Transforming the Mediasphere: Sweden, A Case Study of Conflicting Discourses in Socialist and Capitalist Broadcasting Values

Kent Ingemar Svensson

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Transforming the Mediasphere:

SWEDEN,

A Case Study of Conflicting Discourses in Socialist and Capitalist Broadcasting Values.

K. I. Svensson
B.Comms. Media Studies (Hons)
1999
Transforming the Mediasphere:

Sweden,

A Case Study of Conflicting Discourses in Socialist and Capitalist Broadcasting Values

By

Kent Ingemar Svensson

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.
Abstract

Sweden has undergone major changes in its mediasphere during the last twelve years, during which two oppositional forces have been particularly at work, capitalist and socialist. Both these forces have influenced the direction in which the national mediasphere is transforming. The challenges of these political discourses, and responses from the parties involved regarding the role of the media in society, has been increasingly visible since the late 1950s, when the public service monopoly was first called into question.

The Swedish socialist government has promoted and protected its non-commercial public service monopoly, through which they could mould national identity and distribute culture and enlightenment to all Swedish citizens. The public service broadcaster, although 'independent', has been closely tied to and monitored by the state, which has put society, education, seriousness, discussion on social and political issues and non-commercialism at the top of its public broadcasting agenda.

With the threat to the public service monopoly and to the security of control, there has been considerable cultural, economical, political and social debate in and between various national organisations. The discourses surrounding these issues have been especially prominent during the last decade, at a time when the nature of the Swedish mediasphere has changed radically. As transnational commercial broadcasters began finding their way into the Swedish market, the socialist government faced, on one hand, pressure to...
respond to increasing market forces. On the other hand, pressure also arose regarding the protection and strengthening of the public service broadcaster (Weibull & Severinsson, in Negrine, 1988, p. 85).

Through the public broadcaster, the transnational commercial broadcasters, and the political discourses regarding them both, I will create a picture of the Swedish mediasphere and analyse the cultural, political, social and economic policy—making by the governing parties. I will also analyse the 'desired' outcomes of the oppositional forces in question.

In this dissertation, I will argue that what started out as cultural concerns relating to increasing capitalist imperialism within the field of broadcasting, has led to the consideration of other issues as well, regarding the discussion of political and economical sovereignty. Also involved is the 'perceived' necessity of technological innovation, mainly in response to the necessity to protect the 'threatened' Swedish cultural beliefs, values and traditions. These discourses have arisen mostly in response to the intensification of globalising forces, where people, goods and services flow more freely and are tied increasingly closer together.

During cultural debates on protection from the 'negative' influences reaching Sweden as a result of transnational corporations, technological development has become an even more important part of Swedish policy-making. As will be argued, two main beliefs regarding technology have arisen. Firstly, a governing belief in technology as 'neutral' can be observed, and secondly, a
promise of technological 'salvation' seems to have developed among the
governing parties, and especially in the socialist one.

The material used in this dissertation has been researched both in Sweden
and in Australia, and wherever a passage from a non-English text has been
translated and quoted, the original quote in Swedish has been provided for
the reader as a reference.
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signature: [Redacted]
Date: [Redacted]
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To continue my studies and do an Honours year at Edith Cowan University has been an exiting and challenging experience. It has been wonderful to be able to deepen my knowledge of the Swedish mediasphere and of the discourses surrounding it, and write a dissertation about it. The completion of my dissertation would not, however, have been possible if it were not for some amazing people.

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<tr>
<td>Folkbildning</td>
<td>Referred to as 'popular adult education' or a 'common knowledge'</td>
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<td>Granskningsnämnden</td>
<td>(Used to be Radionämnden) The supervising board of the television and radio channels</td>
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<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Landsorganisationen – Confederation of Trade Unions</td>
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<td>Radio Nord</td>
<td>'Pirate' radio channel transmitting off the Swedish coast during the 1950s and 1960s</td>
</tr>
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<td>Riksdag</td>
<td>The Swedish parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>SVT</td>
<td>Sveriges Television (The public service broadcaster)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Sveriges Radio (included Sveriges Television until 1993)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV 3 &amp; TV 5</td>
<td>Commercial channels transmitting from abroad into Sweden</td>
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<td>TV 4</td>
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Chapter 1

Background to the Subject and Introduction to the Ideological Frameworks.

Sweden introduced, as the last nation in Western Europe, commercial television in 1992 by establishing a third terrestrial channel, TV 4. Sweden has, from the Second World War till today, primarily been a socialist nation, and the Social Democratic Party has only lost three elections (1976, 1979 and 1991), resulting at these times in a right block majority in the Swedish Riksdag. Social Democrat Olof Palme, Minister of Communication, during the 1960s and 1970s and later Prime Minister, was deeply involved in the development of the Swedish television industry, which according to him should “safeguard uncompromisingly and with a steadfastness bordering on passion, the right of television to make open criticism of society, of the authorities, and of private interests” (Ortmark 1979, p. 144). He went on to say that “the best possible guarantees against abuse and for freedom of expression are to be secured through a corporation operating in the service of the public, that is, a corporation that is not owned by private interests nor financed by advertising” (Ortmark 1979, p. 144). Since the start of radio, and later television broadcasting in Sweden, the socialist government has always had a very negative attitude towards unregulated media and in particular media financed by advertising.

During the last ten years the Swedish policy makers have been increasingly
challenged by transnational influences, forcing them to take action and re-evaluate their broadcasting values and political stance. Great debate, resistance and the embracing of technology have been the result. This thesis seeks to analyse the conflicting ideologies at work, the transformation of the Swedish mediasphere (which primarily has occurred during the 1990s), and the increasing strength of transnational influences.

The values of 'democracy' and 'freedom of speech' have for a long time been part of the Swedish Constitution, as well as held in high importance and spoken of as part of the national identity and culture. Television and radio were seen as useful tools to reach the people and the socialist government laid great emphasis on the goals of raising the values of 'taste' and knowledge among citizens through these media and promoting a unified 'high' culture as represented by the cultural priorities of the elite. From the start of radio transmissions in Sweden, the media has been closely tied to the State and particularly the government (Hultén 1995, p. 46). Even though the media is regulated and under control, it has been 'independent' from the State, and prohibition of censorship by the government applies.

These new broadcasting media, radio and television, gave rise to certain concerns. "It was feared [by the socialist government that the mass media] would divert people from reading books, going to meetings, or being active in voluntary associations or labour unions" (Hultén 1995, p. 47). The established elite in Sweden saw the function of these media to be educational, serious, to serve
people with 'unbiased' information, to engage people in social and political discourse, and to raise the 'common knowledge' and taste among the citizens, referred to as *folkbildning*.

Frow and Morris (1996, p. 345) point out that "the concept of culture [could refer] to the existence of social groups - their formation, their maintenance, their definition against other groups [and] the constant process of their re-formation". Culture operates on different levels, Frow and Morris (1996) continue: the nation-state and/or the level of national culture, class, gender, race, age, sexuality and ethnicity.

Sweden is a socialist State, and some argue that it should be run according to the principles of 'State-Led-Society', in opposition to capitalist nations, which have adopted the principles of a 'Market-Led-Society' (TristaZeen, n.d, p. 3). Rokeach (in Rosengren 1994, p. 15) offers a short definition of the systems involved here; *Socialism* puts high value on freedom and equality, while *Liberal Capitalism* puts high value on freedom and less on equality.

Stuart Hall (in During 1993, p. 13) argues that the new right believes "the state should intervene in citizens' lives to the minimum possible extent so that market forces can structure as many social relations and exchanges as possible"... and that "the affirmation of internal differences (especially between classes, ethnic groups and genders) could threaten national unity". Michel Foucault (in During 1993, p. 19) continues the argument that "culture is neither an end in itself nor a
product of autonomous agents – individual or communities – but a mechanism for transmitting forms of 'governmentality', for ordering how we act, think, live."

Radio was considered to be part of national political and cultural society, and therefore, it was also to uphold the strong values of democracy and *folkbildning*. The socialist values and ideals underpinning Swedish broadcasting can be observed in the *1960 Governmental Inquiry* presented in 1965, (Sou 1965, p. 20) into the media, and the role broadcasting ought to play as part of nation – building. The inquiry, analysed by Thurén (1997, p. 132 – 133), describes two possible formulae for the media. The first one suggests that the media should function according to the principles of any capitalist corporation, in competition with others, financed by commercials, like the system in the United States. This proposal was rejected, the main argument being that in such a system it is impossible, owing to technological reasons, to guarantee pluralism. There are not enough frequencies to secure a multitude of channels, and (according to the inquiry), a commercial based system tends to limit the range of different programs and become dominated by light entertainment, where the need to attract advertisers prevents the television stations from discussing more controversial issues. Swedish regulators believed it imperative that the media were free from "other irrelevant imagined interests, where one primarily refers to the aspiration of economic profit" (Thurén 1997, p. 132).

Anti – commercial broadcasting attitudes have traditionally been strong not only in Sweden, but in the other Nordic nations as well. Commercialism has been
viewed with scepticism and considered by the socialist establishment as in vulgar
taste. Supporters of the national public service broadcasting monopoly argued
that the services of commercial television systems would always have to give
priority to others than from the people (Hultén 1995, p. 49). To the socialist
government the media were to be a contributing part of Swedish culture and a
distributor of knowledge. They were not to be influenced by sellers of
commodities. In fact, “one of the fundamental ideas in support of the national
state monopoly in radio, and later television, has been the universal distribution
of information, culture, and enlightenment to all sectors and comers of the
country” (Hultén 1995, p. 42). Thus it is no surprise that the 1960 Governmental
Inquiry recommended the non – commercial alternative, drawing on socialist
ideology.

It was proposed that the function of media should be the service of the
community, and that the community in return should participate in the
organisation and contribute to the financial needs of the national broadcaster
(Thurén 1997, p. 133). The audiovisual media were therefore to rely on financial
funds distributed by the government. The media are ‘independent’, but with
government financial control, thus ‘independence’ becomes problematic. This will
be discussed further in chapter 2. Every Swedish household with a television set
(about three million) has to pay a licence fee, which currently is approximately A$ 12 per month, contributing to the public service broadcaster’s finances.
The public service broadcaster, Sveriges Television (SVT 1 and 2), is also, (indirectly), owned by the people. Twenty per cent of the shares are held by the Swedish press, 20 per cent by private trade and business organisations and 60 per cent by popular movements (folkrörelser), which include labour unions, consumer groups, farmers’ associations, adult education bodies and churches (Noam 1991, p. 205). Unions in Sweden are a very strong component of society; 85 per cent of the working citizens were, in 1994, members of a union (Statistiska Centralbyrån 1996), organised in the Confederation of Trade Unions – (LO)⁴. This is compared to the United Kingdom’s approximately 33 per cent (Encyclopædia Britannica n.d. A) and the low 14 per cent in the United States (AFL – CIO 1998). Further, the Board of Governors of Sveriges Radio, (SR, which included both radio and television until 1993), has incorporated within it the major influential and power groups in Swedish society; representatives of the major parties, corporations and organisations (Ortmark 1979, 147). The Board of Governors has thirteen representatives of which six are appointed by the government, five by the shareholders and two by the trade unions (Howell 1986, p. 110). The Social Democratic Party, which has dominated the Riksdag for four decades, has therefore been able indirectly to influence the labour unions’ representatives in SR (Noam 1991, p. 205). Similar to the left block, the right block also has close connections with groups, organisations and popular movements in Swedish society. To understand the nature of political life in Sweden, one has to know that both Labor and Conservative are to the left of the American left wing, according to TristaZeen (n.d, p. 1). There have, since the start of broadcasting media, been struggles between the left and the right block,
with most of the triggers for deregulation of the media constituted by influences from outside the Swedish borders, which will be discussed later in chapter 2.

The *1960 Governmental Inquiry* put forward two main responsibilities for the Swedish public service broadcaster, and a third (lesser) responsibility. It should serve in the *'interest of the community'* and meet the *'desires of the viewers'*, and enhance "spiritual cultivation ... fine culture and art ... and human values" (Thurén 1997, p. 135). By the 'interest of the community' the inquiry explains (in Thurén 1997, p. 133) that public service broadcasting should:

> in many different ways keep citizens well informed. The goal here is comprehensive information about their own country as well as the world at large, which reaches all adult citizens, the ones who are responsible for the maintenance of society. An essential part of this information constitutes the reporting of different opinions, values, and points of view, which is an integrated part of modern democracy. We believe that for a democracy to work well, it requires knowledgeable citizens, who take part in the social opinion – making processes and therefore can participate in the state processes in a meaningful way.

The media should treat its audience as citizens involved in debates of national, political, and cultural issues in a democratic society and not as subjects or customers. It was the opinion of the inquiry that modern community, owing to its complexity, requires the co – operation of the media, especially radio and television, to provide important information to citizens (Thurén 1997, p. 134).

With the second responsibility, the *'desires of viewers'*; the inquiry proposed that as many desires as possible should be satisfied, without giving any concessions
to commercialism. Thurén (1997, p. 134) refers to this as 'the lowest common denominator', and the following argument is provided by the inquiry:

A closer look shows... that the “greater” audience consists of a multitude of larger and smaller groups; that every individual can be a part of several of these, and that the membership of different groups and interests crosses boundaries and varies in many ways. One must also keep in mind that different interests can be more or less central to the individual, that what gathers a large audience often is a kind of “lowest common denominator” which is also, therefore, pretty peripheral to most people included in this audience. It is often those interests that the individual shares with a few people only that mean the most. Therefore it is as important to satisfy the desires of the smaller audiences, as it is of the larger ones.  

The media is required to respect and observe all the interests of various groups, minority and majority, that constitute the society as a whole, and this would not be possible in a commercialised system according to the inquiry (Thurén 1997, p. 134).

The broadcasting media were, as a third responsibility, to uphold and promote abstract values which lead to the “spiritual cultivation, to the development of fine culture and art, to style and manner in society, in essence towards all the human values that can be influenced by media activities” (Thurén 1997, p. 135). This statement indicates that ‘spiritual cultivation’ and the ‘development of fine culture and art’ are regarded as having their own worth, separate from the desire of the individual being, and it strongly reflects an encouraging paternalistic attitude, much like folkbildning. This third principle of broadcasting served the government as self – improvement and the fostering of knowledge and understanding among
the general populace. Government and media control are paternalistic in style, providing for the needs of the people in general (Hultén 1995, p. 42 – 43), and eliminating distractions and irrelevancies. Through the media, citizens were expected to acquire important information and knowledge, and engage in political, social and cultural debate. As a result of this activity, the level of ‘taste’ and ‘value’ (as represented by the elite culture) would grow stronger and improve society as a whole.

The **Riksdag** set up rules and guidelines, *The Radio Act*, between the state and the national public service broadcaster (and later also TV 4) for the media to observe and follow during broadcasting and the production of programs. The State has, however, on principle, always kept itself at a distance from production (Edin 1996, p. 200). The appropriate level of political influence has always been heavily debated, but it has each time been made clear that politicians may not involve themselves in the production process, nor can they, as stated in Section 8 of *The Radio Act*, view a program in advance, use censorship or prohibit it due to its content. There is however a special council, *Granskningsnämnden*[^8], that may after a broadcast examine a program for any possible breaches of *The Radio Act* (Hadenius 1992, p. 118). The role of the government within public service broadcasting, (and it will be argued in this dissertation that this is problematic), should be a balanced one, but the public service broadcaster has often criticised political representatives, claiming that they cross the line too often and interfere to much in program production (Edin 1996, p. 200).

[^8]: Granskningsnämnden
There have also been other forces at work, which have different goals, values and opinions on their agenda. Since the start of radio, there has been a constant struggle between socialist and capitalist broadcasting values of regulation and deregulation, within Sweden and SVT itself. The majority of the pressure, however, for deregulation and commercialisation has come from beyond the Nordic nations. The early instances of this, involving illegal radio transmissions, took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when *Radio Nord* began broadcasting over Sweden. This contributed significantly to the initiation of the 1960 Governmental Inquiry. With the increasing struggle of commercial broadcasting for a foothold in Swedish society it is possible to observe and analyse the political policies regarding national and transnational broadcasting, regulation or deregulation of these, and the forces that propel the processes of globalisation.

In 1958 a radio station, *FM Radio Mercur*, began broadcasting over Denmark and in 1961 *Radio Nord* made its appearance on the Swedish airwaves. The ship transmitting *Radio Nord* positioned itself in international waters in the Baltic Sea, off Stockholm's archipelago. By 1963 various ships had positioned themselves around Europe. The ship transmitting *Radio Nord*, called *Bonjour*, was American owned, registered in Liechtenstein and manned with a Swedish crew (Skornia 1965, p. 183 - 184). Various American companies, such as Ford, Lever Brothers and the American Tobacco Company sponsored these ships broadcasting commercial radio (Skornia 1965, p. 183 – 184). This sponsorship would have had a role in persuading the nations, which received the transmissions to deregulate
their media sectors. This may not have been the motive, however, the companies could just have advertised at any price, concerned mainly with increasing profits.

Regardless of this, the Swedish government considered pirate radio a threat to its political ideology and forbade the advertising (Hultén 1995, p. 48), but the radio station continued to broadcast. Fears were also raised that this intrusive commercial channel would destroy the 'unique' Swedish culture, and the long-term aim of folkbildning in a socialist spirit.

By 1959, one year after Radio Mercur began broadcasting, it had a turnover of US$ 150,000 from advertising revenues. In 1962 the Swedish Board of Telecommunications approved, after heavy parliamentary debate, legislation that would "prevent the commercial radio transmissions to Sweden from outside terrestrial waters" (Skornia 1965, p. 185) and further emphasis was laid upon The 1960 Governmental Inquiry, initiated two years earlier in 1960, whose objectives included analysis of the Swedish mediasphere, and its future development. In June of 1962 Radio Nord ceased its broadcasting.

The general public, however, had enjoyed the variety Radio Nord brought and pressure was put on the government. In order to meet the new public demands, and in response to the fears of further transnational commercial stations, the government introduced (in 1962) a popular music channel and (in 1964) one with light music, both non-commercial (Noam 1991, p. 204).

Public service broadcasting in Sweden has always been closely linked to the State, and considered an integral part of the debates and priorities of traditional
socialist political and cultural issues and concepts. When the commission presented its proposals in 1965, it suggested that a second television channel should be established. A lively debate broke out regarding the different financial suggestions for funding SVT 2.

Supporters of commercial television argued against the public service broadcasting monopoly and accused the broadcaster of failing to encourage diversity. They suggested that a commercial channel would bring in more revenue and therefore be able to broadcast better, and more diverse, programs (Hadenius 1992, p. 123). The attitudes informing The 1960 Governmental Inquiry remained strong, however, and as a result SVT 2 was introduced in 1969 as a non-commerical channel. Another factor influencing the decision was the Swedish press, which was against any commercialisation of television, mainly owing to its concerns regarding the press losing advertising revenues as a consequence.

The socialist government considered it very important that, between them, SVT 1 and 2 were to eliminate structural differences in opportunities for people, and give everybody the same chance of enriching experiences. Within the area of folkbildning and education, the two television channels and the three radio channels, would introduce people to new areas of knowledge and provide easier access to information regarding relevant social issues. The government was enthusiastic about the possibility of widening the access of 'high' culture to people who could not afford to visit theatre, opera and concerts (Thurén 1997, p. 136 - 137). The two channels would operate in a "stimulating race for the best producers, writers, journalists, and programmes, ... rather than a chase for the
biggest audiences, which would follow from commercial competition" (Hultén 1995, p. 51).

The Swedish socialist government had experienced Radio Nord and the ease with which it beamed into the nation as very disturbing, and as a major threat to their ideological values and beliefs. During the 1960s the socialist government became increasingly aware of developments in satellite and cable technology, and their possible threat to the public service broadcasting monopoly (Hultén 1995, p. 53). In response to these new telecommunication technologies being developed, the socialist government embarked on its own satellite and cable developments, primarily to protect itself from (in their opinion) destructive forces which threatened Swedish culture and the political agenda. The technological advances made in the capitalist nations were studied, after which an equivalent of the new technology was developed and integrated to serve alongside the Swedish socialist agenda.

Dyson and Humphreys (1988, p. 48) argue that Sweden and the other Nordic nations (Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland), although they vary in specific policies, share a very strong and developed tradition of public service broadcasting monopoly and a deep belief in a non-commercial culture. On the other hand, they also note that the Nordic nations have adopted a typically positive attitude towards the requirements of technological development and the constant modernisation of their economies. Sweden presented a "successful model of Social Democratic brokerage between the demands of social and cultural policy, and those of economic policy, in a (sic) open – economy framework" (Dyson, et al. 1988, p. 48 – 49). The Nordic nations are small players and highly distinctive in the world market and share political, cultural, historical
and economic traditions and values going back hundreds of years. As a result, they naturally turned to each other.

In the early 1970s the Nordic Ministers of Education and Culture, (as part of the political body of the Nordic Council of Ministers), initiated a commission to investigate and stimulate the possibility of co-operation between the Nordic nations, in establishing their own satellite broadcasting program (Weibull and Severinsson 1988, p. 79). Two distinct eras can be constructed: First the NORDSAT project referred to, (by Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 80), as the 'Cultural Era' and the second one, TELE-X, referred to as the 'Industrial Era'.

The NORDSAT project was initiated to serve as a defensive wall against the perceived 'negative' influences of the European continental satellite systems (Weibull and Severinsson 1988, p. 80). NORDSAT primarily arose out of cultural concerns. TELE-X, on the other hand, was mainly founded on the objectives of industrial development. By the beginning of the 1970s (when the NORDSAT project was under development), the cultural aspects of possible satellite and cable systems generated great political debate in the Nordic region. This debate was dominated by two controversial topics: advertising and freedom of speech (Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 88). The commission set up by the Nordic Ministers of Education and Culture was to investigate the political, judicial, technical, financial and cultural aspects of a Nordic satellite system and, in 1979, they presented five main guidelines (Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 79 - 80) for a full scale Nordic satellite broadcasting exchange program:

- A desire to support increasing cultural co-operation between the Nordic nations.
• The perceived necessity of a Nordic Broadcasting Cooperation in case (or when) non-Nordic European satellite and cable transmission became a common part of daily life.
• An increased freedom to choose between channels and programs within the Nordic nations.
• A desire to contribute to an increased knowledge of the Nordic languages.
• An improvement in the cultural and linguistic situation of minority groups (this mainly referred to the Finnish-Swedes in Sweden and Finland), in Nordic nations.

The report received a mixed response, and generated great political discussion between the left and right in Swedish politics. The Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the public service radio and television broadcasters were the most critical towards the project. The opposition to NORDSAT was mainly based on cultural issues, regarding the threat to national cultures (Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 80). The Metal Workers’ Union (the largest in Sweden) praised the project, because of its importance as a spur to technological development. The project was, however, rejected in 1981 by all the nations except Norway (Hultén 1995, p. 53).

Upon the rejection of NORDSAT, another project (TELE-X, also involving a satellite), which had been on the drawing board since the 1960s, gained ascendancy (Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 82). The State-owned Telia (at the time called Televerket – the equivalent of Australia’s Telstra) was responsible for the development of TELE-X, in co-operation with the Swedish Space Corporation (Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 82). Ekecrantz (Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 82) notes that while the NORDSAT project caused strong political debate and controversy,
TELE – X, on the other hand, as a technological project, developed with virtually no political debate at all, almost finding itself outside the realm of politics.

Analysing the progress of these two projects, satellite broadcasting primarily started out as Nordic cultural co-operation, but over time it became a highly important matter of industrial development. The implication is that political decision-makers found national agreement on technological and industrial developments, and especially developments in the area of telecommunication technologies. When discussion arose regarding the practical use of these technologies, however, intense cultural debate erupted, relating to the fear of commercial transnational broadcasting over Sweden (Weibull, et al. 1988, p. 100).

Most Swedish political players, mainly in regard to the advances in European broadcasting, shared the view that technological development was crucial to Sweden. Technology began (as will be discussed in this dissertation) to be seen as 'neutral', a component in society that could be used in any way desirable to achieve the objectives set out. The Swedish socialist government, during the late 1980s and 1990s, was to experience further powerful forces of transnational broadcasting and deregulation. As a result the culture debate grew stronger and technology (even though it was responsible for bringing the unwanted influences to Sweden), became viewed by the socialist government as a tool to use, in order to protect the Swedish mediasphere and public service broadcasting. TELE – X was to become a reality in 1989.
Chapter 2

The Cable and Satellite Age:
Towards a New Mediasphere.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Swedish socialist government started to receive applications from a number of broadcasters (among them the United Kingdom's Sky Channel), requesting permission to broadcast over Swedish territory. This, and the emergence of cable and satellite television, was not only seen as a threat to the state's broadcasting monopoly, but also began generating concern within the Swedish public service broadcaster, Sveriges Radio (SR — which included radio and television until 1993). The fear centred upon a possible increase in competition with foreign programs. According to Howell (1986, p. 113), "opponents argue that the Scandinavian cultures would be further diluted due to the quantum increases of Anglo-American programming in English, since so much already exist[ed] on Nordic TV channels."

Owing to pressure in the late 1960s and early 1970s SR, under a conservative government, had already been through a decentralisation process where the broadcasting company was divided into four program companies: One for the three radio channels; one for the two television channels; one for the educational radio and television and one for local radio (Noam 1991, p.204). Once again, the 1980s promised further upheaval.
Technological developments were seen as crucial to Swedish policy-makers. The fact that the emergence of TELE-X cable and satellite went without any significant debate, compared to that generated by NORDSAT's cultural issues, could be argued to be a result of the Promethean promise (further discussed in chapter 3), which Kurtz (1994) explains is a “symbol for those who wish to use human achievements, especially technology, to improve the human condition and are willing to shape nature in order to fulfil our needs and purposes” (p. 1), and a spur ‘to cultivate our own technological skills and values, [and] to use instrumental intelligence” (p. 4). “Modernity takes as its project the expansion of technology, reason, and science, for it believes that problems can best be solved by using such methods wisely” argues Kurtz (1994, p. 5).

The idea of Swedish policy makers seems to have been (and generally still is), that the more technologically advanced and controlled the Swedish mediasphere becomes, the easier it will be to resist unwanted influences from abroad. This is an extremely problematic assumption, especially given the forces of globalisation.

Another significant reason for the satellite and cable technological developments was the increasing flow of transnational information, delivered by new telecommunication technologies. McQuail, de Mateo and Tapper (1992, p. 16) present a model of the forces at work;
The increasing developments in telecommunication technologies forced the Swedish government into action. The government's proposal for national broadcasting 1986 - 1992, "was framed in terms of the need for public service broadcasting in a media scene characterised by transnational satellite broadcasting" (Negrine 1988, p. 101). Swedish policy makers were, arguably, forced to adapt and acquire the new technology, and by applying it in a specific way, hoped to be able to resist transnational transmissions. The Swedish policy makers also hoped that these technological developments would be able to protect SVT, and its values.

A radio and television in the service of the public [as SVT claims itself to be] is a societal and cultural institution. We must not forget that the television industry today has become the greatest theatre, the most influential provider of news, the greatest entertainer and the greatest promoter of *folkbildning*.
in the nation. It has become the national scene and forum for information and debate (Hultén, Søndergaard, and Carlsson 1996, p. 3).²

Morley (1991, p. 5) points out that television watching should not be "understood as *either 'mere ritual' or a process of transmission of ideological (or cultural) categories, but precisely as operating along both dimensions at once." The rituals of TV are of vital importance to the understanding of its place in society, and they therefore play a significant part in the development of ideology (Morley 1991, p. 5). SVT was increasingly challenged during the late 1980s and the 1990s by commercial transnational broadcasters, and the future of SVT and its values and traditions were closely linked to the future of the concept of public service broadcasting itself (Hultén, et al. 1996, p. 3). In other words, could SVT remain a public service broadcaster in the traditional socialist spirit, or did it have to embrace market ideologies in order to compete with transnational commercial broadcasting?

In 1982 the conservative government established a parliamentary commission to investigate cable and satellite television, but the commission was later revised when the Social Democrats returned to power, and altered to discourage advertising. The report put forward in 1984 expressed concerns over the cost of cabling Sweden, as well as funding programs. It recommended that private funding rather than public money should be used for the development of cable networks (Noam 1991, p. 211). The commission did not consider the issue arising from cable and satellite technology to be important to government policy,
as, for example, was the case in France and Germany. The commission argued that cabling was more a matter of market demand (Weibull and Severinsson 1988, p. 87). The socialist government favoured cable networks over direct satellite broadcasting (although parabolic antennae were not prohibited), and with the state – owned Telia (equivalent to Australia’s Telstra) operating as a 'state' cable network, the state maintained a sense of control over the technological developments which were affecting the mediasphere.

The cultural issues in relation to the introduction of cable networks, on the other hand, generated great debate. A governmental report in 1985 proposed that a Cable Television Authority should be established to licence and regulate the cable networks, and cable programming. Each cable system would have a monopoly in its area, and would be subject to regulation. The cable networks would:

- Be issued with three year licences,
- Be required to distribute the two SVT channels for free,
- Not mix local and satellite programming on the same channel,
- Not offer inter - community cable networking,
- Have no advertising or sponsorship,
- Operate no discrimination against ethnic groups, and
- Exercise no exclusive rights to hard news reporting (Howell 1986, p. 113 - 114).
These policies were developed mainly with regard to external pressure from cable companies, which wanted to establish themselves in the Swedish market. Even though the government felt that they had not investigated the matter fully, and were not ready for policy making yet, they felt that they had to regulate if they were to maintain control of the mediasphere. These regulatory policies generally expressed the government's desire to protect the public service broadcaster (Weibull, and Severinsson 1988, p. 101). The report led to legislation in 1986.

The state-controlled mediasphere came to a definite end on New Year's Eve 1987 when the Scandinavian commercial satellite channel, TV 3, began transmitting from the United Kingdom. Its signals were jammed until 1992, however, and not available to all citizens in Sweden. Foreign commercial cable and satellite channels had also been forbidden to direct advertising towards the Swedish market. However, the opportunity to transmit from abroad to Sweden now made the legislation passed in 1986 obsolete. The possibility of control and oversight of Swedish programming by the Cable Television Authority had diminished.

Since 1995 the Consumer Ombudsman (Konsumentombudsmannen) has tried to regulate commercials, especially those aimed at children (on TV 3, and TV 5, which began broadcasting in 1989)\(^3\), but both the Court of the European Union and the Trade Court (Marknadsdomstolen) in Sweden have reached the same conclusion: Swedish law can only be applied to channels broadcasting from
within the nation, and foreign channels have to follow legislation in the nations applicable to them (Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå 1998, Nov. 20). By 1990 the government realised that it was impossible to prevent commercial television entering Sweden, and discussions that had already lasted for thirty years were now not based upon whether to introduce commercial television, but upon how to go about it, and what trade-offs might be possible.

When TV 3 made its appearance in the market in 1987, issues regarding regulation and advertising arose once again. As well, the future role of the public service broadcaster became a problematic issue. In 1989 the government appointed a commission with responsibility to investigate and put forward a new basis for the politics of future television broadcasting. Part of the brief for the commission was to look at the possibility of using commercial television as a financial resource for new terrestrial networks, to investigate who should be responsible for these new broadcasts and at what level the state should regulate such transmissions (Thurén 1997, p. 308). Sverker Gustavsson was appointed Commissioner.

According to Gustavsson, demands could be placed on commercial channels, but it would not be possible to expect commercial television channels to serve minority interests or to carry out the obligations of *folkbildning* (Thurén 1997, p. 312). In Gustavsson's view, however, the obligations of SVT should not be affected by the presence of transnational broadcasters. SVT should maintain its responsibilities to observe 'objectivity', to be factual and to allow different
opinions to be presented on equal terms. Two values were especially emphasised by the Commissioner; to provide 'good' television and to safeguard Swedish culture;

The more active we want to be internationally, the more we have to seek our own identity and knowledge about ourselves, our own language and our own culture. It is therefore especially relevant that improved possibilities of information, entertainment and cultural stimuli reach and are available to everybody in Sweden.\(^4\) (Thurén 1997, p. 309)

The question of screening commercials on SVT, became a heavily debated issue with the Social Democrats against and the Conservatives, (joined by the Federation of Swedish Industries), in favour (Noam 1991, p. 207). Newspapers and magazines had joined in an alliance against the introduction of commercial television, sparked by their fear of competition for the advertising market. The emergence of TV 3 however also generated fears within the advertising market of revenues flowing abroad (Hadenius 1992, p. 125), and increasingly opinion began to favour commercial television within Sweden in one form or another.

In 1990, via the TELE - X satellite, TV 4 Nordisk Television (later referred to simply as TV 4) began broadcasting. TV 4 thus became the first commercial channel to originate from within Sweden and have the legislative right to do so. It was privately owned by companies within the Wallenberg Group, the book company Natur och Kultur (Nature and Culture) and Jordbrukamas Föreningsbank (The United Bank of Farmers) (Hadenius and Weibull 1997, p. 183). One of the channel's foundational objectives was the right to be established as the third terrestrial channel, one on which advertising would be allowed
(Hadenius 1992, p. 115). This raised another problematic issue, (explored further in the next chapter), of the diminishing political control by government over the Swedish political economy, as global capitalism gained a stronger hold and pushed for transnational deregulation.

It was obvious that the demand for terrestrial commercial television was not about to go away, and this 'evil' influence, if necessary, should be regulated and licensed under supervision. Three alternative representations of terrestrial commercial television were put forward;

- To allow advertising on one or both of the public service channels,
- To establish a third private channel, licensed by the government, on which advertising would be allowed (TV 4's choice), or
- To allow advertising on both private and public service channels (Hultén 1995, p. 55).

The Minister of Culture, Bengt Göransson (Social Democrat) was opposed to commercial television. In March 1991, however, the parliamentary parties reached an agreement that a third channel, privately owned and funded by advertising, would be delivered terrestrially. Given that this new channel would have a monopoly on advertising, the public service channels would remain commercial - free. Critics maintained that even though SVT stayed commercial - free, the "two public [service broadcasting] channels [would] have insufficient funds, since the politicians [were] unwilling to increase the license fee level. They
also believe[d] that the battle for viewers [would] become just as 'commercial', even if the public company [did] not sell advertising" (Hadenius 1992, p. 126).

After debate, and a shift in government from a socialist to a conservative one, it was decided that TV 4 should be awarded the license to be the third terrestrial channel, and not TV 3 (the UK – based channel) as had first been suggested. In 1992, TV 4 went terrestrial and by 1994, 98% of the population had access to the channel (Hadenius and Weibull 1997, p. 183). In return for its advertising monopoly (and the granting of its four -year - license 1992 - 1996), however, TV 4 had to agree to certain regulations (from Hadenius 1992, p. 126):

- The ownership of the channel had to be broadly based in Swedish society.
- A percentage of the advertising revenues had to be paid to the state.\textsuperscript{5}
- The holders of the broadcast licence had to pay the expenses of the distribution of the channel.
- Certain types of advertising would not be allowed: political, wine and liquor and advertisements aimed at children.
- Advertising had to be limited to time blocks,\textsuperscript{6} and should not interrupt programs.
- The programming had to meet certain public service requirements.

TV 4 was also obliged, for the licence period 1992 - 1996, to broadcast at least 50 hours per week, transmit news on a daily basis (which during the winter season could not be below ten hours a week), and also broadcast programs

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aimed at children under twelve years. A further condition was that TV 4 should, over a twelve month period, broadcast at least 40 hours of Swedish or Nordic television drama and show a minimum 15 hours of Swedish – produced material per week (Hadenius and Weibull 1997, p. 232).

"TV 4 was, within the framework of commercial conditions which the company had to follow, to offer a multifaceted range of programs which could be recognised as high quality" (Hadenius and Weibull 1997, 219). TV 4 can therefore principally be regarded as a semi-public service broadcaster regulated by the state. Hultén (1996, p. 17) notes that the Nordic nations are especially characterised by regulating commercial channels that have established themselves alongside the public service broadcaster. Richstad (1998), an analyst of Asian mediascapes, has suggested that the introduction of commercial television on regulatory grounds is an 'Asian – type' of commercialisation. This seems a similar process to that of Swedish policy makers. Governments "still maintain tight control over media by administrative, political and economic means and ... the process can be characterized as commercialization without independence" (Richstad 1998, p. 294). Making sure that these semi-public service channels in the end live up to their commitments can prove to be a lot more difficult than drawing up the terms and conditions, however.

Granskningsnämnden is responsible for enforcing the guidelines set out for Swedish broadcasters, and also for receiving any complaints from citizens. During the era of the public service monopoly, there was mutual respect between
SVT and *Granskningsnämnden*. SVT regarded it as a point of honour that they should not to be convicted for breaking regulations. When a dispute between SVT and *Granskningsnämnden* occurred, however, it provoked heavy debate in the media (Edin 1996, p. 201). Today there is no self-evident loyalty between *Granskningsnämnden* and TV 4. TV 4 has (in certain aspects) failed to meet the guidelines agreed to, or manipulated and tried to stretch the boundaries of what the agreement allows, by dividing a program into two parts and inserting, for example, a news update, with commercials before and after the insert. Such practices have proven hard to police. For example, *Granskningsnämnden* could not dictate the lay-out of 'a program', since that would be in conflict with the prohibition of censorship (Edin 1996, p. 202). TV 4's breaches of the agreement were conducted in a way that the traditional public broadcaster could not have done, or had no reason to do (Edin 1996, p. 201 - 202).

TV 4 relies on the Swedish government for its broadcasting licence, but is not tied to the same economic dependence upon the state as SVT, which would risk cuts in its financing if it did not follow the agreed guidelines (Edin 1996, p. 202). Although SVT is supposed to be 'independent' of the state, since the state controls its financing it becomes problematic as to how much 'independence' SVT really has.

When the second SVT channel started in 1969, it represented young and radical influences, and the channel became known as 'the red channel' (Thurén 1997, p. 217). The channel covered topics like the Vietnam War, conditions in the Third
World, and (most controversially) conditions in Sweden. The number of appeals to *Granskningsnämnden* increased three fold and the number of programs that were found 'guilty', owing to a lack of 'objectivity', also increased dramatically (Thurén 1997, p. 218). The state initiated an investigation and SVT experienced cuts in its funding in both 1970 and 1974 (Thurén 1997, p. 217 - 218).

The competition between SVT 1 and 2 that began with SVT 2's start in 1969, ceased in 1996, when the Swedish government decided that the two channels were to join, and start co-operating with each other. This move came mostly as a response to the increasing competition for viewers. The public service broadcaster also received an 11% cut in its budget (Hultén 1996, p. 14).

"It can", according to Thurén (1997, p. 218), "be argued as to whether or not these financial cuts [in 1970 and 1974] were only based on economic grounds, or if they were also connected with a general dissatisfaction with the too radical nature of programs." θ Thurén (1997, p. 218) acknowledges that it would be difficult to prove the point one way or another, but suggests that it shows quite clearly that the state (by economic control over SVT), can use its power to force SVT in a desired direction. The financial cuts in 1996 were (arguably) motivated to steer the two channels closer to each other, keeping in mind that SVT's costs are higher, compared to commercial channels. SVT 1 and 2 have to be financially sound, however, to remain the central broadcasting influence in Sweden.
Issues of freedom of speech, financing and the responsibility of upholding cultural values have dominated discussions that have preceded changes within the Swedish mediasphere. The groups that have promoted the abolition of a broadcasting monopoly have emphasised the importance of freedom of speech and less government control. They have argued that the market should dictate broadcasting developments, and not political decision-makers. The official political response has been that only a larger radio and television company (such as SVT) has the opportunity to resist commercial influences and ensure freedom of speech and 'objectivity'. Continuing supporters of a public broadcasting monopoly have argued that a move towards a market-driven society would decrease the quality and diversity of programming, and therefore weaken national culture in Sweden (Hadenius and Weibull 1997, p. 210 - 211).

During the monopoly era of public broadcasting, state interference within SR and SVT was highly controversial and problematic, and a 'balanced' relationship had to be maintained. When the monopoly was broken, that 'balance', was no longer such an important issue, and the accepted view of the role the state should play regarding the public service broadcaster changed. If the public service broadcaster were to transform and become a state television station, the public would still have access to other channels (Edin 1996, p. 198). As a former public service broadcasting monopoly, however, now placed in a transnational environment, SVT's relationship with the public, and its own role, becomes an issue.
The public service broadcaster's relationship with 'the public' has been a disconnected one. "It has not been regarded appropriate to let the audience have direct influence over the program policy, owing to the view that it is not sufficiently qualified" (Edin 1996, p. 196). In the current environment, SVT is forced to compete with commercial channels for the audience. In such a climate, will SVT be forced to move closer to a market-driven position, or can it uphold its public service obligations, and its responsibility to serve the public interest, minority interest, (even during prime time), and maintain a wide range of entertainment, news, information and cultural events for everybody (Sepstrup 1993, p. 104)? SVT finds it harder than TV 4 to produce 'popular' programming schedules and fulfil public service obligations. Since the SVT 1 and 2 have not primarily relied on serving the interests of the audience, but of the general public, their role becomes even more problematic. Edin (1996, p. 196) raises the question as to whether the public service broadcaster, positioned in a market-driven environment, will be able to represent anything else than itself? According to the views that are most critical of the public service model, the development of broadcasting in democratic and modern societies has raised problems regarding the claims of public service broadcasting to represent the general public. It is argued that these claims serve only as a defence of a representation of a societal and public unity that does not exist any more (Edin 1996, p. 196 - 197), if it ever did.

The *modus operandi* of introducing a new channel into the terrestrial network (1992), and of merging SVT 1 and 2 (1996), seems to have been a successful
strategy in keeping the viewers 'within the nation'. The terrestrial channels, (SVT 1 and 2 and TV 4), have 80% of the audience (70% in homes with cable television), and TV 3 and TV 5 10%, with the remaining per cent of viewing audience tuning in to other cable channels (Hultén 1995, p. 57).

Over the years a growing fear of transnational broadcasters has gained momentum and replaced the pro - protectionist fear of tampering with the public service broadcasting model (Hultén 1996, p. 17). In reluctantly accepting commercial television, the socialist government has permitted its existence, but only on the government's own terms. As will be further analysed in chapter 3, technology has become an even more important component (as far as the Swedish government is concerned), of the regulation process in a dynamic mediasphere. Technological development, values of *folkbildning*, government supervision over the mediasphere and protection of Swedish culture have all dominated aspects of government policy; the challenge has been to balance these and respond to changes in the broadcasting environment.
Chapter 3

The Global and the Local.

With the development of national television systems around the world in the 1960s, increasing criticism of 'cultural imperialism' gained momentum among nations, especially with regard to the United States, seen as the major centre from which national cultures were influenced (Sinclair 1992, p. 99). The Swedish socialist government, as noted before, has a strong belief in an 'independent', non-commercial public service monopoly regulated by the State. SVT 1 and 2, the socialists argue, should be educational and informative tools, builders of 'high culture' and should engage the citizens in political, social and cultural issues. After the 1960s (when the transnational broadcasters began penetrating the Swedish mediasphere), the socialist government made it quite clear that public service media ought to be free of "other imagined interests, where one primarily [referred] to the aspiration of economic profit" (Thurén 1997, p. 132). Arguably it can be said that commercial culture is 'foreign' culture, and that it is imperative to the socialist government that the Swedish political, economical and cultural sovereignty be protected from these perceived negative influences.

After the 'pirate' radio channel Radio Nord was banned in 1962, the socialist government initiated different projects (NORDSAT, TELE - Χ) to counteract these foreign, commercial influences. This presents two problematic issues, which will
be discussed in this chapter. Firstly, there seems to be a belief that Swedish culture is something 'pure and authentic' that needs to be protected, and secondly, that the technology, which is meant to protect that 'pure and authentic' culture, is regarded as a 'neutral' component in society. This technological viewpoint is referred to by Vig (1988, in Palmer 1994, p. 80) as the instrumental, where technology is seen purely as a tool for resolving problems. With the introduction of digital television in Sweden, technology has been attributed with another character by the policy makers (which I will return to later), of possibly being able to fulfil the communication objectives of the socialist government and bring 'salvation' to the threatened national and cultural sovereignty. This viewpoint includes an element of technological determinism where the answers to problems are seen as depending upon the availability of appropriate technology, rather than the human will which underpins the technology.

According to Vig (1988, in Palmer 1994, p. 80) the technological determinist, "generally share[s the] assumption that technology is autonomous, and ... its own driving force". Any corporation, Bryan (1994, p. 148) argues, which has the most advanced technology has the upper hand over other corporations and will be able to produce cheaper products. In the case of telecommunication corporations they will also be able to transmit that product (the information) faster and better, and as a result, be more profitable. Both the capitalist and the socialist ideologies discussed here show evidence of a belief in a communicative technological Promethean promise.
During the last twenty years the development of the telecommunications industry has made it increasingly feasible to establish a variety of transnational communication channels. For the corporations that possess the technology, owing to the fact that they rely on building their markets and increasing profits, it is a logical move to establish themselves in new markets and become transnational (Bryan 1994, p. 147).

Differences in the development of national broadcasting systems reflect distinguishing characteristics in the political and regulatory approach of the national government concerned. The United States, as a market-led society, adopted a commercially-based broadcasting system, with a free flow of information, provided for a profit. Other nations, like Sweden (socialist) and the former Soviet Union with Eastern Europe (communist), operated according to the principles of state-led societies. These nations established for different reasons guidelines to either limit the free flow of information and/or to limit the market freedom of the broadcasters (Richeri 1992, p. 72 - 73). In a world characterised by an increasing rate and force of political, economical and cultural globalisation it has become, as discussed in earlier chapters, increasingly difficult for individual nations to regulate satellite transmission over their territories. These forces are also characterised by

the disaggregation of the nation-state as the basic economic, political and socio-cultural unit of world order, and the ascendance of the private corporation, with its power base in globalized industrialization, trade and communication ... it is clear that the nation-state's incapacity to control the electronic movement of information across its borders now
undermines its powers as a sovereign territorial unit, and as a consequence, its claims as guardian of 'national cultural identity', a crucial issue in the cultural imperialism debate (Sinclair 1992, p. 101).

These issues are live issues with regards to Swedish national broadcasting and the inclusions of other broadcasters carrying foreign programming; many of them European, but carrying American content.

Richards and French (1996, p. 33) refer to Golding (1994) in presenting four main features of a global culture:

First, is the supposed decline of the nation as a cultural force: people are asserted to identify more with supra – national cultural affiliations, than with those of the nation. Allied to this is the end of the nation – state as a political and economic force. Second, new levels of organisations, both 'above', at the supra - national level, and 'below', at the regional level, supposedly take over the functions previously performed by national governments. Third, is what Golding refers to as the 'syndicalisation of experience' – the emergence of major cultural and commercial symbols, in the form, most obviously, of internationally traded branded goods. Finally, he points to the role of the major international languages, particularly English, as vehicles for international culture.

Both telecommunication economist Jussawalla (1996, in Richstad 1998, p. 289) and the Hon. Justice Kirby (1998, p 63) partly attribute the fall of the Berlin Wall, the subsequent break up of the Eastern European nations' political systems, and the consequent collapse of the Soviet Union to the influence of the telecommunication industry, which would indeed be technological determinism. The Eastern Bloc was unable to prevent transnational broadcasts by Western media from entering its territory, with communist East Germany receiving
significant amounts of ideological information from its neighbour West Germany, through television and radio broadcasts, influenced by the United States. The former American Germany-based Radio Free America also beamed its signal into the East Bloc, promoting western values. Arguably, those transmissions would have had an enormous impact on the cultures of the East European nations, especially since former East and West Germany share the same language. On the other hand Radio Moscow had no such influence on the West!

There is more going on here than technological determinism. Morley (1996, in Waisbord 1998, p. 381) argues that "the 'magic carpet' of broadcasting technologies plays a fundamental role in promoting national unity at a symbolic level, linking individuals and their families to the 'centre' of national life, offering the audience an image of the nation as a knowable community". Western media could thus potentially redefine 'national life' winning Eastern European hearts and minds to the political system of capitalism and a free-market ideology.

The telecommunication sector is primarily responsible for influencing the 'nervous system' of modern society and exchanges of information and knowledge are of extreme importance in world economic activities and the balance of power (Commission of the European Communities 1988, in Mowlana 1994, p. 163). Robert W. McChesney (1998, p. 2) lists two ways in which the communication industry is involved in globalisation processes:

First, due in part to stunning developments such as digital and satellite communication technologies, communication and information are coming to play a larger and more important role in capitalist economies. ... Some even go so far as to
argue that 'information' has replaced manufacturing as the foundation of the economy. Second, the commercial media, advertising, and telecommunication markets themselves are rapidly globalizing, arguably even more so than the balance of political economy. Indeed, global media and communication [industries] are [not at all neutral, but] in some respect the advancing armies of global capitalism.

Deregulation of national broadcasting systems thus becomes an objective for the United States' industry, in order to gain access to different national markets. Competition within international markets is also driven by the US attempt to export a commercially – driven broadcasting model, which weakens the individual national broadcasting industry (Mowlana 1994, p. 163).

According to Tusa (1995, p. 52) "there is strong evidence that a country cannot modernise and turn from a controlled economic system to an open one unless it enjoys access to open information". This raises the question as to whether a controlled economic system necessarily becomes an open one upon access to open information. It also includes the implication that 'modern' is synonymous with 'an open communication system'. Nonetheless, the telecommunication industry is seen as a crucial part of socio – economic development (Chan 1991, p. 183), and culture depends, for its very existence, on different modes of communication (Powell 1985, p. 178).

Given that it possesses the most developed commercial media culture (McChesney 1998, p. 17), the United States has acquired a special position on the international scene. This preeminence is a result of the large amount of US - exported programs, (and consequently export of American culture), the lack of
imports of foreign programs and the broadly commercially – based broadcasting system, which operates as part of an unregulated and competitive market (Powell 1985, p. 193).

The United States does regulate its own telecommunication industry, and pushes for community obligations, but not to the same extent as some other nations. In a governmental investigation, The Telecom 2000 Report, the United States' government established a regulatory point of view on the free market control of broadcasting system:

Television remains the most regulated of electronic mass media. Policymakers must develop a regulatory framework which both recognizes new and evolving marketplace realities and affords broadcasters a full and fair opportunity to compete effectively in an increasingly competitive and dynamic media environment. Where competition can be reasonably expected to function as an effective surrogate for what regulation ideally might accomplish, government should not regulate and reliance should be placed on the marketplace. (Doyle 1992, p. 153)

A 1994 SVT agreement (Hultén 1995, p. 52) states that "public broadcasting 'shall' offer a diversity of opinion and cater to differing interests, which 'implies an obligation' to 'scrutinize authorities, organizations and private firms which exert influence over policy affecting the public' and 'shall stimulate public discussion of important socio - economic and cultural issues'". SVT shall also, as proposed by the government in the media plan for 1997 – 2001, be radio and television broadcasters in the service of the public, and the content shall display a high degree of variety, depth, quality and as a whole promote values of folkbildning.
These objectives, according to socialist policy, would not be possible under a commercial media system. Nonetheless, technology, commercialism and market pressure all have a tendency to make radio, television and the print media increasingly uniform and global, in both their form and their content, and regardless of where they originated or their social and cultural situation (Morgan 1997, p. 3). Free – market communications have become a tool to penetrate nations that have political inclinations towards regulated markets, after which the dominant core can expand its own market interests into the colonised cultures and markets. As well as Sweden, another example is China, with approximately 1.2 billion people. This becomes an extremely attractive market for transnational corporations. China has raised concern regarding Murdoch’s Hong Kong – based STAR TV and its rapid penetration into Asia, reaching 36 nations from Egypt in the west to Japan in the east, Indonesia in the south to Siberia in the north (Chan 1994, p. 114), and exerting a western influence.

Both the United States, as a super power, and Sweden, as a smaller nation, seek economic profit and technological and social development. The conflicting approaches in broadcasting technologies, and the conflicting policies regulating them, have nonetheless created a great conflict of interest. As Shoesmith (1993, p. 271) argues, there are immense value differences at work between the commercial and the cultural, the national and the global. The United States has become a ‘core’ of ‘culture imperialism’ influencing the rest of the world, ‘the periphery’. As communication systems are rapidly becoming global in scale
(influenced by the US' model, and carrying US programs, advertising global brands), nations see their political boundaries disappear as goods, services and information flow increasingly unhindered across national borders. The use of media by the core to offer a hegemonic representation of culture has become regarded as equal to 'cultural imperialism' (Richards and French 1996, p. 29). 'Cultural imperialism', as argued by Green (1994, p. 171), "serves the economic and industrial ends of transnational corporate power by fostering an environment which promotes consumerism. Media products, portrayed lifestyles and marketed goods are all consumed by the colonised culture". Contradicting this claim to be a 'colonised' culture, however, and balancing the perceived threat to political and cultural sovereignty, is the fact that there does exist a local demand for the dominant core products. These local demands cannot be ignored, and national and transnational companies cannot make people want and buy things that they in the end do not really want (Bryan 1994, p. 156), or watch television programs that they do not really like.

Visualising the core - periphery dynamic of globalisation from another perspective, one can regard Sweden as the 'core', whose task it is to limit the free flow of broadcasting from the rest of the world, 'the periphery'. Comparing these two scenarios, (Sweden as core, and the US as core) the advantage enjoyed by the dominant forces of globalisation, and the power of resistance by the less dominating nations, can be observed. While the dominant core concentrates on the expansion of its markets, however, and on promoting its capitalist ideology, other nations express concern that not only do they have to
develop economically and compete with the dominant markets, but they also regard it necessary to protect their cultural values, beliefs, traditions and languages against the dominant norm, which they are concerned may dilute and destroy their national identities. Therefore, communication technology becomes the forum from where these influences can be resisted and controlled, and where these ideological battles are waged.

Ferguson (Shoesmith 1993, p. 270) has also approached the subject of globalisation and in her description of it argues that the principal elements are:

- 'Big is better'
- 'More is better'
- 'Time and space have disappeared'
- 'Global cultural hegemony'
- 'Saving planet Earth', and
- 'Democracy for sale via American television'.

These elements are argued to have arisen from two dominant cultural perceptions that have created and formed the popular conception of technology. Firstly, there is the "Promethean promise that technology, applied judiciously, can resolve the fundamental problems besetting humankind" and secondly, that of plenitude; "that through technology we can construct the ideal society in which want has been dismissed" (Shoesmith 1993, p.270). The media are highly involved in the second viewpoint, mainly through advertising, where the capitalist
ideals of possession and consumption are constructed and promoted (Shoesmith 1993, p. 270). A society where the state lets market forces construct as many social relations and exchanges as is feasible by interfering as little as possible in the lives of the citizens (Hall, in During 1993, p. 19), is considered to be the most successful one by the dominant core.

Again visualising Sweden as the core and the rest of the world as the periphery, from which the Swedish culture has to be protected, one can also observe a Promethean promise concerning communication technologies; this time from a socialist point of view.

One of the deepest held beliefs in Sweden is that broadcasting should not be commercialised, but when transnational commercial – financed channels began beaming their programs into Sweden, and attracting audiences, fears were raised of revenues flowing abroad. “Given that the pressure towards internationalisation is very much driven by the dynamics of commercial competition and the increasing dominance of the free market...” (Richards and French 1996, p. 37 -38), it became clear that the technological advancements taking place could not be prevented, and the only productive alternative was to take advantage of them. As the broadcasting monopoly was threatened the socialist government analysed available communication technologies, and developed and applied them in a preferred way. The aim was to protect SVT and the Swedish mediasphere, and also to satisfy the market and public needs, brought to the surface by transnational corporations and media companies.
beaming their signals into Sweden. As a result of the European – based satellite commercial channel TV 3 transmitting over Swedish territory and bypassing Swedish law, the socialist government established a national regulated, free – to – air commercial television channel, TV 4. If commercialism was a necessary evil, it was to be under government supervision and control. By establishing a Swedish version of the imposing cross - border broadcasting channels, Swedish audiences were able to be maintained within the nation's political and cultural borders, since it soon proved the case that Swedes prefer the domestic version of commercialism to that beamed in from outside.

As the different national political, economical and cultural spheres become increasingly globalised, it has been argued that the national increasingly resists globalisation by transforming it locally. Meyrowitz' (1985, in Morley 1991, p. 7 - 8) main argument is that the transnational media are redefining the conceptions of 'position' and 'place', separating experience from physical locality, making places more and more uniform and, as a result, the importance of locality is declining. The new media today, Meyrowitz (1989, in Morley 1991, p. 8) continues, is certainly likely to 'relativize' our sense of place – so that 'locality is no longer necessarily seen as the centre stage of life's drama'. That centre stage is then ... taken by national television in the home, bringing us news of the 'generalized elsewhere' of other places and 'non - local' people and their simultaneous experiences - thus undermining any sense of the primacy of 'locality' as the 'unifying rhetorical space of daily television extends into the living rooms of everyone'.

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Thus instead of the local being local – within – a – nation, interpreting the global from various sources, the nation becomes the 'local', receives the global, and broadcasts a 'common cultural understanding' of the global product, to citizens within the nation. Locality appears not only to be included in the national and global, but as Meyrowitz (1989, in Morley 1991, p. 8) argues, also "increasingly bypassed in both directions: experience is both unified beyond localities and fragmented between them". The issues of nation, narration and the relationship between them become increasingly important, along with language and discourse. Through these devices communication technologies (mainly television) create specific national narratives of culture and identity, in order to connect national and international spheres, while maintaining the image and reality of the 'national family' and the international community beyond (Morley 1991, p. 12).

"The critical issue is that control over communication technology means control over information, and control over information is a precondition of political power" (Bryan 1994, p. 155). In a world where information tends to flow increasingly freely between nations, national political 'power' is rapidly diminishing. Technological developments in Sweden became a channel through which much of these perceived negative influences arrived. Swedish developments have themselves played a part in the processes of globalisation, and the free flow of information, while at the same time trying to prevent or control these forces. Nonetheless, in 1997, the Swedish socialist government decided that a terrestrial digital network should be established. The government recommended (Sveriges...
Riksdag 1997) in a parliamentary proposition (1996/97:67, bet. and 1996/97:KU17) that terrestrial digital television should be introduced by several steps, allowing the State to observe its progress, and from there decide future developments of the project. Lars Jeding, appointed to investigate the possibilities of digital television, suggested that the new technology be introduced as quickly as possible by terrestrial means, owing to the fact that it is in the terrestrial realm that the real influence of the State lies, by out–manoeuvring both the cable and satellite industries (Andersson 1996). Within a terrestrial network, the government would have licensing control over the channels permitted to broadcast and consequently, of the programming offered to its citizens (Crofts 1998). This would especially be the case after the analogue system was closed down (not later than 2007), when the only alternative to cable and satellite would be the digital network (Andersson 1996). The digital terrestrial net will most likely consist of SVT's channels, commercial channels and pay–television services (Andersson 1996), but service providers would have to agree to specific regulations and obligations drawn up by the government in order to secure a broadcasting licence. The government here is visualising that through digital technology, it will be able to establish and enjoy the control over national and transnational media it once had during the monopoly days, thereby protecting Swedish culture from the perceived negative influences of globalisation. In a regulatory climate, would commercial television be able to survive financially, or would it have to seek other markets? Could and would the Swedish socialist government over–regulate such a television station, making Sweden an unprofitable market?
It is evident that 'culture', which the Swedish policy-makers want to protect, is not something pure, authentic or never-changing, on the contrary as Miller (Morley 1991, p. 9-10) argues, "the 'local' is not to be considered as an indigenous source of cultural identity, which remains 'authentic' only in so far as it is unsullied by contact with the global. Rather, the 'local' is itself often produced by means of the indigenization of global resources and inputs". An alternative situation, offered by Shoesmith (1993, p. 271), is the production of a hybridised culture. Shoesmith theorises that a culture, exposed to other cultures, adopts certain features and transforms those features through distinctive cultural practices. Cultures are forever changing, through interactions within and between nations and peoples, and therefore are always hybridising. The perceived connection between culture and territory becomes less important, owing to the fact that cultures are constantly changing as a result of individual choice and taste, and this leads to the rejection of the charge of cultural imperialism (Golding 1998, p. 83).

Twelve years after the UK-based pirate channel TV 3 broke the monopoly of SVT in 1987, Swedish culture has undergone dramatic changes. This is especially the case regarding broadcast culture (although it is not argued here that the Swedish culture was something 'pure' before 1987). The question that must be posed is: Will today's Swedish socialist policy-makers now turn the clock back to 1987, to the way 'culture' was then (which is impossible), or will they accept the 'culture' of today and try to 'freeze' it, or will they let culture keep
on evolving and growing? Culture is not outside time nor can it be easily manipulated. Instead, culture is forever changing and evolves through the influence of (individual) people from around of the world. This will happen even if the government visualises itself as having control of the (still perceived 'neutral') Swedish national communication media, turning it into a kind of 'regulated globalism'. One thing is certain, the Swedish government will still exercise its power over issues regarding television advertising, which it sees as the greatest threat to national culture. Transnational broadcasting corporations have been positioned as the 'advancing troops of global capitalism' weakening, as a result, the control of governments over national political and economical issues. If this is the case, has the Swedish government, by opting for a digital terrestrial network over cable and satellite, succeeded in securing its defensive and protective position, and political and economic sovereignty? The digitalisation of the terrestrial broadcasting system, and of television receivers, will cost approx. 10 – 20 billion Swedish Crowns [A$ 2 – 4 billion] (Andersson 1996). This will open up an enormous new market for Swedish industry, which has the capacity to produce the transmission and receiving technology, and thus the possible economic benefits from this policy development will remain locally, fulfilling the Promethean promise and delivering a semblance of regulatory control.
Conclusion

Forty years after Radio Nord first began to challenge the government’s broadcasting monopoly in Sweden, dramatic changes can be observed within the Swedish mediasphere. Sweden’s regulatory regime has moved closer towards those in Western Europe, where commercial broadcasting systems dominate. In the Nordic nations, however, the public service broadcasting system can still be regarded as the core model, with the commercial channels as a peripheral addition (Hultén 1996, p. 9).

Since the start of transnational radio and television broadcasting, the Swedish socialist government has expressed concern over the perceived threats to the nation's culture, values and traditions. The government has responded with a strategy of observation, investigation and technology development (in the spirit of socialism) to accommodate and regulate changes in telecommunications within the mediasphere, with the aim of supporting the principles of folkbildning.

Swedish socialists regarded the developments in transnational telecommunications in Europe and the USA as a threat to their broadcasting ideology; and they have resisted the introduction of commercially-based systems, and ‘free’ transnational broadcasting. The Swedish government's usual response to foreign developments in technology and broadcasting practice has been to observe the changes and appoint a commission to investigate their
possible implications, and potential applications, within the Swedish mediasphere.

Given that Swedish socialists have held political power for almost all of broadcasting history, they have had a great influence on the development broadcasting in Sweden. While the NORDSAT project caused considerable cultural debate between the Nordic nations (which eventually led to its collapse), the development of the mainly Swedish funded TELE-X, based on objectives of technological development, seemed to be outside political debate altogether (Weibull and Severinsson 1988, p. 82). TELE-X was deemed by all political and social players to be crucial to Sweden. From the 1950s onwards technology has increasingly been regarded as a 'neutral' and 'necessary' element in society; an instrument to be used in achieving socialist objectives.

With the end of the broadcasting monopoly Sweden now receives an increasing amount of transnational programming. This has forced the socialist government to keep itself up to date with the latest technologies. These advances are regarded as helping to protect the Swedish mediasphere from any undesirable influence, as well as promoting the values of public service broadcasting. Technology has been seen by policy-makers as an instrument with which to protect the Swedish mediasphere.

The problematic issue arising here is that technology is not neutral but represents a strategy by which commercial players in core nations can attempt to
break down the regulatory barriers of other nations. One effect of this is that market interests can expand and make peripheral nations increasingly capitalist in their form and appearance. Over time, as new government regulations have been introduced, technological developments (and the few corporations controlling them) have moved to bypass these. Responding to this challenge the Swedish socialist government has re-ordered the mediasphere and implemented new regulations. Ironically, the Swedish attitude which perceives technological development as crucial, has led to domestic technological developments (TELE - X for example) contributing to the satellite systems which have enabled foreign information to reach Swedish citizens. Consequently Swedish technology has directly encouraged the forces of globalisation.

During the ongoing debate about Swedish 'culture', political and social concern has grown stronger. Swedish culture has been regarded as something 'unique', and distinct from other cultures. Even among the Nordic nations cultural issues have created great debate. Despite the efforts of cultural protection, the result has been that Swedish culture has changed. It has responded to influences from within the nation as well as from abroad. The process of hybridisation (Shoesmith 1993, p. 271) has transformed and integrated internal and external influences into a social and cultural understanding and as a result, political and social values and beliefs have also changed. "Globalisation", Souchou (1994, p. 35) argues, "breaks up the insularity which has made feasible the opposition between us and them in the first place." Even so, the socialist government has
increasingly resisted an unregulated mediasphere and uncontrolled foreign influences reaching Swedish citizens.

Policy-makers have shown great enthusiasm over the development of digital television. Still regarding technology as 'neutral', they have laid great faith in a communicative *Promethean* promise, which promote salvation through technology and offers glimpses of a national state of broadcasting perfection. "Control of the international flow of data is a virtual impossibility, and yet at the same time a precondition of national sovereignty" (Frow 1992, p. 11). Trust in future technological developments are the one hope left for nations that wish to regulate their mediasphere.

"Industrial expansion and rapid technological change continue in ... [Sweden], in part because of the demands made by other expanding nations. The existing expansionist phase of technological civilization cannot, however, be expected to continue indefinitely" (Encyclopædia Britannica n.d.b). The Swedish government has opted to develop a digital terrestrial network. The granting of broadcast licences will allow regulation of channels, commercial and non-commercial, that request permission to broadcast within Sweden. Arguably the Swedish socialist government visualises digital television as a beneficial development in broadcasting technology, one which will allow regulation to achieve their objectives of a controlled national broadcasting sphere, where any future threats to the socialist ideology will be neutralised. Through regulation the Swedish
government seems to hope for a stable mediasphere of public service broadcasting and the peripheral addition of commercial broadcasting.

The activities of transnational corporations have led to an enormous increase in the flow of information, people, goods and services, further eroding national boundaries and pushing forward the processes of globalisation. A deregulated broadcasting media is positively correlated with the development of capitalism in a nation. In Sweden, commercial broadcasting represents a reluctant accommodation of foreign pressure to integrate fully within the global economy. Nonetheless, the Swedish government has never given up its ambition to use broadcasting regulation to protect the public service broadcaster and promote the values of *folkbildning* and of Swedish culture.

Given that national sovereignty is bolstered by the control of information (Frow 1992, p. 11), the socialists have regarded that sovereignty as strengthened by the progress in technology, and by its application. The socialist government still regards it important to safeguard Swedish culture against the power of transnational corporations and the threats of an increasingly globalised world. Even though the government wants Sweden to be a player in the international market, they hope that continuing regulation will protect the Swedish economy and culture, and maintain its integrity as a sovereign state. However, they are also aware that transnational corporations constantly engage all national states within the web of global capitalism, and thus the struggle for autonomy will continue.
The Swedish government has accepted commercial television as a peripheral part of its mediasphere. In responding to the internal and external voices of a less regulated mediasphere, the government introduced (on its own terms and conditions) an optional version of commercial television, TV 4, hoping to satisfy both the market and the public. With regard to the public service broadcaster, SVT has gone through significant changes. In addition to those outlined earlier, SVT Europa (a mix of SVT 1 and 2) began broadcasting in 1997 over Europe (Novis Electronics 1998, p. 1). With the introduction of digital television in 1998–99, another channel, SVT 24 (a twenty-four hour news channel) has been introduced (Crofts 1998, p. 2). In response to public and market demand, the Swedish policy-makers have continued to follow the pattern of introducing Swedish alternatives to the foreign channels broadcasting over Sweden. This has shown to be a successful response. Swedish citizens still seem to prefer their own national television services (with an audience share of 70–80 percent) (Hultén 1995, p. 57), through which the values and traditions of Swedish (elite) culture, non-commercialism and folkbildning are highly promoted.
Endnotes

Chapter 1.

1). The name of the Swedish Parliament.

2). *Folkbildning* — translated as 'popular adult education' or could be referred to as 'common knowledge'.

3). Original quote: “Några som irrelevanta uppfattade sidointressen, varmed man främst äsytar strävan efter ekonomisk vinst.”

4). Landsorganisationen — LO

5). Original quote: ...“att på många olika sätt hålla medborgarna väl informerade. Målet är här en allsidig information om det egna landet och världen i stort, vilket verkligen när fram till alla de vuxna medborgarna, de som bär upp samhällsstyrelsen. Ett väsentligt led i denna information utgör redovisningen av de skilda åsikter, värderingar och meningsriktningar vilka ingår som en integrerad del av den moderna demokratin. Vi föreställer oss nämligen att en väl fungerande demokrati kräver kunnga medborgare, vilka tar del av opinionsbildningen i samhället och därför kan deltaga i statslivet på ett meningsfullt sätt.”

6). Original quote: “Närmare eftertanke visar... att den “stora” publiken består av en mångfald större och mindre grupper, att varje individ kan tillhöra flera av dessa, och att dessa grupptillhörigheter och intressen korsar varandra och växlar på många sätt. Men måste också hålla i minnet, att olika intressen kan vara mer eller mindre centrala för den enskilde, att vad samlar en stor publik ofta är en slags “minsta gemensamma nämnare” som också är ganska perifer för de flesta som ingår i denna publik, och att det mycket ofta är just de intressen som den enskilde delar med ett fåtal andra som betyder mest för honom. Därför är det lika viktigt att tillgodose de små publikernas önskemål som att ta hänsyn till de stora publikerna.”

7). Original quote: ...“gentemot den andliga odlingen, mot de sköna konsternas utveckling, mot stil och ton i samhället, ja i vidare mening mot alla de mänskliga vården som kan påverkas av dessa medierverksamheter.”

8). *Granskningsnämnden*, used to be referred to as *Radionämnden*, but will throughout the dissertation be referred to as *Granskningsnämnden*.

Chapter 2.

1). “Prometheus, ‘the forethinker’, was the most gifted of the Titans. Athene taught him architecture, astronomy, mathematics, navigation, medicine and metallurgy and other useful arts, all of which he passed on to mankind. When Zeus, angry with the race of men, proposed to extirpate them and withheld the gift of fire from them, Prometheus defied his ban, stole the fire ... and gave it to mankind.

In revenge Zeus chained him to a rock in the Caucasus and sent an eagle to eat his liver which grew again at night as fast as the bird could devour it by day. Despite his
sufferings, Prometheus remained defiant, so combining in Greek mythology the roles of father of technology, friend of mankind and supreme rebel” (Bullock, 1971, p. 12).

“A Promethean is not concerned simply with his or her own self – preservation and prosperity, but with those whom he or she cherishes, and he or she has an altruistic regard for all humanity. Prometheus is concerned with the common good, which he or she thinks can be ameliorated” (Kurtz, 1994, p. 5). “Prometheus ... loved man too much ... thus the demonic destroyer is a non – Promethean; for he is not concerned with the common good nor does he love humankind” (Kurtz, 1994, p. 4).

As Kurtz (1996, p. 1) explains, and very close to the philosophy of the Swedish socialists (and others as well): “Secular humanism ... believes in the possibility of objective knowledge, and it encourages the continued development of science and technology [of which the communication technologies are a major part] to solve human problems.” Secular humanism “is committed to democracy, universal humanistic rights, separation of church and state, and the building of a world community, ... and it is optimistic about the human prospect, and it affirms out ability to control future events and to ameliorate and enhance the human condition” (Kurtz, 1996, p. 1).


3). Commercial television channels, TV 3 and TV 5, transmit from the United Kingdom and Luxembourg respectively.

4). Original quote: “Ju mer aktiva vi vill vara internationellt, desto mer måste vi befitta oss om vår självkänndom, vårt eget språk och vår kultur. Det är därför särskilt väsentligt att förbättrade möjligheter till information, underhållning och kulturell stimulans kommer alla i Sverige till del.”

5). Exceeding SEK 750 million (approx. A$ 150 million) plus the licence fee, SEK 50 million (approx. A$ 10 million) per year. In 1995 TV 4 paid the Swedish state SEK 300 million (approx. A$ 60 million) in accordance with the agreement (Hadenius and Weibull, 1997, p. 233).

6). Between programs only, and not exceeding ten per cent of total broadcast time, and not more than thirteen per cent per broadcast hour (Hultén, 1995, p. 56).

7). Original quote: “TV 4 skall inom ramen för de kommersiella villkor som företaget har att följa, erbjuda ett mångsidigt programutbud som kännetecknas av hög kvalité.”

8). Original quote: “Det kan diskuteras om dessa besparingar enbart var ekonomiskt betingade eller om de också hade samband med missnöje med den i många ögon alltför radikala programpolitiken”.

Chapter 3.

1). Original quote: "Några som irrelevanta uppfattade sidointressen, varmed man främst åsyftar strävan efter ekonomisk vinst."
Bibliography


