

Public Service Radio in Denmark Today

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The article is an attempt to assess the current situation in the middle of the 90's with regard to the radio in Denmark, to discuss the problems it may be confronted with and to determine the conditions which must be fulfilled in order for the Danish public service radio to continue to function as a significant element within the general media spectrum of the country.

After a brief historical introduction, the paper makes suggestions as to how modern public service radio should be understood. Then it provides a description of the radio's situation today on a national, regional and local level, and singles out a number of problems which should be discussed relative to these different levels, e.g. the general tendency to declining listeners coverage, teenagers who listen to commercial local and international radio only, and the fact that the target group of the national radio news seems to be limited to well-educated men over 40. Plans for the future put forward by the National Broadcast Company (Danmarks Radio) are discussed, and a series of alternatives are evaluated.

The Historical Background

On April 1, 1925 the government took over radio broadcasting in Denmark. Up to this point the radio programs in Denmark had been produced by a number of private ra-

dio clubs, with both commercials and sponsors. The reason the Danish legislators wanted to take over radio activities was to be sure they had control of the new medium, and to make certain that it was functioning for the benefit of the people. At this point there was no clear strategy concerning program policy underlying the takeover, but such a policy was gradually developed and has since been given the designation "the paternalistic radio" because the explicit purpose of the state broadcasting system was to educate and instruct the Danish population.

In 1951 the only existing radio channel was supplemented with a second channel, Program 2 (P2), which was a cultural channel with broadcasting limited to the evening hours. This expansion in radio channels occurred at the same time as television also began to broadcast. But the introduction of a two-channel system for the radio was not accompanied by any changes in the notions of the purpose of the radio. On the contrary, renewed emphasis was placed on the desire to provide the population with a series of elevated cultural experiences. And evidently the decision-makers were so confident in their mission that they didn't feel it was particularly necessary to ask the listeners. The first listener survey was conducted in 1929, and it did not provide complete support for the broad educational strategy set down by the state

broadcasting company. Many people expressed the desire for more popular programs. The next investigation was undertaken in 1950 in connection with the start of the second radio channel and the television broadcasts, and the next one not until 1964 when the third radio channel, Program 3 (P3), was established. That makes 3 listener surveys in the course of 35 years. The paternalistic concept of public service radio was not seriously challenged until the late 50's when the commercial Radio Mercury (Radio Mercur) began sending popular music, entertainment and commercials, broadcasted from out on the Sound (1958-1962). Radio Mercury was stopped by legislation, but it was one of the main reasons for launching the more youthful P3, which actually employed several people from Radio Mercury. It became necessary for radio to take the need for entertainment, and especially the need for music among the young people seriously.

Until 1975 the structure of the radio programs was the following: Program 1 (P1) broadcasted from 6 am to midnight, P2 from 7 pm to midnight and P3 from noon to 2 o'clock in the morning. Thus, with the most coverage at the same time as the television was broadcasting. In the meantime, the radio's prime time had changed from the evening to the daytime hours, mainly because of television. This was an untenable situation for the radio, and the program structure was reorganized, with a regional radio structure being established at the same time, in recognition of the divergent needs of the population. This restructuring can be characterized as an elastic retreat in relation to television, and an offensive maneuver in the hours where there was no television. From 1975 the structure of the radio programs looked like this: P1 still broadcasted from 6 am to midnight, but now with a range of pro-

grams, P2 from 6 am to midnight with regional programs and educational broadcasts and P3 from 5 am to 2 am with music, news and public service announcements, i.e. a strengthening of morning radio and regional radio.

In 1983 the radio monopoly was broken. In 1981 the Danish parliament passed a law providing for experiments with local radio and television, and two years later the first experiments were begun. The intention was to create greater diversity, stimulate the democratic process and to make it possible for more people to have a voice in the media. Advertising was not permitted, and no private company – except for the daily newspapers – could obtain permission to broadcast. But in 1988 the law was altered to allow commercials to a limited extent (no more than 10% of the total broadcasting time). In 1990 sponsored programs were permitted, and the original regulations were relaxed, allowing stations to broadcast to neighbouring districts.

The next major change in the radio came in 1989 when the Danish Broadcasting Company changed from being block radio to framework radio. Prior to 1989 the programs were produced by a series of local divisions (among others the Division of Theater and Literature, the Division of Culture and Society, the Division of Entertainment and the Division of Music). Each division produced a certain number of programs of a certain length which were placed in blocks having no connection with each other. In 1989 almost all of these divisions were eliminated, and instead a number of programming groups were established (early morning, morning, early afternoon, late afternoon, evening and weekend) with responsibility for the programs on the various channels. This new type of framework radio can be viewed as the first step in the direction of

the formatted radio which was introduced on January 1, 1992. The framework radio is characterized, for example, by a range of programs that can be adjusted according to the needs and preferences of a specific target group (more on this later). One of the few divisions that survived, and that maintained its responsibility for programs, was the Division of News and Current Affairs (the newscasts).

Modern Public Service Radio

During the past 10-15 years public service has found itself in the midst of an identity crisis. Probably the most significant reason for this should be sought in a society which defines itself to an ever increasing degree in relation to norms and procedures that are derived from the market. At the same time, however, there has been increased recognition in recent years of the fact that radio and television programs completely regulated by the market would *not* be able to satisfy the needs for information, culture, debate and entertainment found in the population of the majority of the European countries. But there has also been recognition of the fact that it has been necessary to redefine and modernize the very concept of what public service is – or rather should be – here in the many-faceted media society of the 90's, a good 70 years after the first public service media institutions came into being. But to formulate a detailed and precise definition of what a modern public service radio should be, and thereby also to specify the duties which a modern public service radio should fulfill, is by no means a simple task. As pointed out, among others by Henrik Søndergaard, public service is far from an unambiguous notion, it is rather a complex of notions involving a number of higher social and cultural concepts concerning

how the media ought to function, a legal construction as well as the way in which the public service media administer this construction in program policy¹.

Above all we can say that the modern public service media's justification is to contribute towards maintaining and continually developing an open, dynamic and democratic society in which the social identity and participation of the citizens is developed and the ability to act in a democratic fashion is encouraged through essential, reliable and relevant information, cultural experiences, debate and entertainment of high quality, as well as to provide the possibility for the citizens themselves to have a voice in the media. In brief: The modern public service media should be at the disposal of the population in a democratic society. This, of course, involves the obligation, when attempting to pinpoint more precisely what modern public service should stand for, to start with those who are being addressed. And where radio is concerned this means *the listeners*, finding out who they are and the needs they may have in relation to the radio media.

When the Danish Broadcasting Company was a media monopoly there was a tendency to view the listeners as the sum of the country's population, defined in relation to a common history, a common language and not least in relation to a common culture and cultural heritage which was to be maintained and developed, and here radio (and later television) was to play a central role. What the population itself thought about being categorized in this way seemed less important than the underlying pedagogical interest in educating the public that was made possible through such a taxonomy. But the varying use of the ever escalating media in the course of the most recent decades has clearly shown that there is just as much dissonance as

harmony in the public's attitude towards the electronic media. Seen in relation to the nation state, the Danes themselves naturally still form the basis for the population, but this point of view is increasingly difficult to support in relation to the media situation of the 90's where acceptance of the population as a heterogeneous mass keeps popping up, a population comprising groups and constellations of a geographic, political, social and cultural nature.

Thus, the basis for a modern public service view of the radio has to be found in a view of the Danish population as a complex group with different interests and different needs, which only to a limited extent can be dealt with at one and the same time. The question then is what are the *consequences* of this for radio (and television) as public service media.

In 1980 a media commission was appointed, and in the final report from 1985 some characteristics were outlined: The programs are to be of interest to the population as a whole, also the minorities; The programs should include different opinions; the citizens should have the possibility of both expressing themselves and of receiving information; a significant portion of the original programs should be produced by the station itself; listeners and viewers should be guaranteed good reception; and the radio stations should support national cultural productions. The Media Commission's detailed stipulations were based on the radio law of 1977, inspired by the BBC. Later the British research institution Broadcasting Research Unit (BRU) has tried to define a modern concept of public service. The difference, however, between the BRU's view and the corresponding Danish view is that the BRU operated with a *public service system* consisting of several institutions, whereas in Denmark it is merely a question of operating with one specific

type of media. The BRU's requirement of public service is, in brief²: 1) Universal geographic coverage, 2) programs for every taste and interest, 3) programs for minorities, 4) loyalty towards the society and one's own national identity, 5) independence of state and other pressure groups, 6) one radio/television station is to be financed by license fees, 7) competition with regard to quality, but not in relation to listeners, and 8) public regulation is to be organized in such a way as to promote and not inhibit the activities of program producers. These 8 requirements clearly refer to a particularly British tradition and media situation with the BBC in a tight political and economic spot and involving an often extremely heated debate concerning the BBC's role in society. On the other hand, however, it is also clear that these requirements could easily be of inspiration to other public service institutions in their attempts to establish their own identity within a multichannel system.

On the European level public service has also called attention to itself, and quite recently the Council of Europe has drafted a resolution concerning this issue³. One of the central requirements stipulates that the member countries must see to it that there is at least one wide-spread and generally accessible program service containing information, education, culture and entertainment. Above and beyond the requirements already mentioned for the BBC, the resolution stipulates that one of the public service media's most important tasks is to function as a common point of reference for the population as a whole and as a factor promoting social integration, and to increase the choices available to the public by offering programs which normally are not found on the commercial stations.

In sum, we can draw the following picture characterizing the modern public service media:

- Institutions that are independent of the government and special interests.
- Institutions that completely cover a specific geographic area and that provide good and inexpensive media reception.
- A system in which at least one institution is financed solely by licensefees.
- Program activity encompassing news broadcasting, information, culture, debate and entertainment.
- Program activity characterized by quality and original programs and which is particularly obligated in relation to the national culture.
- A range of programs that provides programs which are interesting to all segments of the population.
- Practices in program activity that contribute towards promoting social integration.

In relation to the traditional requirements for public service it is important to point out the following adjustments/innovations:

- The population is viewed to a greater extent as a heterogeneous plurality.
- Public service is viewed as a function in relation to an overall system and not primarily as one particular institution.
- Public service program activity is to be marked by quality and innovation and should also supplement its programs with that which is not found in the commercial media.
- Greater emphasis is to be placed on variety in the sense of plurality and multiplicity in the programs.

These changes in perspective are generally an expression of the fact that public service is more closely connected with the

programs, the program profile and program planning than with the institution. It is in the programs themselves and in the structure of the programs that pluralism and cultural multiplicity is to be expressed, and here quality is stressed to a much greater degree than previously was the case.

In the following evaluation of the extent to which the radio lives up to a modern public service function, it is also important to pay attention to one particular characteristic of the radio as opposed to television – at least at the present time – the fact that the radio, to a greater extent than television, is a local medium. It is easier to use, and you can carry a tape-recorder with you everywhere you go, just like you can with a radio receiver. And compared with television, it is also to a much greater extent a medium suited for music. Where listener behavior is concerned, there is usually much greater loyalty to a specific channel than is the case with television, and the radio simultaneously broadcasts programs on a national, regional and local level.

Status in the Mid-90's

In Denmark people listen to the radio on an average of close to 2 1/4 hours a day. This is an hour less than the Swedes and a half hour less than the Norwegians. The Finns listen a little more (3 3/4 hours). Within Europe the Italians have the top score, together with the Belgians, with 4 1/2 and 4 1/4 hours respectively, while England is at the bottom of the list with 2 hours⁴. We can ask ourselves whether close to 2 hours a day is a lot or a little, but on a European scale the time we use listening to the radio in Denmark is relatively little, and there seems to be a tendency showing that the amount of time used listening to the radio decreases proportionally with the de-

gree of governmental regulation. – We should remember, however, that in this purely quantitative calculation, no consideration is given to how people listen: Whether it is concentrated listening to a debate program or whether the radio simply functions as sound in the background.

Coverage

When it comes to radio coverage, on the other hand, Denmark seems to place itself nicely in relation to the rest of Europe. The accumulated weekly coverage is just about 90% according to the latest listener surveys, where it is 89% in England and 87% in Germany. If we look at the daily coverage, Denmark figures right at 77% for the yearly average. In Sweden the percent of coverage is approximately the same⁵, whereas in Norway it is 72% (Kagan's 1993). Even if the Danes don't really listen to that much radio, the radio is, on the whole, in contact with over 3/4 of the Danish population every single day for at least 15 minutes. If we stop to compare this with television, the daily coverage in Denmark in 1994 was 74% (with a minimum of 5 minutes of television daily), and the accumulated weekly coverage was 95%. Thus, a greater cumulative coverage, but still a slight lower daily coverage. The Danes are therefore at least just as much in contact with the radio as with television, and this is true in a similar way for the time used on the two media. While we listen to the radio on an average of 2 1/4 hours, as already mentioned, the figure for television is a good 2 1/3 hours.

The Danish Broadcasting Company

Radio in Denmark is still primarily the Danish Broadcasting Company. This broadcasting company transmits a total of

about 30,000 hours of radio a year, with 5,800 hours on P1, 2,900 hours of music on P2, 8,700 hours on P3 and 1,600 hours of programs with national coverage on the Denmark Channel plus a good 11,000 hours of regional radio broadcasts (altogether). 80% of all radio listening is to one of the four choices provided by the Danish Broadcasting Company. But within the four channels transmitted by the Danish Broadcasting Company there are great differences: The daily coverage for P3 is thus almost 40% and for the Denmark Channel not quite 35%. P1, on the other hand, is at 11% and P2 music at 2-3%⁶.

Local Radio and Foreign Radio

The remaining 20% of the time used listening to the radio goes to the 233 local radio stations found in Denmark (distributed over 150 broadcasting fields)⁷. A report from the Ministry of Culture from 1993 on the local radio estimates roughly that the total transmission time for all local radio is about 500,000 hours a year, distributed among the 233 stations. This gives an average of about 2,000 hours per station per year. According to the Danish Broadcasting Company's listener report from 1994, however, there is a slight tendency towards a somewhat decreasing number of listeners for the local radio stations, especially on the weekends, with a corresponding increase for P3.

The Danes only listen to a limited extent to foreign radio and the radio of their neighbouring countries, in spite of the fact that the cable networks provide a number of program choices. Thus, the daily coverage is 4% for the whole country. The coverage is significantly greater, however, in the region where Radio South is located, where 11% listen to foreign radio (German local radio), and the last half of 1994

showed an increase to 7% in the district of Funen (also German local radio).

But as we know, numbers can be calculated in various ways. If we, like the DRB Index from the Gallup polls from 1993, begin by looking at the larger commercial local radio stations, the daily coverage is 33% – This number is arrived at on the basis of 54 local radio stations covering 76% of the population.

Some of the local radio stations show quite a significant percent of coverage. In a couple of cases over 50% in daily coverage. This percent of coverage does not, of course, mean that people only listen to the local radio. Only 8% listened exclusively to the local stations. But seen from the point of view of competition, these numbers showing the most listened to local radio stations show that the battle for listeners can be extremely difficult, especially in some of the larger province towns.

Who Listens to What?

Finally, it can be interesting to take a look at the demographic analysis undertaken in connection with the Danish Broadcasting Company's listener survey. This analysis provides only a relatively rough indication of who listens and to what extent they listen to the public service channels. It is not at all surprising that the most eager listeners are adults between the age of 40 and 69. The Danish Broadcasting Company reaches about 80% of this group daily, whereas it only reaches 40% of the teenagers. For the latter group, the local radio stations are an attractive alternative. And this is also the case for the group between age 20 and 29, though here the tendency is not as pronounced. A good 60% of those between the age of 20 and 29 come in contact with the Danish Broadcasting Company every day. The other side of this

is that almost 60% of the country's teenagers are not in contact with public service radio on a daily basis, and among those between the age of 20 and 29 the figure is close to 40%. It hasn't been possible to trace the extent to which these percentages change with age, but in any case it is something that public service radio certainly should be aware of.

”The New Radio”

It was with this title, *The New Radio*, that the Danish Broadcasting Company introduced a new structure for its four channels. The reorganization was to take effect January 1, 1992. With *The New Radio* the Denmark Channel was introduced, P2 Music was expanded and P3 adjusted more in the direction of the younger listeners. Where program structure is concerned, the most significant change in 1989 was the change mentioned above from *block radio* to *framework radio*, and almost all of the old divisions were dissolved and integrated into the new channel structure. With *The New Radio* in 1992 the restructuring undertaken in 1989 was followed up by a *formatting* of the four radio channels.

Listener Goals

Formatting makes it possible to establish listener goals for the individual channels. Thus, the Danish Broadcasting Company has set up a number of specific goals for the broadcasting production as a whole as well as for each of the four channels, initially only of a quantitative nature. The central issue for the full-service channels formatted to specific target groups was the extent to which the channel comes in contact with its target group, and in general terms, the goal has been to reach as many as possible from this group all the time.

The central issue for the channels formatted with regard to content, on the other hand, is to achieve a significant increase in the cumulative listener figures. Recently, a number of qualitative goals have been incorporated as well: Listener satisfaction, the significance of the programs and their use (frequency of use and type of listening).

Program 1: The Classical Talk-Channel

P1 broadcasts from 6 am to 12 midnight, on weekends from 7 am to 12 midnight. Music makes up 20% of the total broadcast time. Concerning the range of program offerings we are told:

P1 offers the opportunity to listen to subjects on a channel dedicated to popular culture, information and experience, expressed radiophonically in a contemporary and relevant manner. In a time marked by ever increasing internationalization, P1 is intended as the channel for open debate on matters of common interest in Danish society. The program offerings range from the individual uplifting artistic experience, over the insightful treatment of current events or topics, to the continuous contributions to adult education and popular information. (DR 1994)⁸

It is important to mention that P1's program framework, with its most recent adjustments, has strengthened the coverage of four areas: Background coverage of foreign and domestic politics, scientific topics, cultural journalism and the communication of Danish drama and literature. In spite of the rather general and positive description of P1, it is clear that it is the verbal channel for culture, information and social debate, and as such the overseer of a classical public service obligation. Seen in the light of the formatting endeavors, P1 can – at least in part – be viewed as a chan-

nel formatted for content, with emphasis on information, culture, debate and radiophonic experiences for varying target groups, and there can be no doubt that P1's program framework provides significant contributions to modern public service radio activity in Denmark. This includes high caliber cultural experiences (among other things in edited productions, documentaries and radio theater) within the broad area of social debate, including public access, and in the communication of background information on national and international topics and cultural contributions in a variety of daily programs.

This description attempts to distance itself from a view of P1 as a traditional and somewhat old-fashioned lecture channel by emphasizing that the radiophonic expression is to be contemporary, characterized by open dialog, and by stressing the experience aspect. Where the programs are concerned, these intentions are realized in the telephone and debate programs, the features, which are radiophonically extremely professional, frequent attempts to make the informative programs more accessible and radiophonically more exciting, the expressive experiments in the communication of cultural topics and the attempts to develop the role of the anchorman in a number of programs. On the other hand, P1 still seems to be burdened by tradition, both in the choice of material and the way it is communicated, and the question remains whether the programs really are accessible for the least educated segment of the population. The programs are often on too high a level, and the form of presentation, in particular, often falls short of the requirement of being expressed radiophonically in a "contemporary and relevant manner".

P1's listener goal is still a daily coverage of 15% and a cumulative weekly coverage

of 25%. These goals have not been reached. In 1992 the daily coverage was 12%, in 1993 13% and in 1994 11%. The daily coverage even seems to have stabilized itself on a lower level. Similarly, the cumulative weekly coverage was also lower: 22% in 1992, 23% in 1993 and 23% in 1994, but with a tendency toward a slight increase.

P2 Music

The other national channel is P2 Music. P2 Music broadcasts daily from 7 pm to 12 midnight, on weekends from 8 am to 12 midnight. 80% of the total broadcasting time is used for music.

Where the programs are concerned, P2 Music is given the following characteristic:

P2 Music is an important part of Danish musical life and is obligated, in cooperation with the latter, to initiate, reflect and develop all types of music for listening within three main areas: "Classical music" from the middle ages to our own century. Musical compositions of today. And jazz. In addition, but to a lesser extent, this obligation includes operettas, musicals, ethnic folk music and the music of foreign cultures for the enjoyment of the channel's listeners. P2 Music is to strengthen the awareness and knowledge of music – and to expand this dimension by including the music and musical life of other countries. (DR 1994)

It is clear that P2 defines itself as a culturally elite channel, with responsibility for the music culture encompassed by the expression "music for listening". Words like "support, initiate, reflect and develop" all point in this direction. The path leading back to the previous public service obligation to produce culturally elite programs is also evident. The description also contains elements of the classical notion of providing popular education, evidenced by the

emphasis on the purpose of the channel also being to "strengthen the awareness and knowledge of music". Clearly, the experience dimension also plays an important role, but this is not the aspect given primary focus in the description. P2 Music markets itself as the serious music channel, with an obligation to serve the entire Danish population, but this is probably closer to well-meaning wishful thinking than to reality, considering the dominance of programs for the culturally elite. P2 Music is formatted to cover a combination of target group and content as the channel for those who are interested in the so-called "music for listening" (classical music, contemporary musical compositions and jazz).

The Danish Broadcasting Company has not formulated any goals for P2 Music's daily coverage. The reason for this is that the channel is geared to different target groups on weekday evenings and weekends, and therefore, according to the Danish Broadcasting Company, should be measured with a view to its cumulative weekly coverage. Here the goal has been set at 17%. The daily coverage on weekdays for 1992-94 has been measured to 2-3%, whereas the coverage for Saturday and Sunday has been measured to 8% and 11% respectively, thus significantly higher on weekends⁹. The cumulative weekly coverage remains stable at around 18%, just above the goal percentage.

P3

P3 is Denmark's largest radio channel, reaching close to 40% of the Danish population every day. Music takes up 70% of the total broadcasting time. Where programs are concerned, the Danish Broadcasting Company has described P3's profile as follows:

P3 is a 24-hour channel dominated by music, with popular and rhythmic music aimed at the younger segment of the population. P3 is the Danish utility radio channel, with continuous updating in the form of news, entertainment, current events and press reports, sports and service announcements communicated rapidly, directly and vivaciously. P3's task is to reflect the trends and cultural patterns of the Danish youth and to initiate and reflect initiatives within the popular and rhythmic genres of Danish musical life. (DR 1994)

Here we see that P3 is a channel formatted to its target group, with a specific program profile, which has been adjusted to the target group with respect to form and content. When this new edition of P3 was launched at the end of 1991, this is how it was presented in the brochure entitled "The New Radio": "Our greatest wish is to be with you from the moment you get up til the moment you go to bed, from morning to evening, at night (if you're not asleep), when you are off work, when you're working or doing something else, when you're relaxing, when you want to be entertained, when you want to be "updated" on the world, Denmark, yourself, when you ...". Thus, a full service radio with the ambition of being able to cover all the listening needs of its target group. Finally, the channel emphasizes that it is a music channel, also with Danish music. Characteristic types of programs are workplace radio with a mixture of music, journalism and entertainment with guests in the studio and access for listeners via telephone and telefax, programs with music and news reports, or with youthful rhythmic music. In relation to the public service requirements, P3 clearly falls under the entertainment section, but it is worth noting that P3 does not appear merely as a music- and service channel. The programs mentioned above combine

entertainment with debate (in a modern form) as well as education and information in a more informal form than is found on P1.

The listener goals for P3 are daily coverage of 40% and cumulative weekly coverage of 65%. For 1992-93-94 P3 has in fact had a daily coverage of 41%, 41% and 39% and a cumulative coverage of 68%, 66% and 65%. And once again we discover that there is a declining tendency. The goal of getting more young people to listen has apparently not been achieved. From 1992 to 1994 the coverage among the 13-19 year olds has fallen from 32% to 29%, whereas it has remained stable at around 50% among the 20-29 year olds. Neither does the goal of attracting more young people on weekends seem to be just around the corner. The coverage for both the 13-19 year old group and the 20-29 year olds also shows a falling tendency.

The Denmark Channel

This channel shares a frequency with P2 Music and broadcasts on regular weekdays from 6 am to 7 pm plus Saturdays from 7 am to 12 noon. In 1992 when the Denmark channel was initiated, it was run centrally from Copenhagen (the district area), and the individual regional stations broadcasted between the national network programs. On the national programs music takes up 55% of the broadcasting time, whereas it takes up 40% on the regional programs. The Danish Broadcasting Company characterizes the Denmark Channel in the following manner:

The Denmark Channel is the Danish Broadcasting Company's national network of regional programs with local news, current events and service announcements, together with a variety of national programs for an adult audience. The Denmark Channel

broadcasts news, current topics, points of view, opinions, beliefs, music and entertainment – and bases its programs on the Danish population's everyday culture and daily life. The news coverage on the Denmark Channel includes regional, national and international news. The music is melodious, popular and of a varied nature – from records, cd's or original recordings. The Denmark Channel places emphasis on listener participation in its programs, from dialog and debate to the programs providing service and giving good advice that listeners can use and act upon. (DR 1994)

The Denmark Channel is defined as a full service channel for all Danes over 30 years old. The overlap with P3 is no accident, but an expression of the desire to account for the fact that not all people in the same age bracket have the same interests and needs, not least with regard to music. The goal of this channel is a daily coverage of at least 36% and a cumulative weekly coverage of 43%, and the Denmark Channel is relatively close to its goals. For 1992-94 the daily average coverage was 34% and the cumulative average coverage 43%, and this coverage seems to be stable. With regard to the regional morning programs, the goal is a daily coverage of at least 25%, and the results from 1992-94 shows that the the coverage in all the regions is above this goal: from 28% to 36%.

The Radio News

The restructuring in 1989 did not have the same consequences for the Radio News as for the remaining departments. The Department of News and Current Affairs was retained and still delivers news to the three channels (P1, P3 and the Denmark Channel) that operate with newscasts. Thus, the Radio News still has the entire Danish population as the target group for all of its newscasts. However, the individual news-

casts have different target groups. The publication "Here is the Radio" characterizes the Radio News like this:

The Radio News is the Danish Broadcasting Company's news communication with national coverage. On all of the Danish Broadcasting Company's channels it continually uncovers, registers, expands, illustrates, tests and communicates all the national and international news of significance for the population. The key words characterizing the Radio News are significance, consistency, seriousness, variety, impartiality and reliability. The Radio News' news and magazine broadcasts are produced by the Radio News' own staff or in collaboration with the staff of the individual radio channels. (DR 1994)

In addition, the Department of News and Current Affairs broadcasts special programs for, among others, ethnic minority groups on AM frequencies and to Danes abroad in particular by short wave broadcasts. The big newscasts in the morning, at noon, in late afternoon, early and late evening are the same for all channels. In addition to this, the news department broadcasts brief newscasts on P3 every hour around the clock, plus news briefs every half hour in the morning and late afternoon. The greatest changes for the news department in 1994 involved the broadcasting of magazine programs on all 3 channels, but notably with material that is adapted to a certain extent to the different formats of the individual channels.

The goal of the Department of News and Current Affairs is to increase the *daily* cumulative coverage of the radio newscasts on the Denmark channels and P3 from the 60% it was in 1990, and in particular to acquire more younger listeners (under 30 years old) and thus the increase the daily cumulative coverage of this group (1994: 42%). The goal is also to maintain the existing level for the long newscasts in the morning and at noon, i.e.

1.2 million listeners at 7 o'clock and ca. 1 million at noon. For the long newscasts late in the afternoon the goal is 500,000 listeners at 5 o'clock and 200,000 at 6:30.

As for the cumulative coverage among the 13-29 year olds, it is quite variable, but in both of the years that it has been measured (November 1992 and 1993) it has been above the goal figures with 56% and 50% respectively. Regarding the level for the various newscasts, the average figures for 1992-94 are ca. 1.2 million listeners at 7 am and 1 million at noon, with a declining tendency in both instances. For the 5 o'clock newscast in the afternoon the average is approximately 450,000, thus under the goal figures, and here the development does not indicate any upward tendency, rather the opposite. For the 6:30 pm newscast the number of listeners in 1992 was significantly above the goal level, but it fell drastically to 271,000 in 1994, obviously because tv prime time is starting earlier.

The Local Radio

As mentioned in the introductory historical background, legislation in the beginning of the 80's allowed for the possibility of supplementing the national and regional radio with local radio. And the development in listening hours indicated that the local radio stations fulfilled an existing need. Thus, some of the earliest accounts from the mid 80's show that the total listening hours increased significantly for the listeners who had the opportunity to listen to a local radio station (37%)¹⁰. The introduction of local radio was only accompanied by a small drop in listening for the Danish Broadcasting Company. The local radio stations functioned primarily as a supplement. Since then there has been a tremendous expansion of local radio, such that the local stations now cover the entire

country, often with several stations within the same local area. The average coverage of the local radio stations on normal weekdays currently in the 90's is around 20% with the same slightly declining tendency shown in the surveys for the Danish Broadcasting Company. And the local radio programs still seem to function as a supplement rather than competition in relation to the Danish Broadcasting Company¹¹.

In 1994 media researchers Per Jauert and Ole Prehn conducted an investigation of the local radio and television in Denmark for the Danish Ministry of Culture, cf. the previous references to this investigation. This investigation is based on a comprehensive questionnaire which was sent to all 233 local radio stations and the 44 local television stations in Denmark. The purpose of the investigation was to take stock of the area, and the report includes, among other things, an account of the broadcasting conditions, the various types of stations and their administrative, economic and programming profiles. Even though it was difficult to get all the stations to answer – only 60% responded, with an overweight of stations without commercials (65%) and fewer responses from those with commercials (52%) – this report contains much valuable information and a thorough analysis of this very complicated and elusive area.

The two main groups within the local radio stations, those with commercials and those without, both cover a wide range of varying types. Those with commercials extend from a few large and relatively well-consolidated around the clock stations with numerous full-time employees and a large range of programs to numerous economically weak commercial radio stations which are constantly struggling to survive, to specialist stations and several religious

stations. Among those without commercials there is a relatively large group of religious stations, but of course also radio stations for associations and grass root organizations with specific political profiles.

The listeners to these local stations are primarily young people between 13 and 40 years old (The Danish Broadcasting Company's listener survey 1994:45), and they listen especially because of the music¹². And for most of the local radio stations, music is the dominating feature in the program framework. It is not surprising that this is particularly true of the commercial stations, where the amount of music is never under 50%. For about half of the stations investigated the amount of music was 70-89%, but it probably would have been even more if a number of the commercial stations did not have such great problems with royalties to KODA and Gramex as is the case. In comparison, the amount of music on the Danish Broadcasting Company's P3 is 70%. The local radio stations without commercials show a more even distribution, and it is clear that the tendency is generally to broadcast less music, but here the KODA-Gramex royalties are also a burden on budgets.

Where commercials are concerned, it is difficult, according to the investigation, to get a precise overview. Thus, it is not possible to give the income from commercials for the individual stations. At an estimate, income from advertising for all of the country's commercial stations is around 100 million Danish Crowns per year, and the income from advertising comprises 50% of the total income for the limited number of stations that answered this question. On an average the local stations use 4% of their broadcast time on commercials. Only 7 stations reach 10% which is the highest level permitted.

Five Types

Based on the program frameworks, we can divide the local radio stations up into five groups: The first group consists of commercial stations with a high percentage of music. The rest of the program framework is filled out with hourly newscasts, service announcements about traffic, local activities and current events plus listener greetings. The second type – which includes only a few stations – is also commercial, but a significant part of the program framework includes heavy programs with high journalistic ambitions with newscasts lasting up to a half hour, debate programs and programs on current issues, in addition to the types of programs that characterize the remaining commercial stations. Where the contents are concerned, they correspond to the local pages in one of the larger province newspapers, including the front page with the most striking national and international news items. The third group consists of the so-called "interest stations", which function as the voice of various special interest groups. Here, the magazine programs dominate, with a mixture of direct input from the studio, taped elements, telephone interviews and music. The religious stations make up the fourth group with a broad range of programs, spanning from programs that deal with social and cultural problems to evangelical programs with preaching, Bible reading, prayers and intercessions. The fifth and final group could be called the public access radio stations, i.e. the stations where a significant portion of the program framework is made up of programs produced by individuals and/or groups in cooperation with the station's staff.

The program structure ranges from the traditional block radio to framework radio

and format radio. The blockradio form is found in particular among the non-commercial stations with broad and complex target groups, whereas the framework radio is usually for the commercial stations. Here we also find examples of true format radio, where programs are geared to a limited target group. But this characterization only gives a rough picture of a much more complex reality. Thus, the programs can be structured within a fixed framework during the daytime, whereas in the evening they are sent as block radio.

Discussion

The Danish Broadcasting Company is unquestionably the dominating factor in the Danish public service system, and we can ask ourselves to what extent do the Danish Broadcasting Company's radio channels, taken together, live up to the demands inherent in the concept of a modern public service radio. To begin with, we can ascertain that the Danish Broadcasting Company seems to live up to the demand of independence in relation to economic special interests and for the most part also in relation to the government and the political system. The radio law of 1988, in particular, strengthened the radio's independence in relation to the political system by replacing the parliamentary Radio Advisory Board with a governing board, even though the politicians didn't completely let go of their grip on the broadcasting company, since the governing board is appointed by the parliament and the governing parties. Also the broadcasting system is sufficient to secure reasonable and inexpensive reception all over the country.

With regard to the other points, the total radio program activity can be seen as an expression of the desire to meet the demands of a modern public service station.

The program framework of all of the channels contains an aspect of public access, and both P1 and P2 Music support, each in their own way, the production of national culture. Where the requirement of serving the entire population is concerned, including the minorities, it is, of course, a question of how small a group the radio is aiming at. And in this connection the local radio stations can, of course, operate with significantly smaller groups than the Danish Broadcasting Company, even on the regional level. But the expansion of the regional system has contributed towards satisfying the different needs for information, culture and entertainment in the various regions, when we take the listener figures into consideration. Finally, there is no question that the continued maintenance of program activities aimed at the ethnic minorities in Denmark is significant with regard to the social integration of these minorities.

From a general point of view, the Danish Broadcasting Company is still a strong public service medium for the population of Denmark. This is true internally in relation to the major portion of the local stations, and it also holds true if we compare the time listeners spend listening to the Danish Broadcasting Company as opposed to other stations with the corresponding situation in the rest of Scandinavia. As already mentioned, 80% of the listening time goes to the Danish Broadcasting system's channels and 20% to the local radio stations. In Finland 70% of the listening time is spent on the public service institution YLE's four channels, while 30% of the time is spent listening to the local radio stations. In Norway 61% of the listening time is spent on NRK, while the commercial national radio channel P4 takes up 27% and the local radio stations 12%. Finally, the Swedish Broadcasting Company

has 77% of the listeners and the local and commercial stations 22%. If we look at the total listening time in the four countries, Denmark is at the bottom of the list with 2 hours and 10 min. per day, whereas the Finns listen 3 hours and 43 min., the Swedes 3 hours and 16 min. and the Norwegians 2 hours and 44 min. But if we look at the time that is used to listen to the big public service radio stations in the different countries, the distribution doesn't look nearly as flattering for the Danish Broadcasting Company. Thus, in Finland close to 3 hours are used listening to YLE, in Sweden 2 1/2 hours listening to the Swedish Broadcasting Company, 1 3/4 hours listening to the Danish Broadcasting Company and in Norway 1 1/2 hours listening to NRK. With the relatively limited time people in Denmark spend listening to the radio, changes in the media picture can have relatively great consequences for public service radio. Or expressed in a different way, public service radio in Denmark is more vulnerable than in Finland and Sweden, simply due to the limited listening: A numerical decrease in the listening hours involves a greater fall in percentage where Denmark is concerned.

Problem Areas

But even if the Danish Broadcasting Company seems to live up to the requirements for a modern public service radio in significant areas and is relatively strong in relation to the private local radio stations taken as a whole, the analysis has still singled out a number of problems.

In general, the listener coverage reveals a declining tendency. This is the case, however, for both the public service channels and to a certain extent also the local radio channels. *P1* has too few listeners in relation to the goal set by the Danish Broad-

casting Company, and development in recent years does not give any indication of any immediate increase in listener coverage. Things look a little better for *P2 Music*. Even though the daily coverage is small, the cumulative coverage is higher than the goal figures, and the weekend coverage is much higher than the daily coverage. One problem that *P2* faces, however, is whether the programs and the listener coverage that has been achieved can justify, in the long run, the substantial expenses that are connected with several ensembles, now that the general cultural obligation, the decisive reason for having them, has been given up as a requirement. Another problem which arises in this connection is the fact that the competition from international classical music channels via the cable system, for example, might involve a noticeable reduction in listener coverage in the future.

P3, just like *P1* is just under the goals that have been set, and things seem to be going the wrong way. To this we can add the fact that the teenagers have a tendency to fall by the wayside. If this development continues, there is the danger that the radio will completely lose contact with the majority of the listeners of the future. In addition, *P3* is also faced with fierce competition from a number of the local radio stations and will most probably be faced with similar competition in the future from international commercial music radio channels for young people via the cable network – a kind of MTV radio. Already a few years ago, a significant portion of the young people (23%) who had the opportunity to do so listened to satellite radio, and this hurts *P3*. The listening time for this group has fallen from 9 1/2 hours weekly to 8 hours¹³.

The Denmark Channel, understood here as the regional channels, is in good shape compared with the goals that were set. The

biggest problem for the regional channels is probably the competition from the larger commercial local radio stations, especially in a number of cities in Jutland. As we have seen, these local radio stations have significant coverage within their own primary broadcasting area. If it is sometimes difficult for the regional radio stations to deal with competition, this can be due to the geographic layout of the region.

For the *Radio News*, the analysis pointed out that the larger newscasts have a declining number of listeners. The cumulative figures are still particularly high, but the long newscasts, especially those in the late afternoon, have run into difficulty. The goal for the newscast at 5 pm has not been reached, and the listener figures for the 6:30 evening newscast are declining drastically, most likely because tv prime time starts earlier. In relation to the goal of 42%, the Radio News has a relatively good hold on the young people (under age 30). But the question is whether it is enough to be in contact with every other person in the group in the course of the day. And it is one thing to ask who and how many listen to the news broadcasts, but quite another to ask what they get out of it. Investigations in the late 80's and early 90's have shown that the Radio News' core listeners are, using a rough generalization, educated men over 40. For the most part they are also the ones that get the most out of the newscasts. But these investigations also showed that when the Radio News changed its traditional way of communicating the news, other groups got significantly more out of the newscast, and interestingly enough, none of the core listeners dropped out or felt that they were being patronized¹⁴. And even though a certain amount of progress has been made in radiophonic news communication, the traditional form is still the most dominating, so it would

still be inappropriate to maintain that the Radio News has the entire Danish population as its target group. Finally, the more precise formatting of the individual channels involves a problem for the communication of the news. Up until the present, the Department of News and Current Affairs has succeeded in maintaining an identical newscast for all the channels, sometimes resulting in a noticeable discrepancy, however, between the standard newscast and the radiophonic staging of the remaining material, particularly on P3.

Finally, where the *local radio* stations are concerned, we are dealing, as previously mentioned, with a slightly declining listening tendency. The local radio stations, taken together, have added many new aspects to the radio medium, significantly increased the choices for the listeners and made it possible for more people to express themselves through the radio. On the other hand, we must also recognize the fact that an increase in the number of radio stations does not necessarily mean greater variety. A great many of the commercial local radio stations with a high percentage of music have a program framework with music, brief hourly newscasts, commercials and service announcements which resemble each other. And a good many of the grass roots radio stations also have program frameworks with numerous common elements. The increase in the number of stations has to a certain extent simply meant that the listener has just gotten more of the same thing. Among the commercial local radio stations there is also the problem that quite a large number of them have serious economic problems, which has fostered the desire to lift the restrictions on forming networks, for example, in order to strengthen the economy, in particular by offering advertisers a larger listening audience. The problem with this

is that in time such networks could acquire such a dominating position that they would undermine the market for the "free" radio stations. Another problem is that a sufficiently broad network could function as a back entry for what would actually be a national commercial channel. Among the non-commercial local radio stations the problems lie primarily in the risk that listener groups would become so small that the radio stations would lose their importance for the local debate and that the programs would not be professional enough in their production and presentation to be taken seriously.

The Danish Broadcasting Company's Bid for the Future

Besides setting a number of primarily quantitative goals for the various channels and the newscasts, as already mentioned, the Danish Broadcasting Company has formulated, in its report entitled *The Danish Broadcasting Company 1995 – 2005 (Danmarks Radio 1995-2005)*, a strategy for its entire operations, and thus also for the radio. This report is ambitious and reflects an attempt to formulate both an ideological basis as well as goals and strategies for a modern public service institution in a future which, with respect to the media, will be characterized by major changes, steadily increasing competition in the acquisition of resources, viewers and listeners as well as rapid technological development.

Where *the radio* is concerned, the Danish Broadcasting Company's main bid is a system comprising 4 differently formatted full-time channels, two of these round the clock channels. P1 is still to be the verbal channel "with emphasis on that which is Danish, the informative dialog and the radiophonic experience for varying target groups", P2 Music is to be expanded to a

24 hour classical music channel "with emphasis on Danish music and performance, Danish presentation and the interplay with Danish musical life". Similarly, P3 is still to be, as the report says, "the youthful 24 hour full service station" for young people under the age of 40 with news, journalism, music and service announcements. Finally, the Denmark Channel is to be "a regionally based full service offer for the oldest half of the population". The goals for the various channels will be different due to the differentiated formatting. P1 is primarily to have a high cumulative coverage. P2 Music a high coverage and a high listening time for the segment of the population that is interested in classical music, contemporary musical compositions and jazz. P3 and the Denmark Channel are primarily to have high percentages of coverage within their respective target groups.

In relation to the present structure, we are dealing with significant expansion in two areas. With this proposal, the Danish Broadcasting Company wants to lock into a fourth frequency and to distribute this extra space primarily to P2 Music and then to the regional program frameworks. The justification is that listeners would have extended possibilities to choose among day and night, and it would strengthen the regional public service radio, based on the assumption that it is on this level that the commercial stations will expand during the next few years. The Danish Broadcasting Company has already taken steps to strengthen the regional channels. As of April 1, 1995 the Danish Broadcasting Company has initiated an experiment allowing the individual regional stations to adjust their program framework more in the direction of the specific needs of their respective target groups, in recognition of the fact that the needs are different in different parts of the country, just as the daily

rhythm differs from region to region. But here we should not underestimate the competition from the local radio stations in several towns in Jutland.

The individual regions have each had their own desires for this project. Thus, Radio Funen wanted to come in closer contact with its listeners by letting the local organizations produce their own programs. The Radio of Eastern Jutland wanted to establish cooperation with listener panels made up of the core listeners of the area in order to receive criticism, new ideas and suggestions for possible changes in the programming output. Other regional stations want to introduce new programs. Radio Mid and West want more programs with a basis in current affairs and debates, Radio Northern Jutland wants a program especially geared to older listeners, and on Bornholm the regional station wants to experiment with a formatting of the newscasts by mixing national and international material with regional news, thus taking the channel's special target group into consideration.

Where the newscasts are concerned, the report suggests that one comprehensive news service should be maintained, but that the individual newscasts should be formatted, since the different channels have different target groups with different preferences and backgrounds. The communication of news should take place on the basis of knowledge of these differences and with a view to "building a bridge over the information gaps that are the result of such differences". The report does not take a stand on how this change in the communication of news is to be realized organizationally, but suggests two possibilities for negotiation. One of these would leave the production responsibility with the Department of News and Current Affairs,

where this department would reach agreements with the individual channels as to how to give the newscasts the profile that would fit the needs of the individual channels. The other, and more controversial suggestion involves placing a substantial portion of the economic resources for news communication in the hands of the chief producers of the individual channels, thus establishing a buy-and-sell relationship between the new department and the regional channel, combined, however, with an agreement that the central news department would be the only supplier. Both suggestions contribute towards strengthening the position of the chiefs of production in relation to the Department of News and Current Affairs, and the latter suggestion gives the chief producers the possibility of having a strong influence on the form and contents of the newscasts.

In addition, the report contains three "declarations of intent": 1) The Danish Broadcasting Company will, in the area of entertainment, attempt to develop original Danish program concepts, possibly jointly with several channels, where new talent can be brought in. 2) It is the intention to improve the public access aspect, possibly by reopening the tape-recording workshops nationally and regionally and by developing program types that involve the listeners more actively than is the case today. And 3) A new construction in the form of a suggestion that part of the production be contracted out to external areas.

Finally, there are plans to establish an experiment with DAB (Danish Audio Broadcasting), similar to the experiments taking place in several of the other European countries. This experiment would involve comparing the sound quality of FM and DAB, and thus there would be simulcasting on weekdays between 1:30 pm and

6:30 pm in the Copenhagen area. This simulcasting would be used to broadcast classical music.

An Evaluation of the Plan

It is quite clear that the Danish Broadcasting Company would consolidate its position as a public service radio in a number of areas if the suggestions in this report were carried out in practice. This is particularly true regarding the highbrow cultural side of musical life. On the other hand, it is uncertain whether or not such a relatively large investment would be reflected in sufficiently widespread support from the listeners. An increase has even been calculated from the present 17% in weekly coverage to 25%. It is also uncertain whether or not a predominantly musical channel dominated by music for listening is the optimal alternative compared to P3's Night Radio, for example, when we take the listeners at this time of the night into consideration. In addition to this, it is probably a question of whether or not a program framework of the scope that has been suggested would be able to live up to the demand of a sufficiently broadly constructed framework including Danish music, Danish performances and presentations in cooperation with Danish musical life. And finally, it is rather puzzling that the test broadcasts with DAB are only to include classical music. Here it is quite obvious that listeners with other musical tastes would be just as interested in the testing of this new technology.

The report's suggestions regarding the communication of news has given rise to a certain amount of debate. The governing board of the Danish Broadcasting Company has been sceptical of the suggestion of formatting the news, and among the employees of the news department there has

been a great amount of concern that the common news service would be dissolved if the most radical suggestion were to be adopted. But before the formatting of the news is turned into a question of maintaining a public service news service or not, it would certainly be advisable to stress the fact that there are different ways of formatting the news material. The formatting can be carried out within a specific *program profile*, a specific *broadcasting form*, a particular way of *communicating the news* and finally, by *composing and communicating the material* in a broadcasting form geared to the needs and interests of the respective target groups. If we take a look at the program profile, a certain amount of formatting has already taken place with the varying emphasis and toning used in the newscasts. Where the broadcasting form is concerned, the idea of formatting goes even further back, all the way back to the introduction of the hourly newscasts on P3 back in the beginning of the 70's. There was a lot of heated discussion about this change back then too. Nevertheless, formatting has not been undertaken in the last two areas. Except for the fact that Bornholm's Radio, as mentioned above, has expressed the desire to begin experimenting with formatting in connection with the steps towards independence for the 9 regional channels.

It is clear that formatting in the last two instances would have practical consequences for both the contents and the form of the newscasts. But such formatting doesn't necessarily take away from the seriousness and reliability of the newscast. The newscast is already formatted to meet the demands of *the radio medium* e.g. compared to newspapers, and from a historical point of view, we can add that the familiar forms of the various newscasts are formatted in reality based on classical P1 norms.

Since then, the radio medium has developed to accommodate a population which is now recognized as being heterogeneous and as having different interests and needs, and the communication of news must keep abreast of this development, just as the written press and television has done.

From an overall public service perspective, respecting the regionally determined differences in the interests of the population, the recommendation to increase the extent of regional programs seems quite reasonable. In all cases it involves a choice all day long for listeners who are primarily interested in local and regional programs. But with regard to the element of competition with the local radio stations, this expansion is only an adequate answer if the restrictions really are relaxed so that it will really be possible for the local radio stations to provide regional coverage. If, on the other hand, they remain local, there is no guarantee that an extension of the broadcasting time in itself will improve the impact of the regional public service channels.

With regard to P3, the possibilities probably lie in the suggestions for program renewal, with the use of new talent. The contract model can also prove valuable for the kind of renewal that can attract younger listeners, and contracting for programs on the outside market can also contribute toward stimulating growth in the area of alternative radio. The weakness in the report's recommendation is the broad target group for this channel, not least when we consider the emphasis on music and its great significance for the choice of channels among the youngest segment of the target group. It doesn't seem very likely that such breadth would be able to solve the problem with the young listeners who drop out, a problem that can easily be reinforced proportionally with the increase in

competition from the international satellite channels geared to the young listeners. On the other hand, a narrowing of the target group for P3 would leave an empty space with regard to programs for the oldest segment of the present target group, and any real solution to the problem is difficult to see within the bounds of the structural suggestions taken as a whole.

Other Possibilities

But at present there is no clear indication that the Danish Broadcasting Company will be given a fourth national radio channel, and this fact can encourage the consideration of alternatives:

Alternative 1: A National Commercial Radio Channel

One of the alternatives could be a national radio channel run commercially, much like the one TV3, among others, has expressed an interest in. The question is what this additional choice would mean for the Danish Broadcasting Company's channels and the local radio stations. Seen from a purely numerical point of view, there would be an increase in the horizontal variation. But whether or not it would increase the versatility beyond this would depend entirely on the programming. If it decides to follow the same concept as the local commercial radio stations, the possibility for variation would hardly be increased to any noticeable extent. In addition, studies of television show that increased commercialism involves less versatility, more entertainment and program import. Versatility is generally greatest in channels financed by fees, somewhat less in the public channels financed by commercials and much less in the purely commercial channels. The way things are, it is impossible to evaluate this

aspect on a national and regional level for the radio in a Danish connection. But if we compare the commercial radio channel with the non-commercial channels in Norway, this connection between commercialism and versatility can be verified. In Norway, since 1993, there has been one private national radio channel, P4. P4 has as its target group adults over 25, and the program framework consists of a mix of newscasts, service announcements, music and entertainment plus a number of more specialized programs. P4 is subject to restrictions with respect to its programming, with requirements like programs for minorities and breadth in news coverage. The Norwegian Broadcasting Company's (NRK) monopoly was broken in 1982, and before the introduction of the private national channel, NRK's two radio channels had a hold on ca. 75% of radio listening, with the remaining 25% belonging to the local radio channels. After the introduction of P4, NRK's listening has fallen to 61%, and that of the local radio channels has been cut in half to 12%, whereas P4 reaches 27% of the listeners (1994 figures). Thus, the new private channel has given NRK rough competition and taken quite a chunk out of NRK's group of listeners, but it has been especially hard on the local radio channels.

The structure of the radio in Denmark today is similar to the situation in Norway before P4 was introduced, and we can therefore assume that the introduction of a fourth national commercial radio channel in Denmark would have comparable consequences, modified, however, by two things: First of all, much is dependent on the choice of target group orientation for a potential national commercial channel in Denmark, and secondly, the Danish Broadcasting Company has already undergone a process of modernization in the radio area,

something which was not the case when the new channel was introduced in Norway. Actual channel formatting, along with the expansion to a three-channel structure, was first accomplished by NRK at the same time as P4 hit the air.

Alternative 2: Fewer Restrictions on the Local Radio Stations

Instead of introducing a national commercial radio channel, among other things because of the negative consequences it would probably have in the area of local radio, the present restrictions could be relaxed so the local radio channels could have better transmitting facilities and, to a greater or lesser degree, the possibility for forming networks as many of them would like. The advantages for the private local radio stations would be the possibility for simulcasting and a greater listener basis, and thereby a more solid economic foundation.

In Sweden a deregulation in the area of local radio was implemented in 1993, whereby commercial local radio channels were permitted. The purpose of the deregulation was, according to the legislators, to increase the number of independent voices on the air, but not to make it possible to form networks, because if this were to happen it would go against the purpose of the deregulation: more independent voices on the air. Nevertheless, already a year after the deregulation had been passed, it was a fact that the private local radio stations were, in reality, dominated by three networks, and that the local voices were significantly missing¹⁵. Today the "local" commercial stations take up 22% of the time people in Sweden use listening to the radio, whereas the figure for the non-commercial local radio channels is only 1%. Seen from the point of view of versa-

tility, the Swedish example should make us stop and think. The consequence of liberalization seems to have led to oligarchic conditions on the level of local radio within a relatively short period of time. In Denmark a comparable development would not be unlikely, especially if the legislative possibilities for networks and cross ownership were relaxed in combination with the total or partial revocation of the present ban on program coordination.

Alternative 3: Radio a la TV2

A third possibility would be to use the model from the deregulation of television in Denmark in 1988 and establish a Radio-2, a radio channel with national coverage, financed partly by advertising and partly by listener fees, with public service obligations, plus the 9 regional radio channels, which, if this alternative is adopted, should be transferred from the Danish Broadcasting Company. The advantage of such a restructuring, from a public service point of view, would be that the program output would be subject to the requirement of versatility in the same way as the present public service channels, and at the same time an alternative to a radio system with roots in the monopoly could be established.

In addition to the sizable resources – both economical and administrative – that would be connected with such a restructuring, the greatest disadvantage would probably be the fact that a relatively well-functioning public service system would be left in such an amputated state that it would hardly be able to function as a full-service option for the entire population, and would instead be reduced to a kind of specialized radio. And with this the advantages, seen from a public service point of view, would be significantly fewer.

More Competition – a Better Public Service Radio?

In the years to come increased competition inevitably will become the conditions of public service radio almost everywhere, due only to the technological development within the radio media. In a future not far away satellite radio will be a possibility to the majority of listeners, especially when the transmissions are digitalized. Even today you can receive satellite radio via cable networks. Satellite radio is mainly music programmes, and its influence on public service radio will probably be on how music programmes are produced, and how they are formatted. But whether or not this will improve the quality of the programmes is still an open question. If you compare with MTV, the consequences would be more hitlists and program-mix between music presentations and commercials.

However, music is not the core of public service radio taken as a whole. The spoken word is more central, and as a verbal channel the radio is closely tied to the language culture of the community or the nation, and here the radio provides an opportunity for experiencing community and divergence in a more intense manner than television, where the picture is predominant. It is not possible on the radio simply to be content with importing an American situation comedy or a detective series and adding subtitles. The radio is a close-up medium which is integrated in our daily activities in a way that television isn't (yet). In addition, radio is more flexible and easier to work with. It can go anywhere and can be taken everywhere. Finally, you can listen to the radio when you are doing other things. You can do this with television too, but it is not as easy. Seen from a public service point of view, these specific characteristics contribute towards underlining

the central role of the radio as a guardian of culture in a broad sense in a national, regional and local setting. Despite the technological possibilities, satellite radio will not become an immediate threat to at least national public service radio. Although most people in Scandinavia understand more than their native tongue, most listeners still prefer to listen to e. g. the news, features, documentary and entertainment in their own language, and this situation will not change in a near future.

But what about a commercial channel with national coverage? Seen from a programme point of view, there are only few arguments – if any – that this will improve the quality of the programmes as far as versatility is concerned, and as already mentioned the experiences from Norway seem to confirm that a commercial channel would hardly be able to contribute to the radiophonic renewal that would be beneficial to the public service system. In addition, there are already dozens of alternatives in the local area, on the international level and in the form of neighborhood radio stations. The idea of constructing an alternative radio system according to the same principles as TV2 doesn't seem attractive either, considering the consequences this would have for the present public service radio system. On the other hand, it is obvious that monopoly in the long run does not encourage development

and renewal, and e. g. in Denmark the national radio news has been a privilege belonging to The Danish Broadcasting Company since 1925. As a consequence you could permit the local stations to network about the news and to create alternative radio news, as proposed by a majority of the Media Committee¹⁶. But referring to the Swedish situation, there is a serious risk that this will lead to more widespread networking and a de facto oligarchy among the local stations.

Public service radio cannot avoid competition in the future, and should not avoid it either. What is important, however, public service radio cannot fulfill its obligation – no more than public service television can – if it is only supposed to address the things that the commercial radio doesn't want to take care of or doesn't find it profitable to address. If things should take this direction anyway, there is the impending risk that the public service radio would be reduced to a specialized radio with greatly reduced attention from listeners, because under these circumstances the public service radio would find it much more difficult to become an integrated part of daily life. Thus, public service radio should be maintained as a full-service option for the entire population, and the competition you want to face the public service radio with, has to be adapted to that.

Notes

1. Cf. Søndergaard (1995:4f).
2. Cf. British Research Unit (1985).
3. Cf. The Media in a Democratic Society (1994).
4. Cf. Kagan's European Radio 1993. The methods for measuring listening time are not identical in the different countries, however, and this involves minor uncertainties.
5. Cf. En radio och tv i almänhetens tjänst! (1994).

6. Cf. These numbers are for weekdays. The coverage Saturdays and Sundays is somewhat lower, on an average close to 1/4 lower with deviations benefiting P2 Music in particular (from 2-3% to close to 10%).
7. Cf. Jauert & Prehn (1995:28).
8. I am responsible for the translation of this and the following quotations from *Her er radioen*, DR 1994.
9. Cf. The Danish Broadcasting Company, Radio Development, Media Research (1995).
10. Cf. Nordahl Svendsen (1985:123).
11. Cf. Lønsmann (1994).
12. Cf. Tortzen (1992).
13. Cf. DRåben 1991, no. 15.
14. Cf. Poulsen (1988) and Poulsen (1990).
15. Cf. Wallis (1995).
16. Cf. Medieudvalget (1995:148).

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