

From Bulletins to Journalism

Some Perspectives on the Development of Swedish Radio News 1925-1995

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News is What Newspapermen Make It is the title of a classical article by Walter Gieber (1964). What Gieber means with this is that most analyses of news as a process has been founded on the too simple a notion that news is what is constructed by people working in the media. His conclusion is that there is a need for an understanding of "the social forces which bear on the reporting of the news".

Reflections on the nature of news and what is behind it come very natural if your task is to understand the historical development of news. The aim of this presentation is to formulate some basic hypotheses of how news has developed in form and content from the early years of radio in the mid 1920s till the beginning of the 1990s and what factors might have contributed to the changes. .

The framework is a study of radio and TV news, which has been initiated within the research programme of Swedish Radio and Television History.¹ My main interests here are two. The first is to identify some key events in the organization of radio news programming over the years, and the second is to relate those to the general de-

velopment of journalism in society. Hence, I start with an overview of how radio news programming developed over the years and then, given this development, try to identify as the most important forces behind it. Following Gieber's perspective, I also try to touch upon the question concerning the social forces in relation to the role of the individuals. To me it seems that history writing in the humanities often has exaggerated the importance of certain individuals, whereas social scientists on their side in historical studies tend to forget the role of individuals (cf. the discussion in Dahl, 1994). Thus I ask if it is possible to combine the two ways of understanding what conditions the changes in radio news development.

It is important to note that my perspective here is restricted to the organization and character of the news programmes as it can be traced from secondary material.² No systematic content analysis of news form and news content has yet been undertaken. However, the ideas presented here will hopefully function as a frame of reference for the forthcoming studies.³

Swedish Radio News in 1925-1995: a Quantitative Overview

On Tuesday October 10, 1995 Swedish public service radio, Sveriges Radio, offered a Göteborg listener 75 newscasts. News was presented around the clock and in three channels: P1 had 22, P3 27 and P4, also including the local public service radio had 26⁴. Of those newscasts 67 were produced by the Sveriges Radio itself – 54 by the main newsroom (Eko-redaktionen) and 13 by the newsroom of the local Radio Göteborg P4 – and 8 by the Swedish news agency TT, all of them in P1. The private local radio, established in 1993, also offered a great number of newscasts. Of the main stations in Göteborg, Radio City had 18 newscasts with national news, all of them produced by TT, and 3 local news. P6 only offered national news in 18 newscasts, produced by the newsroom of TV4, the national private TV channel, established in 1992. Radio Rix offered both national (20) and local news (8), all of them produced by the network itself.

Thus, in 1995, a huge amount of news, actually 142 different newscasts, is available. If we calculate five minutes for the average bulletin it totals to more than eleven hours of news a day. It can be contrasted with the situation almost exactly 70 years earlier. On Tuesday October 7, 1925, only one piece of radio news was offered, a 15 minutes TT news bulletin at 9.15 PM. It took another ten years from 1925 before a second newscast was introduced. This was the news at noon, 12.30 PM, starting in 1935. The morning news went on the air as an extra newscast because of the second world war and was later (1941) made permanent. All of these newscasts were produced by TT, which had a monopoly on radio news until 1947 and, after that, still an actual dominance until 1956 (Elgemyr, 1987).

After 1956 there was a rapid expansion of radio news, following the increase of radio air time through the introduction of new channels (P2 in 1955 and P3 in 1961). On an average weekday in October 1965 P1 offered 14 newscasts: 9 produced by the Sveriges Radio itself, 3 by TT and 2 a combination by TT news and news comments by Sveriges Radio. In P3 the hourly news were all produced by the radio itself.

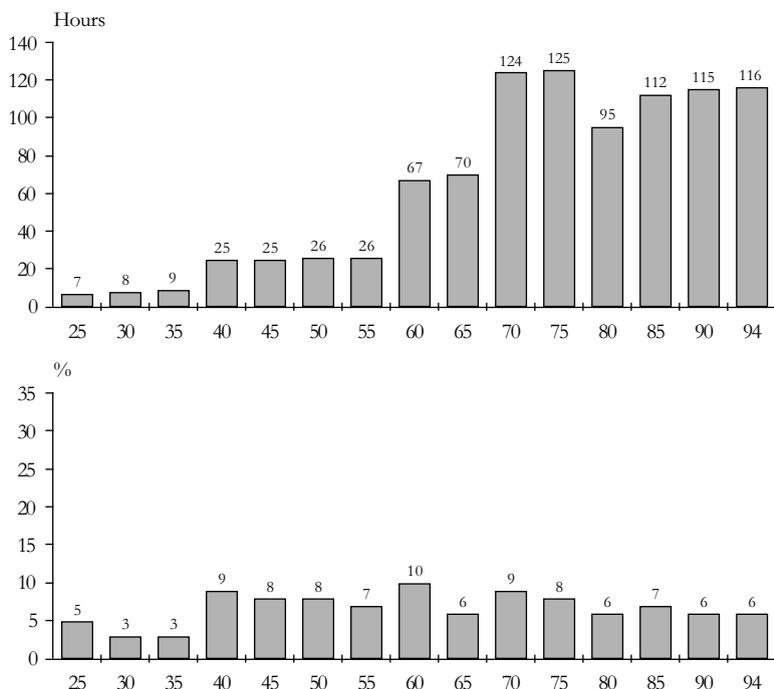
In figur 1 quantitative summary of radio news is presented. It shows the volume of news in hours for an average week each year as well as the percentage of news of the total radio programming.

Two observations can be made from the trends shown in figure 1. The first is that there is a dramatic expansion of radio news, starting between 1955 and 1960 and going on until 1970: from 1955 and 1970 there was an increase of news output with almost 500 per cent. The second observation is that the proportion of news of the total radio output has been remarkably stable over the years. The tendency after the mid 1970s is even indicating a small decline, meaning that the total output has increased relatively more than the news output. The latter is mainly explained by the fact that the introduction of the P4 channel in 1987 meant a strong increase in the output of non-produced music programming (Weibull and Anshelm, 1990).

Three Phases in Radio News Development

The quantitative presentation of radio news output since 1925 reveals very little of the character of news development. What were the premises for the expansion? When were the breaking points in time – and why? In the following I shall try to look more thoroughly into three phases of radio news development: the early period

Figure 1. News in Radio 1925-1994: Hours of News an Average Week and Percentage of News of the Total Radio Programming



Remarks: The figures presented are based on a quantitative analysis of four weeks each year – two weeks in the spring and one in the fall.

between 1925 and 1956, the expansion period 1956-1970 and the mature period 1970-1985.

1925-1956: Defining What's News

Radio was introduced in Sweden in 1925. The company given the responsibility for programming was AB Radiotjänst (Radio Service Ltd). It had originally been formed by a consortium of Swedish newspapers, but later extended to other shareholders, mainly from the Swedish radio industry (Elgemyr, 1984b). The first contractual agreement between Radiotjänst and the Swedish Telegraph Agency, responsible for all transmission technology and acting as

representative of the Swedish state, was signed in late 1924.

The contractual agreement contained one paragraph concerning news programmes. There it was said that Radiotjänst was not permitted to offer any daily news other than that produced by the national news agency TT or another agency authorised by the Radio Company or the Telegraph Agency (§6). Thus, TT was given a formal monopoly on radio news.

Many interpretations of this paragraph have stressed the fact that the TT was owned by the Newspaper industry, which was also the main owner of Radiotjänst. Then it was very natural that Radiotjänst wanted to keep the news within its own

control. There are also parallels with the situation in other countries. In both United Kingdom and the United States the newspaper industry exerted strong pressure to prevent radio from extending news programming (Bliss, 1991:34ff; Scannell and Cardiff, 1991:39ff). However, it seems that the Swedish government was as eager as the newspaper industry to authorise only TT as the provider of radio news. The responsible minister even regarded it as an interest of the state that TT was granted monopoly. It is very obvious that TT was seen as a sort of official agency (Elgemyr, 1984a:21ff, 1987)⁵.

On the other hand, it was in the interest of the newspaper industry to restrict the newscasts. The reason to chose 9.15 PM as the time for the sole TT newscast was that it meant no competition to newspapers. But it seems obvious that there was also a common interest to restrict radio news. In the contractual agreement between the radio and the Telegraph agency a certain cost limit was incorporated (§13). In 1925 the cost for TT news amounted to 7 000 Swedish Crowns, to be compared with 17 500 Crowns for opera transmissions.

During its first decade radio can not be considered a news medium. At that time, cultural and educational programming as well as classical music including opera were the main pillars of broadcasting. The results from one of the first audience studies ('an audience referendum' presented in the minutes of the board in 1928) clearly show the popularity of music, confirming American observations on the radio as a 'music box' (Bliss, 1991:21). However, programmes on current events were successively introduced, mainly as so called chronicles. Such chronicles concerned for example parliamentary and foreign affairs.

During the 1930s there was an obvious change in orientation of radio program-

ming. Current events programming was increased and direct broadcasting from certain events was introduced. Further it was obvious that there was an external criticism against TT for favouring the newspapers at the cost of its radio bulletins. In 1932 TT presented an analysis in defence of its news profile, showing that about 75 per cent of telegrams presented in its evening news-casts had not been available to newspapers beforehand (Radiotjänst, 1932). At the same time controversies concerning the increasing costs of the TT bulletins arouse.

During the second half of the 1930s a sort of *modus vivendi* developed between Radiotjänst and TT. On one hand, TT kept the monopoly on news telegrams, meaning mostly news on Swedish current affairs and foreign affairs, and was also forced to offer a newscast at noon in 1935. On the other hand, Radiotjänst could develop a current affairs programming, containing news from the Swedish cultural life and even sports. In 1935 a special news department was organized for direct coverage of culture, industry and folklore (Radiotjänst, 1936). It seems that this role differentiation between TT and the the current events coverage by the Radiotjänst can be understood in terms of the news definition. News was defined as news telegrams concerning immediate events but also current events from the political sphere and from abroad. Here TT had monopoly. Taking the international situation into consideration, e. g. the propaganda radio of Germany och Italy, it must have been natural to be restrictive.

In other areas, however, it seems to have been possible for Radiotjänst to increase its activities which can be concluded from a memorandum on programme policy presented in February 1937 (cf. Elgemyr, 1984a:33f). The same year the first

daily current affairs programme produced by Radiotjänst, Dagens Eko (The Daily Echo), went on the air as a continuation of the TT newscast at 7PM. It contained 2 or 3 entries a day. Looking at the content profile of Dagens Eko for the first year it is a mixture of news analysis, mostly concerning foreign news, interviews with persons in the news and cultural affairs, including talks. Parts of it shows similarities to the cinema newsreel at the time. It is also interesting to note that the news department was renamed Reportage Department after only one year.

During most of the second world war the roles of TT and Radiotjänst continued to function in the same way. The strong increase in news interest in the last years of the war meant that Radiotjänst tried to extend its activities into news reporting – the traditional domain of TT – by transmitting war news. It seemed to have been generally tolerated, probably because of the great interest in immediate events in the final months of the war, but also because Radiotjänst did not use news wires but foreign broadcasts (Elgemyr, 1987). After the war, however, the situation went back to the normal role differentiation.

The Breaking of Radio Produced News

It is interesting to note the paradox that the interest of expanding current news programming of its own and to keep the TT monopoly on telegram news, both seem to originate from Radiotjänst itself. Already in 1935 a government committee had criticized the strong position of TT, meaning that it was enough that TT supplied Radiotjänst with its news wire, while it was up to Radiotjänst to decide how to present the news (SOU 1935:10; Elgemyr, 1987:12). The proposal, however, was presented as an internal matter for Radiotjänst

to develop, but nothing was done. The same type of criticism was offered by a second government committee presenting its report in 1946 (SOU 1946:1; Elgemyr, 1987:17). As a result the formal monopoly for TT was abolished, but it was said that news should primarily be supplied by TT.

However, even this reformulation of the contractual agreement did not mean very much at first. All main news bulletins were provided by TT and Radiotjänst continued to restrict itself to Dagens Eko and launched no news programme of its own. Actually, the percentage of news programming, including Dagens Eko, dropped somewhat after 1946 – from 314,3 programme hours in 1946 to 301,5 in 1953/54. On the other hand, however, current events programming increased from 217,1 to 268 hours during the same period.

It might seem surprising that the Radiotjänst did not take advantage of the government committee proposals to launch a news service of its own as did for example BBC in the same situation (Scannell and Cardiff, 1991:30ff; Cox, 1995:5f). Two reasons might have been important. The first, and most obvious, is probably the interest of the newspaper industry to restrict the newscasts to the newspaper owned TT, implying that the TT was a sort of official news provider. The other reason has to do with the controversy in the handling of news. In the party press of the time it was expected that news pages were partisan in orientation, but how should a public service radio handle the situation, especially in a period of intense political controversy like the late 1930s. It must have been regarded as much more simple to have the TT as news presenter in the area of political and foreign news, whereas the less controversial areas, like culture and entertainment, could be covered by the Dagens Eko. A third reason, expressed by newspa-

per representatives of the board, might have been that competence of newsprogramming within radio was questioned (Elgemyr, 1984a:37f).

The late 1940s and the first years of the 1950s seem to have been a time of rethinking within the radio, perhaps as a cosequence of the 1946 government report, but it took some time. One important break can be observed in the Radiotjänst Yearbook of 1953/54. For the first time the news and current affairs programming is presented in the first section of the yearbook, traditionally devoted to talks and cultural programming. It seems obvious that there was a change in programme orientation, which was pointed out also by the newspaper *Expressen* (Elgemyr, 1987a: 40). The radio, probably in relation to television being expected to start in a year or two, wanted to stress its news profile. But also other factors contributed to the development. One seems to have been that TT did not adapt very much to changing environment, but kept its very traditional bulletin character. Another factor of importance seems to have been the internal pressure from the editorial staff of *Dagens Eko*, wanting to bring out more news (Elgemyr, 1987:24ff).

The news break for Swedish Radio can be dated to the period between 1954 and 1956. It coincided with changes in the organization, among other things a new director general of Radiotjänst (from 1957 Sveriges Radio) interested in news (Rydbeck, 1990:202), the introduction of television in 1956, and an expansion in radio programming. With the introduction of a second radio channel in 1955, a news bulletin wholly produced by the radio itself was introduced for the first time in the fall of 1956 (Elgemyr, 1987). But, probably more important, was the fact that the *Dagens Eko* tried to develop a journalistic

profile of its own, mixing backgrounds with news and in 1956 introducing news summaries. Also the reporting from specific events, especially the uprising in Hungary and the Suez Crisis played an important role for the creation of its news profile.

The development during this period has to be seen from the perspective of the rise of a new modern news journalism. The tabloid newspaper *Expressen*, founded in 1944, stressed the Anglo-saxon type of journalism, contrasting against the old party press tradition (Hadenius and Weibull, 1994). It is interesting to note that *Expressen* itself launched an editorial campaign promoting radio produced news in the beginning of the 1950s (Elgemyr, 1984a:39f).

Building the Radio News

From a very low level of radio news in 1953/54 there was almost a continuous expansion of news programming in the forthcoming two decades (Figure 1). Which already has been pointed out this increase to a large extent followed the expansion of the total radio programming, especially the start of the third channel, originally called the Melody Radio, later P3.

Radio news development was also affected by the introduction of television 1956. At first Swedish Television, which was organized as a unit within Sveriges Radio, did not offer much news. The so called TV Journal was very similar to a cinema newsreel (Djerf-Pierre, 1996). A strong demand on TV news forced the company to reorganize its news operation. Thus, a central newsroom (Centralredaktionen or the CR) was set up in 1960 to supply both radio and television. The CR was regarded as a provider of telegram news based on wire services.

In 1960 the CR was given the responsibility for all news bulletins in radio. With the introduction of the Melody Radio in 1961 with hourly news bulletins, all produced by the CR, it meant a huge increase in radio produced news. Here competition from a pirate radio station, Radio Nord, broadcasting from a ship in the Baltic played a decisive role (Elgemyr, 1987). Thus, news from the CR took over the new, third channel, while the TT bulletins kept its traditional times during the day in P1 and did not, with a few exceptions, expand with the new radio channels. However, the Dagens Eko, which was mainly regarded as a news analysis programme increased its time on air – in 1962 with a so called lunch echo (directly after the TT bulletin at 12.30PM), in 1963 with a 'night echo' (10PM) and in 1965 with two 'morning echos', (6AM and 7.30AM). Now, news from the main radio newsroom and the Dagens Eko was totally dominating the output of radio news. Consequently, the paragraph in the contractual agreement concerning the use of the TT service was abolished in 1966.

During the same period of time the Dagens Eko increased in journalistic quality. Traditional restrictions in terms of total impartiality and balance, often leading to deadlock in the news analysis, were abolished with support of the director general (Cederberg and Elgemyr, 1984b; Rydbeck, 1990:203). In these years radio news, primarily the Dagens Eko, was characterized by the same reorientation as the American press had gone through in 1920s and 1930s, meaning a decline of 'facts' reporting (Schudson, 1978;134ff). Here it reflected a general development in Swedish party newspapers journalism, expressing a will to separate editorial pages from news pages, stressing the importance of a professional journalism.

The development within radio did not take place without conflicts. The press representatives in the board of Sveriges Radio as well as the director of TT criticized the expansion of radio produced news at the cost of TT. The Director General of Sveriges Radio responded to the critics that he had no plans to abolish the traditional TT bulletins, but regarded it as natural that the radio itself was responsible for additional newscasts (Elgemyr, 1987). However, in 1970 the radio took over two of the classical TT newsbulletins – 12.30PM and 6.30PM, showing its will to control all news bulletins. Given the journalistic development of radio news it is interesting to note that TT proponents sometimes argue in terms of the official status of TT (Elgemyr, 1984a:51f).

Until 1979, however, radio news programmes were produced by two different newsrooms – the CR was responsible for all news bulletins in radio as well as the telegram news in TV, whereas the Eko newsroom was responsible for news analysis and in-depth news. Since the late 1960s it has been a constant debate on this organization, which had its parallel in TV, where each channel had its own commenting news programme (Djerf-Pierre, 1996). The whole organization was based on the distinction between facts and comments, implying that the former should represent 'objective reporting', while the latter could open for comments and presentation of partisan views (Sveriges Radio, 1968).

An internal study aiming at the creation of a news profile for radio and TV resulted in almost deadlock, showing that this was not only a matter of organization, but of news ideology (Djerf-Pierre and Weibull, 1995), where the professionals wanted to focus on an independent journalism (cf. Furhammar, 1995). The 1974

Government Committee, presenting its report in 1977, proposed a merger between news bulletin programmes and the commenting programmes (SOU 1977:19). Thus, in 1979 the CR was abolished and the Eko newsroom took over all radio produced news on the national level.

The period after the mid 1980s till today can be regarded as a period of its own, characterized by the consolidation of national news and an expansion in local reporting. Since 1980 it has been regarded as natural that all expansion of radio news is a responsibility of the radio itself. In 1985 specialized 'echos' started in the areas of economic and consumer news and in 1987, nightly hourly newscasts were introduced. Economic pressure on the public service radio in 1995 has resulted in increased integration between national and local radio, including a closer cooperation between the local radio newsrooms and the national Eko newsroom and in 1995 it was decided to abolish all TT newscasts in radio from January 1, 1996.

The Framework of Radio News

So far I have tried to identify some key events in the development of news programming in Swedish radio: in the first period the relation between TT and Dagens Eko, in the second period the expansion of radio produced news, and in the third period the successive control of one national newsroom. Now the second question is how this development could be explained or at least understood. To quote Walter Gieber once more: What were the social forces behind it? And further, which role did individuals play in this development?

As a point of departure a traditional model in organizing the ideas, focusing on the different roles of external and internal

contexts, has been used (Djerf-Pierre and Weibull, 1995). The external context consists of among other things political and economic pressure, media competition as well as the audience demands and the opinion climate. The internal context concerns organizational needs, professional routines and the role of individuals within the organization (cf. Shoemaker, 1991:32ff; Hjarvard, 1995:25ff).

The intention is to be able to point out some aspects of the development which are especially important to building a framework further study. Thus, the following interpretations must be regarded as merely hypotheses to be tested in forthcoming studies within the project, based also on form and content of radio news programming.

The External Perspective I: Politics, Economy and 'Reality'

It is evident that public service broadcasting working under a contractual agreement with the government is always open to political pressure. Over the years many government reports have surveyed the company, including the news organization, at times of renewal of the agreement. Further, party political representatives have had the opportunity to discuss organizational issues as members of the board. The political perspective is also the predominant one in earlier Swedish radio history research (cf. Hultén, 1984; Elgemyr, 1984b; Cederberg and Elgemyr, 1984).

Looking at the first period it is clear that the TT monopoly from the beginning of radio was in the interest of the government. TT was regarded as a sort of official source of news, which had close contacts with political agencies (Hadenius, 1971). Thus, it was natural for the government to propose a paragraph granting TT a news

monopoly. Since the majority of the shareholders of Radiotjänst also were owners of TT there was no controversy around it.

However, within the board of the Radiotjänst there was sometimes controversies concerning the dominating role of TT. More surprising perhaps is that the 1933 government committee also criticized the lack of radio produced bulletins. However, the criticism was not against TT as the sole news supplier, but against the role of Radiotjänst in handling the news programming. Since this criticism did not lead to a formal proposal it probably was not that important and Radiotjänst did not change its policy, not even as a consequence of the same criticism by the 1944 government committee.

The plausible interpretation is that the government as well as Radiotjänst in spite of all was happy with the strong role of TT during the political controversies of the 1930s and the pressure during the second world war. Further, news did not seem to be regarded as very important until the second world war. Later, during the cold war of the 1960s, similar arguments were used by the press representatives in the board of Sveriges Radio, referring to the official status of TT.

The expansion of radio news during the 1950s and 1960s was initiated by the radio itself. It was generally regarded as important by the government committees during that period. During the 1970s there is an increasing controversy around broadcast news, but it is mainly concentrated on television. The on-going expansion of radio news did not per se seem to arise much debate. On the contrary, the 1960 government committee reporting in 1965 (SOU 1965:20) as well as the committee on local radio (SOU 1973:8) stressed the importance of expanding the radio news.

Economic factors, of course, always played an important role in the development of radio news, even though it may be hard to distinguish between political and economic factors when studying a public service company. However, the problems of the 1930s seem to have been partly economic ones, whereas the economically flourishing years of the 1960s clearly coincided with the strong expansion of radio produced news.

During the 1980s and 1990s economic factors seem to have been important for determining the development. The political pressure for increase in programming, for example the introduction of a fourth radio channel for local news, and a relative decline in income have forced the radio to change its news profile, among other things to totally abolish TT.

Also other changes in society, here called the external reality, i.e. important events, have affected news development, like they have in other countries (cf. Cox, 1995). Thus, the start of the second world war meant the introduction of a morning newscast from TT. When TT later, in 1941, wanted to withdraw it, it turned out to be impossible because of audience reactions, but also because of a strong social need.

Also the reorientation of radio news during the mid 1950s coincided with important events, e.g. the uprising in Hungary and the Suez Crisis, putting the fast news of radio in the focus of interest. During this period the Dagens Eko managed to develop more of a news profile. The assassination of Olof Palme on a late Friday night in February 1986, when the newsroom of Swedish radio was closed (Lindahl, 1986), resulted in a strong external criticism and lead to the introduction of hourly newsbulletins in the night radio.

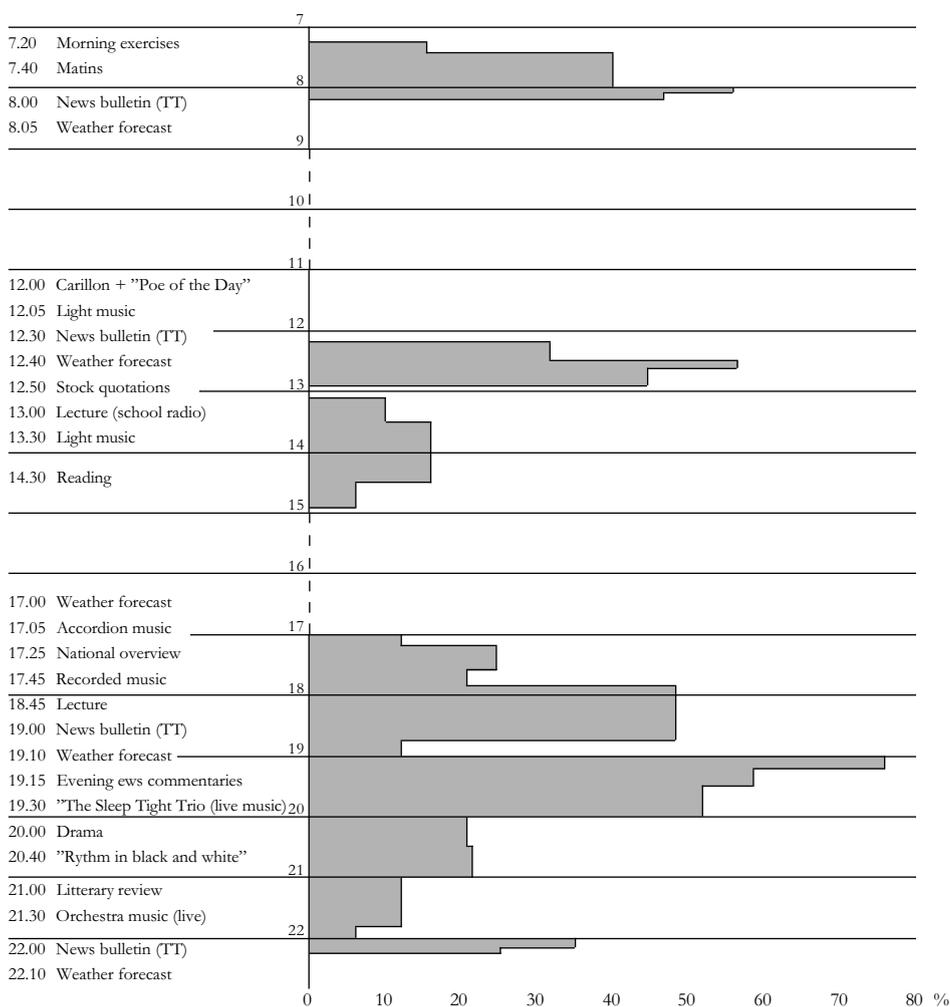
*The External Perspective II:
The Audience – and Other Media*

Did reactions from the audience mean much to the news development within radio? Both yes and no. It is quite clear that decision makers stressing the importance of news refer to the attraction it has among the listeners. During the first years, according to an audience referendum in 1928, music had the highest priority. Look-

ing at the percentage of listeners wanting more of individual programme categories the rank is as follows:.

Folk Music 58%
Traditional Dance Music 57%
Accordion Music 56%
General Entertainment, Cabaret 49%
Talks 48%
Military Music 43%
News Bulletins 38%
Radio Theatre 32%

Figure 2a. Percentage of Radio Listeners Over the Day, in 1943



Source: Hadenius and Weibull (1994)

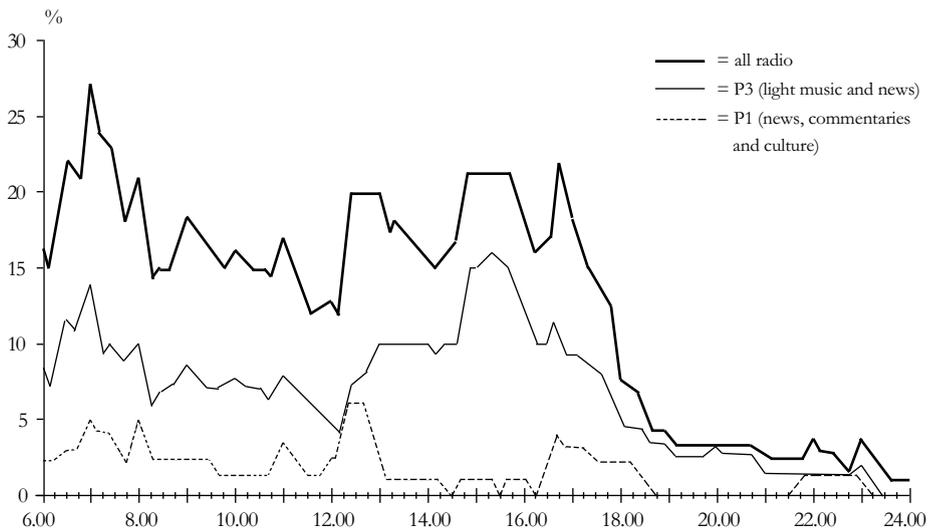
However, it is quite clear that the audience begins to play a more important role during the 1930s. At the introduction of the *Dagens Eko* there is an explicit reference to the 'legitimate claims of the listeners (Minutes of the Board, February 22, 1937). Later, the same argument was used to force the radio, and TT, to keep its morning news bulletin also after the first years of the war.

It is also well known that the news bulletin had an enormous audience during the second world war (Figure 2a), but it is also evident that music and news are two pillars of radio in the shadow of television. The start of the pirate station *Radio Nord* offering music and news resulted in a declining audience for *Sveriges Radio*, which almost immediately launched its own music-and-news-channel. Also in 1991 the news holes of the day attract most listeners, especially in P1 (Figure 2b).

The development of radio in the 1990s, especially the programme policy of the new private radio since 1993, confirms the interest in news. To get a reasonable audience share a regular news service is important. At the same time it is interesting to note the interest in current events among listeners often means that also current affairs programming get a news profile.

Of course, the development of radio news also has been affected of the relation to other media. To a large extent this had to do with the audience. When the newspaper representatives in the first board of *Radiotjänst* argued for 9.15 PM as the suitable time for the only radio news bulletin they knew that this was a time of the day when newspapers would not hurt the interest in newspaper reading. They wanted the news audience to stay with newspapers as their main source of news.

Figure 2b. Percentage of Radio Listeners Over the Day, in 1991



Source: Hadenius and Weibull (1994)

Later the competition between newspapers and radio did not arise much controversy. Actually, the newspaper *Expressen* promoted the introduction of independent radio news in the first half of the 1950s (Elgemyr, 194a:39f). During the 1960s the introduction of TV and its attraction among the audience in the areas of entertainment lead the government committees to stress the importance of developing a strong radio newsroom.

The conclusion seems to be that radio news has developed its profile in relation to other media. Only in the very early years of radio news it seems to have been a pressure from other media to prevent the development of radio news.

The Organizational Perspective: News as Profile

Another important factor influencing the radio news is the development of the organization per se. It seems obvious that during almost the first two decades of Swedish Radio, news was not regarded as a main responsibility for Radiotjänst as a programme company; it was seemingly enough to have an agreement with TT concerning its air time. Cultural programming and music were the main pillars, together with for example weather reports (Radiotjänst, 1929). But, probably, also organizational policy was important. The Radiotjänst did not go into news presentation in the 1930s or 1940s even if it was formally possible through the abolition of the TT monopoly. One important factor, pointed out in an earlier section, might have been that it did not want to go into potential controversies related to news selection during this politically intense period. As has been shown earlier there were proposals in this direction, but the political developments in the world probably put an

obstacle to such ideas. The direct broadcasting from the cultural and social life, typically, concerned uncontroversial topics.

Of course, the possibility to get into news programming was also dependent on the technical facilities within the radio organization. In the beginning of the 1940s more than 90 per cent of the transmission time was direct broadcasting. In 1955 50 per cent of the programming was based in recordings, which after that increased dramatically (Åberg, 1995:21ff). Direct broadcasting meant that news must be either the reading from the news wire in a studio, or bringing people to a studio. Other facilities were complicated to handle (cf. Elgemyr, 1984c). Here we have another reason for the character of the *Dagens Eko* during its first decade.

On the other hand it is quite clear that when the policy was changed in mid 1950s and the technical facilities were available the news organization was prepared to act. Now, news was regarded as very important for the profile of radio and the central newsroom was organizationally placed directly under the director general (Elgemyr, 1987). From now on Radiotjänst seems to have been determined to develop a strong news organization (Rydbeck, 1990:202f). Even if it was said that TT should keep its position unchanged, it is obvious that the building of a network of foreign correspondents was clearly pointing in another direction.

Thus, the development of a strong central newsroom (the CR) was very important, not least that it was common to radio and television using the power of the total organization. The CR was regarded as a service to the special radio newsroom, presenting the news bulletins of the CR (*Nyhetsverksamheten*, 1971). The abolishment of the CR in 1979 had its background in a differing news profiles for radio and television as well as a change in news ideology.

Thus, the new organization also could be interpreted even as a way of strengthen the news within radio – and TV.

Organizational Routines:

Changes in the News Concept

It seems very obvious that the TT news during the first decades of radio in Sweden reflected the idea of what was to be defined as news. TT represented a classical news concept: it reported from actual events in Sweden or abroad. The telegrams mostly concentrated on one event at a time, telling which persons were there and what happened. Very little was said about background or consequences, aspects normally labeled as comments. Hard news had priority, but sports could be included, reflecting a world dominated by male decision makers. To a large extent the material was based on official sources, most often public agencies. The wire news, transformed into talk news, could be regarded as a sort of 'facts' reporting (Hadenius, 1971; Westerståhl och Johansson, 1985).

The traditional news concept did not arise much controversy until the 1960s. Thus, it is easy to understand that the small increase in current social and cultural news produced by the radio itself did not mean very much. In a way it was, at this time, not regarded as news. Typically, the only area arising some debate was sports reporting (Elgemyr, 1987). Even though the Dagens Eko from its start was presented as an addition to the TT evening news bulletin, it actually seems to have covered other areas.

Consequently, the increasing amount of radio reportages during the late 1940s was not considered as news at that time. There was some criticism against the TT and the Dagens Eko news format in the late 1940s and early 1950s, meaning that it was too traditional (Elgemyr, 1987:26). However,

when radio began producing its own news in the mid 1950s it kept the same news concept, clearly distinguishing between 'telegram news' and 'news reports' or 'news analysis', stressing the journalistic profile of the latter. The same distinction was underlined in a report of the mid 1960s, leading to the organization of one telegram newsroom (the CR) responsible for telegram news as was shown in an earlier section.

At the same time, however, the Dagens Eko strengthened its journalistic profile and stressed its independence in news selection, thus blurring the distinction between telegram news and news analysis. Furthermore, this distinction was severely criticized, mostly among young journalists. They argued that professional journalism was not a matter of transmitting official or semi-official telegram news or even comment on them, but to develop a news organization of their own. Further, it was said that the distinction was an ideological one, legitimizing the official society to have a direct outlet by the telegram news. They stressed the importance of professional editing of all news (Hadenius and Weibull, 1994; cf. Schudson, 1978). During the period radio produced news changed in character, being increasingly critical (Westerståhl and Johansson, 1985).

It seems that the increasing controversy concerning the relation between facts and comments affected the development of broadcast news. The CR and the Dagens Eko became increasingly similar. If there was little difference it was, obviously, little reason to have two different newsrooms. Thus, as a first step separate TV news bulletins was abolished in the mid 1970s and the merger between the CR and the Eko newsroom in radio took place in 1979, making the Eko newsroom the sole supplier of radio produced news.

The Professional Perspective: The Role of the Individuals

So far radio news development has been treated as a result of structural factors. Professionalism has been regarded as an organizational aspect. But of course, the intensified debate on the character and role of the news reflected the climate of opinion of the 1970s. More important, however, is that the same climate affected the newspaper, but did not have the same impact there. In newspapers with their roots in the party political tradition the traditional news concept seems to have lasted longer (Westerståhl and Johansson, 1985).

Put in another way the journalists within Sveriges Radio seem to have been more powerful in pressing their views than the journalists of the press. It is reasonable to believe that this has to do both with the character of a public service company and with the recruitment of journalists (Weibull et al, 1991).

It is very difficult to judge how the internal influence of individual journalists over the radio news profile has developed over time. Of course, famous reporters like for example Sven Jerring had much influence in current events reporting. Having been hired as a Radiotjänst official, the terminology of the time, already in the 1920s, he very early stressed the importance of direct broadcasting, to bring the listeners to the heart of the event. Later Carl-Åke Wadsten as the first director of Dagens Eko stressed the importance of covering current events. His followers in office, Lennart Dansk, Henrik Hahr and Per Persson moved the position of radio news forward. Dansk and Hahr primarily paved the way for modern news reporting in the late 1940s and early 1950s, while Persson, recruited from the press in 1956, gave the Dagens Eko a clear journalistic profile.

The radio news people obviously wanted to extend their territory. They stressed the importance of a professional news ideology. During the late 1960s and 1970s it seems to have been a lot of controversy of what was characteristic for the news ideology, but as a journalistic collective they strengthened their positions. Thus, professional journalism in Sweden is often said to have its roots in radio news.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to point out some context factors which might have influenced the development of radio news. The factors are regarded as hypotheses that are to be carefully studied and the interplay between them has to be analysed. However, finally it could be of interest to point out, tentatively, what seems to be important factors determining the development in each of the three development periods (Figure 3).

In the early days, probably until the late 1950s radio transmitted news. It was more of a news medium than of a news organization (cf Habermas, 1962). Not only the existence of TT, but the understanding of direct broadcasting created this profile. TT presented news bulletins from official sources, the Radiotjänst officials went out into social and cultural life and placed a microphone, where something interesting, not too controversial, took place.

From the mid 1970s it seems clear that the professionals of the radio and television newsrooms have gained a position, when they challenge the traditional news concept. Investigative journalism is introduced, even in the contractual agreement with the government, and telegram news is subordinated a journalistic profile. News is regarded as power and is used according to that. It seems reasonable to regard the pe-

Figur 3. A Tentative Overview of Factors Influencing Radio News Development 1925-1995

<i>Context level</i>	<i>Period</i>		
	1925-1955	1955-1970	1970-1985
External context	Political Crisis Second World War Party press	Political and economic expansion New journalism	Political controversy in media politics Professional journalism
	Political pressure Media Pressure	Economic growth Audience interest	Economic pressure Audience Interest
Internal Context	Technology problems Small organization Traditional news concept	Organizational development Policy development Broadened news	Simple technology Professionalization
Character of news	Bulletins	Reporting	National journalism Local reporting
Character of news operation	Dependence Conditioned experiments	Profile building Struggle	Independence News power

riod after 1985 as fourth phase in radio news development, stressing the local news reporting.

However, the period between the beginning of the 1950s and the end of the 1960s seems to be the real time of change. It could be discussed when this period starts and when it goes over in the third. However, for the future work within our project it seems especially important to concentrate of those years of early radio news. Which of the factors discussed above contributed most to the profound change – and why?

Then, a final remark. In the beginning I quoted Walter Gieber about news and newspaper men. In his article he stressed the importance of the social forces, but what role did the newspaper men play? When professional historians write media history there is often a stress on the individuals (cf. Cederberg and Elgemyr, 1984),

here the development seems to be explained by structural factors.

In my preliminary analysis it seems clear that the role of the individuals is conditioned by the development stage of the news organization. During the first years there was little room for organizational changes, but the organization as such was small and individual reporters like Sven Jerring managed to build a position, stressing the importance of direct broadcasting. But the period when individuals seem to have the greatest opportunities to form the development is the one when a organizational change is going on. Thus, the second of three phases must be the one where we could find strong imprints of individuals, for example the legendary director of Dagens Eko Per Persson, could be found. Thus, a concentration of the second period would make it possible also to see what the radio men made.

Notes

1. The research programme is founded by the two public service companies Sveriges Radio and Sveriges Television. It consists of three main areas: (1) Politics and Economy of Swedish radio and television (professor Stig Hadenius, Stockholm University), (2) Radio and Television in Swedish society (professor Lennart Weibull, Göteborg University) and (3) The cultural programming of radio and television (professor Dag Nordmark, Umeå University). The research programme started in 1994 and is scheduled to be finished in 2000 at 75 anniversary of Swedish radio.
2. The paper is mainly based on the Radiotjänst/Sveriges Radio Yearbook 1925-1970 and government committee reports presented 1935, 1946, 1963 and 1977 and earlier research. I am especially indebted to Göran Elgemyr's studies on radio news (Elgemyr, 1987) and the book on radio development edited by Cederberg and Elgemyr (1984), especially Elgemyr's contributions. Sport news is mainly excluded from the overview.
3. The detailed research plans for the news study are found in Djerf-Pierre and Weibull (1995).
4. News in five foreign languages for immigrants are presented in P2 each day, but not included in this analysis.
5. It has to be mentioned that TT had been founded in 1921 after several years of severe rivalry between different news agencies. Because of that it was probably seen as very important to back TT as the national news agency (cf Hadenius, 1971; Jigenius, forthcoming).

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