

Better Served or Better Hidden?

Digital Radio and Television Services for Three Minorities in the Nordic Countries: A Preliminary Assessment

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In January 1998, a new digital radio service was launched for Finnish speakers in Sweden. This event constituted a milestone on the way to a brave, new era. The new media technology paves the way towards a new mediascape that will also give small minorities a full radio service and increased television services in their own language. As the distribution capacity grows, the only limit left seems to be in resources for content production.

This new development holds promise for minorities that during the last decades have been marginalized by the introduction of new commercial broadcasts. Services in minority languages have not benefited from the new, market-driven media. Thus, the minorities are faced with the problem of defending and developing their relative position in a new, competitive situation in which profiled stations and channels, not single programs, compete for different audience segments.

Such recent opportunities for developing new and separate services for minorities are well suited to the needs of the companies responsible for public service programming. With stiffening competition for the attention of the majority audience, public service radio and TV operators increasingly feel that minority programs are a burden, because audience ratings go down when programs in minority languages are being broadcast.

The new technology now promises additional broadcasting capacity, and a possibility for separate minority services. Digital radio, digital television, and Internet will save the day for those language minorities that have fought an uneven battle against majority rule and dominance in the media.

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Or will they? At this point, the digital radio receivers available on the market are too expensive to allow an audience to be created for the new digital services. When the national digital television projects are carried out, there will certainly be an interest in creating a multitude of new services that will bring more fragmentation to the markets. This increased competition may negatively affect the interest in minority services, both within the minority group itself and among those who have had occasional contact with the minority cultures through their visibility on established public service channels.

Two Radio Stations, One TV-Channel

This article presents the background of three digital broadcasting projects aimed at increasing the amount of radio and television services for the three largest language minorities living in Finland, Norway and Sweden. The minorities studied are the indigenous Sámi population that lives in the northern parts of all three countries, the Swedish speakers in Finland (the Finnish Swedes), and the Finnish speakers in Sweden (the Swedish Finns). These minorities are all considered to be “national minorities”, historically rooted in their respective countries.

By law, regulations or state agreements, these three minorities have been provided with their own broadcasting services in their own languages. There is considerable variation between the levels of service. Best equipped are the Swedish speakers in Finland, who have access to two radio stations and television programs amounting to half a television channel. The situation for the Sámi population is worse. Though radio programs are broadcast in Nor-

way and Sweden, only in Finland does this minority have access to its own radio station. The Sámi Radio offers quite limited service in the smaller of the different Sámi languages.

The supply of radio and television programs is now in the process of entering the digital era. The digital radio station for the Finnish speakers in Sweden has already started. In Norway, Sweden and Finland, a joint digital audio broadcasting service for the Sámi population is planned as a co-operation between the public service companies of the three countries. The time schedule for this plan is still not fixed. According to plans, the new service should be on the air in the year 2000. In Finland, a new digital prime time television service for Swedish speakers is planned to start within the next few years. This service would double the amount of programs broadcast in Finland for a Swedish audience.

All three projects are developed with the support of license financed public service broadcasting companies. In these three minority groups, the companies find small but active target groups. If the minorities become early users, this would add legitimacy to the investments of the public service companies in the difficult intermediate phase when the new digital services are built up. For approximately 15 years, the companies will have to run the new digital radio stations and TV channels alongside the old analogue ones, in spite of the higher costs of maintaining two broadcasting systems. In all Nordic countries, the public service companies count on having to carry on with double systems well into the 21st century. The old analogue systems are calculated to be obsolete by about 2010 (Brandrud 1997, 74).

Methodology and Data

The histories of all three minorities discussed are long. Though the process of assimilation has been continuous, none of these three minorities has ceased to exist. The long survival of these three language minorities renders credibility to Cormack's (1998, 36-43) conclusion that the absolute number of a minority population is not crucial.

Cormack disputes Abram de Swaan's (1991) claim that a minority population must exceed one million people in order to support a language fully. Instead, he indicates that six other factors may affect the status of the minority population; the level of activity, leadership and organization, political culture of the state, the relation between region and state, the symbolic status of the language, and inter-

national trends. Following this argument, simple comparisons between quantified measures say little about the current or potential strength of any given minority culture.

The point of departure of this article is the spectrum of forces formed by conceptualizations of a public sphere, on the one hand, and minority self-representation and cultural activation, on the other. The minorities discussed here all have a long tradition as their foundation. They are guaranteed specific cultural rights, and this is supposed to include them in the public sphere of the nation states in which they live. When it comes to broadcasting, the key to this inclusion has been public service radio and television.

Public service radio and television have traditionally had the twofold goal of diversification (serving each) and integration (serving all). This goal has been easier to reach in a situation where the public service companies have a factual monopoly in broadcasting. Deregulation and new competition have forced the public service companies all over Europe to rethink their strategies. Now, in many cases, these companies find a new challenge in keeping the contact with a broad audience alive. Thus, it has become more and more difficult to include minority services on radio stations and television channels that are designed to attract large audiences.

At the same time, media competition has also implied a challenge to the producers of minority programs on radio and television to defend the position of these programs within their core audience. There is a demand that minority-only radio stations and television channels should be profiled in order to perform better within the new competitive media milieu. From the point of view of public service strategies, however, this development creates a stronger tension between the two sub-goals of serving every individual and serving all.

New digital techniques now offer more distribution capacity for radio and television broadcasts. These techniques may help to solve the problem of diversity by providing the capacity to serve extremely narrow audiences. However, a media milieu formed in this way may fail to attract broad audiences to a common public sphere, as is required by the other ideal. Indeed, the new techniques will most likely lead to an increased fragmentation of the audiences for all electronic media. This may or may not result in the marginalization of minorities that earlier have been relatively well integrated. Will new minority services on separate stations and

channels vitalize the minorities and serve as a tool for their active participation globally, regionally and locally? Or will this separation ultimately lead to an exclusion of the minorities from a public discourse in which they have formerly participated?

The basic problem can be formulated as a tension between two basic principles of human rights, that is the right to communicate and the right to be understood (Husband 1998, 4). The right to communicate is based on communicative freedoms, and an infrastructure that enables communication within society. The right to be understood is defined as a duty for all to seek comprehension of the other (this principle has been derived from the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, it is here cited from Husband 1998, 5). From the point of view of minority languages, it is easy to see an emerging scenario where all of the factors mentioned above (public service operators' interest in maximizing the audience on their main radio stations and television channels; the minorities' interest in maximizing the choices they give to their core audience; and the technical development described above) are combined to support new separate minority services. This development would perhaps strengthen the first dimension: the freedom of minorities to communicate. The excessive and one-sided support of this freedom may, however, severely endanger the right to be understood by fragmenting the sphere within which society communicates.

The new digital media development for broadcasting is discussed against this general background. The point of departure is explicitly the fact that all three minorities discussed in this article have actively opted for the new digital radio and television techniques as part of their strategy to solve the problem of serving minority audiences.

Being a Finnish Swede myself, I do not try to hide my sympathies for solutions that better serve the interests of the minorities. The problem is, of course, that the consequences of different solutions are difficult to estimate.

The empirical base for this article builds on three different types of data:

1. Census data describing the minority populations in combination with research describing their language abilities
2. Documentation on policy decisions on minority rights in the countries studied and documentation on media developments

3. Audience research depicting use of minority media in different segments of the minority population

The article is based on a secondary analysis of available data. The audience behavior of Swedish speakers in Finland and Finnish speakers in Sweden is rather well researched. For practical reasons (systems of census statistics, problems of definition), research concerning the media behavior of the Sámi and the census data describing both Finnish speakers in Sweden and Sámi are, however, difficult to obtain. The data has been supplemented by interviews.

The Minorities and Public Service vs. Commercial Media

The support for minority media is not only based on national policies; they are also subjected to international agreements (for example, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages¹). The task of fulfilling these obligations has, however, been given to public service radio and television.

The introduction of new local radio stations and commercial broadcast media in the late 1980s and early 1990s dramatically altered the media scenery in the Nordic countries. The introduction of local radio stations also allowed minorities a local voice, but these radio stations' resources have been small and the broadcasting hours often limited to some hours per week or month (Hujanen and Jauert 1998, 108-111, 117-120). Some non-commercial local radio stations have tried to include services to minorities (Ananthakrishnan 1994, 120-122). However, for economic reasons, these efforts have been rather limited and often short-lived. At the moment, one important minority station is a local (community) radio in Kautokeino that broadcasts in both Sámi and Norwegian, with parts of its broadcasts relayed to the Oslo area.

The supply of programs in minority languages on commercial radio stations and television channels is almost non-existent, as the commercial conditions have been much too harsh for minority language services to develop (Moring and Salmi 1998, 329-332). Private commercial radio and television broadcasters are not usually obligated to participate in serving minority audiences. In those cases where licensing authorities have obligated commercial operators to provide services in minority languages,

they have largely failed to do so.² Thus, the deregulation and commercialization of broadcasting have only increased the relative marginalization of minority broadcasts in society.

The Digitalization Alliance

In addition to finding a solution to minority broadcasts, public service companies want to introduce new digital distribution techniques for several other reasons. Digital distribution offers higher broadcast capacity at reduced distribution costs per program service. For radio, DAB adds multimedia features that allow the opening of totally new types of services. For television, DVB-T offers a new high-capacity terrestrial broadcast system that can fend off the threat to national media policies that is posed by digital satellite broadcasts in combination with cable operators.

Though digitalization of radio and television broadcasting and production techniques is likely to emerge within a near future, the success of particular digitalization projects is uncertain. The attractiveness of the new digital radio (DAB) to the market is yet to be proved. Those who want to use the new services have to purchase new receivers. The first DAB car radio receivers have been introduced on the market only in late 1998, at prices that are many times higher than the market price for an FM car radio.³ This limits the audience for the new digital audio services at least in the first years. There is a possibility that the new technique will not survive the competition with established radio and alternative, new media developments (Berendt 1997, 9).⁴

According to expectations expressed by representatives of the electronics industry, the success of terrestrial digital television (DVB-T) seems to be more certain. There are, however, voices warning that the technical standards of television broadcasts may also develop in mutually exclusive ways (Brandrud 1997, 74-75).⁵ In this case, the risks that have been mentioned concern the mode in which the broadcasts will be transmitted, satellite/cable or terrestrial.

In the light of the market risks involved, it would not be surprising if a small part of the additional broadcasting capacity from new digital techniques in this initial phase were reserved for services in minority languages. This policy would lend legitimacy to the public service broadcasters, who have an obligation to serve the minorities. At the same time, commercial operators, at least on the radio side, are not likely to compete strongly for the new capacity. With only few receivers on the market and an uncer-

tain future for the particular new techniques introduced, these operators will probably tend to choose a "wait-and-see" strategy.

But the market risks are also a cultural risk to a minority audience that moves from traditional to digital broadcasting. For a considerable time, digital services will reach only the most technically advanced part of the minority audience. Most of the audience can be reached only through conventional radio and television transmission systems. At the same time, new media competition will be introduced by private operators who offer popular programs through direct satellite broadcasting systems or cable (Brandrud 1997, 74-75). In this kind of situation, the audiences for minority language services may shrink dramatically.

Some Definitional Aspects of Minorities and Minority Policies

What is a minority? There is no single answer to that question. Minorities are constituted in different ways, and there are few general features that can serve as clear lines of demarcation for several different minorities. Also in this specific case, the minority concept is problematic. There are profound differences between the Sámi, the Finnish Swedes and the Swedish Finns.

The Sámi population has lived through a history of oppression and threat against its traditional life style. Though Swedish Finns have a long history in Sweden, most of them are relatively recently immigrated people from Finland and their offspring. In society as a whole, this population does not enjoy a high status. The Finnish Swedes, on the other hand, have for centuries had a well-established position in Finland with strong institutions. The Swedish People's Party has frequently been represented in the Finnish government.

It is also evident that these three minorities differ considerably from other minorities that, for example, consist of smaller groups of recently immigrated people coming from both geographically and culturally more distant places.

There are, however, efforts to apply a single definition to the minorities discussed here. In a recent Swedish committee report on minority rights (SOU 1997:193, 37), a set of four criteria is developed to function as an instrument for defining a "national minority":

- A group with an explicit affinity, which in number is non-dominant with respect to the rest of the population

- Specific features concerning religion, language, tradition and/or culture
- Historical or long term ties to Sweden
- Self-definition – The individual as well as the group shall have a goal to keep their identity.

In these particular cases, language is a key issue. The question of minority media for the Sámi, the Swedish Finns, and the Finnish Swedes is mainly about language. One additional distinction we will make is between defining the minority in terms of individual characteristics or in terms of territory (Herberts 1995, 22-23). It is evident that minorities of the present types are primarily defined in terms of individual and group features that distinguish them from the majority population, existing within the same territory. There are only a few and exceptional cases where the Finnish Swedes, the Swedish Finns or the Sámi represent a majority that could form a base for a political majority rule in a given territory. This is the case for the Finnish Swedes in the Åland Islands and for the Sámi in some parts of the Sámi area. More often the minority population is mixed into the majority population, with bilingualism creating a flexible boundary that favors the majority.

There are, however, historical grounds for looking at these minorities also from a territorial perspective. In Sweden, Finns have originally lived in certain (central and northern) parts of the country. In Finland, almost all the Finnish Swedes live in a narrow zone along the coastline. The Sámi people, being indigenous but gradually pushed to the North, mainly live in the North of Fennoscandia. What remains of their traditional land has been divided by the state borders of four different countries.

In all three cases, the territoriality principle is applied in certain matters, though there are differences between the countries. Because Finland has two official languages – Finnish and Swedish – the Finnish Swedes have the right to handle public matters in their own language (the individuality principle). But the formal position of the Swedish language is even stronger in those municipalities (“communes”) where the Swedish-speakers are a majority. The territoriality principle is fully applied in the Åland Islands, which enjoy political autonomy.

In northern Sweden, according to a recent committee report, it has been suggested that citizens in five municipalities should be given the right to handle matters with the authorities using Finnish. A similar suggestion is made for the Sámi language concerning four municipalities (SOU 1997:193,

102). These rights for Sámi people in certain northern municipalities have been introduced in Finland through legislation (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998). In Norway, the Sámi language enjoys an official status equal to the two Norwegian languages. The daily administrative use of the language is, however, limited to the Sámi region, and increased regional rights for the Sámi are currently being discussed (Helander 1992/95, SOU 1997:193, 35).

The indigenous Sámi minority differs from the other two minority populations discussed in this paper. The Sámi enjoy a certain cross-national political status through the Sámi Conference and its executive Sámi Council, which is represented in different international organizations operating within the framework of the United Nations. Also, the Sámi people have different bodies for political representation within the borders of the respective states (SOU 1997:193, 47-49; Helander 1992/95, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998). The territorial aspects of Sámi rights – including rights to inherited land – remain, however, largely unsolved (Sillanpää 1994, 169).

The definition of belonging to the Sámi population is based on origin, language, and also on acceptance from the group. For example, in Norway a Sámi is defined as a person who (Act No 56/1987, see Helander 1992/95)

- Has Sámi as his/her first language, or has a father, mother or a single grandparent who has Sámi as their first language, or
- Considers himself/herself a Sámi, and lives in entire accordance with the rules of the Sámi society, and who is recognized by the representative Sámi body as a Sámi, or
- Has a father and a mother who satisfies the above-mentioned conditions for being a Sámi

The most important criterion is the first, which is applied as a definitional tool also in Finland and Sweden (Herberts 1995, 32; Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998). In Finland, a discussion is currently going on about whether people whose ancestors have worked in traditional Sámi occupations should have the right to be counted as Sámi as well. The Sámi Parliament in Finland has turned down this suggestion, wanting a more narrow definition that does not give the offspring of Finnish families living in the High North the right to vote in Sámi elections (*Helsingin Sanomat* 29.3.1998)

Being a Finnish Swede in Finland is based on registration of first language (from 1982 onwards

”mother tongue”) in the census statistics. Similarly, belonging to the Swedish Finns in Sweden is based on language (Herberts 1995, 40). The first language as a census criterion is, however, not registered in Sweden. Therefore, also Finnish origin (first or second generation) is used as a complementary means to estimate the size of the minority (SOU 1997:193, 51-52).

The basic organizing principles for minority rights are thus based on (1) an officially equal status of languages in public matters (Finland: the Finnish Swedes, Norway: the Sámi), (2) regional rights for the Sámi in certain municipalities (Finland), and (plans for) regional rights in certain municipalities for the Finns (Sweden) and the Sámi (Sweden, Norway).

The Swedish Finns, Finnish Swedes and Sámi

There are 440,000 people who are first or second generation Finns in Sweden. This is 5 percent of the total population. According to estimates made by their own organization, around half of these (250,000) are still speaking Finnish. The origins of the Finnish language in Sweden have been dated back to the 16th century. The Finnish population in Sweden has, however, grown as a consequence of migration from Finland during the post WW II period. Though there are regional concentrations in the Capital region and Gothenburg, Swedish Finns live in all parts of the country (SOU 1997:193, 49-52).

A separate group is formed by the ”meänkieli”-speakers in Northern Sweden, a group of between 50,000 and 60,000 people who speak a distinct dialect of Finnish. This minority has a long history and – unlike other Swedish Finns – they form a distinctly regional group. Swedish Finns generally understand Swedish, but they seek to safeguard their language and the identity and culture that is connected to the language (SOU 1997:193, 49-52).

There are about 300,000 Finnish Swedes in Finland (Finnäs 1995). This is almost 6 percent of the population. They have been living in Finland for centuries, and do not usually have ancestry with which they are familiar in Sweden (Allardt 1997a, b). Their language is guaranteed a status equal to that of Finnish by the constitution, and Finnish Swedes are registered by first language in the Finnish census statistics. According to this criterion, there is no difficulty in estimating the size of the Finnish Swedish population.

There is, however, another problem in defining the cultural characteristics of this group. Most Finnish Swedes are bilingual and understand Finnish well enough to follow Finnish media. A growing proportion of bilingual marriages means that children grow up in families where both languages are spoken. Earlier, this has represented a threat to the Finnish-Swedish culture. Since the mid-1980’s, this trend has shifted, and more children from bilingual marriages now go to Swedish schools than to Finnish schools (Finnäs 1995). Most Finnish Swedes live along the Baltic coastline. The Finnish-Swedish population is mixed into the Finnish population, the exception being the Åland Islands between Finland and Sweden where the Swedish language is guaranteed a dominant position, and some rural communities in Ostrobothnia and the South West.

The Sámi languages belong to the family of Fenno-Ugric languages, and are thus related to Finnish. Sámi speakers can be divided into 3 main groups and 9 dialects, the most common language being North Sámi (Helander 1992/95). In the Sámi area (reaching from the central parts of Norway and Sweden through the northernmost part of Finland into the Kola Peninsula in Russia), 50,000-75,000 people are counted as belonging to the Sámi minority (SOU 1997:193, 47-49). If we consider also people with Sámi origin who live in these countries, but outside the Sámi region, an amount of 80,000-100,000 has been mentioned (Samekanalen 1995, 34). The great variety in the figures is due to difficulties with definition and registration. Most of the Sámi live in Norway (40,000-45,000) and Sweden (17,000). In Finland, the size of the Sámi population is estimated to approximately 6,000 people, in Russia to 2,000 (Helander 1992/95).

Detailed knowledge about the language skills of the Sámi population is not available. According to estimates, half of the Sámi speak a Sámi language as their first language (Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998). In absolute figures, this would mean that there are a total of about 35,000 Sámi-speakers in the Nordic countries and Russia (20,000 in Norway, 10,000 in Sweden, 3,000 in Finland, and 1,000 in Russia, see Helander 1992/95). The small group of Russian Sámi speakers is, however, diminishing, and there are few Sámi-speakers under the age of 30 (Sergejeva 1995/97). Thus, it is under discussion whether (and which of) the Sámi minority languages can be revived, and whether media supply in the Sámi language will be a sufficient tool for accomplishing this revival.

Current Minority Media Services

A common denominator in the media for language minorities in the Nordic countries is that the radio plays a leading role. In relative terms, the radio services show the least difference from the services to the majority. Both radio and television services are, however, almost totally provided by the three public service operators, NRK in Norway, SR, SVT and UR in Sweden⁶, and Yle in Finland.

In all three countries, the public service operators have specific obligations to serve the minorities. A statement of the Norwegian broadcasting company (Norsk rikskringkasting, NRK) states that NRK shall "carry responsibility for the defense and development of Sámi languages and culture, and broadcast programs also in other minority languages in the country" (NRKs mål och strategi 1996-2000). In Finland, the act on the Finnish broadcasting company (Yleisradio, Yle) approved by Parliament entrusts Yle "to deal on equal ground in programming with Finnish- and Swedish-speaking citizens, to provide services in the Sámi language, and where applicable to other language groups in the country" (Endén 1996, 222). In Sweden, the government requires the Swedish public service radio and TV companies (Sveriges radio, SR, Sveriges television, SVT) to "pay attention to the language and ethnic minorities", giving Sámi, Finnish and Meänkieli a special position (SOU 1997:193, 67). These arrangements have provided the minorities with public radio and television services, at least at a minimum level, in all three countries.

The press is not regulated in the same way. Largely, the public support to services for minorities is weaker in print media. In Norway, the press support to the Sámi newspapers is given a special status by being separated from other press support (Skogerbø 1997, 105). Also in Sweden, newspapers published in minority languages have been granted special support. In Finland, the Sámi media may apply for support from the general state subsidies through the Sámi parliaments (Markelin 1998, 45; SOU 1997:193, 67). A so-called selective press support in Finland that has been of importance to independent newspapers printed in Swedish will, according to government budget plans, be dropped in 1999. A considerably smaller sum will remain to be paid by the Swedish People's Party.

Media for the Finnish Swedes

By comparison, the media services for the Finnish Swedes are superior to those of the other minorities

in the Nordic countries. For historical reasons (Swedish was the main administrative language in Finland for several centuries, and remained in a strong position supported by legislation and educational structures), the media developed parallel in Finnish and in Swedish in the 19th century.

Today, there are 12 newspapers published more than 3 times a week in Swedish. Of these, 10 are local (2 in the Åland Islands). The 2 biggest newspapers have a regional character, one covering the southern parts of the country (circulation around 60,000), the other covering the Ostrobothnia region (circulation around 27,000).

Daily newspapers from Sweden have only a small circulation, whereas weeklies and popular magazines play a larger role. The reason for this is the lack of Swedish-language popular culture produced in Finland, due to the small size of the market and the wide dispersion of the Swedish population (Moring and Salmi 1998). For the same reason, among young Finnish Swedes in the Southern parts of Finland, the popular culture that is consumed is largely in Finnish.

Radio services for the Finnish Swedes are, by comparison, extensive. From the start in the 1920's, public service radio operated in both languages. Today, the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) broadcasts 2 radio stations in Swedish, in addition to 3 stations operating in Finnish. Radio from Sweden can be listened to in Ostrobothnia and the Åland Islands. In addition, one local commercial station operates in the Åland islands, and some programs on stations in Ostrobothnia are produced in Swedish.

A crude profilation of the programs has been possible as there are two radio stations operating in Swedish. One station combines news, regional broadcasts, talk and adult-oriented music, targeting a +35 demography. For part of the day, this station is split into five different programs. The other station combines popular culture, family oriented programs and sport with youth-oriented music, targeting a -35 population. The stations can be heard along the coastline where the Swedish-speakers live. A mix of the programs from the two stations is broadcast to the inner parts of the country. Together, the two stations broadcast 18 to 20 hours daily. Annually, this means 15,000 hours.

Television services in Swedish are broadcast on Yle's two channels. A total of 930 hours annually includes daily news broadcasts. A particular importance is given to children's programs produced in Swedish. There are also text television services available in Swedish (on TV and Internet), corresponding to similar services in Finnish⁷.

In addition to media supply broadcast in Swedish by the Finnish public service channels, television programs from Sweden may be freely viewed in the coastal areas. In Southern Finland, this is possible through a special mix of programs produced by the Swedish public service television (SVT Europe). For reasons of producers' rights, no re-scheduling of the relayed programs is allowed. The programs have to be broadcast simultaneously in Sweden and Finland ("simulcast"). The mix may contain only programs to which SVT is the full owner of rights. This excludes, for example, imported programs. In Ostrobothnia and the Åland Islands, the full menu of public service and commercial programs is available partly through border viewing, and partly through re-broadcasting according to special agreements.

The main project for the Swedish minority in Finland is to develop a television service in Finland that would offer services equal to the television channels of today, but on digital television. Detailed plans for this service are not yet presented. Recently, however, a state committee suggests that a total of three digital networks carrying the equivalent of 12 channels could be built. Two of these would – by the year 2000 – cover 70 percent of the population. The third would be built immediately after that. (*Digitaalinen televisio ja Suomi, Liikenneministeriön julkaisu 23/98*).

Within the Swedish section of Yle, plans have been made to "be within the avant-garde of the development of the new TV-technique." Quoting the Director of the Swedish section of Yle

To put it briefly, the digital Finnish-Swedish television evening we plan to offer within a couple of years is built on the idea that the viewer should be provided with all his/her television supply in his/her own language. In addition to this, the channel shall – as the Swedish supply today does – function as a complement and alternative that serves also Finnish speaking viewers ... A fully developed digital television could of course not be developed within the current budgetary frames. Extra means have to be directed to this by the Company (Yle), but we hope to get them. Also the State has an obligation to support the transformation to a digital technology. (Sandelin, 1998)

These formulations indicate that the Swedish section of Yle aims to start the new digital services within the third digital network in the year 2001. The ambition of offering a full prime time service

requires that Yle would double the amount of broadcasting hours in Swedish to approximately 2000 hours annually. According to Sandelin, one part of the increased supply would be original Finnish-Swedish production, but other parts would be either dubbed or subtitled into Swedish.

Media for the Swedish Finns

In Sweden, the Swedish Finns have had daily windows of broadcasts in Finnish on Swedish public service radio (SR). With the arrival of new digital techniques, SR has started a station, broadcasting exclusively in Finnish. Efforts to create a market for daily newspapers in Finnish have fallen short, and the amount of television programming is fairly small.

Though there have been several efforts to start a daily Finnish language newspaper in Sweden (Blomqvist 1982, 22-33), no such newspaper has survived. There are printed periodicals (*Viikkoviesti* and *Ruotsinsuomalainen*), but they do not fill the function of a newspaper.

Radio programs in Finnish have been broadcast as windows on two Swedish public service radio (SR) stations. There have been some what less than 2 hours of nationwide broadcasts. In addition, 21 regional stations have, on a daily basis, broadcast an average of around 3.5 hours in Finnish (Lehikoinen 1997, 3). In those regions where Finnish broadcasts can be heard, the annual supply of programs amounts to around 1800 hours.

Beginning in January 1998, SR started a new service based on digital radio broadcasting technique (DAB) in Finnish. This service operates 6 hours a day, which annually amounts to around 2,200 hours. For technical reasons concerning the functional features of a digital single frequency network, as well as for reasons of production capacity, the new digital service is broadcasting nationwide. As most of the programs are simulcasts with the old stations, this has also resulted in a change in the broadcasts from analogue stations from mainly regional to mainly nationwide. This allows for a synergetic use of program production resources. On the other hand, it also alters program contents, giving less emphasis to local and regional matters.

Among other themes, the programs offered by the new DAB radio service cover news and current affairs, programs from Finland, children's programs, talk shows and locally produced, but nationwide broadcast, programs about the different communities where the Finnish speakers live. Mainly, the programs are of a flow-radio type, altering short

stories with music. (P7 DAB-lähetysten ohjelma-aiheet 1998).

Television services for Swedish Finns are broadcast on the public service television's (SVT) channels. They amount to around 110 hours annually. An additional service is the simulcast of a mix of programs produced by the Finnish public service television (Yle) in the Stockholm area. This program is also relayed via cable to 25 other localities in Sweden. This solution mirrors the method by which SVT Europe is broadcast in southern Finland.

Media for the Sámi

The media services in Sámi are dominated by radio. The amount of television broadcasting hours is small. In each country, some hours of television programs in Sámi are produced annually. Single programs in Sámi have been produced since the early days of television. It was only much later that regular services started. In Norway, for example, children's programs have been produced bi-weekly since 1995. New services have been introduced that are targeted at adolescents. A special text television project supported by the European Union is planned to be operative in autumn 1998. The project has developed a Sámi orthography for the existing European text-television system that will enable services in Sámi languages. The three Sámi radio stations have presented plans to the public service companies according to which they could start a daily television news broadcast from the year 2000 (SR Sameredaktionen 1998).

There are two North Sámi newspapers *Min Aigi* and *Assu* that are published twice a week. In Finland, there is a monthly periodical, *Sápmelaš*. In Northern Norway and Sweden there are also papers covering Sámi issues, but these are written mainly in the majority language. Also, the Sámi in Finland and Sweden read the two regular papers published in Norway.

The radio broadcasts for the Sámi vary considerably from country to country. There are three broadcasting centers of the Sámi Radios, in Karasjok (Norway), Inari (Finland) and Kiruna (Sweden). These stations are today linked into a network that allows for extensive program exchange. As a consequence of the cooperation between radio stations in the three different countries, the broadcasts in Sámi cover a range of 4-5 Sámi dialects/languages (Lehtola 1997, 112).

The Norwegian Sámi Radio has a staff of 36 persons, the Finnish 15-16 persons, and the Swedish 11 persons. The Sámi program volumes in 1996 were

1,790 hours in Norway, 2,035 hours in Finland and 300 hours in Sweden. The differences between the broadcasting hours are explained by the fact that the Finnish Sámi Radio has its own station, and may thus broadcast programs produced by the two other stations. In Norway and Sweden, the Sámi programs are broadcast within windows on the national stations in the Sámi region (Nousuniemi 1998, Samekanalen 1995, 26). For the Sámi people in Russia, only about half an hour weekly is broadcast by the local Lovorezo radio (Sergejeva 1995/1997).

During weekdays, there are daily radio news broadcasts in Sámi produced in the three Nordic countries. Only NRK, however, produces daily newsreels during weekends (Nousuniemi 1998).

So far, all Sámi broadcasts are transmitted through conventional analogue techniques. There is, however, a plan for a joint Sámi radio covering the total Sámi area and using the new DAB technique. According to this plan, the editorial staff for Sámi programs in Norway, Sweden and Finland should join forces to produce one station, which would broadcast digitally over the whole Sámi area. According to current plans, these broadcasts would be nationwide (in Norway) or regional and relayed to bigger cities with a Sámi population in southern parts of the countries. According to this suggestion, the program should be a full service station which "offers the Sámi audience as broad news- and program services as YLE, SR and NRK offer the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish public". Twenty-five percent of the programs should be news and current affairs. The station should broadcast in several different Sámi dialects (Samekanalen 1996).

As a first step, a joint editorial group will start to produce programs on economy and livelihood for the three Nordic Sámi Radios already in 1999 (Nousuniemi, interview). The joint DAB service would be fully operative once the new broadcasting system covers the Sámi areas. In the beginning, for juridical reasons, the content responsibility for the programs would be held by one editor in chief in each country separately. In the final model, the station would operate under one legally responsible editor in chief (Samekanalen 1996, 7-8).

A special case for radio as a medium for the Sámi is that the Sámi language is strongest in its oral tradition. Though there is a written tradition originating from the 17th century, a large number of the older Sámi people are illiterate in their mother tongue, since the language has been taught in schools only recently. Only gradually, and starting with Norway in the 1960's, school education in Sámi language has started to cultivate new genera-

tions of literate Sámi speakers (Helander 1992/95, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998).

The Common Denominator: A Lack of Commercial Supply

The supply of popular culture in minority languages is very limited. As was already noted, commercial television and radio operate almost exclusively in the majority language. With few exceptions, tabloids (here in the meaning "yellow press") and weekly family or popular culture magazines are published in the majority language. This has stimulated cross border sales between Sweden and Finland.

The reasons for the lack of commercial minority media lay in the unfavorable market structure formed by the three minority populations. These populations are in most areas mixed into a majority population (the Finnish Swedes, and the Swedish Finns) and in some cases live in rather sparsely populated areas (the Sámi). The best structure from the point of view of commercial media that depend on selling an audience to (local) advertisers is the opposite: a densely populated area where the media and the market meet within driving distance. Minority media would thus, theoretically, be attractive mainly to brand mark advertisers, and provided the media form large networks that can generate a big enough audience. Nowhere in the Nordic countries have new commercial media yet emerged under these conditions (Moring and Salmi 1998).

This has meant that services for the minorities tend to be middle of the road adult oriented contents, with a strong emphasis on news, current affairs and culture, and additional contents produced for children. For the minorities, this has meant an uphill battle to keep the minority language living in younger generations that get the popular culture services they prefer solely through commercial media. New formatted radio stations and commercial television channels operate in the majority language with a great proportion of audio-visual contents of Anglo-American origin. These types of media contents attract also young people within the minorities, who thus grow into the majority media culture.

There are, however, some new developments in the opposite direction. A greater share of the minority television programs has lately been produced for adolescents (the example of youth-oriented television in Sámi, provided by the Norwegian television, was mentioned above). But the most noteworthy exception from the mainstream orientation of minority

media is the youth-oriented Radio Extrem in Finland that was started in 1997. This station is an example of a public service company (Yle) that – for cultural reasons – competes in terms of program formats and on common grounds with commercial operators, in order to secure a popular culture supply in a minority language. The station tries to attract a young audience by adjusting its sound to the sound of commercial youth-oriented stations, while using the Swedish language for presentations and relying on a rich supply of popular music produced in Sweden (Moring and Salmi 1998).

Minorities Going Worldwide: Internet

For minority cultures, one problem has been to reach those members who live outside the regions covered by the minority media on a daily base. Many people with, for example, Sámi origin live and work in other parts of their country, especially in the national capitals. Evidently, broadcast networks fall short in covering all these areas. Internet provides a medium with the capacity to reach individuals worldwide at a cost that is reasonable to the broadcaster. Today, Sámi news broadcasts can be listened to daily as an "On Demand" service through Internet world wide (<http://www.yle.fi/samiradio/contents.htm>).

The potentials for this technique are rich. It is, however, still too early to tell how it will affect the broadcasting situation for minorities as a whole. There is a possibility that Internet in combination with, for example, a high capacity mobile phone network will take over some of the traditional roles of radio and television.

The Audiences of Minority Broadcasts

The results from audience research concerning minority listening habits show one common feature. In spite of large proportions of bilingual people, language is a major listening motive for people who listen to minority language stations (Moring and Salmi 1998, P7 Audience report 1997), or a feature given high priority among respondents (Samekanalen 1995, 34). However, bilinguality (especially if the parents in the same family are of different language origin) seems to shift radio listening habits strongly to the favor of the majority language (Moring and Salmi 1998, 337).

Of course, the audiences for different minority radio services vary considerably. A methodological problem is that there is little research available that

allows comparisons of the listening in all three minorities according to standardized measures. The figures presented here are thus to be seen mainly as illustrations describing current media use.

In Finland, before the introduction of the new youth-oriented radio broadcasting in Swedish, the share of listening to Swedish radio stations among Finnish-Swedes was around 60 percent. Most of the listening was directed to the two stations broadcasting from Finland (53 percent in 1995). In average, 5-10 percent was directed to stations broadcasting from Sweden. The listening among young people was, however, at a dramatically lower level. In the -25 age group, stations broadcasting in Swedish accounted for one third of the total listening time in 1995.

A survey was conducted only 6 months after the introduction of the new youth-oriented station "Radio Extrem". During this time, it had achieved the position as the most listened-to station among young Swedish speakers. More than half of the listening time among the -25 group was directed to the stations broadcasting in Swedish. The share of Swedish programs in the whole audience had grown from 60 to 66 percent (Salmi 1998).

In Sweden, 31 percent of the Swedish Finns listen "sometimes", 11 percent "often" to Finnish broadcasts. As would be expected, young people listen clearly less than do older people. Around 25-30 percent of Swedish Finns in the -34 group listen to Finnish radio "sometimes", an additional 3-5 percent listen "often".

Figures covering the listening habits of the entire Sámi population are not available. A survey in Norway 1994 showed that 54 percent of the population in the five central Sámi municipalities listened to NRK Sámi Radio 5-7 days a week (Samekanalen 1995, 34-35). Two Finnish surveys in 1992 and 1994 showed that the Sámi radio reached almost 60 percent of the +15 Sámi population on a daily basis. One out of five did not listen to other radio programs (Lehtola 1997, 112). Surveys in Sweden and Finland have shown that broadcasts in Sámi language enjoy wide support among people in general. In Finland, 83 percent of the people responded that radio programs in Sámi are important, in Sweden 95 percent of the people responded that newspapers, radio and TV in Sámi are important (Samekanalen 1995, 34-35).

Figures covering television use among Finnish Swedes in Finland show the hard competition for television audiences. Though the services in Swedish produced in Finland by Yle reach 30 percent of

the Finnish Swedes on a daily basis, only 7 percent of the daily viewing time is directed to these programs. In Southern Finland, the Swedish speakers mainly follow the Finnish television channels, whereas in Ostrobothnia about half of the viewing time is directed to television from Sweden. (Taloustutkimus 1997).

When assessing these figures, one should keep in mind that there are daily short news broadcasts and childrens' programs in Swedish during prime time on the Finnish TV-channels, but a great share of the Swedish programs are spread to less attractive viewing hours.

In Sweden, 24 percent of the Finnish speakers watch the TV-news produced in Finnish by SVT at least once a week. An additional 34 percent follow them "sometimes". A general feature of the Finnish-speakers in Sweden seems to be that they prefer Swedish media for their normal news services. The services in Finnish produced in Sweden, and the TV-programs relayed from Finland, respond more to their cultural needs and their needs to keep informed about events in Finland. (P7 Audience report 1997).

Due to the sparse Sámi television broadcasts, no equivalent information about Sámi audiences can be presented.

Minority Media as a Means for Increasing Minority Visibility among the Majority

As was noted earlier, an important goal for minority media is to make the minority more visible in the society as a whole (see, for example, EEBA Charter 1996, Article 7.6.c). This "right to be understood" has been presented as a third generation in human rights thinking, a complement to the right of expression and the obligations of the state to create a diverse and interactive media infrastructure (Husband 1998, 10). The examples available from audience research highlighting this matter indicate that current systems, where minority and majority programs are broadcast jointly on the same stations/channels, have been serving this goal rather efficiently. Such systems are radio and television for Swedish Finns in Sweden and for Sámi in Sweden and Norway, and television for Sámi and Finnish Swedes in Finland.

According to Swedish audience research, the early evening window broadcast in Finnish on the main Swedish radio station P4 has 250,000 daily listeners. This is many times more than the amount of Finnish speakers daily listening to broadcasts in Finnish (11 percent of 250,000) (P7 Audience re-

port 1997). The same phenomenon can be observed in data on Finnish television programs in Sweden and Swedish television programs in Finland.

Also those stations that operate separately in the minority language attract additional audiences from the majority, but estimates of the size of these additional audiences amount to clearly lower numbers of majority listeners. The two Swedish radio stations in Finland have thus been estimated to attract an extra daily audience of Finnish speakers that is nearly as big as the Swedish audience itself, but only 1-2 percent of the total majority audience (Yleisradio Oy, Vuosikertomus 1996). There have, however, been indications (regional audience studies as well as observations of audience contacts to the station) that the number of Finns listening to programs broadcast on the two Swedish stations has grown after the introduction of the new youth-oriented program.

The Finnish speaking audience viewing TV-programs in Swedish clearly outnumbers the Swedish audience. The Swedish programs are broadcast on the two main public service channels. There are no reliable measures of the relative shares of Finnish and Swedish viewers watching the Swedish television programs. On the basis of logical exclusion we may, however, make the conclusion from the Finnish television meter data that the programs broadcast in Swedish have to attract more Finnish than Swedish viewers.

There is little research systematically analyzing this feature of the minority programs in the Nordic countries. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the system of a strong public service broadcasting sector, weak or non-existent commercial competition, and minority broadcasts as windows on the main national radio stations and television channels gives minorities the best possible visibility. This system dominated the Nordic countries for several decades until the late 1980s.

The problem for this system is that with increasing commercial competition, the basic conditions for this balance collapse. In a competitive system, there are several competing alternatives continuously available in the majority language. Thus, staying with minority programs becomes more and more an active choice. Increasingly, media services in minority languages face basic market conditions. Given a bilingual minority and a growing media supply, only a minority program supply which (a) has a distinct profile, and (b) is broadcast continuously, stands a chance of successfully defending its position within the minority audience as well as attracting an additional majority audience.

The Cultural Effects of New Digital Media – A Preliminary Assessment

The digital broadcasting standards for radio (DAB) and television (DVB) have opened the possibilities for a new media order. These European standards are already in an early operative phase in many European countries, but they are a long way from becoming everyday reality for all people. For a considerable time to come, the new broadcast super highway being built by the public service companies will be a marginal route to the broad audience. Some of its applications may prove a dead end for those who opt for it. Or then, again, they may not. The promising gains glimmering at the horizon have tempted the minority groups to take an active part in this lottery for the future.

As has been argued in this article, the development contains risks in terms of achieving the cultural goals set by those who think that the new technical solutions will serve the minorities. Will the programs produced in minority languages actually be available to the minorities (do they have receivers, do they tune in)? As the digitalization allows for even more (commercial) competition in the future, will there be resources through public service operators available for the minorities to profile their own programming in a competitive manner? In the segmented media context that is emerging, will minorities continue to be visible in a way that the majority can understand? And finally, will the particular digitalization options chosen today pay off in the future? That is, will those broadcasting techniques that are now on the market – and on which new minority services are based – actually spread throughout society?

In a shorter time perspective, digitalization might even decrease quality and availability of minority programs to the minority audience, as is the case for the Swedish Finns according to the example given above. People follow the programs through the radio- and television sets that are actually available. They cannot follow the new nationwide digital service on their radios, but have to accept the reduction in local contents that result from the demands of this new service.

These types of problems become acute if, during the transition period, the public service companies are allowed to decrease the services to the minorities on the traditionally existing analogue services. If programs offered to minorities in their own language are unavailable for even a short period of time, people may permanently change their media habits.

Consumption habits of bilingual people with part of their identity in the minority and part in the majority might be especially vulnerable. These risks may severely endanger the achievement of the very cultural ends that the new services are supposed to meet.

The other side of the coin concerns visibility. Isolated new services to minorities offered as part of increased media diversity may lead to cultural "ghettos". The digitalization process may thus intervene directly in the tense processes of identity formation and integration of minority and majority populations within a public sphere. As Charles Husband has noted, "A public sphere that operates through parallel and exclusive communication systems cannot promote dialogue between fellow citizens." Husband argues for the participation of ethnic minority communities through their participation in mainstream media, as well as through autonomous production of distinctive media serving specific ethnic audiences and presenting particular communities' perspectives for transmission to others (Husband 1994, 2). A prerequisite for an ideal solution is the support of a functioning public service broadcasting sector (Husband 1998, 10).

Given the support of a public service broadcaster, a threefold minority service strategy could be suggested. (1) Intensified services to the minorities have to be created, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the digital technique. (2) Programs portraying the minority, its positions and its views must be directed to a broader (majority) audience. (3) During this development process, current media habits within the minority audience must be respected.

We might ask whether, in the future, the notion of a mainstream media in the dominant community will exist at all. Without trying to answer the question in full, it may be concluded that the direction of the media development today is clearly favoring the first goal, strengthening services targeted at different segments of the audience (among which we find minorities and parts of minorities). This development may well continue at the cost of the other two goals. Thus a common and general public discourse may grow weaker, including the participation of ethnic minority communities in mainstream media. Also, in the context of a technically driven development, those minority members who are less resourceful may be left on the sidelines if their current media services are not given attention and developed alongside the new digital media.

This development is also problematic for the internal discourse of the minority culture that is sup-

posed to be strengthened. New programs may be highly attractive to those in the core of a minority culture, whereas those at the margins may not include the new services in their cultural behavior. The groups that are more loosely attached to the minority cultures are in a critical position. The ethnicity factor does not sufficiently explain media behavior (Husband 1994, 10). As noted above, language has been found to be an important factor when people are asked about media preferences. The actual media behavior is, however, unstable in those parts of a minority population that (due to marriage, bilingualism, etc.) are not within the core of the minority culture. People in this situation may choose to stick to the stations operating in the majority language that in terms of content are more closely formatted according to their needs. However, if the future media supply is increasingly fragmented, this development seems unavoidable, irrespective of what the minorities choose to do.

A third risk is linked with how the audience market accepts the new digital solutions. Will the large audience accept the new standards in the same way, for example, FM radio was accepted? Or will the new standards fail to penetrate the market? If there are multiple broadcast standards in the future, common grounds for communications may suffer. Parts of the majority audience may never get access to the same services that are offered to minorities if a new technical barrier between groups in society is formed.

There are, however, also encouraging experiences. The introduction of segmented services on radio for the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland gave immediate results. The new station achieved the position of market leader within the same young demography that had earlier been listening to Finnish programs and was almost considered a hopeless case for the minority culture. This would point to the need, in spite of the risks, for an active use of the profiling tools provided by new media technologies.

If careful measures are taken, there is a possibility that the European media landscape also in the future will be based on heterogeneity and multiculturalism, thus meeting the ideals set by certain minority media analysts and public service researchers (see Spà and Garitaonandía 1995; Poulsen 1996, 55-56). This development of digital media may, at the same time, lead to a fragmentation of the public sphere, characterized by parallel and exclusive communication systems that do not promote dialogue between fellow citizens.

Notes

1. According to Article 11 "The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media: (a) to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:...(iii) to make adequate provisions so that broadcasters offer programs in the regional or minority languages;... ..(b) (i) to encourage and/or facilitate the creation of at least one radio station in the regional or minority languages;(c) (ii) to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;" By 15.9.1998 this agreement, including the options quoted here, had been ratified by Finland and Norway (ETS No. 148). Sweden is in the process of deciding its course in this matter (SOU 1997, 19-20).
2. The Norwegian nationwide commercial broadcasters (TV2 and radio P4) both were given obligations to serve also the Sámi population. These obligations have so far been neglected (Gaup, presentation 1998).
3. Different market surveys have come up with estimates of an acceptable price premium of plus 25 to 30 percent for car- and home radios, up to plus 70 percent for portable sets (EBU market research Executive Summary 1997, Berendt 1997, 8). At the Internationale Funkaufstellung trade fair in Berlin (August-September 1997), the first consumer applications for car radios were presented, still at a price far beyond what consumers can be estimated to pay. According to information given by the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle, the only DAB radio available on the Finnish market in August 1996 was sold for \$1800 (*Radiouutisia* No. 8/1998).
4. Examples of potential competitors are other digital radio transmission techniques, like in band on channel digital radio (IBOC), satellite- and cable radio, and competition from other types of new media (side band TV, Internet).
5. According to solutions currently planned in the Nordic countries, one terrestrial broadcasting system ("multiplex") would carry 3-6 television channels (Stein 1997, Brandrud 1997, 41).
6. Public service radio (SR), television (SVT) and educational programs (UR) are organized as separate companies in Sweden.
7. This system, originally created in England, uses transmission capacity not used for the television picture to transmit text pages which can be selected by the viewer to be viewed on screen. In Finnish, some 400 pages are available (Endén 1996, 265).

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