

# A Historical Review of Radio Research in Sweden

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How has Swedish radio research developed? Which problem areas have been studied, by which institutions and with what financing? A review of these matters is made here, based on time periods corresponding to the reorganisations of radio, and with that the altered forms of radio distribution and programme policy, since this evolution appears to be one of the most important causes of growth and changes in radio research. The periods are sometimes more relevant to radio, sometimes to TV, but valid for both, as the public service media in Sweden – and research about them – have, to a great extent, been institutionally connected up until 1992. The summarising discussion asks in whose interests and for what purposes the radio studies have been performed.

1925-1955

## *On Radio*

During the period 1925-1955, radio in Sweden was the only medium on the air. Trial broadcasts could be heard even in the early twenties, but AB Radiotjänst (Swedish Broadcasting Corporation), the independent, politically established, licence financed company with sole right to broadcast national radio in the service of the public, started its regular programming on

the 1st of January, 1925. This programming was, and still is, free from advertising. The shares were at the outset owned by the press (2/3) and radio salesmen (1/3). Before the national network was built out, private local radio stations were also allowed, but only for a few years. Radio thus became a joint-stock company – but with parliament regulating the annual grants, and a radio law and an agreement with the state laying down the broad outlines for programming. No one outside Radiotjänst had the right to influence what was broadcast, but complaints about possible violations against law and agreement could, after broadcasting, be made to Radionämnden (The Radio Council), set up in 1936. In 1994, this function was taken over by Granskningsnämnden för radio och TV (The Broadcasting Commission); thus the same general construction is still valid.

Apart from 1925, the first years' radio listeners had a varied programme menu of facts and education, entertainment and music to choose from during 7-8 hours a day, mainly in the evenings. On Sundays, there were 12 hours of broadcasting. However, news and programmes on current affairs were few. For example, during the first seven years, the news was limited to a quarter of an hour each day at 9.15 p.m., and then only slowly increased by a few

short newscasts at other times of the day. It was Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå (TT) (The News Agency of the Press), not Radiotjänst, that had been given responsibility for the radio news activity, and TT did not want radio to compete with the press for the news. Not until 1937 was Radiotjänst permitted to start a programme on current affairs of its own, Dagens Eko, but still with TT as the supplier of news bulletins. When the war ceased in 1945, Radiotjänst wilfully broke the agreement on TT's news monopoly. From 1947 and thereafter, Radiotjänst was lawfully allowed to broadcast news bulletins of its own, in addition to those of TT, but they were not regularly set up until 1956 (Elgemyr 1984a).

Until the last year of the period, 1955, radio had pauses in broadcasting during the day – one could mainly listen in the mornings, mid-days and evenings. In 1955, radio broadcasting began to develop faster, as radio then got its second channel, P2, via the FM-system.

### *On Radio Research*

During the beginning of the 20th century up to the Second World War, little media research existed at any level in Sweden. Exceptions were mainly some literature research done within the discipline of literature science and some press research within the disciplines of history and political science.

When it comes to radio, however, Telegrafstyrelsen (The Board of Telecommunications), in consultation with Radiotjänst, arranged in 1928 a kind of voting enquiry (Radiotjänst 1929, SOU 1935:10). All the then licence holders (still less than one fourth of the households had radio) received a postal questionnaire and were asked what they wanted to hear more or less of for 20 programme items – nota bene, in re-

lation to what was broadcast. Approximately 155,000 persons or 43 per cent responded (this group is not representative of the licence holders, who in their turn are not representative of the other members of the household). Various genres of traditional light music of that time topped the list. High up on the list were also talks, news, as well as sketches and cabaret. At the bottom of the list landed modern dance music, i.e., mainly jazz, and different forms of serious music.

More genuine surveys were done during the war and afterwards. In 1943, when around 70 per cent of the population had access to radio at home, the size and composition of the radio audience during one week were studied at the request of Radiotjänst. Peaks in listening were observed during news broadcasts – according to the study, nearly 80 per cent of yesterday's actual radio audience (not of all persons with access to radio) listened at 7 p.m. – but old-time dance music, the gramophone hour, entertainment programmes, radio plays and morning devotions also attracted 40-50 per cent of the actual audience. On average, these listeners heard 2 1/2-3 hours a day (Svenska Gallupinstitutet 1943, SOU 1946:1). Afterwards, some people have been amazed by this daily listening time and the high per centages shown for many programmes in the report, and concluded "that radio during the war was an extremely important mass medium". Even if that is not to be doubted, it is worth mentioning that listening time per listener today is about the same – but with the difference that listening is spread out around the clock and across many radio channels, with the consequence that each single programme reaches a much smaller audience.

After the war, some studies were made about listening to special radio programmes. Further, audience surveys were per-

formed about the role of radio in the election campaigns of 1948 and 1950. (Until 1969, Radiotjänst mostly ordered the large, quantitative data collections from institutes on the market.) It appeared that election programmes on the radio were of much more interest to the public than corresponding content in the press, film and other sources. Also, in 1947, the living habits of the Swedish population were studied to find out about suitable broadcasting times. This last study has often been somewhat ironically referred to afterwards, since it showed that 79 per cent of the population was "already" awake at 7 o'clock – a result that astonished the middle class radio staff. The consequence was that morning programmes were broadcast one hour earlier, at 6.15 a.m.

In 1948-49, Radiotjänst also tested a new method, so-called listening councils (in the form of discussion forums). These were carried out relatively regularly during some ten years. At the same time, the number of customary listening studies (mostly ratings) increased. A survey about the election campaign on the radio in 1954 was contracted out to a university political science department. In 1955, Radiotjänst established its own Section for Listening Studies.

If we use a simple transmission paradigm of the mass communication process, nowadays abandoned by many media researchers but at that time a common model and therefore appropriate in this context – sender>message>medium>receiver – the focus of radio research during 1925-1955 can schematically be delineated as in figure 1.

Thus, the problem areas of research during this first period were, above all, the actual and potential radio listeners. Also, the studies on the role of radio in the elections mainly focused on the listeners, even if they, in a broader sense, touched on the societal function of radio for formation of public opinion and for democracy, as well. When looking from this period into the future, we see that these three problem areas – the actual and potential audience, along with the political role of radio – comprise the agenda of radio research for a long time to come. Even if a few studies were carried out at universities, it was altogether radio itself that initiated and financed research during this period.

## 1956-1968

### *On Radio – and TV*

This period starts when Sweden got its first TV channel. Radiotjänst began trial

Figure 1. The Direction of Radio Research 1925-1955

<i>Research institutions</i>	sender	contents	medium	audience
<b>researchers at Radiotjänst/institutes on the market</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- voting enquiry</li> <li>- audience ratings</li> <li>- listening councils</li> <li>- living habits</li> <li>- the role of radio in the elections</li> </ul>
<b>universities</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listening to special programmes</li> <li>- the role of radio in the election</li> </ul>

TV transmissions a few years earlier, but it was in 1956 that regular TV broadcasting got going. Radio and TV were, thus, integrated within the same company. In 1957, ownership was broadened: 40 per cent of the shares were owned by the press, 40 per cent by popular movements and 20 per cent by trade and industry. That same year, Radiotjänst was renamed to Sveriges Radio.

As mentioned, radio channel P2 started in 1955. With that, music, entertainment, culture, news and regional programmes were given more air space. The new FM network also meant that broadcasters could take into consideration the portable transistor radios and car radios that influenced listening habits. But it was the fact that a commercial pirate radio, Radio Nord, illegally started broadcasting music, advertisements and short news programmes from the Stockholm archipelago in 1961, that, remarkably after only a few weeks, ultimately brought about permission and money for Sveriges Radio to broadcast Melody radio – light music – over the P2 net, as well as night radio on P1. Already in 1962, the building of a third channel, P3, started, which was designated for light music and night radio. In 1966, when P3 could be heard all over the country, the profiles of P1, P2 and P3 were established and remained essentially the same until 1992: P1 became the talk channel with information, P2 the channel for serious music and programmes for special target groups, and P3 the channel for light music and entertainment (Elgemyr 1984b, Holmbäck 1984).

At the end of the period (1967), the distribution of shares of Sveriges Radio was changed again, as a sign of increasing independence: 60 per cent were now owned by popular movements, 20 per cent by the press and 20 per cent by trade and industry.

## *On Radio Research*

The first years of this period were dominated by surveys about radio listening, although TV viewing was studied as well. 1958 was the year, however, when the first comprehensive TV ratings were performed, and those were soon a rule. In 1959, the Section for *Listening Studies* at Sveriges Radio changed its name to the Section for *Audience Studies* – in short PUB. More and more studies on more and more aspects of the audience were done. Some examples of special ventures, besides the common audience ratings, concerned the new radio channels and the enlarged programming – for details, see figure 2. But even if radio studies increased, those on TV became far more frequent, in spite of the fact that radio listening only slightly and temporarily diminished with the spread of TV.

Most of the studies were descriptive and concerned primarily structural conditions – but there was also, at Sveriges Radio, more theoretical research on the functions and effects of the communication process. One study, which was based on American models of the formation of public opinion, focused on the election in 1960 on the radio (and TV), in terms of the role of ether media in propaganda, opinion leaders, voting behaviour and political mobility. Another example consisted of a series of studies about the effects of radio's and TV's information campaigns before the switch-over to right hand traffic in Sweden in 1967 – these studies, as well, initiated because of a political decision.

In a survey of Swedish mass communication research during 1957-1962 *concerning all media*, Nowak (1963) found that researchers had paid great attention to only one clearly defined theoretical field – namely, political public opinion. Of those studies that had been brought about outside Sve-

Figure 2. The Direction of Radio Research 1956-1968 (main examples)

<i>Research institutions</i>	sender	contents	medium	audience
<b>the research department at Sveriges Radio (PUB)/institutes on the market</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- audience ratings</li> <li>- listening possibilities, sound quality, listening and needs regarding P2, Melody radio, P3, music, music radio, regional programmes, night radio</li> <li>- children, youth and radio</li> <li>- living habits</li> <li>- the role of radio in the election</li> <li>- effects of radio's traffic campaign</li> </ul>
<b>governmental institutions</b>		- the information for consumers		- the role of radio for opinion leadership
<b>universities: social sciences</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- analyses of propaganda</li> <li>- the objectivity of news</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- radio's formation of political opinion</li> <li>- effects of radio's traffic campaign</li> <li>- the needs that radio fulfills for individuals</li> </ul>
<b>universities: humanities</b>		- the radio drama		

riges Radio, it was chiefly within this field that radio had been included as one (of several) objects of study. The institute that had devoted itself mostly to the question of opinion leadership was a governmental institution. With respect to the formation of political opinion and the effects of election propaganda, it was instead a university political science department that, since the beginning of the 1950s, had carried out investigations concerning the elections (and the referendum in 1957). One university study had, however, a totally different approach. It proceeded from the uses and gratifications model and shed light upon the needs that individuals fulfil by using various media, among others radio.

During this period, analyses of media contents were pursued as well. One of the university departments mentioned above had made several analyses of propaganda, mainly in the press, but also on the radio and radio transmissions in Swedish from other countries. At the end of the period, Sveriges Radio commissioned the same department to study the objectivity of its news. That content analyses began to emerge on the scene is also shown by the fact that a governmental institution made an inventory of the extent and quality of information for consumers in radio and other media. Radio drama (radio plays) was another content studied from a historical and cultural perspective, but at a university

humanities department. With this exception, all radio research up to this point – within Sveriges Radio, at governmental institutions and at the universities – had emanated from the social sciences.

One reason that radio research increased during this period, at the same time as it was getting into the back-water of TV research, was the substantial expansion of radio – but also of TV – during the 1960s. Another was that mass communication research in Sweden became more widespread in general, something which also affected radio research. Besides surveys of the radio audience, studies on radio contents, as mentioned, were given some weight. But still, the actual and potential audience, as well as the political functions and effects of radio, were the dominating problem areas. The fact that certain nations had exploited radio for propaganda during the war was not to be forgotten, and the duty of Sveriges Radio, as a public service company, to supply impartial information based on facts became one of the lodestars for radio research.

In agreement with Nowak (1963), we can state that, for the most part, mass communication research constituted a natural part of only certain media companies' activity – i.e. radio research for radio. At institutions outside the media, media research had with few exceptions a marked side position. When media had a more distinguished position there, it was principally some specific problem or aspect that was studied, e.g. the focus on mass communication from a political angle. Also, outside Sveriges Radio, the radio medium had almost always been studied in combination with TV and/or the press.

In addition to radio itself as an interested party and financier of radio research, it was chiefly authorities that provided the means for research during this period. The

social scientific university research on radio had also received support from Sveriges Radio and an authority.

However, the governmental radio commission of 1960 (SOU 1965:20, SOU 1965:21) emphasised in a whole chapter the need for augmented research about radio and TV. It strongly stressed that such research was needed not only for Sveriges Radio and the governmental authorities and in order to realise education via radio and TV – but also because of general scientific viewpoints and for the public.

It was around this time that the results of PUB's studies became public – available for everyone and for scientific discussion. From now on, PUB's reports, books and articles were widely circulated, contacts with and talks for interested groups became common, and co-operation with universities became more frequent.

## 1969-1977

### *On Radio – and TV*

In 1969, a second TV channel was established. The two TV channels were to work within the same company "in stimulating competition". Colour TV was officially introduced the following year.

As regards radio, the governmental radio commission of 1969 (SOU 1973:8) was of great importance. It proposed, among other things, the setting up of local radio, that the parliament decided should be working in 1977 and consist of 24 local radio stations (later on 25). Radio had had long term activity in some ten districts, and in Spring 1973, it had experimented with local radio at three places in the country. Planning concerning the prospect of the coming daughter company, Local Radio, became intensive during the period in question. Economic reductions of Sveriges Radio were simultaneously carried

out, and the phonograms (records, sound cassettes) spread rapidly.

Radio and TV in school education was the subject of several governmental commissions as well. School radio and school TV existed within Sveriges Radio, but in 1967, TRU, a state committee for radio and TV in the educational system, was started outside Sveriges Radio. The activity of TRU was made permanent in a company of its own, Utbildningsradion (Educational Radio), in connection with the dissolution in 1978 of Sveriges Radio's sole right to broadcast (at the beginning of next period).

### *On Radio Research*

In 1969, PUB, the Section of Audience Research at Sveriges Radio, received the status of a department and a new name, Audience and Programme Research Department. Moreover, in the same year, it formed an organisation of telephone interviewers of its own, which at the start performed ratings and other telephone studies, 300 days of the year (soon, however, the interviews were slimmed because of the economic cuts at Sveriges Radio). TV has always paid for far more audience ratings than radio, and before local radio started in 1977, radio ordered standardised audience ratings for only a few weeks per year. When PUB's own interview organisation was established, it stopped ordering corresponding data collections from other institutes on the market.

Besides, PUB made a great deal of special studies for radio, which figure 3 exemplifies.

Among the overall trends and themes during the period, the following could be accentuated: A new feature of audience research was qualitative soft data studies based on informal interviews and observa-

tions about the role of radio in people's environment, and about the changed radio listening after the introduction of TV. Now radio listening took place much more during the daytime and parallel to other activities, at home and on the job.

Studies performed on the experiment with local radio in 1973 and before the start of local radio in 1977, did not only apply to the usual listeners but also to radio journalists' views of local radio, as well as expectations from local radio among organisations, companies, associations, local authorities, county councils, news papers, etc. Consequently, these and other studies also dealt with the sender in the mass communication process.

The theoretical and long term orientation of the projects became stronger and treated, for instance, the comprehensibility of the news (based on psychological theories), the relative importance of radio and TV in diminishing or increasing the information gaps in society (based on media sociological theories), and children, radio and TV (based on socialisation perspectives, psychological theory and the uses and gratifications model). There were several elements of critical research within Sveriges Radio. Of the research outside Sveriges Radio, studies on objectivity in radio and TV news brought up an on-going critical debate about the definition of 'objectivity' as well.

In a survey of Swedish mass media research *as a whole* during 1965-1975 (Kronvall 1976), PUB was proved to be the largest individual research institution in the country, but overall, media research at universities and other institutions had, at this point, greatly increased. Three fourths of the media researchers during the decade surveyed had worked at some university department. An interesting fact is that of these university researchers, about half

Figure 3. The Direction of Radio Research 1969-1977 (main examples)

<i>Research institutions</i>	sender	contents	medium	audience
<b>the research department at Sveriges Radio (PUB)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the experiment with local radio -73</li> <li>- expectations from local radio -77</li> <li>- the decisions of The Radio Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- analysis of the news</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- audience ratings</li> <li>- listening to regional programmes, election programmes, radio plays, serious music</li> <li>- the experiment with local radio - 73</li> <li>- expectations from local radio -77</li> <li>- advance information about programmes</li> <li>- the listening situation</li> <li>- comprehensibility of the news</li> <li>- the role of radio for information gaps</li> <li>- education via radio</li> <li>- emotional and other experiences of programmes</li> <li>- the importance of radio in people's lives</li> <li>- children and radio</li> <li>- the audience of programmes in minority languages</li> </ul>
<b>governmental institutions</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the credibility of radio</li> <li>- the news diffusion of radio and its role in situations of crisis</li> </ul>
<b>universities: social sciences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the experiment with local radio -73</li> <li>- expectations from local radio -77</li> <li>- the paragraph on democracy in the Agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the objectivity of news</li> <li>- analyses of propaganda</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the experiment with local radio -73</li> <li>- expectations from local radio -77</li> <li>- the role of radio for information gaps</li> <li>- the news diffusion of radio and its role in situations of crisis</li> </ul>
<b>universities: humanities</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the concept of objectivity</li> <li>- the news language</li> </ul>		



were attached to The Faculty of Arts and around half to The Faculty of Social Sciences. Thus, media research generally was much more multidisciplinary than was previously imagined. Unfortunately, research projects on radio and TV were not kept separate in this survey, and thus it is difficult to distinguish precisely those which concerned radio. The commissioner himself found, however, that:

*the absolute majority of research on ether media takes place at Sveriges Radio or at institutions/departments that are specially commissioned by Sveriges Radio or The Radio Council. Research about Sveriges Radio outside this frame is inconsiderable (Kronvall 1976).*

We can say, therefore, with great certainty that the radio research principally consisted of those studies presented in figure 3, and that the greater part of it, as earlier, was of a social scientific nature.

Accordingly, the period was characterised by more and more radio research, which also became more diverse, nuanced and in some cases more theoretical. The main lines of research were still the same problem areas focused on during earlier periods – the actual and the potential radio audience, and analyses of the news and political contents of radio. Beyond this, however, the areas had considerably widened. But despite the multidisciplinary character of media research generally, cultural scientific radio studies were rare; the humanistic element concerned the radio language and criticism of the objectivity studies. At the same time, the growth of TV research during the period was proportionally much greater than that of radio research. And when radio was studied in more general and theoretical projects, this often happened in combination with TV and/or the press. It was often the case that radio got

”into the bargain” when, strictly speaking, the main interest was TV.

Even if radio research during the period in some cases was paid for by research councils and foundations, Sveriges Radio and, secondly, several authorities were – as previously – the major financiers.

## 1978-1986

### *On Radio – and TV*

As a consequence of a proposal by the governmental radio commission of 1974 (SOU 1977:19), Sveriges Radio was reorganised from 1978 onwards into a combine of four daughter companies – Sveriges Television (TV), Sveriges Riksradio (National Radio), Sveriges Lokalradio (Local Radio) and Utbildningsradion (Educational Radio) – as well as a mother company, Sveriges Radio. With that, the monopoly formed in 1925, which allowed only one company in Sweden to broadcast, legally ceased after some 50 years. During this period, TV also got competition from cable and satellite TV (and video).

At the beginning of the period, Local Radio transmitted its programmes in special ”windows” in P3, which widened with time. In 1985, Local Radio also made an experiment with full-scale transmissions from three stations, i.e., 12 hours a day for three months. Not until 1986, at the end of the period, did the parliament decide to build a net for a new radio channel, P4, for these local broadcasts. At the beginning of the period, Local Radio and Educational Radio made experiments with ”everyone’s radio”, in which individuals and associations could make radio programmes of their own. As a result of one of the very many governmental commissions in the media field during this time, there were, however, since 1979 also trials – made in-

dependently of the Sveriges Radio combine – concerning neighbourhood radio (radio with limited local capacity especially for broadcasting by associations). Neighbourhood radio became permanent in 1986.

### *On Radio Research*

The many kinds of quantitative and qualitative enquiries at PUB about the actual and potential audience of radio and of various programme types mentioned above continued and deepened. New methods were developed. In the data base of Nordicom (valid from 1975 on), there are several hundreds of Swedish research publications related to radio documented for this period, of which half or more were performed at PUB and – to a less degree – by a newly appointed research group at Educational Radio. Figure 4 gives examples of research interests during this period.

As before, the backbone of radio research during this period was composed of the same, however broadened, problem areas – the actual and potential audience, together with the societal and political role of radio in electioneering, news surveillance, news diffusion and crisis situations. But in the abundance of research reports, a new wave of interest in radio studies can especially be noticed with the origin of local radio and the experiments with neighbourhood and "everyone's" radio. Consequently, radio studies were now carried out both on national and local levels – and this was the case both for research inside and outside Sveriges Radio. Theories and discussions about the functions of local media from, among others, the perspectives of decentralisation and public access, were lively. The new local media also contributed to more and more radio studies about the communicator and the contents.

Even though the social sciences still were responsible for the lion's share of radio research, the humanities also became more visible, e.g., studies performed by linguists, theologians and historians. Thus, the multidisciplinary nature of media research generally at the universities had begun to have an enduring effect on research on radio as well. The humanistic radio studies were mainly oriented towards contents or texts, but to some degree also towards the communicator. The last-mentioned ones attached, among other things, importance to how politics, society and the struggle for power between different groups had influenced the development of radio historically, its news broadcasting, as well as the reorganisations and ideologies of radio (and TV). According to these historical studies, the independence and freedom of Swedish public service radio stand out as a chimera.

A certain distribution of work between the research at PUB, on the one hand, and, on the other, the research at governmental institutions and universities, also began to crystallise: While PUB's studies more often focused on the audience, authorities and universities more often focused on the sender and contents in the communication process.

Clearly, radio research had become even more voluminous – both at PUB, governmental authorities and universities. University research began directly and indirectly to reflect the fact that, in the 1980s, media and communication research was being established as a scientific discipline of its own. For this reason, there were also more projects of interest to radio that were financed by research councils and foundations. All the same, the overwhelming part of radio research was still paid for by National Radio, Local Radio, Educational Radio, ministries and other authorities.

Figure 4. The Direction of Radio Research 1978-1986 (main examples)

<i>Research institutions</i>	sender	contents	medium	audience
<b>the research department at Sveriges Radio (PUB)/ researchers at Educational Radio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- costs for radio</li> <li>- "everyone's radio"</li> <li>- work for equal possibilities for men and women within radio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- religious programmes</li> <li>- gender roles in programmes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- audience ratings</li> <li>- local radio and the audience</li> <li>- neighbourhood radio and the audience</li> <li>- a great deal of quantitative and qualitative studies of the actual and potential audience (as earlier)</li> <li>- attention of the listening</li> <li>- comprehensibility of the news</li> <li>- the news diffusion of radio</li> <li>- children, youth and radio</li> <li>- mens' and women's listening</li> <li>- listening among linguistic and other minority groups</li> </ul>
<b>governmental institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the decisions of The Radio Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the contents of local radio</li> <li>- the news of radio/ local radio</li> <li>- the objectivity before the referendum on nuclear power</li> </ul>		
<b>universities: social sciences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local radio</li> <li>- "everyone's radio"</li> <li>- neighbourhood radio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the contents of local radio</li> <li>- the contents of neighbourhood radio</li> <li>- election campaigns on the radio/local radio</li> <li>- the news surveillance of radio/local radio</li> <li>- the image of Sweden in news over time</li> <li>- analyses of propaganda</li> <li>- gender roles in programmes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local radio and the audience</li> <li>- neighbourhood radio and the audience</li> <li>- the news diffusion of radio</li> </ul>
<b>universities: humanities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the media adaption of the devotions</li> <li>- the organization etc of the radio historically seen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the consumers' programmes</li> <li>- the religion on the radio</li> <li>- the news language</li> <li>- the language of the local radio</li> <li>- a phone-in and music request programme</li> </ul>		

1987-1992

### *On Radio – and TV*

In 1987, a reform of Sveriges Television's two existing channels, initiated by the authorities, resulted in a Stockholm channel and a Sweden channel. Also, the deregulation during this period was a tangible fact – competition from other TV channels became gradually stronger. Partly it occurred because of access to more and more satellite TV channels, partly because of the start of a third earthbound TV channel in 1990-91. This national public service channel, TV4, which is financed by advertising, is completely independent of Sveriges Television.

From the beginning of the period, the stations of Local Radio that had existed for ten years could "loosen" themselves in stages with the building of the net for the new radio channel, P4. The net was ready in 1990, thus, the first year in which all the 25 local radio stations could broadcast on their own frequencies on a separate channel.

The ministries, however, gave signals about a near reorganisation of radio and TV – the combine of Sveriges Radio would be dissolved by the turn of 1992/93. This also meant that National Radio and Local Radio – again – would be fused into one company and that commercial, private local radio transmissions would be permitted (see next period). Several neighbourhood radio stations had already introduced advertising illegally.

### *On Radio Research*

During this relatively short time period, radio research went on with unreduced intensity at PUB. Most studies focused on similar problem areas as those taken up during the end of the 1970s and the beginning

of the 1980s. If we were to point out something special, it could be a very large venture at the end of the period – before the coming fusion of National and Local Radio – which included numerous secondary analyses of PUB's large data bases, as well as several quantitative and qualitative special enquiries about, among other things, geographical differences in radio listening and individuals' needs and wants in terms of radio and radio contents on national and local levels. These reports have remained confidential, something which applied to several PUB-studies of this period. The justification was that Sveriges Television had been – and National/Local Radio would soon be – put into a situation of competition with other TV and radio stations. Local Radio also did several studies through a private market institute which were not made public either.

At the universities, interest in local radio and neighbourhood radio continued. Not least, neighbourhood radio stations were scrutinised which – e.g., because of unusually extensive listening by young people – could herald the coming competition from the private local radio stations. Scientific prognoses were made about the effects of radio advertising generally and on the daily press in particular. In part, the studies on local media had, accordingly, taken on a different, forward-looking perspective owing to the announced commercial private radio.

Humanistic radio research, seen during the last preceding periods, had come to stay, but from a more pronounced historical perspective. The historical interest is, furthermore, in evidence within the radio and TV media themselves. Towards the end of the period, radio and TV held an introductory seminar which kicked-off one of the largest radio and TV research projects ever – on the history of the ether me-

Figure 5. The Direction of Radio Research 1987-1992 (main examples)

<i>Research institutions</i>	sender	contents	medium	audience
<b>the research department at Sveriges Radio (PUB) / researchers at Educational Radio</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the contents of local radio</li> <li>- radio's presentation of the disaster in Tjernobył</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- audience ratings</li> <li>- local radio and the audience</li> <li>- neighbourhood radio and the audience</li> <li>- a great deal of quantitative and qualitative audience studies</li> <li>- deep-going studies with listeners to special programmes</li> <li>- secondary analyses of PUB's data bases</li> <li>- geographical differences in listening</li> <li>- needs and wants of local radio features</li> <li>- the role of radio for individuals' experiences of the disaster in Tjernobył</li> <li>- tests of music taste</li> <li>- children and radio</li> <li>- the audience of multicultural and immigrants' programmes</li> <li>- the need for radio among people having visual defects</li> </ul>
<b>governmental institutions</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the news surveillance of radio/local radio</li> <li>- the racialism on the neighbourhood radio</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the role of radio in situations of crisis</li> </ul>
<b>trade and industry</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the news surveillance of radio</li> </ul>		
<b>universities: social sciences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local radio</li> <li>- neighbourhood radio</li> <li>- prognoses on radio advertising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the news surveillance of radio/local radio</li> <li>- the history of the ether media</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local radio and the audience</li> <li>- neighbourhood radio and the audience</li> <li>- the news diffusion of radio</li> <li>- the need for radio among people having visual defects</li> </ul>
<b>universities: humanities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the organization etc of radio historically seen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- radio's presentation of the disaster in Tjernobył</li> <li>- radio religion historically seen</li> <li>- Sven Jerring's language historically seen</li> <li>- radio genres where listeners can take part per telephone</li> <li>- the history of the ether media</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the radio as an adult educator historically seen</li> <li>- the role of radio in building up the Swedish welfare state historically seen</li> <li>- the listeners' viewpoints on radio language historically seen</li> </ul>

dia. This project would be carried out by the universities, and funded by radio and TV. It would be completed in the year of 2000, when public service radio and public service TV become 75 years of age.

The direction of radio research during the period is described in more detail in figure 5.

The problem areas and financiers of radio research correspond as a whole with those prevailing during earlier periods – but with the successive changes that have occurred over time because of the development of radio in terms of organisation, distribution and program policy, and because of the development of research at PUB, universities and other organisations. As mentioned, nuances specific to the period have, among other things, to do with the approaching private radio and have a rather double nature. Partly, research interest is focused on the future. National and Local Radio, authorities, trade and industry and some researchers make predictions about economy, technology, organisation, programme contents and listening in the expected media situation. Other researchers, and at the same time National and Local Radio, simultaneously turn their interest towards the past – in search of history.

1993-

### *On Radio – and TV*

In early 1993, the mother company and the combine of Sveriges Radio were abolished. National Radio and Local Radio were fused into one company, Sveriges Radio, thus, with the same name as the abolished mother company. The new radio company Sveriges Radio, as well as Sveriges Television (TV) and Utbildningsradion (Educational Radio) became three independent enterprises. The former share holders (the press, trade and industry, and popular

movements) withdrew. The shares are now owned by foundations.

In order to meet the rapidly approaching competition from the commercial private local radio, the new Sveriges Radio established, at its start in January 1993, new profiles for P3 and P4 according to age. At present P3 targets the younger half of the population (<40 years of age) with approximately 2/3 light music and 1/3 ambitious journalistic features. P4 broadcasts approximately 40 per cent light music and, above that, news, entertainment, culture, social issues, sports, traffic and service information, as well as many local inserts, and targets the older part of the population (>35 years of age). P1 is, as previously, the channel for spoken information and P2, as previously, the channel for serious music and programmes in minority languages. In 1993, the government started auctioning off frequencies for local private radio stations, which mainly and gradually started operating from 1994 onwards. Even the neighbourhood radio stations were, at this point, allowed to advertise. In the Spring of 1996, around 90 per cent of the population in Sweden could listen to private radio, which has almost without exception profiled itself as music radio stations, attracting a multitude of listeners, chiefly in the younger half of the population and above all teenagers. (Neighbourhood radio reaches, as before, a rather small audience).

The present agreements between the public service media and the state will be the subject of renegotiations from 1996, but no clear signals about further development have been made – other than those about new sharp economic cuts now in progress for Sveriges Radio, Sveriges Television and Educational Radio. In September 1995, Sveriges Radio received permission to broadcast with DAB technique (di-

gital audio broadcasting), which makes it possible to have far more programmes within given frequencies.

### *On Radio Research*

When the combine of Sveriges Radio ceased, and because Sveriges Television wanted measuring methods other than telephone interviews for the continuous audience ratings, PUB was shut down (in June 1993). Instead, Sveriges Television and several satellite TV channels have the TV ratings done jointly, with people meters via a market institute (MMS). Sveriges Radio

and several private radio stations, on the other hand, jointly own another, new institute (RUAB) which generates running radio ratings by means of telephone interviews. Only overall figures on listening are made public. In addition to that, Sveriges Radio has, mainly via a new small internal research function, performed a great number of special studies about radio, for the time being confidential – see problem areas in figure 6. Prominence can be given to extensive studies on the population’s music tastes and life styles interpreted from a Bourdieu perspective, which also shed light on basic methodological questions. As a

Figure 6. The Direction of Radio Research 1993- (main examples)

<i>Research institutions</i>	sender	contents	medium	audience
<b>researchers at the radio / institutes on the market</b>		- men and women in the radio output		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- audience ratings</li> <li>- the audience’s viewpoints on programme quality</li> <li>- listeners’ attitudes to channels and programme contents</li> <li>- the news diffusion of radio</li> <li>- music tastes and life styles of the population</li> <li>- tests of music taste</li> <li>- children, youth and radio</li> <li>- the Finnish-speaking population’s need for radio</li> <li>- people’s need for DAB radio</li> </ul>
<b>universities</b>	- the history of the ether media: organisation, technology, democracy etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multiplicity of the radio output</li> <li>- the history of the ether media: news, current affairs, sports, music, culture, entertainment, children’s programmes etc</li> </ul>	- radio sound and radio as an aural medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the history of the ether media: the audience</li> <li>- radio habits</li> </ul>

company of its own and in the new competitive situation, Sveriges Radio has hitherto during this period invested more in radio research than during any of the previous periods. The confidential results are a consequence of the market situation. Certain trends and analyses are, however, delivered to the parliament and government in public annual reports, supply estimates, etc.

Private radio and agencies for advertisers finance radio studies as well – first the above-mentioned audience ratings, secondly tests of music taste. The results are business secrets.

In addition to this, Sveriges Radio and Sveriges Television have, as mentioned, initiated and pay for the research project on the history of the ether media, that at present engages quite a number of social scientific and humanistic university researchers up to the year of 2000 (other interested parties also contribute economically). Further examples of university research are pointed out in figure 6. Not least, certain researchers have begun to reflect on the significance of 'public service', and the need for radio and TV in the service of the public.

Since knowledge of the audience diminished outside Sveriges Radio when PUB ceased and audience results financed by the radio became confidential, there are, at the universities, several examples of investigations of media habits in which radio listening is included. Nordicom at Göteborg University has also, since the 1970s, issued many periodical publications including summary statistics and analyses about the development of radio and radio listening.

Up until now, the problem areas during the period concern, in sum, both audience, contents, communicator and the medium. Many areas of current interest have been

studied during previous periods as well. There is a certain new tendency, however, towards studies of light radio contents. In part this occurs in the history project, in part in research on music taste and studies of the listeners' attitudes towards existing channels and programmes. It is precisely in this field of popular culture that the fight for listeners is most intense, now when radio competition has become a fact.

For the universities, a division into social scientific and humanistic media research becomes less and less relevant, as media and communication science including journalism, in the course of the previous period, was established as a discipline of its own, and in some places is also of a multi- or interdisciplinary character. With reference to the financing of radio research during the present period, radio is, till now, dominating heavily.

## Summarising Discussion

Radio research in Sweden has been extensive, though as a whole more empirical than theoretically innovative. It has to the highest possible degree been influenced by more and more national and local radio channels and stations (including competition from TV), the successive profiling of their contents and the many reorganisations of the radio medium – which, in their turn, were caused by political decisions in a society of changing ideologies.

Radio itself has been the greatest financier of radio research, followed by state authorities. Even the radio research carried out at the universities has only partly been supported by grants from independent research councils and foundations. This need not mean that the radio or the authorities always have been initiators of the concrete studies. But even if the researcher sometimes took the initiative, or if the initiative



was made in an interplay, the research problems must be of relevance to those who pay.

The fact that radio has paid for a great portion of the radio studies is not surprising. Radio is, on one level, the party most interested in such research, and equivalent conditions have applied to media research all over the world. The fact that Swedish authorities have invested money in studies on the informative role of radio and on new media, e.g., local radio, is also to be expected, as the state sets up recurrent commissions prior to new agreements with public service radio, prior to reorganisations of the radio, and prior to regulations and deregulations of radio activity. An important circumstance in this context is also the organisational edification of Swedish media research. Much radio research has been anchored in organisations outside the universities. It was, as mentioned, not until during the 1980s that media and communication science in combination with journalism was built up as a university discipline of its own. It is a documented fact that, previously, when university researchers interested in the media were dispersed across various other disciplines (sociology, political science, history, philosophy, linguistics, ethnology, etc.), they functioned with few exceptions in isolation, lacking colleagues with similar interests and, with that, having few prospects of getting grants for large research projects.

The research funded by radio has primarily focused on multiple aspects of the actual and potential radio audience, a type of research that overwhelmingly was performed within Sveriges Radio – until 1992 at the Audience and Programme Research Department (PUB). Secondly, radio has financed analyses of radio programme contents, often as tasks given to universities. Principally, in these cases, political radio

contents, news objectivity, and the functions of radio in news diffusion and crisis situations have been the topics. Such studies have often been funded by authorities as well.

In spite of the fact that radio research has been comprehensive, radio has – when media research at PUB, other organisations and universities started to spread in Sweden after the Second World War – been pushed into the background by other media, which for various reasons seemed more interesting or easily accessible to study. The fact that TV research became more extensive than radio research was, among other things, due to the public debate which to a higher degree stressed the import and effects of TV. Another circumstance was that radio and TV – and their audience research – were organisationally interlaced during a long time. Thus, radio was often ”dragged” into research which, after all, was characterised by an interest in TV.

According to tradition, the press took precedence at the journalism high schools and at departments of political science at universities, not least since much radio (and TV) research was in progress at PUB. The press was also materially more easily accessible before The Archive for Sound and Pictures was established in 1979. In terms of university research about the news and the political role of radio, radio has often been studied in connection with the press and TV, of which the press was the most usual starting-point for research.

Thus, although radio and TV are the media people use most, and although radio research has been comprehensive, radio nevertheless has been met with a more lukewarm interest from researchers than TV and the press. During long periods, radio has been there beside, or as a complement to the scientific main stream.

Two occasions exist, however, when Swedish radio research was vitalised. One was at the entry of local and neighbourhood radio from the 1970s onwards. Sveriges Radio, Local Radio and authorities offered large grants, and researchers came flocking. A great number of studies scrutinised most parts of the communication process and theories about decentralisation and audience participation were eagerly put forward.

The other occasion was associated with the rise of commercial private local radio in the 1990's. Yet, the situation is different, among other things because no large governmental commission with a need for research preceded the auctioning of frequencies for the private radio. Radio research in this situation has partly become forward-looking – how to meet the competition? what will the economic consequences be? At the same time, radio research has turned its focus to the past, as if to summarise the epoch of public service.

Even if commercial radio spread earlier in several other Nordic and European countries than Sweden, it is probably the deregulation, the threat against public service radio and industry's awakened interest in radio advertising, that led the long active association E.S.O.M.A.R (European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research) to arrange its first research symposium on radio only in Paris, July 1995 – and that also led to the arrangement of a Nordic academic seminar in Tampere, Finland, in October of the same year which focused only on radio. The same factors probably brought about the present working groups on public service at the Nordic conferences on media and communication science, in a similar way as workshops on local radio or local media started in the 1970's. The discussion about the meaning of 'public service' has, however, not really

gathered speed in the Swedish research world, but is characterised by some uncertainty and resignation.

Radio research in Sweden has, above all, been of a social scientific character, both within and outside the universities. The less frequent humanistic radio research has slowly grown from the 1970s onwards, mainly at the universities. Proportionally, humanistic research at the university level has been funded by grants from research councils and foundations more often than social scientific research. Of special interest for the humanistic researchers has been radio as an organisation and radio contents from a historical perspective, as well as news, adult education, religious programmes and language on the radio. A large part of both the social scientific and humanistic radio research at the universities, has, accordingly, been influenced by prevalent traditions and interest areas in the separate, scattered disciplines (political science, linguistics, theology, ethnology, etc.).

Radio research has been "a serious matter". The concentration on news, information, politics, organisation, adult education, language, religion, and the like, is, among other things, an expression of the researchers' aspirations for that culture which – in society and among academicians – is most established or "legitimate". Only a few radio studies have dealt with light music, sports, contests where listeners can take part, phone-in programmes, traffic and service information, tips on local cultural and amusing events, congratulation and request programmes, nature, personal relations, jokes, satire and entertainment – and people's needs for these. Only a few studies have treated radio as companionship, as a source of feelings and experiences, as something personal in people's lives. It has more often been the case that such programmes and needs have been studied

within radio's own audience research than at the universities, although some exceptions exist there as well. The fact that radio is, by and large, a medium of popular culture and that most people, besides listening to the news, use radio as a source of popular culture has been more or less neglected by research. The development towards media research in Sweden which is based on new theories of culture, noticeable for other media, has, therefore, hardly embraced radio of today. Who is making discourse analyses of radio texts? Who is talking about radio cultures? Who is making reception studies of the meanings and imports that radio and radio contents have for various users? Who is taking up the role of radio channels for subcultures – e.g, youth groups – in proving their identity in the context of their different life conditions? A tendency towards studies of light radio contents and radio listening as a life style can, however, be discerned during the last years – not owing to academic vitality, but to the circumstance that there is an ongoing struggle between private and public service radio, which takes place in the field of the established popular culture and which has brought such research to the fore.

With the radio medium and the authorities as economic motors, the organisational development of the radio medium, its new forms of distribution and changed programme policy as technological and political spurs, as well as the traditional, introverted university research with the "serious" social and cultural issues in focus, one may reflect on the legitimacy of radio research. In whose interests and with what aims have the radio studies been performed?

Here, the matter of legitimacy does not primarily mean a questioning of the researchers' possibilities to design and carry out the studies themselves, or of the qual-

ity of the studies, but is caused by the fact that some problem areas have been studied exhaustively, while others, that are at least as essential from the point of view of the listeners, the main radio users, have more or less been forgotten.

Both public service radio and private radio must take the audience into consideration – but in different ways. In the commercial case, it is a question of reaching the largest possible audience within a homogenous section of the population (the target group). Radio contents are formed and formatted according to the lowest common denominator, and the activity continues if a sufficient number of advertisers find it worth supporting. In the public service case, it is a question of broad, impartial programming, which should be characterised by multiplicity and quality and which, to the extent possible, should also serve the interests of minority groups. The public service media must still show reasonably high total audience figures to government, parliament and board members to be allowed to continue an activity in the service of the public.

The research which public service radio initiates, is, consequently, done for the audience, but at the same time to legitimate its own activity, and live up to laws and agreements before the decision makers. As long as public service radio was in a situation of sole right and the population did not have another radio, research about impartiality and matter-of-factness, news, information and other "heavy" programme activity, has been what the decision makers have attached most importance to. Neither were light music nor entertaining material previously any great "problem" in this context, as such radio contents nevertheless got high audience ratings.

Similarly, the authorities have initiated radio research done in the interest of the

population – but within the framework of what the authorities in periods of varying political ideologies consider, or have been charged to consider, to be appropriate radio activity (e.g., information in situations of crisis; local, neighbourhood and private radio). Hence, to a great extent, the investigations that the authorities pay for, act to legitimise the decisions of the authorities.

Nothing in the review indicates that the university research on radio, not even that with independent research grants, has been more free or critical than other radio research. There are individual exceptions – but those exist also within the radio research financed by radio and authorities. The idea that the research at PUB, for example, has only been administrative, or has merely implied a desperate hunting for a fictive audience from an institutionally constructed perspective (Ang 1990) is not true. Such statements would point to ignorance, or an attempt to uphold the university researchers' own interests at the expense of the more decision-oriented research. Taken as a whole, it seems that particularly university research on radio which has not been dependent on radio and authorities, through its direction towards "serious" established culture, has, to a great degree, served the researchers' personal interests and legitimised the survival and within-scientific traditions of the researchers' own disciplines. Neither has the building up of media and communication science to a university discipline, a strengthening of the possibilities of free media research, so far contributed to any essential

new thinking or critical approaches with respect to, specifically, radio research.

It is desirable that research is of relevance both outside and inside science, i.e., is both of practical use and contributes to scientific development. Consequently, research ought to serve the aims of parties other than the individual researcher, the individual medium or the individual authority. In light of the fact that radio research also, above all, has been governed by the development of the radio medium – its technology, forms of distributions, reorganisations, media competition and changed programme policy – which, in turn, has been due to societal political resolutions in changing spirits of time, it must be especially underlined that the relevance of research in a democratic society should apply to the people as well. Accordingly, radio studies must be of importance to and achieve something for the radio users. Radio research must to a greater extent be performed in the interests of the listeners.

The review has pointed out a number of neglected areas in the field of radio research – and there are many other areas – which ought to be elucidated more from the perspective of the listeners. It would be ironic – but unfortunately consistent – if it is chiefly the introduction of private radio that governs the direction of radio research during the next years, towards the meaning of 'public service', towards history, and towards the fact that also light music and radio entertainment should imply multiplicity and quality in the service of the public.

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For the period of 1975-1992 the data base of Nordicom has been used to a great extent. I am much obliged to Nordicom for the data list of Nordic publications on radio that was at my disposal.

