

Foreword

The past decade or so has seen momentous changes in the media landscape in our countries. Not least in radio. Today we have dual systems of public service and commercial radio stations. Radio as a medium seems to be experiencing something of a renaissance after a couple of decades more or less in the shadow of television.

The 1970s and 1980s saw an overall trend toward decentralization of the medium. Policy-makers saw decentralization as a possible means to revitalize participation in public affairs and politics. A general desire to activate people and groups, even in programme production, led to the establishment of 'organizational radio', 'NGO-radio', 'rainbow radio', 'neighbourhood radio', 'access radio' and 'community radio' systems – the names vary, as do the systems – as well as local/regional radio under the auspices of national public service broadcasters.

The most fundamental change, however, was to come in the 1990s with the introduction of privately owned, commercial local stations. This marked the final break with the tradition of public service broadcasting monopoly.

Today, considerable energy and resources are put into developing markets and attracting regular listeners. Technology, too, continues to evolve. All this has aroused new interest in the medium: it is flexible, convenient and attractive to ever greater numbers of listeners.

These developments form the backdrop to the Nordic seminar on radio research reported here. The seminar, held in Tampere, Finland, in the Fall 1995, assembled some 25 researchers from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden to discuss past findings and future directions. Numerous papers were presented, and some of them have been revised to form the contents of the anthology you have before you. They include a historical analyses of radio broadcasting in the region, studies of the new competitive environment – structures and policy, new radio culture, production, programmes and listeners – and input toward a theory of radio.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all the authors for the time and effort they have devoted to this volume. And thanks, not least, to professors *Per Jauert* and *Taisto Hujanen*, who were co-organizers of the conference in Tampere and who helped make the anthology possible.

Göteborg in June 1997

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Editor

