster and the sponsor. This is an area that internationally is full of infringements. Secondly there is the tendency that certain programming concepts attract more advertising than others, and this again influences editorial decisions of what type of programmes to produce and transmit.

5. As regards the influence from sources there is a tendency in broadcasting as well as in other media to seek a lowest common denominator for newsworthiness and for how to cover an event. In such situations both sources and the attention given to the event by interests outside and inside the media are often very strong. Examples of this tendency are particularly pronounced when it comes to international TV-news coverage of major conflicts and crises like the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In these cases American sources and government media strategies contributed to the way the conflicts were covered by TV-journalists from all over the world. One example had to do with the footage from the action in Iraq provided by American sources, another was the practice of embedded reporters (Thusu e.a. 2003). In a way what I have described above is but

one extreme example of how strong professional actors try to influence news-coverage in general by trying to filter and form what type of stories that reaches the news, and in what format. These actors often represent strong financial or political interests.

6. The sixth type of threat to editorial independence is linked to how central staff members of the broadcasters participate in informal or formal networks that might influence the content of certain types of programmes. This may for instance be the case in relation to the coverage of entertainment and music. Another example is how programme hosts may be a form of "permanent" free-lancers who double by also serving as information agents for certain big events, which they then again cover directly themselves, or influence how these events are being covered by using their contacts inside the broadcasters. One Norwegian example is how the PR-responsible person for a big music-festival in Kristiansand also double as the programme host for a popular morning radio show where there were several reports about the same festival. Such practices undermine the legitimacy of broadcasters as independent media. They are also obviously counter to the principles of good practices laid down by the Norwegian media organisations in their system of self-justice.[9]

Conclusion

The discussion above is intended as a contribution to throwing light on the very complex relationship that exists between broadcasting regulations in theory and practice on the one hand and the principle of freedom of expression on the other. There can be no doubt that looked upon from an absolutely strict freedom of expression perspective to regulate broadcasting for other reasons than the administration of limited resources in the form of frequencies constitutes a form of prior control that is contrary to the fundamentals of freedom of expression. It is necessary to ensure the independence of broadcasters from possible government control, and refrain from treating broadcasting any differently from other media.

However, if one takes into the consideration the sixth paragraph of the Norwegian Constitutional Article 100, it is possible to regard broadcasting regulation as being compatible with the traditional liberal emphasis on freedom of expression. The paragraph makes it possible to establish a regulatory framework that would ensure that there was a plurality of independent broadcasters. It is consistent with a view of that the market left to it self is not necessarily capable of creating conditions that promote freedom of expression and diversity in the broadcasting sector. Therefore regulations that secure a system of independent public service broadcasting will be in line with the principles of media freedom.

It is, however, important to always bear in mind that seen from all perspectives broadcast regulation and freedom of expression is an uneasy relationship fraught with contradictions.

Notes

1. The commission was set up in 1996 by the Ministries of Justice and Culture with the mandate to go through all aspects of the issue of freedom of expression and come up with a new proposal for the freedom of expression article in the Norwegian Constitution. The commission delivered its report in 1999.
2. In the English version, this chapter has unfortunately been drastically abbreviated.

3. As it is stated on the Ofcom website: ”Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services.” http://www.ofcom.org.uk/
4. “ICASA is the regulator for the South African communications sector, responsible for the regulation of broadcasting and telecommunications services. ICASA was established by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa Act No 13 of 2000.” http://www.icasa.org.za/Default.aspx?Page=2
5. I use the Norwegian Constitution as an example here, but the principles are the same for all democratic Constitutions.
6. As I in the past couple of years have been involved in researching media and democracy in Africa, I would just point out that it is quite common that African governments use the public broadcasters to blatantly promote their views during election campaigns.
7. In Norwegian legal parlance – ”namsretten”.
8. Lagmannsretten – in English legal parlance this is synonymous with ’the High Court’ in civil cases, and ‘the Crown Court’ in criminal cases.
9. That is: Vær varsom-plakaten (Code of Ethics of the Norwegian Press) and Redaktørplakaten (Rights and Duties of the Editor).

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Encircling the Power of Journalism

Martin Eide

Abstract

The power of journalism is decisive in the exercise of power and democracy in modern societies. This article emphasizes the impact of a journalistic logic and the matter of "thinking journalistically" among social actors. Hardly any modern institution or social actor is untouched by the prevailing media logic. The professional ideology of journalism, the dramaturgical power of journalism and the particular role of modern popular journalism are considered.

Key Words: journalism, power, journalistic logic, popular journalism, professional ideology, dramaturgical power

Introduction

The power of journalism should be regarded as a particularly important and interesting kind of power in modern societies[1]. Consequently, an adequate understanding of society and a relevant theory of power should be able to account for the role of journalism. Journalism deserves a prominent place on the agenda for discussions of power and democracy. In my view, this mission cannot be properly accomplished unless we take popular journalism seriously.

Within modern social theory, society is frequently conceived of as being constituted by different sections or fields, diverse systems or networks with reciprocal relations and floating boundaries. Communication and dissemination between the different fields or systems should be decisive in such an approach – and the role of journalism should call for considerable awareness.

Furthermore, in modern social theory, power is frequently conceptualised as a relational phenomenon. Power is not a capacity that is possessed by an agent once and for all. Neither is it permanently anchored in certain social structures. Power appears in multiple and floating ways and typically displays itself through discourses and prevailing logic. Accordingly, journalism and the impact of journalistic logic on social actors' courses of action should be of central interest in an updated social theory of power.

Questions concerning journalism and power address important dimensions in the general debate on power in the social sciences (cf. Lukes 1974, Petersson 1989). Firstly, journalism is of paramount importance to agenda-setting power. Secondly, journalism is of relevance for the power implied in non-decisions and issues that never reaches a public agenda. Thirdly, journalism is decisive in questions concerning ideology, hegemony and symbolic power. In short: None of these three dimensions of power can be properly understood if the role of journalism is neglected.

Structures and Shifts

Traditionally, political scientists have told us that there were two channels for political influence, namely the election and the organization channels. "Votes count, but resources decide", the formula went (Rokkan 1966). Today, it is beyond doubt that the mass media have established themselves as a new a channel– a third channel for political influence – and in many aspects also as an independent power broker.

Journalism is a creative endeavour within an industry-like framework. The power of journalism, consequently, cannot be properly grasped through agent-oriented models of power alone. An intriguing interplay of material, institutional and symbolic relationships must be accounted for. In Graham Murdock's words: "The trick we need to learn is how to keep these two faces of communications – the material and the symbolic – in play at the same time and to explore their interplay without collapsing either one into the other" (1991:54). And as he further emphasizes: This ambition confronts us precisely with "the central theoretical dilemma of the human sciences – how to conceptualize the relations between social structures, cultural formations, and situated action" (1991:54).

Through conceiving of structures both as medium for and a result of action (cf. Giddens 1984), and viewing structures as potentially both constraining and enabling, we are approaching an adequate understanding of journalism's social role, and we are doing so without ruling out the individual actors who make a difference. Journalistic power is not a matter of mechanics, and the journalist is no robot. We are encountering the enigma of human agency, the classical issue of "shaping of action by structure and transforming of structure by action" (Abrams (1982:3). And we are addressing processes of social change.

The first national project to study power relations in a Norwegian context in the early 1980s concluded that power had moved away from the parliamentary arena and toward the corporative system. Power had moved from the election channel toward the organization channel (NOU 1982; 3). A second national project of the same kind recently concluded that to a larger extent power has now moved toward the market and the law or judicial system (NOU 2003; 19). Journalism has accompanied these movements of power: Firstly, through a more comprehensive coverage of public administration. Secondly, through a heavier coverage of economic issues. Thirdly, through a kind of journalism that emphasizes people's rights in different capacities – especially as consumers but also as citizens. And fourthly, journalism's relation to the market has become more manifest through a general popularization process.

Journalistic Logic and the Exercise of Power

Of equally importance is a fifth feature of the relationship between power and journalism, namely the fact that journalism has become an intimate and imperative part of the exercise of power. A journalistic logic has come to be an indispensable requirement for any social actor who wants to achieve something in this world. It is a matter of thinking journalistically in order to be successful, and this competence is no longer reserved for journalists. In a way, every social institution is today a media institution.

Hardly any modern institution or social actor is untouched by the prevailing media logic, existing media conventions or journalistic modes of operation. Accomplishing a goal is more and more a matter of adapting to and taking advantage of media logic. The logic of journalism is expanding, and journalistic power is mobilized by any agent with the slightest ambition in the political field as well as other social arenas. The competence

of thinking journalistically and acting in compliance with prevailing media logic is as common outside the mass media as within them. This omnipresence of media logic originates a particular implicit kind of power, which is a more indirect and concealed kind of power than the more salient agenda-setting capacity of modern journalism. Journalistic power is a matter of managing the logic of journalism.

Today this logic seems to be superior to the political position of the individual journalist. Journalism has a professional bias, more so than a political bias in any traditional sense. It is a fact that journalists usually vote for leftist political parties to a larger extent than the average voter does. However, this accounts for less of the journalistic power than the fact that all journalists subscribe to a journalistic logic and a certain professional ideology. Journalism has become an ideology in itself. And journalistic influence on power relations has been conceptualized through a model of "chaotic flow". Journalists have become "agents of instability rather than of control," British media sociologist Brian McNair states (1998:165). It is important to understand the destabilizing capacity of modern journalism, but I doubt that "chaotic flow" is the most fruitful concept to use in understanding the actual power of journalism.

A Professional Ideology

Journalism as an ideology is based on a very simple cosmology, on a rather simplistic image of society. The construction of journalistic ideology starts from the premise that on the one side of society there are the powerful, while on the other side we find the common people. In between there are journalists, located in the region between those in power and the people. The journalists' job is to serve the people and challenge the powerful (Petersson & Carlberg 1990, Petersson 1994).

In journalism's professional ideology, society is constituted of three groups of actors: power brokers, ordinary people and journalists – in other words sources, audiences and newsrooms. Consequently, all sources that do not belong to the people are considered power brokers. And the worst case scenario, in the journalistic view, is if the powerful are allowed to address the innocent people directly, without any journalistic intervention. Journalists are crucial intermediators and interpreters between the mighty and the people, according to the professional ideology of journalism. Viewing the journalist not as an independent critic of power, but as a part of power, would be regarded by the community of professional journalists as an unfair allegation.

Journalism as ideology frequently emerges in the form of a particular blend of populism and elitism (Petersson & Carlberg, 1990). On the one hand, the audience is flattered and popular commitment is celebrated. On the other hand, it is emphasized that a turning point always emerges when the journalist takes charge. It is the media's actions that really matter.

A central element in the current expression of this ideology is the conception of the journalist as an advocate for his or her audience. In the representative plot here, the journalist appears as the fearless knight, who seems to bring about a solution and happy ending on behalf of the audience member. While the journalist is either the hero or the Good Samaritan, the role of the antagonist is played by, for instance, the civil servant, the bureaucrat or the representative of the health care system.

Newspaper Schizophrenia

In the Norwegian context, the popular press has led the fashion in pursuing this modern journalism ideology. It is also in the popular press where we have witnessed the most enduring efforts in investigative journalism. Consequently, the actual quality of popular journalism deserves mention here. Newspaper schizophrenia is thus a catchword.[2] The following diagnosis is probably valid not only for Norway but for all the Scandinavian countries.

A schizophrenic popular newspaper has more to offer than daily melodramas, entertainment and guidance for everyday life. Its dealings with matters of importance for the political discourse often bear the signs of quality journalism. Unlike the situation in Britain, for instance, where the popular press is clearly distinct from the quality press, the leading Norwegian popular newspapers also constitute major arenas in the public sphere. They do so through their characteristic ambiguity, by balancing traditional and popular press ideologies, by being schizophrenic newspapers.

Norwegian democracy and the Norwegian public sphere are marked by this state of the art in Norwegian popular journalism. Public life is deeply related to the particular combination of quality and sensation – the particular mixture of hard news and soft entertainment – provided by the popular press.

Tabloid journalism is often understood in terms of its preoccupation with moral disorder and threats to everyday life. But there is more to modern popular journalism than this. Besides threats to everyday life, it addresses the joy of everyday life and provides guidance in conducting a good life. This attitude runs contrary to the often-emphasized negativism and sensationalism of tabloid journalism.

A shift of focus might contribute to a better explanation of the popular fascination of the popular press. Meeting the challenge of understanding the popularity of tabloid journalism might also enable a more competent and interesting critique of it if we grasp how it "connects to the real practical conditions of life of its audiences" (Knight, 1989:125).

Furthermore, analysis of *different kinds of* popular newspapers will help us question traditional views concerning the obsession with crime in popular journalism. In the case of Norwegian popular journalism, it is obvious that an important aspect of its commercial success has been its conscious *combination* of hard crime news and a softer and gentler journalism – for instance in the realm of service journalism of different kinds. It has been an editorial concern to balance the blood dripping stories with softer and more joyful articles. Readers have been offered tragedies that have turned into tears of joy, not to mention the tons of cheerful curiosities they have been presented.

This kind of 'combination strategy' is strikingly different from the 'either-or strategies' adopted in popular journalism elsewhere.

The concept of tabloid journalism is not necessarily helpful in these circumstances. The concept itself, derived from the format of the newspaper, can be misleading. Norwegian press structure offers illumination, with the majority of Norwegian newspapers now being printed in tabloid format while the vast majority of them are sold mainly through subscription, and only a handful of them conduct a kind of journalism that resembles what is traditionally labelled 'tabloid journalism' (Høst, 1993). In my view, it is important to keep in mind that it is the *combination* of format and sales form – in this case tabloid and daily sale – that *can*, but not necessarily *does*, enable certain varieties of popular journalism.

History and Context

A historical approach might prove helpful in providing the necessary nuances, since a proper historical understanding will have to look for both the particular and the general. The differences are severe, between a tabloid paper of the kind that is not a *news*paper at all, but an entertainment medium – on the one hand. And on the other hand: a tabloid newspaper that still provides news in a traditional sense, and still conveys political information – also in a traditional sense. A historical perspective is definitely required in understanding schizophrenic newspapers – in this area.

Neither of the two major national Norwegian popular dailies (*Dagbladet* and *VG*) was originally established as a popular paper. They were both rooted in projects to enlighten the public from above, and later underwent decisive processes of popularization. Throughout these processes, the schizophrenia emerged from efforts to serve different markets at the same time. The Norwegian newspaper market as a whole was, and still is, too small for one-sided cultivations of either an elite or a popular market.

Changes in the nature of political journalism should be understood against this background. The first point to be made is thus that political news is no longer attributed a privileged status. Political coverage in the popular press is, however, still extensive and rather serious, compared to what is elsewhere called tabloid journalism. The Parliament is still an important news beat and the official agenda is still reflected, but the living room and private sphere are of equal importance in generating top stories.

A second point is an expansion of a kind of service journalism into the domain of political journalism. The journalistic assessment is clear and simple: In the domain of politics as well, the reader is in need of guidance and clarity, of political consumer information, to be able to pursue his or her interests. The cultivated conception of the role of journalism is that the journalist is on your side, pushing the politicians to come up with clear arguments and effective solutions.

The subject that service journalism interpellates is a hybrid figure – part citizen, part consumer and part client. Moreover, service journalism lends itself to collective, political action inasmuch as it shares common ground – the problematization of the everyday life-world – with the social movements and advocacy-activism groups that are the motivating force of subpolitics (Eide & Knight 1999).

A third point is that political journalism is characterized by the generally prevailing melodramatic framework of the popular press and its emphasis on drama, conflict, personalities and emotions. Political journalism is also endowed with a quest for the human touch. Politicians become human beings in a way, while the voters become customers.

Melodramas and Everyday Life

Political journalism is subject to what Richard Sennett (1976) has called 'the tyranny of intimacy'. When these symbolic forms succeed to the extent that they do, it must be due to factors other than speculation on the poor taste of readers. There must be a certain *social* sounding board for this kind of dissemination of politics. When commercial successful modes of address are directed towards consumers, clients and private persons, one reason for this popular success can be that the readers' role as citizens is undermined. It doesn't matter much whether or not they are politically active. Readers, who experience a lack of power, can be offered politics as human drama. Moreover, political parties tend to converge ideologically; hence the personal capacities of individual politicians become more important in the political process. Furthermore, melo-

dramatic political journalism can be conceived of as a popular protest against an abstract and theoretical understanding of society (Gripsrud, 1992).

Although such factors can account for the breakthrough of this kind of popular journalism, they cannot justify the same journalism. A melodramatic understanding of politics is bound to be a misunderstanding (Gripsrud, 1992). Journalism that consistently offers "the experiences of the individual as the direct and unmediated key to the understanding of the social totality" (Sparks, 1992:41) fails to offer a proper understanding of politics and society.

The orientation towards everyday life and the disembedding from traditional news beats and news conventions contributes to a new kind of journalistic self-confidence. Journalism constitutes its own expert system, a knowledge regime in its own right. Journalistic power gains new and different ground – a new foundation – throughout the process of popularization.

A Cult of Independence

For many decades, the most popular slogan in the journalistic community has been that of 'independence'. Independence from political parties was the first matter of concern in the professional armament of modern journalism. Later, this was followed by a slogan of independence from sources and a struggle against what has been labelled 'the tyranny of the sources'. The problem here is that the relationship between journalists and sources is defined as first and foremost a power struggle. It is problematic when the proclaimed independence from sources is given superiority to the knowledge demanded to investigate a case. It is problematic if professional independence is reduced to a superficial posture (cf. Eide 1998).

It is also problematic when journalistic creativity is mobilised first and foremost in the dramaturgical arrangement of news, at the expense of investigative creativity and serious efforts to learn how the world is put together. It is important – for the journalist as well as the public – to question the prevailing media logic. Since power is so closely related to media logic and media dramaturgy, it is crucial to understand and criticise the dramaturgical work conducted by journalists – the staging of issues and events – the endeavour that definitely turns the journalist into a key actor in the modern public sphere.

Dramaturgical Power

From rhetoric as well as dramatic art, we know that tension is created by contradictions and conflicts (cf. Eide & Hernes 1987). On the one hand we have the protagonist, and against him the antagonist, former actions or external circumstances outside his control. The protagonist's own mistakes can cause defeat. Or the opposite: A strike of luck can turn the situation, or an act of rescue can bring salvation and a happy ending.

It is not the events themselves but the presentations – the ways the story and actors are directed and arranged – that are crucial. This arrangement is most efficient when it is conducive to excitement, surprises, controversies and reconciliation, when the previous events and actions constitute preconditions for what is happening at the moment.

In a play this is accomplished through the dramatic construction – the succession of scenes and acts. In the mass media the same effect can appear through serial-like pres-

entations of the development in a case. The audience is kept in suspense with efficient cliff-hangers. This technique is by no means reserved for fictive TV serials.

The test of a good piece of drama is how well the processing of events and the portrayals of actors are interwoven – how the personalities of the principal characters constitute choices that create new situations that in their turn give birth to new choices or change their qualifications. And the actions must stem from their interests and feelings, their ideals and their fear.

The reservoir of dramatic archetypes is probably relatively restricted in modern journalism. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to claim that certain mass media specialize in certain archetypes or classes of principal characters.

At any rate, the journalist usually has the upper hand in the dramaturgical arrangement of public issues. The journalist possesses a privilege in confronting other social actors and setting up confrontations between public figures. The journalist exercises his or her dramaturgical and narrative power through an ability to provoke reactions among social actors and institutions.

"Custodians of Conscience"

In addition to this substantial dramaturgical power, the journalist can also act as a *reviewer*, as a *critic* of the play conducted by the sources or actors in the media drama. For the participants in a media event, the rule of the game is not only to act in order to get the most favourable publicity through the event itself. It is as important to get a good review, to be proclaimed the winner of a public confrontation or at least to gain sympathy and support through the journalistic interpretation of appearances on the media stage.

Occasionally there is more at stake. The media appearance can be a disclosure, even a scandal. In such a circumstance the journalistic dramaturgy is of particularly severe importance. Armed with a heavy load of moral pathos the journalists then act as custodians of conscience, to use a phrase coined by James Ettema and Ted Glasser (1998). Or to put it another way, the journalists act as a modern priesthood. However, they have no salvation to offer unfortunate participants in a media scandal or drama of destiny. The significance of scandals is considerable in "a world where visibility has been transformed by the media and where power and reputation go hand in hand" (Thompson 2000: xi). Scandals matter. And journalists are the masters of the moment.

But their superiority will always be challenged by other media strategists and sources with knowledge of the rules of the game. As indicated, journalists are not the only masters of media logic. Competence in media logic abounds in a modern media society.

Media Mechanics

The thesis of the omnipresence of media logic might seem to run contrary to another current proposition, namely the claim that journalism is dead. In the age of Internet it is often argued that it is now possible for an individual to be his or her own journalist, his or her own editor. But the claim that journalism had passed away was posited before the arrival of Internet. The foundation of this contention was precisely an observation of the obvious mastery of media logic among journalists. We live in a postjournalistic age, proclaimed American media scholars Robert Snow and David Altheide (1991). Journalism is dead; it is no longer among us. What we have is not journalism but media

mechanics. The journalist has become a media mechanic – a superficial master of prevailing media stereotypes and conventions.

There might be a great deal in a diagnosis of journalists as media mechanics. However, I assert that the rumour of the death of journalism is overstated. In this age of multimedia journalism, in which journalistic messages are processed and adapted for dissemination through a wide range of different communication platforms, the pressure is increasing to turn journalism into media mechanics and packaging. The journalist being transformed into a communication technician is as critical as if he or she is reduced to an impresario of media dramas and media scandals. Journalism owes more to society than this. Journalism's democratic obligations must be maintained.

The ambition of this chapter has been to address questions of media power, with a focus on journalism and qualitative aspects of modern popular journalism of a certain kind. Hopefully, the reflections and observations on media logic, journalism, power and democracy have substantiated the main underlying proposition: The power of journalism is a particularly important and interesting kind of power in modern societies.

Notes

1. The core argument of this article draws on my introduction to the book *Til dagsorden! Journalistikk, makt og demokrati (A point of order! Journalism, Power and Democracy)* (Eide, ed. 2001).
2. The following points on newspaper schizophrenia draw on Eide 1997.

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Fairness, Informativeness and Scrutiny

The Role of News Media in Democracy

Kent Asp

Abstract

The chapter outlines the theoretical premises of the Swedish Media Election Studies and some principal empirical findings. The role of the media in democratic societies is to contribute to free opinion formation by fulfilling two normative functions: to inform the citizenry and to scrutinize those who govern. On the descriptive level three functions are distinguished: to supply different opinions, to provide information on issues, and to expose misbehavior. These descriptive functions correspond to three normative demands: fairness, informativeness and scrutiny. Empirical conclusions are based on analyses of the medias' impartiality, their information value and informativity score, and the quality of their scrutiny.

Swedish news media in general, and the public service broadcast media in particular, fulfill the demands made of them to a considerable degree. On balance, after nearly thirty years of empirical study in the Swedish Media Election Studies project, my assessment of the performance of Swedish news media is largely positive.

Key Words: media and democracy, election campaigns, functions, fairness, informativeness, scrutiny

Introduction

> *... I think that television poses no less of a threat to political life and to democracy itself.*

The conclusion is Pierre Bourdieu's, which he set out in the introduction to his book *On Television and Journalism* (Bourdieu 1996:10).

Are the media a threat to democracy? Researchers who study the media and journalism find little that is novel or particularly original in Bourdieu's analysis and critique of television and the mechanisms that govern the journalistic field. He echoes rather many scholars in the fields of Media Studies or Mass Communication. Critical points are the media's predilection for disturbing news and conflict, journalists' distancing and cynical perspectives on politics, a focus on personalities and on politics as a game of strategy, and an increasingly commercial rationale.

In a comprehensive review of the (primarily American) literature on the subject, media researcher Doris Graber reaches a quite different conclusion: "Evidence from content analyses, focus groups and intensive interviews supports the conclusion that the news supply is adequate for citizens' civic needs and that they use it judiciously" (Graber 2004).

Although Graber's conclusion is decidedly more positive, the research on which it is based hardly lacks critical views of the kind Bourdieu and other more pessimistic media critics put forward. The difference resides in the conclusions drawn, and these mainly have to do with the functions different analysts assign to the media and the normative expectations they attach to them. That is to say, the contrasting assessments of the roles media *actually* play in democratic society is mainly a consequence of the beholder's normative ideas about the roles the media *should* play.

One's normative starting points and conception of democracy are, in other words, decisive for one's assessment of media performance. We should bear this in mind as we proceed to analyze the role news media should play in a democracy and how the media fulfill the tasks society assigns to them.[1] And we should bear in mind that media play other roles, too. They are there to entertain, to provide vicarious experience and sensations, and to make money. The discussion of normative roles and expectations discussed here is therefore confined to media that are professionally journalistic. They are referred to in the following as "news media".

The Free Exchange of Ideas

Anyone who approaches the question of the media's roles in democratic society encounters at the outset two fundamental questions: On what basis, with what right, can we assign certain tasks and apply certain normative criteria to the media? And, if we find such a basis, who should decide which tasks the media should be expected to perform?

To my way of thinking, there is no definite answer to the first question. Any analysis of the roles media *should* play in democratic society necessarily springs out of a normative position concerning the nature of democracy – the fundamental constitutive principles of democratic rule.

Answers to the second question may be formulated with reference to classic political doctrine, modern theories of democracy and normative theories of the media.[2] As I see it, democracy is based on two fundamental democratic values: the sovereignty of the people and the free exchange of ideas.[3] The two fundamental values are interrelated; democracy requires that both be satisfied. It is entirely possible for a dictator to reflect the will of the people while forbidding the free exchange of ideas; conversely, there are societies in which ideas may be exchanged freely, but can never influence policy.

Thus, on the basis of normative democratic criteria, we might formulate the task of news media in the service of democracy, as follows: In a democracy media should work for the realization of the will of the people by facilitating the free exchange of ideas. The principal task of the media in a democracy is to contribute to *free and autonomous opinion formation* in society.

This essay will make use of the terms presented in the figure on the next page.

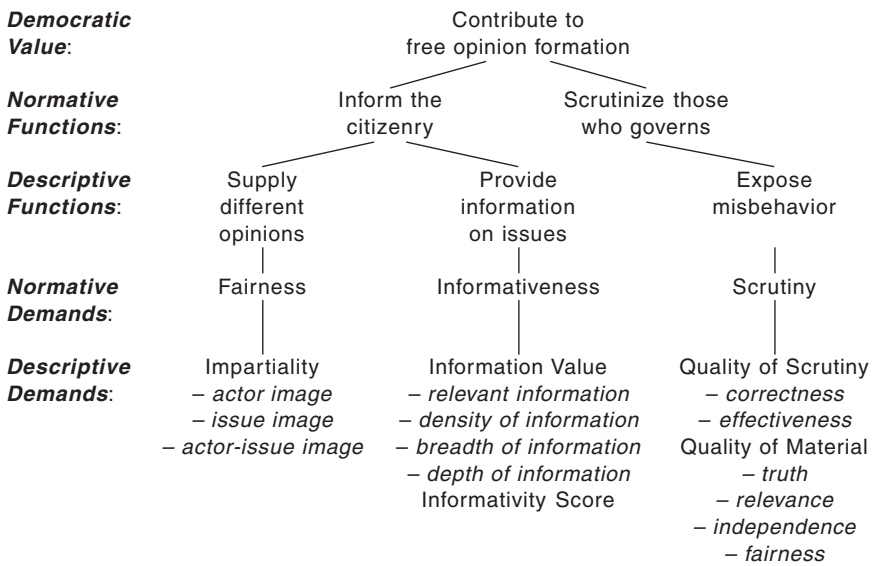
Normative Functions

How can the media best contribute to the realization of the fundamental democratic value, a free exchange of ideas?

In both the classical literature on democracy and normative media theory ideas about which tasks the media should have in democratic society revolve around two central themes: how media should relate to *those who govern,* i.e., government and influential figures, and how they should relate to *the governed,* the public (Asp 1992).

Taking our starting point in the concept of 'rational Man', the notion that individuals themselves are best equipped to decide what lies in their interests (a tenet of classical democratic doctrine and a fundament of liberal ideology relating to the press), and the principle that one of the functions of the media in democratic society is to ensure that citizens have access to sufficient information to enable them to act in accordance with their interests and preferences (a fundament of the social responsibility theory of the press), the task of news media in relation to "the governed" may be formulated, as follows: News media should provide citizens with such *information* as enables them to freely and autonomously form opinions on *issues of consequence to society*. The better the media perform this task, the more they contribute to fulfilling that fundamental democratic value, free opinion formation.

Figure 1. *The Functions of News Media in Democracy – Theoretical Premises*



Starting with the notion that the media should monitor and stand independent of the powers of the state and the notion that the media have a duty on behalf of the public to keep holders of power under scrutiny, we may formulate the function of news media vis-à-vis those who govern, as follows: News media should freely and independently keep holders of power under surveillance and *scrutinize* their actions so as to enable citizens to form an opinion of their rulers' *performance*. The better the media perform this task, the more they contribute to fulfilling that fundamental democratic value, free opinion formation.

Thus, citizens are assumed to function as individual decision-makers, and it is the duty of the media to contribute to free and autonomous opinion formation by providing the citizens with a sufficient basis for the rational assessments that enable them to form opinions on issues of consequence to society and the actions of those in positions of power.

To inform the citizenry and *to scrutinize those who govern* are in this connection considered two separate and equally important normative functions. This is by no means self-evident. One might well consider the media's scrutinizing 'watchdog' function as

a means to achieve the overarching objective of providing a solid basis for citizens' rational decision-making. Such a view means that the prime function of the media in democratic society is to inform the public, and that scrutinizing holders of power is part of that function.

As for the opinions citizens form on issues of consequence to society, they are perceived to spring jointly out of perceptions and conclusions regarding the issues per se and perceptions and conclusions relating to those who represent different opinions on the issues (Asp 1986:62ff). The normative function to inform the citizenry is thus a composite of two different descriptive functions: to provide information on issues, and to present different opinions.

News media perform their informing function by *giving opinions currency* and *providing information about issues*; they perform their surveillance function by *revealing wrongdoing on the part of holders of power.*

Normative Demands

What normative demands can be made of the media regarding how they should go about fulfilling their democratic functions?

As regards the media's information function, one may demand that news media are *informative*, that they provide the kind of information that citizens can form independent opinions on public affairs issues and that they are *fair* in their representation of opinions: that they do not favor one or another opinion at the expense of others.

As regards the media's scrutinizing function, one may demand that they, on behalf of the public, *scrutinize* individuals in positions of power so that abuses of power and other impropriety are made known and that they provide citizens with enough information so that they can form their own opinions and conclusions about leaders' behavior and character.

Informative Media

The principle that news media should be informative may, on the basis of democratic norms, be formulated, as follows: News media should give citizens information that enables them autonomously to form opinions on current issues.

The principle is hardly problematic on the normative level (albeit it lacks a foundation in classical democratic theory). It is, however, somewhat problematic on the descriptive level inasmuch as we need to specify what we mean by "informative media" and how we should go about measuring media's performance in this respect.

To my way of thinking, the citizen's information needs represent the norm against which news media's reporting should be assessed. First and foremost, rational decision-making requires access to *relevant information*. Relevant information is, in principle, any and all information that speaks for or against a given position on an issue. But access to relevant information is not in itself sufficient. Relevant information must be communicated in a reasonable proportion relative to the total information flow. We need to specify a requirement of *information density*.

Frequency of relevant information may, however, be achieved through a parrot-like iteration of a handful of arguments. Consequently, the demand for information density must be combined with the requirement of a modicum of diversity or breadth. Maximum *information breadth* is when all relevant aspects that speak for or against a given opinion

or position have been offered. *Depth of information* is necessary, as well. That is to say, the media should provide the information that permits the citizen to judge the validity and strength of the arguments presented, e.g., by relating the facts, motives and valuations that underlie various arguments, by putting the issue in context, and by predicting the consequences of one or another position on the issue at hand.

Density, breadth and depth of information are each important in their own right, but from the citizen's point of view it is the combination of the three that constitutes the media's *informative value*.

Information value is closely related to the space accorded an issue or election campaign. It is therefore necessary to assess how effective media are as information media: what I call their *informativity score*. A news medium may, for example, present relatively little information in absolute terms, but nonetheless be very informative and thus be of great value to the citizen.

I use the terms informative value and informativity score in the Swedish Media Election Studies (Medievalsundersökningarna), where, operating on the descriptive level, I assess media's actual value as sources of information. When making a balanced judgement on a normative level, I speak of *informativeness*, more and less informative media.

Fair Media

The demand that news media should be fair may on the basis of normative democratic principles be formulated, as follows: News media should treat various views and ideas in such a way that no view is unduly favored or discounted.

The demand of fairness is, in terms of its normative fundaments, somewhat more problematic than the demand that media be informative. Partisan or biased news reporting in any given medium is not incompatible with the value of the free exchange of ideas and free opinion formation. Indeed, on a systemic level it may even fulfill the value better. But although impartiality cannot be required of any individual medium on the basis of democratic principles, it can be demanded of media that through laws and regulations or through observance of voluntary ethical rules, are required to maintain an impartial stance in news reporting. Formulated in this manner, one may readily apply the demand of impartiality to practically all Swedish news media.

Now, what do we mean by *impartiality* – that the media do not unduly favor or discount a political actor or a given point of view? And what do we mean when we say that media are biased in their reporting of the news?

The question of whether the media have in fact favored a party or point of view must be distinguished from the normative question of whether the media have unduly favored it or put it at a disadvantage. That an actor has received favorable treatment in news reporting does not necessarily mean that the actor has been unduly favored. The conclusions we draw on the descriptive level do not automatically apply on the normative level.

To establish bias on the descriptive level requires a positive theory that is comprehensive in its description of the ways in which an actor may be favored or discounted in news reporting. The theory must cover all aspects, as an actor may have been discounted in one respect, but favored in another. My starting point is that individuals' political behavior is a function of their perceptions and valuations of two objects in the realm of politics: actors and issues. On the basis of this simple premise we can, through deductive reasoning, identify three different ways in which an actor may be favored or put at a disadvantage by the media.

First of all, an actor may be favored or discounted by the *image* he or she is given as an *actor*. Secondly, he/she may be favored or discounted by how an *issue* is presented to the public, e.g., favored through an emphasis on issues, phenomena that are consonant with the actor's personal world-view and priorities. Third, an actor may be favored or discounted by the way he or she is depicted in *relation* to various issues, phenomena and contexts. For example, an actor may be favored if the media associate him/her with the substantive profile he/she prefers and may, by the same token, be put at a disadvantage if he/she is presented in connection with phenomena and contexts that the actor finds undesirable or at odds with his/her priorities and preferences.

How can we determine whether extensive media coverage has been favorable or unfavorable? That an actor receives a lot of coverage is not necessarily favorable, nor is little coverage necessarily unfavorable.

In the Swedish Media Election Studies, what decides whether reporting is deemed favorable or unfavorable are a set of simple assumptions about what under normal circumstances might be considered favorable or unfavorable: that, for example, it normally would be favorable for a party or political idea to receive a lot of attention; that it is normally more favorable to be applauded than criticized; that it is normally more favorable to be described as being in harmony than in conflict; that it is normally more favorable if the media's depiction of actual conditions corresponds to the impression the actor wishes to give, and so forth.

Together, but also each separately, the three ways to favor or disadvantage someone or something provide a basis for assessments of the degree of bias in media coverage. An actor, party or idea may receive favorable treatment (extensive coverage) in one respect, but be put at a disadvantage in another (covered in unfavorable contexts). Conclusions as to a medium's bias therefore have to be based on a global assessment of all the ways that media coverage can favor or put an actor at a disadvantage.

When I draw conclusions about favorable or unfavorable election coverage on a descriptive level, I use the term *impartiality* (in its three respects). When I judge whether or not the tendency is undue, I speak of degrees of *fairness*.

Scrutinizing Media

The demand that news media should be agents of scrutiny may be formulated on the basis of normative democratic principles, as follows: News media should scrutinize those who govern so that abuses of power and other impropriety become known to the public; they should provide citizens with such information as enables them to make independent assessments of the issue at hand.

The normative demand that the media should, freely and independently, scrutinize holders of political power is more firmly rooted in classical political thought than the ideas that news media should be informative and fair. The media as the fourth estate is a central element in the liberal tradition and in classical democratic doctrine. Less clear on a descriptive level, however, is what is meant by the 'fourth estate' and what demands may be made of the media as agents of scrutiny.[4]

Obviously, the media should be autonomous in relation to the objects of their scrutiny. That the press should be independent of the state and its representatives is a fundamental premise in classical liberal ideology. In normative theories of the press of more recent vintage, independence of the state is equally fundamental, but perhaps less cen-

tral, and the focus of scrutiny (and thus the institutions that the media should be independent of) has broadened.

Another fundamental premise is that media's attention should be focused on officials' deeds. As I see it, the media's function as fourth estate does not have to do with the content of officials' policies or political statements, whether they concern what their parties have achieved or the policies they intend to carry out in months and years to come. We should make a clear distinction between the media's scrutinizing role and their duty to inform. An examination of the parties' platforms or programs is part of the duty to inform; here, scrutiny is the means and information the objective. In the case of the scrutinizing function, scrutiny is the objective and information, investigation and publication the means.

Media's duty to scrutinize is also limited to certain kinds of deeds, namely, abuses of power and other impropriety, whether unlawful, immoral or unethical. An analysis to determine whether or not politicians have kept their election promises is not automatically part of a news medium's duty to scrutinize. When media examine or scrutinize, they are not necessarily performing the watchdog function inasmuch as all news journalism contains some measure of investigation.

Thus, news media shall stand independent of the powers that be and scrutinize the performance of holders of power with a particular focus on abuses of power and impropriety. Who, then are "holders of power", and in what ways should they be subjected to scrutiny?

The nature of the media's scrutiny may, as I see it, be specified in terms of two dimensions: *the scope of scrutiny*, i.e., the variety of holders of power to be subjected to scrutiny, and *the duty of the scrutinizer*, i.e., the kind of scrutiny media should undertake.

As for the scope of scrutiny, the holders of powers specified in classical liberal ideology of the press were rulers, that is, the Crown and subsequently also bureaucrats and other figures in government. These figures are still the most important objects of scrutiny in more recent normative theories of the media, but "holders of power" is defined more broadly. For example, the Charters of Swedish public service television companies (SVT and TV4) contain an admonition to "scrutinize authorities, organizations and private firms that exert influence over policy affecting the public". An American journalist, Peter Dunne, broadens the scope yet more in his oft-quoted dictum that media should "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable".

The media's duty to scrutinize the powerful lies at the core of liberal ideology of the press. The media should act as watchmen and sound the alarm whenever they detect abuses of power or other misconduct among the ranks of the powerful. Or, as Alexis de Tocqueville reported from his travels in the then-24 states of the USA in the 1830s: "The press monitors what government officials are doing and alerts citizens to misbehavior" (cited in Heffner 1984, ch. 11).

The media as active scrutinizers of politics and society represent a younger tradition, having its roots in the American tradition of 'muck-raking'. Thus, the emergence of active scrutiny and investigative journalism on the part of the media is mainly a result of newspapers' successive break with partisan politics, the professionalization of journalism and the emergence of 'objective journalism' in the USA during the first decades of the twentieth century (Schudson 1978).

Taking our starting point in ideas about the role the media should play (passive monitoring or active scrutiny) and the scope of the focus (only figures in government or all wielders of power and influence in society), four different kinds of tasks may be

discerned: (1) monitoring of holders of political power; (2) monitoring of all wielders of power and influence; (3) scrutiny of holders of political power; and (4) scrutiny of all wielders of power and influence in society.

Normative principles of democracy give no clear indication as to the character of media scrutiny or where the emphasis should rest. An actively investigative role where journalists, acting on behalf of the public and independent of the various power centers in society, actively scrutinize every individual in a position of power or influence with respect to both their private and public acts gives the media a considerable measure of power, much more than if the task is confined to monitoring the political leadership with a view to policing abuses of power. The demands set out in the following would, however, appear to apply irrespective of the scope of the task we assign the media and choose as our normative premise.

Two fundamental demands may be formulated: the one has to do with the quality of media scrutiny, the other, with the quality of the material on which the media base their scrutiny.

First of all, the media should contribute to bringing any misdoings that may occur to the public's attention. They should, in the service of the public, sound the alarm whenever abuses of power and other misconduct is discovered (cf. the debate between Zaller 2003, Bennett 2003, Patterson 2003 and Graber 2003). The media may themselves sound the alarm or pick up and spread alarms from other media as well as from monitoring agencies, public and private. This sort of relay function is naturally more common than discovering wrongdoing on one's own. But the media can also fulfil their monitoring function without doing anything at all; their sheer existence – the risk of getting caught – may have a deterrent effect on those they are set to monitor. In all probability this is the very most common way in which the media fill their monitoring function – although, of course, we cannot be certain.

Two different demands can be made of *the quality of media scrutiny*. First, that the media's judgement is *correct*, i.e., that what is disclosed as impropriety is actually wrong. Secondly, that the media are *effective*, i.e., that abuses are discovered and made public.

Making demands on the normative level is straightforward enough, but on the descriptive level it is difficult to determine to what extent the media live up to them. The measure of the media's success must be a combination of good judgement and efficiency on the part of the media. The better their judgement and the greater their efficiency in discovering and disclosing wrongdoing, the more successful they are in their watchdog function. This implies that very few exposés in the media may nonetheless represent a high degree of efficiency if in fact there is very little wrongdoing in a society or political system (which in turn may be a consequence of the presence of monitoring by the media).

As for the *quality of the material* the media gain access to, we may say that the information presented to the public should be of such quality that it allows people to draw their own conclusions about abuses of power and other wrongdoing on the part of elected officials and bureaucrats. Four demands may be made of the material: first and foremost is the absolute demand that the information presented be *true*. Secondly, it should be of importance to people, i.e., *relevant*. Relevance has to do with both what has been done and who did it. A minor misdeed on the part of a leading politician may be very relevant to the citizenry; similarly, gross abuses on the part of a minor official may also be highly relevant.

A third demand is that the scrutiny be *independent*. It shall be performed independent of other power centers and should not be done on anyone's behalf. The demand is somewhat problematic inasmuch as investigative journalism is often based on information that is leaked by someone who has something to gain by the facts being brought to light. Most major exposés are a consequence of one power player's desire to embarrass or otherwise put a rival player at a disadvantage. The media's independence in such cases consists mainly of verifying the information against other sources. The decision to publish is thus a matter of weighing the truth and relevance of the information against the knowledge that one is serving someone's interests. Newsdesks most likely experience such bouts of conscience rather frequently.

A fourth demand is that the media are *fair* in their scrutiny, fair in the sense that the accused is given the right to tell his/her side of the story and that in presenting the facts of the case the journalist does not suppress material that speaks for the accused. Here it is more a question of giving the person "a fair hearing" than of maintaining impartiality of the kind demanded of media as communicators of opinion.

Testing Media Performance

At the outset I noted that the choice of normative premises is decisive for one's assessment of media performance, as the choice of premises determines which functions and tasks are assigned to the media and what criteria are applied to measure performance.

The empirical assessment of media performance in connection with election campaigns that follows here takes its starting point in the two fundamental normative functions assigned to news media, namely, informing the citizenry and scrutinizing figures in positions of power.

In practice, however, it is necessary to set priorities. The Swedish Media Election Studies do not include any comprehensive or systematic measures of the kind of scrutiny we expect of 'the fourth estate', but only quantitative measures of the amount of coverage media have given various scandals and other irregularities. Consequently, the discussion that follows is not based on any systematically designed empirical test of media scrutiny in connection with election campaigns.

Media performance as vehicle of information has been studied mainly in connection with three national referenda: a referendum on nuclear energy in 1980, one on whether or not Sweden should join the European Union (EU) in 1994, and one on whether or not Sweden should join the European Monetary Union (EMU) in 2003. Referenda make special demands with respect to the information function inasmuch as voting concerns a (single) substantive issue. In the EU referendum, however, the analysis of the media's information value was limited. Consequently, our empirical test of how informative the media are is mainly based on the referenda on nuclear energy and the EMU.

The media's representation of opinion has been studied in connection with nine parliamentary elections between 1979 and 2006 and the three above-mentioned referenda. The demand of impartiality in campaign coverage is particularly relevant in the case of general elections, since voting means taking a position vis-à-vis different political actors, parties or political ideas. Political bias, the extent to which the parties have been treated fairly in the news media, has been assessed in relation to all the election campaigns. The descriptive demand of impartiality has, as we recall, three aspects. Thus, we examine whether any particular party or alternative in the referenda has been favored or put at a disadvantage by the way media have described them as actors, by the media's

representation of the issues, or by the way the parties are associated with various issues and contexts.

Media Scrutiny

In their scrutinizing function the media should ensure that voters are aware of any impropriety that politicians or public officials may have committed. They should also provide voters with the information voters need in order to be able to form an independent opinion on the issue at hand. Does the election campaign coverage of Swedish news media satisfy the demands that may be made of the media with regard to their duty to scrutinize holders of power?

The demand that media scrutinize holders of power is not voiced to the same extent during election campaigns as the demands that news coverage should be fair and informative. As a consequence, the Swedish Media Election Studies have not focused on the scrutinizing function in any systematic or comprehensive fashion, in part because empirical tests of performance in terms of the demands that scrutiny shall be correct and effective require data from other sources than media content. It should be pointed out that the demands that are made of examinations of the parties' and candidates' policies relate, to my way of thinking, to the media's informative function and are therefore included in the Media Election Studies.

It is not possible to give a general, empirically founded answer to the question of whether or not the scrutiny undertaken during election campaigns is correct or effective. In quantitative terms the media's scrutinizing role of the sort associated with 'the fourth estate' is less salient than their informative role. Less than 10 per cent of the media coverage concerns exposés of abuses of power and other wrongdoing.

Obviously, it is difficult to determine empirically whether or not the media's revelations are correct, i.e., that it actually is a question of abuse of power or wrongdoing. Everyone who has studied election campaigns knows that as elections near, scandals pop up that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. This may be an indication that the media's threshold may be lower as elections approach, and that the media's judgement might be a little less correct than at other times. But an opposite hypothesis is also possible. We know, for example, that editors are acutely aware that many people are interested in training the spotlight on one or another rival; consequently, they may be less likely than normal to give scandals attention.

Swedish media's scrutiny in election campaigns is mainly focused on Social Democrats. Whether this attention is undue or correct and whether it is efficient is open to debate. What suggests that it may be correct is the circumstance that the Social Democrats have ruled Sweden most of the time during the interval under study. It is conceivable that Social Democrats, influenced by their many years in power, are more prone to abuses of power, etc., than bouregois politicians are. But it is also possible that the media tend to choose to scrutinize Social Democrats and Social Democratic ministers more than representatives of other parties or blocs.

Informative Media

That news media give the voters the kind of information that helps them take a stand on the issues at hand is particularly important in referenda, where each individual voter has a more distinct policy-making role than in general elections. The media's value as

sources of information has therefore been studied primarily in connection with Sweden's three most recent national referenda: on nuclear energy in 1980, on membership in the European Union in 1994, and on membership in the European Monetary Union/adoption of the euro as the coin of the realm in 2003.

Crucial to rational decision-making is access to information that is of relevance to the decision at hand.

All three referenda gave rise to tremendous amounts of information in the press, radio and television, which culminated during the last intensive campaign month. In addition to regularly scheduled newscasts radio and television carried special election programs, and newspapers published special supplements that presented the arguments for and against nuclear energy, for and against Swedish entry into the EU, and for and against adoption of the euro. Provided the voter had the time and the energy, he or she could read, listen to and watch information about the subject of the referendum several hours each day in the last month of the campaign.

Media reports focusing on the actors in the campaigns and the referendum as a political contest make up a good share of the coverage, however. Indeed, a share equal to that devoted to the issues. These proportions have changed over time. Media coverage leading up to the referendum on the European Monetary Union/the euro in 2003 was more focused on the political contest per se than either the referendum on nuclear power in 1980 or that on EU membership in 1994.

Albeit the causality behind longitudinal variations is not always easily determined, this finding suggests a certain shift from politics toward tactics, from issue toward personalities, from substance toward game. In public service television and radio, whose news services are largely comparable, the shares of primarily issue-focused news items were 52 per cent in the referendum on nuclear energy, 50 per cent in the referendum on EU membership, and 44 per cent in the referendum on the EMU/euro.

The trend in comparable metropolitan newspapers is even more marked: 60 per cent on nuclear energy and the EU, and 48 per cent on the euro. A similar trend is noted in the provincial press.

Thus, there would seem to be a trend in news reporting toward treating politics as a game, the players involved, the campaign and public opinion. The change is most pronounced in the metropolitan press, and least in the tabloid press and broadcast news.

There are two conceivable explanations for these findings: Either there has been a change in political journalism, or the change mirrors a change in how politics is conducted, i.e., actual differences in the referendum campaigns. That the change is not equally apparent in all media speaks in favor of the former explanation, that journalistic praxis has changed. Differences in the campaigns would most likely have been reflected across the board.

Although much of the reporting has to do with "the game of politics'", all three referenda gave rise to vast amounts of decision-relevant information on the issue at hand. The metropolitan morning papers contained much more of this kind of information than provincial newspapers, and the provincial and tabloid press offered more than radio and television. These findings are not surprising when we consider that the incidence of information depends on the "space" available for news on the subject. There is a big difference between the amount of news copy in a metropolitan morning paper and that in a television newscast.

But, even if newspapers offer more decision-relevant information than radio and television newscasts, radio and television overall nonetheless carried a considerable

volume of decision-relevant information. Viewers who watched the main evening newscast on *SVT2* (*Rapport*), plus all the special election programs on *SVT1* and *SVT2* the last weeks of the three campaigns, and readers who read everything about the referendum in the two most important Swedish newspapers, *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm, morning) and *Aftonbladet* (national, tabloid) partook of roughly the same amount of decision-relevant information.

It is commonly assumed that the brevity of newscasts in the broadcast media mean that they are more information-dense than print media that have more space at their disposal. The differences are not very big, nor is the relationship totally consistent. In the referendum on the euro in 2003, radio and television were more information-dense than either the metropolitan or the provincial press, but in 1980 on the issue of nuclear energy newspapers were more information-dense than broadcast media, albeit the differences were not as pronounced as in 2003.

Metropolitan morning papers are no more information-dense than provincial papers or the tabloid press. In the euro referendum in 2003, for example, provincial papers were even more information-dense than the metropolitan morning press. No systematic differences among newspapers were noted in connection with the 1980 referendum.

Thus, it is impossible to point to any one category of media as being the most information-dense. Television studio debates and "Meet the Press"-type interrogations are generally more information-dense than news reporting. This is probably not surprising, since the point of the program is to confront and examine the different campaign organizations' arguments. The fact remains, such programs are more information-dense than news media.

Theoretically speaking, a high frequency or density of information may be achieved by repeating a single argument over and over again. Thus, the criterion of density needs to be complemented with a criterion of breadth. Generally speaking, the media differ more with respect to breadth than they do in terms of information density. The greatest breadth was noted for metropolitan morning papers, where *Dagens Nyheter* in connection with both referenda, on nuclear energy and on the euro, offered by far the greatest variety of information. Provincial papers and the tabloid press displayed clearly less breadth, but least breadth was noted for radio and television newscasts.

Voters who read a metropolitan morning paper were also exposed to a broad variety of information and slants on the issue at hand, but those who watched all the programs offered on the subject by *Sveriges Television* (*SVT*) were exposed to a more or less equally broad spectrum of arguments. Thus, one did not have to reside in Stockholm, Göteborg or Malmö to have access to a broad assortment of arguments and facts relating to the three referenda. Even those – a majority of Swedes – who did not have access to a metropolitan morning paper were well served by the news media.

The media should also supply information that allows voters to form an opinion of the validity and logic of the arguments presented to them by reporting the facts and rationales that underlie the arguments, that is, background and 'depth'. This entails putting the issue in context and discussing the consequences of the alternatives voters may choose between.

In the case of the euro referendum in 2003 roughly one-fifth of the total news coverage offered background and depth. This was a somewhat greater share than in the referendum on nuclear energy in 1980. But we note major differences between news media, and between the the two referenda. It is therefore difficult to discern any general pattern or trend concerning the depth of news media coverage, other than that metropolitan morning papers offered the most depth in both cases.

In two respects, however, changes over time are apparent. First, the provincial press and public service television (*SVT*) news departments offered information of much greater depth in 2003 than they did in 1980. Secondly, *SVT's* election specials offered less depth in 2003 than in 1980 – less than one-fifth of the information offered about the European Monetary Union in 2003 was background and depth, compared to nearly half of the coverage devoted to the referendum on nuclear energy in 1980. These observations lead us to conclude that television exhibits an increase in information-density, but a decrease in depth over the course of the period studied.

From voters' point of view, then, the ideal medium will offer density, breadth and depth – the sum of which is the medium's overall information value.

A calculation of the media's combined information value in terms of these three dimensions results in a wider gap between the best and the worst media. This is because media that are good on one dimension tend to be good on the others, as well. The metropolitan morning press clearly has greater information value than the provincial press and a considerably greater information value than radio and television newscasts.

Thus, access to a metropolitan morning paper gives the voter a much better chance to acquire the information he or she needs to make a rational choice.

But this is not to say that television is a poor source of information. In both referenda the total referendum-related news coverage on public service television was of the same information value as the most informative of metropolitan newspapers, *Dagens Nyheter*.

Yet another dimension is important from the media consumer's point of view, namely, how efficiently the media communicate information – what I call their "informativity". This is important inasmuch as consumers nearly always have to (or choose to) expose themselves to only a sample of the content the media offer. A highly informative medium is one that gives readers, listeners or viewers a substantial amount of information in relation to the time they devote to it.

Which media should voters turn to for information if they have little time to spare?

In both the referendum on nuclear energy in 1980 and that on the euro in 2003, the election specials on *Sveriges Television* were the most informative. Viewers received much more information in shorter time than they would have got if they had read a metropolitan morning paper or partaken of radio and television newscasts. Thus, the election specials on public service television not only have high information value, they also score high on informativity, i.e. they are efficient.

We note two important changes over time with respect to the media's informativity. Both television news and the provincial press had higher informativity scores in 2003 than they had in connection with the 1980 referendum. In 2003 all provincial newspapers had an even higher informativity score than the metropolitan press, whereas the opposite was true in 1980.

Did Swedish news media fulfill the demands that may be made of them as sources of information on the basis of normative democratic principles? Were they informative?

The answer naturally depends on the measuring stick one applies. According to the norms I apply and the empirical findings of the Swedish Media Election Studies, my answer is Yes. Swedish voters had very good opportunities to gather the information they needed to make a well-informed choice in the three referenda. Information on the issues was relatively abundant (dense); it displayed considerable breadth and some depth, as well.

Nor was the quality of information confined to those having access to the metropolitan morning press. Together, television newscasts and election specials displayed very

high information quality, as did provincial newspapers. Thus, even those who lived in the countryside, those who were not particularly interested in politics, elderly people and people with little formal education could via their local newspapers and television weigh the various arguments against each other and form their own position on the issues to be decided in the respective referenda.

Fair Media

In the role of communicator of opinion news media should treat different opinions in such a way that no opinion is unduly favored or put at a disadvantage. The media's fulfillment of this demand has been studied in connection with nine general elections and three referenda.

What do the findings tell us? Do Swedish news media give fair accounts of the political alternatives put before voters?

The first way in which a party may be favored or put at a disadvantage is through the image media give of the parties as actors, the attention devoted to the actor, and how the actor is depicted.

Generally speaking, we find a close correspondence between the media exposure parties are accorded and their popularity among the electorate.[5] This holds true in all the elections and in all news media; furthermore, newsdesks' selection of subjects is also very uniform. It is probably not a party's popularity per se that decides how much coverage it receives. It is rather the consequence of a two-step assessment of newsworthiness: the relevance of the news story is a function of the party's political weight and importance, and an indicator of these aspects is the support the party has among voters.

At the face of it, this kind of assessment would appear to favor large parties and put smaller parties at a disadvantage. But, attention is only one of the ways an actor can be favored. Another aspect is the kind of attention the actor is accorded. Extensive exposure often means a lot of criticism, in which case it is far from certain that media attention will have a favorable effect. Consequently, one cannot simply conclude that large parties are generally given more favorable treatment in the media than small parties.

Although news selection is quite similar among Swedish news media, we also note, particularly in the early years of the period, that the party a medium supported in opinion columns tended to receive more exposure in the medium than other parties. In the first three general elections (1979-1985) party partisanship was fairly pronounced in Swedish newspapers. Over the period under study we find that the two 'extremes' in our sample, *Svenska Dagbladet* (Conservative) and *Arbetet* (Social Democratic), gradually came to be more alike.[6] In the last two election campaigns that Arbetet covered, the paper treated the Social Democrats and the non-socialist bloc basically the same, and in the three most recent election campaigns *Svenska Dagbladet* has resembled *Dagens Nyheter* and *Göteborgs-Posten* (both "independent Liberal").

In terms of the parties' exposure in news columns, then, we may say that Sweden in the early 1990s no longer had a party press in the traditional sense – not in Sweden's major cities in any case. On the other hand, we do find traces of a certain amount of bloc partisanship in the news coverage of the most recent three elections.

Another way a party may be favored or discounted is through how the media present the issues – the amount of attention different issues or phenomena are given, and how they are depicted.

In virtually every election campaign it is possible to point out one or another party that has been favored or put at a disadvantage by the way different issues have been treated and how conditions are described by the media. But although we can identify "winners" and "losers" in this regard, there is no one party or political view that systematically has been favored or discounted in the election campaigns of the last twenty-five years. The only systematic difference that we note is a tendency, perhaps not entirely unexpected, for the two largest parties, the Social Democrats and the Conservatives, to have more influence over the media's agenda than other parties.

The third principal way a party may be favored or disadvantaged is the way in which the media associate the party with different issues, phenomena and contexts – i.e., the "issue profile" they assign to the parties. A party's success in an election campaign often has to do with whether or not it has managed to reach the public on the issues it wishes to talk about – and to avoid those issues that may cast the party in a negative light.

Here, too, it is possible to identify at least one party in any given election that has been favored or disadvantaged in relation to their issue profile. But, again, there is no one party or set of political views that has been consistently favored or disadvantaged.

There is one general characteristic of Swedish news media's election coverage, however. Parties are often forced to speak and take stands on issues that they would rather not discuss. There is generally a poor fit between the issue profile the party would like to project to the public and the profile the public partakes of via the media. This is particularly true of television news programs, where a negative selection principle often applies. But the poor fit applies equally to all the parties. No party or set of political views has unequivocally and systematically been put at a disadvantage more than others.

These findings may be summarized in *two general conclusions*. *First*, there is always at least one party that is favored or discounted by the way news media report about the election campaign. This holds true for all the election campaigns studied, and it applies to all the news media studied: newspapers and radio and television newscasts. But, there is no systematic pattern in the partisanship observed. That goes for public service radio and television and TV4, and for much of the metropolitan press.

One reason is that the news media function both as collaborator and as adversary vis-à-vis the parties. Sometimess journalists and media play along with a party, sometimes they play against it. The roles shift from election to election; the parties can never be sure which role the media will play. Journalists can transform extraneous events, chance occurrences and seemingly meaningless details in a campaign into issues that can decide the election. Events that either make the journalist valuable collaborators or formidable adversaries.

Secondly, the media are very similar with respect to how they report election campaigns. The similarities with regard to both selection and presentation are more characteristic of Swedish election coverage than the differences. Swedish election campaigns in the media are essentially about the same issues, no matter which newspaper or news program one turns to – the media become their own measuring stick. Thus, if a party finds itself favored or disadvantaged the treatment will be replicated in all media – and in the same way.

Are Swedish news media non-partisan? Is election coverage fair? The answer depends on one's time frame. If we look at any given election and consider the media's impartiality on a descriptive level, the answer is No, since there will be at least one party that is highly favored or put at a clear disadvantage in any given election campaign.

But the answer is Yes if we consider individual election campaigns and the media's partisanship on a normative level, since the degree of their partisanship is seldom "undue". This is in any case true of public service radio and television, who are required by law and their charters to maintain an impartial stance in news reporting. In the instances where a party has clearly been disadvantaged in news coverage, the cause is usually a blunder on the part of the party or the result of the sniping between rival parties. Likewise, when a party has been favored, it is generally due to a popular political initiative or success in a public debate.

In the Swedish press, however, some papers still fly their party's colors, in news columns, as well. On the whole, however, Swedish newspapers are much less partisan in the period studied than in the era of the party press.

The answer is also Yes when we view media performance in the longer term. In each campaign we can identify at least one party that has fared ill in the press, but there is no consistent pattern as to which party fares ill from election to election. Thus, in the long term news media's coverage of parliamentary elections may be considered fair.

One must attach certain reservations to the answers given above in the case of the three referenda. Newspapers' news coverage of the referenda campaigns is considerably more partisan than their coverage of general elections. Radio and television, on the other hand, are even more impartial in their treatment of the alternatives than they are in their treatment of the parties in election campaigns. In the referendum on Sweden's nuclear energy program in 1980, newspapers differed widely as to how they treated the three alternatives, and the differences corresponded closely to the papers' position in opinion columns.[7]

Newspapers differed markedly in the referenda on EU membership in 1994 and membership in the European Monetary Union in 2003, as well. The Yes campaigns predominated in the news in both cases, by roughly two to one in terms of volume. But, although "Yes to the euro" dominated news space in 2003, on balance the "No" alternative received more favorable treatment. This contrasts markedly with the media's treatment of the alternatives in the referendum in 1994, where "Yes" both was allotted more space and received more favorable treatment. The results of the two referenda contrasted, as well: voters approved membership in the European Union, whereas they said No to the euro.

The differences noted between coverage in the 1994 and 2003 referenda applied to all the news media studied: the metropolitan, tabloid and provincial press, and radio and television newscasts. The election specials on television remained strictly non-partisan in all three referenda.

As to an assessment of news media's impartiality in the referendum campaigns, we can only say Yes with strong reservations. Radio and television newscasts and election specials were largely impartial, whereas news reporting in the press was more partisan.

Do Swedish news media fulfill the normative demands that can be made of them? Are they fair in their news coverage?

In the long term and overall, we may say that Swedish news media are fair in their coverage of election campaigns, especially with respect to parliamentary elections and especially in radio and television. The alternatives voters can choose from are presented fairly in the sense that none of the alternatives is favored or discounted unduly.

The question remains whether the media are fair in their treatment of politicians as a profession. The media's decidedly critical scrutiny of politics in connection with election campaigns is fair in the sense that it does not turn a blind eye to anyone, but it is

unfair in the sense that the spotlight is trained on politicians more than other holders of power.

Ideals and the Real World

In large-scale modern societies recurrent elections are the institution that makes democracy possible. Ultimately, the free and independent choices citizens make between competing political alternatives is the foundation upon which democracy rests.

In contemporary democracies the performance of mass media is crucial. If free opinion-formation is a necessary prerequisite to democracy, free and independent mass media are a necessary prerequisite to free opinion-formation. The media are a vital part of the democratic infrastructure. They provide information to voters, while they also provide platforms for the parties and candidates who compete for voters' support. If the media do not fulfill their communicative functions, elections cannot fulfill their function as mechanisms of democracy.

It is in this context that the Swedish Media Election Studies are carried out. How well do Swedish media serve this vital democratic mechanism? Are news media fair, informative and scrutinizing?

Our assessment of their performance depends, as I observed at the start, on our normative starting points. My personal assessment – based on my normative starting points and empirical studies of nearly three decades of election campaign coverage – is more in line with the Doris Graber's conclusion than with the fears expressed by Pierre Bourdieu.

Notes

1. The theroretical starting points referred to here represent the fundament for the Swedish Media Election Studies (Medievalsundersökningarna) that are carried out within the framework of the research program, "Journalism and Democracy" in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMG) at Göteborg University. The analyses cover news media's coverage of nine general election campaigns (1979-2006) and three national referenda (on nuclear energy in 1980, entry into the European Union in 1994, and membership in the European Monetary Union in 2003). The coverage of general elections is limited to the final four weeks of the campaign in the press, radio and television. In the case of referenda, the material also includes all broadcast programs relating to the referendum as well as editorials and other op-ed material in the press. The empirical findings of the first Media Election Study are reported in Asp (1982), and the theoretical starting points in Asp (1986). Ensuing studies have been reported in conjunction with each election. I have chosen not to refer to my own work in the discussion of empirical findings here.
2. The tasks assigned to the news media and the expectations regarding their role in a democracy are outgrowths of normative assumptions which are discussed in Asp (1992). The theoretical underpinnings of the Swedish Media Election Studies are specified and further elaborated in Asp (2006), on which the present article draws extensively.
3. The discussion in the present article is based on conditions in Sweden. The expectations and requirements made of the media should therefore be those that are considered legitimate in Swedish society. The theories and the normative and descriptive criteria discussed here are, however, of the sort that may be assumed to apply to democratic rule as such. (For a primarily American discussion, see for example Zaller 2003, Bennett 2003, Patterson 2003, Graber 2003, Gans 2003, Patterson 2000, Page 1996, Schudson 1995, Patterson 1993, Iyengar 1991, Keane 1991, Lichtenberg 1990, Entman 1989 and Strömbäck 2005).
4. Surprisingly, the literature contains few attempts to specify the concept of the media as 'the fourth estate' or the scrutinizing role of the media (Strömbäck 2003, Ekström, Johansson & Larsson forthcoming). A search using the term "watchdog journalism" on Google, for example, turns up 1,340,000 hits,

and “investigative reporting” 2,760 000 hits. In the literature the terms are often used interchangeably, despite their different epistemological origins.

5. Seven parties were represented in the Swedish Riksdag (parliament) during the greater part of the period studied. In the elections of 2006 the Social Democrats received the least share of the vote in their history (35.0%) and lost power to ”Alliance for Sweden”, a coalition of four non-socialist parties.

   The Social Democrats have ruled most of the time since modern democracy was introduced in Sweden. Between 1998 and 2006 the Social Democrats ruled with the parliamentary support of two small parties: the Left (5.9%), to the left of the Social Democrats, and the Greens (5.2 %) who won representation in the Riksdag in 1988.

   The winning Alliance in 2006 comprises the Conservatives, a Liberal-Conservative party that veered toward mid-spectrum in 2006 with remarkable success (26.2%); Center, a formerly agrarian party which in recent years has courted small enterprises (7.9%); the Liberals, who have turned from their traditional social-Liberal emphasis toward market liberalism (7.5%); and the Christian Democrats a socially conservative party (6.6%).
6. *Arbetet* (Malmö), the flagship of the Social Democratic fleet, ceased publication in 2000.
7. The referendum on nuclear energy was something of a “special case”. Normally, voters are given a choice between two alternatives – often Yes vs. No. But the issue of nuclear energy cut across party lines and threatened to splinter all the parties, particularly the largest ones.

   Sweden’s nuclear program was half-built when the nuclear accident at Harrisburg (USA) occurred. The accident forced the ruling Social Democrats to accede to popular demands for a referendum. Alternative 2, a “yes-and-no” position (fulfillment of the nuclear program, but a phase-out of the reactors as renewable sources of electricity could be phased in), was a (successful) strategy to defuse highly negative public opinion in the aftermath of Harrisburg.

   The three alternatives, the turmoil in the parties, and the fears surrounding nuclear energy at the time surely impacted on news reporting of the referendum campaigns.

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Marketplace of Ideas and Marketplace of Money

A Study of Commercialism and the Swedish Election News Coverage in 1998 and 2002

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether commercialization can explain the extent to which the Swedish news media during the 1998 and 2002 national elections framed politics as a game, followed an interpretive journalistic style and allowed politicians to speak for themselves. Six hypotheses were derived from the claim by Patterson (2000) that commercialism is the driving force behind the framing of politics as a game and, by implication, the increasing use of an interpretive journalistic style and shrinking sound- or inkbites.

Taken together, the results show only mixed support for the hypotheses. The results thus indicate that perceiving commercialism as *the* crucial independent variable is too simplified. Moreover, it must certainly not be a *universal* truth that commercialism is driving the changes of election news coverage, or that there is always a contradiction between the media functioning in the marketplace of ideas and the marketplace of money.

Key Words: election news coverage, commercialism, framing, interpretive journalism

Introduction

Democracy as a political system for self-government requires a media system that provides the information people need to be free and self-governing, forums for public discussions and that functions as a watchdog against abuse of power. Through this, the media system and its constituent parts can contribute to an enlighted understanding among the citizens in a democracy.

This is no less true during the heated months and weeks preceding an election, when political parties and candidates campaign and people make up their minds regarding which party or candidates to vote for. The media, however, is not only in the business of providing information, but also in the business of making money. Media companies are, with a few exceptions, essentially commercial companies. Thus, the media is part of the marketplace of money as well as the marketplace of ideas.

Three Consequences of Commercialism

The fact that media companies are, in general, commercial companies might have fundamental consequences for the news coverage in general as well as for the news coverage of elections (Hamilton, 2004; Allern, 2001; Picard, 2005). Moreover, these consequences might, according to several observers, have detrimal effects on the media as part of the marketplace of ideas (Åsard & Bennett, 1997; McManus, 1994; Croteau & Hoynes, 2001).

One such consequence, of particular importance regarding election news coverage, is the tendency to frame politics as a strategic game, rather than as issues. As noted by Patterson (2000, p. 253-254, 255-256):

> Of the many effects of commercialism on news content, none is more consequential than the media´s tendency to report politics not as an issue but as a game in which individual politicians vie for power. [...] The news media´s tendency to frame politics in gamelike terms serves to depolitizice issues, presenting them more as political tokens in the struggle for power than as objects of serious debate.

What is important to note here is that Patterson is stating the relationship between commercialism and the framing of politics in universal terms.

Another effect of commercialism, to some extent independent and to some extent part of the tendency to frame politics as a strategic game, is that the journalistic style has become more interpretive and less descriptive: ”Today, facts and interpretation are freely intermixed in election reporting. Interpretation provides the theme, and the facts illustrate it. The theme is primary; the facts are secondary. Since the themes are usually constructed from the game schema, it pervades election news” (Patterson, 1993, p. 67).

A third effect of commercialism is the shrinking soundbite (Patterson, 1993, 2000), or ”inkbite”, which measures the number of words candidates are allowed to speak for themselves in newspaper articles. Regarding soundbites on television network news in the U.S., research has shown that on average it had shrunk to less than ten seconds in the late 1980s and 90s, down from over 40 seconds in 1968 (Hallin, 1992; Lowry & Shidler, 1998). As for inkbites, the trend is not as clear, but as shown by Just and collegues, in the 1992 U.S. presidential election, ”newspapers [were] even less likely to let candidates speak for themselves than television news” (Just *et al.* 1999, p. 29).

These three tendencies in contemporary political journalism and election news coverage have been found in several other postmodern democracies apart from the United States. (Franklin, 1997; Norris *et al.*, 1999; Strömbäck, 2004; Waldahl & Narud, 2004; van der Eijk, 2000; Petersson *et al.* 2006). However, the research results are difficult to compare, due to different operationalizations and definitions of crucial concepts.

What is more important in this context, however, is that it is yet unclear as to whether or not these tendencies should actually be viewed as effects of commercialism. *If* Patterson is correct when stating in *universal terms* that commercialism is the driving force behind the tendency to frame politics as a game, then this particular framing should be more common the more commercially oriented a particular media outlet is and more common the more commercially oriented a particular media system is. Furthermore, *if* the interpretive journalistic style and the shrinking sound- or inkbites are indeed linked to the framing of politics as a game, then the interpretive journalistic style should be more common and the sound- or inkbites shorter the more commercially oriented a particular media outlet or media system is.

Stated differently, the degree of commercialism would be the crucial independent variable not only in the United States, the prototype of a country with a ”liberal model” of media and political systems, but also in a country such as Sweden, the prototype of a ”democratic corporatist model” of media and political systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

Setting the Stage: Background and Hypotheses

Against this background, the purpose of this article is to study whether or not commercialism can explain the extent to which the Swedish news media during the 1998 and 2002 national elections framed politics as a game rather than as issues, followed an interpretive rather than a descriptive journalistic style, and, finally, how many sentences politicians were allowed to speak for themselves.

Admittedly, studying only two elections is not sufficient to reach any final answers with regards to the effects of commercialism. This particular study should therefore be perceived only as a first step in a series of studies following future Swedish elections.

Since the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the Swedish media landscape has been radically transformed (Petersson et al, 2005; Hadenius & Weibull, 2003). Historically, the Swedish broadcast media have been financed and produced through the public service companies Sveriges Television and Sveriges Radio. No private and commercial channels were allowed to broadcast. In 1987, however, the monopoly started to break down as a Swedish cable channel, TV3, started to broadcast to a Swedish audience but from London, thus circumventing the Swedish legislation in this area. In 1991, the first terrestrial and commercial television channel, TV4, was allowed to broadcast in Sweden. The monopoly was broken (Hadenius, 1998; Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001), and in 1993, private radio was allowed to broadcast at a local level.

Whereas Sweden had two television channels and four radio channels in the mid 1980s, all of which were public service channels, Sweden now has more than thirty terrestial, cable- and digital television channels, the majority of which are private and commercial (Jönsson & Strömbäck, 2007). Regarding TV4, however, it is important to note that even though it is a privately owned and commercially driven media company, TV4 is obliged by the conditions of its license to, among other things, broadcast news that provide ”the information citizens need to be informed and form opinions in matters of societal relevance” (Translated by author).

Thus, with regards to the broadcast media, during the last twenty years Sweden has witnessed increased competition for audiences, investors, advertisers and also sources (cf. McManus, 1994). The same is true for the newspapers, partly because of the competition with the broadcast media, and partly because of falling advertising revenues and an economic recession during the 1990s. Another major change is that Swedish newspapers, which have always been owned by private enterprises or foundations, have become increasingly independent of the political system and the political parties since the 1960s. The party-press model, which used to be very strong in Sweden, has more or less disappeared when it comes to the news coverage (Asp, 2003; Petersson *et al.* 2005).

Thus, political parallelism has weakened (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Hadenius & Weibull, 2003). Commercial incentives have become more important whereas political incentives have become more or less irrelevant for the owners and editors of Swedish newspapers. Several Swedish scholars and observers have also noted that the Swedish media system has become more commercialized, and that it is an on-going process (Hultén, 1999; Hvitfelt, 1996; Petersson *et al.* 2005).

Even though the Swedish media landscape has generally become more commercialized than previously, there are still differences between different media outlets. One obvious difference is that two of the three major television channels (SVT1 and SVT2) are still run as public service channels, and in 2004, 50% of the Swedish population still watched the news on one of the two public service channels at least five days a week, whereas the corresponding share for the commercial channel TV4 was 32% (Holmberg & Weibull, 2005, p. 28). Sweden, however, is a rather newspaper-centric society when it comes to consumption of news: in 2003, 72% read their morning newspaper at least five days a week, and the newspaper sales per 1000 adult population was 541,1 in 2000 (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 23. Approximately 70% of all households subscribe to a newspaper (Andersson, 2005, p. 305).

At the national level, there are four major national newspapers which have some power to set the national political agenda and the agenda for other media (Nord & Strömbäck, 2003). *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* are broadsheet papers, in style if no longer in form, whereas the other two, *Expressen* and *Aftonbladet*, as categorized by Sparks (2000, p. 14-15) can be described as either ”serious-popular” or ”news stand” tabloids. *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* are mainly subscription based, whereas *Expressen* and *Aftonbladet* are sold at news stands. There are also differences in the means that their operations are financed. Whereas the broadsheets obtain about two thirds of their income from advertisers, the populars only receive about 25% of their income from advertisers. Thus, the tabloids depend on their day-to-day sales to their audiences for their revenues (Gustafsson, 2005).

This means that the broadsheets are more dependent on the market for advertisers than the tabloids, whereas the tabloids are more dependent on the market for audiences. This makes the tabloids more commercialized in the sense that they must, on a daily basis, adjust to what is perceived as popular, or even dramatized, reporting, in order to sell as many copies as possible. The situation is different for the broadsheets, because they rely more on advertizing for their income, because they are subscription based, and because their readers generally speaking are more politically interested and more educated than the readers of the tabloids (Nord, 2003; Andersson, 2005). Therefore, the first three hypotheses are:

> H1: The framing of politics as a game will be more common in *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* than in *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*.

> H2: The interpretive journalistic style will be more common in *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* than in *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*.

> H3: The number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves will be lower in *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* than in *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*.

With regards to the television news, the news in commercial TV4 called *TV4 Nyheterna* can be categorized as more commercial than that in the public service channels SVT1 and SVT2, called *Rapport* and *Aktuellt*. Thus, the next three hypotheses are:

> H4: The framing of politics as a game will be more common in *TV4 Nyheterna* than in *Rapport* and *Aktuellt*.

> H5: The interpretive journalistic style will be more common in *TV4 Nyheterna* than in *Rapport* and *Aktuellt*.

H6: The number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves will be lower in *TV4 Nyheterna* than in *Rapport* and *Aktuellt*.

It is also of interest as to whether any changes can be observed between the election news coverage in 1988 and 2002, although this is obviously too brief a time period to allow any firm conclusions to be drawn with regards to changes over time. Nevertheless, this study asks the following research question: Which differences can be observed between 1998 and 2002 with regards to the framing of politics as a game, the usage of an interpretive journalistic style and the number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves?

Methodology in Studying Election News Coverage

This study is based on a quantitative content analysis of the four main national newspapers – *Dagens Nyheter*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Expressen*, *Aftonbladet* – and the three main television news shows in Sweden – *Rapport*, *Aktuellt* and *TV4 Nyheterna*. In the case of the television news, the main daily news show for each channel was chosen for the study. In the case of the newspapers, supplements, editorials and content not deemed to be news journalism were excluded.

Subject to these restrictions, the content analysis included all news stories during the last three weeks before Election day in 1998 (August 31-September 20) and 2002 (August 26-September 15) making references to national politicians or national political institutions. The unit of analysis is the individual news article or news story, and the total number of news articles and news stories covered by the content analysis is 2176 (table 1).

Table 1. *Number of News Articles/Stories in the Content Analysis*

	Aftonbladet (T)	Expressen (T)	Dagens Nyheter (BS)	Svenska Dagbladet (BS)	TV4 Nyheterna (C)	Rapport (PS)	Aktuellt (PS)	N
1998	179	174	201	189	72	107	101	1 022
2002	170	161	325	214	73	103	108	1 154

Note: T=tabloid, BS=broadsheet, C=commercial news, PS=public service news.

The variables of interest in this study deal with the framing of politics, the dominant journalistic style and the number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves. With reference to the frames, there were five available alternatives, and the coding focused on the dominant frame in the individual news stories. The five frames were: issue frame, game frame, scandal frame, trivia, and other. This article, however, will focus on the use of issue frames, game frames and scandal frames, and treat articles with other frames as ”missing”. Thus, the issue frame, the game frame and the scandal frame remains.

News stories were coded as *issue framed* if they focused on political issues, social conditions requiring political action, or political discussions where the substance consisted of issues and issue-related questions. News stories were coded as *game framed* if the game of the campaigns provided the main plot of the story, if the articles focused on polls and treated politicians or parties as strategic actors mainly interested in winning and avoiding losing, if there was a centrality of performance, style and perceptions of the politicians or

the parties, and if there was a focus on campaign and/or power struggling strategies or tactics (Strömbäck, 2004; Capella & Jamieson, 1997; Patterson, 1993; Jamieson, 1992). Finally, news stories were coded as *scandal framed* if they focused on alleged scandals involving politicians or political institutions, or if they framed what politicians had said as if it were a scandal, i.e, if the articles focused on gaffes (Sabato, 1993).

The journalistic style was coded as either descriptive or interpretive. Following Patterson (1993, 2000), journalistic style was coded as descriptive, when the news stories focused on the facts of an event or social condition, and on who said what to whom and when. Journalistic style was coded as interpretive when news stories followed a theme clearly chosen by the journalists, when the facts were merely used as illustrations to the theme, when journalists were openly interpreting the words and actions of political actors, or events, their causes and/or effects, and when they made attributions that were not supported in the texts. The coding focused on the dominant style in each unit of analysis. In cases where it was not possible to determine the dominant style, those news stories are treated as 'missing'.

Regarding the length for which politicians were allowed to speak for themselves, this study counted the actual number of sentences politicians were quoted as saying, both in newspaper stories and in broadcast news stories. Thus, instead of measuring soundbites in television news, this study used the same measure – number of sentences – in the study of both newspaper and broadcast news. It was somewhat more difficult to measure in broadcast news, since people tend not to speak in whole sentences, and sometimes leave words hanging in the air or change subject without actually completing the sentence they had started. In such cases, the end of a sentence was marked by a pause or a significant change of subject.

Swedish Election News Coverage in 1998 and 2002

Can commercialism explain the extent to which the Swedish news media during the 1998 and 2002 national elections framed politics as a game rather than as issues, followed an interpretive rather than a descriptive journalistic style, and how many sentences politicians were allowed to speak for themselves? The first part of this question is addressed by hypothesis 1 – according to which the framing of politics as a game is expected to be more common in the tabloids *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* than in the broadsheets *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* – and in hypothesis 4 – according to which this particular framing is expected to be more common in the commercial *TV4 Nyheterna* than in the public service news shows *Rapport* and *Aktuellt*. Both these hypotheses are addressed in table 2 below.

Table 2. *The Framing of Politics as a Game in the Election Coverage 1998 and 2002 (%)*

	Aftonbladet (T)	Expressen (T)	Dagens Nyheter (BS)	Svenska Dagbladet (BS)	TV4 Nyheterna (C)	Rapport (PS)	Aktuellt (PS)	Mean
Game framed 1998	48	52	30	46	44	35	30	41
Game framed 2002	38	55	27	39	49	22	29	37
N 1998/2002	168/162	158/148	193/313	185/207	64/71	100/98	95/103	

Note: T=tabloid, BS=broadsheet, C=commercial news, PS=public service news. Percentage has been rounded off.

The results indicate that the framing of politics as a game was indeed more common in commercial *TV4 Nyheterna* than in the public service news shows in both 1998 and 2002. However, it is also interesting to note the differences between the public service news shows. In 1998, *Rapport* framed politics as a game more often than *Aktuellt*, whereas the opposite was true in 2002.

The first hypothesis, focusing on differences in the framing of politics between tabloids and broadsheets, is supported in 1988 but not in 2002. In the latter case, the framing of politics was almost as common in the broadsheet *Svenska Dagbladet* as in the tabloid *Aftonbladet*. The differences between those two newspapers were small even in 1998. Thus, comparing the four newspapers, and treating the degree to which they frame politics as a game as an indicator of the degree of commercialized journalism, it appears as if *Expressen* is the most commercialized newspaper, whereas *Dagens Nyheter* is the least commercialized newspaper, with *Aftonbladet* and *Svenska Dagbladet* falling between those endpoints. In any case, the results only give partial support to Hypothesis 1.

Addressing the question with regards to differences between 1998 and 2002, the mean indicates that at a general level, the framing of politics as a game was actually less common in 2002 than in 1998. Thus, if this particular framing is treated as an indicator of the degree of commercialism, this suggests that Swedish election news journalism was actually less commercialized in 2002 than in 1998. The alternative interpretation would of course be that it is misleading to perceive the degree to which different media frame politics as a game as an indicator of commercialism, or that other factors are more important than the degree of commercialism.

The next set of hypotheses are focused on whether the news stories are predominantly descriptive or interpretive. According to Hypotheses 2 and 5, an interpretive journalistic style is expected to be more common in *Aftonbladet*, *Expressen* and *TV4 Nyheterna* than in *Dagens Nyheter*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, *Aktuellt* and *Rapport*. The results are displayed in table 3.

Table 3. *Predominant Journalistic Style in Different Media in the Election Coverage 1998 and 2002 (%)*

	Aftonbladet (T)	Expressen (T)	Dagens Nyheter (BS)	Svenska Dagbladet (BS)	TV4 Nyheterna (C)	Rapport (PS)	Aktuellt (PS)	Mean
Descriptive 1998	67	70	62	66	55	52	63	61
Descriptive 2002	65	48	66	56	56	59	48	57
Interpretive 1998	33	30	38	34	45	48	37	39
Interpretive 2002	35	52	34	44	44	41	52	43
N 1998/2002	168/162	158/148	193/313	185/207	64/71	100/98	95/103	

Note: T=tabloid, BS=broadsheet, C=commercial news, PS=public service news. Percentage has been rounded off.

Addressing the research question first, the mean show that the interpretive journalistic style at a general level was more common in 2002 than in 1998. However, there are important differences between different media and between the two election campaigns.

Contrary to expectations, the interpretive journalistic style was not more common in commercial *TV4 Nyheterna* than in the public service news shows *Rapport* and *Aktuellt*. Instead, restricting ourselves to the broadcast news shows, the interpretive journalistic

style was most common in *Rapport* in 1998 and in *Aktuellt* in 2002, even though the difference in 1998 is very small and insignificant. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is not supported.

The same is true regarding Hypothesis 2, stating that the interpretive journalistic style would be more common in *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* than in *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter*. The results show that even though there are differences in how common the interpretive journalistic style is, these differences cannot be explained by whether the newspapers are tabloids or broadsheets. In 1998, the interpretive journalistic style was almost as common in all papers, whereas in 2002, it was more common in *Expressen* – a tabloid – and *Svenska Dagbladet* – a broadsheet – than in *Aftonbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter*.

The last set of hypotheses are focused on the number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves. In 1998, politicians were quoted as saying 7742 sentences, compared with a total of 8295 in 2002. However, there are differences between the newspapers and the broadcast news shows as well as between different media outlets, as is shown in table 4.

Table 4. *Number of Sentences Politicians were Quoted in the Election News Coverage 1998 and 2002*

	Aftonbladet (T)	Expressen (T)	Dagens Nyheter (BS)	Svenska Dagbladet (BS)	TV4 Nyheterna (C)	Rapport (PS)	Aktuellt (PS)	N
1998	1 845	1 884	900	1 093	534	753	733	7 742
2002	2 133	1 213	1 700	1 547	467	551	684	8 295

The results show that politicians were quoted as saying more sentences in 2002 than in 1998 in *Aftonbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet*, while the number decreased in *Expressen* and the broadcast news shows. The number of sentences was lower in commercial *TV4 Nyheterna* than in the public service news shows.

Regarding the newspapers, the differences in the number of sentences and between 1998 and 2002 depends to a considerable extent on the use of ”issue boxes”, where politicians from all parties are allowed to spell out their policy positions on questions or issues decided by the news departments. These issue boxes were first used by the tabloids, but are now also used by the broadsheets. In 1998, *Aftonbladet* published 11 issue boxes, *Expressen* 8, *Dagens Nyheter* 1 and *Svenska Dagbladet* 2. The corresponding numbers in 2002 were 13, 3, 8 and 7.

Excluding these issue boxes would yield a somewhat different result than that presented in the table above. If the issue boxes are excluded, the number of sentences politicians were allowed to speak for themselves in *Aftonbladet* drops to 766 in 1998 and 940 in 2002, in *Expressen* to 1142 in 1998 and 962 in 2002, in *Dagens Nyheter* to 866 in 1998 and 1508 in 2002, and finally, in *Svenska Dagbladet* to 976 and 1166 in 1998 and 2002 respectively.

Regarding Hypothesis 3 – stating that the number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves will be lower in *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen* than in *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* – the evidence is mixed. Including the issue boxes, in 1998 the opposite was actually the case, whereas in 2002, the number of sentences was higher in *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* than in *Expressen*, but *Aftonbladet* was, at the same time, the newspaper that was most likely to allow politicians to speak

for themselves. Excluding the issue boxes, the hypothesis is supported in 2002 but not in 1998, when the number of sentences politicians were allowed to speak for themselves was higher in *Expressen* than in any other medium. However, as it makes no sense to exclude the issue boxes, it is more appropriate to focus on the results which include these.

To sum up, this research shows only limited support for the hypotheses derived from the thesis that commercialism is the driving force behind the framing of politics as a game, the tendency to adopt an interpretive journalistic style, and to limit the number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves. Two hypotheses are supported, three are not supported, whereas the evidence is mixed with regards to one hypothesis.

Discussion: Commercialism and the Swedish Election News Coverage

The purpose of this article has been to study whether the degree of commercialism can explain the extent to which the Swedish news media during the 1998 and 2002 national elections framed politics as a game rather than as issues, followed an interpretive rather than a descriptive journalistic style, and, finally, how many sentences politicians were allowed to speak for themselves. Six hypotheses were derived from the claim by Patterson (2000) that commercialism is the driving force behind the framing of politics as a game and, by implication, the increasing use of an interpretive journalistic style and shrinking sound- or inkbites.

Before discussing the results, it is important to recognize that this study has an obvious weakness in that the empirical data is limited to only two elections. Thus, more research is required before any definitive conclusions can be drawn with regards to the effects of commercialism on election news coverage more generally. Therefore, this study should be perceived as a *first* attempt to study the effects of commercialism on election news coverage in Sweden. My intention is also to continue studying this topic after future Swedish elections.

With this caveat in mind, the results indicate that the Swedish news media functions both as a marketplace of ideas and a marketplace of money. Two hypotheses were supported, predicting that the framing of politics as a game would be more common in *TV4 Nyheterna* than in *Aktuellt* and *Rapport*, and that the number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves would be lower in *TV4 Nyheterna* than in *Aktuellt* and *Rapport*. Three hypotheses were not supported, predicting that the interpretive journalistic style would be more common in *Aftonbladet*, *Expressen* and *TV4 Nyheterna* than in *Dagens Nyheter*, *Aktuellt* and *Rapport*, and that the number of sentences politicians are allowed to speak for themselves would be lower in the tabloids than in the broadsheets. With regards to the hypothesis predicting that the framing of politics as a game would be more common in the broadsheets than in the tabloids, it was supported in 1998 but not in 2002. Moreover, the differences between the two tabloids on the one hand and the two broadsheets on the other, appear to be at least as important as the differences between the tabloids and the broadsheets. Thus, the type of newspaper cannot explain these results.

How can these results be explained? One conclusion might be that structural factors such as ownership (private vs public service), type of media (newspapers vs TV) or type of newspaper (taboid vs broadsheet) cannot explain the choice of frames, of journalistic style or how much space politicians are allowed to speak for themselves. This is not

to say that structural factors are unimportant, but it does indicate that there are a number of other important factors at work which at times might be of equal or greater importance than structural factors. For example, the closeness of the electoral race and the likelihood of a change in government is likely to have an impact upon the degree to which the media frame politics as a strategic game. The closer an electoral race, and the more likely a change of government, the more the news media can be expected to frame politics as a strategic game. If, on the other hand, the agenda is set by major real-world events, such as catastrophies or an economic recession, then the news media are likely to focus more on the issues.

However, it is not only the political system and the electoral context that matters. The editorial policies of and journalistic norms and values within different news departments can also be expected to influence the electoral news coverage. Considering the small number of top political journalists within most Swedish media, it is even likely that individual differences can have a significant impact upon the news coverage of election campaigns. The choice of the targeted audiences and their particular expectations of the media can also shape the election news coverage, at least to some degree.

Stated differently, structural factors matter, but the same is true with regards to contextual factors as well as semi-structural and individual factors. Structural factors might set the stage and have major indirect effects upon the election news coverage, but these are filtered and reshaped by other forces at a lower level of abstraction. This can be exemplified by the use of issue boxes. Printing these is, economically speaking, a sound decision, since it is cheap, but it also gives politicians more space to speak for themselves and citizens the opportunity to compare the policy positions of the parties. In this case, there is not even a contradiction between what is economically rational and in informing the public in a manner that benefits enlighted understanding. This also illustrates that there need not be any contradiction between the news media simultanously functioning as a marketplace of ideas and a marketplace of money.

Thus, perceiving commercialism as *the* crucial independent variable is too simplified. Moreover, it must certainly not be a *universal* truth that commercialism is driving the changes regarding framing, journalistic style and the extent to which politicians are allowed to speak for themselves, or that there always is a contradiction between the media functioning in the marketplace of ideas and the marketplace of money.

To state that the framing of politics as a strategic game is common in contemporary political news journalism is one thing; to state in universal terms that is has become ever more common or that it is an effect of commercialism is another. The same is true with regards to the choice of journalistic style or how much politicians are allowed to speak for themselves. This research indicates that Swedish election news journalism is similar to U.S. election news journalism in the sense that the tendencies to frame politics as a game, to adopt an interpretive journalistic style and to limit the space politicians are allowed to speak for themselves are prevalent in both countries, but not that these tendencies are equally strong in both countries or that they should be perceived as an effect of commercialism in Sweden (see also Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2006).

Thus, as scholars or readers of the research literature, we should always be careful not to overstate the generalizability of different research results. We should also strive for more comparative research. As noted by Blumler and Gurevitch (1975), comparative research is an essential antidote to naive universalism and unwitting parochialism, and that is an antidote we need in order to further our scientific understanding and to serve our communities with valid and reliable knowledge.

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From Party Press to Independent Observers?

An Analysis of Election Campaign Coverage Prior to the General Elections of 1981 and 2005 in Two Norwegian Newspapers

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to shed light on the political role of the former 'party press' in general election campaigns compared with the role of modern, non-party papers in Norway. The discussion is based on a content analysis of the election coverage in two local newspapers in the elections campaigns in 1981 and 2005. The question concerning the campaign coverage of the two party papers in 1981 is if – and if so, to what extent – factors like professional journalistic values or audience and market interests served to balance a biased, partisan profile. As to 2005, the question concerning the non-party papers becomes whether, and if so, to what extent – factors like historical roots and present ideological platforms still influenced their priorities and positions.

Key Words: party press, partisanship, election coverage, independence, market interests

Introduction

The news media have long played a crucial role in political campaigns and elections – as arenas for debate and persuasion, and as tools for information and propaganda. Political messages are in most cases mediated, and election campaigns seem increasingly to follow the logic of news media (Aardal & al. 2004, Bennett & Entman 2001, Norris 1999, Eide 1991, Asp 1986).

Television has become the politicians' favoured medium in election campaigns. However, in the Nordic countries, where newspaper circulation still is very high and election coverage in the press is extensive, also the newspapers are regarded as important political arenas. The political parties know that the dailies provide far more news space for political reporting than do television newscasts.

Nordic newspapers, in contrast to public service broadcasting, have a long history of formal affiliation to political parties, in Norway continuing until as recently as the early 1990s. Today the label 'party paper' is a thing of the past: the new and favoured label is 'independent'. However, most newspapers still pay tribute to their political roots in the form of statutes defining their editorial platform in ideological terms like conservative, liberal or social democratic.

Do such historical roots – and today's ideological labels – have any influence on modern political journalism?

The aim of this article is to shed light on the political role of the old 'party press' in general election campaigns compared with the role of modern, non-party papers in Norway. For analytical purposes, 'party affiliation' and 'partisanship' are regarded as concepts which are different but interlinked. Both party papers and papers without any formal party affiliation can, in various ways and with varying degrees of strength, show types of partisanship in their news reporting and views.

The empirical data are based on a content analysis of all political news stories, reports, interviews and editorial commentaries in two local Norwegian newspapers, *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa* (*NA*), published in the four last weeks prior to the general elections of 1981 and 2005.[1] These two belong to the most common type of newspaper in the Nordic countries: local or regional *omnibus* papers that face only limited competition with other papers in their main distribution areas, and have a history as party papers but are today without any formal political party affiliation. They are now owned by corporations that demand relatively high profits on invested capital.

An argument for comparing the coverage of the elections of 1981 and 2005 is that in both cases the polls indicated a realistic possibility of a change of government. In the election campaign – as well as in the press – this resulted in a clear tendency to group the political parties into two 'government coalition alternatives'. An argument for choosing as recent a year as 1981 as the starting point is the possibility to study two potentially conflicting dimensions: On one hand, the Norwegian press was still dominated by newspapers with formal party affiliation. On the other hand, professional journalistic values concerning news priorities as well as ethics had gained a relatively strong standing within the journalistic community.

The weeks covered represent the peak of the election coverage, with television debates, public discussions, political initiatives and press briefings. In this sense, then, the period is not 'typical' of the everyday coverage. The amount of political news and commentaries in these weeks is expanded, and the political sympathies of the press can also be more outspoken than normal. The same can be said of the interest for political news among readers.

The analytical perspective is comparative, and the main research question is this:

How did the two papers interpret and practise their role as 'party papers' in the election campaign of 1981, compared with their new roles as politically independent, non-party newspapers in the election campaign of 2005?

Concerning campaign coverage in the early1980s, the general hypothesis is that as party papers *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa*[2] would strongly favour 'their own' politicians, and pay less attention to their adversaries. This means that they would function primarily as political news channels for their mother parties, less as arenas for debate, and seldom or never as independent political actors. The question then becomes if – and if so, to what extent – other factors like professional journalistic values or strategic audience and market interests served to counterbalance a biased, partisan profile.

As to 2005, the general hypothesis is that the newspapers first and foremost had to take their market interests into consideration. As profit-oriented, non-party newspapers they would now favour the parties most influential among their readership. Then the question becomes whether, and if so, to what extent – other factors like historical roots and present ideological platforms influenced their priorities and positions. Professional,

ethical values about newspapers as an arena for democratic debate must also be taken into consideration.

The Rise and Fall of the Party Press

Høyer (2005: 76) identifies a 'party paper' as a newspaper that is owned, staffed and directed by a political party or by political party affiliations. The social democratic press in Norway comes close to this definition. The Labour press has had strong organizational links to the mother party, and its papers were owned by the Labour Party[3] and trade unions. Norway's conservative and liberal newspapers were in periods subsidized by their parties (Danielsen 1979: 101–117), but most typically they were *owned* by politically engaged families and local shareholders. However, their owners in most cases defined their papers as affiliated to the Conservatives or the Liberals, and their editors-in- chief were party members, sometimes in leading positions. Newspapers supporting the Centre Party[4] tended to be owned by various types of shareholders – the party, organizations in the agricultural sector and politically engaged individuals. I will here subsume all these types of formal party affiliations under the common umbrella of 'the party press'.

After the formation of modern political parties in the last decades of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century, most newspapers in Norway were affiliated with one political party or another. Even as late as in 1972, as many as 119 of nearly 200 registered newspapers still either formally defined themselves as party papers or had well-known party affiliations but used more general ideological expressions in their statutes, like 'conservative' or 'liberal', to characterize their status.[5] In 1972, these two types of party press together –119 newspapers in all – represented 74 per cent of the net circulation of the Norwegian press.[6] Most of those papers that characterized themselves as 'independent' or 'non-political' were small, local news outlets[7]. A survey in 1974 showed that 83 per cent of the editors in the Labour press and 59 per cent of the editors in the non-socialist press held office in a political party (Høyer 2005: 80). Up to the 1980s, journalists from the national or regional press accredited to the press lobby in the Norwegian parliament, the *Storting*, would even participate in the meetings of their party's parliamentarian group (Allern 2001a: 92–94). During these years the 'differentiation of the press' was basically understood as partisan newspapers representing different political parties and differing ideologies.

At the same time, the strengthening of professional values in journalism made 'independence' the ideological buzzword of the news institution. Among journalists this was interpreted both as independence of political parties and independence of public relations firms and other types of professional news management (Ottosen 2004, Raaum 1999, Allern 1997). It had long been a recognized norm for news journalists in the party press to distinguish between 'news' and 'views'. News coverage of an election should in principle be factual, and reports from the election campaigns should give a voice to various political alternatives, while the editorials and commentaries would represent the values and political voice which the newspaper itself supported. At least this was the official view and journalistic ideology.

After the first years of the 1990s there was hardly any Norwegian newspaper that defined itself as a party paper (Allern 2001a:13)[8]. Both external and internal factors brought about this change. Most political parties lost members, and some even experienced debilitating party splits. At the same time, the newspapers grew both in reader-

ship and economic strength. The introduction of state press subsidies in the 1970s secured economic support for newspapers with low revenues from advertising, making them more independent of old types of political party subsidies. Tougher competition on the newspaper market made it increasingly important for newspapers to broaden their readership base, and political partisanship could in this respect be a negative factor. During the 1970s and 1980s it became obvious that most newspapers, at least in economic terms, had little to gain from upholding a position as 'the voice of the party'.[9]

The liberal newspapers were the first to 'go independent'. The debate and referendum about Norway joining the European Common Market in 1972 had resulted in a split of the Liberals into two parties, both too weak to represent any political authority in relation to the comparatively large and financially independent liberal newspapers. In the years after the Second World War, the popular liberal daily *Dagbladet* had even subsidized some party organizations of the Liberals. Now this marriage had ended in divorce, and prior to the general election in 1977 the newspaper said a final adieu to the party (Simensen 1999: 64-65). In the coming two decades nearly all newspapers in Norway followed the same path.

During the 1980s the conflict between the old political role of the newspapers as party organs and their ambitions of representing a more independent position became increasingly evident. The Association of the Conservative Press was for the last time represented as a party branch at the national congress of the Conservatives in 1983, and conservative newspapers started to term themselves 'independent conservative'. In an attempt to get subscribers from the liberal press, the Conservatives' national news agency, *Høyres Pressebyrå*[10], was renamed *Norpress* (Holand 1992a: 10, Simensen 1999: 60).

In 1993-1994 the social democratic newspapers followed the same route and were no longer defined as organs of the Labour Party. As a symbolic part of the same process, some newspapers also changed their names.[11] The association of social democratic newspapers, *A-pressen*, became a centralized media company and, for a short period, even a public stock company.

An interesting question is whether, and if so to what extent, such changes have influenced the political priorities and news policies of modern 'non-party' papers with roots in Norwegian party politics. In an anniversary publication from the Association of the Conservative Press 1892-1992, Johan E. Holand concludes that present-day newspapers with a conservative outlook still support the Conservatives in the most important questions:

> Ideologically such newspapers still feel related to the Conservatives and express this. However, both in principle and in practical issues the effects of this attitude in the public debate are not quite as rigid as before (Holand 1992a: 12[12]).

These words were, however, written more than ten years ago. Could such an observation still be made today? And are there any differences between newspapers with differing political and ideological histories?

In a study of Norwegian newspapers' attitudes to the change of government in 2000, Bjerke (2001) discusses and analyses several factors that can influence a paper's political profile, and concludes that the paper's political *history* still seem to play an important role. However, his analysis is limited to editorials and commentaries, and does not include news coverage.

A Study of Two Newspapers, Data and Methods

At the time of the general election campaigns in 1981, most dailies still belonged to the party press. This includes the two newspapers chosen for this case study, *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa,* two typical local/ regional newspapers formerly affiliated to a political party. An analysis of their journalistic priorities and views during election campaigns will, it is hoped, provide more general insight into how journalists in two quite different periods interpreted their journalistic and political 'mission'.

Adresseavisen, founded in 1767, is Norway's oldest newspaper. It appears six days a week in Norway's third largest city, Trondheim. *Namdalsavisa* is a local newspaper published six days a week in Namsos, a coastal town north of Trondheim. The two papers are published in Trøndelag, the middle region in Norway, historically a stronghold of the Norwegian Labour Party.

In 1981 *Adresseavisen* was owned by local shareholders and officially supported the Conservatives. The two editors-in-chief belonged to Association of the Conservative Press – an important organizational link to the Conservatives.[13] The association was a branch of the Conservatives and elected delegates to its national congress, and their president was a permanent member of the central board of the party. One of the two editors-in-chief, Kjell E. Amdahl, was deputy president of this association in 1981 and became the president the year thereafter (Holand 1992b:62).

Namdalsavisa was in 1981 owned by a coordinating organization of the Labour Party press,[14] local branches of the Labour Party and trade unions. The paper was defined as an 'organ of the Norwegian Labour Party', and regularly published articles supplied by the Labour Party's press office.[15] The editor-in-chief, Rolf A. Amdal, was a party member. The normal procedure in the Labour Party press in these years was for the central board of the Labour Party to have the final say concerning the appointment of editors-in-chief (Simensen 1999: 43–48).

Since then, there have come important changes concerning ownership, media competition and party affiliation. In 1981 both papers had local competitors.[16] *Adresseavisen* is now the only daily newspaper in Trondheim and the largest newspaper in the county of Sør-Trøndelag. It is owned by a public stock company with the same name. Norway's leading media corporation, Schibsted, in August 2006 owned 34.4 per cent of the shares. The statutes of the mother company underline that the aim of the company 'is to publish *Adresseavisen* as a conservative paper'.[17]

Namdalsavisa is today the only newspaper in the district of Namdalen in the county of Nord-Trøndelag. It is owned by one of Norway's three leading media companies, *A-pressen*.[18] According to the company statutes, *A-pressen* 'builds upon the traditions and ideas of the labour movement'[19]. The statutes of *Namdalsavisa* confirm that the newspaper 'shall present good and independent journalism, based on the labour movement's ideas about freedom, democracy and equality'.[20]

Data for the content analysis consist of copies or originals of all front pages, news pages, feature pages and debate pages with one or more articles or columns directly or indirectly related to the general election, during the four final weeks before the election.[21] Because the topic under study here is news priorities and editorial opinions, letters to the editor and other debate articles written by non-journalists have not been included. The only exception is 'election reports' written by the top candidates from various political parties in *Namdalsavisa* in 1981. These reports are included because the series was planned and organized by the newspaper, and was presented as a regular part of the election coverage on its news pages.

Relevant *articles* were all coded by author. For the front page, the definition of 'article' also includes headlines (sometimes with a picture, but not any text) referring to an article on another page. For the news, feature and commentary pages 'article' is defined as any story consisting of a separate headline and a text. In a few cases where the 'headlines' clearly represented 'a story within a story' (or a short factual supplement) this text was interpreted and coded as a part of the 'main article'. *Adresseavisen* was a broadsheet in both years, while *Namdalsavisa* was a tabloid. Articles have not been weighted according to length, which represents a limitation concerning the analysis.

The dependent variables chosen can in several ways say something about the degree of partisanship in news coverage and commentaries. They include political headlines/articles on the front page, the political parties represented as 'the 'main source' in front-page stories, the political party represented as the 'main source' in news stories, the text genres of the stories, the gender of the 'main sources', and the expressions of positive/negative attitude to government alternatives in the news articles and commentaries about the elections.

Parts of the coding, like the main sources' party affiliation and their gender, are in most cases based on information that is made clear in the text. Coding of text genres is more complicated because the borderlines between different text genres are sometimes blurred. The variable concerning positive/negative attitude towards various government alternatives is in practice an attempt to provide a more qualitative reading and evaluation as the basis for quantitative data. The definitions of some of these variables and their values will be discussed later in further detail. Cramer's V has been employed as a statistical measure of the strength of correlation or dependency between two nominal, categorical variables in the contingency tables.[22]

The General Election of 1981 and Its Political Background

In Norway, as in many other European countries, the political climate in the 1970s was characterized by political radicalization, not least among youth. Then, around 1980, the political and cultural climate changed in a more liberal-conservative direction. Sympathy for the Conservatives began to expand among voters outside the party's traditional stronghold in the upper middle classes and the urban areas. The polls indicated that the Labour Party government, supported in the Storting by the Socialist Left Party, could lose its majority base.

The prime minister in the Labour Party government, Odvar Nordli, decided early in 1981 to withdraw from his position, and on 4 February was succeeded by the then-Minister of the Environment, Gro Harlem Brundtland. Young and energetic, she became Norway's first female prime minister, and gave the Labour Party new hopes of remaining in power. The Conservative candidate for prime minister was Kåre Willoch, the party's leading parliamentary politician, known as a brilliant rhetorician. The two top candidates soon became known by their first names among the public (and in the press), and the duels between 'Gro and Kåre' drew large audiences.

The Labour Party felt sure of being able to count on the Socialist Left Party as a part of its parliamentary base. The situation on the 'non-socialist' side prior to the election campaign was less clear. The Conservatives primarily wanted to establish a coalition government together with the Christian People's Party and the Centre Party, but the three parties failed to reach a formal agreement. The Christian People's Party's demand for a more restrictive abortion law was one of the obstacles. If a coalition were not possi-

ble, the Conservatives would form a minority government with direct and indirect support from other non-socialist parties.

In the election campaign the Labour Party put health and welfare at the top of its political agenda, while the Conservatives' priorities were tax reductions, warnings against excessive public spending and inflation, and demands for more 'freedom' from state regulations in various sectors of society. Both parties favoured political topics where they traditionally had issue ownership.

The general election of September 1981 proved a success for the Conservatives, who got 31.8 per cent of the national vote[23] – the party's best-ever election result.[24] The Labour Party gained 37.2 per cent of the vote, which was better than some polls had indicated, but not enough to prevent a change of government.[25] The Conservatives, supported by other non-socialist parties, then formed a minority government.[26]

1981: Two Party Papers in Action

According to the standard hypothesis about the party press, *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa* in 1981 should ideally feel a strong obligation to cover big and small events concerning the activities of their own parties, and favour their own politicians as news sources. One argument against such a strategy could be that a too heavy dose of partisan party politics in the columns would be bad for business. Each newspaper was the largest paper in its area, however still with some competition in the districts. They clearly wanted to increase their circulation and therefore would have an interest in presenting themselves as open arenas – at least in their news pages. For journalists the necessity of maintaining a separation between news and views also was a recognized value. An editorial in *Adresseavisen* just before Election Day in 1981 is a typical example of this professional ideology:

> *Adresseavisen* has tried to cover the election campaign from many sides by giving all serious parties some space to present their views. Our own political views we have mostly presented in the editorials.[27]

How realistic or accurate was this journalistic-political self-declaration?

During the final four weeks (24 issues) before the general election campaign, the conservative *Adresseavisen* on average presented around eight large and small articles about the general election per day, while the social democratic *Namdalsavisa* printed seven articles. One of these would generally be presented on the front page, but rarely represented the top story (six times in *Adresseavisen* and only three times in *Namdalsavisa*).

News was by far the largest basic genre in both papers, slightly more dominant in the conservative than in the social democratic paper. In the latter, editorials and other commentary were more frequent and played a more important role in the election coverage. The feature genre, representing a more personal and free literary style, was not found in either paper. [28]

Media studies in many countries show that the *sources* cited or referred to in news stories most often represent organizations and institutional interests (Gans 1980, Ericson & al., 1989, Sahlstrand 2000, Allern 2001b). In the coverage of an election campaign, politicians from the various political parties, supplemented by political experts and officials, dominate the scene (Waldahl & Narud, 2005: 182–202). The coding in this analysis is limited to 'the main source'.[29] If more than one source is mentioned, 'the main

source' is defined as the source first mentioned in the headline or the lead, or first cited in the story.[30] Non-party sources include experts, election officials, spokespersons of interest organizations and – sometimes – members of the general public.

Table 1 indicates that both newspapers favoured politicians from their mother party. In the social democratic paper, as much as 44 per cent of the main sources belonged to the Labour Party. The second most important party source were politicians from the Centre Party; only seven per cent belonged to the Conservatives. In *Adresseavisen,* 27 per cent of the main sources were from the Conservatives, 21 per cent from Labour and 16 per cent belonged to the Christian Peoples Party.[31] On the front page both newspapers gave the politicians from their own party even higher priority. In *Adresseavisen* about one third of the sources named in front-page articles were politicians from the Conservatives, and in *Namsdalsavisa* about fifty per cent of these sources were Labour Party politicians.

Table 1. *Party Affiliations of Main Sources in Election News Stories,* Adresseavisen *and* Namdalsavisa*, 1981 (per cent)*

	Newspaper	
Source	*Adresseavisen* (Conservatives)	*Namdalsavisa* (Labour Party)
Labour Party	21	44
Conservatives	27	8
Christian People's Party	16	6
Centre Party	8	12
Liberals	4	2
Socialist Left Party	4	6
Progress Party	1	1
Red Election Alliance	1	1
Non-party sources/other	19	21
All	101	101
(N)	(166)	(109)

Cramer's V= 0.364

This indicates that the conservative newspaper tried to play a somewhat less obviously partisan role in the election campaign than *Namdalsavisa*. One reason can be that many of *Adresseavisen's* readers were social democratic voters, and it was important to keep them as subscribers. In the Namsos area, by contrast, conservative voters were in the minority among the readership of *Namdalsavisa*.

In both *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa* the smaller political parties, like the Liberals and the Socialist Left Party, were seldom represented as 'the main source'. The populist, right-wing Progress Party (later to became one of Norway's largest parties) and the left socialist Red Election Alliance were both more or less boycotted by *Adresseavisen*.

In the 1981 election, *the government alternatives* were the dominant central topic.

Table 2 shows the political sympathy in newspaper coverage towards the two blocs. If the main source, directly or indirectly, either supported a Labour Party government, or expressed criticism of the parties that supported a conservative or a non-socialist coalition government, the article has been coded as positive to a Labour Party govern-

ment, and vice versa for the other government alternative. This includes non-party sources (like spokespersons from interest organizations) taking a stand on the government alternatives. All editorials or commentaries have, after a qualitative reading, been coded according to the same standard. Political articles (news and commentaries) that do not take sides, have an unclear message as to the government alternatives, or where the government topic is irrelevant, have been coded in the 'neutral' category.

Table 2. *Political Sympathies Towards Government Alternatives, by Newspaper Type and Genre, 1981 (per cent)*

	News		Editorials/commentaries		All genres	
Political sympathy	*Adresseavisen* (Cons.)	*NA* (Labour)	*Adresseavisen* (Cons.)	*NA* (Labour)	*Adresseavisen* (Cons.)	*NA* (Labour)
Pro Labour government	21	54	–	98	17	68
Pro non-socialist government	46	11	92	–	52	9
Neutral/irrelevant	34	35	8	2	31	23
All	101	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(172)	(115)	(26)	(54)	(198)	(169)

Cramers V= 0.557

In their editorials, both newspapers were outspoken about their political sympathies. *Adresseavisen* criticized the Labour Party government, and praised the election manifesto of the Conservatives.[32] After favourable opinion polls for the non-socialist parties, the editors expressed their optimism concerning the chances of a change of government.[33] However, the final pre-election appeal to their voters was the 'classic' neutral appeal: 'make use of your right to vote'.[34] In *Namdalsavisa*, editorials defended the Labour Party government and argued polemically against the Conservatives and their candidate for prime minister. At the same time the paper's editorials often had a 'local angle', using examples and arguing for or against politicians from the region. Editorials in *Adresseavisen* were generally more 'national' in style, and regularly referred to political meetings in the capital. Local Labour Party newspapers like *Namdalsavisa* were provided with editorials from the Labour Party's press office every day, and many newspapers make use of this service. Editor-in-chief of *Namdalsavisa*, Rolf A. Amdal, confirms that he preferred to write his own local editorials,[35] even supplementing them with long and more personal political commentaries under his own by-line. Altogether, the commentaries in *Namdalsavisa* gave the impression that the editor-in-chief was somewhat more engaged in the outcome of the election than were the editors of *Adresseavisen*.

In both papers, editorials and commentaries were basically partisan, which strengthens the party press hypothesis. The few commentaries that were coded as neutral/irrelevant took up other aspects, like making use of the right to vote, or more local political questions.

What then about news coverage? It was definitely more 'balanced' than the editorials and commentaries. In *Namdalsavisa* 54 per cent of the news articles were positive to a Labour government and/or attacked the non-socialist alternative. In *Adresseavisen* 46 per cent of the news articles were critical towards the Labour government and/or supported a non-socialist alternative. Around one third of the news stories in both pa-

pers were neutral or in this respect irrelevant. The news coverage in both newspapers was undoubtedly 'biased', favouring their own government alternative. Nor is there any reason to believe that the readers were taken by surprise, as most of them would expect such a profile in a party paper. The influence of readership orientation and market interests seems, however, slightly more apparent in *Adresseavisen's* news coverage than in that of *Namdalsavisa*.[36]

Another dimension concerning news sources is gender. News is generally known as a masculine area and politics is no exception (Gallagher 1981, Zilliacus-Tikkanen 1997, Eide 1993, Allern 2001b). However, in Norway several political parties, with Labour in the lead, had from the late 1970s launched various initiatives aimed at increasing the representation of women in politics. At the time of the election campaign in 1981, the acting prime minister was a woman, and both Labour Party and the Conservatives had well-known female politicians among their top candidates in the two Trøndelag counties.

A gender analysis of the 'main sources' shows, not surprisingly, that the representation of women in the news stories was very low. Only 22 per cent of the named sources in *Adresseavisen* and 26 per cent of the sources in *Namdalsavisa* were women.[37] In this respect there was no difference between the two party papers.

The Election of 2005 and Its Political Background

Before the general election of 1997 the leader of the Labour Party, Torbjørn Jagland, declared that his government could not continue in government with a weaker parliamentary basis than it had received in the 1993 election, which was 36.9 per cent of the vote. When the election result proved to be 35.0 per cent, the Jagland government resigned. The three centrist parties in Norwegian politics – the Christian Peoples' Party, the Centre Party and the Liberals – formed a new minority government with Kjell Magne Bondevik of the Christian Peoples' Party as prime minister.

In the longer run, this minority government encountered opposition both from the Conservatives and Labour, and had to resign early in 2000. Jens Stoltenberg, who after several years of intra-party power struggles had been appointed the party's new candidate for prime minister, formed the new government. However, his attempt to 'reform' traditional social democratic policies in a more liberal and market-oriented direction met strong criticism from the trade union movement and from voters in the geographical periphery. The Labour Party government was also criticized for being unable to solve problems concerning social security, especially for elderly people. Among the attackers was the right-wing populist Progress Party, which demanded that more of Norway's considerable oil revenues should be used for health and social care. Opinion polls showed that this demand won support among the general public (Aardal & al. 2004: 16). Large groups of traditional Labour voters seemed no longer to 'recognize' their old party.

In 2001 the Labour Party got only 24.3 per cent of the vote – a catastrophe for the party often characterized as 'the eagle' among the political parties in Norway. The Conservatives, the Christian People's Party and the Liberals succeeded in forming a new centre-conservative coalition government.

Prior to the general election in 2005, the Labour Party changed its political tactics. For the first time in history, the party declared that its intention was to establish a coalition government,[38] its chosen partners being the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party. Also in these parties the decision to launch a government alternative together with the Labour Party found acceptance, after years of internal debates. The new alliance was

strongly supported by the central trade union movement, LO, and by several newspapers with their roots in the labour movement. The new alliance was quickly dubbed 'the red-green alliance' and presented itself as a coalition defending social security and traditional welfare values.

The general election in September proved to be a close race, but ended with a slight majority in the Storting for the red-green coalition. Jens Stoltenberg could form a new three-party government. In the county of Sør-Trøndelag, *Adresseavisen's* main circulation area, the red- green alliance together got 57.5 per cent of the vote. In Nord-Trøndelag county, it was even stronger, gaining 67.8 of the vote, and in some municipalities in *Namdalsavisa's* circulation area up to eight out of ten votes.[39]

2005: Two Independent Newspapers in Action

According to the general market hypothesis, both *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa* would in 2005 seek to function as arenas for different political parties and in their news reports favour the parties that were most influential among their readership. An argument against this could be that the two newspapers still had statutes expressing an ideological platform (conservative versus social democratic), and that both had a history as party papers and political roots that still influenced the choice of editors.[40]

In the final four weeks before the general election in 2005, *Adresseavisen* published an average of 15.3 articles about the election each day, as against only 5.3 a day for *Namdalsavisa*. This difference can only partly be explained by the differing formats: as a tabloid *Namdalsavisa* generally gave less room to brief news items than *Adresseavisen*.

News was the dominant basic genre in both dailies. *Adresseavisen* invented in 2005 a hybrid genre they called a 'voter panel' – a group of 'ordinary voters' selected by the newspaper, with a range of occupations, views and age levels, representing 'the voice of the people'. One format was reports about meetings organized by the newspaper between voter panellists and leading politicians. Neither investigative reporting nor the feature genre played a visible role in either of the papers.

Table 3. *Main Sources (political affiliations) in Election News Stories, by Newspaper Type, 2005 (per cent)*

	Newspaper	
Source	*Adresseavisen* (Conservatives)	*Namdalsavisa* (social democratic)
Labour Party	15	16
Conservatives	16	7
Christian People's Party	7	12
Centre Party	7	15
Liberals	9	14
Progress Party	6	7
Socialist Left Party	9	17
Red Election Alliance	2	1
Non-party sources/other	27	8
All	100	100
(N)	(287)	(96)

Cramer's V= 0.232

Table 3 shows the party affiliations of the main sources of news articles. In the conservative *Adresseavisen,* politicians from the Conservatives and the Labour Party were the most important sources, followed on a lower level by sources from the Liberals and the Socialist Left Party. If we relate this to the market hypothesis (representation according to the party's standing in the polls or election results), the Conservatives and the Liberals were somewhat overrepresented, while the Labour Party was underrepresented. However, the major deviation concerns the populist Progress Party, which (as predicted by the polls) emerged as the second largest party in Sør-Trøndelag, ahead of the Conservatives. Only the left socialist Red Election Alliance was in *Adresseavisen* treated as more unimportant.

These priorities in news coverage can be interpreted as a compromise between *Adresseavisen's* assessment of the parties 'market value' – an attempt to be a democratic arena for (nearly) all – and political decisions to treat the Conservatives and the Labour Party as the favoured 'main adversaries'. The paper's historical conservative roots are, however, still evident. Tellingly, the Conservatives – which in the 2005 election became only the third largest party in Sør-Trøndelag (far behind the Labour Party, behind the Progress Party and slightly ahead of the Socialist Left Party) – were still the party most frequently used as a main source (slightly ahead of the Labour Party) in the news stories of *Adresseavisen*.

Is there, in this respect, any difference between the conservative *Adresseavisen* and the social democratic *Namdalsavisa?*[41] In the social democratic newspaper, the three parties of the red-green alliance – the Socialist Left Party, the Labour Party and the Centre Party – got most publicity. The last two political parties are traditionally the largest in elections in Nord-Trøndelag, which indicates a possible convergence between *Namdalsavisa's* political sympathies and its readership orientation. The considerable publicity for the Socialist Left Party, which fought hard to secure its mandate from Nord-Trøndelag county, seem to have been a more politically motivated news decision. On Election Day, the editorial in *Namdalsavisa* more or less begged its voters to ensure a new period in the Storting for the Socialist Left Party's top candidate, a politician from the *Namdalsavisa's* own local area.[42] As in *Adresseavisen*, the Progress Party – which became the third largest party in the county in the 2005 election – was relatively seldom used as a main source in news articles.[43]

Table 4. *Political Sympathies Towards Government Alternatives, by Newspaper Type and Genre, 2005 (per cent)*

	News		Editorials/commentaries		All genres	
Political sympathy	*Adresseavisen* (Cons.)	*NA* (SD)	*Adresseavisen* (Cons.)	*NA* (Labour)	*Adresseavisen* (Cons.)	*NA* (SD)
Pro Labour government	29	53	–	87	24	57
Pro non-socialist government	37	33	62	–	41	29
Neutral/Irrelevant	35	14	38	14	35	14
All	100	100	100	101	100	100
(N)	(305)	(109)	(62)	(17)	(367)	(126)

Cramer's V= 0.308

Table 4 shows political sympathies for the two government alternatives within two main genres (news and comments) in 2005. The coding follows the same principles as for Table 2 (1981).

Most editorials and commentaries in *Namdalsavisa* were positive to the red-green alternative and critical to the conservative-liberal coalition – the opposite of that found in *Adresseavisen's* editorials and commentaries. However, compared with *Namdalsavisa* the conservative newspaper had a larger share of comments more neutral in tone and more analytical in approach. A qualitative reading of the editorials in *Adresseavisen* indicates that the newspaper found it preferable to attack the red-green alternative (especially its left side), than openly embrace the Conservatives. The most main adversaries were the Socialist Left Party and the trade union movement. The financial support provided by the national trade union federation (LO) to the red-green coalition partners was described as especially problematic: '…LO is not a democratic institution'.[44] Unsurprisingly, an editorial in *Namdalsavisa* expressed the opposite opinion:

> The conservatives have always attacked the close relationship between the Labour Party and LO. However, this is a useful relationship for both parts. Therefore, it will continue, to the delight of both the Labour Party and the members of LO, or in other words, for most people.[45]

Another aspect is the newspapers' role in 2005 as politically engaged local patriots supporting economic interests and demanding better infrastructure in their own regions. This concerns all types of priorities, from ferry lines and bridge construction, to investments in hospitals. Especially clear in its role as an agitator for 'our region' is *Adresseavisen*, where local patriotism at times assumes ideological dimensions. This market-oriented, geo-political orientation seems to have become at least as important as the newspaper's conservative heritage.

In the news coverage there was in 2005 a less significant political difference between the priorities of two papers. In *Adresseavisen,* 37 per cent of the news articles were reports with sources positive to the conservative-liberal coalition, while 29 per cent were articles with sources supporting the red-green coalition. The main tendency in *Namdalsavisa* was the opposite, and with a somewhat larger difference between the coverage of the two blocs.

Finally, more than two decades after 1981, there were any changes in the newspapers' priorities concerning the gender of their political sources? In *Adresseavisen,* 30 per cent of the main sources in 2005 were women. This result must, in a more normative perspective, be seen as a small sign of progress for a newspaper known to be highly male-dominated (Allern 2001b: 192). In *Namdalsavisa,* however, women represented only 22 per cent of the sources – less than in 1981. One contributing reason may be that all the top candidates of the parties in the red-green alliance were men.[46]

Discussion and Conclusions

The basic question here has been how the two papers selected for study interpreted and practised their role as 'party papers' in the election campaign of 1981, compared with their new role as politically independent, non-party newspapers in the election campaign of 2005.

In the introduction two general hypotheses were formulated. Concerning 1981, the hypothesis was that as party papers *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa* would strongly

favour 'their own' politicians and pay far less attention to their adversaries. They would be primarily political news channels for their mother party, and less an arena for debate.

The content analysis of the election campaign basically strengthens this hypothesis, but with some important modifications concerning news coverage. It is a historical myth that the party papers neglected all other political sources than politicians from their mother party. The party papers were not *only* party papers. Both *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa* sought to combine their editorial partisanship with the arena role, demonstratively giving some news space to their major political adversaries. However, not all political parties were invited, and those who were did not get the same treatment. Both newspapers met local competition. Their half-hearted role as a democratic arena can be interpreted as a necessary concession both to strategic market interests and to professional norms about 'balance' in news coverage.

Concerning 2005, the standard hypothesis was that the two papers, now formally party-independent, would first and foremost take their readership and market interests into consideration regardless, of their own political ideological leanings. Having abandoned their role as news channels for their former mother parties, they would try to function as an arena for different political parties, favouring the parties most influential among their own readership.

The content analysis of the government sympathies in news and commentaries partly confirms this hypothesis – but only partly. There was of course a *stronger* association between the type of newspaper (*Adresseavisen* versus *Namdalsavisa*) and the sympathies for different government alternatives in the 1981 election campaign than in 2005. However, it is also clear that both newspapers still have very different political profiles, especially in their editorials and comments. *Namdalsavisa* was a very actively engaged supporter of the red-green alternative. The political love affair between *Adresseavisen* and the Conservatives might not have been ardent in 2005 as in 1981, but still there were some warm feelings. Nor should this come as a surprise in a newspaper defined as conservative – and where the political editor (in 2005) is a former politician from the Conservatives. At the same time it was clearly much easier, considering their readership interests, for both papers to support different coalition alternatives in 2005, than it would have been to support pure one-party government alternatives.

In both papers, the news columns were undoubtedly more 'balanced' concerning political sources in the 2005 general election than in 1981. However, they were still somewhat influenced by historical loyalties. In 2005, *Namdalsavisa* could more readily combine these two potentially conflicting roles because its readership – far more than that of *Adresseavisen* – sympathized with the newspapers' favoured government alternative. It is also interesting to note that the growth of influence for the populist Progress Party did not result in any extended coverage in the news in these two papers. On its front pages, *Adresseavisen* consistently ignored one of the Conservatives' main competitors among the voting public.

Another interesting historical aspect is the development of the amount of election coverage. In *Adresseavisen,* the number of articles increased 100 per cent in 2005 compared with 1981. One reason is that this newspaper has expanded its news coverage in most areas. However, the general election in 2005 was generally treated as a bigger news event and given higher priority than 24 years previously. 'Less party politics' does not necessarily mean less weight on politics. The creation of new genres, like the voter panel, in the news coverage can also be interpreted as an attempt to make the election

more interesting to readers. *Namdalsavisa*, which is a smaller newspaper, had less election coverage, and was also more 'traditional' concerning the genres that it employed.

Two patterns seem relatively constant when campaign coverage in 1981 and 2005 is compared. One is the *gender factor* in the news. In 2005 *Adresseavisen* made a little progress towards greater representation of women among its sources, whereas *Namdalsavisa* went the other way. However, the main picture is still one of male dominance in the news. In this respect the news institution seems more conservative than the political parties themselves. Why is this so? One reason can be the systematic lack of deliberate journalistic ambitions to change old patterns. Male dominance in the news is still, even in a country where 38 per cent of the members of parliament and nearly half the government ministers are women, seen as the 'natural order' of things.

The second common pattern is the *lack of independent, investigative journalism* in the two papers, in both election campaigns. News coverage concentrated on reports of the parties' political initiatives, interviews with top candidates and reporting from political meetings and discussions. Of course, the political parties and their candidates must be given the opportunity to communicate with the public through the media. The political parties also have learned to accept the 'logic' of the news media. However, the newspapers chosen for this study proved far more important as *arenas* for the election campaigns of the largest parties, than as independent investigators that critically examined the demands, promises – and deeds – of the political parties.

Notes

1. The initiative to this study was taken by the unions of journalists and editors in the two counties of Trøndelag, who in 2006 invited me to speak about changes in political journalism at an annual media conference.
2. In 1981 the paper's name was *Namdal Arbeiderblad* (literally: 'Namdal Workers' Paper').
3. In most cases, the local branches of the Labour Party were the shareholders.
4. The party's name from 1921 to 1958 was *Bondepartiet* (The Farmers' Party); then it was changed to *Senterpartiet* (The Centre Party).
5. One such example is *Aftenposten*, a newspaper as loyal to the Conservatives in these years as *Arbeiderbladet* , the leading Labour Party paper in Oslo, was loyal to the Labour Party.
6. Source: *NOU 1992: 14*, statistics based on *Aviskatalogen*, a publication where the newspapers themselves defined their political affiliation.
7. *Verdens Gang* (*VG*) was one of the few large-circulation newspapers that in the first three decades after the Second World War did not have any party affiliation. However, both in ideological and political terms *VG* was opposed to the social democratic and socialist parties and supported the 'non-socialist alternative'.
8. The only exception is *Halden Arbeiderblad,* whose statutes still (September 2006) define it as an organ of the Norwegian Labour Party. However, this sentence has for many years been a 'sleeping paragraph'.
9. Even before the Second World War, some party papers (including the Labour press), especially when they were the only newspaper in their district, had adopted a 'catch-all' policy of seeking to report all news, regardless of party politics.
10. Whereas 'Høyres Pressebyrå' clearly indicated the party name – *Høyre* – 'Norpress' was a neutral designation.
11. *Arbeiderbladet* in Oslo became *Dagsavisen* (The Daily Newspaper), *Bergens Arbeiderblad* was renamed *Bergensavisen (BA)* and *Namdal Arbeiderblad* became *Namdalsavisa* (*NA*).
12. My translation. The text in Norwegian: *'Ideologisk føler disse aviser seg fortsatt knyttet til Høyre og gir uttrykk for det. Men utslagene i holdningen til både prinsipielle og praktiske saker i samfunnsdebatten er ikke så bastante som før.'*
13. *Den konservative presses forening*.
14. *Norsk Arbeiderpresse* AS
15. *Arbeidernes pressekontor*

16. In Trondheim the local competitors were the social democratic *Arbeider-Avisa* and the liberal *Nidaros* (only two issues per week). In the Namsos area *t*he local competitor was *Nord-Trønderen og Namdalen*, which supported both the Centre Party and the Liberals.
17. Statutes *(vedtekter)* for *Adresseavisen* ASA, § 2, last revised 10 April 1997.
18. In 1995 The Norwegian Labour Party sold its shares in *A-pressen*. In 1998 the corporation was made a public stock company (Simensen 1999: 49-51), but withdrew from the stock exchange in 2003. As of August 2006, main owners in the company were the National Federation of Trade Unions (LO) and some of its branches, the tele-communications company Telenor and the independent foundation Free Speech (*Fritt Ord*).
19. The current statutes were formulated by the annual assembly of A-pressen, 4 June 2003.
20. This is the introductory paragraph in a declaration of 'the basic view' of *Namdalsavisa* (2005).
21. The relevant pages were researched by journalists in *Adresseavisen* and *Namdalsavisa*, who were engaged to assist in the project.
22. Cramer's V is standardized and becomes 0 if there is no statistical dependency and 1 if there is a perfect association. A Cramer's V higher than 0.3 is in the social sciences normally interpreted as indicating a relatively strong association.
23. The source of all election results in this article is Statistics Norway.
24. In the county of Sør-Trøndelag, the Conservatives got 29.3 per cent and in Nord-Trøndelag 17.8 per cent of the vote. Both results were a success compared with earlier elections.
25. In *Sør-Trøndelag* county, the Labour Party got 38.7 per cent of the vote, and in Nord-Trøndelag county as much as 42.7 per cent.
26. In 1983 the government became a coalition government with Centre Party and the Christian People's Party as new members.
27. *Adresseavisen*, 12 September 1981: *'Adresseavisen har forsøkt å dekke valgkampen variert ved å gi alle seriøse partier plass til å fremheve sine synspunkter. Vårt eget politiske syn har vi fortrinnsvis hevdet på lederplass'*.
28. In *Adresseavisen* 87 per cent of the articles were categorized as news, 13 per cent as editorials and commentaries. In *Namsdalsavisa* news represented 68 per cent, while editorials comprised as much as 32 per cent of the articles.
29. In articles with more than one source, 'the main source' gives the best indication of how the newspaper has decided to frame the story. In 17 per cent of the articles in *Adresseavisen* and as much as 36 per cent of those in *NA,* no specific source was mentioned. These were generally brief news reports.
30. In most cases, the political affiliation of the sources is mentioned in the story. If not (perhaps because this was regarded as unnecessary because the politician in question was well known to the local audience), the politician's party affiliation has been confirmed through other and written sources.
31. Cramer's V is 0.364, which indicates a relatively strong correlation between the type of newspaper and the party affiliations of the main sources.
32. *Adresseavisen*, 19 August 1981.
33. *Adresseavisen*, 11 September 1981.
34. *Adresseavisen*, 12 September 1981.
35. Personal communication from Amdal to the author, 30 August 2006.
36. Cramer's V is as high as 0.557, which confirms the strong relationship between newspaper type and the political sympathies towards the government alternatives.
37. A Cramer's V as low as 0.120 confirms that there in this respect was a very weak association between newspaper type and source gender.
38. The only exception is the short-lived coalition government that included *all* national parties, in the first months after the end of the Second World War.
39. Source: Statistics Norway.
40. The political editor in *Adresseavisen*, Ingrid Skjøtskift, is a former politician within the Conservatives.
41. Cramer's V is 0.232, which indicates an association between the type of newspaper and the source's political affiliation – however, not strong.
42. 'Distrikts-Inge' ut av tinget? *NA,* 12 September 2006.
43. The small Red Election Alliance was represented by a single interview with its top candidate. He declared that as a full-time crab fisher, he had no time to participate in any election campaign. It is easy to understand that the election coverage in *Namdalsavisa* became limited.
44. *'..LO er ikke noe demokratisk organ'*, from an editorial in *Adresseavisen*, 25 August 2006.
45. Editorial in *NA*, 25 August 2006: *'Høyresida har alltid angrepet det tette forholdet mellom AP og LO. Det er imidlertid et forhold som begge parter har stor nytte av. Derfor kommer det til å fortsette, til glede både for AP og for LO's medlemmer, eller om en vil, for folk flest'*

46. A Cramer's V as low as 0.127 reminds us that the type of newspaper (conservative or social democratic) in this respect counts relatively little.

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The Gender of Journalism

The Structure and Logic of the Field in the Twentieth Century

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Abstract

The basic theme of the essay is gender and power in the field of journalism in Sweden. It is not controversial to assert that journalism, historically speaking, evolved as a male-dominated field. Despite the high level of gender quality in Sweden, however, this pattern remains the case. Drawing on Bourdieu's theories on habitus, capital and field and Toril Moi's "appropriation" of Bourdieu, the article looks at the structure of the field of journalism during three periods: the Era of the token woman (1900-1950), the Era of the critical mass (1950-1985), and the Era of feminization (1985 onwards). The field of journalism is defined at the nexus of three overarching social forces – political, economic, and professional forces and dynamics – and the gender order of the field reflects the relative weight of these forces at any given point in time. The empirical analysis of the field is centered around four main questions: (1) which positions men and women have been given access to during different time periods, (2) what forms of capital have men and women accumulated, (3) how images and perceptions on what constitutes "good" journalism have become gendered over time and which positions, media, and genres of journalism have been associated with status/prestige as well as to what extent this social status branding is gendered, and (4) to what extent the struggle in the field has been gendered and what strategies and tactics have been employed in that struggle. Inclosing, the article discusses some conclusions about the gender logic of the field of journalism. The main finding is that status, prestige and power have been associated with conceptions of masculinity and these conceptions, in turn, have been associated to the beliefs that underpin the field – the image of the journalistic "mission".

Key Words: gender and journalism, journalism history, field of journalism, Bourdieu, gender-typing, feminist analysis, Sweden

Introduction

The influence of women in journalism is one of the most central problem areas in feminist media research.[1] In international overviews, Sweden and the other Nordic countries are often held forth as pioneers on questions relating to gender equality, not least in the field of journalism. True, women made up fully half of the profession in 2005, but the feminization of journalism has hardly been achieved without a struggle.

This essay considers the issue of power and gender in Swedish journalism from a historical and feministic perspective.[2] The links between field, power and gender are a

central theme in Pierre Bourdieu's analyses of the conditions applying to women and men in society.[3] The analysis of power and gender in journalism presented here is therefore inspired by Bourdieu's theories of gender and the reproduction of social power.[4] The feminist interpretation of Bourdieu's general theories primarily draws on Toril Moi's "appropriation" of Bourdieu in the book, *What Is a Woman* (1999).[5]

As Bourdieu defines it, a social field consists of a system of competing social relations, where individuals and institutions compete for the same stakes. The actors use different strategies to acquire positions and influence. What is at stake is success, prestige, status and, ultimately, the power to decide who shall be recognized as a member of the profession and what constitutes 'good' and valuable journalism.[6]

In all fields there is an ongoing struggle for hegemony. One must have resources to attain a position – that is, have access to the kinds of capital that are valued in the field. Capital, in Bourdieu's view, is more than an economic phenomenon. On the contrary, whatever is valued and striven for in any given field may be regarded as capital, e.g., symbolic (status, prestige, legitimacy), cultural (education, savoir faire, titles, distinctions), and social (family, personal contacts). Moi observes that Bourdieu never considers social class as a field in its own right, nor does he speak of "class capital". Gender is treated in the same way: as a part of the general social field. Gender varies socially and culturally; it is a combinatory category that infiltrates and influences every other social category. In Moi's view, gender, too, is a form of symbolic capital, having different value in different fields.[7] Where femininity has negative symbolic value, a woman may compensate for it by acquiring other forms of capital: professional, cultural, economic or social. Thus, the central thesis in this chapter's feminist analysis of a field is that journalism – like all other fields – is gendered, but that the meaning and implications of gender vary between different media and over time.

The essay starts with an analysis of the *structure* of the Swedish field of journalism in a historical perspective. The development of the field through the 1900s is treated in terms of three periods: the era of the token woman 1900-1950, that of the critical mass 1950-1985, and that of feminization 1985 and since. The basis for this grouping is a historical overview of changes in the power bases in Swedish journalism. The field of journalism may be seen to occupy the intersection of three fields of forces: the political, the economic and the professional. The strength of the respective fields has waxed and waned, for which reason the power bases in journalism, too, have shifted – a factor that has been of central importance for the gender order in the field. Taking its starting point in Bourdieu and Moi, the essay addresses four central questions or themes. The first is, what places and positions have men and women, respectively, occupied in the field of journalism. The second concerns recruitment to the profession and the kinds of capital women and men have accumulated. The third question is the degree to which the definition of 'good' journalism is gendered. Which professional positions, media and genres have conferred status in the different periods, and has this status had a gender dimension? The fourth question concerns the forms the struggle between men and women in the field has taken; what strategies have proven effective? Have there been 'battles of the sexes', and if so, what were the issues involved?

Finally, conclusions about the nature of the *logic* of the journalistic field in Sweden are considered. The question of the implications and meaning of masculinity and femininity, respectively, in the field, and how status, prestige and power in journalism relate to different conceptions of gender is problematized.

The Structure

Bourgeois *Öffentlichkeit* and the arenas for opinion formation that emerged in Europe of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are closely bound up with the emergence of the modern newspaper. Bourgeois *Öffentlichkeit* was male. Just as other spheres of power in society – e.g., politics, the clergy, and science – journalism originated as a male domain, to which women were denied access.[8] The first Swedish women to engage in the newspaper business were a number of widows of master printers who took over their husbands' businesses and managed their newspapers.[9] Their access to the field was by inheritance, but their position was also founded on a specific idea about gender, namely, that widows were considered more highly developed women, "nearly" men. Consequently, widows were allowed to function as interim custodians of the trade and the skills involved.[10]

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, women had somewhat broader access to publishing and journalism, but women in newspaper journalism were still very few. The first real breakthrough for women in Swedish journalism came in the early 1900s.

The Era of the Token Woman 1900-1950

The first decades of the twentieth century were years of frenetic modernization. The women's rights movement grew strong, and women won suffrage and were able to vote in the elections of 1921. The pace of progress was rapid, especially in the field of technology. Radio was one of the icons of the 1920s that nourished a strong faith in progress and modernity. But, the expansive 1920s ended abruptly with the stock market crash in New York and the worldwide depression that followed it. The depression hit Sweden and the rest of Europe in the early 1930s and its effects cast a pall on the entire decade. Swedish historian Yvonne Hirdman describes the 1930s and 1940s in terms of the Swedish gender system as the "age of the Housewife contract". Modern social policy was designed on the presumption of 'the man of the house' as sole breadwinner, but with a public welfare system as a guarantor of families' social security.[11]

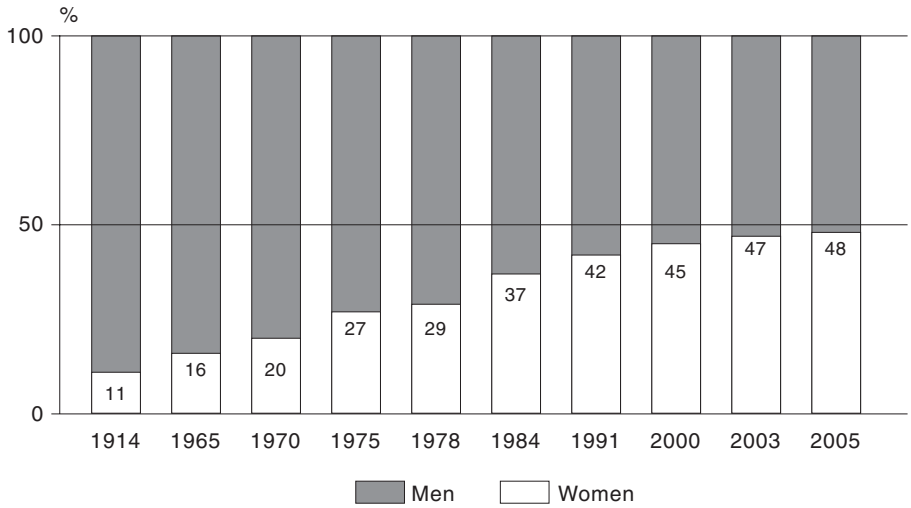
As for the media, in Sweden and the other Nordic countries the period saw the emergence of a strong, locally rooted party press. Newspapers were started with the purpose of promoting a political tendency or ideology; they served more or less as megaphones for the parties in public political discourse. Mass movements and political organizations tried to get their messages across, not only through organizational periodicals, but by founding newspapers, as well. The daily press was important, not least for the labor movement and the Social Democratic Party, but each of the parties had a paper that represented their point of view in all the major towns and cities of Sweden.

Radio assumed a different role than the daily press, and far different from radio's role in the USA, where the medium was commercial from the start. In Europe, radio was developed in the form of publicly regulated non-profit institutions that subsequently became known as "public service". In Sweden, nationally distributed Radiotjänst came on the air with a single channel in 1925.

Male dominance in the media was unchallenged in the early years of the twentieth century. In 1914, when the earliest available statistics were compiled, 11 per cent of the journalists in Stockholm newspapers were women (Figure 1). The 1910s saw the formation of "Ligan" [The League], an informal network of women journalists in Stockholm, the capital.[12] The presence of women in the provincial bourgeois press and the Social Democratic press was much weaker, with only a few per cent in each.[13] Thus, it was via

the non-socialist metropolitan press that women entered into Swedish journalism. On the new medium, radio, women's presence was considerably weaker than in the press. The first generation of managers and producers were, without exception, men. Only after years of pressuring were two women producers hired in the early 1940s. They were responsible for women's programs and children's programs, respectively.[14]

Figure 1. *The Shares of Women and Men among Swedish Journalists 1914-2005 (per cent)*



Sources: Berger 1977, p 136. In the case of 1914, the figures refer to Stockholm only. In the next-largest cities, Göteborg and Malmö, the share of women was only 4 per cent, in the provinces even less. The figures for 1965-2005 are based on membership statistics in the journalists' union, SJF (www.sjf.se).

The growth of popular magazines up to mid-century was another important platform for women in journalism. A number of magazines that addressed 'ladies' and housewives employed a good number of women writers. They carried material on fashion, housekeeping and family, as well as current events and educational non-fiction.

Positions of power in broadcasting and the press were virtually totally male-dominated. Only five women were among the 353 people who were registered as editors-in-chief in Swedish newspapers in 1925.[15] Twenty-five years later the situation was the same: of the 294 editors-in-chief in the Swedish press in 1950, only one was a woman. Most recruitment opportunities for women were instead to be found in the weekly press and ladies' magazines.[16]

Gendering and Status: New Women's Rooms in Journalism

Newspaper journalism was clearly gendered in the early years of the past century, with certain positions and areas of coverage designated for men and women, respectively. Early women journalists were well-educated and had a command of foreign languages, which recommended them for translating material from the foreign press. Sensational news from abroad – scandals, murder and other kinds of criminality – written up in bulletin form became a women's domain.[17] Other women's specialties were writing columns and serial fiction. When women's pages were introduced, women journalists supplied the content, which included items about home-making, housekeeping and child

care, but also consumer affairs and women's rights issues. The pioneers among women journalists also contributed to the development of new genres, such as the interview and reportage. Ester Blenda Nordström, member of the above-mentioned "Ligan", won renown for her Wallraff-style reportage, where she assumed various roles in order to get an insider perspective. In one case, for example, she took a job as a domestic servant in order to be able to write about servants' working and living conditions.[18] Most other areas of journalism were male-dominated, particularly the realms of business news and domestic politics, plus international affairs, which gained in importance with the Great War (1914-1918). The Arts was also a high-status and largely male-dominated domain.

Positions of power and influence were closely linked to the central opinion-leading role that newspapers were expected to play. Leading publicists were generally active members and public spokesmen for the parties with which their papers were affiliated. Thus, the power bases in the newspaper business were controlled by the owners, which in turn had strong ties to the various political parties.[19]

Programming in public service radio differed from newspaper content. Programs were imbued with a didactic ideal of public enlightenment. A distinctly bourgeois lifestyle and rhetoric characterized the programs. Learned lectures were an important genre in early radio days, and the lecturers were generally men.[20] Only during the second world war were female voices allowed on the air on a regular basis. Female lecturers were recruited with a view to engaging women in the program of austerity that the war entailed. Thus, broadcasting established a feminine *Öffentlichkeit* on the air waves. There had, however, been programs for housewives from the start. Programs stressed women's essential role as homemakers; important themes were the professionalization of homemaking, and civic education of women.

Capital and Recruitment: Class Position as Ticket to the Public Sphere

Positions of power in the radio organization were reserved for a male elite richly endowed with cultural capital. The male editors-in-chief of bourgeois newspapers had similar social and cultural assets; they were from upper-class backgrounds and/or were highly educated, often with postgraduate degrees, including doctorates and professorships. The editors of Social Democratic newspapers followed different routes into newspaper journalism. Many came from working-class families, they were recruited from the union movement and working-class political organizations, and they seldom had a secondary school diploma or higher education. The majority was recruited from posts as functionaries in the Social Democratic Party or one of the unions.[21]

The male editors-in-chief of popular magazines were of more varied backgrounds. A study of the social backgrounds of editors-in-chief of Sweden's leading magazines in 1925 and 1950 found that several were 'self-made men', having worked their way up from very modest circumstances. The women editors-in-chief tended, by contrast, to come from middle-and upper-class backgrounds and possessed considerable social and cultural capital.[22]

The recruitment of journalists followed similar patterns. Radio hired a group of "hand-picked voice-tested gentlemen".[23] Cultural capital in the form of *Bildung* (education, a good all-round orientation, a cultivated manner) was an important selection criteria, as were the voice tests. The male voice was the norm in Swedish radio. Women's voices were not considered appropriate for broadcasting, at least not for reading news. When Swedish radio in 1938 for the first time carried news read by a woman, it provoked a storm of protest. Critics thought it inappropriate for a woman to speak of

war and other gruesome subjects. A couple of decades would pass before the experiment with a woman newsreader was repeated.[24]

As for newspapers, recruitment patterns and the social bases on which recruitment took place differed radically between Social Democratic and bourgeois papers. In most cases journalists favored the political views that the newspapers represented. Professional training generally took the form of work as a volunteer for little or no pay. No academic training in journalism existed, and the profession did not confer much in the way of social status.[25]

Personal contacts – social capital – were also important for those seeking employment as journalists, in radio and print media alike.[26] The first women journalists in the newspaper industry had a lot of social capital, and other forms of capital, as well. Those who first took their places in the public sphere were women of the upper-middle class; they were the daughters of fathers who favored the idea of women having a profession; they had influential friends, and, frequently, they married successful colleagues. They were at once examples and proponents of 'the new woman', a new feminine ideal that conceived of women as independent, equals to, and friends with men.[27] Many of these pioneers were also active in the women's movement. Their class position and all the capital that came with it were important in their gaining access to the public sphere.

The Ground Battle: Segregation and Peaceful Co-existence in the Field

Early women journalists had no access to the profession's organizations. When founded in 1874, Publicistklubben, a professional society for all those working in Swedish media, owners, publishers, editors or journalists, was strictly a gentlemen's club. The journalists' union, SJF, was also heavily male-dominated, with only two women – both active in the Stockholm press – among its founding members in 1901.[28] Instead, a number of networks of women journalists, both formal and informal, were established in the first half of the 1900s.[29]

In the early days of broadcasting the prevailing idea of gender conceived of women and men essentially as mutually dependent opposites. This idea of harmonious complementarity made room for women, but only in positions and areas that were considered "feminine". The gender segregation in news desks was virtually total. The prevailing peaceful co-existence should not be taken to mean that male dominance, both among staff and on the airwaves, did not provoke friction. "The Radio Committee of the Swedish Women's Associations", uniting fourteen leading women's organizations, protested against the paucity of women lecturers on the radio. Their protests succeeded, and the number of lectures given by women tripled between 1932 and 1936.[30]

Newspapers came under fire, as well. "Ligan" produced a spectacular film criticizing the differences in salary and working conditions offered men and women, respectively. Although the great majority of women journalists had to work with low-prestige "ladies' pages", a number of women 'soloists' managed to make a name for themselves and become ace reporters for their papers.[31]

Political and economic factors combined to enable a growing number of women to enter newspaper journalism. First, the branch expanded, and as the number of positions increased it became easier for women to find work in the field. Secondly, increasing commercialization gave rise to a demand for content that appealed to female readers. The women's movement had been established, women had won the right to vote and access to several different social fields, and "the new woman" represented a new ideal of the independent, self-reliant woman.[32]

The fact that women were few at media news desks seems to have meant that they were both marginalized and privileged. The pioneer women in newspapers, radio and later, in the 1950s, television were often what Rosabeth Moss Kanter in her classic study, *Men and Women of the Corporation,* refers to as "tokens".[33] Their "uniqueness" gave them notoriety and even special appreciation, while it also meant that they remained outsiders. Early women in journalism did not feel hindered or actively discouraged; on the contrary, many say they experienced no such problems, but found their male colleagues both friendly and helpful.[34] One explanation for the lack of open rivalry might be that men and women did not compete for the same stakes. Women's entry into the field of journalism took place on terms set by men, a fundamental premise being that the women would complement rather than compete with men's knowledge and competencies. The areas valued highest by the party press, political and opinion-leading journalism, remained unchallenged male domains.

The Era of the Critical Mass 1950-1985

The first decades after the Second World War have often been described as the era when the Swedish welfare state was constructed. Even if the idea was much older, the concept of the nation as a "home" has come to epitomize the postwar phenomenon of the welfare state.[35] Consumerism was born, homes were modernized, faith in the future budded and bloomed. Alongside Switzerland – another country that had escaped the ravages of war – Sweden attained the highest standard of living in the world.

Women's roles in Swedish society changed. The 1950s was the decade of the housewife, but because Sweden experienced a labor shortage there was a growing demand for women on the labor market. Major campaigns were launched to attract women to working life outside the home, and the share of women in the labor force climbed rapidly from 15.6 per cent in 1950 to 36.7 percent in 1965.[36] This was facilitated by the public sector's assuming more and more responsibility for childcare.

The welfare state meant an expansion of the public sector, particularly in the 1960s. Traditional patterns of family life began to be questioned, and the institution of matrimony, sexual mores and women's part in working life were all subjected to critical debate. Two breadwinners in the household began to be the norm. In the 1970s joint income tax returns were abolished, maternity leave was replaced by a parental leave that could be shared by mother and father, and women's right to abortion was introduced.

The media landscape underwent fundamental changes, as well. Many provincial newspapers ceased publication in the 1940s and 1950s, often leaving only one paper in the community. These local monopolies meant that the remaining papers had to broaden their appeal and cross party lines so as to serve the entire community. In the course of the 1950s, public service radio expanded its services to three channels, and an entirely new medium, television, came on the air in 1956. Television was incorporated into Radiotjänst, the same public service broadcasting institution as radio. The tabloid press had its heyday in the postwar decades, which precipitated a rapid expansion of the field of journalism. In 1954 the journalists' union, SJF, had 2,500 members, in 1976 somewhat more than 9,000, and in 1985 about 12,000. Newspapers continued to dominate the field. A study of the profession of journalism in 1969 found that 67 per cent of all Swedish journalists worked for newspapers (44 per cent in provincial papers, and 23 per cent in metropolitan papers); only 5 per cent worked in radio and television.[37]

Even early in the century there were signs of a trend toward professionalization of journalism. Journalists were expected to be better educated and have specialized knowledge, and professional organizations – The Press Council (Publicistklubben) and the union, SJF – were founded. But it was not until the 1950s that professionalism gained real momentum. An important indicator of this trend was the founding of academic training in journalism. The closure of many newspapers and professionalization combined to reduce the degree of partisan bias in news selection and analysis. The thriving tabloid press introduced a more informal style, with emphasis on popular features like sports news, photojournalism and sensational news. Metropolitan newspapers' news values became the norm for radio, as well, which became less paternalistic. Entertaining content like sports events, drama and 'human interest' news stories occupied more airtime, and didactic programming less. The overall homogenization of news values and norms may also be seen as an effect of professionalization, inasmuch as professions are based on shared professional norms and ethical codes.[38]

As professionalism in program production grew, the norms and ideals of journalism gradually changed. By the end of the 1960s, consensus was no longer the basis for good journalism. Both journalists' conceptions of their readers and audiences and their thinking about the purpose of journalism had undergone a radical transformation, especially in broadcasting. Journalism now should be activist, it should arouse, disclose, advocate. Journalism was a mission, a duty to act as a third estate, to scrutinize holders of power and to expose iniquities, injustice and misdoing in high places.[39]

Together, the fading of newspapers' party stripes, professionalization and the expansion of public service broadcasting meant the emergence of new power bases in the field. These were not directly linked to formal positions, but were rather based on symbolic capital that individual journalists garnered through notoriety and professional recognition, where the criteria of quality tended to be defined by colleagues in the field.

The so-called watchdog function of journalism was considered most important, and investigative journalism was accorded special status. The Watergate scandal of 1972-1973 in the USA was the result of relentless investigative journalism on the part of two young journalists, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, at *Washington Post.* The reporters earned cult status within the field and inspired journalists worldwide. In 1973, a Swedish political magazine, *Folket i Bild/Kulturfront,* in a similar fashion disclosed the secret registration of union activists' political sympathies by the Social Democratic Party. The disclosure caused a major scandal, known as the IB Affair, and the affair epitomized the new role of journalism. The two Swedish journalists were jailed for "espionage", but for one of them, Jan Guillou, it was the start of a career that would make him one of Sweden's most renowned publicists. The Shooting Iron – the fearless journalist who stands up to power figures, dares to interrupt them in interviews to point out inconsistencies, etc., in search of the truth – became a metaphor for the new journalism.

The number of women in journalism grew, but the ratio of women did not improve as quickly. Like radio before it, television in early days was heavily male-dominated. The only departments where women were well-represented were children's programs and programs relating to 'home and family'.[40] The first, and for several years sole, woman in the television news department was hired in 1960; Swedish radio hired their first female reporter in 1964. In 1965, 16 per cent of Sweden's journalists were women (Figure 1); in 1978 the figure had risen to 29 per cent. Meanwhile, the share of women journalists was much greater in magazine publishing than in other media. Male dominance continued in Swedish television even after the second non-commercial public

service channel started up in 1969. Women made up nearly half (43 per cent) of those who applied for positions as journalists or producers with the second channel; only 21 per cent of those hired were women. [41]

Despite an increasing number of women in the field, there were still very few women in management positions in journalistic media. As late as 1975 there was not a single woman in an executive position in the entire Stockholm morning press.[42] Nor was the situation much better in broadcasting; the only women in leading positions were to be found in the departments for children's programming and 'home and family'.[43] Male dominance was total among news desk chiefs on all channels through the 1970s.

Gendering and Status: 'Soft News' was Women's Domain

In the 1950s, the idea of women's and men's complementarity in journalism still prevailed.[44] This was achieved through a gender-based differentiation of positions and areas of coverage. Homemaking, parenting, and relationships became women's domains, but they had low status. In the areas that conveyed high status – politics, economics and world affairs – men predominated. By the mid-1960s gender segregation had chinks in it, but hierarchies in the newsroom were still distinctly gendered. In television all the desk chiefs were men, and the more prestigious, domestic news and foreign news desks, were entirely male. More women journalists had joined the organizations, but they were confined to the rank and file of all-round reporters.[45]

In the 1970s the environment, social issues (the schools, health and geriatric care) and consumer affairs moved up on the agenda, in the press as well as in radio and television. As these subjects emerged as typical fields of expertise for women journalists, they were commonly bunched up and labeled "soft news". In newspaper journalism the most male-dominated desks were sports, business, world affairs and domestic politics – termed "hard news" – where men wrote nine out of ten articles. Social issues and consumer affairs were the only areas where women were in the majority.[46] This pattern of gender-typing was also noted in radio and television.[47]

Recruitment and Capital: Professionalization no Boon to Women

The professionalization of Swedish journalism changed the patterns of recruitment to the profession, which also influenced women's opportunities in the field. Journalists' political leanings were no longer necessarily a merit in employers' eyes. The cultural capital that professional training represented was a new asset that opened doors to aspiring journalists; while social capital in the form of one's personal network and professional capital (journalistic experience) were important for advancement in one's career. At top levels, too, experience in the field and editorial leadership grew in importance. In radio and, later, television, recruitment paths began to resemble those in the newspaper industry. In the era when radio had a more official role and tone, most of the staff was male graduates in the Arts and residents of metropolitan Stockholm; in the course of the 1960s recruits to Swedish radio and television were primarily college-educated newspaper journalists with a background in the social sciences.

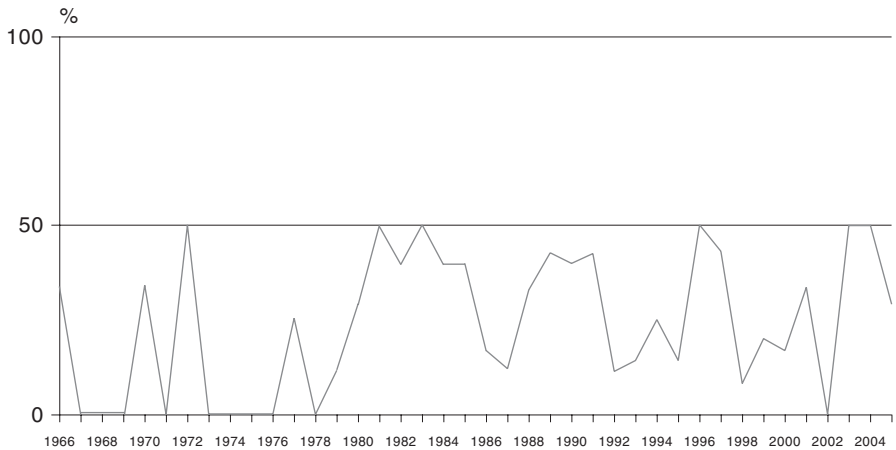
At the outset professionalization worked to the disadvantage of some women in the field. For example, in early days of television newsreaders were women who doubled as program announcers. When management decided in the 1960s that the news bulletins should be read by "professional journalists", the announcers lost a portion of their jobs.[48] Nor was the introduction of professional training in journalism immediately an

asset for aspiring women. The first schools of journalism received applications from many women, but accepted very few.[49]

The number of women in journalism grew, and professional training in Journalism became an increasingly important 'ticket' to the field. A survey of Swedish journalists in 1969 found that women journalists tended to have more formal education than their male colleagues.[50] As for social background, most journalists were recruited from the middle class; 40 per cent had at least a secondary school diploma, and half of these had some college education, as well. Forty per cent had some form of training in Journalism.

Awards and prizes based on colleagues' recognition may also be seen as a sign of professionalism. The Great Journalist Prize was instituted in 1966 by Bonniers, the largest media group in Sweden, to recognize outstanding achievement in journalism, and the Golden Pen award was first awarded by the Press Council [Publicistklubben] on the occasion of the society's centennial in 1975.

Figure 2. *The Share of Great Journalist Prizes awarded to Women 1966-2005 (per cent)*[51]



Source: www.storajournalistpriset.se

At the start, the Great Journalist Prize had only two classes: newspaper journalism and other periodicals. Subsequently, radio, television and new media were added. The first year one woman and two men were awarded. Four years were to pass before another women was awarded the prize. All in all, women made up 25 per cent of the prizewinners between 1966 and 2005, but the numbers varied greatly from year to year (Figure 2). Until 1980, women laureates were exceptions to the rule. For the most part during the professionalization phase, men accorded recognition to men.

The Ground Battle: Open Conflicts Between Men and Women in the Field

Like most of Western Europe, Sweden experienced a wave of egalitarian radicalism in the 1970s. Unionism and issues relating to working life came to the fore, with stronger demands for more democratic decision-making processes, flatter (or no) hierarchies, revolving and collective leadership, etc.[52] These overall trends influenced journalism, as well. Gender equality was linked to democracy in the workplace and working conditions. Open conflicts between women and men became more frequent. Women's dissatisfaction gave rise to a number of campaigns on the part of women journalists at

metropolitan newspapers like *Aftonbladet, GT* and *Dagens Nyheter*. Protests were raised within public service radio and television, as well. The issues concerned working conditions, the climate at the workplace (sexist jargon, alcohol, gender discrimination and low salaries for women) as well as male privilege regarding the definition of professionalism.[53] Women now made up a critical mass in many media companies; there were enough of them to have an impact.[54]

Together, these factors meant that the debate began to have concrete effects. One consequence was the start of several Women's desks.[55] The journalists' union, SJF, also got involved in the gender equality debate.[56] In 1978 the first gender-based statistics was introduced.[57] These showed that women now made up 29 per cent of the field in Sweden, and that women were now in the majority at the country's two academic Schools of Journalism. The tabloid press was a male bastion (80 per cent); the magazine branch was the only branch in which women were in the majority (53 per cent). Only 9 per cent of managers and editors were women.

The radicalism of the era and the emerging national political debate on gender equality made it possible for the first time to discuss issues of power imbalances and newsroom segregation in a serious fashion. Feminine journalism was launched as a critical alternative that would focus on the realities of women's day-to-day lives and the so-called private sphere, put events into broader context, consult women as news sources, stress how events and processes relate to and impact on women's lives, and allow subjectivity, empathy and emotions a place in journalistic work. The object of criticism were male ideals of professionalism, i.e., the norms of a focus on conflict, factuality, objectivity, dispassionate perspective, and neutrality, and the status accorded male elites and political and economic reporting.

Feminine journalism was formulated in the intersection of the ideas current in the international women's movement ("Private is political") and a critical attitude to mass media, voiced mainly by young, academically trained journalists. Influenced by the radicalism of the day, they were critical of the so-called Establishment and conventional journalistic norms. A number of radio and television programs sought to combine class and gender perspectives.

Some of the main objectives of the work relating to gender equality were (1) to raise the status of the world of women by raising the status of what was regarded as women's or "soft" subjects and (2) to see to it that women got access to positions and areas of coverage that traditionally had been male preserves. In the early 1970s, a number of specialized reporters, women having education, housing and social issues as their specialties, were hired. Many younger women journalists were also eager to work to make more room in the media for the subjects and issues that were important to women. Social issues were therefore more in focus, while they also became an area in which women predominated.[58] Thus, the predominance of women around so-called "soft news" was a consequence of both gendered hiring policies and women journalists' own preferences. The power struggle in the field revolved less around *whether* the purpose of journalism should be to critically scrutinize society and train spotlights on social ills than around *which areas* and phenomena deserved scrutiny.

The Era of Feminization, 1985 –

The issue of gender equality came to fruition on a broad front in the 1980s. Characteristic of Sweden and the other Nordic countries was the incorporation of feminism into

the established political parties, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as "state feminism".[59] Women's representation in politics expanded, and the first gender-balanced Cabinet (having a 50:50 ratio of men to women) in Swedish history took office in 1994. Until the 1990s, most gender equality efforts aimed at eliminating outright discrimination; in the new millennium gender mainstreaming, i.e., the principle that gender equality perspectives should imbue all sectors of Swedish society, has become the rule.

These advances notwithstanding, the debate on gender equality has not subsided. A feministic political party, Feminist Initiative, was formed in 2005 and issues regarding women's situation on the labor market, domestic violence and the sexualization of the public sphere were given significant attention on the public agenda.

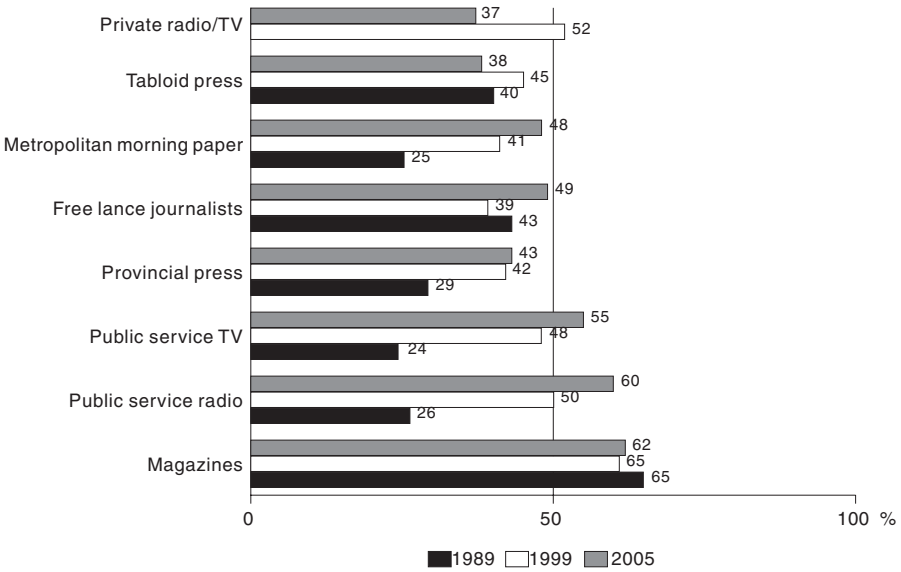
Starting in the early 1980s, the logic of the market has won ground in Swedish mass media, due in part to increasing competition and internationalization of media markets. The media landscape changed, and the broadcasting sector mushroomed when the monopolies of public service radio and television were broken, and commercial, advertising-financed channels came on the air in the late 1980s. Concentration of ownership in the newspaper industry continued, chains were formed or extended.

These changes in the media landscape were reflected in journalism, where particularly the broadcast media expanded. In 2005, the journalists' union had 18,000 members. Of these, just over 30 per cent worked in the provincial press, and just over 25 per cent in radio and television. The public service channels dominated the latter category, but one-third of the journalists in broadcasting were employed in the new, privately owned commercial broadcasting sector.[60]

The share of women journalists continued to grow (Figure 1). The biggest wave of entries occurred in the 1980s, during which period women's numbers rose from 30 per cent of all journalists at the start of the decade to 42 per cent at its end. In 2005, 48 per cent of Swedish journalists were women. Studies of the profession in 1989, 1999 and 2005 show variations in the proportions of women among different media sectors (Figure 3)[61] As earlier, women dominated in magazine publishing in 2005, but they formed a majority of the journalists in public service broadcasting, as well. The lowest frequencies of women journalists were noted in commercial radio and television news departments, and in the tabloid press. These latter branches were also the only ones that showed a decline in the shares of women journalists between 1999 and 2005. The figures suggest that there is still a great deal of turbulence in terms of gender in the journalistic field.

The recruitment of women to executive positions in the media was in no way commensurate with the number of women in journalism. In 1989, only 15 per cent of executive positions were held by women.[62] Despite several important breakthroughs in the 1990s, male dominance in the top echelons of the media industry was still strong in 2001: three out of four were men. [63] The highest share of women in top positions was noted in magazine publishing (59 per cent), followed by public service radio and television (44 per cent). Newspapers, the specialized press and commercial radio all had 15 per cent women in top positions. All in all, 89 per cent of CEOs were men, and two out of three heads of desks/departments were men. Thus, women had much less access to formal positions of power in the media, and when they did have such access, it was primarily a question of editorial power. Economic power remained in male hands.

Figure 3. *Share of Women among Swedish Journalists by Media Sector in 1989, 1999 and 2005 (per cent)*



Note: The numbers of respondents varied between 29 (magazines press) and 286 (provincial press) in 1989, between 53 (private radio/TV) and 349 (provincial press) in 1999, and between 39 (tabloid press) and 286 (provincial press) in 2005. There were no private radio/TV channels in Sweden in 1989.

Recruitment and Capital: Women with Capital of their Own

A study of the profession in 1989 found that the social base had hardly changed since 1969.[64] The level of formal education was higher, but journalism was still a solidly middle-class occupation. As previously, the women in the branch possessed more capital on average than their male colleagues. They tended to have more formal education and came from a higher socio-economic background. The pattern persisted into the 2000s.[65] However, among those in top positions there were no differences between the sexes with respect to levels of education or class background.[66]

Gendering and Status: Investigative Journalism = Status = Male

The gender-typing of areas of coverage and subject matter subsided under the 1980s and 1990s. A study of news desks at Swedish public service television (SVT1 and SVT2), found no such gender differences in the period 1985-1995.[67] Toward the end of the 1990s, however, the degree of gender-typing in news journalism increased again, on public service television and the commercial rival, TV4, alike. The backlash was unmistakable. Gender-typing was still apparent in Swedish newspapers in 2000, as well. Sports journalism, business and the economy, crime and op-ed journalism (editorials, commentary) were still male-dominated, whereas women predominated in areas of coverage like social issues, consumer affairs and homemaking/family.[68]

The increasing differentiation of the media system had an impact on the content of journalism, not only in Sweden and the Nordic countries, but also in most of the western world. Tabloidization and popularization are terms frequently used to characterize the new style of journalism, whose principal features include intimization, where the boundaries between public and private become fluid, personification, with a focus on

individuals' emotions and experiences; and greater emphasis on relevance to daily life and readers' and audiences' needs and interests in news selection. Thus, the new journalism shares many of the traits that characterized what once was termed feminine' journalism. This is one of the reasons why feminist journalism research speaks of a "feminization" of journalism in the 1990s.[69]

Meanwhile, investigative journalism still had the most prestige in the field. In surveys of Swedish journalists in 1999 and 2005, that asked how journalists defined their role or purpose, "critical scrutiny of holders of power" took top priority among all categories of journalists, women and men alike. [70] In the 1990s, investigative journalism was recognized as a specific genre, and special news desks were formed for the purpose. In 1991, a prize for investigative reporting, "The Golden Spade", was instituted.[71] In the first decade of its existence the prize was awarded mostly to men; among laureates and journalists recognized with 'honorable mention' only one in four was a woman.

The news desks that received the greatest number of Golden Spades between 1991 and 2001 were those behind two programs carried on public service television: *Striptease* and *Uppdrag: Granskning* [Mission: Investigate]. In interviews the journalists did not shy away from asking provocative questions or even badgering their quarry. Especially one of the more high-profile journalists, Jan Josefsson, made a name for himself as one of the country's most controversial reporters. Highly partisan reportage and controversial methods, coupled with a persuasive narrative style made him one of the most debated – and revered – figures in Swedish journalism. Swedish journalists gave Josefsson, alongside the above-mentioned Jan Guillou, top ranking. A question put to all journalists in 2000 inquired about role models; Josefsson and Guillou were mentioned most frequently. Investigative journalism was synonymous with high status and masculinity.

The Ground Battle: The Logic of the Market Leads to More Gendering

Commercialization implied a shift in the power base in the field of journalism, from the professional (editorial) to the economic field of power. Recent generations of media owners have assumed the role of CEO rather than publisher or editor.[72] Those who wield economic power have advanced their positions.

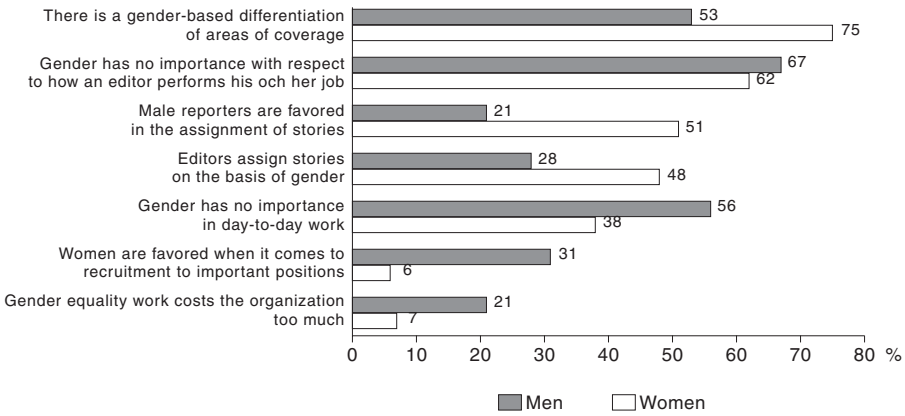
What effect did the growing influence of commercial considerations have on the gender order? In the literature on the consequences of commercialization the question has been pivotal. Does the market favor women? [73] There is no simple answer. On the one hand, "feminine" realms of experience, perspectives and interests have received more attention; women journalists have more leeway; the boundaries between the private and public spheres are transcended. That is to say, women's public space expanded. On the other hand, women's progress in journalism was harshly criticized by dominant men in the field, who complained that experienced and respected (male) journalists were being replaced by (female) "bimbo reporters". This coupling of poor quality and women can be seen as a typical example of symbolic violence, which buttresses male hegemony.[74] What is more, increased market sensitivity has entailed a major increase in sports news, economic news and crime news – traditionally male subjects and interests. The content of economic news reporting and the new business publications were characterized by a massive predominance of men.[75] Men also predominated among the CEOs and boards of directors of media companies, as they did in the media facing keener competition (with the exception of popular magazines, where women predominated). Men's predominance was least in the non-commercial public service broadcasting com-

panies. In the case of the tabloids, one may even speak of a 'babe effect' in the 1990s, that is, a sexualization where "young women are exposed to the male gaze as objects of pleasure and desire".[76] The logic of the market also appears to increase the extent of gender-typing of news desks, with the risk that once again women may be relegated to subjects, genres and desks having lower status.[77]

Not the market, but rather the fruits of the political movement for gender equality that were harvested in the 1980s and 1990s should be credited with having strengthened the position of women in the field of journalism. The political demands for gender equality in the organization as well as in program output were particularly strong in public service broadcasting, but the journalists' union, too, worked toward the same goals. Thus, the political field of power exerted influence on the media by virtue of the issue of gender equality, but it represents political influence of a quite different nature from that exerted in the era of the party press. No media organization could ignore the issue of gender equality, but the tenor of the debate naturally varied between organizations. A study of the news desks within public service television, SVT1 and SVT2, shows that gender equality is something all journalists have to take a stand on, men and women alike. This is not to say that they will have the same views or that all men or all women think the same way.[78] Instead, interviews with somewhat over 40 journalists and editors, men and women, at SVT news desks in 2001-2003 reveal a strong ambivalence. On the one hand, both men and women stress the importance of a gender-neutral professional identity. On the other hand, a majority expresses the view that gender does indeed affect both news values and one's work as a journalist.

The ambivalence is confirmed by the findings of the Survey of journalists for 2005 (Figure 4). When Swedish journalists were asked to express their positions on a number of statements, the answers were often contradictory. Many women journalists, for example, feel that women are at a disadvantage when stories are assigned, but say at the same time that gender has no importance with respect to how a desk chief performs his or her job.

Figure 4. *Men and Women Journalists' Views on the Importance of Gender in Journalism. Shares Agreeing Totally or to Some Extent with Various Propositions (per cent)*



Source: The Survey of journalists 2005. The alternatives where: Totally agree, Agree to some extent, Disagree, Strongly disagree.

Men and women also express different views. Women tend to emphasize the importance of gender in journalism and feel that women are systematically disadvantaged. Fewer men consider gender important in journalism, and every third male respondent even feels that women actually are favored in recruitment to important positions. At the same time, there is widespread support for the work toward gender equality even among men: only 21 per cent of the men and 7 per cent of the women feel that too many resources are put into the effort.

Generally speaking, in the 2000s there seems to be a widespread self-image within the field that a good measure of gender equality prevails in Swedish media companies. The fact that nearly half of the profession is women is often put forward as evidence to this effect. One cannot assume, however, that a greater number of women in the field necessarily influences news values or increases the presence of women in news content, in Sweden or anywhere else. In the Swedish press, radio and television the shares of women as news sources or interviewees has rested consistently at fewer than 30 per cent, despite an increase in the number of women journalists. Assessments as to whether, and in what ways, journalism has changed by the presence of more women journalists in the field vary. Research findings are contradictory; some studies have found clear-cut differences, others none whatsoever. Swedish journalists are agreed that the greater number of women in the profession has influenced journalism in three important ways: it has broadened the pool of experience on news desks, introduced new perspectives ('slants') in news coverage, and expanded the selection of stories covered.[79]

The Logic

Any attempt to describe the main features of a multifaceted and complex historical process runs the risk of oversimplification. The diversity, the exceptions, the contradictions and ambiguities tend to be pared away when overall conclusions are drawn. Despite the risk, I shall in the following try to draw some overall conclusions about the gender logic of the field of journalism over the course of the past century.

The Gender Logic of the Field

The first observation to be made from this historical review is that women have occupied ever-greater space in the journalistic field. The share of women among journalists grew from a few percent at the start of the century to half 100 years later. When it comes to positions of power, however, the trend is not as good. At the start of the 2000s, only in public service radio and television and magazine publishing was women's representation in positions of power greater than 40 per cent.

The question of gender has imbued the field from the start and has put women and men in different places and positions. Thus, the field is characterized by hierarchies and segregation based on gender, but the ways in which gendering operates differ between media and genres as well as over time. What is regarded as masculine and feminine, respectively, has varied. Investigative journalism was mainly undertaken by women journalists in the early 1900s; seventy years later and since, it is a male domain. Coverage of social issues was not gendered at the start of the century, but became women's work in the 1970s. In the early years of the century international news was a women's domain, but a only few decades later, when the area gained status and the focus shifted to first-hand reporting, men took over.

Despite these and other changes over time, a basic pattern – a gender logic – persists. Ideas about the gender of journalism mainly grow out of a dichotomic view similar to the one that feminists have pointed out regarding the concept of the public sphere: bourgeois *Öffentlichkeit* and the enlightened rationality of modern journalism are masculine; the conditions under which we live our everyday lives, the home, and the intimate sphere are not part of it, and are therefore left to women.[80]

Gender Logic in Journalism

Masculine	**Feminine**
The public sphere/ elites	Private/intimate sphere/everyday life
Male sources and perspectives	Female sources and perspectives
Distance/neutrality/objectivity	Intimacy/empathy/subjectivity
Autonomy ("professional" criteria)	Oriented toward the reader's (etc.) needs and interests

In the past century, journalism that relates to the public sphere, that treats objects of masculine interest, that consults (male) holders of power as sources, that describes reality with dispassionate perspective or 'distance', and which observes a professional ethic is generally associated with masculinity. Journalism that relates to the private sphere, that tries to serve the reader/listener/viewer's needs and interests, that consults women as sources, and seeks to get close to the people or phenomena at hand, and where empathy, personal feelings and reflections have a place has been considered feminine. Just as the relationship between the male public sphere and the female private sphere is asymmetrical, the journalistic logic, too, presumes differences in power and status, with masculine journalism generally being ascribed greater symbolic value.

Relative Subordination

Inequality and relations of dominance and subordination characterize all social fields. Both power and leadership are generally associated with masculinity. The realm of the media is no exception. Women's representation in top positions has not increased in anywhere near the same proportion as the numbers of women in journalism as such. The positions of power that women have attained are mainly to be found in magazine publishing and public service broadcasting, both radio and television. The latter is an area where the political discourse on gender equality has exerted the greatest influence, and the former is the portion of the magazine branch that addresses women as its primary target group.

The places and positions in the journalistic field that women and men have gained access to have varied over time; still, women's place in the journalistic production field has in the 1900s generally been what Bourdieu characterized as "the position of the dominated". Like other cultural production fields, journalism is characterized by contradictions between "commercial" and "non-commercial" and between those who emphasize producers and their field and those who attach more importance to the receivers, to sales and success as measured in circulation and ratings.[81] The difference in status between 'high' and 'low' culture, between elitist and popular, intellectual and commercial, between specialization and mass production is reflected in the different status of "masculine" and "feminine" in journalism. In the media field these distinctions imbue entire media, genres and forms of expression: distinctions, for example, between social reportage and gossip journalism, general reporters and specialized ones, business magazines and women's weeklies. This is not to say that *all* male-dominated genres are ac-

corded high status. Sports and crime news, too, are male-dominated genres, but their value and quality have been seriously questioned. Status in the field also has an obvious class dimension, and the intersection of class and gender in relation to power in the journalistic field has been clearly apparent throughout the twentieth century.

Power and Resistance: Women's Strategies

Viewing journalism as a field in Bourdieu's sense means that we look upon it as a locus of an ongoing contest and struggle, where there are winners and losers. One may, like Toril Moi, wonder whether this approach is not in itself essentially ideological, based as it is on a presumption of "human self-interest as the prime mover of social relations".[82] Moi concludes, however, that although this ideological position may not be consistent with feminist ideals of social interaction, "feminists have never been reluctant to analyze current gender-arrangements in terms of interests and benefits". The power perspective also makes it possible to study counterstrategies to power. The gender order in journalism has been discussed and debated: gender-based differences in salary and working conditions have come under fire, and male dominance has been questioned.

From a bourdieuian point of view women's relative subordination in the journalistic field is hardly surprising inasmuch as Bourdieu presumes that women – all other factors equal – in all fields and at all levels inevitably occupy disadvantaged positions.[83] Being a woman in a male-dominated field makes it necessary to develop specific strategies for taking possession of positions in the field.[84] The conclusion we may draw from our historical review is that three principal strategies have been developed in the course of the century: strategies of *competition, specialization* and *expansion.*

In the competitive strategy women vie with men for the same stakes. To succeed in these contests, women journalists have needed to acquire *more* of the kinds of capital that are valued in the field – education, contacts, personal networks, etc. – than most men have. They have had to become, as Liesbet van Zoonen and Margareta Melin-Higgins put it, "one of the boys".[85] As Kristina Lundgren views it, this is exactly how the leading pioneer women in journalism went about it, although the capital they brought to bear varied: aristocratic heritage, experience of living abroad, knowledge of languages, and/or academic education.[86] Throughout the 1900s the women in journalism in Sweden have had generally higher social rank and more education than their male colleagues, and when, in the professionalization phase, professional training in Journalism became valued, women – more than men – acquired it.

The specialization strategy means using one's specifically feminine capital to the full by specializing in subjects and genres that particularly appeal to women, striving, if you will, to become "one of the girls". Magazine publishing and women's supplements in newspapers are prime examples of openings for this strategy. Kristina Lundgren describes how women journalists in the 1930s gained positions in a segment of "op-ed journalism" as columnists who could interpret the then-current debate on the new roles of women in Swedish society.

The third strategy, expansion, means finding openings in the journalistic space that allow the development of new genres and styles in areas before they have become gendered. The activist investigative journalism undertaken by Ester Blenda Nordström in the 1910s may be seen as such an expansion. Investigative reportage was not yet gender-coded as being masculine. Another example is women's expansion into social issues, a women's domain in Sweden of the 1970s. Up until then, the area had no particular gender.

The Male Power Bases in Journalism

Despite the advances made by women in journalism through the 1900s, journalism as a field has remained male-dominated. What does this imply? Unfortunately, there is little research about *men as men* and on the implications and meaning of masculinity in the journalistic field. An analysis of the logic of the field suggests, however, that masculinity (in its historically specific forms) and power (the bases of which have varied over time) are closely related to the ideas about what constitutes good journalism that have prevailed in different periods.[87] Every field produces and reproduces a fundamental belief in the values, achievements and rewards that the game gives rise to – i.e., the fundaments of the field's existence.[88]

In the journalistic field the ongoing struggle is about how to define the fundamental purposes and values of the profession. Throughout the past century this sense of purpose has been based on the unique social functions of the media: from megaphone in the era of the party press (the era of 'the token woman' 1900-1950), to the third estate in the professionalization phase (the era of 'the critical mass' 1950-1985), to ombudsman for the public at large during the era of feminization (1985-). The ideological underpinnings throughout these phases has been the conviction that journalism is not a product that is produced, sold and consumed on the market, but rather a specific mission that is indispensable to society and the proper function of democracy.

By way of conclusion, I should like to offer some reflections on how status, prestige and power in journalism have related to different conceptions of masculinity, which in turn are related to this assumption, on which the entire field rests.

The journalistic field occupies the intersection of political, economic and professional fields of forces. The relative influence of the three fields has varied across the periods described here, but men throughout the century have dominated positions of power in journalism. As the power bases within journalism have shifted, the prevailing conceptions of masculinity that have borne up the positions have changed, as well. In the heyday of the party press 'good newspaper journalism' was defined on the basis of partisan interests and the overall function of serving as a megaphone for principal interest groups in Swedish society. The male publicist of this era was a bearer of this ideal. Editors-in-chief for the largest and most influential newspapers were dominant opinion leaders; their power resided dually in party politics and journalism. The ideals that prevailed in radio broadcasting were somewhat different: public service broadcasting at this time resembled a branch of the civil service and was imbued with a mission to edify the general public. Program policies were blatantly paternalistic. Common to both broadcasting and the press was a strong linkage to modernity, rationalism and education.

The fading influence of the party press, professionalization and the expansion of public service media resulted in the emergence of new power bases in the journalistic field, bases that were in part independent of traditional positions of power. The role of watchdog with its implicit critical stance vis-à-vis holders of power grew to be considered the most important role of the profession, and investigative and muckraking reportage conferred prestige. Critical, investigative journalism was a male domain, but the definition of masculinity that underlay it was radically different from that of the era of the party press. The prevailing sense of purpose and criteria of excellence were linked to other values: courage, fearlessness, determination and individualism were the ideal.

Commercialization of the media shifted the power bases in the journalistic field. The enhancement of economic power opened the door to a masculinity of a kind previously

associated with holders of power in the realms of business and finance. The charismatic media manager represented a new habitus and new values: executive ability, efficiency, drive, vigor and focus. One might venture to conclude that by the gender logic of the field, the purpose of journalism is linked to masculinity, but that "masculinity" has been defined differently over time.

The relative strength of the different fields of forces is also part of the reason why the gender order has changed in the journalistic field. When the power bases shift, other kinds of capital become important and new strategies are required to win the struggle for hegemony. At the same time, one cannot say that one or the other field of forces has definitely favored or disadvantaged women journalists. Women journalists and editors are needed to reach female readers, listeners and viewers. On the other hand, women have also ended up in places having less status: media and genres that are grouped around the commercial pole of the media status field.

Nor has professionalization necessarily favored women. On the contrary, the first measures taken in the professionalization process – journalism training, for example – favored men at women's expense. In the case of professional recognition, the criteria of professionalism have systematically disadvantaged women. Meanwhile, formal training in Journalism, with regulated admission, has in more recent years allowed many women to enter the field. Training in Journalism is an important capital asset for female top media executives

The political field of forces has set criteria for far-reaching social representativeness with regard to both personnel and the perspectives from which journalists describe reality. The political gender equality discourse, very central in Swedish politics these past decades, has provided persuasive arguments for better representation of women in the media. Issues and perspectives that media previously ignored have received coverage, and female news sources are heard and seen in interviews, articles and broadcast news items. At the same time, ideas about what constitutes "feminine journalism" have given rise to expectations that may cause editors to 'type-cast' women when it comes to assigning stories so that they automatically are asked to cover stories about education and health care. Such gender-typing contributes in turn to reinstate men as the norm and define feminine subjects and women as the "other". Men are seldom challenged to "make a difference" in journalism, something that women have been expected to do throughout the past century in order to merit a legitimate place in the public sphere.

Notes

1. See for example, Gertrude Robinson: *Gender, Journalism and Equity: Canadian, U.S. and European Perspectives,* Hampton Press, 2005; Marian de Bruin & Karen Ross (eds.): *Gender and Newsroom Cultures*, Hampton Press, 2004; Cynthia Carter, Gill Branston & Stuart Allen (eds.): *News, Gender and Power,* Routledge, 1998; Liesbet van Zoonen: One of the girls? The changing gender of journalism. In Cynthia Carter, Gill Branston & Stuart Allen (eds.): *News, Gender and Power,* Routledge, 1998.
2. Portions of this article have been published in Swedish in *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift* 2003:2. As for my own research, I have used mainly three sources. First, the project "Women in the Newsroom Culture", funded by the Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR). Secondly, the project, "The Media Elite: Journalism as a gendered social field", which forms part of an interdisciplinary research program, "Gender and the Reproduction of Elites", funded by the Bicentennary Fund of the National Bank of Sweden. Third, the periodic so-called "Surveys of Swedish Journalists" conducted by the Department of journalism and mass communication (JMG) at Göteborg university. The survey population consists of 2000 journalists who are members of the Swedish journalists' union

and professional society, SJF, and work for Swedish or foreign-owned media operating in Sweden. The response rate in the surveys used was 64 per cent in 1989, 57 per cent in 1999, and 59 per cent in 2005. The respondents were representative of the population in terms of demographic factors, including gender.

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4. Pierre Bourdieu: *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology,* Stanford University Press, 1990; Pierre Bourdieu: *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* Polity Press, 1993.
5. Toril Moi, *What Is a Woman and Other Essays,* Oxford, 1999, Ch. 3, Appropriating Bourdieu, p 264ff.
6. Pierre Bourdieu: *On Television,* New Press, 1998. See also Jan Fredrik Hovden: Etter alla journalistikkens reglar ... Skisse till ein studie av det norske journalistiske feltet [Following the rules ... An outline of a study of the Norwegian field of journalism]. In Martin Eide (ed.) *Til dagsorden! Journalistikk, makt og demokrati.* Makt- og demokratiutredningen, Gyldendal, 2001.
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8. Margareta Berger: *Pennskaft: Kvinnliga journalists i svensk dagspress 1690-1975* [Women in Swedish newspaper journalism 1690-1975], Norstedts,1977, p 21ff.
9. Berger, 1977, p 21ff.
10. Anita Göransson: Mening, makt och materialitet: Ett försök att förena realistiska och poststrukturalistiska positioner [Meaning, power and materiality: an attempt to integrate realistic and poststructuralist positions]. *Häften för kritiska studier 31*: 4, 1998, p 14. See also Christina Blad: Kvinna med eget företag – från 1700-talets mitt till 1800-talets slut [Women with their own businesses – from the mid eighteenth through the nineteenth century]. In Ingrid Hagman (ed.): *Mot halva makten.* SOU 1997:113, p 127-142.
11. Yvonne Hirdman: Genussystemet [The gender system]. In *Demokrati och makt i Sverige* SOU 1990:44, p 86.
12. Margareta Stål: *Signaturen Bansai: Ester Blenda Nordström, pennskaft och reporter i det tidiga 1900-talet* [Behind the pseudonym Bansai: Ester Blenda Nordström, pioneer reporter]. Göteborgs universitet, JMG, 2002, p 81ff.
13. Berger 1977, p 48ff; Stål 2002, p 94.
14. Kerstin Berggren-Axberger, Barbro Svinhufvud. Lars Åke Engblom: *Radio- och TV-folket* [Who's who in radio and television]. Stockholm: Stiftelsen Etermedierna i Sverige, 1998, p 41.
15. The data are reported in Nya Lundstedt, a project under the auspices of the National Library of Sweden that has produced a data base of all the newspapers published in Sweden between 1900 and 1994 (cf. www.kb.se/nl). It should be noted that the identification of editors has its gaps, many being indicated only by their initials. Some of these entries may be women.
16. Gunilla Lundström, Per Rydén & Elisabeth Sandlund: Det moderna Sveriges spegel (1897-1945) [Mirror of modern Sweden (1897-1945)]. In Karl Erik Gustafsson & Per Rydén (eds.) *Den svenska pressens historia IV.* Stockholm: Ekerlid, 2001, pp 204ff, 243.
17. Berger, 1977, p 45; Stål, 2002, p 94ff.
18. Stål, 2002, p 245ff.
19. Staffan Sundin: Ägarstrategier i svensk dagpress under 1900-talet [Owner strategies in the Swedish daily press in the twentieth century]. In Ulla Carlsson & Karl Erik Gustafsson (eds.): *Den moderna dagspressen 350 år.* Göteborg: Nordicom-Sweden, 1996, p 79.
20. Karin Nordberg: Bakslag och barrikader: Historia och kön i medieforskningen [Reversals and the barricades: History and gender in media research]. In Ulla Carlsson (ed.): *Nordisk forskning om kvinnor and medier.* Nordicom-Sverige nr 3, 1993, p 49. See also Karin Nordberg: Sitter vi fortfarande med flätorna i brevlådan? Klassfrågan i *Radio Ellen* och *Freja* [Issues of class in two feminist radio series of the 1990s]. In Göran Fredriksson, Inger Humlesjö, Birgitta Jordansson & Kerstin Norlander (eds.): *Könsmaktens förvandlingar.* Göteborg: Skrifter från Institutionen för arbetsvetenskap; 2, Göteborgs Universitet, 2003, p 130; Karin Nordberg: *Folkhemmets röst; Radion som folkbildare* [Radio as agent of adult education]. Eslöv: Symposion, 1998, p 319ff.
21. Stig Hadenius, Jan-Olof Seveborg & Lennart Weibull: *Partipress: Socialdemokratisk press och presspolitik 1910-1920* [The party press: Social Democratic newspapers and press policy 1910-1920]. Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1968, p 131ff.
22. Jenny Wiik: *På plats i medieeliten: En studie av historiska förändringar av veckopresseliten ur ett genusperspektiv* [Elite circles: Applying a gender perspective to changes over time in the elite of magazine publishing in a gender perspective]. Göteborg, JMG, Göteborgs universitet, 2002.

23. Engblom, 1998, p 7.
24. Monika Djerf-Pierre & Lennart Weibull: *Spegla, granska, tolka: Aktualitetsjournalistik i svensk radio och TV under 1900-talet* [Mirror, watch-dog and interpreter: News and current affairs journalism in Swedish radio and television in the 20th Century]. Prisma, 2001, p 56.
25. Lars-Åke Engblom, Sverker Johnsson & Karl Erik Gustafsson: Bland andra massmedier (efter 1945) [Among other mass media (after 1945)]. In Karl Erik Gustafsson & Per Rydén (eds.): *Den svenska pressens historia IV.* Stockholm: Ekerlid, 2002, p. 57.
26. Lundström et al., 2001, p 100.
27. Stål, 2002, p 101ff; Nordberg, 1998, p 324f.
28. The two were Maria Cederschiöld and Anna Wallin, both at *Aftonbladet* (Stockholm). Agneta Lindblom Hulthén: Hur det hela började [How it all started]. In *Journalisternas bok 1901-2001.* Stockholm: Svenska Journalistförbundet, 2001, p 15.
29. Nordberg, 1993, p 47; Berger, 1977, p 45ff; Stål, 2002, 81ff.
30. Stål, 2002, p 101ff: Nordberg, 1998, p 324f.
31. Examples are Barbro Alving "Bang" at *Dagens Nyheter,* Maud Adlercreutz "Maud" at *Aftonbladet,* and Astrid Ljungström "Attis" at *Svenska Dagbladet.* Kristina Lundgren: *Solister i mångfalden* [Soloists in the choir]. Stockholm: JMK, Stockholms universitet, 2002, p 380.
32. Lundgren, 2002, p 378ff.
33. Rosabeth Moss Kanter: *Men and Women of the Corporation.* Basic Books, 1977/1993, p 206ff.
34. Lundgren, 2002, p 78ff.
35. See, for example, Fredrika Lagergren: *På andra sidan välfärdsstaten: en studie i politiska idéers betydelse* [The other side of the welfare state: a study in the importance of political ideas]. Eslöv: Symposion, 1999.
36. Hirdman, 1990, p 87.
37. The study is summarized in Lennart Weibull (ed.): *Svenska journalister: ett grupporträtt*, Tidens Förlag, 1991, p 18-20, 48. The study, one of the first studies of the members of the profession, was done by Lars Furhoff and Lennart Nilsson and reported in *Journalistkåren i Sverige* [The profession of journalism in Sweden], 1970.
38. Lars-Åke Engblom: Varför professionalisering? [Why professionalization?]. In *Journalisternas bok 1901-2001.* Stockholm: SJF, 2001; Olof Petersson, Monika Djerf-Pierre, Jesper Strömbäck & Lennart Weibull: *Mediernas integritet* [The integrity of the media]. Demokratirådets rapport 2005. Stockholm, SNS Förlag, 2005.
39. Monika Djerf-Pierre: Squaring the Circle: News in Public Service and Commercial Television in Sweden 1956-1999. *Journalism Studies 1*: 2, 2000; Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001, p 360f.
40. Madeleine Kleberg: *Skötsam kvinnosyn: Hem- och familjereportage i svensk TV åren 1956-1969* [Home and family programming on Swedish television 1956-1969]. Stockholm: JMK, Stockholms universitet, 1999.
41. Engblom, 1998, p 134ff.
42. Berger, 1977:285ff. Nya Lundstedt's catalogue of editors for 1975 lists very few women. They were editors-in-chief at small provincial papers.
43. Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2001.
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45. Monika Djerf-Pierre & Monica Löfgren-Nilsson. Gender-typing in the Newsroom: the Feminization of Swedish Television News Production, 1958-2000. In Marjan de Bruin & Karen Ross (eds): *Identities at Work: Gender and Professionalism in Media Organizations.* Hampton Press, 2004.
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47. Djerf-Pierre & Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004; Monica Löfgren-Nilsson: Könsmärkning i SVTs nyheter 1958-2003 [Gender-typing in public service television news 1958-2003]. *Nordicom-Information 2004:4,* p 39-50.
48. Djerf-Pierre & Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004.
49. Berger, 1977, p 23ff.
50. Weibull, 1991, p 19.
51. Source: Bonnier's list of laureates at www.storajournalistpriset.se. (Processed data)
52. Berger, 1977, p 313; Djerf-Pierre & Weibull 2001, p 216ff; Ulla B. Abrahamsson: Are we nearing the top of the hill? Notes from a decade of working toward equality in Swedish Broadcasting. Paper presented at a conference of IAMCR in Bled, Yugoslavia, August 1990.

53. *Dokumentet – och vad hände sedan?* [Dokumentet – and what happened then?]. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1979; Birgitta Ney: Kvinnor i journalistiken [Women in journalism]. In *Journalisternas bok 1901-2001.* Stockholm: Svenska Journalistförbundet, 2001.
54. See Moss-Kanter, 1977, p 206ff. See also Drude Dahlerup: From a small to a large minority: Women in Scandinavian politics. *Scandinavian Political Studies 11*:4, 1988.
55. *Dokumentet,* 1979, p 259; Nordberg, 2003, p 131.
56. *Journalisternas bok 1901-2001* [The book of journalists, 1901-2001], Stockholm: Svenska Journalistförbundet, 2001, p 409.
57. Ney, 2001, p 249.
58. This was true in both the daily press and broadcast media. Cf. Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 1991, p 295ff.
59. See Helga Hernes: *Welfare State and Woman Power: Essays in State Feminism.* Oslo: Institutt for samfunnsforskning, Rapport; 92:11, 1992.
60. Journalistundersökningarna [Surveys of Swedish journalists], Göteborgs universitet, www.sjf.se.
61. The numbers of respondents varied between 29 (magazines, specialized press) and 286 (provincial press) in 1989, between 53 (private radio/TV) and 349 (provincial press) in 1999, and between 39 (tabloid press) and 286 (provincial press) in 2005. There were no private radio/TV channels in Sweden in 1989.
62. *Demokrati och makt i Sverige* [Democracy and power in Sweden]. Stockholm, Maktutredningen, SOU 1990:44, p 331.
63. Monika Djerf-Pierre: Lonely at the top: Gendered Media Elites in Sweden. *Journalism 6*:3, 2005, p 265-290.
64. Journalistundersökningarna [Surveys of Swedish journalists], Göteborgs universitet. The 1989 survey is reported in Weibull, 1991, p 29.
65. Journalistundersökningarna [Surveys of Swedish journalists]. Göteborgs universitet.
66. Djerf-Pierre, 2005; Djerf-Pierre, 2006.
67. Djerf-Pierre & Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004; Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004.
68. Journalistundersökningarna [Surveys of Swedish journalists]. Göteborgs universitet, and the research project, Kvinnorna i journalistkulturen [Women in the newsroom culture].
69. van Zoonen, 1998.
70. See Djerf-Pierre & Weibull, 2002, p 346ff.
71. Gunnar Nygren: *Belönad granskning* [Award-winning scrutiny]. Sundsvall: Demokratiinstitutet, Studier i kommunikation; 3, 2003.
72. Sundin, 1996:79.
73. See, for example, van Zoonen, 1998; Vibeke Larsen: Ut af kjøkkenet – in på social och förbrukerstoff? Om kjönnspreget arbeitsdeling i redaksjonene [Out of the kitchen – and into social and consumer affairs? On a gendered division of labor in journalism]. In Elisabeth Eide (ed.): *Narrespeil: kjønn sex og medier.* Kristiansand:Høyskoleforlaget, 2000; Monica Löfgren-Nilsson: Att göra skillnad: kvinnors villkor och betydelse i svensk nyhetsjournalistik [Making a difference: the importance and conditions of women in Swedish news journalism]. In Gunilla Jarlbro & Anna Näslund Dahlgren (eds.): *Kvinnor och medier. Rapport från ett seminarium.* Stockholm: Stiftelsen Institut för mediestudier, 2000.
74. Anna Edin & Kristina Widestedt: *Bimbon och den manliga medielogiken* [The bimbo and male media logic]. Stockholm: Stiftelsen Institut för mediestudier, Rapport; 3, 2001, p 32f.
75. A study of the business magazines, *Dagens Industri* and *Finanstidningen* in 2000 found a total absence of women in the magazines' articles. The distribution of men and women among the writers was not much better: 19 per cent women in *Dagens Industri,* and 9 per cent in *Finanstidningen.* Ulrika Frick & Jenny Stenros: *Dagens industri* vs. *Finanstidningen,* JMG, Göteborgs universitet, 2000, p. 50.
76. Eilisabeth Eide: Mansbastioner med iboende treghet [The immanent inertia of male bastions]. In Martin Eide (ed.): *Til dagsorden! Journalistikk, makt og demokrati,* Gyldendal, 2001, p 341f.
77. Löfgren-Nilsson 2004.
78. Data from the project, "Women in the newsroom culture".
79. *Journalistundersökningen 2005* [Survey of Swedish journalists], 2005.
80. Nancy Fraser: Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text 25/26,* 1990; van Zoonen, 1998; Sanna Ojajärvi: From talking heads to walking bodies: Challenging the masculinity of the news. In Ullamaija Kivikuru (ed.) *Contesting the frontiers: Media and dimensions of identity.* Göteborg: Nordicom, 2001. See also the following studies for discussions of "masculine" and "feminine" in journalism: Pamela Creedon (ed.): *Women in Mass Communication: Challenging gender values.* London: Sage, 1989; Elisabeth Eide: Kvinnebildet i norsk dagspresse ved ingangen til 1990-tallet [Images of women in the Norwegian press in the early 1990s]. Oslo: Norsk Journalisthøgskole, 1991; Larsen, 2000; Löfgren-Nilsson, 2000; Margareta Melin-

Higgins: Female educators and male craftsmen: The professional ideal among Swedish journalists, *Nordicom Review 1995:1,* Margareta Melin-Higgins: Bloodhounds or bloodbitches: Female ideals and Catch 22. In *Kjønn i medie.* Oslo: Likestillingsrådets publikasjonsserie 1996:6, 1996; Henrika Zilliacus-Tikkanen: Möjligheter och hinder för en kvinnlig journalistik [Prospects and stumbling blocks for feminine journalism]. In Ulla Carlsson (ed.) *Nordisk forskning om kvinnor och medier.* Göteborg: Nordicom, 1993; Henrika Zilliacus-Tikkanen: Journalistikens essens i ett könsperspektiv [The essence of journalism in a gender perspective], Rundradions jämställdshets-kommitté, 1997; van Zoonen, 1998.

81. Bourdieu, 1993, p 168f. See also Donald Broady: Enligt konstens alla regler [Playing by the rules]. *Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift 1994:*1, 1994.
82. Moi 1999, p. 290.
83. Bourdieu, 2001.
84. Moi, 1999, passim. See also Margareta Melin-Higgins: Fly eller fäkta: Kvinnlig journalisters överlevnadstaktiker [Flee or stand one's ground: The survival tactics of women journalists]. *Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift 2003:*2, 2003, p 53-68; Melin-Higgins, 2004.
85. van Zoonen, 1998; Melin-Higgins, 2003, 2004.
86. Lundgren, 2002, pp 380 ff.
87. For a discussion of male power bases see Göransson, 1998.
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Changing Sports, Changing Media

Mass Appeal, the Sports/Media Complex and TV Sports Rights

KNUT HELLAND

Abstract

Popular sport is attractive. And mediated sport has a mass appeal. Furthermore, the attraction value of sports is increasingly important for the mutual commercialization and development of both sports and the media. This chapter presents an historical analysis of the symbiosis between sports and the media, and seeks to unravel the dynamics in this relationship. Based on this examination, a more recent case on TV sports rights is also analysed. The Norwegian TV rights deal on football from 2005 shows how such rights have the potential to severely threaten long established publicist ideals.

Key Words: the sports/media complex, broadcasting history, TV sports rights, sports journalism, publicist ideals

Introduction: "But from where?"[1]

In 1968, former goal keeper for the Norwegian national soccer team, Kjell Kaspersen, published the book *Hot Shot*[2]. One of his arguments was that a professional Norwegian football league was utterly inconceivable. Moreover, he claimed it was implausible because the system lacked the money to support such an idea:

> To keep a squad in the professional league, one would have to procure money to pay wages for at least 25 players. And one would have to pay good money to get these lads to give up their day-jobs. It's no use going into the financial details of such a venture – it just won't do any good. In my opinion professional football in Norway is a utopian idea. We are simply too few in this country to fill the stadiums week after week. Moreover, money to keep such a venture going would have to come from outside. *But from where?* (Kaspersen 1968: 117, my emphasis)

This question can now be easily answered: The clubs did not need to fill the stadiums week after week. Instead, the necessary economic resources came from remote sources and on top of match day revenues – from a modern sports/media complex that developed in Norway and the rest of Europe during the 1970s and 1980s, and which achieved its current structure during the 1990s.

Sports and press became mass phenomena during the 19th century, and the two spheres have developed in parallel ever since. As such, there has always existed a mutual relationship between the two. Moreover, today's modern sports/media complex is

the result of new technology and social developments. This system was first and foremost established by way of television's function as a conveyor of exposure and exhibition. In addition, the commercialisation of television and the growing competition for audiences in a new media market played an important role.

The commercialisation of sports and broadcasting has transpired in parallel in Norway as well as in the rest of the world. As such, this process of commercialisation has been a collective transformation. However, despite the many effects of this process on the sports and media fields, the mutuality of this development has been inadequately analysed. As such, the media aspect has been neglected in sports research, and the sports aspect has been neglected in media research. Media research has rather considered sports too popular and officious to be the object of appropriate research (Dahlén & Helland 2002; Boyle 2006). This has happened despite the fact that sports play a central role in the media supply; despite the fact that sports rights are a major factor in the "reformatting" of the broadcasting structure in Norway and elsewhere; and despite the fact that principal publicist ideals are challenged by the commercial struggle for sports rights.

Today, the appeal of sports is so significant that it fuels the changes taking place within central social institutions such as broadcasting and journalism. The great value of sports in fact helps shape media structures and practices – in the same manner as media realities facilitate the reformation of sports themselves. The current changes in sports broadcasting are about to alter the very structure of broadcasting media, as well as its traditional social position.

In addition, sports rights in themselves influence sports news coverage. As such, the constraining nature of sports rights serves to frame what should ideally be independent sports coverage. Sports journalism thereby helps to increase the appeal of sports on television – breaking sports into a new variety of broadcasting formats. This situation conflicts with the professional ideals of news reporting. Sports coverage in the sports/media complex is often used for self-promotion, which in turn helps to increase the value of the product, i.e. the sports rights.

This contribution will focus on the appeal of sports coverage in a historical context. It was in Britain that the relations between sports and the media were first developed. These relations, and how they were later replicated in a Norwegian and Scandinavian context, is used to further analyse the development of sports/media relations. The contribution will further more demonstrate how the dynamics of the sports/media complex in many ways remain unchanged in the historical sense – but also how these dynamics have been dramatically enhanced. The main argument is that because of its substantial attraction value, sports coverage today has great consequences both in terms of media structure and media content.

The recent contract between the Norwegian Football Association and TV 2/Canal Digital concerning the "football product" is used as a case on how sports rights have created new alliances and new structures in the broadcasting field. The agreement is also used to demonstrate how established publicist ideals are dramatically challenged by the broadcaster's and the purveyor of rights' mutual interest in promoting "the football product".

Sports Appeal and the Media

The relationship between sports and the media has been the origins of concepts such as the "sports/media complex" (Jhally 1989), the "media/sport production complex" (Maguire 1993), the "media sport cultural complex" (Rowe 1999), and the "sport-media

nexus" (Boyles & Haynes 2000). These notions seem to be inspired by the concept known as the "military-industrial complex" – a terminology used by the former U.S. President Eisenhower in 1960. He wanted to denote a pattern of relations thought to exist between high-ranking industrialists concerned with the manufacture of military technology, and military advisors concerned with making themselves useful to the government.

In analysing this sports/media complex, it is useful to employ the concepts of symbiosis and parasitism. These concepts originate from ancient Greece. "Symbiosis" describes a cohabitation of two different individual entities in which both benefit. Should only one of the individuals benefit from the relationship, it is called parasitism. Sports are a business – so is the mass media. Sports are social institutions – as are news and mass media. There is a historical and symbiotic match between sports- and media institutions. According to David Rowe (1999: 32), both institutions are becoming mutually dependent: "It is little wonder that the relationship between sport and the media (especially in television) is commonly described as the happiest of marriages".

This symbiosis is evident when we look at how the appeal of sports has made it television's most important trait in the competition for viewers. Why? The very foundation of the sports/media complex is the universal appeal of sports. This is a fact that has had different effects in different media at different times. Sports as an attraction have contributed to the development of new media markets and to the use of new media technology. Today, fans can receive sms-updates every time their favourite team scores. Technologically speaking, this is a new phenomenon. However, the social communicative role of the mobile phone harkens back to the late 1800s. In those days, English teams brought pigeons to their away-games. This way, patrons of the team's home pub were updated by pigeon mail – first the names of the starting line-up, then the half-time result, and finally the final score (Murray 1994:30).

Early Relations between Football and the Media in Britain

A specific and symbolic expression of the symbiotic relationship between football and the press in Victorian England transpired in 1863. This year the rotary press with its "endless paper rolls" was introduced. The circulation increased significantly. In the year 1800 the largest circulation in Great Britain was 5 000; in 1850 it was 50 000; and in 1900 it was 750 000. Concurrent with the increase in circulation, there was a decrease in costs (Høyer 1995: 69ff). As such, the newspaper market conditions were dramatically changed, and wider circulations could be produced and distributed to a mass audience. The introduction of the rotary press meant newspapers could fully benefit from its potential as a mass medium in a mass market: The press could now address a mass audience that were literate, and had money and increased leisure time.

In the same year and in the same city as the rotary press was introduced – in London – the Football Association was established. This had an immense importance for football as mass entertainment. The situation at that time was that teams were playing by different sets of rules. As such, the main role of the Association was to standardise the game. A letter to the editor printed in *The Times* in 1863 demonstrates how local rules limited the expansion of football as a game:

> I am myself an Ethonian, and the game of football as played by us differs essentially in most respects from that played at Westminster, Rugby, Harrow and most other London clubs. Now, this difference prevents matches being made or played

> between either school or club; and furthermore, prevents a player from gaining the credit of playing well anywhere but among his own associates. (Quoted from Tischler 1981: 24)

Through a standardisation of the game, football's potential as mass spectator sport came to its right. Football became a national game, and cup and league arrangements – also for national teams – could be established and further developed.[3] Football as game was professionalised from the mid-1880s, and it quickly developed into a new type of mass entertainment. The standardisation of football, the national expansion and its popularity, gave the game its appeal. Attendance at the English cup finals demonstrates this development: 2000 in 1872; 17 000 in 1888; 69 000 in 1897; and 110 000 in 1901 (Helland 2003: 29). Football had become mass entertainment.

Hence, as the press developed into a mass medium, football simultaneously became mass entertainment in Britain. It was evident as early as 1880 that football sold newspapers. As such, newspapers as well as advertisers reacted accordingly (Murray 1994: 30). Popular interest during the late 19th century was extensive, and information about the matches was welcomed in pubs across the country. Many pubs kept score of the games on boards displayed for all to see. This informative service was now taken over by the press:

> Saturday evening 'specials', often in coloured paper, brought the afternoon's scores to the public in the shortest possible time. Speed meant sales, and before the telephone took over for telegrams and pigeons used to carry the scores. (Murray 1994: 30)

As sports sections started taking up more and more space in newspapers, football started occupying more and more space in the sports sections (Rowe 1999). Football developed into a spectator sport and a media sport at the same time. According to Murray (1994: 29), "Football could now be added to alcohol and religion as one of man's great comforters: in Glasgow the more fanatical could enjoy all three at the same time."

So, how can this "original symbiosis" between sports and media be explained? In order to answer this question we must, according to Rowe (1999: 13), look at the great changes that have transformed the lives of a large portion of the world's population: "the rise of capitalism and the industrialism in general and the advent of mass consumption and the commodification of leisure time in particular." It is this relationship that even today "configures" the association between sports and the media.

Sports Attraction and "New Media" in Norway

As was the case in Great Britain, the relationship between sports and the media in Norway was established during the course of the 1800s. Nonetheless, the real expansion of football's popularity only occurred around the turn of the century. Winter sports were still the dominant sport in Norway at the end of the 19th century. However, a particularly interesting case establishing the symbiosis between sports and media in Norway took place in 1920. The specific appeal of sports forestalled the potential of the radio as social medium, as Norwegian speed skater Oscar Mathisen met the American skater Bobby McLean at Frogner Stadium in Kristiania[4]. This was five years before the launch of public radio in Norway.

Norway had only gained independence from Sweden 15 years earlier, and Mathisen was Norway's first great sports hero. He won the battle with McLean – conquering the American in the 500, 1 500 and 10 000 meter races. More importantly from a media perspective, this weekend in February 1920 substantially anticipated the radio as mass medium. The stadium was already sold out – yet more people wanted to follow Mathisen's battle against McLean. Former (sports) journalist and film maker Arne Skouen (1996:52) describes how a crowd in the city centre of Norway's capitol was immediately informed about the ongoing events:

> The solution became the first technical transmission from one place to another – a genius solution, yet unknown in Scandinavia. I witnessed this event with my father, outside Tostrupgården. I was six and a half years old. On the third floor, a man was perched on a window sill with his fur coat on, because it was very cold. He had a phone to his ear while taking notes on a pad. He then dropped the phone, grabbed a large megaphone and yelled though it with his equally large voice. The square below him was packed with people, and it was equally packed at Eidsvoll's Square and all the way down to Parliament Street.

Technically speaking, this was not the transmission of radio waves. However, the combination of telephone, a large voice and an acoustic megaphone yelling informed – almost "live" – messages to a mass audience concerning an event they were not themselves witnessing. The event forestalled the radio as social medium.

Today, the carrier pigeons are redundant, and truly committed fans may receive sms-messages with information about developments in their team's current match on their mobile phones. The most appealing sporting events are transmitted live on radio, television, mobile phone and through the Internet.

Sports, Appeal and TV Exposure

Sports programming was a significant feature when television was introduced to the general audience. In 1936, certain parts of the Summer Olympics could be seen on television in about 30 public areas in Berlin. In June 1937 approximately 2000 Londoners could watch a tennis match transmitted from Wimbledon, and in 1938, the first international football fixture – between England and Scotland – was aired on British television (Reimer 2002: 26). However, television technology was a limited resource at the time, and broadcasting was defined more as a medium for information than for entertainment. Furthermore, sports in general – and football in particular – was still a spectator sport whose economic revenue was based on stadium attendance. As such, football organisations in Britain as well as in Scandinavia were reluctant to allow for the live broadcasting of their matches. The British television channels BBC and Independent Television (ITV) had been in direct competition with each other since 1954. Nevertheless, exclusive rights to sports events were contested only to a limited extent. According to Murray (1994: 73), BBC and ITV in those days had an informal gentlemen's agreement when it came to the live broadcasting of football games.

During the 1970s and 1980s however, a new and modern broadcasting industry developed that was based on audience appeal *and* the exposure of commercial messages. This was the case both in Norway, Great Britain and other Western European countries. Television development through the 1970s and 1980s went through two stages, of which the first included the introduction of sponsorship into sports broadcasting. As it were,

in Britain sponsorships had been connected with the sport since its early days in Britain, "...with manufacturers' signs on stands and stand roofs. Makers' names on balls, advertisements in the press, club programme and year books, players selling the names to this or that newspaper column or commercial product" (Murray 1994: 275). But television had yet to prove its real potential for sponsorship and brand exposure.

During the 1970s and 1980s the football sponsorship market developed rapidly. Umbro's production of the Liverpool Football Club uniforms is a case in point. Umbro had supplied Liverpool with uniforms since 1933. However, the Umbro logo did not make its appearance on the Liverpool shirt until 1971. Three years later, in 1974, the Football Association allowed teams to wear the logos of their various other sponsors. However, it was only in 1983 that the collective pressures from sponsors and television channels – as well as the broadcasting agreements' potential for greater earnings – persuaded English clubs to transmit matches live (Whannel 1992:80). Television thus became a channel for the direct presentation of the football league and commercial advertising.

The Trinity of Football, Sponsorship and Broadcasting

Developments in Norway and in Scandinavia as a whole transpired in parallel to that of the British situation. In 1971, the Norwegian Football Association (NFF) allowed provisional advertising on the back of shirts. At the time, the only live broadcast football match in Norway was the cup final. Because the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (the NRK) had strict rules against advertising on television, the NRK and the NFF agreed that players should not wear shirts with advertising during the cup finals. This rule was however resisted within the clubs, who were keen not to alienate this potentially steady source of income. During the General Assembly in 1971, the clubs decided they would not comply with the NRK's demands. The NRK did broadcast the cup finals both in 1971 and 1972; however in 1979 the public service channel again decided not to transmit the cup final if the sponsorship logos were not removed from players' uniforms. At the same time, the NRK appealed to the Football Association and to the cup finalists to do everything in their power to ensure the match would be broadcast. Consequently, the cup finalist sponsors agreed to drop the shirt logos. As such, the sponsors would rather the match be broadcast without their exposure than have the teams play with advertisement on their shirts and not be broadcast. The NRK's demands and principles had thus prevailed.

The victory was however short-lived. The following year, the NRK's fight against shirt logos was lost. The NRK and the Football Association signed a new broadcasting agreement in 1980, and the NRK had to yield on the issue of shirt advertisement (Reinertsen 2001: 50ff). With this resignation, the trinity of football, sponsorship and broadcasting was decisively established in Norway.

The so-called "tippekamp" – English League matches aired live on Swedish, Danish and Norwegian television – were also essential in the establishment of this trinity. When English football began its live broadcasting during the Norwegian winter season of 1969, Scandinavian businesses soon saw the potential for commercial exposure. Accordingly, commercial industry began to purchase advertising space in the televised matches from English football clubs. As a counter-measure, the NRK refrained from announcing their scheduled matches until a day or two beforehand. This was clearly a strategy in a conflict in which football arenas were transformed into show grounds for

commercial exposure. In a portrait of two Norwegian football players the situation is described in the following way:

> At the time, the broadcasting of English football matches was surrounded with secrecy and mystique so that Danish chocolate producers, breweries and other manufacturers would not have time to put up their advertisements before the match started. [...] At the time, the broadcasting of advertisement was illegal, so newspapers had desk journalists manually erasing logos from the players' shirts before printing them (Fænn & Myklebust 1999: 68).

Commercialisation of Television and the Competition for TV Sports Rights

While the first stage of the modernisation of the sports/media complex transformed television into a channel for commercial exposure, the second stage established a new competitive marketplace and principles of competition between television channels. Indications of this change became evident with the launch of the Astra satellite in February 1989, and the inauguration of British satellite television the same year. Subsequently, when BSkyB ventured into football that year, it created a situation in which ITV and the BBC were forced into individual rivalry. For the clubs themselves, as well as the football organisations, BSkyB's arrival on the scene was most welcome. According to Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes (2004: 28f), BSkyB's involvement entailed a new set of economic, technological and cultural circumstances that had a critical impact on the relationship between sports and broadcasting.

A similar situation occurred in the Norwegian broadcasting landscape. Since 1960, the NRK had been the only national broadcaster. From the late 1980s however, it received competition from the newly established television channels TV3 and TV Norge. In addition, the commercial public service channel TV 2 was launched in 1992. TV 2 is based on a combination of entertainment, news and sports and – in contrast to the NRK – included daily sports programming from the beginning. As TV 2 and the NRK became rivals in the fight for audiences and sponsorship revenue, the retail of rights and sponsors meant Norwegian football doubled its income. Football historians Matti Goksøyr and Finn Olstad comment that:

> The 1990s were a golden age for Norwegian football, both financially and for the sport itself. Football had reached paradise without knowing so. A situation in which one could bet on and win with two horses at the same time, has placed Norwegian and international football in a historically unique position. One achieved both sponsorship revenue and television revenue (Goksøyr & Olstad 2002: 355).

The basis for the "football product" – as the commercial sports-, sponsorship- and media-product we know today – had been created. It is the exposure of commercial messages in itself that provides added value to the "sports product", and which renders the media the key element in the sports/media complex. This complex also "works" on behalf of the broadcaster. TV 2's Sports Editor Bjørn Taalesen explains how when talking about the final of the Handball World Cup in Norway in 1999:

> No-one noticed this, but when matches go into extra time in the Handball World Cup, there is not supposed to be a break between the two extra halves. However,

> there was a break because, in actuality, TV 2 decided when the second extra half was to commence – because we wanted to squeeze in a few commercials between the two halves. But we did this so smoothly that people didn't notice. No-one noticed this during the final, but we gave the official a small monitor so he would know when to give the go-ahead to start the second extra half – after the commercials. But nothing was ruined because of this." (Quoted in Helland 2003: 76f)

This brief and improvised commercial break earned TV 2 approximately € 100 000.

The "sports product" holds a central position in the sports/media complex because of its mass appeal; because of its exposure of commercial messages; and because of the nature of television rights. Later, this has had implications for the development of Norwegian broadcasting on a broad basis, and has also challenged the publicist venture of broadcasting.

Football's Mass Appeal and the Norwegian Broadcasting Structure

How sports rights challenge established broadcasting structures and publicist ideals becomes apparent when looking at the newly created agreement concerning the broadcasting of Norwegian football. This agreement further more provides insight into how the Football Association attempted to account for their need for exposure.

There are four different sets of actors involved in the Norwegian competition for sports rights. Firstly, there are the public broadcasters, the NRK and TV 2. The NRK is financed by a general license fee, and TV 2 is financed by advertising revenue. Both channels are first and foremost distributed through the terrestrial network; however they are also transmitted by cable networks, satellite systems and to some extent through the Internet. The NRK is broadcast by the two major satellite companies Canal Digital and Viasat, while TV 2 is broadcast solely by Canal Digital. Secondly, there are the private commercial broadcasters without a public licence – channels such as TV 3 and TV Norge. These are financed by advertising, have a more limited terrestrial dissemination, and are aired either by Viasat (TV 3) or Canal Digital (TV Norge) (Helland & Solberg 2007). Thirdly, there are the entertainment channels – distributed through satellite and cable networks and based on films and sports events – such as Canal + (by Canal Digital), and TV 1000 (by Viasat). Fourthly, there are the satellite network owners, i.e. the Norwegian telecommunications company Telenor and the investment company SBS (Helland & Solberg 2007).

In June 2005, the rights to domestically broadcast Norwegian football matches through television, mobile phones and the Internet for the next 3-4 years was auctioned off by the Norwegian Football Association. The rights were acquired by the commercial public service broadcaster TV 2 and the satellite distributor Canal Digital – owned by Telenor – for the sum of NOK 1 billion (€127 million). They were won in competition with – among others – the NRK and Viasat. The price did not include production costs related to matches, which had to be covered by TV 2 and Telenor.

It was an astonishing price, and it represented a 300-400 per cent increase compared to the previous agreement (Helland & Solberg 2007). The primary interested parties were, however, the public service broadcasters who are competing against each other as well as the other commercial actors in the television market. Furthermore, the two main opposing satellite distributors – Canal Digital and Viasat – were both keen to obtain football rights that would aid them in their effort to dominate the Norwegian

satellite television market. Because of this situation, the two public service broadcasters both unexpectedly entered into strategic and financial alliances with one of the two competing satellite distributors.

TV 2's Sports Editor, Bjørn Taalesen (2006) has published his own book which offers an insider's perspective on the processes involved in the channel's procurement of the "football agreement". He emphasises the importance of the agreement in terms of the future Norwegian television market:

> It was no-longer merely a matter of how much money Norwegian football was worth. It was a struggle for the future of the Nordic television market. Norwegian football had merely become the arena in which the battle was to be won. In the jackpot lay the opportunity to dominate the future Norwegian digital television market. Football had become the means to secure this strategic position and to establish the basis for the development of the pay-per-view market everyone knows is coming (Taalesen 2006: 97).

Taalesen's analysis reveals why sports rights are so expensive: Because of the importance of securing a future position in the television market, it would be difficult to abandon such a deal from a strategic point of view.

However, this agreement entails more than mere economic costs. There are several other essential issues incorporated into the contract. A confidential NFF document stipulates specific demands on the part of the owner:

- To produce at least 220 matches per season
- To produce at least 20 "football magazine"-style programmes per season
- To make use of studio design elements provided by the NFF
- To broadcast a 10-second "profile programme" (a segment advertising the "football product") at the beginning of each programme
- To advertise all broadcast matches: 15 second segments, five times a day for the three preceding days before each match
- To call leagues and cups by their sponsor names
- The NFF determines where players are to be interviewed (sponsor exposure)
- The NFF determines which matches are to be broadcast

The requirements stipulated in the agreement are both extensive and detailed. It is furthermore specific in terms of the responsibilities involved in broadcasting Norwegian football.[5] The three main aspects of the deal are as follows: Firstly, it is specific regarding the aspect of *the production*: TV 2/Telenor is responsible for producing matches and sports programming. However, the NFF in many ways "formats" this coverage through instructions regarding how many matches and programmes are to be produced, and which league and cup matches are to be broadcast live. As such, this public service broadcaster is in many ways converted into the NFF's own "production and broadcasting apparatus". Secondly, it specifies aspects regarding *commercial exposure*: The agreement contains obligations that render TV 2/Telenor an instrument of commercial exposure for the NFF and its commercial partners. When the NFF requires TV 2 to call leagues by their sponsored names, and further more require interviews with players to be conducted in front of a sponsored wall, these are measures that are part of the NFF's

brand building strategy for itself and its partners. Thirdly, there is the aspect regarding *advertisement and promotion*: The terms outlined above concerning the promotion of football matches and the incorporation of "profile programming", renders TV 2/Telenor a channel for the advertising of the "football product" itself, which they share with the NFF.

A broadcaster with exclusive rights of this kind – with its strict regulations regarding the channel's broadcasting activities – easily becomes a tool in the production, exposure and public relations strategy of both the NFF and the owner channel. Because of football's mass appeal, and because of the fierce competition to procure these rights, the owner is induced to "format" the football product according to the business strategies of the NFF. As such, strong external and internal pressures are put on the publicist role of the broadcaster.

The Appeal of Football and "Editorial Sports Rights Advertisement"

The mass appeal of mediated football poses challenges for established media structures and practices alike. The four groups of contestants mentioned above all have different approaches to the ideals embedded in the role of the publicist. The first group – the public service broadcasters the NRK and TV 2 – have traditionally had rather strong obligations towards publicist ideals. Both feature regular news programming and both produce their own sports news. In the second group – the private commercial channels without public service obligations – TV 3 does not feature sports news programming, while TV Norge does. However, TV Norge's sports programming are relatively low-cost productions. The third group of broadcasters – the entertainment channels – carries no publicist traditions in terms of news and current affairs programming in the broad sense. The fourth group of broadcasters – the satellite distribution companies – is not actors in this area.

The tender document outlining the football agreement challenges long-established publicist ideals. This is a problematic aspect which was commented upon by the NRK's Sports Editor during the bid:

> My main impression of this tender document is that this deal will undermine our editorial freedom and threaten important principles that have been established over the years. In our opinion, there are many reasons for being critical towards many sections in this document" (The NRK 2005).

TV 2's Sports Editor had the following reflections on the same issue:

> It was not only football matches that were for sale here. For a price one could also sell out the established ethical principles of the press. Page after page revealed tendencies towards the fact that television's chief editors no longer controlled the editorial content of the football product (Taalesen 2006: 77).

This is evidence of an emerging trend in which sports rights purveyors place demands on procurers that turn broadcasters into propaganda channels for sports organisations. Before the Euro 2000 championship, UEFA demanded that rights holders – including TV 2 – would broadcast UEFA propaganda in the form of television programmes called "UEFA Stories" prior to the tournament. The International Olympic Committee has pursued similar strategies.

When a broadcaster obtains exclusive rights to football matches, the football organisation and its sponsors are not the only ones eager to build "the football product". The broadcaster itself, and in particular its sports department, will assume strategic measures to increase the appeal of the sport – in order that the investment may be defended. Once exclusive rights have been obtained, a natural interest amasses within the broadcaster to utilise rights to their full extent – and cover the sport comprehensively. TV 2's Sports Editor Bjørn Taalesen, on the channel's Norwegian rights to the English Premiere League:

> When a television channel like ours owns rights like these, the focus will not only be on broadcasting the matches, but the whole news process will in itself be affected by it. When we owned the rights, a Norwegian player in Premier League in England could not move a muscle without us doing a report on it. After we lost the rights, news values changed and our attention to English football is much weaker. Now we only report what we think is necessary (Research interview).

As a further illustration, sports presenter Davy Wathne explains how basketball coverage in TV 2's sports programming has become increasingly problematic for him after TV 2 became a sponsor of the national basket league:

> The worst ting I do as a sports presenter is to introduce an insignificant report on an insignificant change of an insignificant manager in an insignificant club in such an insignificant national sport as basketball (Research interview 2006).

Bjørn Taalesen goes on to comment on TV 2's position as main sponsor of the NFF:

> We are the largest sponsor of Norwegian football in terms of revenue for the Norwegian Football Association. This means that we are in a position to determine the degree to which general sponsors receive on-air publicity. Commercial sports sponsors will often measure their contract according to on-air exposure, and thereby be able to document the value of their sponsorship. It goes without saying that a TV-company that occupies the position of "largest sponsor" retains a rather unique opportunity to substantiate the value of its contract. The more Norwegian football there is on TV, the bigger the commercial value. This is not a bad outlook from a marketing perspective! (Helland 2006: 11)

Not all the requirements in the tender document were honoured, and the final agreement between TV 2/Telenor and the NFF is not publicly known (Ytre-Arne 2006; Ytre-Arne & Helland 2007). Nevertheless, the fact that certain elements within the contract are clearly in violation with essential publicist ideals is beyond doubt. The obligations placed on the broadcaster by the NFF and other powerful rights holders concerned with exposure, violated basic principles of publicist activities. From an international perspective, journalists ideally operate according to specific codes of ethics. These ideals may not always be adhered to; however it is the formulation, the institutionalisation and the social awareness of these ideals that enable journalists to represent the journalistic institution. In a national perspective, the journalistic adherence to these codes constitutes the very legitimisation of the public broadcasting licence fee.

The football agreement clearly threatens publicist ideals, both formally and informally. The two most vital directives pertaining to journalist and publicist endeavours in the press and broadcasting are the Code of Ethics and the Code of Advertisement. The Code of Ethics explicitly states that the news media "cannot yield to any pressure from

anybody who might want to prevent open debates, the flow of information, free access to sources, and open debate on any matter of importance to society as a whole" (Code of Ethics of the Norwegian Press, § 1.3). The Code also states that "each editorial desk and each employee must guard their own integrity and credibility in order to be free to act independently of any persons or groups who – for ideological, economic or other reasons – might want to exercise an influence over editorial matters" (Code of Ethics of the Norwegian Press, § 2.2). § 2.6 states: "Reject any attempt to break down the clear distinction between advertisement and editorial copy". The same regulations also state: "Never promise editorial favours in return for advertisements. The material should be published as a result of editorial considerations" (§ 2.7). The Norwegian Broadcasting Act is equally clear on this aspect. It explicitly states that, "The broadcaster shall not broadcast items containing surreptitious advertising" (§ 3.3). According to the Broadcasting Act,

> "Surreptitious advertising" means the verbal or visual presentation in programmes of a product manufacturer's or a service provider's products, services, trademark or business, where the presentation intentionally serves advertising purposes and the audience is liable to be misled about the nature of the presentation (§ 1.1).

Key words in both regulation and law are integrity, independence, and influence. Ideally, journalists – including sports journalists – editors and broadcasters should operate with integrity and independence from organisations and activities they may have to relate to in the editorial process. The NFF's attempted arrangement with the football broadcasters is therefore in clear conflict with the ideals and legal regulations referred here. It not only represents an attempt to break down the distinction between advertisement and editorial copy – it also represents an attempt to win editorial favour in return for exclusive media rights. This arrangement fails to safeguard publication according to editorial rules. Journalistic coverage of ones own sports rights – which is in the interest of the sports organisation and broadcaster alike – and which can be characterised as editorial advertisement – may be labelled *editorial sports rights advertisement*.

The "exposure game" concerning football as content reveals a rather paradoxical situation. On the one hand TV 2/Telenor is a very powerful constellation in terms of media interest. On the other hand, exclusive media rights entail compliance with strict regulations in terms of the actual football coverage. These obligations and regulations may seem both unreasonable and unconventional. Nevertheless, sports rights holders have a long tradition for actively using the medium itself to develop both image and "product".

Today, the football pitch is more than just a stadium. The pitch is also an important arena for mass media in their struggle for market segments in which to sell their own products (pay-TV); to sell viewers to advertisers (advertisement-TV); and to maintain ratings (public service broadcasting/commercial broadcasting).

Consequently, publicist ideals and sports journalism are certainly under pressure. Davis Rowe has described the situation thus:

> Sports journalists [...] are caught in a particularly difficult bind because of the different, sometimes contradictory professional demands made on them; they are expected, often at the same time, to be objective reporters, critical investigators, apologists for sports and teams, representatives of fans, and, not unusually, to have performed in sport at elite levels (David Rowe, 1999: 37).

Marshall McLuhan in the early 1960s maintained that "the medium is the message". This statement may be reformulated in regards to television sports rights: "The medium is the exposure". It is the appeal – and the possible exposure of advertisement and sponsorships, added to the increased interest in media content – which gives football its added value. In this situation, strong economic dynamics are combined with fundamental business strategies. As such, mass appeal combined with a central position in the media complex ensures sports contribute to further changes in media structures and media practices.

Conclusions

During a pre-match press conference in the 1990s, the former manager of the Norwegian national team for men – Egil "Drillo" Olsen – was asked what his biggest worry was. The journalist was obviously concerned with the upcoming match and the condition of an injured player. Olsen answered: "What worries me most is that market liberalism is accelerating so fast in Europe" (Olsen et al 1997: 157ff).

If there is one area in which market liberalism has become increasingly evident during the last years, it is in sports and broadcasting, and – in particular – in the two combined. Market liberalism has had extensive implications for essential social institutions such as broadcasting and journalism, and has furthermore been closely linked to the development of the mass appeal of media-covered sports in general – and football in particular.

This increase in popularity has entailed great success for the mediated "football product". It is a product which is very easy to sell, and it is furthermore a product to which a range of different actors wish to be associated. According to Rowe (1999), the media is both an economic and cultural driving force in this development. The media itself supplies most of the capital that in turn creates and disseminates information and images. This in turn produces an ascending spiral – constantly generating more capital and more sports events.

As such, sports journalism has become an integral part of popular culture. Ever since sports found its way into newspapers, broadcasting, and onto the Internet, sports have had a very popular share in the media content. Because of the mass appeal of sports, sports journalism is often conceived of as having a role within the news institution that is different from other journalistic forms. It often seems sports journalism's position within the field is constituted by the appeal of sports *per se*. Sports journalists are today's Brothers Grimm – constructing our modern fairytales, collecting medals on behalf of fans and the nation, and creating antagonis*t scapegoats.*

In the end, the contest for sports rights concerns viewers, licence fees and profits – played out by powerful actors within the media landscape. It is also a competition for ensuring the new commercial platforms can offer the most appealing content; for securing television distribution; and for controlling and maximising commercial exposure. Sports are the driving force of this struggle (Helland 2006). Of all the various sports branches, football is the most vital, in Norway as it is in many other countries. Accordingly there is a strong symbiosis between sports and the media.

It is evident that broadcasters with publicist ideals have themselves become part of the modern sports/media complex (see also Brandsås & Odden 1997, Helland & Ytre-Arne 2007). As such, media organisations have a strong commercial interest in the condition of this reality. Journalistic ideals place the news media as independent watchdogs

of social institutions. As we have seen, however, this ideal can be violated in the name of mass appeal, and through the effect of the sports/media complex. Sports coverage is normally reserved for the broadcaster's sports division. Furthermore, the sports division operates in accordance with the broadcaster's sports rights. This association is in danger of converting sports coverage into a sophisticated form of editorial advertising, where the branding of sports associations as well as the broadcaster itself may easily become the dominant objective.

Historically, the ties between sports and the media have always been both strong and prevalent – and particularly in football, where the popularity of the game has constituted a premise for the symbiosis between sports and the media. However, this relationship holds two strong paradoxes: Firstly, that the media institution is such a powerful instrument for exposure, yet at the same time too weak to safeguard journalistic and publicist ideals; and secondly that the strongest area of commercial interest – i.e. sports coverage – has the weakest critical journalistic methodology. As such, these strong paradoxes threaten the social role of broadcasting and journalism.

Notes

1. Thanks to Helle Sjøvaag for language consultance
2. Norwegian*: I skuddet*
3. The first unofficial international fixture between England and Scotland was played in 1870, while the first official international between the two national teams took place in 1872. That same year, the first cup final of the Football Association was played. The initiative to establish "The Football League" was taken in 1888 (Helland 2003)
4. Today: Oslo
5. I got access to the document when a journalist contacted me, gave me the document, and asked for reactions from me as a media researcher.

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Media Markets in Scandinavia

Political Economy Aspects of Convergence and Divergence

Anker Brink Lund

Abstract

It is commonly believed that the Nordic countries, in general, and the Scandinavian countries, in particular, are so much alike that they constitute a common media system – often termed democratic-corporatist. But a review of recent studies on power and democracy in Sweden, Norway and Denmark shows that there is most probably no such thing as one uniform Nordic media model. It may be argued, however, that political and commercial preconditions make the Scandinavian media markets extremely suitable for comparative research. In order to do such research, without risking reproduction of prejudices and unwarranted generalizations, media researchers must pay close attention not only to media convergence, but also to divergence in terms of the political economy that constitutes the national framework surrounding media corporations and media regulators.

Key Words: comparative research, media market, convergence, divergence, political economy

Introduction

Political economy approaches to media studies had their heyday in the 1970s (Miller & Gandy, 1991). By the end of the century, these applications were overshadowed by other research perspectives. Yet the current trend towards international comparisons invites a renewal of this kind of social studies, taking into consideration the institutional context surrounding media market competition, especially in order to balance excessive claims and exaggerated generalizations in relation to globalization and media convergence.

In their groundbreaking monograph *Comparing Media Systems* (2004), Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini propose a promising framework for this kind of research. A political economy model (including the Scandinavian media markets) termed ”Democratic-Corporatist” is contrasted to two other models: the liberal and the polarized. Within this comparative framework, the relationship between state, business and media is discussed in an institutional context, primarily based on statistical comparisons, descriptions and formal regulatory regimes.

In the present article, it is my intent to inform and supplement the Hallin/Mancini-typology using empirical data from recent studies of democracy and power in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. I do so in order to illustrate how a regional market perspective may improve our understanding of convergence and divergence regarding media organizations as local players in global games (Kristensen & Zeitlin, 2005). In conclusion, I

suggest ways in which critical media research may be constructively applied to these competitive games.

The Democratic-Corporatist Tradition

Denmark, Norway and Sweden invite comparative research because the regional media markets of Scandinavia share a number of common features, with a long tradition of self-regulation of business terms, combined with politically negotiated and culturally legitimized subsidies. Research of this kind, however, is relatively scarce, and the little we have reveals significant institutional differences, e.g. the Norwegian study of democracy and power (Østerud et al., 2003) was considerably more pessimistic about the future of democratic governance than was a similar study in Denmark (Togeby et al., 2003). Comparing these findings to international research on political economy and media management (Picard, 2004; Roppen, 2004), we can highlight four conditions that are thought to be essential qualities of media performance in democratic-corporatist systems:

1. Relatively large readership of privately owned newspapers
2. Relatively high audience reach of public service radio and TV
3. Professional and competitive production of news and views
4. Regulated market conditions based on political compromises

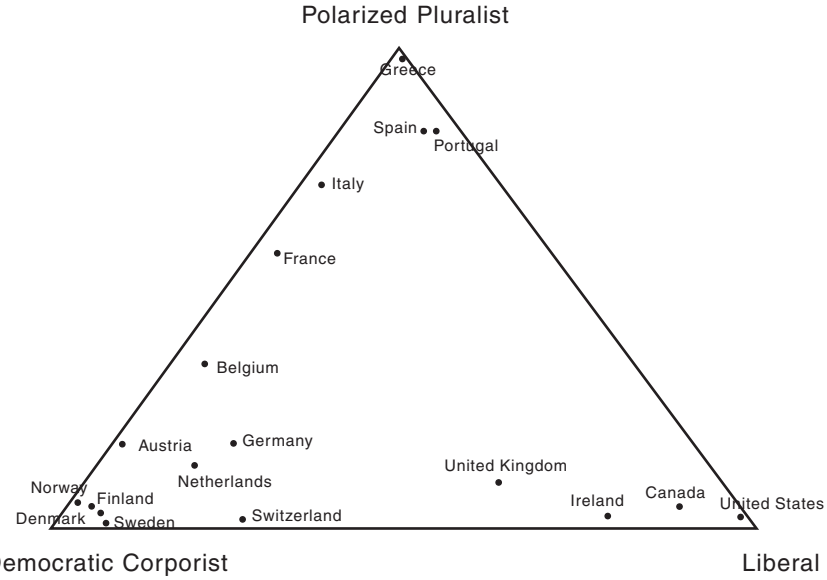
Scandinavian media research on the first two points generally confirms mutual trends towards a common Nordic model based on democratic ideals of press freedom and corporate public service autonomy (Hadenius & Weibull, 2005; Nissen, 2006). Recent research on the two latter points, however, evaluating professional news production and political media regulation, brings forth important nuances differentiating Denmark, Norway and Sweden that must be carefully addressed in order to demonstrate and understand the financial and political divergence of media markets in Scandinavia.

Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 190) focus on the "partnership between social organizations and the state" as the central aspect of the democratic-corporatist media market model based upon ideals of freedom of expression, democracy, and the education of the general public, which characterize the Scandinavian notion of a political economy for news and views. Collective bargaining is an important component of this tradition. Consequently, newspapers, radio, and television in Scandinavia are expected to play a role not only as commercial marketers, but also as a public arena for a critical and consensus-seeking debate.

In contrast to the polarized media systems that characterize Southern Europe, party representatives and interest organizations do not control the media in Scandinavia. In the past, elected officials did have party-controlled newspapers at their disposal, and parliamentary representatives were in control of electronic media. Recent political deregulation and closure of weaker media players, however, bear witness to the increased dominance of major media conglomerates, which may potentially drive the Scandinavian systems in the direction of the liberal tradition. In this context, home market privileges, language barriers and regulatory regimes become important institutional conditions of competitiveness. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that state interventions of the past can secure the competitive vitality required under the international media convergence of the future.

In Scandinavia, political fears of commercial and market-driven news production resulting in bias and homogeneity in media content have fuelled heated discussions on how to proactively secure diversity in open access to public opinion forming. These concerns have resulted in revised market regulations, including more selective press subsidies and demands for special treatment of minority viewpoints.

At the same time, radio and television services have been de-regulated. Broadcasting in Scandinavia was initially limited to companies that were granted government concessions for use of the limited amount of available frequencies. Later, the argument for continued state regulation has rested upon political considerations of cultural orientation. In line with the liberal model of media business, these monopolistic conditions have been systematically changed since the late 1980s (Ewertsson & Hultkrantz, 2004). None the less, according to Hallin and Mancini (2004:70), Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden can still be placed in the extreme democratic-corporatist point of a typological triangle constituting "a common culture and a common public sphere".



Source: Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 70.

In a democratic-corporatist media system, Hallin and Mancini expect government regulations to be based on ideals of public opinion driven politics and collectively negotiated business considerations. The mass media are assigned a political role as proxy citizens, representing a diversity of voices and connecting the masses with competing elites. From an economy perspective, this may essentially be regarded as a regulated form of home market protection resulting in a hybrid media system based on license financing and revenue derived from the marketplace. It may also be regarded as a political construct aimed at avoiding concentration of power and a one-sided public debate.

Older studies of democracy and power in Scandinavia demonstrate that mass media in the Nordic nations do indeed live up to these democratic-corporatist functions while acting on competitive market terms (Østgaard et al., 1979). Lately, however, the mass media have also to some degree replaced political parties as public administrators of political agendas (Strömbäck, 2000). Research from a political economy perspective

demonstrates institutional developments facilitating concentration of media ownership (Østbye, 2000), but altered market conditions have also made the authoritative exercise of power more transparent (Hoff, 2004). All in all, the fact that public opinion is increasingly mediated through conglomerates of market-dependant enterprises is not necessarily a sign of decline or improvement of Scandinavian democracies:[1]

> The media of today play a greater role as the connective tissue between the public and the political leadership than they did previously. Media have a significant influence upon the public agenda, public opinions, political communication and political decisions. Yet their power can also be exaggerated. Presumably the media structure and news criteria in general are most important. There seems to be a mediation of politics in which politicians and organizations accommodate first and foremost the electronic news media's requirements for access and form (Togeby et al., 2003, p. 212; my translation).

This quote gives a balanced view of how the Danish study of democracy and power summarizes the current knowledge of power relations in the media, with particular emphasis on relations to the political system. These conclusions are based on a long series of studies: Albæk et al. 2002; Damgaard 2003; Hoff 2004; Kjær 2002; Laursen 2001; Loftager 2004; Lund 2002; Madsen 2000; Philips & Schrøder 2004. It is evident from this research that the democratic-corporatist media system of Denmark at the turn of this century is neither strictly controlled by politics nor by omnipotent market-driven enterprises. Media owners, editors and journalists do occupy privileged positions that are significant for the authoritative allocation of valid social values. But such market conditions are balanced by user-generated content, particularly communicated by web-based media.

Content analysis of journalistic coverage of the political arena does indeed document spectacular examples of distortion of proportion and agenda setting manipulations. These occurrences, however, are exceptions rather than the rule. The daily run of the mill is characterized by orderly editorial processes dominated by routine competition that taps authoritative news sources. The main result is not the spinning of public opinion, but rather processes of priming and framing that influence what issues elected officials of authority should (and need not) pay particular attention to. In this manner, the core power of the media is to define what situations require political action – as opposed to issues that are best left to the private sphere or silently accepted (Lund, 2002).

The market-driven competition among media outlets has, paradoxically, led to relatively uniform redaction of political news not only in Denmark, but also in the rest of Scandinavia. In their contribution to the Swedish study of democracy and power, Ekecrantz and Olsson (1994) conclude that this tendency must be ascribed to institutional conditions: The homogeneous perspective and weighting in the editorial process rests to a great extent upon the fact that the journalistic actors are dependant upon collective norms and mutual dependency in a mediated field of strategically conflicting sources that promote news and views.

This very important aspect of media management is not salient in Hallin and Mancini's typology. They focus mainly on state intervention, professionalization of journalism and political parallelism. But the Swedish and Danish studies of democracy and power clearly show that the media system is not only influenced by politics, but at least equally influenced by routine practices and business considerations within an institutionalized framework of self-regulated enterprises serving the public on competitive media markets.

Business Considerations

In all the Scandinavian countries, we find a complex combination of market-driven and budget-driven media. The legitimacy of this hybrid political economy rests upon professional standards of self-regulation, freedom of expression and licence to operate on market conditions. Scandinavian media systems are characterized by relatively open access to the press, radio, and television. This is a central tenet of public service traditions and democratic ideals of diversity of opinion. Despite the fact that media markets have suffered an epidemic of newspaper closures in the post-war era, journalistic competition on news and views still characterizes editorial practices (Lund, 2002).

One-sided party bias and singular business dominance no longer dominate the majority of Scandinavian news media. Instead, a homogenized institutional practice has emerged in which communicating actors negotiate the news agenda through a constant give-and-take. In practice, mediated political and news production enjoys a conditional autonomy. The individual mediums are deeply dependant upon each other as well as on authoritative sources (Allern, 2001), as the competing players balance their concern for the paying audience and their concern for commercial advertisers (Gustafsson, 2005).

Comparing media systems of this kind, it is hardly sufficient to focus only upon formal concentration of ownership. We must also examine the particulars of editorial preferences and professional homogeneity that occasionally lead to biased reporting and pack-journalism. Scandinavian media business act on a competitive market struggling to maximize share and reach, defending editorial autonomy and routines of self-regulation. Media uses and gratifications are closely monitored (Weibull, 1983; Bergström et al., 2005), but no individual editor or journalist exercises exclusive powers over his/her audience (Østbye, 2005). Editorial influence is primarily exercised through collective negotiations defining situational consensus. When considered from a political economy point of view, market-driven competition is neither perfect nor free in the liberal meaning of the terms. The authors of the Swedish study of democracy and power clearly demonstrate this, warning against reduced content diversity in mediated news and views:[2]

> Given that mass media have an impact on the way democracy functions, how media are governed must be considered crucial. Control over media has strategic bearing upon the struggle for power. If one particular way of defining public opinion monopolizes the media, democracy is placed in jeopardy. Demands for diversity and freedom of access become essential (Petterson & Carlberg 1990, p. 46; my translation).

In other words, in Sweden, the public – perceived as responsible and informed citizens – must be guaranteed the opportunity to independently shape their own opinions on media market terms. Within these limits of democratic ideals of freedom of expression, diversity, and media access, media businesses (private as well as publicly financed) have a licence to operate as mediators of public opinion.

Such a privilege calls for self-restraint and caution in democratic-corporatist media systems. Because significant aspects of democratic action are mediated by a privately owned press, media businesses are expected to act in a responsible and informed fashion. Despite the fact that Swedish (and other Scandinavian) editors and media owners may not legally be subject to formal, parliamentary or constitutional checks and balances, they voluntarily and collectively offer public service for more or less private money.

Under these circumstances no mass media can, in the long run, attain complete independence from the paying public or from political authorities. In a negotiated

economy, all parties involved in these exchanges may intervene if the informal rules of conduct are being systematically broken. Editorial power is delegated by the public and granted under institutionalized conditions. Media ownership and ideological bonds, for example past party affiliation, no longer serve as indisputable definers of editorial privilege. Consequently, the self-regulation of professional and socially responsible journalism becomes a crucial justification for the management of media businesses.

Scandinavian studies of democracy and power document how the influences of powerful elites function as informal adjusters of editorial practices. Research data, on the other hand, do not imply that Scandinavian editors and journalists systematically serve owners and business managers in ways known in pluralist-polarized media systems. Neither do they fully live up to liberal ideals of an objectivist journalism that acts as an independent watchdog of democracy (Valeur, 2002).

The political economy of media management may be understood as a never-ending negotiation in which journalists and sources, editors and owners reciprocally control and balance each other. While the individual editor is responsible for his or her own media content, no single actor controls the exercise of editorial power in the negotiated order as a whole. Everyday redaction rests upon journalistic decisions that prioritize events and initiatives prepared using professional tools and work routines. Media content is edited within a normative framework that is neither defined strictly by political nor by narrow financial considerations (Lund, 2002).

Radical media critics, however, consider the very exercise of editorial power as an attribute connected to capital and position, which hover high above the powerless masses (McManus, 1994). In its extreme, this cynical perception of dominance may lead to conspiracy theories claiming that undemocratic special interests, with the help of well-compensated operatives, systematically manipulate and work against the common interest. In order to counteract these accusations, institutional news sources use "victims of power" to illustrate political problems and their potential solutions. Paradoxically, this kind of editorial case-journalism places powerless citizens in positions of being influential for the promotion of conflicting elites. Media coverage of immigration and health care, for example, are two exemplary illustrations of how this form of editing takes place in routine journalism.

The net result is a political arena characterized by "scandal" in a continuous struggle for visibility between shifting alliances of actors on the political stage (Thompson, 1995). The balance of power can be shifted via editorial bias in the news institution; for example through a revealing story and the reaction it effects among competing elites. Parliamentary news coverage increasingly resembles horse race coverage. Journalists assume the roles of both commentator and referee. For professional media consultants, these confused roles become a tempting opportunity to nurse and spin special interests (Nielsen, 2000).

Consequently, media power is exerted not only through publication, but also by the information journalists more or less knowingly omit from their routine reporting. Professional decisions by editors not to cover complex issues or obtuse perspectives are of great practical significance. In the long run, these business considerations may have a stronger political significance than does manipulative spinning of mediated public opinion (Noelle-Neuman, 1984).

In short, Hallin and Mancini are right to emphasize journalistic professionalism and editorial independence as essential elements of the democratic-corporatist model of media management. Scandinavian studies of democracy and power confirm that mass

media in Denmark, Norway and Sweden enjoy a relatively high degree of autonomy. The net result is complex power relations and reciprocal influence of journalists, editors and news sources spun and nursed by elected officials and public administrators. Limitations in the form of ownership and political control are no more prevalent than are source-dependency and institutionalized norms.

Consequently, the ongoing battle for editorial control is less concerned with spin doctoring and more with niche nursing a negotiated order in which credibility depends less upon manipulation and more upon the ability to cloak special interests as a common good. Within this mutual framework, there are significant differences among the Scandinavian countries, for example in areas such as the education of journalists, media ownership, and statutes that regulate competition. More specifically, in terms of business models, a considerable amount of divergence can be observed across the Scandinavian media markets. In Denmark, for instance, local papers exclusively financed by advertising have existed for many years. In Norway, this type of publication has met active resistance from dominant players in the media market, and the Swedish invention of free traffic papers has provoked differing reactions in the Scandinavian context.

The impact of such differences in terms of business considerations has not been systematically researched. Therefore, Hallin and Mancini (2004) may be absolutely right in their claim that the shared traditions of the Scandinavian media system are in jeopardy. But the claim that current trends in the political economy should systematically be pushing the democratic-corporatist institutions in the direction of the liberal pole can neither be confirmed nor rejected in spite of the close readings of current media research in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Political Regulations

The Scandinavian nations have a long tradition of parliamentary control of the mass media as a cultural-political supplement to market-based self-regulation under free trade conditions. The government intervenes in media business with the intent of securing diversity and national identity. The official political goal has usually been to create and preserve the basis for free speech and fair competition on the media market. But tools and methods utilized for political regulations vary from nation to nation (Kelly et al., 2004).

Even fundamentals, e.g. the editorial and political limits to free speech, are interpreted quite differently within and between individual media market players of Scandinavia. This was clearly demonstrated during the heated debates on publication of the so-called Mohammed-cartoons initiated by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* (Petersson et al., 2007). Also public service broadcasting (usually regarded as the central element of the Nordic media model), differs markedly when we compare frameworks of political regulations and their impact on editorial decision making (Roppen et al., 2006).

Differences of this kind cannot be accounted for by economical considerations alone. Political power struggles and compromises play important parts as was clearly demonstrated in the latest power and democracy studies in Norway. A number of empirical studies (Eide 2001; Slaatta 2003; Syvertsen 2001; Østbye 2000; Østerud m.fl. 2003) have thoroughly re-examined these issues, re-evaluating traditional dogma on politicized media regulation (Hernes 1978; Olsen 1980) and applying a field-perspective (Bourdieu 1996) with special attention paid to the order of symbolic power:[3]

> The focus of this evaluation concerning the power of the media has been that specific media organizations (...) are positioned differently within an order of the media. Within this frame of reference, we discuss a structured division of labour between different technological fields in which certain relations exist between the fields, structuring the positions of the individual media in the order of the media (Slaatta 2003, p. 232; my translation).

Regarded from this point of view, media power is a structural order that can neither be reduced to a specific tradition of a party-political nature nor to a professional framing of news and views based on ideals of objectivist journalism. The distribution of symbolic power, both historically and currently, is sociologically perceived as a battlefield on which a variety of economic and cultural conditions have significant impact upon the diversity of media content. On the other hand, media market power is not a given attribute that chosen elites inherently possess, but rather something conflicting actors exercise in mutual interplay and within an institutional framework heavily influenced by political action. This may be described as symbolic power struggles to define the premises for public debate in which all citizens have the right to participate; but, it must be noted, without equal opportunity to exercise mediated influence.

In order to mitigate such inequalities, all the Scandinavian nations have some form of politically defined subsidies for the printed mass media, ranging from direct funding and tax relief to cheap rates for delivery by the postal services. Norway, however, is the only Scandinavian nation in which formal limits of ownership have been politically regulated. This may be an incentive for Norwegian media houses to expand regionally to a greater extent than other Scandinavian players.

While Norway and Sweden to varying degrees offer direct support to selected newspapers, the representatives of the press, supported by a political majority, have rejected similar proposals in Denmark. The consequences of these differences in press subsidies are disputed and invite future research. But no Scandinavian government has initiated comparisons of this kind.

As far as the electronic media are concerned, the approach to regulation on a national level has been more consistent throughout Scandinavia, and public service broadcasting is institutionally strong in all the Nordic nations both in terms of share and reach. Yet analyses of the creation of Denmark's TV2 (Bruun et al., 2000), Norway's TV2 (Dahl & Høyer, 2003) and Sweden's TV4 (Ewertsson, 2005) show that behind the apparently uniform goal of public service on de-regulated market terms lie significant variations in the political approach to the re-regulation of electronic media.

On the basis of Scandinavian studies of democracy and power, one could more generally argue that democratic-corporatist diversity in the Nordic media markets is only partly due to intended effects of government regulation. Other givens, e.g. language barriers, play a significant role as barriers of entry. The Nordic nations consist of relatively small niche markets that do not attract the multinational players to the same degree as larger mass markets do. The institutional frameworks are net results of competing and co-operating players negotiating conflicting interests on national and international markets. In sum, the Scandinavian media systems are not based on pure market economy, where business considerations call the score; they are also not products of a planned economy in which a political majority rules. They are in fact democratic-corporatist hybrids.

In this mixed and negotiated economy, commercial alliances are not allowed to become cartels that diminish market competition in a monopolistic fashion. Securing diversity within provincially defined niche markets, however, is not the only goal shaping media politics in Scandinavia. Another premise is international conventions. With organizations such as the EU and UNESCO in the lead, the norms of *free flow of information* are accepted conditions in the Nordic nations. The prohibition of restraint-of-trade regulations is an additional factor that may play a decisive role in the future of public service broadcasting (Mortensen, 2005).

The national approach to media regulation has traditionally prevented foreign dominance of media ownership, but in the future it may also impede Scandinavian players in the increasingly globalized competition for consolidation and media convergence. Media enterprises such as Schibsted, Bonnier, Aller and Egmont can be regarded as dominant media businesses in a regional context. But placed in the global perspective, they are relatively small players. National regulation to protect even smaller players may increase diversity in the short run, but risk obstructing trans-national expansion. In the long run, this may weaken Scandinavian media businesses in terms of their multinational competition.

In line with the corporate tradition for negotiation and compromise, Scandinavian media have a long tradition of collegial arrangements to prevent legal conflicts and political intervention. Such measures put voluntary restraints on mergers and buy-outs on national markets. How this is done, however, differs from niche market to niche market. In Sweden, social responsibility arrangements have been institutionalized in terms of a so-called *publicistiskt bokslut* (Wadbring, 2003). This arrangement of media audit is directed by researchers, who combine the media's own reports with opinion polls conducted within and outside editorial offices. These status reports prompt public discussion, while conclusions to be drawn are left to the editor-in-chief and media managers.

All in all, the recent studies of democracy and power demonstrate that the media markets in Denmark, Sweden and Norway are similar in terms of internal self-regulations and external state-regulations. But the regulatory regimes are by no means identical. Scandinavian comparisons do not support claims for one unified democratic-corporatist system with regard to political intervention. Significant differences persist, not only from nation to nation, but also among competing media corporations adapting to political rules of the symbolic power games.

Hallin and Mancini may be quite right in claiming an international mega-trend towards liberal convergence in terms of political de-regulations in national and regional media markets. But even under such conditions, institutional change is path dependant. Different kinds of press subsidies and other forms of unilateral intervention of the Scandinavian kind will probably be maintained. But of course, there is no guarantee that the institutional frameworks of the past will survive and suffice under changing market conditions for de-regulated media businesses and public service providers.

Local Players in Global Games

Hallin and Manchini (2004) claim that a process of convergence is currently taking place. Mega-trends are pushing all media markets around the world towards the so-called liberal system of market-driven and de-regulated commercialism. Similar claims are often heard in Scandinavian media debates. Warnings about Americanization and convergence are abundant. Leaving normative fear and loathing aside, an important

question for media research in this relation must be: How can the Scandinavian media businesses and political regulators learn from each other?

A, answer to this question based on political economy can only be found by carefully studying the ongoing battles for convergence and divergence in different media markets since the 1990s. Scandinavian skirmishes of this kind have ethnocentrically been labelled "the Great Nordic Media War". Pessimists fear the present struggle will have the same results as the military confrontations of the 1700s, where neighbouring nations inflicted so much damage upon each other that outside powers dictated the terms of truce – thereby, by analogy, reducing all the Scandinavian media to inferior players on a converging world market.

While Scandinavian publicists and politicians fight among themselves on a mutual and regional market, multi-nationals such as Mecom, News Corporation, and RTL are ready to clean up the aftermath of local battles. In Scandinavia, the regional players and their political institutions have proven themselves able to create high barriers of entry. But Nordisk Råd and other trans-national agencies have had little success in coordinating regional media policies. Emphasizing the continuance of general subsidies for the printed media, and the preservation of government-financed public service radio and television, as the central counter-strategy to secure greater diversity. Hallin and Mancini conclude:

> A strong tradition of rational-legal authority affects the media systems of Democratic Corporatist countries in several ways. First, (...) the expansion of the newspaper is connected with the development of rational-legal authority, as it is with the expansion of the market and parliamentary democracy. Second, the relative autonomy of public service broadcasting systems in Democratic Corporatist countries is consistent with the independent character of public institutions generally. Third, legal institutions often have an important influence on the media systems in Democratic Corporatist countries. (Hallin & Mancini, 2004:193-4)

A second crucial research question is whether this political tradition, based upon national regulation of the media derived from statutory powers and professional autonomy, can preserve content diversity and a negotiated economy under global convergence and increasing economies of scale. This question becomes crucial in light of the changing strategies of multinational players investing heavily in on-line media worldwide. One side effect of the Scandinavian practices of political media regulation, with emphasis on the national level, has been the creation niche markets of limited volume controlled by relatively small players. Scandinavian media enterprises enjoy tax abatements and political protection from external pressure, but few have succeeded in trans-national thinking and international consolidation.

The past 100 years of interaction among media businesses and political regulators has created institutional conditions that, to a great degree, have preserved provincial home markets in Denmark, Norway and Sweden as provincial and relatively closed systems in terms of worldwide media competition. It has been difficult and risky for foreign players to penetrate the Scandinavian market barriers, and the promise of success was limited, in part because well-run and well-financed public service channels in radio and television delayed and limited advertising to the electronic media. Advertising media buyers were shunted off to the printed media where regional publishers control a dominant share of the market.

Consequently, the political economy of the printed and electronic media in Denmark, Sweden and Norway has created institutional conditions that favour national services based upon hybrid combinations of private and public funding. Jan Stenbeck, who brought satellite-television to Scandinavia and founded Metro International, demonstrated this vividly by using an effective strategy of civil disobedience in Scandinavia in the late 1980s. In retrospect, Stenbeck illustrated the changing condition for national players in de-regulated games by referring to the popular pastime of "rock, paper, scissors" where paper engulfs the rock, the scissors cut the paper, and the stone destroys the scissors (Andersson 2002).

Individual media businesses (*rocks)* do act as independent agents of profit maximization in Scandinavian media markets. Business interests are regularly asphyxiated by political regulation (*paper*). Global, technological development (*scissors*), on the other hand, can cut through national "red tape" and make it ineffective, as Stenbeck himself proved by introducing satellite television. And – as history teaches us – no mass media technology can be implemented without capital. So in the last instance, it is private money for public services that frames the terms of politically de- and re-regulated media orders of Scandinavia.

International studies confirm that multinational business interests prime and spin the political regulators in regional markets across the globe (Curran & Gurevitch, 2005). But the extent and consequences of market-driven media convergence have only been marginally explored in a Scandinavian context. This invites grand generalizations. Increasingly, the procurement of democratic access and diversity in opinion forming will probably be left to market-based forces maximizing profits. Collective self-regulation of the democratic-corporatist kind may prevail, but it is somewhat like selling elastic by the yard: It is only workable as long as it rests upon mutual trust. Such element of prudent statesmanship and self-restraint cannot necessarily endure global market conditions. The perseverance of internal autonomy requires a careful balancing with external audit. In this respect, market-oriented media research from a political economy point of view could play a much more active role than has been the case in Scandinavia.

Conclusion

To sum up, there are many political and economic indications that Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 143-197) are correct in attributing common traits to the Nordic media systems. But no single common regional media order dominates. No uniform Scandinavian media model exists in spite of the fact that Denmark, Norway and Sweden share many common traits, e.g. self-regulated journalism and politically regulated media markets based on political compromises.

For constructive media researchers, the primary goal should not only be to reveal the side-effects of such developments, but also proactively to investigate how local players in global games may administer traditional values, e.g. freedom of expression and public service, under changing institutional conditions. Media management must be viewed not strictly as an attribute associated with ownership or political affiliation. Research-based media-market analyses must be grounded in political economy based comparisons of media systems – locally, regionally and globally.

Scandinavian press, radio and television have emerged from a provincial tradition institutionalized by means of politically regulated market conditions. This makes Denmark, Norway and Sweden fundamentally different from most other European countries

and even more different from the American media market that usually dominates the research agenda. Interventions of the past did not encourage international expansion and competitive vigour. Consequently, the domesticated media industry can probably only preserve its relative autonomy under increasing world competition and EU-harmonization if systematic knowledge of the institutional impact on national competitiveness is available. Constructive media research may assist in this process by becoming more comparative in focus.

In line with this, Scandinavian media managers must be convinced that they have a shared interest in the creation of greater transparency in the regional market. Researchers do have access to relevant media data, primarily due to the work of Nordicom, but the base data from the different countries are not always fully compatible. We also lack specific comparisons of media management and unintended side effects of political regulation. These are necessary inputs if we are to solidify the political economy foundations of generalized ideal-types so as to consider not only systemic convergence, but also institutional diversity.

In short, political economy research questions the very existence of the democratic-corporate model of Scandinavia in order to understand the specific conditions of local players and their institutional competitiveness in global games. There is little doubt that many common commercial and political characteristics exist throughout the regional media market constituted by Denmark, Norway and Sweden. But these similarities cannot be properly understood without carefully calibrated comparative designs, considering not only global mega-trends, but also the diverging forces that constitute the national media markets in a Scandinavian context.

Notes

1. ”Medierne spiller i dag en større rolle som forbindelsesled mellem befolkningen og den politiske ledelse, end de gjorde tidligere. Medierne har betydelig indflydelse på både befolkningens dagsorden, befolkningens holdninger, den politiske kommunikation og de politiske beslutninger. Men deres magt kan også overdrives. Ofte udgør de blot en arena for andre aktører. Det vigtigste er formodentlig mediestrukturen og de generelle nyhedskriterier. Der synes således at ske en medialisering af politikken, som indebærer, at politiker og organisationer indretter sig efter først og fremmest de elektroniske nyhedsmediers adgangs- og formkrav.” (Togeby m.fl. 2003, s. 212)
2. ”Givet att massmedia har sådan betydelse för demokratins funktionssätt bliver det avgörande hur media styrs. Kontrollen över media är av strategisk betydelse i maktkampen. Om en enda meningsriktning monopoliserade media skulle demokratin hotas. Kraven på mångfald och fritt tillträde bliver därmed centrala.” (Petterson & Carlberg 1990, s. 46)
3. ”Sentralt i denne fremstillingen av mediernes makt har vært at de enkelte medierne (...) inntar ulike posisjoner innenfor en medieorden. Innenfor den kan vi snakke om en strukturert arbeidsdeling mellom ulike teknologiske felt, hvor bestemte relasjoner optrer mellom felterne, som virker strukurerende inn på de enkelte mediernes posisjoner i medieordenen.” (Slaata 2003, s. 232)

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The Role of Free Dailies in a Segregated Society

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Abstract

Alongside subscribed morning newspapers, free dailies have assumed considerable importance in Swedish society. Like most Western countries, Sweden is socially and culturally segregated. Newspaper readership had been found to have increased substantially in recent years among residents of poor areas having high rates of unemployment, low income and low levels of formal education. The publication of free dailies has literally given people in these areas a newspaper, something they have not had access to before. Meanwhile, subscribed newspapers continue to hold their own in wealthier districts, whose residents have an entirely different socioeconomic and cultural background. The printed press is still a very vital medium in Swedish society, but today we note a primarily economic differentiation among newspapers in contrast to the political differentiation that prevailed a century ago.

Key Words: newspaper, free daily, segregation, class hierarchy, social geography

Introduction

Sweden has one of the highest frequencies of newspaper reading in the world. Local and regional morning papers, which constitute the base, are nearly all subscribed. Seven households in ten subscribe to a morning newspaper. Nonetheless, there are major differences between different subgroups in the population; some areas are white spots on distributors' maps.

It is not a question of geography *per se*, but rather of structures that are related to where people live. These may be described in terms of local culture in a broad sense: who lives there, what the schools are like, employment and occupations, prevailing norms and values, and the type of housing (blocks of flats, single-family dwellings, etc.). The list could be made longer. When geographically defined localities are homogeneous and different from one another, we may speak of segregation. All segregation is about relations between the parts; areas are segregated in relation to each other, not in themselves.[1]

Just how much the structure or the culture decides how free residents are to choose how to live their lives is debatable. As I see it, social environments are decisive for people's opportunities, and since social environments or cultures are different for different people, it leads to different degrees of opportunity. At the same time, of course, we are hardly marionettes; we do have wills of our own.[2] My aim has been to study both structures and cultures and to examine the position of newspapers in different urban rooms.

Urban Rooms

Cities, and Stockholm in particular, have played a vital role in the development of the Swedish press. It was here that modern newspapers were born and thrived. Roughly a century ago, Stockholm had ten daily newspapers. Outside the cities newspapers developed slowly, but then experienced a major boom. At this time, about 100 years ago, newspapers were not written for anyone and everyone; newspaper reading was confined to a rather thin stratum of society, and within this stratum the different substrata read different papers. Virtually every community was served by more than one paper.[3]

In the twentieth century, a new kind of newspaper, the so-called omnibus paper, emerged. As the name suggests, omnibus papers strive for a broad appeal; they contain something for everyone. In pace with the expansion of literacy, a higher level of education and lower newspaper prices, newspaper reading spread among the population.[4] Today, in the first years of the twenty-first century, we note a certain decline in newspaper reading. Also, the part of the branch that is doing best is no longer the morning press in Stockholm, but local morning newspapers in the provinces. Thus, one-hundred years on, the two categories have switched roles.

Mobility in Modern Society

The modernization of Swedish society and the urbanization it entails have, among other things, led to aggregations of people in cities. This has in turn led to regional differences in the socio-demographic composition of the population. Particularly young people have moved from the countryside to the city, leaving elder generations behind them. Since access to higher education is one of the prime reasons why the younger generation moves, differences in the level of education between town and country more or less automatically arise.

For many years, public debate about geography in Sweden focused on regional imbalances.[5] But internal migration is not the only factor that affects the character of Swedish towns and cities. First and foremost among the factors that have polarized urban areas is global mobility, which has led to local segregation. This has been the focus of discussions of geography in the 1990s, a debate which will doubtless continue for years to come.[6] The mobility that is of relevance to the present study may be characterized, as follows:[7]

- The international division of labor. The transition from the dominance of industrial production to the 'service society' has given rise to a dualism in the labor market, where demand for labor is greatest among the highly educated and/or skilled and unskilled labor, respectively. As a consequence, large portions of the traditional working class are left out.
- Changes in the focus of welfare policy. The welfare state was previously geared toward integration, but as the public sector have become increasingly decentralized and the choices available to individuals have multiplied, social differentiation has assumed a different character: social problems covary to a higher degree, so that one social problem now tends to lead to several other problems.
- International migration. The major differences in migration that have been observed since the 1970s have left their mark on patterns of residence on the local level. Among the characteristics of recent migration are an increasing number of nationalities in the flow of migrants, so that the cultural distances between Scandinavians and

the migrants have increased. Secondly, we observe an increasing polarization in terms of occupations and wages. Furthermore, there is an immanent drive toward concentration in migration itself, whereby recent immigrants want to be near their extended families and compatriots.

Together, the mobility that is taking place nationally and internationally means that cities, and particularly metropolitan areas, are growing. Metropolitan cities are considerably more heterogeneous than towns and smaller urban centers inasmuch as a metropole is more than a geographical unit. It comprises a number of smaller cultural units that are more distinct than in smaller communities. They are not easily grasped in their entirety.

Cultural geography is a collective term for a number of different geographies: e.g., social geography, demographics and architectural geography, economic geography, and political geography.[8] Social geography will be of especial relevance here.

A Social Geography of Today

The kind of polarization that previously characterized metropolitan cities is now observed everywhere in lesser communities, as well. Segregated residence is a feature of all kinds of communities in Sweden today, but the consequences of such segregation can be very different. In major cities, for example, segregated residence also means differentiated access to service, public and commercial.[9]

At the same time, segregation per se is nothing new in Sweden. There has always been social stratification that has led to people living in different parts of town and having different living conditions and opportunities. What is new is that this stratification today has such a pronounced ethnic dimension. Whereas we once spoke of social segregation *but* cultural homogeneity, we may now speak of a social *and* cultural segregation.[10]

Households having poorer economic and social resources tend to aggregate in neighborhoods that are less attractive than others. Typical characteristics of such neighborhoods are largeness of scale, unrest and anonymity.[11] Of this we may deduce that the stratification is a question not only of ethnicity, but also of class, i.e., social stratification, but that the two largely coincide – and furthermore, coincide with the individuals' job security.[12]

Explanations as to the origins of residential segregation vary, with different researchers pointing to different causal factors. Factors frequently mentioned are economic resources, class, education, gender and ethnicity. The importance assigned each varies, however, depending on one's choice of approach to the subject. One may well introduce factors like attitudes, values, norms and expectations into an analysis.[13]

All in all, residence sets a framework for social participation. Voting behavior and leisure activities are influenced by place of residence. Reading of morning newspapers is influenced, too.

Studying the Social Landscape

Studies taking their starting point in patterns of residence, which involve structure as well as cultural and social stratification, require an analysis of individual communities or aggegrates of data on the community level. A number of factors have led me to choose to analyze the city of Göteborg. Göteborg is large enough for such an analysis, yet it does not have the characterisics of metropole that Stockholm, alone among Swedish

cities, has. Still, it is large enough to exhibit important geographical differences and similarities and, furthermore, there are ample data to permit a meaningful analysis.[14] We have every reason to believe that the patterns identified in Göteborg are present in many other cities, both in Sweden and abroad.

The Social Urban Structure

The City of Göteborg is comprised of 21 districts. The districts differ widely, and the differences are not always intuitive from the point of view of geography. Low-income areas border on high-income areas. In Table 1 a number of social and economic factors are indicated for each district; the districts are ordered according to average personal income.

Table 1. *Some Distinguishing Features of Göteborg's Districts 2005*

District	Ave. personal income ('000 SEK)	Share immigrants (%)	Share welfare clients (% families)	Share higher education (%)	Share unemployd (%)	Health status (sick leave, days/yr)	Share living in the public housing sector (%)
Askim	292	9	2	35	4	28	0
Älvsborg	291	8	1	38	3	25	0
Torslanda	258	6	1	18	3	34	3
Örgryte	223	11	3	37	6	30	12
Kärra-Rödbo	221	11	3	11	5	43	0
Tynnered	221	17	7	22	6	46	24
Linnéstaden	218	13	5	41	6	33	14
Tuve-Säve	213	16	5	15	5	46	18
Centrum	210	14	3	42	6	28	23
Styrsö	205	4	3	24	4	38	4
Härlanda	202	12	4	34	7	33	21
Backa	190	24	7	14	7	54	32
Majorna	189	11	6	36	7	40	52
Lundby	188	20	8	21	7	44	22
Högsbo	176	14	5	24	6	48	33
Kortedala	168	27	11	16	9	58	47
Frölunda	161	22	9	18	8	58	59
Biskopsgården	157	36	14	12	10	63	45
Lärjedalen	146	44	27	11	12	52	54
Gunnared	144	46	25	11	12	61	68
Bergsjön	117	51	31	11	13	59	42
Average Göteborg	200	20	8	26	7	42	29

Note: "Health status" is measured in terms of the per capita payments of public sick benefits (days per person) in the population aged 16-64 years; "unemployed" refers to those lacking gainful employment, including those engaged in public works programs; "higher education" refers to individuals having at least three years' education after secondary school; "immigrants" is defined as all foreign-born, whether Swedes or citizens of other countries.

Source: City of Göteborg: *Göteborgsbladet* April 2005.

The pattern that emerges is very clear and, with few exceptions, linear. Bergsjön and Askim represent the extremes. The average resident of Askim earns more than twice as much as the average resident of Bergsjön, is considerably healthier, lives in a single-family dwelling and, for the most part, has never had to turn to the community for fi-

nancial aid. The average resident of Bergsjön, by contrast, has a very low income and often needs financial aid; he or she has no post-secondary education, does not have a steady job, rents his or her apartment and has many days of sick leave each year.[15]

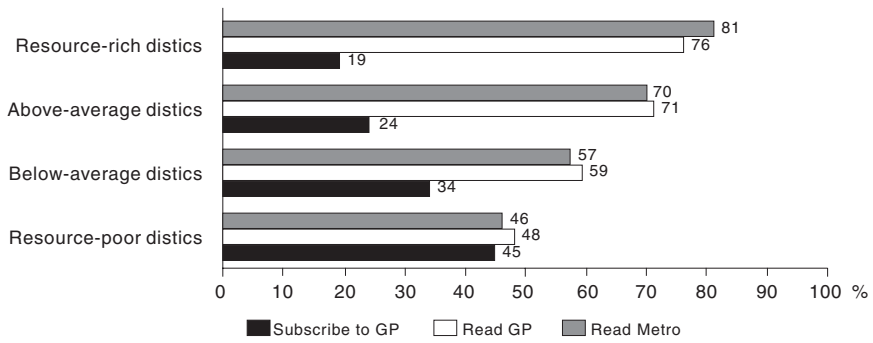
How important are our socio-geographic surroundings? Very important. The surrounding environment creates the framework that makes us feel "at home". We are more familiar with some places than others, and that familiarity puts us at ease.[16] What is important need not necessarily be our domicile, it might equally be our workplace, for example. At the same time, home is the setting for our formative years, and even later we spend a lot of our time there. That is where our children spend their days, that is where we visit the doctor and where we shop for our food. Large cities are difficult to survey; the neighborhood or district therefore becomes our frame of reference, what we identify with.[17] Different surroundings set the framework for different subcultures and lifestyles. The various lifestyles that can develop will not be discussed here; suffice it to say that expectations, restrictions, opportunities and reality covary with where we live. What is possible for a 15-year-old in Älvsborg or Askim is not always possible in Bergsjön. It is a question of economic resources, but also of cultural capital, of habitus.[18]

Newspapers in the Social Structure

Thus, it is not whether one lives in the northern or southern parts of town, but rather characteristics of the neighborhood or district that are important. In order to obtain as stable a basis as possible, an index was created on the basis of the different districts' characteristics. Instead of 21 districts, we obtain four groups of districts that may be distinguished in terms of the amount of resources at residents' disposal.[19] Residents of the wealthier districts have a lot of both economic and cultural capital, whereas residents of the poorest districts lack both kinds of capital. There are two intermediate groups, as well.

Göteborgs-Posten is the only subscribed local newspaper in the Göteborg region. Alongside it since 1998 is *Metro,* a free daily distributed mornings. *Göteborgs-Posten* regularly reaches about 65 per cent of the population, and *Metro* about 25 per cent of the region as a whole.[20] Figure 1 shows both how subscriptions and reading of the respective newspapers have developed throughout the Göteborg region.

Figure 1. *Subscriptions and Regular Reading of Newspapers in Different Types of Districts of Göteborg, 2004 (per cent)*



Note: "Regular reading" means reading 4 or more days/week.

Source: Västsvenska SOM-undersökningen 2004, an annual survey conducted in Western Sweden, in the population aged 15-85 years.

Subscription and reading of a subscribed paper correlate closely in all districts. In resource-rich districts like Askim or Älvsborg three out of four residents read *Göteborgs-Posten* regularly – and they subscribe to the paper. *Metro* is not a particularly attractive alternative. But among residents in Gunnared, Lärjedalen or Bergsjön residents are as likely (or unlikely) to read *Metro* as *Göteborgs-Posten.* Just under half the population in these districts read *Göteborg-Posten* regularly.

Figure 1 only tells us about reading of the two papers at a certain point in time; it tells us nothing about either total reading or changes in reading habits over time. The figures do not tell us, for example, whether the same half of the population in a given category of districts read both newspapers or half the residents read one paper, and half the other. Nor do they tell us anything about the impact entry of the free daily onto the market in the late 1990s had. Was reading of *Göteborgs-Posten* considerably more common in the poor districts of Göteborg before *Metro* came on the scene, that is, was total reading about the same, but some residents simply switched to the free daily? Subscription prices are a common motive among those considering quitting a subscription; the free daily, *Metro,* provided a convenient alternative.

In order to form an opinion about *Metro's* impact we need to examine newspaper reading over an extended period of time, and preferably start our analysis before *Metro* made its debut. The many figures in Table 2 show two things: (1) how reading of individual titles has changed over time in districts with different resource status, and (2) the trend in newspaper reading *per se* in the respective categories of districts.

First of all, we see a total measure of newspaper reading. Most interesting is the Difference column, which indicates *Metro's* contribution to the total. The categories of districts differ widely in this respect: in Askim and other resource-rich districts *Metro's* contribution is very slight, whereas in Bergsjön and other resource-poor districts, the increment is sizable. This pattern has been noted since *Metro* first entered the market. Thus, it is wrong to assume that many people in poorer districts formerly read *Göteborgs-Posten,* but switched to *Metro* when the opportunity presented itself. Instead, it appears that reading of *Göteborgs-Posten* had already reached "rock bottom" when *Metro* appeared on the scene.

The most remarkable feature, however, is that the frequency of newspaper reading in resource-poor districts, thanks to *Metro,* is today almost as high as newspaper reading in wealthy districts. People who have not had a morning newspaper now have one. The two intermediate categories fall between the extremes in this respect, as well.

A conceivable explanation might be that a greater share of the residents of resource-poor districts use public transportation and therefore have more direct access to *Metro* than others, who do not use public transportation to the same extent. This is not so, however. Use of public transportation is relatively evenly distributed over all districts of the city.[21]

As for individual papers, *Metro* has strengthened its position, in wealthier districts, as well. This does not result in a major increment, however, since most readers also read *Göteborgs-Posten.* In these wealthier areas we also find subscribers to the Stockholm morning papers, *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet,* and the nationally distributed business daily, *Dagens Industri* – which are not included in the analysis. None of these titles reach enough readers to be considered rivals on the local market.

Table 2. *Reading of Different Newspapers in Different Types of Districts in Göteborg, 1996-2004 (per cent)*

	A morning paper excl. Metro	A morning paper incl. Metro	Difference	Göteborgs-Posten	Metro	Number of respondents
Resource-rich districts						
1996	86	–	–	83	–	230
1997	88	–	–	86	–	218
1998	82	83	1	77	8	221
1999	79	82	3	75	12	257
2000	79	84	5	78	11	253
2001	84	90	6	83	16	261
2002	76	85	9	75	18	267
2003	83	89	6	80	19	261
2004	78	87	9	76	19	250
Above-average districts						
1996	82	–	–	76	–	351
1997	81	–	–	74	–	331
1998	75	82	7	70	15	294
1999	74	82	8	69	19	327
2000	75	85	10	71	20	310
2001	73	80	7	70	19	335
2002	74	81	7	70	19	313
2003	71	81	10	69	22	324
2004	73	84	11	71	24	322
Below-average districts						
1996	70	–	–	64	–	233
1997	74	–	–	69	–	256
1998	64	76	12	58	21	241
1999	72	80	8	66	20	268
2000	66	79	13	63	23	273
2001	67	80	13	64	27	275
2002	65	81	16	63	32	271
2003	62	80	18	60	33	255
2004	62	82	20	59	34	281
Resource-poor districts						
1996	56	–	–	53	–	184
1997	54	–	–	49	–	205
1998	57	76	19	50	31	165
1999	57	73	16	53	29	203
2000	55	77	22	50	37	195
2001	59	81	22	55	37	216
2002	49	74	25	47	41	193
2003	53	78	25	48	42	212
2004	50	79	29	48	45	218

Source: Västsvenska SOM-undersökningen respectively year.

Residential Careers'

The concept of making residential careers' is well known in cultural geography. When people move, change their addresses, it generally has to do with changes in their life cycle – marriage, having children – but there is also another kind of residential careers where some groups are considerably more mobile than others.[22]

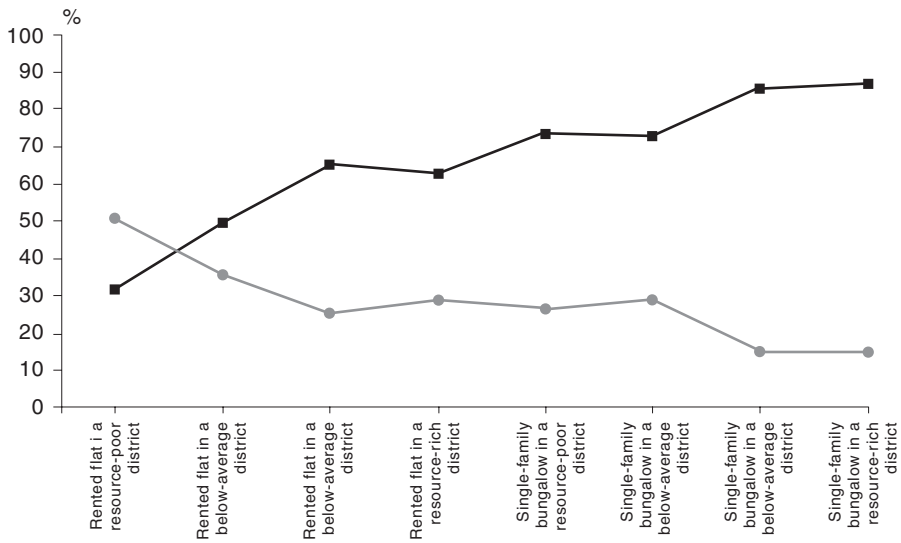
Most immigrants do not reach as far in their 'careers' as native Swedes. Upon arrival in Sweden immigrants generally lack economic resources, contacts, and information about housing alternatives, how they work and don't work. The first offer they receive generally comes from the community housing authority and involves a flat in one of the mass housing projects of the 1960s and 1970s. Once installed there, conservative forces start working in the direction of segregation rather than integration; they militate against a residential career.[23]

One factor behind the phenomenon is economic, but it also has to do with opportunities and limitations that are built into the structure – all of which have consequences with respect to our media consumption. If we combine our analysis of different categories of districts with a categorization of type of housing, the pattern observed earlier is accentuated. In Figure 2 we have a hypothetical residential career on the x-axis in the form of a rented flat and a single-family bungalow, respectively, in the different categories of districts.[24] This is a hypothetical example, which may not exist exactly like this in reality, but it is nonetheless illustrative.

If we accept the pattern on the x-axis as a plausible residential career, the path of the traditional paid morning paper follows it quite closely. The further along in our career, the more likely we are to read a subscribed newspaper. And vice versa: Metro plays a major role at the start of a residential career, but then declines in importance.

Many other factors are naturally at play here: the population in single-family dwellings is older, for example, particularly in well-to-do districts. Even so, the pattern is quite distinct.

Figure 2. *Reading of Different Newspapers by Housing Situation and Type of District, Göteborg 2003/2004 (per cent)*



Note: Reading is defined as reading four or more issues a week. Reading of GP and Metro, respectively, overlaps. The number of responses varies between 94 and 313.

Source: Västsvenska SOM-undersökningen 2003 and 2004 (two sets of data have been combined to improve the quality of the results).

Metro is considerably stronger than Göteborgs-Posten in one particular category, namely, tenants in blocks of flats in poor districts. Otherwise, Göteborgs-Posten predominates, and the gap between the two titles widens as we progress along the residential career. Overall, however, we find indications of an interest in reading a newspaper among residents of poor districts, as well – but not if they have to pay for it.

The Class Hierarchy Lingers on

So far, we have considered horizontal stratification: different parts of the city may be characterized according to the social and economic status of the people who live there – and all that implies. Now we turn to look at vertical stratification, that is, we shift our focus to the hierarchical differentiation in individual districts.[25] Although structures have successively become less pronounced, social class still has significance in Swedish society. Place of residence is one aspect of social stratification, but social class, too, is an important factor.

Social stratification based on class is essentially a question of economic resources: disposable income, wealth, property, occupation, education, access to other kinds of material resources. But it also has to do with access to cultural expression: the Arts, theatre and so forth. Class society is reproduced within the family, and thus the structures and our class perspective are imprinted early in life.[26] One might say that class is an individual characteristic, whereas place of residence is a structural one. The two covary closely, however. The number of highly educated individuals who choose to live in poor districts is relatively small, just as rather few members of the working class reside in wealthy districts. All combinations do exist, however, and the question is, which characteristic exerts the stronger influence on newspaper reading and choice of newspaper.

Figure 3 shows the results of an analysis of the resource-richest and resource-poorest districts of Göteborg (the intermediate districts have been excluded). A second factor

Figur 3. *Reading of Morning Newspapers among Individuals in Working Class and White-collar/Academic Households in Wealthy and Poor Districts of Göteborg, Respectively, 2003/2004 (percentages)*

	Wealthy districts			Poor districts		
	Working class households	White collar./acad. households	Difference	Working class households	White collar./acad. households	Difference
Read morning paper (Metro excluded)	68	87	19	45	68	23
Read morning paper (Metro included)	81	92	11	76	86	10
Difference	13	5		31	18	

Note: "Read" means reading of 4 or more issues a week. Class affiliation is self-reported. The number of responses in the respective cells varies between 120 and 300.

Source: Västsvenska SOM-undersökningen 2003 and 2004 (two sets of data have been combined to improve the quality of the results).

is (self-reported) social class. The third factor is reading of a morning newspaper, with the free daily, Metro, included and excluded, respectively.

First of all, we can compare the figures within each set of districts. In wealthier districts we find the greatest difference in newspaper reading (19 percentage points) between working class and white collar/academic households when reading of Metro is excluded. About the same difference (23 points) is found between the two groups in resource-poor districts. In the poorer districts, however, we find the most marked difference (31 points) among working class households, with Metro included and not included as a morning newspaper, respectively.

A second kind of comparison may be made between the same cells in the respective categories of districts, e.g., working-class households in resource-poor and resource-rich districts, respectively, and differences in reading of morning papers when Metro is included versus when it is not included. We note the biggest difference (23 percentage points) between the cells in the upper left-hand corner of each side, that is, between working-class households when Metro is not included: working-class families that reside in resource-rich districts appear to be more influenced by the "norm" of reading a morning paper than working-class families living in resource-poor districts. The same pattern is noted among individuals who consider themselves "white collar or academic" when Metro is not included, but the difference is not as marked, and the overall level (share reading) is much higher than among the working class.

A third comparison focuses on the extreme cases. The one extreme is working-class households in a resource-poor district, if Metro does not qualify as a morning paper. In this case, somewhat less than half the group read a morning paper regularly. The other extreme is white-collar/academic households in a resource-rich district, where Metro is included among morning papers. Here, regular reading is as high as 90 per cent, nearly double the rate in the former case. What we see here is that working-class families in resource-poor districts are weakest in terms of access to a morning newspaper.

Working-class families in resource-rich districts display largely the same newspaper-reading behavior as white-collar/academic families; the culture of the district "spills over". Conversely, white-collar/academic households in poorer districts are not entirely in line with the prevailing pattern in the district. Thus, both individual and structural stratification factors play a role – and, furthermore, often reinforce one another. Consider, for example, the pattern observed with regard to newspaper reading and residential career.

Structures and Cultures

In terms of geography, resource-rich and poor districts of Göteborg live literally side by side. The borders, while not razor-sharp, are often clear-cut. All geographical units have internal structures and patterns that reinforce one another. To exaggerate slightly, we might speak of positive and negative spirals. Or, to borrow from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu: we all bear our own particular habitus.[27] Although Swedish society of today is more individualistic than ever before, structures live on, and with them subcultures. Newspaper reading patterns of the kind discussed here – where reading/non-reading of newspapers is closely related to social and ethnic stratification[28] – were manifest in the USA decades before they were first observed in Sweden.

These structures and patterns will prevail unless restraining thresholds are removed – as in the case of the free daily, Metro, where the cost of a newspaper constituted the threshold. Interest in reading a paper existed; otherwise, Metro could hardly have at-

tained the penetration is has today. Another contributing factor is most likely Metro's form and style of address, with short bulletin-style stories that appeal to new readers who may find other newspapers too 'heavy'.[29]

The consequences of segregation in urban settings in a broader societal perspective is far too big a question to be broached here, but some of the consequences for the community, for individual companies and for reading of newspapers in hard copy may be mentioned:

> Long-enough gone, the segregated city can break down the cohesive mortar that allows its residents to develop a more or less common sense of "we", just as major regional differences in living conditions can challenge the legitimacy of the nation state.[30]

Local newspapers are often spoken of as a cohesive factor – one, however, that is not equally present in all the rooms of the city.[31] Or, is it perhaps a misrepresentation to say that some of the city's rooms are left out? Such a statement is based on the notion that the only true newspaper is a paid newspaper. There are other ways of looking at the branch.

From a commercial point of view, the start of a daily free daily is not necessarily positive, inasmuch as the free daily represents a rival, albeit on the margin. From the point of view of the local community, however, a free daily may be seen as a bridge-builder, something that transcends the inner frontiers in a segregated society. The cohesive mortar is not of the same consistency, but unless we are prepared to dismiss large numbers of people's choices, we have to accept that different kinds of mortar may do the job.

Notes

1. E.g., Stigendal (1999).
2. Cf. Bourdieu (1989); Dear & Wolch (1989); Giddens (1997); Lull (1995); Stigendal (1999).
3. Gustafsson & Rydén (2000); Severinsson (1996).
4. See, for example, Den svenska pressens historia, band II [A History of the Swedish Press. Vol. 2] (2001).
5. Ahrne et al (1996); Andersson (2000); cf. Sibley (1999).
6. Andersson (2000); cf. Johansson (2003). For an international comparision, see Cousins (2005) i.a.
7. Andersson et al (1998); cf. Inglehart (1990); Schön (2000); Sernhede (2003).
8. Berger (1995)
9. Andersson (2000); Andersson et al (1998); Stigendal (1999); cf. Ahrne (1996); Dear & Wolch (1989).
10. Cf. Ahrne (1996).
11. E.g. Johansson (2003); Sandstig (2003).
12. Magnusson (2000); Stigendal (1999); cf. Bourdieu (1989).
13. See, for example, Dear & Wolch (1989); Molina (2003); Sibley (1999).
14. See, for example, Nord & Nygren (2002) and Wadbring (2003) for similar studies of Stockholm and Stigendal (1999) for a study of Malmö, which, however, does not include media.
15. The indicators are hardly a flawless mirrors of reality. For example, lengthy periods of illness or convalescence and lengthy periods of unemployment have more serious consequences than a day or two at home with the flu or "a few days off" between jobs. But, the differences between the communities are clear enough, even without considering the chronic dimension.
16. Molina (2003); cf. Nordström (1986); Sandstig (2003).
17. E.g., Janowitz (1967); cf. Dear & Wolch (1989).
18. Bourdieu (1989); cf. Johansson (2003).
19. The index is a composite of rankings of different characteristics of the districts into four groups of about the same size.
20. Bergström & Weibull (2005).

21. Wadbring (2003).
22. Andersson et al. (1998), Mörck (1997); cf. Magnusson (2000).
23. Molina (2003).
24. Forms of housing that involve some form of co-ownership have been excluded as they are too few to produce reliable results.
25. Johansson (2003).
26. Cf. Ahrne (1996), Bourdieu (1986), Giddens (1998), Inglehart (1990).
27. Bourdieu (1989).
28. Cf. Bogart (1981). Age, of course, is another important factor.
29. Reichenberg & Wadbring (2004).
30. Andersson (2000:223f, my translation).
31. Weibull (2000) For a discussion of the role of the media in making Sweden Swedish, see Löfgren (1990).

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Media Institutions as a Research Field

Three Phases of Norwegian Broadcasting Research

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Abstract

The article discusses the background and origins of research on media institutions as a field, and especially assesses the development and status of Norwegian research on broadcasting institutions. It is demonstrated how the field has developed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, through three key phases: the era of broadcasting monopolies; the "new media situation" in the 1980s and 1990s; and the era of convergence; globalization and commercialization from the late 1990s. A key purpose is to discuss the theoretical perspectives and implicit and explicit assumptions upon which the research is based. Further, the article points to shortcomings and gaps in our knowledge of how media institutions evolve and operate. In closing, it is suggested how the field may maintain its relevance in an era where the very concept of a "broadcasting institution" is becoming more blurred.

Key Words: media institutions, broadcasting, Norway, research overview

Introduction

Research on media institutions has expanded significantly over the past three decades. This article discusses the background and origins of the field, and especially assesses the development and status of *Norwegian research on broadcasting institutions*. We demonstrate how the field has developed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, through three key phases: the era of broadcasting monopolies; the "new media situation" in the 1980s and 1990s; and the era of convergence; globalization and commercialization from the late 1990s. A key purpose is to discuss the theoretical perspectives and implicit and explicit assumptions upon which the research is based. We further point to shortcomings and gaps in our knowledge of how media institutions evolve and operate. In closing, we suggest how the field may maintain its relevance in an era where the very concept of a "broadcasting institution" is becoming more blurred.

Institutions: Concepts and Research

In order to discuss research on broadcasting institutions it is necessary to clarify how we understand the concept of *institution*. Like all key terms in the social sciences, it possesses several meanings. By a traditional sociological account, an institution is defined through key characteristics such as the *presence of professions*, *formal procedures* and *permanence*. Hierarchies of employees master and maintain different aspects of an organization's affairs, functions and practices are established as formal rules of conduct,

and these hierarchies and rules are stable and lasting (Østerberg 1994: 85). Yet, it is important not to focus exclusively on the material and physical manifestations of institutions. They also represent immaterial aspects – norms, interpretations, values, discourses and ideas circulating within and around specific social practices (Eide 1999: 24).

Obviously, it is necessary to apply further demarcations when approaching institutions as concrete objects of research. An important division seems to lie between understanding institutions as *spheres* – encompassing a number of organizations and practices (the family, the arts) – and understanding institutions as *specific organizations* (The BBC, The Microsoft Corporation, The UN). This indicates two approaches within research on media institutions. When regarding institutions as spheres, we study authorities, practices and discourses common to the media industry at large: the cultural and democratic functions of the media, its legal and normative framework, journalistic norms and conventions, and so on. In terms of specific organizations, we look at media institutions in a more limited way: specific newspapers, media enterprises, advertising agencies, and broadcasting corporations.

In this article we essentially concentrate on the second meaning of the term: media institutions as specific media organizations or enterprises. This demarcation is necessary to provide a clear focus for discussion. But the limits are not absolute, here, as in other parts of media studies, different research fields overlap and converge. It is neither required nor possible to clearly separate specific organizations from the larger set of practices and discourses surrounding them.

The Origins of Media Institution Research

The body of research on media institutions dates back to the 1960s. As everyone familiar with the history of the field will recognize, media research in the social sciences was at that time mostly preoccupied with *effects,* and with how audiences used the media. Gradually, however, researchers began to investigate the chain of communication "backwards" – from *receiver* to *message* to *sender* – in the terminology of a basic linear communication model. This process did not entail a breach with the reception orientation per se – potential and actual "effects" were still seen as the most interesting aspect of the media – but it was considered valuable to investigate the organizational sources and "causes" of such effects (McQuail 1994: 185). This, then, is a first backdrop for the initiation of media institution research.

One example of how the effect orientation – even in the late 1970s – functioned as an overall justification and point of reference for research on institutions can be found in Helge Østbye's report on Norwegian broadcasting from 1977. The report is a comprehensive survey of the operation, organization and programme production of the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK, and deals with every aspect but effects. Nevertheless, in the preface, Østbye (1977: i) writes that "the disposition of the report builds on Lasswell's famous five-part question: Who Says what To whom In which channel And with what effect?"

The second reason why researchers in the 1960s and 1970s began to show an interest in "sender organizations" is more ideological. Critical researchers wanted to delve behind the media's self-legitimating discourses referring to freedom of speech, democracy, and social responsibility, and wanted to demonstrate that media institutions were part of society's ideological machinery of power. Earlier descriptions of the media's

norms and functions had, with some exceptions, been strongly pluralistic, and largely sustained the self-image of the (Western) press (see, for example Siebert et al. 1956). The new critical approach brought an interest in how media messages were produced, and the economic and political constraints that influenced production. Here too, the idea of effects was significant, but in a different manner than within classical audience research: the decisive question was to which degree media affected the individual's perception of reality in an ideological sense – the so-called "ideological effect" (Hall 1977; also Murdoch and Golding 1977; Allern 1992).

A third backdrop for the origin of media institution research can be found in studies of journalism. This research has its roots in the early 20th century, and did from the beginning apply an agency-oriented approach. The individual qualities of the journalist were regarded as the primary explanatory factor for media content, most succinctly expressed in the tradition of the journalist as "gatekeeper" (White 1950; see Eide 1992 for an overview). From the late 1970s, demands came for a more structural approach. In a much-quoted article Elliott (1977) points to "vast gaps" in our knowledge of how media messages were produced, how media organizations were organized and managed, and how journalists were recruited and socialized. At the time of writing, Elliott and others were undertaking analyses of these very processes. A number of studies on *news production* were published towards the end of the 1970s – studies still regarded as classics in the field (among others Epstein 1973; Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979; Burns 1977; Schlesinger 1978; Golding and Elliott 1979). The mid-1980s brought several Norwegian contributions in this tradition (Siverts 1984; Klausen 1986; also Puijk 1990).

A fourth reason for the emergence of media institution research is simply the need for background and chronology. This has generated two modes of presentation useful for any media researcher: the collection of facts and the institutional history. Anyone venturing into a new field of research will recognize the importance of works establishing and summarizing the background and chronology of the phenomenon in question. When this information is hard to obtain, the researcher must engage in a fair share of detailed labour before even embarking on the actual analysis. Fortunately, there is a rather strong external demand for accounts of this nature. For instance, Norway got its first collected account of its media institutions as a result of a government-commissioned report on power in the 1970s (NOU 1982:30), the first history of the public broadcaster NRK was commissioned by the institution itself (Dahl 1975, 1978; Dahl and Bastiansen 1999) and the history of Norwegian journalism was written in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Norwegian Press Association (Ottosen 1996). The history of "moving pictures in Norway" was made possible by a special grant from the Norwegian Research Council, who considered it an initiative of national importance (Dahl et al. (eds.) 1996).

Research on Norwegian Broadcasting Institutions

We turn now to a specific investigation into *Norwegian research on broadcasting institutions.* The purpose is to map the development of research on one kind of media institutions in one country, thereby attempting to say something about how this relates to the "roots" as well as to future challenges in field. The discussion will be characterized by our own interests in the field of broadcasting research; to some extent it is a description from "the inside" – with the subsequent lack of distance to the object in question. This limitation entails that the presented evaluations first and foremost should

be considered as points for further discussion, rather than an attempt to establish a final statement of the field's development.

The most obvious trait of research on radio and television institutions in Norway since the late 1970s is the substantial increase in its *mass* and *quality*. Works registered in Nordicom's databases (www.nordicom .gu.se) as research on broadcasting institutions in Norway up to the mid-1980s, are almost exclusively official documents, and short speeches and discussion papers from the NRK or other media organizations (there are important exceptions to this norm, of which a few have already been mentioned). From the late 1980s on, however, a small explosion takes place. Not only are more and more genuine research reports emerging between all the short lectures and proceedings – substantial contributions also come from within the growing student mass. In the autumn of 1986, the first master course in media studies is launched at the University of Bergen, and shortly afterwards a similar course is launched at the University of Oslo. From this point on term papers, master theses and a shortly also PhD dissertations make a considerable addition to the field.

When dividing the relevant research into phases or generations – as is common in overviews of this kind – it seems natural to make a division somewhere around the mid-1980s. Works produced prior to this point may be considered as "first generation". These are influenced by the tendencies emphasized above – first and foremost the desire to study the sender in the communication process, to present facts and institutional histories. This corresponds to other divisions within media research. Scannell and Cardiff (1991), for instance, talk of generations in research on broadcasting history: the first worked on background, chronology and context, while the next was more preoccupied with explaining the processes behind the produced content. Nevertheless, in relation to research on Norwegian radio and television institutions, establishing a generation gap of this kind is not entirely suitable. Not only has the research community changed over the past decades, so has also the object of study. The entire institutional organization of broadcasting in Norway has undergone great changes in the same period.

This primarily means that the need for "first generation research" does not end with the conclusion of the first surveys. On the contrary, the emergence of each new broadcasting institution, and every change in the institutional order, create a new void in the knowledge base. Furthermore, changes in one field often engender greater interest in that which was, or that which is in the process of disappearing. Within the field in question, this is distinctly expressed by a renewed interest in broadcasting history from the 1990s (see for instance Totland 1992; Eide 1993; Theisen 1993; Bastiansen 1995; Bastiansen and Syvertsen 1996; Dahl et al. 1996; Bakøy 2002; Hake 2006).

Consequently, all broadcasting research conducted in Norway over the past almost 30 years can in a certain sense be characterized as "first generation research". It is research that regardless of theoretical approach aims to document processes and institutional traits formerly unanalyzed. In order to categorize the research into phases, it is therefore more productive to separate on a thematic basis. A pragmatic labelling can for instance be established between three phases: first, works analyzing the state-owned broadcaster in the monopoly era; second, studies addressing the alterations brought on by the liberalization in the 1980s, and third, research focused on the fragmentation and convergence within the broadcasting sector apparent from the late 1990s. In the following we employ these three phases to identify differences in ambitions and perspectives between the various contributions. To a certain extent the phases represent three "generations" of research on broadcasting institutions in Norway, but the classification – as

will be demonstrated – is far from absolute. As such, it is more sensible to talk of several generations within each subfield of study. Also, as will become clear, the emergence of a new phase does not mean the end of interest in the themes of a former.

Phase I: Researching the NRK in the Monopoly Era

The research on the state-owned broadcaster in the monopoly era mainly comprises institutional history and collections of facts. Scientifically speaking, this research is characterized by great attention to detail and great ambition to present a complete picture. Ambitions are equally low in terms of theory and perspectives. The works often lack attention to a specific problem beyond providing an overview. A good example can again be found in Østbye's (1977) report, encompassing over 350 information-packed pages. The preface states that apart from serving its purpose as background for a government-commissioned investigation,

> [t]he author hopes that the report might serve a wider purpose. It contains quite a lot of information about Norwegian broadcasting. Even though most of this information is available elsewhere, there *may* be need for a collection of relatively well established facts about the NRK. Radio and television are important to many, and in my opinion the debate concerning this significant field of social life will benefit from the further dissemination of some information about the institution NRK (Østbye 1977: i).

The report is obviously useful for anyone with the slightest interest in broadcasting. Nevertheless, its intent is presented almost apologetically.

The three-volume work on the history of the NRK (Dahl 1975, 1978; Dahl and Bastiansen 1999) and the many studies upon which this presentation is based (see references above to master theses on the history of broadcasting), is another example. The presentation of the history of the NRK is an ambitious and comprehensive historical work, and it represents a substantial contribution to Norwegian media research. However, the intention is primarily to produce a presentation on which others can expand. In the preface to the third volume, which represents the culmination of more than 20 years' work across hundreds of pages, the authors offer the following modest manifesto:

> The intent of this presentation is to provide the first collective account of the history of Norwegian radio and television, and thereby establish the chronology of media development. To establish the actual chronology of things, and thereby discover the cause and effect of these events – and their chains of events or stages – has been a constant guiding principle. [...] Should this book provide nothing more than a chronological framework for further studies in radio and television, the object has nevertheless been obtained (Dahl and Bastiansen 1999: 10).

A modest theoretical level of ambition is no prerequisite, even for fact-based or historical presentations. The 1990s do bring accounts of broadcasting history with a more distinctive theoretical perspective, and a greater will to attach historical analysis to general research-traditions within film and media studies (see for instance Bakøy 2002). This could indicate a transition from first to second generation research within this particular area, but so far there are few Norwegian contributions to broadcasting history with such an approach. On the other hand, several recent works add to first generation historical studies, while incorporating also the post-monopoly era: Bastiansen and Dahl

(2003) provide one contribution in their general media history text book; Halse and Østbye (2003) offer another in the first one volume account of Norwegian broadcasting history.

Whatever the principal perspective, a distinct commonality can be identified in every analysis in this first phase. The relationship between the NRK and the state dominates over the broadcaster's relationship with all other clusters of power. Economic motives and market influence play a rather modest role, and to the extent that relations between commercial interests and the broadcaster are discussed, these are commonly described as more harmonious than the broadcasters' relation to the political sphere. For Østbye (1977), the relationships with industry are generally characterized by "cooperation", "mutual problems" and "good contact".

Phase II: Researching "The New Media Situation"

From the mid-1980s, deregulation, liberalization and the advent of multi channel television become central themes for media research in Norway, as elsewhere. A new generation of students and researchers are drawn to media departments, and for this generation, the changes in broadcasting become one of the major fields of interest. The trend can be compared to student's fascination with the Internet and multimedia in the late 1990s and mobile telephony in the 2000s. Just as the approaches to Internet and mobile telephones are numerable, so were approaches to broadcasting in the 1980s. A closer look of the research shows, however, that some perspectives and approaches were preferred more systematically than others.

The fascination with the new media situation first of all entails a renewed interest in the *driving forces* behind media development. Cultural and political interests are no longer the focal point. The research is more occupied with technology and the market. Policy-makers are described as powerless rather than powerful, and the relation between broadcasters and the industry looses its harmonic character. The market no longer consists of national radio factories and an innocent record industry. Instead, we are dealing with "international software producers", "global financial interests," and "transnational media and advertising empires".

While research on the first phase depended mostly on written sources and documents, research on the second phase is characterized by a high degree of methodological pluralism. It is not unusual to combine methods from the social sciences and humanities, and document analyses, interviews, observations, statistical methods, and textual analyses are all applied. Drawing on structural theories of technological development and market economy, as well as normative perspectives on the public sphere and democratization, several analyses during the 1980s and 1990s examine how traditional entrenchments fall and how new media is established (among others Helland 1988; Skogerbø 1988, 1996; Lundby and Futsæter 1993; Syvertsen 1986, 1992). Attention to the changing conditions of broadcasting also contributes to the emergence of *media policy* as an independent field of interest. Sources of inspiration are here a more pluralistic sociology focusing on agents and their conditions (see Østbye 1995; Syvertsen 2004: ch. 3)

Starting from analyses of "new" technology and economic and political change, the studies now establish a chain of events from which the next natural step is to examine actual broadcasting institutions. The focus is on how institutions respond to the new situation. Within the institutions most attention is still paid to high status genres – particularly news and current affairs or cultural programming. Other genres or non-pro-

gramming departments receive little attention. Interest still lie in media institutions as *content producers* (and thus potentially *effect producers*), and studies of media institutions as *businesses* are far apart. Also, organizational research in the classical sense is lacking. What little there is is typically produced outside media departments and within political science or other fields (for instance Jacobsen 1992).

Interestingly, neither researchers nor students initially showed interest in *new* media institutions. Some studies of the more idealistic attempts at local radio and television (Kristiansen 1984; Skogerbø 1988) notwithstanding, almost all studies in this early period focuses on how the former monopoly institution NRK adapts to the new situation. Particularly noticeable is the fact that neither researchers nor master students choose to study the establishment phases of the many emerging commercial radio and television companies. Symptomatically, not until the NRK founds a second television channel do we get the first study this kind – and then again from outside the traditional field of media studies (Wennes 1997).

When comprehensive accounts of the new institutions start to materialize, they do so from within the institutions themselves: Rynning's (1996) book on the commercial niche broadcaster TVNorge – in which he was a founding figure – is more a personal story than a work of media research. The history of 20 years of local television is "not meant to be a theoretical work in the sense that it is related to theories of media studies", according to the author – himself an active participant in the development (Stene 2004: 7). Other contributions came surprisingly late: the first thorough accounts of the second large television company in Norway – TV2 – were published after it had been in business for a decade (Enli et al. (eds.) 2002; Dahl and Høyer 2003). In their wake, there may be a tendency for researchers to choose the TV2 as a case more frequently, for example when studying the use of news promos (Almaas 2005) or the consequences of ownership for media pluralism (as TV2 acquired shares in the new radio channel Kanal24) (Messel 2005). Studies of smaller independent programme producers, however, remain almost non-existent (but see Rinde 1999).

This does not mean that the TV2 and the other new companies are entirely absent from earlier contributions. But, to the extent they are analyzed, it is primarily in comparison with the NRK. This applies to Helland's (1993) study of news production in the TV3 and the NRK, and the corresponding comparison of the NRK and the TV2 (Sand and Helland 1998). Knutsen's (2000) analysis of music programming on the NRK's third radio channel and its commercial counterpart P4, and Syvertsen's (1997) study of the NRK and the TV2's strategy and programming policy, are further examples. Enli (1998) and Thomsen (2004) both compare the NRK's radio channels with new entrants – analyzing the production of current affairs programs and sports programming, respectively. The latter, and Eileng's (2002) study of competition for television programme rights between the NRK and the TV2, follow an increased focus on sports and the media (see for example Dahlén and Helland (eds.) 2002; Dahlén et al. (eds.) 2004).

A comparative perspective is almost always productive, and all these works provide vital contributions to the apprehension of new media institutions seen from the "inside". However, the NRK's position – and the overwhelming amount of information available on the public broadcaster compared to new institutions – may constitute a problem: there is a certain risk that comparisons are conducted on the stipulations of the established institution. Just as case studies of the new entrants was lacking for a long period, comparisons between newcomers only emerge later. After the year 2000 we get analyses of how market demands influence programming on commercial broadcasters TV2,

TVNorge and TV3 (Karlsen 2000), comparisons of scheduling on TVNorge and TV3 (Lia 2003), and of the strategies of two commercial radio licensees (Enli and Sundet forthcoming), to mention a few.

Seeing the research on the "new media situation" as a whole, conspicuously few studies compare broadcasting institutions and other media, other cultural producers, or other forms of organizations. Implicitly, the media research community appears to assume that broadcasting institutions are radically different from all other organizations and cannot be examined by using theories from other areas of organization research. The focus on broadcasting as such means that the studies construct a solid knowledge base within the media institution field, but that the insights attain a form which makes them less applicable to other cultural or social research. If media research is to play a role outside its own discipline, it could be argued, studies cannot limit themselves to just compare the NRK with a commercial competitor. Comparative organizational studies of the NRK and the former telecom monopoly Telenor, or the NRK and the universities for that matter, could yield interesting findings, and locate media studies more firmly within a wider field of cultural and political sciences.

A Functionalist Perspective?

One of the central research questions concerning the new media situation emerging in the late 1980s is thus: *how has the NRK adapted to competition and new political and economic conditions*? Already the phrasing of this question indicates the overall perspective of this research: change as *adaptation* to external constraints. Most of the studies appear to build on a relatively linear chain of events where external forces – technological, political and economic – upset a stable media situation and produce some form of "crisis" within the established institutions. From this perspective, the task of researchers is to document the specific adaptation strategies on various levels, be it change in departmental identity and formats (Puijk 1990); ideology or programming policy (Syvertsen 1992, 1997); news production and news ideology (Helland and Sand 1998); channel identity and branding (Ytreberg and Orgeret 1997); production forms and textual strategies (Ytreberg 1999); or target audience orientation (Bachman 1999), to name a few examples. To some extent, the same approach presupposing *reaction* is found in the later analyses of the commercial institutions: for instance, they concentrate on how the market influences programming (Karlsen 2000), or aims at identifying the contradictions inherent in the National Assembly's decision to set up a second television channel (Dahl and Høyer 2003).

Once again it is important to emphasize that we are dealing with comprehensive and important analyses, out of which some the later arrivals can be said to constitute a second generation perspective drawing on new theoretical traditions. Yet, it is interesting to note that the perspective that "change comes from the outside" hardly is questioned in any of these studies. This makes the implicit meta-theoretical model, on which these theories rest, somewhat functionalist. Society is an organism, and structural changes trigger isolated parts within the organism to transform and adapt to the new reality.

The perspective is quite different from the one applied in the more historical and fact-oriented research on the monopoly era. In these descriptions, the attitude of the broadcasting institution is more pro-active. The public broadcaster emerges as an agent with a large potential for changing its operational framework. Kjekstad, author of a historical study on the introduction of television in Norway (1974), for instance, sees the NRK

as the single most important agent in initialising decisive political processes. Similarly, Dahl and Bastiansen (1999) applies a perspective where internal developments in the institution during the 1970s become crucial for explaining the subsequent deregulation. It is probably true that an approach which focuses on the actions of the single broadcaster may be more adequate in the monopoly era, than in subsequent periods. Still, it is interesting that a perspective in which for example the NRK's actions are seen as causes of subsequent events are virtually absent from later research.

Legitimacy and Public Service Broadcasting

A final feature separating research on the NRK before and after the monopoly era is the shift of focus from political power relations to the institution's own efforts to maintain political *legitimacy*. The dominant relationship between the public broadcaster and the state is still present, yet there is an increasing recognition that the NRK – and similar broadcasting institutions – must gain wider support in order to defend their privileges. Indeed, public broadcasters find themselves in a unique position where they have to compete for ratings in a market, and at the same time demonstrate that they are distinctly different from commercial operators.

The degree to which the NRK manages this balance becomes a main focal point in many studies. It can be found in analyses of organizational strategies of legitimacy and, as in Ytreberg's thesis (1999; also Ytreberg 2002a), in analyses of textual changes and of how "the sender organization" applies various forms of authority in its form of address. This body of research, however, demonstrates that the need for political legitimacy not only affects the state-owned broadcaster, but also new entrants in the market. This point is made in Helland's thesis (1993) – he argues that the desire to achieve political support was the key reason why the commercial broadcaster TV3 at all cared to establish a news service. Syvertsen's (1997) analysis of the TV2, and Enli and Sundet's (forthcoming) analysis of radio channels P4 and Kanal24, shows that a degree of political legitimacy is a necessity also for private institutions struggling to achieve favourable conditions in a market where political privileges still count.

Another effect of the interest in legitimating strategies is that the concept "public service broadcasting" increases in importance – to the extent that some regard it as the defining feature of the research field. Søndergaard (1996), for instance, uses "public service research" as a collective term for all Nordic research on institutional changes in broadcasting. While "public service" hardly is mentioned in research on the monopoly era, the term is virtually omnipresent in the research in this second phase (for an overview see Syvertsen 1990; Carlson (ed.) 1999). Indeed, it seems that the term "public service" is sometimes used to give research on specific national institutions an illusion of generalizability.

To assess the extent to which "public service broadcasting" in one country is similar or different from other countries, however, we need thorough comparative studies. These have been few and far between, both in Norway and internationally. Syvertsen (1992) and Fossum (1994) – analyzing public television in Norway and Great Britain, and public radio in Norway and Denmark respectively – are two Norwegian exceptions. The work of the Euromedia Group is an important ongoing international initiative, which for one thing provides basic data about national media systems (see for instance McQuail and Siune (eds.) 1998; Kelly et al. (eds.) 2004). However, there is a broad consensus about the lack of maturity in comparative media and communication research

in general (Livingstone 2003; Gurevitch and Blumler 2004). In this sense, research on Norwegian broadcasting institutions does not stand out: there is still a great deal of catching-up to do.

Phase III: Convergence, Globalization and Commercialization

From the second part of the 1990s, broadcasting institutions are again facing drastic changes. The changes are generally identified with the advent of digital technology – predicted to bring convergence of markets, services, networks and terminals. Related, and just as important, are the processes of globalization and a continued commercialization. The former – in which the media take a central role – affect all parts of broadcasting, from media politics through to the patterns of use. The latter development – following recurring re-regulation processes – means increased competition on new arenas, potentially leading to additional fragmentation of audiences. The transition marks the advent of a new phase for research on broadcasting institutions. Three main tendencies can be identified in early studies.

First, there is a tendency of increased attention to media economics. While economic perspectives have been prominent in press research, broadcasting organizations have rather been viewed as *cultural institutions* elevated above the material reality. New systems for ordering and financing programmes; an uncertain future for traditional license- and advertisement funding; competition over sports events and movies; the increased use of sponsorship, product placement and merchandising; "outsourcing" and "downsizing" in the traditional broadcasting institutions; and a constant drive towards profit maximization within the entire private broadcasting sector; all these examples demonstrate that media-economic perspectives cannot be avoided if we are to understand the changes in the field. Though few studies concentrate on media economics exclusively, the perspective is included in several emerging works, for instance on sponsoring (Slinde 2000; Skogerbø 2001), or in textbooks on the media industry (Roppen 2004: ch. 7).

A second tendency regards programme "packaging". In a media situation where the struggle for attention is increasing, institutions progressively need to brand their programmes and channels. This has kindled the interest of students and researchers, and also inspired analyses of a previously ignored side of programming (Ytreberg and Orgeret 1997; Maasø 2002). The differences, or lack thereof, between public service and purely commercial broadcasting are once again pointed to. Recent research indicates how different corporations each try to find their own niche in the struggle for survival (Press 2000; Karlsen 2000; Østby Sæther 2002; Lia 2000) and how major sports events are branded and presented on different channels (Andersen 2003).

Third, a new area of research materializes focusing on the impact of digitalization in a broad sense. Despite the novelty of the topic, the perspectives and approaches are familiar from the second phase: the main focus is yet again on the traditional broadcaster and how it adapts to threats and challenges from the outside (Syvertsen 2003). To the degree that other institutions are drawn in, it is in comparison with the NRK (for example Hansen and Husebø 2005). Some contributions do however signal a change in the object of study. Attention is no longer solely given to the traditionally high status programme producing divisions. Rather, new parts of the NRK as an institution are scrutinized: the organization and content of the public broadcaster's Internet services (Røn 1998; Sommerseth 1999; Rasmussen 2002: ch. 7; Puijk 2004; Moe forthcoming); the

implication of "interactivity" for its program planning, division of resources and target group definitions (Prebensen 2005); the institution's development of commercial activities in the periphery of broadcasting (Strømmen 1999); or its role in the development of digital television distribution and its expansion onto other media platforms (Moe 2003). These studies problematize the public broadcaster's balance between conflicting interests as it seeks to incorporate new activities and services to its range of offers. In addition, the studies further illustrate how analyzes of broadcasting institutions needs to expand beyond the field of broadcasting.

The End of Broadcasting?

Research from the first and second phase relates to clearly defined *broadcasting institutions* with clearly defined *broadcasting assignments*. The institutions have been analyzed as integrated organizations responsible for production, scheduling and distribution, and have been considered as unique institutions, hardly comparable to other media or corporations. In the third phase, researchers no longer see the NRK singularly as a broadcasting institution, but rather as a *cross-media institution* in a more general sense. This is not only in line with the NRK's understanding of itself – it can also be seen as an extension of a trend whereby media corporations are expanding into new business areas. Broadcasters are taking up publishing or Internet services, newspaper companies are buying television channels and former telecom monopolies are moving into film, Internet and television.

The picture is complicated further as the digitalization processes also challenges the very term broadcasting. While the threats of broadcastings' rapid dissolution surely are exaggerated, its traditional demarcation lines are becoming blurred, and it is getting increasingly difficult to determine what exactly constitutes a broadcasting institution. An independent production company makes radio or television programmes, the owner of a television channel may buy and compose the content into a schedule, while a satellite television company distributes packages of channels and content. They are obviously not broadcasting institutions in the traditional form, but together they make up the radio and television sector. While discussions of the prospects for broadcasting flourish elsewhere – mainly in the general literature on television – such perspectives are largely absent from actual analyses of institutions. Few explicitly question the status of the institution at hand.

The early examples from the third phase illustrate how a new research field emerges focusing on broadcasters' many new ventures into the Internet, specific target audience channels, games, and other interactive products. What are lacking thus far are analyses of new entrants to broadcasting from other media industries. Through subsidiaries, the former public telecom Telenor is the dominant actor in digital satellite, cable and terrestrial television distribution. It recently secured the attractive rights to national football (together with the commercial broadcaster TV2), and remains a market leader in potential broadband-based technologies. There are examples of studies incorporating Telenor – such as Nordal's (2004) analysis of the digitalization of the terrestrial television network – but there is a distinct need for more work in this direction. The same goes for research on production companies, requisition routines, and negotiations related to externally commissioned activities.

New Phase – Old Approaches?

The fact that media researchers tend to identify with and specialize in only one medium – rather than with institutional research as such – thus far renders the field bereft of knowledge of the differences and similarities between for instance editorial cultures in newspapers and broadcasting (but see Bastiansen and Dahl 2003; Bastiansen 2006). Now, broadcasting research needs not only to acquire insights from research on other media (press, film) and telecommunications – broadcasting research is also to a certain extent in need of merging with studies on multimedia and other "new" media. As attention is raised to how broadcasting converges with computer and telecom sectors, it is interesting to see if the corresponding research fields follow suit. Research on broadcasting institutions could be extended to include disciplines such as information science or informatics – potentially offering innovative approaches. There are some examples of relevant works in this cross-disciplinary field, which again concentrate on the NRK. They deal with, for instance, the institution as user and developer of web publishing tools and content (Sommer 2004), or analyze how new technology and time-constraints affect working conditions as the institution turns into a bi-medial publisher (Hilstad 2001; also Dahlberg 2001).

Again, we see many relevant studies conducted from outside the field of media studies. From the perspective of organizational research, for instance, Neby (2003) includes the public broadcaster as a case when analyzing the balance between political governance and institutional autonomy in relation to the principles of New Public Management. Correspondingly, Tønnessen (2003) compares human resources management and organizational cultures in the NRK and its Danish counterpart DR. Based on theories of innovation, Ruud et al. (2003) analyze the inner workings of the NRK's "new media" department from an economist's viewpoint.

Within the field of media studies, few works seem to incorporate such perspectives or theoretical approaches. While many studies continue to be characterized by methodological pluralism, there are few traces of innovative theoretical perspectives. Despite some examples of original frameworks utilized in the analyses – Nordal's (2004) use of system theory to understand changes to the broadcasting sector being one – theories of technological development and market economy still dominate. Thus, the spill-over effect between media studies and other fields seems minimal both ways. Different fields of research are clearly not converging to the degree that their objects of study appear to be. To echo our conclusion from the discussion of the second phase of media institution research: the need for media researchers to incorporate perspectives and combine approaches from different social sciences is still apparent.

Additionally, the influx of comparative works remains slim. We have argued for the benefits of comparisons – both of different broadcasters, and of broadcasters and other types of institutions. Following the latest transition of the broadcasting sector, the potential seems even greater. Diachronic comparisons of how an institution faced the changes in the 1980s and 1990s may provide interesting results, and broadcasting institutions' transformation into cross-media operators calls for synchronic comparisons. Last but not least, the internationalization of the media industries – closely connected with the advent of digital technology – demands that we lift our eyes and look beyond national borders. Both providers and users increasingly operate internationally. For example, all over Europe, commercial broadcasters are complaining to the European Commission about the regulation and practices of public broadcasters, effectively turning the Commission into a main media policy actor (Syvertsen 2004: ch. 8).

A purely national approach for understanding the actions of broadcasting institutions is rendered less and less sufficient. There are some isolated comparative contributions. Among them are analyses of the Internet activities of the public broadcasters in different countries (Rasmussen 2002; Moe forthcoming), discussions of the persistence of television channels based on empirical data from the program polices of the public broadcasters in the Scandinavian countries (Ytreberg 2002b), and comparisons of the Norwegian and Danish public broadcasters (Tønnessen 2003). Sundet (2004) also discusses the latter two institutions' roles in her study of the political debate about digital television distribution in Norway and Denmark. Nevertheless, the call made in the discussion of phase two bears repeating: there is a need for further comparative efforts.

Conclusion

In this article we have tried to identify common characteristics of research on broadcasting institutions. We have argued that research on media institutions should be viewed not only as history or "background" to other studies, but rather as a field in its own right. We have further argued that this field, which we have both contributed to, would benefit from theoretical and methodological development. Before summarizing our findings and recommendations for the field we delve briefly into the larger international research community to see if we can find parallel works – studies which summarize and discuss research on broadcasting institutions from other perspectives or in other countries. A survey of the British and Scandinavian publications yield little results. To the degree that we find media research overviews in these countries, they are either very general (Pietilä et al. 1990; Bondebjerg 2000; Bruhn Jensen 2000) or focusing on other fields than the one we are interested in (Blumler et al. 1990; Livingstone 2000).

Yet, although the literature is sparse, it appears that some common trends can be identified. To the degree that research overviews at all take an international perspective, Nordic contributions, at least, tend to view the Nordic or Scandinavian countries together (for instance Carlson 2005). This is reasonable to the extent that the media in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Norway share important characteristics: crucial parts of the regulatory regimes have developed more or less in parallel, and the current challenges posed by convergence, globalization and commercialization apply to all. Research traditions and interests in all three countries seem to have been inspired by the same international trends, and thus we find similar observations to ours. When taking stock of Danish media research for example, Bondebjerg (2000) stresses the innovative character of studies that in our vocabulary would belong to phase II: studies that deliver novel sociological insights through a combination of institutional perspectives and analyses of programming. However, differences between the countries should not be ignored: due to the fact that most Danish media scholars' have a background in literary studies, for example, research on broadcasting institutions in Denmark, at least prior to the 2000s, tended to focus on textual analysis, according to Mortensen (2000). It would be interesting to scrutinize these and other historical discrepancies, and their prospective continued relevance, in order to find out to what degree different research foci actually bring out different insights.

Our discussion of three phases of Norwegian research on broadcasting institutions allows us to draw some tentative conclusions about the field's development, characteristics and future challenges. Apart from the immense volume of work that has been produced over the last decades, the most striking feature may be the consistency of the

research. The dramatic changes to the object of study could lead one to expect a similar shift in approaches, perspectives and interests. Concretely, the latest challenges to the organization of television and radio as broadcasting might lead to expectations of a dissolved field. This does not seem to be the case. On the contrary, much attention is still given to first generation historical studies, and most often the focus is still on how the NRK deals with changes in its external conditions. Also, the methodological and theoretical approaches employed from the 1980s continue to prevail. This continuity of course has its positive sides: we have argued that the recurring transitions of the sector necessitate constant new studies of this kind. Stability in terms of perspective may also render diachronic comparisons easier, and improve our understanding of long-term developments. Could we ask for more?

Yes. In a sense, there is an unrealized potential in the field. A potential provided by the high quality first generation research, the increasing interest shown by neighbouring disciplines from the social sciences, and the possible inspiration from other fields brought on by technological convergence. Our assessment has made evident the need for analyses of the new broadcasting actors, as well as further comparative efforts. By building on existing studies and "opening up" to new theoretical and methodological approaches, Norwegian broadcasting institution research can still prove its value for our understanding of the organization of television and radio.

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Media and Communication Studies Going Global[1]

JAN EKECRANTZ

Abstract

Media and communication studies have always been international. Still, in the era of globalization, internationalistic agendas have to be radicalized, opened up also to non-Western media thought, setting out from existing regional modernities and transformations. Thus, globalization calls for regional, not universalistic epistemologies and for cross-disciplinary, not intra-disciplinary research efforts. The chapter develops these arguments, first by recapitulating the criticism of the media and development paradigm – an early theory of media and social change. This is followed up by a summary report on media and global inequalities in the post-Cold War period, suggesting that the relations between media, politics and economy develop contrary to the prescriptions of received models. This leads to a reinforced questioning of the very distinctions between, e.g., politics, economy and culture in media studies, as illustrated by examples from case studies of recent developments in new democracies and (neo)authoritarian systems.

Key Words: cross-disciplinarity, divides, globalization, media studies, modernities, transformations

Introduction

How is media research to be conducted in a globalized world? Are new paradigms and methodologies needed when the nation state is no longer an unproblematic measure of everything, or a presupposed conceptual frame, in a world where global interdependencies and transborder exchanges are supposedly more significant than structures and processes contained within national borders?

The geopolitical and geocultural consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union in conjunction with the ICT revolution have changed the terms of everything "international" and caused academic concerns about "space" in general. Not only media systems, but also political and economic systems generally, are in flux in the new millennium. There is an often-noted new instability in the world after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the crackdown in Beijing in 1989 and, not least, after 9/11 in 2001.

Media studies shares with sociology and political science difficulties in coming to grips with the realities of a transnationalized and transforming world. One explanation is a certain, lingering "methodological nationalism" (Beck 2002), implying that the nation state still provides the presupposed and mostly implicit conceptual frame – also when the focus is on phenomena beyond the nation state. Considerable thinking is called

for and much is also going on, not least in the field of globalization studies, with its notorious problematization of all kinds of borders, including disciplinary ones.

For many decades, media and communication studies have contributed substantially to our general knowledge of international conditions and processes. There may be a problem with the older disciplines, from which communication research originated, in that they have not incorporated this body of knowledge into their own thinking, modern media and modern media studies now often being a white spot (in sociology, political science, literary theory, etc). This may also explain what seems to be a diminishing inflow into media studies from its "founding" disciplines. It should be remembered that a series of original, path-breaking thinkers in our field came from outside media and communication studies: Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Raymond Williams and many others. On the other side of the North Atlantic, we find many other scholars coming from the "outside" and producing modern classics in our field – from Robert Park and Paul Lazarsfeld to Herbert Schiller.[2]

It seems to be the case that media and communication studies, now a discipline in its own right, has lost touch with these other disciplines, which, in turn, have now largely eliminated media from their research agendas and curricula. As a consequence, they often regard media as epiphenomena, or neglect them altogether.[3] This is the classical problem of an increasing division of intellectual labour at a time when integrated and truly interdisciplinary approaches and transnational theorizing are needed more than ever, owing to the increasing complexity of and interdependencies in a globalized world.

Media studies (and forerunners) originated as a cross- or interdisciplinary undertaking. Now it is, in most places, a discipline in its own right with regard to academic institutionalization. With this come academic prestige, professorships and research funding. But there are also problems and costs associated with being a specialized discipline. In the field of media and communications, an increased division of intellectual labour runs counter to developments in the late-modern world, where the "system of the media is losing its specificity and becoming an integral part of the economic, cultural and political system" (Martín-Barbero 1993: 215). This is just one dimension of globalization that impacts on national systems. Globalization means increased complexity (change and heterogeneity) and this is the new raison d'être for cross-disciplinarity.

Media studies have always been international, long before "globalization" was coined in the early 1990s by Roland Robertson (1992), sociologist of religion. There have been a number of approaches in internationally oriented media and communication studies, from international news and propaganda to *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert *et al*. 1956), and media and development (Lerner 1958, Lerner and Schramm 1967, Pye 1963). Later came the cultural imperialism critique (Schiller 1969, 1976) and the NWICO process (see Carlsson 2005), then media globalization and new media studies. Much of this is covered by international communication (Thussu 2006), a field that has bordered on and sometimes been interfolded with international politics, international sociology, translocal anthropology, and other fields. Media studies has also taken on board, in innovative ways, theory complexes such as world system theory (McPhail 2006), modernity theory (Thompson 1995), media and migration (Appadurai 1996), the network society (Castells 1996), diaspora studies (e.g., Tsagarousianou 2004), and research on the new (informatized) wars (Kaldor 1999). Most recently, studies of new global social movements and media have proved to be fertile ground for cross-breeding between several fields, as in research on civil society media (e.g., Atton 2002, Couldry & Curran 2003).

I will continue on this track and argue for (1) more dialogue with "non-Western" theory and research perspectives, (2) more basic cross-disciplinarity, and (3) a stronger focus on global inequalities and social transformation. These research concerns are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Globalization forces us not only to focus more on *transnational* phenomena in general, but also to highlight *social change and difference,* which are almost unprecedented in pace and scope and directly and indirectly caused by globalization processes. Stability and equality do not characterize contemporary societies. Further, as increasingly central institutions around the world, the media are deeply ingrained in most societal processes. This calls for broad and integrated approaches in media studies, for cross-disciplinarity in a very basic sense: as theorizing and empirical research *across both disciplinary and socio-cultural borders*. Such *transnational theory-building* would seem necessary to take care of some of the new complexities in the contemporary world and its *media-driven modernities*. What they have in common are the facts of change and difference, and the centrality of the media as institutions. Theorizing media and social change in a globalized world implies questioning some received categories and distinctions based on assumptions that no longer hold.

These arguments will be developed in the following. Far from proposing a new theory of media and globalization, I will try to show how media studies can and need to be opened up to experiences and realities outside the centre of the world system. I will first wind back half a century, when media and social development were frequently on the agenda of development research, then reflect on the contemporary scene, which is largely characterized by global divides and their concomitant media phenomena. Following this will be a brief section on the meanings of "de-Westernization" and the decreased relevance of some firmly rooted disciplinary distinctions. This theme will then be concretized using Russian, Brazilian and Chinese examples.

Media and the Development of Underdevelopment

A brief history of internationally oriented studies of media and social change could start with the Schramm, Lerner and Pye era in mass communication research. In the 1950s and 60s, there was a strong reliance on the purportedly universal correlation between growth in media consumption and political democratization and social development in general.[4] It was assumed, by Daniel Lerner and others, that the media created a psychic mobility among people living in the countryside in traditional (i.e. pre-modern) societies, in turn resulting in a geographic and then social mobility, owing to people's longing for a modern life and salaried employment in the cities. The media served as 'mobility multipliers', thus contributing to the 'passing of traditional society', to refer to the title of Lerner's famous book.[5] This was before the decolonization of several countries in Africa and the democratization of Latin American countries, processes that had nothing to do with the rise of public media, at least not in the former colonies. This was also before the cultural imperialism thesis, associated above all with Herbert I. Schiller, who stated that the content of media world-wide was strongly dominated by imperial, that is, U.S. military, economic, political and ideological interests (Schiller 1969, 1976). And the world had not yet seen the 'barrios', 'favelas' and 'banlieus' surrounding the megacities of Asia, Africa and South America, which housed millions of unemployed and destitute. This is where Lerner's mobile hordes ended up, once they got moving – for reasons other than media consumption.

At the time, the given fact was that the statistical correlation between the number of radio and TV receivers per capita, on the one hand, and participation in elections and a number of welfare indicators, on the other, tended to be quite strong (around +0.40 across all countries). It should also be underlined that an important component of the theoretical setup was developmentalism, a belief in unilinear development.[6] Socio-economic differences between countries were translated into a time scale – there were underdeveloped, developing and developed countries – assuming a considerable time-lag, separating the former from the latter.[7] Difference related to dominance and exploitation in the contemporary world was not yet on the media research agenda, but was to be focussed on by dependency theory in the seventies.

The correlation was mostly a spurious one. If one bothered too look at partial correlations, one could easily see that it did not hold for most of the countries in the world – not for the "underdeveloped" or the most "developed". In the poorest and richest countries, respectively, more media meant more market, but not more democracy – media development being above all a consequence and indicator of economic growth. For the ten richest countries, there was even a strong negative correlation between the number of TV sets and political participation. There were also some significant clusters. One group of countries stood out as relatively media-saturated, but this had no relationship whatsoever to socio-economic or political development: More media did not mean that these countries were better off in other respects. To this group belonged most of the Latin American countries, many of them then with authoritarian military regimes and a heavy influx of commercial U.S. television, the developmental potential of which was questioned early on by Latin American intellectuals.[8]

The manifold lessons from these statistical exercises are still valid:

These studies largely overlooked

1) socio-economic differences within countries (Sklair 1995/1997);

2) global power relationships – centre-periphery relations;

3) the relation between the two – Norths and Souths reproducing themselves on national and local levels (Lash 2002), thus producing a globalization of poverty (Nederveen Pieterse 2005a, 2005b);

4) Further, authoritarianism is perfectly compatible with free market commercialism. This historical fact creates problems for attempts at homogenizing categorizations of national media systems (cf. post-Soviet Russia and China, below).

5) Media functions cannot be universally ascertained. In particular, socio-economic level and position in the world system determine uses and political effects of the media system on social, cultural and political life and processes.

A generation later, the difficulties in finding easily applicable classificatory principles for the purposes of comparative media research are reflected in attempts to sort countries in terms of their media systems, one reason being that these systems are reflections of complex and differentiated socio-economic orders. Curran and Park, in their groundbreaking *De-Westernizing Media Studies* (2000), introduced the following two major dimensions as a way of sorting the media systems in today's world: *democratic* vs. *authoritarian* and *neo-liberal* vs. *regulated.* However, these authors had to include an extra, fifth category for "*transitional or mixed societies",* including China, Eastern

Europe, Russia, South America and the Middle East. This "rest", particularly interesting from the point of view of theorizing media and social change, comprises the most dynamic regions, the new media modernities. It is obvious that we need to introduce other dimensions as well. It is even reasonable to ask whether there exist any *non*-transitional or *non*-mixed societies. At least it seems as if most countries are moving along both these dimensions – and others.

I will return to this comparative model, but already here we can use it to speculate about the directions in which these countries might be moving – given the axes of the model. In which of the four possible directions are China, Russia and the rest of the "transitional and mixed" nations moving? And how far have they advanced in the six, seven years since the publication of this book? One thing we know for sure is that the direction of change, given the alternatives defined by this model, depends greatly on interdependent economic and political developments globally *and* nationally. We also know that things move fast in the globalized world and that that in itself creates social and political tensions that have to be taken into consideration when theorizing media and social change.

Postmodern Poverty

Fifty years after the 'media and development' paradigm (and the Bandung conference) and 25 years after the cultural imperialism critique, the geopolitical structure of the first, second and third worlds and one of the two super states has evaporated with the Cold War. Some 50 new countries have seen the light of the day and television and the Internet have turned into dominant media worldwide. Internet access is restricted, but nevertheless a significant factor in Third World countries. Television, however, has a strong presence even in poor countries. I will reflect on this fact below. During the same period, socio-economic cleavages within as well as between countries have increased. This also runs parallel to the introduction of parliamentary democracy in Africa, Latin America and most recently in the post-Soviet world. This "misfit" between economy and politics needs to be taken into account in any analysis of national or local media systems and cultures.[9]

The World Bank's development reports show how the Gini index[10] has developed in a select number of countries over the past 50 years. These are within-country measures, and there is a general long-term increase in economic inequality. Three groups of countries emerge from these statistics:

1) *Extreme inequality*: many Latin American countries (the situation in the Sub-Saharan region is even worse according to other data); Gini exceeds 0.50.

2) *Strong and steadily increasing inequality*: USA, UK, China, Russia, India; Gini within the 0.35 – 0.40 range.

3) *Moderate inequality* (as everything is relative): continental and northern Europe; Gini below 0.35.

This is about differences *between* countries with respect to differences *within* countries. How does this "correlate" with media systems and media cultures? The *first* group, with extreme inequality, is with few exceptions comprised of democratic, capitalistic countries with colonial and authoritarian pasts (including apartheid) under military regimes. The media systems are advanced and strictly commercial, especially when it comes to

broadcast media (e.g., the Globo and Televisa media empires). The *second* group is a mixed bag of old and new capitalistic economies, including some old empires, some of the largest parliamentary democracies, but also China.[11] The media systems vary considerably, but things in common include strong central (federal) governments and big, more or less globalized media corporations with large nationwide audiences. The *third* group includes a number of European countries (EU members or not), many of them, especially in the north, (post-)welfare societies with public service media as one component of the media structure. Were we to use the above categories, these European systems would be deemed "democratic and regulated" (Curran & Park, *op. cit.*).[12]

Inequalities based on economic factors, gender, ethnicity, etc., and class cleavages are the causes of many other conditions, such as crime, violence, corruption, trafficking, and HIV/AIDS (Marmot 2005, Wilkinson 2006). If equality is taken to be an aspect of democracy (for instance as equality of life chances), one has to conclude that economic growth and marketization have little, if anything, to do with democratization. This goes against the grain of liberal political science, but, nevertheless, the empirical foundations for this conclusion are overwhelming.

In a study of 14 countries, picked to represent the three groups above, I plotted economic equality (global ranking based on Gini values) against press freedom (global ranking based on interviews and official data) and then dichotomized these variables (high and low positions in the world ranking). The overall correlation is almost nonexistent, meaning that the degree of equality is not linked to the level of press freedom. For instance, in Egypt there are restrictions on press freedom, but the country has relatively high equality. In South Africa, as in Brazil, the situation is the opposite: enormous cleavages and booming, non-censored commercial media. This is the static picture. In order to capture the dynamics of media and economic growth, I plotted economic growth between 1990 and 2004 (change in global ranking) against press freedom.

The important finding here is that the most expansive new capitalist economies have the poorest record when it comes to press freedoms, parliamentary democracies or not, but with old or neo-authoritarian traits. We are beginning to discern a pattern in which a number of fast-moving capitalist economies (Russia and China being two of them) are also moving in the direction of neo-liberalism *and* neo-authoritarianism. This is happening not with the help of old-fashioned, state-driven propaganda machineries, but in media environments seemingly based more on the pleasure principle, which is supportive of both nationalism and patriotism, than on the reality principle, to put it in Freudian terms (Stallybrass 1996). This is not to say that reception is predictable, just that hundreds of millions of people are continuously exposed to the production of consensus from above.

More sophisticated indicators and statistical analyses could probably take us a little further along this path of enquiry, but in order to better understand media in a globalized world, we have to think through some concepts in media and communication studies, developed mostly within the European/Anglo-American orbit. What does it mean, for a start, to move beyond the national confines?

De-Westernizing as De-disciplining

With the globalization rhetoric that came to the fore in the 1990s, a number of concepts have become problematic and there are many suggestions as to how to get "beyond" or "deconstruct" this and that. What follows is my own contribution to this particular genre.

First, the urge for "internationalization", within academia and elsewhere, leads us to a number of related, but more far-reaching concepts:

Internationalizing (for instance, media studies): In a strict sense, this refers to relations between or comparisons across nations or nation states. In international politics, a political science sub-discipline, this is often unproblematic. It is about interstate relations and activities, or nation-based comparisons, period. To the extent that the nation as such is problematized, however, "international" dissolves into something "foreign" or, for that matter, "global". [13] In a much broader sense, as pointed out in the introduction, it may include both comparative approaches and global and transnational processes (Thussu 2006).

Transnationalizing, on the one hand, reflects the conceptual change from "multinational" (no centre) to "transnational" corporations (operating from core centres in the world economy). On the other, it is an expression of an ambition to move beyond methodological nationalism and "transnationalize" theory, which I interpret as a way out of locally produced universalizations (wherever they are produced). A third meaning would be a focus on cross-border or translocal processes, mostly reflecting the "de-territorialization" of communication practices.

De-Westernizing (to pick up on Curran and Park's book title) resounds an ambition to make room in media studies for perspectives in the East and South. It also implies that we, at the end of the day, give up our Western canons in favour of African, Asian and Latin American ones. Before that, it would be a great step forward to have these different canons productively confront each other in truly globalized media studies.

This agenda of caveats (or "de-" catchwords) for the global age is far from exhaustive. I have already pinpointed methodological nationalism, which would entail a *denationalizing* of media studies, a giving up of concepts firmly rooted in the figure of thought (or mental container) of the nation state and its inherited institutions and national myths. A *de-colonizing* of media and communication studies, originating in core imperial and colonial nation states, takes a great deal of imagination, a "planetary" perspective (Dussel 1998) or "thinking from the border", from outside European and north-American modernities (Mignolo 2000).

All this adds up to a *de-disciplining* of media and communication studies. I started out with a call for more dialogue with "non-Western" theory and research perspectives, more cross-disciplinarity, and a return to historical, disciplinary roots, reinserting media in the social and the cultural. From this follows, among other things, a questioning of basic categories and a deconstruction of disciplinary dichotomies such as *Politics/Culture*[14], *Symbolic/Material*, *Public/Private, Real/Unreal*, *Fact/Fiction, Time/Space*[15], *Production/Consumption*, *Word/Image, Text/Reader, Self/Other, We/Them*.[16] This is not the place to discuss these further, beyond the selective footnote explications. Instead, we shall see how the criticism applies to the situation in some concrete societies. Even cursory studies of some "non-Western" worlds confirm that globalized media studies would benefit considerably from a further dissolution of these binary opposites or, as the case may be, from further inquiries into the inherent dialectics that come into play in actually existing societies. The deconstruction of some such dichotomies does not constitute philosophical word play, but something that is already affected by the media in their *mediation*, in its broadest sense, not least between institutions.

Difference and Change in Media Modernities

In recent years, I have studied media developments and media cultures in 'post-authoritarian', 'neo-authoritarian' systems, 'new democracies', and whatever other labels have been used (the "rest" category). These societies, for instance Brazil, China and Russia, have served as laboratories for natural experiments in media and social change (Ekecrantz, Maia & Castro 2003).

They have many things in common, distinguishing them from most other countries: size, rapid immersion into the world capitalist system (ratified by WTO or Nafta membership)[17], economic growth, democratic deficits by the exclusion of large groups in terms of class, gender and ethnicity from public spheres, economic and social cleavages, and political, cultural and regional divisions, thus problematizing the notion of the nation as a homogenous and meaningful unit. Cleavages are not only between countries in the North and South, respectively, but very much within nation states, the poor and the rich often within arm's length.[18]

What they also have in common is that they are *media modernities,* short for media-driven modernities. How do media mediate between the social classes and between other groupings, producing a mediated visibility with repercussions for social relations and struggles? National, urban bourgeoisies are certainly visible in news, entertainment and advertising, and this applies to Brazil, Russia and China (cf. Lerner's model).[19]

The media modernities of these huge polities are thus based on differentiations that are political, social, regional and temporal, but also ideological and cultural. All of these are heightened by the rapid transformations. The different Chinas, for example (Zhao 2003), are bound to produce diverging discourses, impossible to harmonize in a unified hegemonic order, even when history is sometimes effectively suppressed – or when foreign news and the Internet are censored (Lagerkvist 2006).[20]

In post-Soviet Russia, the relationship between politics and economy, with media as mediator, defies most known models. The first years of the 1990s were characterized by independent media that operated as a "fourth power" (1991-1995). Then entered a highly politicized media system that operated in a society turned into a spectacle (1996-2000). This fragmented "media-political system"[21] operates in a full-fledged commercial environment. However, the fluidity of the "Russian" media system[22] has its spatial counterparts. In 87 out of 89 regions in Russia, one finds seven different "media models". [23] This raises doubts as to whether there exists a "Russian", or for that matter, a "Brazilian" or "Chinese" media system.

Before Putin's presidency (2000-), Brian McNair saw the implications of the Russian system in terms of a new and unique form of capitalism that seriously threatens the democratic transition: "In this respect Russia, for all its robber-baron primitivism, may turn out to be a pioneer of the media-driven capitalism of the twenty-first century, in which the controller of information in all its commodity forms – journalism, entertainment, computer software, data services – are established as the key sub-sector of the capitalist owning class as a whole" (McNair 2000:89). What could now best be described as media-driven state capitalism, a system yielding both financial and political profits, defies most known media models. Outside academia, however, it has been subjected to both intellectual criticism and literary satire.[24] This appeals not least to the younger generations, who are turning away from television. These Russian generations today seem totally alienated from official politics, as enacted on national TV channels, today directly or indirectly controlled by the Kremlin.[25] It tends to "adapt to any conditions and turn to private lives as spheres of self-realization while almost completely

ignoring the virtual community of the nation state" (Zassoursky, *op. cit.*). To the extent that this is a valid description of today's Russian youth, it has gone a long way since the attempted coup in August 1991, when various groups of young people were active on the barricades, embodying a politics of pleasure, which challenged the dominant meaning of politics (Pilkington 1994: 303ff), or since young protesters spread red paint on the White House in Moscow as a demonstration against the first war in Chechnya.

One may not agree with all of these analyses, but they have served here to concretize my thesis that some prevailing disciplinary dichotomies (politics/economy/culture) – and Western institutional models – do not hold. A lack of institutional stability and national homogeneity undermines methodological nationalism. Political communication forms in northern and southern mainland China, closer to Westernized Hong Kong, are almost as different as popular cultural forms in different parts of Brazil, from Afro-Brazilian capoeira in the north-east to favela hip hop in Rio, to gaucho cowboy culture in the south.

The spatial structures of modernity have a temporal side. The timing and speed of entry into the world capitalist system and the rate at which a society has been transformed in the recent past ("keeping pace with time" in today's official Chinese rhetoric) seem to be significant factors for at least two reasons. First, there exists a collective experience of change in society and in everyday life for a large portion of the population. Zhen describes how this is related to "… a larger cultural anxiety about temporality (..) the rapid transition from socialism to a market economy (..) different temporalities – old and new, socialist and capitalist, global and local – have collided (..) the perils of speed have made anxiety a central feature of public discourse." (Zhen 2001: 132). This quote certainly apostrophizes the collapse of some received dichotomies as far as rapidly transforming societies are concerned.

Conclusion

The emerging global system of social classes and power structures is the most significant trait pertaining to 'globality', which means that there are winners and losers and all kinds of widening gaps and divisions. The rise to power of global elites is mirrored at the other end of the socio-economic scale in the masses of forced national and international migrants and hundreds of millions of unemployed owing to economic globalization – read capitalist expansion – into new world regions led by globalized elites with their feet in transnational corporations and neo-liberal governments.[26] Comparative cross-disciplinary case studies can take us a long way if we are interested in getting to know what all this means in actually existing media modernities. Let me conclude by returning to the introductory arguments for basic cross-disciplinarity in media studies and point at some such efforts under way.

A new *macro-sociology of media* would focus on the intersection of global and national class systems and the ways in which they shape the media, media cultures and mediated conflicts. Other cross-disciplinary encounters have already made an imprint in global media studies. *Anthropology,* for instance, is a relative newcomer in media studies, but it could contribute substantially to our understanding of translocality and "transmodernity", based on a de-territorialized notion of culture that privileges *routes* instead of *roots* (Clifford 1997). *Comparative literature* could show us experiences of media modernities outside the North Atlantic orbit. Latin America and Asia, for instance, provide us with a wealth of literary reflections on what it means to live in media-saturated urban environments (if read in that way) far away from the core areas of the mod-

ern world system – as did many of the classical modernist authors in Europe.[27] *Comparative media history* is needed to unravel the deep historical structures of today's global communications, such as the circuits of commerce that produced Western and other modernities in the first place ("globalization" being the cause, not the consequence of modernity – in this perspective). I have already mentioned the field of *new global social movements.*

Globalizing media and communication studies thus implies more than an aggrandizement of the research object and more than adding countries to the bag of comparisons. For one thing, it is about the inclusion of other kinds of media users, cultural producers and political animals, than those typified or implicated in much research – those who happen to live in rich countries, who are targeted as consumers or even citizens with entertainment or information, while sitting comfortably in their homes after work. This was the type codified within the paradigm of affluence out of which mass communication research sprung in the Post-War period.[28] As we all know, however, there are masses of non-rich people "out there" (also in the rich part of the world) and they are not consumers, do not think of themselves as citizens of a polity and they do not come home after work, because they have no work and hence no leisure time and no place to spend it anyway. But they also have in common that they inhabit and are dependent on what goes on in heavily media-saturated societies. This is a historically new equation or paradox, calling for new alliances in media studies, both between and beyond disciplines and their national habitats.

Notes

1. Draws on three papers presented, respectively, at the IAMCR conference in Cairo, 24-28 July 2006, the conference 'Internationalising Media Studies: Imperatives and Impediments', University of Westminster, London, 15-16 September 2006, and the Russia in Flux Research Programme Seminar, Academy of Finland, Helsinki, 27 Oct., 2006.
2. Zelizer (2004) has reviewed a broad range of contributions to journalism studies from many different disciplines. A similar treatment of media studies, as a broader field, would require a book series.
3. See, for instance, Downing's (1996) criticism of political science for its neglect of media and communication aspects, also when it is concerned with political influence.
4. See, e.g., Lerner 1958, Pye 1963, and Lerner & Schramm 1967.
5. See also Thompson's retrospective discussion and contextualization of Lerner's book, 40 years after the publication of *The Passing.*. (Thompson 1995: 188-197).
6. See McPhail (2006) for brief overviews of models at the time, including the economic growth model. Rostow's theory of stages is now, after 1989, being reintroduced in a new shape in much 'transition' research. Updates of the debate on developmentalism are found in Hemer & Tufte 2005.
7. This was a form of "denial of coevalness": people in "backward" parts of the world are not really our contemporaries (Fabian 1983).
8. For data on the phenomenal, continued growth of media around the world, Latin America included, between the 1970s and the late 1990s, see Carlsson 2005: 209.
9. In the following, I have used secondary data and done some simple calculations myself. The IAMCR paper, Cairo 2006, gives the more complete picture.
10. Roughly speaking, the Gini index measures the ratio between the income of the richest and that of the poorest. It ranges from 1 (maximum inequality: one person has all the income) to 0 (no one has more than any other).
11. According to other estimates, China belongs to the first group.
12. Or "democratic corporatist/polarized pluralist", to use the typology suggested by Hallin and Mancini (2004).
13. In Swedish academia, an "international publication" may be a text (1) in an "international" journal (in one of the so-called world languages), or a text either (2) published in English, anywhere, for instance by Nordicom in Gothenburg, or (3) published abroad, in any language.

14. See Brooksbank Jones (2000) on the "the progressive 'enculturing' of politics in response to deepening social divisions"; "the political significance of cultural practices in extra-institutional politics", and "the imbrication of culture and politics (as analytic categories and as practices)". See also Sassen (2006) on how cultural events become political, e.g. street activities, and about the increasing importance of the non-formal forms and places of politics: real political processes that cannot be contained within the formal political system. I have tried to systematize this thematic in Ekecrantz 2006.
15. See Bakhtin (1934/35) on the study of chronotopes (timespaces) as determining, together, the capacities of fictional genres; Wallerstein (1997) shows how the temporal and the spatial are interlinked in sociological and historical forms of knowledge.
16. There is a risk that the ubiquitous criticism of this figure of thought just reproduces orientalism by producing a similarly universalist (meta)discourse. Sardar voices a concern over representations of the 'Other' in history, anthropology and politics: "Postmodernism's obsession with representation of the Other in fiction is designed to project this representation back as reality and hence shape and reshape the Other according to its own desires" (Sardar 1998: 176). We/them is an often taken-for-granted distinction, sometimes downplaying similarities and mystifying difference (not least when the "East-West" dyad is called forth).
17. In Brazil and China, half of the gigantic populations are younger than 25-27, which means that in China this group amounts to some 650 million people.
18. The richest person in Brazil, the owner of the Globo empire, has his well-guarded mansion on a slope in Rio de Janeiro, with favelas uphill.
19. A Russian reality soap showing the everyday life of the immensely rich in a secluded block on the edge of the Moscow River attracted a huge audience.
20. Chin-Chuan Lee catches this well: "In China the media have been battling a confluence of ideological currents and moulding a hybrid ideology ridden with conflicting identities, images, and subjectivities. In this sense, the media have been a site of ideological contestation and accommodation, derived from the ambiguities and contradictions between the revolutionary rhetoric of Communism and the practical discourses of marketization." (Lee 2003, Introduction)
21. Termed the "media-political complex" by Curran and Park (2000:14).
22. This is based on Zassoursky 2004, but there are other such short-term periodizations.
23. The market model; the transitional to market model; the conflict model; the modernized Soviet model; the paternalistic Soviet model; the authoritarian Soviet model; the depressed model (Koltosova 2006: 166).
24. As in the works of Viktor Pelevin, for instance *Generation P* and the not yet translated *Vampyre*. Among other critical analysts, Irina Petrovskaya and Alexij Pankin should be mentioned.
25. Through state channels or large holdings in companies such as Gazprom, in its turn owner of major media since the ousting of media moguls and oligarchs such as Berezovskij and Guzinski.
26. The transnational capitalist class as conceived of by Leslie Sklair is composed of four groups or fractions: (1) TNC executives and their local affiliates, (2) globalizing state bureaucrats, (3) globalizing politicians and professionals, and (4) consumerist elites (merchants, media) (Sklair 1998: 299ff).
27. Like Josef Conrad and James Joyce, see Donovan 2001.
28. From Paddy Scannell's presentation at the Westminster conference (see note 1). Book forthcoming.

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Reminiscence of Intellectual Battles

Bygone in Communications Research

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Abstract

Models in communications studies from the 1940s and 1950s depicted mass communication as one-way traffic. Sender and recipient faced each other almost like two individuals, yet unknown to each other, sharing a stream of messages that carried unequivocal contents with detectable consequences. From this meagre beginning, many modifications were added and new theories developed in the ensuing six to seven decades. In the process, 'senders' have become complex organisations embedded in the power system of society, 'messages' have become a part of culture more generally and 'the audience' is situated within multiple cultural and social contexts. Models have become more interactive, but have they changed enough? Perhaps there is still a need for a review of the state of the art: of what we really know about personal and social communications and the white spaces on our maps.

Key Words: humanistic and social science approaches to media theories, linear and structural models of media communications, the two-step hypothesis, content analysis, discourse analysis and rhetoric

Introduction

Ever since Aristotle wrote his 'Rhetoric', communications has been a recurring theme in academic discourse; a theme that has often served as a silent premise within the venerated traditions of the Humanities and the Social Studies. For decades, even centuries, 'communications' remained a subfield within the diverse study of man. The only way up in the hierarchy for nonconformists was to establish a new field of study; and when these former outsiders eventually met at one and the same university department during the 1960s, it created a situation bound for confusion and misunderstanding. It took a long time to agree on terminology, on proper problems and on the basics of theories. Since then, communications studies have been a great success, at least in the number of researchers, tenured professors, and students.

But rapid expansion may have certain unfortunate consequences. When so much is starting up simultaneously, very few have a comprehensive view of what the new discipline contains. We have seen social scientists, psychologists, historians, linguists, humanists and historians as well as people from computer science, art and literary studies recruited to our field. Sometimes these specialists talk professionally together but more often they do not, and as a result parallel studies have often been conducted on

almost the same phenomena, phrased in different terminologies. It is no wonder much research has been duplicated.

This situation is rapidly improving, with an increasing number of conferences, workshops, round tables and scholarly journals for most specialities and sub-disciplines. But despite the rising number of professional channels, Communications and Media Studies has not yet developed its own fully fledged or overarching theory. Specialisation, even fragmentation into small hypotheses, is now an accepted professional stance, while the great questions about how media relates to human nature and society are asked less frequently.

The reflections above partly conform to my own experiences during a long life in media studies from the early 1970s to my present position as Professor Emeritus. In the following pages I shall outline some paradigms I have met. Since the turnover in theories during this period has been rather high, I do not intend to cover all fields in modern communications research.[1]

My perspective will remain contemporary. I will avoid writing a history of scientific ideas, even though the positions portrayed are given in a roughly chronological order. My description will be a personal account of hindsight by which ideas, as they appeared to me, will be foregrounded. Even if there are many more positions from which a ubiquitous phenomenon like communications is studied I will claim that most of the positions mentioned have been central to teaching and research in Media and Communications departments, at least in Scandinavia, during the past three to four decades.

Linear Models and the Liberalism of Free Choice

Upon the introduction of the Gallup surveys at the end of the 1920s, two problems were immediately raised: what comprises the audience for newspapers and radio, and what are the effects of being exposed to these media? These two problems totally dominated the research agenda in the beginning. So – when Harold Lasswell (1948)[2] formulated his paradigmatic question: "Who says what to whom through which channels and with what effects?" – it was the last question about effects to which attention was drawn in the Behavioural Sciences, although Lasswell himself modified the opening statement later in the text (p. 127): "Each agent is a vortex of interacting environmental and predisposition factors. Whoever performs a relay function can be examined in relation to input and output." But the mysteries of how mediated messages originated, and how they were organised and formulated, was beyond the scope or interest of early media scholars. Systematic studies of the Lasswellian 'who' and 'what' had to wait until the early 1970s.[3] The cardinal problem of how senders and audience interacted during mass communications was not even raised in the beginning of modern communications research. It was taken for granted that senders and recipients did not communicate on normal terms.

The Lasswell question more than suggested a direct link between the messages in mass media and its effects on the attitudes of receivers. There was little room left for misunderstanding of messages of a systematic kind, culturally bounded decoding or double meanings and reading between lines. The narrow focus on isolated and measurable audience effects was later ridiculed as a linear transportation model of communication.[4]

But when you take a closer look behind each part of the Lasswell question you can see, as Lasswell hinted at, more than the simple transfer of messages; you also discover a system of interacting and negotiating forces, all with an influence on the content pro-

duction. Take the role of senders and their journalism (the 'who' and 'what' in Lasswell's question). Both components contain a great deal of regularity, which may be investigated at many levels of society, for example: how content is influenced by the relationship between senders and sources of information – as Jeremy Tunstall studied it[5]; how media themselves are organised and restricted by the technology of production and dissemination, as well as by political intervention, as Philip Schlesinger observed in the BBC.[6] In between, we will find effects on the structure of media systems from the economy of scale in production and the skewed distribution of income between competing media of income from advertisers.[7]

The reason for calling Lasswell's model 'liberal' was motivated not only by the capitalistic nature of most media, which inspired audience studies, but also partly by an additional reference to the Anglo-American ideas of democracy by which the sovereignty of individuals looms high; an idea that also inspired studies of the role of media in early election research. Some of the better-known studies of media behaviour during the 1940s and 1950s were part of the early election research in which the key phenomena looked for consisted of patterns of aggregate individual behaviour.[8]

– Who says what to whom
– through which channel and with what effect?
Harold Lasswell 1948

MICRO	**Sender** Gate keeper	**Channel** Technological Restraints on Message	**Message** News criteria for a Single article	**Recipient** Anonymous individual	**A SINGLE EVENT**
MESO	**Medium** Organisation Firm or syndicat	**Technology** Market – potentialities	**Mediated communication** Content template	**Audience** Size and Composition	**CHANGES OVER TIME**
MACRO & MESO	**Media system** Number of Channels. Political control & censorship.	**Volume of texts** Frequency & distribution between channels of news reporting.	**Genres and style** Genres & style Textual norms.	**Circulation & audience** ratings Revenues from advertisers	**CHANGES OVER TIME**
MACRO	**Media as a Social Institution** Professio-nalisation.	**Media economy** Media-market as % of GNP	**Flow of mediated information** Allocation of Public attention	**Public sphere** Allocation of Public means	**SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

In classical democratic theory, public opinion – to be valid in political decision-making – must rest on the integrity of individual voters. Accordingly, the early models of 'mass society' applied in election and media studies presumed that individuals acted alone and without any reference to a community. Some years of systematic studies of effects, however, revealed a generally low level of attention by individuals to unfamiliar and conflicting messages. There was little balancing of pro- and contra-arguments in the minds of recipients concerning what they heard or read in the media. People mainly looked for confirmation. This avoidance of contradiction was termed 'selective perception', a kind of psychological shield people use to keep their values and prejudices intact.

The inattentive audience could be interpreted as a proof of the independent voter, unaffected by political propaganda. More extremely this was called an 'atomistic model of human behaviour': Individuals act from basic psychological instincts, as part of human nature, rather than on social impulses. From these premises behaviourists looked

for universally valid regularities of individual behaviour, which were subsumed into aggregate public opinions.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, social psychologists like George Homans[9] explored the human group and group dynamics. In their Elmira study, Lazarsfeld et al. (Op. Cit.) found that much of public inattention to media was based on group loyalties and personal pragmatism. People took advice rather from people they knew than from the media. The rediscovery of the primary group, as it was called, or the *two-step hypothesis*, opened eyes to the strong influence of social networks, which intervened and often redirected the intended effects of media. It turned out that informal discussions in these close milieus of family, friends, neighbours or colleagues, etc. had more influence in forming attitudes on social issues than did any mass media. Media served mainly as an agenda setter for group discussions of public affairs. [10]

The 'use and gratification' studies, which later broadened the premises behind the two-step hypothesis, linked the problems and opportunities in recipients' immediate environment to their information-seeking behaviour. This turned the arrows of causality around; it was the interests of recipients that mainly governed their attention to the content of media. And people know what they are looking for.

Having found a set of intervening factors in the primary groups, researchers soon found many more in secondary groups: national organisational networks, political parties, local communities, social sub-cultures, etc. Ethnic or cultural studies, as they were called, focused on special codes and norms in these environments that coloured the perception of both media and their content. However, this fragmentation of the 'mass audience' did not answer the larger question of how media interacted with society in general.

Behaviourism was strongly attacked during the 1970s and 1980s for ignoring the fundamental cultural basis for all human communications. Our impression of the environment – the arguments went – especially our mentality in social relations, even our scientific ideas of reality, depends heavily on ideas, images and concepts embedded in our cultural heritage. More seriously, behaviourists were said to be blind to the impact of the established power system closely linked to the media industry. The long-term effect of these conditions restricted the range of ideas to which the audience was allowed to attend. Recipients became unaware of the alternatives to the hegemonic ideas furnished them by media.

Criticism of Behaviourism rose from many quarters, but especially from literature and linguistics and critical studies in sociology. Arguments emphasising the impact of the media structure on the output of mass communications and the influence on public opinion were maintained within *The Frankfurter School*, as within the *political economy* studies and in cultural studies of mass communications. Cultural studies were popular in Great Britain, with the best-known analyses coming from the *Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.* Authors attached to the centre, such as Stuart Hall, approached media as ideological and hegemonic institutions.[11] In the following I shall treat the structural viewpoints as one position and the humanistic hermeneutical critique as another.

Structural Reproduction of Media Output

Structural critique has often been inspired by Marxism, which in turn is based on allegations of irrevocable historical laws by which the influence of individual actors disappears. Jürgen Habermas is a prominent representative of this kind of thinking in media history. In his *Structurwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962) his aim, he recollected 27 years

later, was to derive an ideal public sphere from various historical contexts.[12] Habermas found his "golden age" of free discussions – of all matters including political ones – in London's coffee houses at the end of the 18th century. In doing so he also anticipated some inherent mechanisms of decay. Changes in the press, he pointed out, ran through different irreversible stages. Open discussion between equals, with 'communicative reason' – or common sense and mutual respect – as their guiding rule, was replaced by frozen postures in journals of opinions and party newspapers, or by political opportunism in the commercialised press. Unrestrained deliberations were replaced by inflexible ideological debates; insincerity had infected public life.[13]

During the 1970s and 1980s, the political economists pointed out that the media represented an ideological superstructure governed by publishers and advertisers, both prominent representatives of the capitalistic system. The result was ideological reproduction of often-subdued reality descriptions, which supported the status quo and the free market system. As a rule, alternative realities were neglected or denied outright. Marxists also rejected the existence of a journalistic autonomy; they claimed that all media production was standardised ideologically in form and underlying messages, and as a result produced a false consciousness that kept the repressed audience inactive and unaware of their true interests. Therefore, despite their superficial diversity in content, etc., media basically served the same hegemonic interests.

The critical sociological and Marxist views both pointed to an apparent weakness in the linear models of communications: their lack of attention to the media industry and to the impact of macro systems. Researchers were not interested in how news and media content was selectively retrieved, restricted and edited by general ideas of what was proper news. In literature and critical studies, news was deconstructed to reveal the underlying true intentions. The weakness of this critique, however, was the lack of empirical support for most of the far-reaching generalisations derived from Marxism. As in the venerated tradition of philology, Marxists mainly studied canonical texts and explained how their terminology applied to current affairs. Interpretations and the true understanding of texts were and are the beginning, aim, and results of their study.

Empirical studies of senders in mass communications did not come from Marxist scholars, but appeared in Anglo-American sociology and anthropology during the early 1970s and later. These scholars looked behind the semantics of media messages to their pragmatics and to their production in an institutional setting at the meso level of society. Sociologists were concerned with the professional, social and political preconditions for the production of mass communications.

Studies of newsroom operations were preoccupied with text norms of 'objectivity' and 'news criteria' and how they functioned within newsrooms, and in this context doubled as strategies[14] towards sources of information[15]. Researchers became preoccupied with the paradoxes of the journalistic profession[16], how the economy of programming intervened with journalistic priorities[17] and, most recently beginning in the 1990s, cross-national comparisons of media systems in which national differences apparently are determined more by the complexities of national histories and cultural traditions than by any universal regularities in journalism.[18]

The empirically oriented studies have left us much necessary and basic knowledge of how mass media works; they have also left a variety of sometimes confusing and contradictory conclusions but few, if any, grand theses. Pursued in many scholarly traditions, these studies have no overarching theory and few methods in common, although some organising themes have emerged. In media history, for example, the long-term

development of media into a separate and partly autonomous social institution has been a major theme[19], as well as the development of the newspaper industry from monopolies to atomistic competition, to oligopoly and back to local monopolies in a multi-media market, which gave ownership more control over journalism but, paradoxically, also gave journalists more power in their encounters with elite sources.[20]

Most media scholars still seem to agree that mass communications basically remains a unidirectional process; at the same time, they observe a certain amount of autonomy in both editors and journalists, as well as in the audience in its choice of messages and interpretation of those messages. This implies that much in the production phase of media content is inaccessible for common people. There is no necessary direct interaction between senders and their audiences. The editorial processes are insensitive to input from common people, except indirectly in circulation figures and viewer ratings, which provide data for the calculations of advertisers and media proprietors. Editors and journalists have taken command over the agenda setting in public life in the short run and are joined by ownership control, setting the priorities in journalism for the longer run, at the expense of the access of politicians, intellectuals and independent writers.

However, some theoretically oriented perspectives seem to have come out of empirical studies, especially at the meso or organisational level of society: Despite many local variations, the media product seems to be a function of how journalism is organised and controlled, which in turn is influenced by social mores and the political systems within which media operate. Another basic frame for journalism is of course the economy and the technological capacity of the individual media. At a more abstract level, this may be taken as the proof of mutual influences between the media system and society. The higher we move towards the macro-level of society and the wider we move into cross-national comparisons, the more dilemmas and contradictory views we will discover about the social and cultural functions of journalism and mass media from a comparative perspective.[21]

A modern image of organised communications proposes a stochastic view. It is a vision of loosely connected and semi-autonomous parts in a hierarchical order of communications channels within a broader media system. The many diverse elements of a media system change in various tempi but still contain standard procedures, choices, news values and narrative options. Message production may be influenced by three interlinked systems: 1) that of matching roles as journalists, sub-editors, editors, publishers, etc., within the editorial department; 2) the economic character of media operating as firms, competing with rival media within a market; and 3) media being a social institution within society in general, partly as an object of legal regulation from political authorities and partly as an autonomous institution by its own codes of professional conduct and acquired authority.

The Cultural Origin of Human Communications

We use culture as much as our senses when we communicate. Furthermore, we depend on communications facilities, social networks and a community to survive. It is also a truism that as we learn to communicate we become integrated into a community. On the other hand, when we are *not* able to communicate we lose the human touch and deteriorate psychologically. Many observations support this proposition, from newborn children connecting with their mothers through sounds, smells and body language, to

people living in isolation, deprived of normal sensory input and human contact, slowly deteriorating physically and psychologically.

The most essential part of communication is language, and language in turn is based on collective experiences and conventions as well as on received ideas and customs. Both language and communications are culturally embedded; our ability to communicate and *what* we usually communicate, rests on a geographically bounded culture, or on a special agreed-on terminology within an interpretive community.

Both humanists and social scientists agree on these basic premises, but while humanists are prone to find the sender as an innate part of the text, social scientists address themselves to contexts and journalistic working routines. As we have seen, 'sender strategies' is an important idea in these studies. By 'strategy', we mean the tendency of senders to follow certain text norms and routines in given situations, resulting in certain categories and forms of text. Forms of presentation and genres in turn serve as guidelines for the audience concerning how to interpret programmes and messages. This, of course, is the general proposition to be investigated in many contexts. In other words, social scientists tend to deal in categories of text and senders, whereas humanists work with identifiable and individual authors and texts. The two traditions have easily collided over the issue of whether or not *content analysis* is a valid method. Content analysis was introduced in the 1950s by social scientists as an objective method of *quantifying meanings* in texts.[22]

Content analysis consists of two seemingly opposite mental operations. First certain features and meanings in the selected texts, relevant to the research problem, are isolated and named in a set of 'categories'. Then rules of equivalence are created regarding how to interpret and identify different expressions in the text under investigation and then sort them into the constructed analytical categories. When two different expressions are said to be *equivalent* they are treated as similar in the analysis. Content analyses rest on summaries of content or on analytical judgements by investigators, in short on individual or subjective ideas of commonness, which consciously ignores nuances in the text. This method of sacrificing variety for simplicity, however, rests on disciplined and systematic judgments, which can be repeated by different coders.

Content analyses concentrate on certain aspects of each text in order to increase the number of sampled texts. The result of these 'superficial' interpretations are then quantified and treated statistically, the idea being that the various frequencies of textual fragments will demonstrate how various categories of senders differ, e.g. in what topics are reported and what spaces are given to them, or the analysis will reveal the kind of opinions given, the way opinions are expressed, etc. The idea is often to disclose something of the sender's stratagems, and of the impact certain historical or social situations have on these strategies.

Humanists, on the other hand, claim that the true meaning of any part of a text must be interpreted with reference to the whole story. In order to reveal an intended or accidental meaning in one part of the text, all parts must be taken into consideration as the parts more or less explicitly refer to each other within the framework of the whole text. In addition, the literary scholar detects intertextual links to stories previously told.

The main study objects in literary studies are books in the national or international canon of carefully selected works. By contrast, media scientists are more often interested in trivial texts by the thousand in popular culture and news, texts that are both ephemeral and non-canonical. Nevertheless, it is maintained that a sample of such trivialities

may provide evidence of everyday ideas that linger in the public attention since trivial messages are written and edited under repetitious routines and genres, also serving as reader guidelines for the preferred way of reading a message. This makes a great difference in how texts are perceived and treated by researchers: social scientists look at media content as collective products by journalists or television producers, while humanists often look for the unique genius of an individual author.

A central tenet in literary analysis is that texts express a multidimensional complex of meanings. Scholars look for underlying codes that represent immanent systems of signs and meanings, almost as objective qualities of the texts. Metonyms and metaphors point to hidden messages and double meanings that invite reading between lines. Content analysis, by contrast, deals mainly with what is clearly expressed 'on the line'.

Codes are systems of signs, symbols and references that do not belong to grammar but are also not an entirely personal way of expression as they belong to an informal and intuitive part of culture. Asking for the origins of codes and, for that matter, also those of journalistic genres, is almost as useless as asking for the origin of languages, they can most fruitfully be studied concerning how and in what contexts changes occur. Representatives of empirical science also claim that meanings may be found in the form in which messages are given.[23] The concept of 'mediation of content', for example, refers to how messages are shaped to fit the mould of limitations and expressive possibilities in each media template.

There are very few objections to these ideas now, but there is still almost a cultural chasm between disciplines regarding how to evaluate the reliability and validity of findings. Humanists have some difficulties in distinguishing between analysis and methods; "My concepts are my method", they seem to claim. Humanists aim at an understanding of different texts, while social scientists opt for an explanation. But without common methods, social scientists retort, findings cannot be accumulated. Without a description of how results are found and of how this procedure can be repeated by others, findings remain subjective and cannot be included in the archive of valid findings.

Rhetoric Reborn?

At most Scandinavian universities, rhetoric had almost disappeared as an independent teaching subject. Not any more. Classical rhetoric has been reintroduced at many universities along with various modern forms of discourse analysis, textual linguistics, aesthetics and related topics. One reason for the popularity of these themes is clearly the expansion of public affairs reporting in most democracies. Being a good communicator has become the most important qualification for a politician. This interest in forms of delivery rather than content, however, may be seen as a regression into essentialism, grammar and textual studies. But the picture is more varied. For instance, in discourse analysis the public and more generally the social context is active in both shaping the messages as well as giving direct feedback. These studies at the micro level work on the premise that there exists some kind of interaction between senders and audience, with turn taking and alternation of roles, which explains the communicative energies and shifting directions in the discourse.

By contrast, much in rhetorical analysis is based on postulates of predetermined meanings and effects, independent of context. It is often claimed that the rules of Classical Rhetoric are an immanent part of the text. But no evidence is given that the send-

ers and their audience share even an intuitive understanding of these rules. In effect, researchers themselves often take the position of the audience in deciding what is evident or unclear in a text. Thus, the epistemological status of Classical Rhetoric in contemporary environments becomes unclear.

Modern empirical analyses of rhetoric, on the other hand, examine how rules of rhetoric are adapted to different situations concerning receivers' expectations. Genres and presentation methods are hidden contracts between senders and their public regarding how to read a message; they cannot be changed by chance. These underlying rules of journalism can be detected but are only partly known today. Much remains of systematic studies of both textual genres and how the audience understands these norms in the production of texts. The debate over what the characteristics of newsworthy events are reveals a widespread disagreement among researchers and illustrates this lack of systematic knowledge.

Some media researchers have placed rhetoric upside down, starting with what people easily understand and are able to remember. They also concentrate on presentation factors. Through experimentation with manipulated news stories – adding or subtracting elements in the story – they have been able to identify a number of rules concerning the kind of information; form of delivery etc. news stories must contain to be easily understood by most of the audience. These rules have been adopted as textual norms by many television news departments.[24]

Hindsight and Foresight

During most of the 20th century, one-way mass communications dominated the idea of how media functioned in society. What is basically wrong with this idea is that most people are described as customers only, not as inventors in their respective communicative environments. Despite systematic research spanning more than half a century, we know far too little about how people create, form and sustain their personal and collective networks from their communicative potential.

With the support of computers and communications technology, new kinds of social networks are formed, and pseudo-communities are easily shaped independent of distance and geographical borders. People are writing e-mails and making phone calls, seemingly without end. If conversations were not destroyed by mass media, they have re-emerged with a vengeance. In the torrents of information released by the Internet, an increasing number of people are also acting as journalists on new platforms (web logs and wikis, net news and citizen reporting), creating new forms of public spheres. The threshold for private expression to be available in the public domain has been lowered, and an amazing number people are entering this space.

Throughout these immense changes, however, *the communicative man* remains intact, only the means of making social contacts shift, not the urge to make contacts. This old idea also suggests new frames of reference for understanding the current revolution in communications. 'Mass society' has simply disappeared, and as a side effect an increasing number of communications phenomena in the 21st century are falling outside our currant theories in media studies. Perhaps it is time for another assessment of our present 'state of the art' and to evaluate what we can safely discard, as well as what ideas, concepts and tools we should keep for the future.

Notes

1. Those versed in French social science and philosophy will find a conspicuous lacuna in the following pages. Some important names and ideas are missing such as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Lacand, Claude Lévi-Strauss etc. My essay is oriented primarily towards Anglo-American empiricism and how this has been discussed and adapted in Scandinavian media research.
2. Lasswell, Harold (1948) 'The Structure and Function of Communications in Society ', in Bryson, Lyman (1948) The Communications of Ideas, Institute for Religious and Social Studies, New York. Reprinted in Wilbur Schramm (1960) Mass Communications, (second edition), Urbana, University of Illinois Press, pp. 117-30 – from which my quotation is taken.
3. See for example Tunstall, Jeremy (1971) Journalists at work. Specialist correspondents: their news organizations, news sources, & competitor-colleagues, London, Constable; and Tuchman, Gaye (1978) Making News. A Study in the Construction of Reality, New York, The Free Press.
4. Carey, James W. (1989) Communications as Culture: essays on media and society, Boston Unwin Hyman.
5. Tunstall (Op Cit.).
6. Schlesinger, Philip (1978) Putting Reality Together: BBC News, London, Constable.
7. Furhoff, Lars (1967) Upplagespiralen[The Spiral of Circulation] Ekonomisk-historiska studier. Vol 3, Stockholm, Scandinavian University Press.
8. Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Berelson, Bernhard, and Gaudet, Hazel (1944/1948) The People's Choice, New York, Columbia University Press.
9. Homans, George C. (1950) The Human Group, New York, Harcourt.
10. A special issue of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 608 (2006) contains a symposium celebrating the 1955 publication of Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld's landmark Personal Influence and evaluating the findings and theories behind the Decatur study, which also confirmed the two-step hypothesis, the major finding that came out of the Elmira study. Most of the contributors to the Annalsvolume were sceptical of the limited focus on 'effects' and of the overgeneralisations of results from a community study. Elihu Katz (2006) himself, however, wrote that the reviewers and critics, now as then, highlighted the concept of individual'effects' – far beyond the more restricted ideas and conclusions claimed in Personal Influence. Reviewers and critics in the same breath ignored earlier published results from the Bureau of Applied Social Research, which clearly pointed to multiple kinds of media influence.
11. Andrew, Edgar and Sedgwick (1999, 43-44) Cultural Theory. The Key Concepts, London, Routledge
12. Jürgen Habermas (1989) in his foreword to The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,Translated by Burger, T. Cambridge MA, MIT Press.
13. The mechanisms of developments in the press, as depicted in the 'Structurwandel', may astonish those who mainly know Habermas from his later 'theory of communicative actions', one of the axioms of that rules for communications and conversation form a joint product or the participant's acrions within given situations.
14. In her article in the American Journal of Sociology (Vol. 77, 1972, pp. 660-79) Gaye Tuchman coined a phrase that has become a catchphrase for a detached and somewhat cynical approach to textual norms and codes of ethics in journalism: 'Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newspapermen's Notion of Objectivity'. Jeremy Tunstall (1973) in the same spirit titled his article, also in American Journal of Sociology (Vol 78, No. 4, pp. 110-31)'Making News by Doing Work: Routinizing the Unexpected'.
15. Two early British studies of media production are Philip Elliot's (1972) The Making of a Television Seriesand Philip Schlesinger's (1978) Putting Reality Together: BBC News.A classic is Gay Tuchman's (1978) Making News. A Study in the Construction of Reality, soon followed by Herbert J. Gans' (1979) Deciding What's News.What Gaye Tuchman found in more general terms was that journalists used norms of professional ethics strategically as a defence of their autonomy from pressures from outside sources of information or from editors and publishers.
16. Already in 1970 Jeremy Tunstall published hisThe Westminster Lobby Correspondents(London, Routledge and Kegan Paul). An early American study, based on telephone interviews with a stratified sample of 1,340 US journalists, is John W.C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman (1976) The News People. A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work. Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
17. Philip Elliot's (1972) (Op. Cit.).
18. See e.g. Daniel Hallin and Paolo Manchini (2004), Comparing Media Systems. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

19. See e.g. Niklas Luhman (1996) Die Realität der Massenmedien(in translation The Reality of Mass Media, 2000)
20. A classic Scandinavian study of concentration in the newspaper industry is Niels Thomsen's study from 1972: Dagbladskonkurrensen 1870-1970[The Newspaper Competition 1870-1970].
21. As many studies demonstrate, there has been and probably still exist marked differences between the Anglo-American and the Continental European tradition in journalism. These varieties may to a great extent be explained by differences in the level and quality of readership and thus in the taste and composition of the respective national audiences. These differences in turn are interpreted as a result of national variations in historical experiences and working conditions for the press, ensuing from variations in censorship and market regulations. Despite these variations, the nations also share many cultural traits with other. Therefore, we may expect the variety in journalism to increase even more as we move out of the European region, e.g. to Africa and Asia. David E Weaver confirms this. He conducted an international project in which journalists in 22 nations were asked about their values and practices, and found enough variety to justify further comparative studies of journalism. In the last chapter Weaver could demonstrate little or no international consensus concerning the role of journalists or the purpose of journalism besides being first with the news. "In short," Weaver concludes, "it seems that no country or territory has a monopoly on professionalism among journalists."Thus, the search for variety and similarities must continue. Weaver, David H (ed.) (1999, 479), The Global Journalist. News People Around the World,Cresskill, Hampton Press.
22. See, e.g. Bernhard Berelson (1952), Content Analysis in Communications Research, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press.
23. See e.g. Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone (2001) The Form of News.
24. In Scandinavia, Olle Findahl and Birgitta Höijer (1984) conducted pioneering work in the comprehension of news reports within the research division of the public Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. See also John P. Robinson and Mark R. Levy et al. (1986), The Main Source. Learning from Television News.Beverly Hills, Sage.

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Interdisciplinarity and Infrastructure

Mediation and Knotworking in Communication Research

Knut Lundby

Abstract

In the Nordic region the field of media and communication research has appeared fairly coherent despite the underlying broad interdisciplinarity. The reasons can partly be found in the support of biennial regional conferences, national research associations, and the Nordicom documentation centre. A similar relationship between interdisciplinarity and infrastructure can be studied at the single university performing research in this area. The case is the author's home base at the University of Oslo. Units and networks of media and communication research are analyzed as 'activity systems'. To what extent can the concepts of 'mediation' and 'knotworking' in 'activity theory' be useful in analyses of interdisciplinarity and infrastructure of media and communication research? How would this apply on a European level?

Key Words: communication research, media studies, Nordic, activity systems, mediation, knotworking

Introduction: The Importance of Shared Objects[1]

Communication research has to develop infrastructure under the pressure of evolving interdisciplinarity in order to cope with changes and demands of society. I will discuss this with media studies in the Nordic countries as the case.[2] Media and communication research in the Nordic countries goes back approximately 50 years (Vroons 2005).

In order to handle the relationship between interdisciplinarity and infrastructure, the participants in the research field have to develop shared objects. Drawing on 'activity theory', I argue that these necessary collective structures could be developed in processes of mediation and 'knotworking'. The concepts will be introduced below, but first some remarks on *levels* of infrastructure and interdisciplinarity.

Shared objects are prerequisites on the local as well as on the global level. 'Local' here means the single research institute or centre making up the basic organisational unit of communication research. 'Global' means the infrastructure these research units relate to above university or national level. In Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden there is a working 'Nordic' community within media and communication studies, through which these researchers may approach the rest of Europe and the wider world.

Nordic Co-operation

Besides Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the Nordic region consists of the three autonomous territories; the Faroe Islands, Greenland (both part of the kingdom of Denmark) and Åland (part of the republic of Finland). The three last have a certain self-governance, symbolised in their own flags, as have the Sámi indigenous people in the north of Finland, Sweden and Norway. The Nordic region, with an aggregate population of about 24 million, has strong common historical and cultural bonds. However, a deep and committed political co-operation across all five countries has never materialized. Today, Denmark, Finland and Sweden are members of the European Union while Iceland and Norway are not, although integrated into the European Economic Area (EEA) as well as into the EU programmes on research and higher education.

There is regular political consultation and co-operation infrastructure between Nordic ministers and parliamentarians.[3] The Nordic Council was formed in 1952, consisting of members of the national parliaments. The Nordic Council of Ministers, established in 1971, is the forum for Nordic governmental co-operation. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Baltic countries, and especially Estonia, have been able to trace their Nordic roots; hence, the Nordic Council of Ministers now includes the Baltic area as well as Northwest Russia in the concept of the Nordic, as 'adjacent areas.' As does the Nordic Research Board[4] within the Nordic Research Area.

Although with limited powers, the Nordic Council of Ministers has been instrumental in the development of a joint Nordic research community on media and communication.

Co-operation between Nordic communication scholars developed because of the proximity between the countries. People in the three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, fairly easily understand each other. Although Finnish has other language roots than the remaining countries, most Finns have some knowledge of Swedish and most Icelanders know some Danish. Hence, 'Nordic languages' may work for communication within the region. However, these days English is taking over as a common language of communication in this research area.

After some 20 years of individual exchange and contacts, a Nordic community of media and communication research was formally established in the mid 1970s. The first Nordic conference for researchers in this area was held in 1973. Two years later Nordicom was established. This Nordic documentation and information centre for media and communication research is a co-operation between the Nordic Council of Ministers and the five governments. Nordicom is a network organization and has been abstracting all Nordic media research since 1975.

From 'Mass Communication' to 'Media and Communication'

For the first three decades of the emerging Nordic research community, 'mass communication' was the key term for the field. The new field mainly grew out of the emerging social sciences, particularly political science and sociology. From the outset, media studies within the humanities were not particularly visible. The same applies to social-psychological research. This implies that there were communication scholars left out in the emerging Nordic community of media researchers. For example, in Norway, Ragnar Rommetveit's internationally acclaimed work on social-psychological aspects of communication and mediation (Rommetveit 1974; Wertsch 2003) was not discussed and documented in this context.

Nevertheless, the academic and intellectual base of the new field expanded. When the former Institute of Press Research at the University of Oslo merged with a new initiative for humanistic media studies, to form the interdisciplinary Department of Media and Communication in 1987, Professor Rommetveit was on the committee to select the humanities chair for the new media studies department. Rommetveit's work was also cited with acclamation by the senior social scientist of the same department, Svennik Høyer (1989), in his book on small talks and big media. Further, Rommetveit (1991) was invited to be the first writer in a celebratory volume to demonstrate the breath of the new department (Rønning and Lundby 1991).

This single chapter, 'On epistemic responsibility in human communication', is the only work by Ragnar Rommetveit referenced in the Nordicom database, and Nordic media and communication research still does not delve deeply into this psychological area of communication studies.

However, the field grew and became more interdisciplinary. Terms to characterize the field changed as well. In 1989, when this Nordic research community was in the process of substituting 'mass communication' with 'media and communication' or 'media studies', there was a count of how many scholarly traditions were feeding into this still-growing field: 29 different disciplines were found represented within the said departments at the universities in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.[5]

Coherence Despite Interdisciplinarity

In the Nordic region this field of study and research has appeared fairly coherent, despite the underlying broad interdisciplinarity. The reasons are partly to be found in the support by three distinct aspects of a joint Nordic infrastructure. All three help to shape and share a common object, namely 'Nordic media and communication research.'

First, there is the biennial media researchers' conference, rotating between the countries since the first in Oslo in 1973. A large portion of the Nordic media researchers, seniors and young scholars alike, attends these conferences. They help build a 'community of practice' (Wenger 1998).

Second, the national associations of media and communication research are acting as national sub-communities, taking their share of work with the biennial Nordic conferences. The Finnish were first. They established their association, TOY[6], in 1974. The Danish colleagues created SMID[7] in 1975. The Swedes came up with FSMK[8] and the Norwegians with NML[9], both in 1977, to mention the associations by their acronyms.

Third, there is NORDICOM, the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research. [10] Nordicom has national documentation centres attached to universities in all five countries as well as a Nordic main office. Nordicom has the status of a formal 'Nordic institution' under the auspices of Nordic Council of Ministers, and, in addition, a link to the ministry of culture in each of the countries. Besides public funding, Nordicom is financed through payment for services, and revenue from sales.

Abstracting all media and communication research by Nordic scholars since 1975, the Nordicom publication base, by 2006, contains some 39,000 references. There are databases on institutions as well as on media researchers and projects in the Nordic countries. To date, they report on 300 media research institutions in the Nordic region and have 900 media researchers, with 700 ongoing or recently finished projects. Nordicom publishes a journal in Scandinavian languages, primarily for internal communication within the research community, and also publishes several book series, in English and in Nordic

languages, and the international renowned journal *Nordicom Review.* Nordicom presents statistics on media consumption and ownership for the whole of the Nordic region, made available and analyzed in the series *Nordic Media Trends.* Finally, Nordicom runs the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media at the request of UNESCO.

Such a coherent infrastructure of services and functions works inwards as well as outwards. It helps the research community to 'remember' and operate on common standards. It also make it possible to 'speak' to the rest of the world with a 'Nordic' voice in these matters, and to map out the Nordic media landscape within a coherent frame, as done by Helge Østbye (2001) for Norway and Lennart Weibull (2001) for Sweden in a Nordicom report on *Media Trends.* Nordicom outlined its role on its website (2005):

> Nordicom has the character of a hub of Nordic cooperation in media research.
>
> Making Nordic research in the field of mass communication and media studies known to colleagues and others outside the region, and weaving and supporting networks of collaboration between the Nordic research communities and colleagues abroad are two prime facets of the Nordicom work.
>
> Nordicom's activities are based on a broad and extensive network of contacts and collaboration with members of the research community, media companies, politicians, regulators, teachers, librarians, and so forth, around the world.
>
> Nordicom gives the Nordic countries a common voice in European and international networks and institutions that inform media and cultural policy. At the same time, Nordicom keeps Nordic users abreast of developments in the sector outside the region, particularly developments in the European Union and the Council of Europe.
>
> Nordicom's work aims at developing media studies and at helping to ensure that research results are made visible in the treatment of media issues at different levels in both the public and private sector.

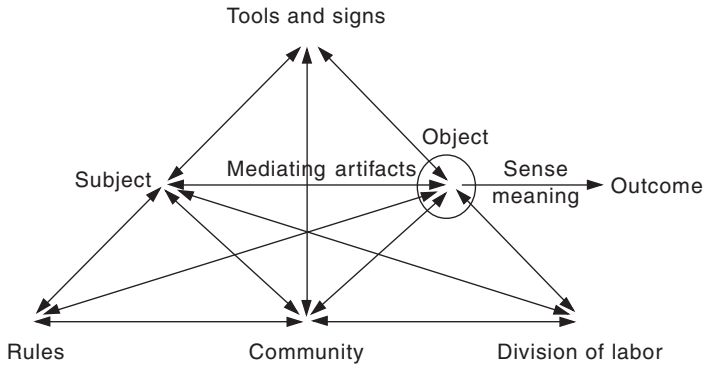
This tripod infrastructure, with the conferences, national associations and the documentation and information service, gives Nordic media and communication research a solid footing to handle the diversity in its field, as well as academic relations with the wider world.

Interdisciplinarity and Infrastructure

Communication studies, even under the more limited term of 'media and communication' studies, are interdisciplinary: it is a field of research, not a discipline and in this field several disciplines meet and merge. The various disciplinary roots of media and communication studies can be traced; however, although they partly mix, and communication scholars from different backgrounds learn from each other, it does not make a new discipline. Such interdisciplinary university or research units occur in other fields as well. Here the discussion is related to the field of communication studies.

The kinds of infrastructure I look for within this field are the elements and links that keep the said interdisciplinary area of research together. These structures coincide with those outlined in general by Yrjö Engeström (1987) as the minimum elements of an 'activity system': the common or shared object, the subjects taking part, the mediating artefacts (signs and tools) applied, the rules, the community, and the division of labour. These elements have been put into an activity system, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *The Activity System Triangle: The Structure of a Human Activity System, from Engeström (1987:78; also in 2001:135)*



How could the field of communication studies be analysed as activity systems?

I will use my own trajectory through the interdisciplinarity and infrastructure of three different generations of communication research units at the University of Oslo as empirical cases for this discussion on the 'local' level. Commenting briefly on the national level, I will then return to the 'global' level of Nordic communication research. Before I embark on this analysis I will briefly introduce the relevant aspects of activity theory.

Activity Theory

'Activity theory' was developed by Russian socio-cultural oriented psychologists from the 1920's and onwards (Kaptelinin and Nardi 2006). It was initiated by Lev Vygotsky (1978) and further structured by Alexei Leont'ev (1978; 1981). Since the mid 1980's, activity theory research has gained broad international attention and is 'transcending its own origins' (Engeström 1999:19–20; Engeström 2001:134: Engeström and Miettinen 1999:1–2). The recent explication of activity theory has a Nordic stronghold at the Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, University of Helsinki, Finland. Yrjö Engeström is their main interpreter of contemporary activity theory, primarily into work environments.

Engeström (2001) distinguishes three generations of activity theory research. The first generation centred around Vygotsky and his idea of 'mediation'. Vygotsky created the basic model behind Figure 1 above. Parallel to the overthrowing of simple stimulus-response models in communication research, Vygotsky (1978:40) introduced 'a complex mediated act' between stimulus and response. Vygotsky's idea of cultural mediation is commonly expressed as the triad of subject, object, and mediating artefact, Engeström holds. In the second generation, Leont'ev (1981:210-3) took activity theory research beyond the individual focus of the first generation, explicating the difference between individual action and collective activity. Mediation by other humans and through social relations was included (Engeström and Miettinen 1999:4). However, Leont'ev did not expand Vygotsky's original triangle into a model of a collective activity system, as depicted by Engeström in Figure 1 above.

The third generation of activity theory needs to develop conceptual tools to understand networks of interacting activity systems, Engeström (2001:135-7) maintains. Interacting activity-systems should be understood as the prime unit of analysis. They

should be interpreted through mediation by artefacts and their object orientation. Further, interacting activity systems should be understood through their history, and by how contradictions and structural tensions foster change and development within and between activity systems. An activity system is always a meeting place for multiple points of view, traditions and interests. This 'multivoicedness' (cf. Wertsch 1991) multiplies in networks of interacting activity systems. It is a source of trouble as well as a source of innovation, reminds Engeström. There are always possibilities of 'expansive transformations' in activity systems. This is accomplished "when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualized to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of activity", Engeström (2001:137) writes.

These principles or dimensions of complex, contemporary activity systems fit the interdisciplinary infrastructure of communication research to be analyzed here, with vertical relations between systems on 'local' versus 'global' level as well as horizontal interaction on each level. However, before embarking on this analysis, some key concepts of activity theory have to be explicated.

Shared Objects

Activity system analysis must be oriented towards the object of activity. This is a moving target, Engeström (2001:135-7) holds. The object existing as 'raw material' in one activity system may become a 'collectively meaningful object' when this activity system merges and interacts with another one. The outcome may be a shared or 'jointly constructed' object. The object of one activity system is, from the outset, a common object within that system. When two or more activity systems interact they may shape a shared object.

A shared object is a prerequisite for intersubjective exchange and collaboration. Interdisciplinarity could not succeed unless there is a shared object for the scientific activity. The infrastructure must support the cultivation of a shared object. If not, the intended interdisciplinary project may fail. The shared object gives a common focus or identity within a department, institute or centre. In a network on a 'global' level, the shared object may be a joint understanding of what the networking is about, as in the concept of a 'Nordic media and communication research'. A shared object has to be constantly cultivated in the ongoing interaction between the various related activity systems.

Mediation of Media Studies

The cultivation of the shared object takes place in the mediation processes of the activity systems. Engeström and Miettinen (1999:13) regard the idea of mediation as the 'germ cell' of the activity approach. The key dimensions of activity systems are gathered in the idea of mediation (Engeström 1999).

The concept of mediation is used in media studies as well. Jesús Martin-Barbero (1993) proposed the conceptual move from the 'media' to processes of 'mediation' within contexts of culture and hegemony. John B. Thompson (1995) focused on symbolic forms in modernity and their modes of production and circulation, as they are transformed in mediation processes. Recently, Nick Couldry (2003) has contributed to mediation analyses of 'media rituals' in society and Roger Silverstone (2005) outlined "The Sociology of Mediation and Communication", to mention a few works.

In this paper I stick to the concept of mediation as formulated by Vygotsky and his followers, mainly as interpreted and presented by Engeström.[11] Activity theory looks for

the mediating artefacts, for the 'tools' and 'signs' that are applied. Tools and signs are cultural artefacts (Wertsch 1985). Symbolic and material artefacts make up means of mediation in activity systems.

Interdisciplinary practice in scientific communities, related to shared objects, requires active mediation within as well as outside the said field. Mediation makes communication possible and keeps an activity system – or interacting activity systems – together.

'Knotworking' in Activity Systems

However, there are work organizations 'when the center does not hold' (Engeström *et al.* 1999). These are the fluid and flexible work practices of 'co-configuration'. Then 'knotworking' becomes important, Engeström and his colleagues (1999) state.

Traditionally, university departments have relied on continued figuration of practices. However, even universities have, today, partly to adapt to the conditions of co-configuration. Courses are configured and customized continuously to adapt to students' and society's demands in a more market-driven system. Research, more and more, is undertaken in complex project structures with larger groups of researchers, where configurations change from project to project, and may be run simultaneously. Such co-configuration is more prevalent in research units heavily dependent on external funding. Hence, public funded universities will not be as affected as private funded research labs.

Co-configuration in research is not happening as rapidly as in customer-related business simply because research takes longer. However, the structural tendencies are the same. Easy access to re-configurations in research partnership via the Internet has accelerated this development in the academic world. "We refer to work that requires active construction of constantly changing combinations of people and artifacts over lengthy trajectories of time and widely distributed in space" (Engeström *et al.* 1999:345). This is close to the object-oriented practices Karin Knorr Cetina (1999) describes in 'epistemic communities': laboratories of high-energy physics or molecular biology, which could be used as a model for knowledge organization.

In co-configuration the actors perform 'knotworking'. "The notion of knot refers to a rapidly pulsating, distributed and partially improvised orchestration of collaborative performance between otherwise loosely connected actors and activity systems", Engeström *et al.* write. Knotworking, then, is characterized "by a pulsating movement of tying, untying and retying together otherwise separate threads of activity'. Knotworking could be individually-based as well as collectively-based (Engeström *et al.* 1999:346-7). I am concentrating on the second, the collective, perspective.

Experiences from the University of Oslo

The concepts are now set up for an empirical analysis. As noted, I will use my own experience from three different units of communication research at the University of Oslo, Norway, as 'data' for the analysis on the 'local' level, before connecting to the 'global' Nordic level. Local cases may have greater significance and validity:

> According to activity theory, any local activity resorts to some historically formed mediating artifacts, cultural resources that are common to the society at large. Networks between activity systems provide for movement of artifacts. These resources can be combined, used, and transformed in novel ways in local

> joint activity. Local, concrete activities, therefore, are simultaneously unique and general (Engeström and Miettinen 1999:8).

For each local research unit, and later for the 'global' network, I will look into key elements and principles of activity systems: First, *Historicity:* the historical background and location. Second, the *Subjects:* the participants or actors in the unit or network under analysis. Third, the degree of *Multivoicedness:* the interdisciplinary repertoire. Fourth, the *Rules, Community, and Division of labour,* i.e. the infrastructure of the unit/network. Fifth, the *Interacting activity systems* with collaboration and relations. Sixth, the *Shared object:* what the activity is centring on. Seventh, the *Main mediation processes:* the key processes to shape and sustain shared object. Eighth, the *Mediating artefacts,* i.e. the main tools and signs that are applied. Ninth, the *Changes and Co-configuration* with the main contradictions and structural tensions. Tenth, the *Knotworking:* the handling of fluidity and demands for flexibility. Finally, the *Expansive transformations:* the re-conceptualizations of possibilities.

A full account of all of these dimensions is not possible within the frames set here. However, the following briefly sketch the development of (media and) communication studies at my university:

The Institute of Press Research

Historicity: The Institute of Press Research was established within the University of Oslo in the mid-1950s on the initiative of press and governmental bodies. The institute did not offer its own courses in mass communication until mid-1980s, and then only at undergraduate level.

Subjects: The Institute had a core group of a few senior scholars plus some project funded researchers. A few students did research at graduate level in the institute. Undergraduate students, however, were not really integrated into the main activity system of the institute.

Multivoicedness: The graduate students had to submit their theses either in political science or sociology. The senior researchers all had such a background. Hence, the interdisciplinary repertoire was not wide. In addition, the research was mainly quantitative.

Rules, community, division of labour: The Institute had to abide by the rules of the host university, since 1963 within a new Faculty of Social Sciences. The Institute made a small working community of its own, with a rather informal and project-driven division of labour.

Interacting activity systems: The initial close interaction with the press organizations weakened over the years, as the Institute became more integrated into the university. Government research grants opened up interaction with ministries as well as with the state Telecom.

Shared object: The shared but changing object throughout the Institute's thirty years of existence was that of research projects and findings on production, organization and consumption of media in Norway; initially about the press, but later on, other media as they evolved.

Main mediation processes: The collection of data and the quantitative and interpretive analysis, as well as the writing, presentation and discussion of research results. Informal mediation behind these processes took place round the table in the middle of the office space.

Mediating artefacts: Type written, xeroxed reports, yearly since the 1970s, based on data punched into stacks of cards and run on the university's mainframe computer. There were hardly any non-centralized computing facilities available.

Knotworking: The Institute had no need for knotworking, although the externally funded research projects required attention to the task-givers. However, they were mostly governmental, and the projects were long-term.

Changes and co-configuration: Changes in the media scene from the 1950s to the 1980s required changed research strategies. However, demands within the university for more interdisciplinary media studies put even more heavy pressure for re- and co-configuration.

Expansive transformations: The Institute resisted strategies from the university leadership to cross the line from a fairly narrow social scientific approach to co-operation with the humanities. The re-conceptualizations of possibilities or expansion of scientific categories were forced upon it.

The Department of Media and Communication

Historicity: The new Department of Media and Communication was put in place by the leadership of the University of Oslo in 1987 as part of a strategic move to cater more broadly for the media developments in society, and to bring the Faculty of Arts into this loop.

Subjects: The new unit doubled the number of staff compared to the former Institute, as professors from the humanities were brought in alongside the social scientists, and it continued to grow. Students became a defined part of the department, also at graduate level.

Multivoicedness: The new department is by definition interdisciplinary. The new staff brings competences from literature, film and media history. The selected students added a variety of experiences and backgrounds to the department.

Rules, community, division of labour: The department was initially organized under the Faculty of Social Sciences as well as the Faculty of Arts, a complicated regime that had to end. However, internally the staff built one community, without divisions.

Interacting activity systems: The media department in Oslo built relations with similar new units in Bergen and Trondheim. In research collaboration, the Oslo department chose to work in extensive programmes with universities in Southern Africa and the Baltic states.

Shared object: The shared object of the interdisciplinary Department of Media and Communication became the teaching of students in a new or expanded field, with adjacent research explorations of this field. Media Studies became a regular university programme.

Main mediation processes: New teaching programmes became a main mode of mediation, further formalized under the national 'Quality Reform' from 2003. The Baltic and African co-operations, as well as larger Research Council projects, mediated research in new ways.

Mediating artefacts: The department explored the World Wide Web from its inception and, early on, got used to computerized and networked mediation. A departmental video library and multimedia lab facilities were made available to professors as well as to students.

Changes and co-configuration: The new department avoided in-fights, but continuously met new challenges in a changing media environment and from a growing number of graduate students. The department was located in a Research Park adjacent to the university campus.

Knotworking: An emerging tendency towards knotworking came with the growing electronic network opportunities. However, the department was not really under pressure to knotwork until a recent squeeze on funding created demands for project flexibility and acquisition.

Expansive transformations: The said Quality Reform re-conceptualized possibilities as the department had to take on more students. Re-organization within the Faculty into larger units put pressure on the media department to extend collaboration in order to keep a critical mass.

The Interdisciplinary Centre: InterMedia

Historicity: While the Department continued its course, I was asked to establish InterMedia, at the University of Oslo, from 1998. This centre came to define itself as part of communication research in terms of 'design, communication and learning in digital environments.'

Subjects: Through InterMedia, the University of Oslo wanted to make a research hub, linking up applied research into ICT and digital media in almost all faculties throughout the university. The centre grew to some 20 researchers by 2005, among them postgraduate fellows.

Multivoicedness: InterMedia was established to move further into interdisciplinarity in this area. The centre relates to education sciences, informatics and research on computers, and law, as well as media studies and other disciplines of the social sciences and humanities.

Rules, community, division of labour: As a centre in-between faculties and departments, InterMedia had to play by the rules of balancing acts. Teaching and disciplinary research should be done in those units, while, at the same time, InterMedia built a research community of its own.

Interacting activity systems: InterMedia, then, got a range of interfaces with other activity systems. The centre was also expected to build relations and project collaboration with external partners as well, on behalf of the university. It takes part in several EU projects.

Shared object: The shared object in this case became collaborative: more complex research projects with hands-on lab-work related to 'new media' and 'net-based learning', as a kind of brand. The shared object is the mode of operation as much as the content area of the research.

Main mediation processes: This centre mediates through the handling of the complex research projects; mediating between the partners in their various roles. InterMedia also gives priority to mediation of research education through a range of supportive structures.

Mediating artefacts: InterMedia's facilities in the new 'Media House' of the Research Park, next to the University of Oslo, are themselves artifacts for the mediation processes that the centre performs. They include InterMediaLab, with well-developed networked solutions.

Changes and co-configuration: The tensions between strong and established faculties on the one side and new innovative cross-structures on the other will constantly be

a challenge for a centre- and project-based organization like InterMedia, especially in terms of funding.

Knotworking: InterMedia is using knotworking in most of the projects it is involved with. Still, this research centre is not a fully fluid organization that uses knotworking all the time. However, the demands on flexibility, appropriation and tying, untying and retying of knots are growing.

Expansive transformations: The priority on 'enhanced' learning has given InterMedia a sufficiently strong base to be able to play a role in a European Network of Excellence in this area. This scholarly concentration, however, may to some extent contradict the intended interdisciplinarity.

The Local Units within the Global Infrastructure

The three activity systems, the Institute, the Department, and the Centre can be more closely compared on this local level. The differences very much depend on the historicity: the changes in context over time. These changing environments offer different possibilities in terms of the technological mediational means and the dramatic expansion in computer capacity and networking is obvious. However, the changes in these tools and sign-systems between the Institute, the early Department and the contemporary Centre are remarkable. Knotworking has expanded from virtually zero to a prominent characteristic during these three phases of communication research at the University of Oslo.

I will not go into a deeper comparison of these three local units. Rather, I want to discuss them in relation to a 'global', wider, infrastructure of communication research. These activity systems have also changed on national, Nordic and further international levels. I will concentrate, more systematically, on the Nordic level. First, however, I will give just a few remarks or examples on the other levels.

On the wider international scene, stable practices have been gradually replaced by co-configurations. Since about 1980, researchers at the Institute used to go, every other year, to the conference of the then International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR).[12] That was all, apart from the biennial Nordic conferences. This practice lasted into the first years of the history of the Department, until the early 1990s. However, options have multiplied. The tendency towards knotworking, even in universities, encouraged by the easy interaction opportunities on the Internet, has opened new doors. The wider interdisciplinarity of the Centre offered a variety of research communities to link up with. The strong base in socio-cultural learning theory that was developed in InterMedia, led to international conferences of Activity Theory (ISCRAT) and Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) rather than to media and communication meetings.

On the national level, the shifting local units at the University of Oslo found their counterparts at the other universities in Norway; during the years of the Institute, there was similar research going on at the University of Bergen. National links with the press organizations were also strong. The establishment of the Department became part of a further institutionalization of media studies in Norway, to be developed in co-operation and through division of labour between the many new units at universities, and in regional colleges. The Norwegian association of media researchers supported this interaction. Again, while the Department carried on these relations within the national media studies community, the Centre found a parallel interdisciplinary construction: InterMedia at the University of Oslo gained a sister in InterMedia at the University of Bergen.

Interactions with the Nordic Level

The Nordic infrastructure of media and communication research is based in the biennial Conferences, the national Associations, and the documentation and services of Nordicom. This infrastructure is in itself an activity system, although it has more of a network character. In brief keywords, following the account of the Nordic co-operation at the beginning of this paper, and related to the three kinds of local communication research units, I have analyzed:

Historicity: The Nordic co-operation was initiated in the mid 1970s during the period of early local institutions, such as the Institute of Press Research, however, was fully developed in interaction with units like the Department of Media and Communication,

Subjects: The Nordic co-operation is built on the individual researchers as well as the variety of media research institutions in the five countries. However, Nordicom adds a group of documentation and information specialists and offices, dedicated to the collective activity.

Multivoicedness: The Nordic collaboration has integrated and adjusted to the growing interdisciplinarity as well as to the gradual professionalization of the field. The Institute and the Department were both part of this; however, InterMedia went beyond the defined scope.

Rules, Community, Division of labour: The Nordic collaboration in media and communication research is built on a fine-tuned system of Conferences, Associations and Documentation with defined roles in relation to each other, in a pre-set time schedule.

Interacting activity systems: Interaction in the Nordic activity system is primarily with local and national activity systems in the same research community. However, Nordicom also takes care of interaction with academics and agencies in the wider international setting.

Shared object: The said Nordic activity system shares the object of 'Nordic media and communication research'. The Institute and the Department fully shares this object. However, InterMedia only partly shares it, as their main objects are elsewhere.

Main mediation processes: The regular Nordic Conferences, the interaction between the national Associations, and not least the Documentation done by Nordicom, are themselves the main mediation processes of the Nordic co-operation in media and communication research.

Mediating artefacts: The Conferences, Associations and Documentation set-up then work as mediating artefacts. They worked even before the advent of today's advanced electronic networked artefacts, which have, of course, made the mediation processes more effective,

Changes and Co-configuration: The hub of the Nordic co-operation, Nordicom, has been under a continuous challenge, or even threat, to adapt to changing requirements regarding funding and productivity. However, basically, the co-operation benefits from Nordic welfare state policies.

Knotworking: Nordicom has become the knotworking agency of media and communication research on a Nordic level. Nordicom has been able to offer the demanded flexibility and service and, hence, been able to stay in business. The Nordic research community relies on this.

Expansive transformations: There are challenges from neighbouring fields and communities of research, e.g. from Activity Theory as well as from mediated learning from information systems and design systems, as the role of InterMedia in communication research shows.

The three-headed Nordic infrastructure has come to be taken more or less for granted by Nordic media and communication researchers. However, the coherent infrastructure is probably a presupposition for the interdisciplinarity of Nordic research in this area. Through this infrastructure it has also been possible to move the field flexibly into new domains as set out by digital networked media. However, there are still new interfaces to consider.

Discussion

The applied dimensions of activity theory, as developed by Yrjö Engeström and his colleagues, are able to throw light on the relationship between interdisciplinarity and infrastructure in Nordic media and communication research. This goes on at local university level as well as on the overall Nordic level. However, this structuralism approach appears static and superficial as applied in the empirical analysis above.

To get hold of a richer texture of the development of communication research one has to go into the cultural aspects as well. James V. Wertsch (2002) points out a way for this kind of analysis in his book on collective remembering. Starting from Vygotsky's understanding of mediation, as does Engeström, Wertsch puts more emphasis on the cultural artefacts in mediation. He focuses on collective remembering as processes where agents use cultural tools, especially narratives. Language becomes important in this socio-cultural perspective on mediation. The resulting collective memory is 'distributed' between the active agents and the textual resources they employ.

The Nordic system of media and communication research is distributed between the active agents (researchers, institutions) and the textual resources they employ (the interdisciplinary repertoire of this scientific field as well as the resources in Nordicom). To get hold of the collective memory of this research community, one has – according to Wertsch – to get into the processes of collective remembering. One then needs to get hold of the narratives, the stories, where the tensions and tendencies of the field are played out and treated. This would, in the situation I have described, have given a much richer analysis. It would have been easier to trace processes of change.[13] However, this would go beyond the limits of space for this paper.

I have focused on the technological tools in the mediation of media and communication research. They are important. Computers, digitalization of material and the networks of the Internet offer new options for collective remembering. However, computerized collections, like those by Nordicom, have to be shared – put to work in narratives – in order to make an active memory-base.

Interdisciplinarity in itself does not produce a collective memory in research units and networks. Nor does an existing infrastructure in itself. In such activity systems, the shared object has to be cultivated in processes of ongoing mediation and knotworking.

Conclusion

This analysis has confirmed that, in order to handle the relationship between interdisciplinarity and infrastructure in communication research, the participants in the units and networks of research have to develop shared objects. They could be developed in processes of mediation and knotworking. Such structures and processes were found in the local university units I analyzed, as well as on the overarching Nordic level.

However, such shared objects have limits, as demonstrated by the example of Rommetveit's non-inclusion in the Nordicom database.

Narratives are part of the structuring activities. I have told the story of Nordic communication research. Although I have selected the cases for analysis from my own university, many other institutions in the Nordic media and communication research field follow a similar path.

My narrative may differ from those of others who have taken part in the same history. My narrative may add to the collective remembering of this research community. However, it also challenges this community on the relations to its neighbours, beyond the accepted repertoire of interdisciplinarity.

On a European Level?

If a knotworked and mediated relationship between interdisciplinarity and infrastructure in media communication research could be sustained on a Nordic regional level, one may ask whether this could work on a European level as well. The establishment of a European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) is a relevant step. However, there will be a need for mediating mechanisms like Nordicom. Diversity in Europe makes it a seemingly unrealistic task to integrate all media and communication research under one hat, as in the Nordic area. Co-operation between regional infrastructures in this field of research may be more realistic. This said, the new European Networks of Excellence in selected areas of research are actually working. However, they encompass more specific areas of research than the wide 'communication' or 'media and communication' field. Further, these Networks of Excellence leave out researchers and institutions that are not defined as 'excellent'. In comparison, the said Nordic experience has been a rather democratic one.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Professor Sten Ludvigsen at InterMedia, University of Oslo. He pointed out the importance of shared objects to me. He also inspired me to look into the options of activity theory.
2. This article is based on a presentation at the First European Communication Conference in Amsterdam November 2005.
3. www.norden.org
4. www.nordforsk.org
5. See *Nordicom-Information* (1989)4.
6. www.uta.fi/tiedotustutkimus/TOY
7. www.smid.dk
8. www.jmg.gu.se/fsmk
9. www.medieforskerlaget.no
10. www.nordicom.gu.se – I am grateful to Director Ulla Carlsson of Nordicom for stimulating discussions.
11. Engeström and Miettinen (1999) raise a significant discussion in relation to how James V. Wertsh (1991) conceptualizes and approach mediation analysis in the Vygotsky tradition. However, it is not necessary to go into this debate here as they agree on tools and signs as the main mediating artefacts.
12. Now the International Association for Media and Communication Research.
13. I became aware of these options during a seminar on Collective memory, social remembering and narratives' at InterMedia, University of Oslo, 26–27 October 2005; especially through the comments from James V. Wertsch.

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Discipline or Field?

Soul-searching in Communication Research[*]

KAARLE NORDENSTRENG

Abstract

The terms of (mass) communication research and media studies are widely used to refer to an academic discipline, usually established in universities as a major or minor subject, a department or institute and sometimes even a school or college. It is implied that this young field is by now a discipline in its own right alongside such traditional disciplines as history, literature, sociology or political science. However, the nature of the discipline often remains unclear, while its identity is typically determined by administrative convenience and market demand rather than analysis of its historical development and scholarly position within the system of arts and sciences. This chapter discusses the nature and terminology of the discipline, with examples of Finland and other Nordic countries, and it advocates the need for a continuous self-assessment of the research community.

Key Words: communication research, media studies, academic disciplines, philosophy of science, Nordic research conferences

Introduction: The Field Expanded and Diversified

Throughout the past 50 years, the field of communication research has expanded perhaps more than any other academic field apart from computer science and biomedicine.[1] Its status next to the old established fields has been consolidated, but its expansion has also led to friction and conflict between the old "ivy league" sciences and this new and popular "Micky Mouse studies", as it is called by opponents in the UK debate (a regular topic in the British *The Times Higher Education Supplement*). The conflicts are not based on mere prestige and jealousy, but literally on the vital prospects of each field – not least the old and established – in the middle of the so-called structural adjustment of universities.

In its expansion, the field has become more and more diversified. Different media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, cinema, etc.) and different aspects of communication (journalism, visual communication, media culture, media economy, etc.) have emerged as more or less independent branches of the field. This multiplication process has not been halted by the convergence development brought about by the digitalisation of media production and distribution. On the contrary, new media, Internet, etc., have entered as further specialities in media studies, often gaining the status of another study programme, major subject or even a discipline of its own.

Placed in a broader perspective of the history of science, such multiplication is quite problematic. The field is both deserting its roots in such basic disciplines as psychol-

ogy, sociology and political science, and it is also becoming more and more dependent on the empirical and practical aspects of reality. This typically means applied research under the terms of the existing institutions, i.e. administrative instead of critical research. Moreover, there is a practical question of naming the various subdivisions of media studies, which does not follow any systematic patterns – neither internationally nor within one country.

In this situation it is high time to return to the crossroads question discussed by Bernard Berelson (1959), Wilbur Schramm (1959) and others in the late 1950s: Is mass communication research really a discipline or just a field? I made an early excursion into this topic already in the 1960s on the basis of my experiences from the USA – including personal interviews with Berelson, Schramm and Harold Lasswell (Nordenstreng 1968).

Today my answer to the discipline/field question is that it remains rather a field than a discipline, and my suggestion is that it is an unhealthy illusion to celebrate the popularity of media studies with the distinction of an independent discipline – not to speak of several disciplines. In any case, some serious soul-searching and critical examination of the identity of the field are called for.

Indispensable material for this soul-searching is provided by the "Ferment in the field" exercise which George Gerbner as editor of *Journal of Communication* mobilized in the early 1980s among colleagues to review the field from the point of view of research paradigms and their challenges – not least the challenge posed by leftist-critical thinking. The resulting special issue (Summer 1983, 33:3) did not reveal any final truth about the state of the art, but it did serve as a healthy reminder of the need to periodically take a meta-look at what we are doing. A new look at the ferment in the field was taken by the same journal ten years later (Summer and Autumn 1993, 43:3 and 4), but that turned out to be just another panorama of the field "between fragmentation and cohesion" (the title of the issue) without particularly intriguing or challenging perspectives.

More of that ferment is exposed by histories of the field, both across the international arena (e.g., Pietilä 2004) and through a national landscape (e.g., Pietilä et al. 1990) as well as anthologies of the classics (e.g., Katz et al. 2003; Peters & Simonson 2004). A useful overview of the present research landscape was provided by Wolfgang Donsbach in his Presidential address to the ICA conference in New York in 2005 (Donsbach 2006). His first thesis is that communication as a research field has seen the greatest growth of probably all academic fields over the last 30 years, and his counterthesis to this: "Communication still lacks, and even loses, identity" (based on a survey of ICA members, pp. 439-443). His second thesis is that we have accumulated a lot of good empirical evidence on the communication process, while the counterthesis admits: "The field increasingly suffers from epistemological erosion" (pp. 444-446). Donsbach's third thesis finally says: "We have precise and sound knowledge in many areas – but (counterthesis) we tend to loose normative orientation in empirical research" (pp. 446-447).

An insightful addition to historical and disciplinary reflections about the field is provided by Brenda Dervin in a survey for the 2004 ICA conference in New Orleans on "navigating methodological divides in the communication field" (Dervin & Song 2004). My response to the question whether diversity means strength or weakness was as follows:

> Both. But today I mostly warn about diversity turning into surfing. The rapidly expanded field has become more and more differentiated and the recent development of convergence has not stopped this tide. Rather the contrary, new media, Internet, etc have given further grounds for specialized approaches in

> media studies, often gaining the status of another major subject and discipline in academic nomenclature. With such a trend the field is both losing its healthy roots in basic disciplines (sociology, political science, linguistics, literature, etc) and is also coming more and more dependent on empirical and practical aspects of reality. This means typically applied research serving existing institutions,

i.e. administrative instead of critical research. It is an unhealthy illusion to celebrate the popularity of media studies with the distinction of an independent discipline or several disciplines. I would call for serious soul-searching and critical examination of the identity of the field. It is time again to return to the crossroads of Schramm, Berelson & al.

Accordingly, there is good reason to search for the identity of the field. Moreover, in addition to these reasons for soul-searching, which stem from the field itself, Europe has an additional challenge for a reform of its whole higher education system, known as the Bologna process.[2] Along with this process also media and communication studies are rapidly moving to a two-tier BA-MA degree system throughout Europe, which brings further ferment to the field. Bologna invites – in practice compels – each major subject to rewrite its curriculum, and in this process one cannot help defining the disciplinary profile and core elements of each subject. This will naturally lead to soul-searching not only within each department but also at higher faculty or college level. Especially challenging prospects are provided by interdisciplinary programmes, which seem to become popular at the MA level opening the possibility to combine different BA backgrounds and to focus on cutting edge topics not least in the ICT and new media.

A Survey in Scandinavia

An illustrative case of the state of the art is provided by the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden (this time excluding the fifth Nordic country, Iceland). Some years ago I proposed in the context of the biannual Nordic conferences a systematic survey of the concepts and terms by which the field of (mass) communication is defined in our universities. The motivation was both theoretical-intellectual in terms of the philosophy of science and practical-bureaucratic in terms of the names given to disciplines, departments and positions. Both aspects have become more and more intriguing with the development of new media, convergence and globalisation. The field in this connection refers broadly to all approaches to media and communication within humanities, social sciences and arts, apart from purely technical approaches, and it covers both research and education.

Such an inventory based on lists of all relevant departments and disciplines to be found in the Nordic universities proved to be too ambitious to be fulfilled as first planned by 2003. I underestimated the difficulties of ascertaining the disciplinary profiles from published materials and websites. I therefore started from what Nordicom had already compiled: a country-by-country listing of university programmes in the field, indicating for each its institutional frame (university, faculty, department), name of subject or discipline, level and length of programme as well as a keyword-type characterisation of the programme content.[3] My preliminary survey[4] was based on this Nordicom mapping of the situation in 2002 and the following national characteristics are summarised with the latest update of 2006:

Sweden has 20 institutions which offer at least BA-level studies, 15 of them also MA programmes and six of them doctoral studies. Practically all of these use the same name

for the discipline: "media and communication science" (*medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap*, MKV). In addition to these are eight journalism programmes. Nordicom's inventory of the Swedish programmes does not include the institutions of film studies, nor those of library studies. Of all the 20 institutions in Sweden, 11 are called universities in Swedish, while 9 are colleges with the Swedish name "högskolan" (literally "high school"). Most of these colleges translate their name for international windows as "university" – quite confusing as the status of these colleges is inferior to proper universities, for example without the right to grant doctoral degrees.

Finland has 10 universities which offer BA/MA + PhD programmes either in media or, beyond media, in speech communication, organizational communication or in library and information studies – generally designated as "communication sciences" (*viestintätieteet*). The number of different departments or institutes in these universities is 18 and the total number of programmes or disciplines is 25. Outside these are non-university-level polytechnics (most misleadingly calling themselves "university of applied science"), which offer altogether 18 programmes in media and communication, not least related to new media. Finnish university programmes have no common name for the discipline; several labels are used, each with a specific meaning determined by the history of the academic subject and its professorship.

Norway used to have in 2001 only four institutions, with "media studies" (*medievitenskap*, literally translated "media science") as the national discipline label, except for one with "film studies" (*filmvitenskap*). In addition, there were several institutions for professional journalism and library studies. But by 2006 nine regional institutions of higher education, called "högskolen" and translated in English as "university colleges", have entered the field so that the latest Norwegian count is 13 institutions with a variety of discipline labels such as "media studies" (*mediefag*), "digital media technology", "film and TV production".

Denmark has five institutions but no common label for the discipline. "Media studies" (*medievidenskap*) is used in Aarhus and South Denmark, "film and media studies" (*film og medievidenskap*) in Copenhagen, "communication" (*kommunikation*) in Aalborg and Roskilde, while the labels "multi media" and "humanistic informatics" are also used. Other pre-university institutions/programmes offer education for professional journalism and librarianship.

In general, the Nordic landscape of the academic discipline gives rise to the following observations:

- The field in Sweden and Finland is institutionally quite abundant and diverse. In these countries the discipline represents both the faculties of humanities and social sciences, and those fairly evenly. Moreover, Finland also brings to the field the faculty of art and design (Helsinki, Rovaniemi), while Sweden's list includes a technical university. Sweden has a nationally used umbrella term for the discipline in contrast to Finland's anarchic terminology. However, the difference may be more cosmetic than real.
- Denmark and Norway have fewer institutions and programmes, although Norway has increased its supply. In these two countries the discipline is mostly administered by the faculty of humanities, but the actual study programmes and research activities display more or less balance between humanities and social sciences. Actually, the

difference between humanities and social sciences appears to be largely artificial and obsolete in this discipline.

- The true nature of the discipline can be discovered only through a careful examination of its historical evolution and institutional position in each case. There is no short-cut to map out the disciplinary landscape, and a proper survey requires thorough knowledge of the respective national territory. Such an in-depth survey still waits to be carried out.
- The current challenge posed by new information technologies, on the one hand, and the Bologna process, on the other, has led most institutions and programmes in the field to critically assess the foundations of their discipline. Regardless of such reflection, institutional changes occur, notably mergers between classic humanistic media studies and (post)modern information sciences, as experienced in Denmark and Norway.

The last-mentioned changes are symptomatic of a more general trend, well known in the USA, where multimedia and digital media are no longer designators for a pilot speciality but part and parcel of mainstream media studies. Take the Institute of Information and Media Studies at the University of Aarhus. This is how it describes its profile (see http://www.imv.au.dk/eng/unit/presentation):

> The research and teaching at the Institute fall broadly within the scope of Information and Media Studies.
>
> The institutional research in Information Studies includes historical, sociological, communicative, and design-oriented approaches to the study of the development and application of information technology on the level of individuals, organisations and society.
>
> Institutional research in Media Studies includes projects concerning production aesthetics, textual analysis and reception within print media, radio, TV, film and the internet, as well as topics concerning the theory, policy, history, and institution of the media.
>
> Between these two fields, where information and media studies increasingly meet, research is carried out in areas such as IT and Learning, the Internet, and Multimedia.

This profile of the combined Institute is naturally more technology-oriented than the earlier programme in Media Studies, which grew out of Nordic Literature. A reorientation was natural, given the fact that the Institute incorporated a branch of computer science.[5] A similar merger was also carried out in Bergen, motivated by the new media society and prospects of convergence.[6] On the other hand, no similar merger materialised at the University of Tampere in Finland, where a new Faculty of Information Sciences was established, with Computer Science and Information Studies brought under the same umbrella. Journalism and Mass Communication was invited to join the new Faculty, but it preferred to remain in the Faculty of Social Sciences, next to Sociology and Political Science, without moving into what it considered too much of a "bits and bytes faculty".[7]

Footnotes to History

After a contemporary survey of the field in Scandinavia it is worth recalling how much the research landscape has changed since the first Nordic conference held in 1973. I made an informal review of history on the occasion of the 30th anniversary conference dinner in Kristiansand, Norway, in August 2003, which is reproduced here:

> This is indeed a moment to recall history because of the 30th anniversary. It was summer 1973 when the Nordic mass communication researchers gathered for the first time in Norway, convened by the then Institutt for presseforskning at the University of Oslo. I think there were some 70 scholars participating from all the Nordic countries, including Iceland (from where Broddason came as always). I remember very well how the clan leaders of each Nordic country met after the event on the sunny and warm (like these days) lawn of the Voksenåsen conference centre and the secretary of that small ad hoc committee was a young research assistant from Gothenburg by name Lennart Weibull. It was instantly agreed that after this successful conference we should meet again in two years in Denmark.
>
> So the tradition started 30 years ago. Bjerringbro was held in 1975, followed by Orivesi behind Tampere in the backwoods of Finland in 1977, Umeå somewhere in Sweden in 1979 and Reykjavik in 1981. A new round of five countries and ten years began in Volda in 1983. In that round Finland had its turn in 1987, and we did it on a cruise between Helsinki and Leningrad. It was the good old Soviet Union and we had a bus tour around Leningrad (perhaps the idea of the Leningrad cowboys was born at the same time). All other conferences have been held on a dry land following the same order of rotation. The third round started in Trondheim in 1993 and two years ago we ended it in Reykjavik. Here in Kristiansand it is the beginning of another round and another decade. So the wings of history are there.
>
> All this has happened without bureaucratic structures, even without an association as many other disciplines have for their Nordic cooperation. It was a real a bottom-up venture sponsored by national research communities and coordinated by Nordicom, which came into being at the same time around 30 years ago, and by the same scholarly interest in search of its identity both at national and international level.
>
> This articulation of the scholarly interest in the early 1970s was a natural consequence of a strong growth of the field. Sweden and Finland had their research centres and programmes established already in the late 1960s, largely thanks to the audience research operations of Sveriges Radio and Yleisradio. The consolidation of the academic field of mass communication research, as it was called at that time while nobody spoke about media, took place in the 1970s and it was supported by wider international platforms such as UNESCO and the IAMCR.
>
> And it was not only quantitative growth but also a question of the paradigmatic orientation of the field under the intellectual conditions of the post-sixties and the political climate of the Cold War and the proceeding to détente. The Danish colleagues were quick to import Habermas, Negt and Kluge to Scandinavia, and they were confronted by conventional press historians and political scientists with a positivist orientation. Finland constituted an anomaly whereby anti-establishment progressives occupied a hegemonic position in the field.

> It was at this time, in the middle of the seventies, that I developed a classification of Nordic communities of our field into two: class A, an innovative and interesting category, and class B, a not so interesting category of normal science. My humble Finnish one-man jury placed Denmark and Finland in class A, while Sweden, Norway and Iceland remained in class B – Sweden despite its large volume of research, Norway and Iceland because of their small volumes.
>
> Today this thought experiment remains, of course, a footnote in history and no doubt each of our countries displays such a variety of scholarship that it is no longer possible to classify them as national entities, not even for a humble Finn. Rather we should note today that the Finnish slogan of connecting people has benefited our field, not primarily as technology but through scholarly networking which helps to turn quantity into quality, making two plus two to be five.

Further and more significant footnotes to history are provided by the keynote address which I was asked to deliver at the first Nordic conference in 1973 (Nordenstreng 1973). It was a state of the art review which was supposed to bring to the conference international perspectives, based on my involvement in Unesco's panel which produced "Proposals for and International Programme of Communication Research" in 1971. I summarized the tendencies of change in the field at that time by suggesting that there are two interrelated aspects involved:

> 1) a tendency towards a more *holistic framework* and 2) a tendency towards *policy orientation*. The holistic approach, for its part, may be seen to imply two sub-aspects, namely, a) stressing of the *processual approach* covering simultaneously various stages of the communication process, and, b) stressing of the *contextual approach* tying the particular communication phenomena into wider socio-politico-economic settings.

After lengthy quotes from Dallas W. Smythe I highlighted his point in a recent paper where he generalized that "behaviourism and logical positivism have provided a 20th century rationale for conservative, conformist and escapist activity". My reflections went on along with the radical outlook of the time, referring to a crisis in the Western social sciences and the need to overcome the traditional concept of science being separated from normative considerations, with a theoretical orientation away from positivism:

> Anti-positivism, for its part, claims that a study of the objective laws of social processes, in their widest sense, can derive at social goals grounded on objective facts. This social goal – the 'how things should be' – can be inferred, at least to a great extent, from the laws followed by goal-directed social processes, once the latter have first been discovered. Consequently, research and politics cannot and should not be sharply separated. As Yrjö Ahmavaara, the Finnish philosopher and communication researcher, puts it, research into social laws and political decision-making process "are parts of a unified organism just violently separated from each other by the Humean guillotine".

My analysis of the state of the art ended pathetically:

> In terms of the present analysis, then, the new approach, then, the new approach in communication research is no more of a happy chance than the boosting interest in communication policies is a social luxury. Both can be seen to reflect the same basic tendency: to have the mechanisms of prevailing social order 'modernized'.

Accordingly, I suggested that all of us reformers with more or less radical intentions were after all modernizers of the (capitalist-bourgeois) system – something that in today's perspective really seems to have happened, not least with the marriage of communication research with the ICTs. I ended the presentation with four recommendations, in the form of warnings, "for us wandering in the middle of the 'movement '":

1. Anti-positivism should not descend to the level of value relativism… Being anti-positivists we might – like the UNESCO document, Halloran, etc. – take it as the task of media researchers to be a kind of partisan with the weapon on social science to change the world in this particular field of mass communication. So far we are sound anti-positivists. But it may well be that in our research, say on news values or the objectivity of news, we may come to the conclusion that there are different ways of reflecting the happenings out in the world and that different parties have different kinds of news organs, different countries have different kinds of news services, and we might end up by saying that all of them are principally equally good… We should not be reluctant to relate the findings of mass communication to a carefully documented objective reality – even if the latter might often be difficult to find out.

2. My second warning relates to the whole study of mass communication research. We should constantly bear in mind that the field itself is part of the social system and no matter whether we want or not, it follows the overall social laws governing all activities in the social body… It seems inevitable that the scientific tradition itself has got a good deal of built-in values in support of the social-economic system of each time, and I think it is impossible to get completely rid of this value-boundedness. But it is very important to be as widely as possible aware of it. Hence the importance for constant discussion around science policy.

3. We should not fall back on a mystification of media research, i.e. an illusion of an isolated discipline. After all, mass communication research has always been and will always remain a field rather than an independent discipline. Here I wholeheartedly support Wilbur Schramm, who spoke about a crossroads where many pass but few remain. In this new tradition of anti-positivism there is a risk of once more accepting the concept of mass media and mass communication research as being something extra-ordinary and to begin to study this as an exclusive phenomenon in society… Hence we should constantly in a way challenge the continuity of our whole field.

4. We should not fly up to abstract clouds where the militant groups carry out their orthodox meditation while the social-political-economic System is going strongly on. Here I want to stress the importance of concrete empirical evidence of reality, including media reality, which is continuously needed. I think there is a risk – especially in the hermeneutic tradition – of overlooking the need for very simple data. For instance, among university students we can notice signs that people are willing to abandon the 'positivistic crap' and the measuring methods and empirical evidence associated with it. This is foolish, of course, and leads to another equally bad situation where we used to be in the heyday of positivism, to a situation where our research is not firmly tied to objective reality.

These footnotes are naturally part of history. Nevertheless, they contain some food for thought, even for the contemporary scholarship.

One aspect which in this context should not be forgotten is Nordicom as a crucial infrastructure for the field in Scandinavia. Initially its role was largely invisible – except for institutions such as mine, which was one of its founders in the early 1970s – but during the three decades it has grown into an internationally recognized database and publisher. Nordicom is an exemplary case for the sociology of science, showing how effective networking will make a difference in the intellectual growth of a field – or discipline if you like.

Conclusion

As an actor in the field for the past 40 years, I should naturally first express gratification at its the expansion and consolidation. Instead of its withering away as suggested by Berelson in the late 1950s, we have seen an impressive growth of the field, which has brought communication and media studies to the centre of contemporary paradigms of socio-economic development – the Information Society. As George Gerbner put it in the editor's epilogue to the ferment issue, "if Marx were alive today, his principal work would be entitled *Communications* rather than *Capital*" (Gerbner 1983, 348).

But I have mixed feelings about this success story. My second thought – more and more even the first one – is that the field, with all the expansion and diversity, runs the risk of becoming professionally self-centred and scientifically shallow. Therefore one of the first points I nowadays make in the introductory course of the most popular subject at my home university is what I call "the paradox of media studies": our task is to deconstruct the naïve view that communication is the core of society and we specialise in undoing media hubris.

Lack of scientific depth follows all too easily from an eclectic and multidisciplinary approach. Both are important as such for a healthy evolution of a discipline, but in a rapid development they may become too dominant and offset the foundations of the body of knowledge. Such a "surfing syndrome" is particularly close to studies of fashionable topics such as information technology.

A particular problem in the field is its own scientific identity and its "genealogical nature", not least regarding the concept of communication. Within the field communication is typically understood as the constituting factor of related studies and disciplines, whereby various aspects of human communication – from speech and organisational communication to different media – have their specialities which are based on this core concept and its foundational theory.[8] However, it is by no means self-evident that communication should be taken as the core of related disciplines. True, communication may be understood as the essence of social relations and society may be understood not only as something held together by the "glue" of communication but as something that itself is made up of communication in the Luhmannian sense. On the other hand, communication can be seen merely as camouflage distracting attention from more fundamental levels such as economics or socio-political power structures. This latter perspective does not support the idea of communication studies as an independent discipline or a group of disciplines united by the foundational concept of communication; it rather takes communication as a complementary aspect of more fundamental factors and thus communication studies as a loosely constructed field.

The question about the nature of communication and the related problem of discipline vs. field is far from settled and therefore it should be actively discussed instead of slipping it under the carpet, either by overlooking it or by addressing it with clichés.

Pursuing this and other issues raised above leads us ultimately to the philosophy of science – asking how scientific knowledge is constructed and organised; what are the principles which designate sciences and disciplines. This examination includes the well-known distinctions between basic and applied research: whereas basic sciences are supposed to describe, explain and help to understand, applied sciences are supposed first and foremost to predict; the basic sciences tell us what *is* and predictive applied sciences tell us what *will be*. In addition to these two main types, there is an often overlooked form of applied sciences which tells us what *ought to be* so that we can attain a given goal. These "design sciences" are not supposed to produce true or false knowledge, nor to predict correctly what will happen, but to enhance human skills and to generate instrumental knowledge for the manipulation of both natural and artificial systems – something that is highly relevant in communication studies.

The distinction between critical and administrative research cuts across both basic and applied sciences, including design sciences. These categories should not be vulgarised by identifying critical research only with basic theorising and administrative research only with applied data gathering and processing. Both theoretical and empirical research can be critical as well as administrative, and critical scholars should be particularly wary simplistic labelling of this or that orientation.

Consequently, I make a strong claim for the philosophy of science in order to deal with the concept of communication and its relation to the system of sciences. At the same time I call for a continuous study of the history of ideas in the field. However young the field, and however burning the challenges of the day, it is vital to realise how it has evolved and how it relates to other fields of research. Being aware of one's own research tradition is a precondition for an organic growth of science – and a medicine against the "surfing syndrome".

Accordingly, all Master's-level communication study programmes should have a module on the history of the field and on the nature of the discipline. Likewise, all established institutions of communication studies should maintain some research on research, not only by mapping out the development of their research agenda, both in terms of topics and underlining paradigms, but also by examining the nature of the field.[9]

I am convinced that this will be good for both science in general and critical studies in particular.

Notes

1. I have no data to substantiate this generalisation and thus it should be taken as an informed guess rather than an empirical observation. Reliable data on the volume of different scholarly fields are hardly available at the national level, not to mention compatible data at the international level. Yet, other colleagues, notably Wolfgang Donsbach (2006), have independently arrived at exactly the same conclusion: the first of Donsbach's three theses about the identity of communication research is that the field has seen "the greatest growth of probably all academic fields over the last 30 years".
2. A summary of the Bologna process is given in Nordenstreng (2004).
3. "Utbildningar i medie- och kommunikationsämnen vid universitet och högskolor in Norden" (2001), published in a slightly abridged form in 2002 by *Nordicom Information* 24:4, 105-111. (For Nordicom

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* This paper is largely based on Nordenstreng (2004), first presented in the colloquium "What is Left in Communication Research" in Piran, Slovenia, September 2003. It also relies on the author's presentations in the first European conference on communication research in Amsterdam, November 2005, and conference on internationalizing media studies in London (University of Westminster), September 2006.

publications, see http://www.nordicom.gu.se/eng.php?portal=publ.) A second useful source was "Utvärdering av medie- och kommunikationsvetenskapliga utbildningar vid svenska universitet och högskolor", the evaluation report of Sweden's media and communication study programmes produced by the Swedish Högskoleverket (2001) with an appendix overview of media and communication education in other Nordic countries, based on the same Nordicom survey. The latest list of institutions and programmes of media and communication studies in the Nordic countries is published in 2006 by *Nordicom Information* 28:3, 141-157.

4. First presented as a paper "Disciplines of Media and Communication – A Survey of the Field" at the 16th Nordic Conference of Media and Communication Research (Kristiansand, Norway, August 2003) in Working Group 25: Media Theories – Media Studies – Media Research. That version was published in Nordenstreng (2004).
5. An interesting – even ironic – aspect of this case is the fact that the most senior academic of the Institute is Professor Frands Mortensen, who was Denmark's leading leftist scholar of communication in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. He and other young scholars were instrumental in importing Habermas, Negt and Kluge to Scandinavia, and, for instance, Finns got to know continental radicalism largely via Denmark. Mortensen has since continued to pursue media studies with a critical approach – however no longer something that is dubbed "radical". In any case, neither he nor anybody else would have imagined even in the wildest dreams in the 1960s that one day he would head an institute focusing on information technology in a fairly affirmative way.
6. The new Department of Information Science and Media Studies (*Institutt for informasjons- og medievitenskap*) is located, like the earlier Department of Media Studies, both in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences. The first head of the merged Department is Professor Jostein Gripsrud, one of Scandinavia's leading critical media scholars. The setting up of this Department in the beginning of 2004 should be taken into account when reading the above survey based on the situation in 2002.
7. A status quo solution regarding the faculty reform in 2001 did not mean that Journalism and Mass Communication wanted to avoid new media, digitalisation, convergence, etc. On the contrary, the Department (http://www.uta.fi/jour/dept/profile.html) was the first in Finland to introduce Master's programmes in this area and its Journalism Research and Development Centre (http://www.uta.fi/jourtutkimus/english.html) has focused largely on projects around new media. Moreover, the Department has among its staff a (part-time) Visiting Professor who happens to be the Executive Director of MIT Media Lab. Regarding Information Studies, earlier named "Library Science and Informatics", it also used to belong to the Faculty of Social Sciences, but unlike Journalism and Mass Communication, it decided after a lengthy discussion to move to the new Faculty of Information Sciences.
8. This is manifest in Colleges or Schools of Communication, which typically include departments of speech, journalism, radio-TV, PR and advertising. In Finland the idea of communication as a unifying concept in higher education and research is quite concretely suggested by the fact that there are several and different kinds of university departments concerned with communication and media at the graduate and postgraduate level – nearly 20 units in 10 universities – and that these departments have established a network for cooperation, University Network for Communication Sciences (http://viesverk.uta.fi//index.php?lang=en).
9. An exemplary project in this respect has been launched at the University of Aarhus, Department of Information and Media Studies. "Theories of Media and Communication – Histories and Relevance" seeks to prioritise the field of media and communication theory and its histories and relevance as an independent field of research within media and communication studies (see http://www.medieteori.dk/english/).

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Media and Mass Communication Research Past, Present and Future

Reflections from a Nordic Horizon

Ulla Carlsson

Abstract

Research on media and mass communication has been in a state of constant flux for some 50 years. Scholars in the Humanities have traditionally studied the meaning of human expression in language, philosophy, the Arts and literature. Social scientists have focused on the relations between media institutions and other institutions, not least political ones. With the so-called 'cultural turn' in the 1980s, media scholars' interest shifted to the role of media in the development of culture, on the potential of media to generate meaning in a broader sense, and on the adaptation of media messages to culturally dominant forms of understanding. Today, the field is characterized by extreme diversity and extensive specialization. Studies on the systems level are few. At the same time, contemporary multicultural and global societies raise more complex issues than ever before. Given the high degree of specialization, scholars in the field may not be exposed to the impulses needed for them to be able to formulate incisive research problems. For the discipline to produce new insights and new knowledge requires collaboration – within the discipline, but above all collaboration across academic as well as national frontiers.

Key Words: media studies, historical perspective, international collaboration, collaboration between disciplines

Introduction

The character and directions of academic inquiry are ever-changing. Old subjects evolve, their influence waxes and wanes; new subjects emerge. All as the result of many different intellectual and social processes on different levels – national, regional and international. The field of Media and Communication is a relative young discipline; many of us have first-hand experience of its gestation and birth.

The study of media and mass communication has evolved steadily since the 1950s. Changes in contemporary political systems, the cross-fertilization or conflict of different cultures, the development of social institutions and organizations, not to mention new information technologies, have influenced the development of the discipline significantly.

The number of scholars in the field of Media and Communication Research has increased dramatically during the last decade, and some excellent research communities have been created. But, there are aspects that arouse some critical reflections – most of

which concern whether and to what extent the work in our field raises relevant questions about the relations between media and society.

An attunement of research to the agendas – and even the interests – of new systems of public grants, external financiers and, furthermore, new structures for higher education has thrust scientific inquiry into a period of change. Research tends to be more administrative, and short-term perspectives prevail at the expense of the long-term accumulation of knowledge. Too little time is devoted to academic debate and critique; there is no "career value" in such undertakings. The leeway for independence and the freedom to utter unpleasant truths have diminished – perhaps not formally, but de facto.

The pressures at play in this overall trend may well have more far-reaching consequences for a relatively "new" field of research like Media and Communication than in older and more established disciplines.

The Emergence of the Discipline in the Nordic Countries

Modern Media and Communication Research has its roots in a variety of disciplines: Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, History, Literature and Linguistics. Within these fields, questions relating to mass media had tended to be marginalised. Serious gaps in knowledge had opened concerning how the external manifestations of media and communication related to their inner life, and to the place the institutions occupy in our societies and cultures. This, just as television was becoming an ubiquitous household fixture and computers had started their conquest. The frustration relating to these 'white spots on the map' spurred the creation of the discipline of Media and Communication Research on eminently interdisciplinary foundations. Behind the urge to create a specialised discipline was the desire to strengthen the field through the elaboration of shared concepts, theoretical starting points and methods.

Some of the scholars who were active in the 1970s and 1980s – today we call them pioneers – worked hard to establish Media and Communication as a discipline in its own right. Among the pioneer generation were researchers like Svennik Höijer and Helge Østbye in Norway; Karl-Erik Rosengren, Kjell Nowak, Olof Hultén, Stig Hadenius and Lennart Weibull in Sweden; and Frands Mortensen, Erik Nordahl Svendsen and Karen Siune in Denmark. All were aided and abetted from time to time by Kaarle Nordenstreng in Finland, where Journalism and Mass Communication had been an academic discipline since the 1940s.

Many of these researchers also founded training programmes for journalists and information officers in an era when demand for professionals in these areas skyrocketed.

Other main actors were the national associations of media researchers, all of which were formed toward the end of the 1970s. These may be seen as an outgrowth of Nordic collaboration, which has a history of some 30-40 years, having first been manifested in a pan-Nordic conference for media and communication research held in 1973 at the Voksenåsen outside Oslo. That same year saw the decision to establish a Nordic documentation center for media and communication research, NORDICOM. Clearly, Nordic collaboration in the area was a chief preprequisite to the development of the discipline in the Nordic countries. This Nordic base provided, and continues to provide, a much more conducive platform for research than any of the five countries alone can offer.

Nordic research collaboration also benefited from Nordic researchers' active involvement in the IAMCR/AIERI (International Association for Mass Communication Research) and its regularly recurring conferences in the1970s. Nearly all the so-called

pioneers were present in Leipzig in 1974, which marked a definite step in the history of the Association. And then there was Leicester 1976, Warsaw 1978 ...

It is no mere coincidence that the Swedish association was formed on the way home from Leicester, and the Norwegian association at the conference in Warsaw. In retrospect it is interesting to see how several different factors, especially regional and international processes, coalesced to make an extraordinary national expansion possible. Still, without the entrepreneurial efforts of individual researchers it would not have happened.

And then...?

In the Nordic region, research and education in Media and Communication were finally unified in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The process took place more or less simultaneously, in a variety of academic departments, some in the Social Sciences, others in the Humanities. This was the case in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The exception was Finland, as earlier mentioned, where Journalism and Mass Communication, and Communication Studies, respectively, had been independent and well-established disciplines for many years.

Viewed in historical perspective, media researchers in the Social Sciences and media researchers in the Humanities for many years kept their distance from one another in terms of theory and methodology. In the Humanities, the focus has often rested on the meaning of human expression from the perspective of Linguistics, Philosophy, the Arts and Literature. The social scientists have, for their part, occupied themselves more with the media institutions and their relations with other institutions, particularly those having to do with democracy, and the effects and comprehension of mediated messages. Whereas methodology has long been a pivotal concern within the Social Sciences, it has been relatively peripheral in the Humanities. For many years, a 'front line' ran through the Nordic research community, dividing those who applied quantitative methods from those who used qualitative.

New disciplines like Media and Communication Research find themselves in something of a dilemma. On the one hand, they seek to develop a discipline that merits national and international recognition; on the other, they want to remain open and non-doctrinaire in their relations with neighbouring disciplines. Often, however, the institutionalisation of a research field, particularly in its early phases, implies a risk of a block in communication with other disciplines – which occurred in the case of Media and Communication Research. The developmental phase coincided, what is more, with a new direction in work in the Humanities known as 'the cultural turn'.

The 'cultural turn' represented a development that brought social scientists and their colleagues in the Humanities closer. Scholars in the field increasingly trained their focus on the roles media play in cultural processes, on the media's potential to create meaning in a broader sense, and on the adaptation of media messages to modes of understanding commonly applied to cultural phenomena. Nowadays it is no longer always easy to tell the difference between work in the two traditions. The concept of *text* became central in almost every sense of the word. We may speak of a process of hybridisation in some regions of the field. The 'cultural turn' has had a far stronger impact on media studies than on many other fields. The outcome, however, has not been greater unity of focus, but rather the opposite, and in retrospect we may ask: In an era when issues relating to the power and morality of media institutions were more urgently im-

portant than ever before, where were the social scientists – why were they so quiet? Was it because they were busy pursuing consensus in the field, or was it because of 'marketisation'? Or, were they simply totally absorbed in the Zeitgeist?

For a young discipline in which most researchers nowadays have their background solely in Media and Communication Research and where contacts with early media research and work in neighbouring disciplines are few, "trends" can have an exceedingly strong impact and may lead to widespread conformism. Some critics have lamented the lack of historical perspectives in much of contemporary Media and Communication Research. The wheel has been re-invented, time and again. Researchers tend to develop a nose for trends and for what is politically correct. In this way it is entirely possible for a field of research to be characterised at once by conformism and multidisciplinarity or, perhaps more aptly, eclecticism.

Media and communication researchers borrow theories, perspectives and methods from other disciplines. Many doctoral dissertations of recent vintage refer – often without much reflection – to a handful of theories garnered from more general cultural and social theory. The works take their inspiration from one, often even several methodologies, without pausing to consider that methods, too, are founded on basic assumptions about the nature of the object to be explored. (Höijer 2006)

Scholars in our field have always borrowed and will surely continue to borrow, due to the nature of the phenomena they concern themselves with. Borrowing in itself should not disqualify us from making the occasional contribution to the development of theory and methodology in other disciplines, but the record to date shows remarkably few such contributions. What is more, we find that issues relating to the media are today being studied in many different disciplines, independent of what has been done, or is being done by researchers in Media and Communication.

Media and Communication is variegated in the extreme, and few syntheses embrace the field as a whole. The field is broad, specialities are many, with new ones appearing from time to time. Indeed, the field can give the impression of incoherence. Specialisation, which is not always solidly founded in theory or methodology, may cause the field to disintegrate into small groups, each a discursive community unto itself. Members' credibility within the community increases, all the while their work is marginalised in relation to the research community at large.

The burgeoning flora of journals these days mirrors the situation. Commercial publishing houses have caught the scent and flocked to the arena. New research specialities are carved out and new journal titles started up all the time. As a consequence, there is a risk that our field may become 'balkanized' to an even greater extent. Furthermore, the rapid increase in seeming diversity may well – as in many other cases of rapid expansion – result in redundant and repetitive publication. Which, in turn, implies a risk that perceptions of academic standards will continue to vary, and with them the quality of published work. Variation in standards is not to be confused with a healthy variety of interests, points of departure, concepts and methods, without which the discipline cannot thrive. Theoretical and methodological pluralism needs to be deliberately cultivated, and this requires competitive interaction between qualitative research environments.

The frantic hunt for research funding, increasing pressures to publish in international journals, and far-reaching specialisation – on a market that has become increasingly trend-sensitive – are not unrelated. Thought, reconsideration, and reflection are scarce in day-to-day academic life. Monographs, as demanding of the scholar's time and effort as they are important to our science, are not profitable ventures.

Specialisation with studies of high quality is not a problem in itself, but it can be problematic unless accompanied by inquiry on a systems level. Without these latter studies, we have no knowledge of the whole to which we can relate the various parts. There is a risk that extreme specialisation may lose its fertility for lack of impulses and an inability to formulate new problems of relevance. Today, there is not much in the way of a media philosophy that can unite findings and theories. The lack of such a philosophy can hamper progress in our field.

Media and communication researchers face some real challenges today. In the world of multilevel governance with private and public actors media landscapes and media cultures are undergoing fundamental and far-reaching metamorphoses. Not to mention the ramifications of phenomena like ICT, media convergence and global media structures.

How to bridge the digital – or more correctly – the knowledge divide is a topic of considerable attention even for media researchers. The main question is the gap between north and south. The gap between the rich and poor still prevails as a result of disparities in access to resources, knowledge and technology, especially in rural areas. But, the divide is also reproduced within virtually every country of the world and often reflects other gaps – those between income groups, the sexes and ethnic groups.

We need to better understand how media and communication may be used, both as tools and as a way of articulating processes of development and social change, improving everyday lives and empowering people to influence their own lives and those of their fellow community members (Hemer and Tufte 2005).

In this digital age it is easy to marginalize traditional media as radio, newspapers, journals and books, and fail to confront critical issues such as the lack of media freedom in many parts of the world, the rising global concentration of private media ownership, the absence of media legislation and the challenges facing public service media.

We also have reason to ask questions about media with a focus on gender and the gender order. The media mirror reality, yes, but they also contribute to constructing hegemonic definitions that all too frequently are depicted as self-evident – as natural, all-pervasive and invisible as the air we breathe.

The research community also bears a responsibility for the cultivation of media and information literacy in society at large. A precondition for a good layman's understanding of the media is new knowledge and the communication of that knowledge. *Media literacy* means understanding how mass media work, how they create reality and produce meaning, how the media are organized, and knowing how to use them wisely. Proponents of media literacy view greater knowledge of the media and communication in society as contributing to participation, active citizenship, development and life-long learning.

With the growing convergence of radio, TV and computer technologies, including the emergence of various hybrids and specializations, we see how a variety of electronic media, information and communication is gradually becoming common goods. Interactive media like the Internet also imply invitations to risky behaviour in connection with media use. The time for simple media effects approaches has passed. Instead, the issues of media content and media use need to be contextualised in a multifactor, risk-based framework as concluded by several researchers (Hargrave and Livingstone 2006). Traditional media literacy is no longer sufficient. There is a need to develop new skills and competencies that render users and consumers 'information literate". Media literacy has tended to focus on cultural expression and has a critical dimension that information lit-

eracy lacks. Recently, however, information literacy is increasingly connected to issues of democracy and active citizenship. There is a need to bring the two forms of literacy together. (Livingstone, van Couvering and Thumim 2006)

Time to Regain the Initiative – Nationally, Regionally and Internationally

In our attempts to comprehend and explain contemporary reality we sometimes find the tools at our disposal too mechanical, too blunt and unidimensional. It has proved easier to ask *what* and *how* than to ask *why*. How, then, can Media and Communication Research meet these challenges?

We need a good dose of critical self-examination, where we consider the relevance of the questions we formulate, where we are more judicious in our choice of theoretical perspectives and more conscious of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the methods at hand, and where we evaluate the validity of our findings and the conclusions we draw from them (Höijer 2006).

And, we definitely need more collaboration – within our field and with other disciplines. We need to learn more from one other, to share knowledge and context. Collaboration between disciplines and collaboration across national frontiers, with the aim of enriching the research environment, is vital to the development of fruitful discursive communities. Research communities themselves need to create platforms to achieve long-term goals through national, regional and international collaboration.

Internationalization is both enriching and necessary in the multicultural and global world of today as it is with regard to scholars' interest in broader, more all-inclusive paradigms. We need comparative studies in order to shed light on important issues. We have to build on past work but break new ground. We need fresh, unexpected insights and new comparative research questions. We need to develop analytical frameworks that will guide comparative analysis of media systems. Without comparative studies we run an obvious risk that certain factors will grow out of proportion. And we have to be able to point to possible areas and strategies for future research.

But, we also have to maintain and further develop national and regional collaboration, not least as a means to ensure that internationalization does not take place at the expense of knowledge about, and reflection on, scholars' own societies and cultures. Fruitful national and regional dialogues are a great boon in international exchanges and vice versa.

The overall objective must be to enable our research field to answer questions about the role of media with regard to the distribution of power and influence in our societies, in addition to questions relating to media content and the role of media in everyday life. We should not lose sight of the fact that, *power, identity* and *inequality* are still concepts of vital relevance in media and communication research (Golding 2005). The outcome of this process will depend on our degree of involvement in discourses outside our institutions and closest circles.

It is time to regain the initiative – nationally, regionally and internationally. And, we must dare to do more. That is, enter a new phase in the development of our knowledge about media and communication, where we raise our level of ambition so that the diversity and richness of Media and Communication Research as a field may bear fruit and inspire other disciplines. So that we, in an age when the media are among the strongest influences in our societies, do not by default leave science-based media philosophy and media criticism to others.

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