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Public Service Broadcasting

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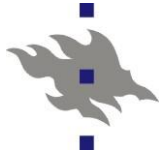
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Svenska social- och kommunalhögskolan



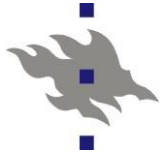
Structure of lecture

- Conceptual clarifications
 - Organizations
 - Institutions
 - Ideas & interests
- 'European' public service broadcasting?
 - National broadcasters, national policies
 - Regulation, the dual system
 - Eu policy and legislation, the construction of European PSB?
- The comparative perspective
 - European vs. North American (Canadian) perspectives
 - 'public service' vs. 'public interest'



Historical Background: Technology meets Politics

- WWI military use
- Transmission
- Radio amateurs
- In the *interest* of the state to create a monopoly through which such a powerful device could be monitored
- Licensing



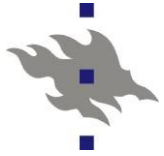
Creatures of the state

- Post WWI
- New borders, new nation states – nation building: national identity
- Russian revolution, communism, socialism
- New demands: universal suffrage, workers' movement, education
- vs. old privileges ...
- Changing morals, new cultural climate



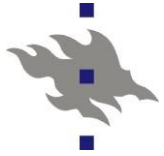
Transformation of state broadcasting into public service broadcasting (Jakubowicz 2007)

- **Paternalistic** – 1920s, promoting public enlightenment, playing a clearly normative role in the country's cultural, moral and political life, e.g, UK BBC, Finland Yle 1920s
- **Democratic and emancipatory** – State (government) control of monopoly broadcasters no longer be justified or claim legitimacy, turning them into autonomous PSB organisations, 1960s and 1970s
- **Systemic** – change part of broader political change; transition to democracy after an authoritarian or totalitarian system. W- Germany 1940s, Spain, Portugal, Greece 1970s, Central and Eastern Europe after 1989



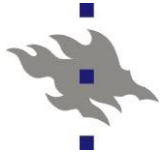
Alternative PB rationale: “market failure”

- United states PBS
- conviction that commercial broadcasting alone is not enough, as it fails to meet all the needs of society
- Reintroduction of PB in New Zealand



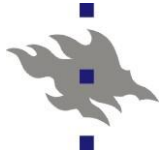
PB: Ideas, institutions and organizations

- *Idea*: origins, means and mission of 'public service';
- *Institutions*: national broadcasting system and regulation, normative principles, cognitive conceptions/cultural prescriptions
- *Organizations*: e.g., BBC, NOS, SVT,YLE; EBU
 - Mandate
 - Financial base
 - Operations
 - current problems



Public service as an institution

- Institutions: configurations of formal and informal norms, rules and routines (cognitive perceptions of what is appropriate and/or possible)
- Govern organizations, production (content), transmission, reception (the audience)
- Structure debates, programming (schedules), program consumption
- Broadcasting systems respond to broader social and political change



Public service organizations (Europe)

- Prevalence in most European countries, w. Luxemburg the only exception
- Many established in 1920s and 30s as national radio corporations
- 'Creatures of the state' → independent corporations
- Set of responsibilities in exchange w. privileges (funding)
- From radio monopolies to multimedia corporations
- BBC as the prototype, model



The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) www.ebu.ch

- Founded 1950, HQ in Geneva
- “largest association of national broadcasters in the world”:
75 members (56 countries) + 45 associate members
- Cooperation: “facilitate the exchange of audiovisual content”, events (Eurovision Song Contest etc., sports rights...)
- Lobbying: “works to ensure that the crucial role of public service broadcasters is recognised and taken into consideration by decision-makers” (Brussels office)



Public service as an idea(I)

- PSB an instrument, a tool (in the hands of the state/government/society/elite) to achieve desired ends
- Creation and sustainment of national unity, national culture
- Enlightenment of the 'masses', education
- Political goals, creation of an informed citizenry
- Projects of modernization and development, (representative democracy)



PSB Core principles in common (Foster 1992)

- provide *universality* of service provision of the same technical quality to all;
- Cater for a variety and diversity of interests and tastes, including popular as well as specialist tastes;
- Provide programmes which *inform and educate*, such as news, current affairs, documentaries, cultural and other programmes of educational value;
- Cater for '*minorities*' – this may be expressed in terms of requirements for local production reflecting the culture, language and lifestyle of the country or community in question.
- These can and are applied not only to one single broadcaster, e.g., the U.K. has placed PSB obligations to commercial broadcasters (ITV, CH 4); formerly in Finland to MTV3, Nelonen also



EC audiovisual/media policy: 2 phases

- 1981-1984: the forging of an European identity and citizenship
 - Dissemination of European information through public TV
→ audiences → European cultural unity
 - Preservation and promotion of Europe's existing cultural diversity
- 1985→ role in completing the internal market
 - Response to satellite and cable; liberalization from national restrictions
 - Creation of a common market in production and distribution to challenge the U.S. in economics of scale



The European policy context

- Policy hierarchy (Harrison and Woods 2001)
- EC institutions: creation of a common market
 - Economic goals
 - Competition policy
 - Community law
- Societal goals;
 - cultural policy



EC Treaty; Amsterdam protocol (1997)

■ Article 16

- PSB “directly related to the democratic, social and cultural needs of each society and to the need to preserve media pluralism”
- Member states primarily responsible for organization and funding of PSB

■ But: ultimately bound by Community law

- Article 87: state aid provisions control any aid in any form by member states which distorts competition
- Article 86 para 2: intended to protect aid on the basis of societal goals
- Tensions: aided tasks do not override “common interest”



What is PSB? A contested concept

- No universal agreement
- Many uses of the concept public service (Syvertsen 1999):
 - Public utility
 - In service of the 'public sphere': citizenship, collective, access to informative and knowledge necessary to perform civic duties
 - In the service of the public as audience; satisfying the individual needs of people as consumers or customers
- “You know it when you see it”



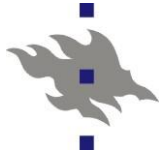
North America: the liberal model

- U.S. All media perform a valuable public service to society by providing information (liberal model in purest form)
 - “Public radio”, PBS= Public Broadcasting Service (TV) networks
 - Quality, elite, privileged minority
 - State grant, fund drives
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- Canada: in addition to commercial broadcasting, system contains strong public elements on national (the CBC), provincial and community levels (e.g., first nations, universities)
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- cable vs. FTA importance in U.S.



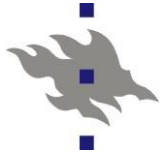
The Canadian single national system

- Broadcasting Act (1991) “the Canadian broadcasting system (...) provides a public service essential to the maintenance and enhancement of national identity and cultural sovereignty (section 3 1 a)
- covers all forms of broadcasting
 - Forms of delivery (cable, satellite, FTA)
 - All languages (E, F)
 - Private and public, community stations, aboriginal networks
- Supervised by single, independent regulator CRTC: maintaining a balance btw cultural, social and economic goals in broadcasting and telecommunications



The future of the European dual system

- Dual system built in current national legislation
- Based on differentiating private, commercial and 'public service'
- Separate legislation, supervision (e.g. Finland, Yle the parliament, private MinTC licensing)
- European communication policy and law forming a new 'single' superstructure?



A 'global' broadcasting policy?

- Global television, You Tube etc...
- Information society; technological determinism (Young)
- Regulatory shift from serving the public interest in favour of servicing the private interest (Raboy, Babe)
- Rich media, poor democracy (McChesney)