

Local Radio in Western Europe

Conflicts Between the Cultures of Center and Periphery

PER JAUERT

European research in local radio and television is quite young, approx. 25 years and has developed parallel to the development of the media themselves, but at a rather limited scale, one must admit, compared to the extent of the mass media research in nationwide or transnational electronic media. A few major books and some articles has been published in the main languages, but most of the research literature in this field has been produced in national or even regional contexts and languages, i.e. in the Nordic countries.

The main part of the internationally published research in local radio and television has focused on issues within media structure – local radio as a part of the general media pattern, their legal, economical status and the perspectives in the media and cultural policy in a period of deregulation of the European public service media. An example is *The People's Voice* (Jankowski, Prehn and Stappers 1992), a book offering the until now most extensive overview of local radio & television in Europe. But most of the empirical facts of the contributions are based on the realities of the 1980s. Mass media research on media structure – even in a general setting – requires updating to be useful for the comprehension of the actual and changeable

situation of the local media, related to the general rapid development of the electronic media.

The research focus in the field of local radio on media policy and structural issues reflects the special cultural and legal conditions for these new stations from their start in the 1970's and their involment in the deregulation period of the national public service institutions through the 1980s. The special conditions for local radio in the European countries related to the attempts from EU institutions to harmonize the legal framework for this area has been the object for several studies in the beginning of the 1990s (Drivjers 1992, Jauert & Prehn 1994, Kleinstauber 1991, Siune & Treutzschler 1992, Trappel 1991). The basic political argument for most deregulation of national legislation on radio and television has been the consumer's freedom of choice. But several reseachers point to the obvious media policy paradox which lies in the fact that the consumer oriented argument for deregulation, i.e. greater diversity in terms of programming and thus more possibilities of choice for the audience, in fact has turned out to have changed into its opposite. The growing dominance of the market forces have led to a larger supply, but not any diversity in

terms of programming. It has rather led to a standardization and simplification of the radio output. (Bergelman and Pauwels 1992)

The lines of conflict between the non-commercial local radios – also called community radios, "free radios", "radio libres" etc. – and the commercial local radios have also attracted the attention of mass media researchers who have tried to define and explain the term of "commercial" vs. "non commercial"; "local" vs. "regional" and "national" etc. (Kleinstauber 1991:15). In spite of a great variety of types of stations in the Western European countries and a blurring of the more strict or formal definitions, a kind of general consensus have been reached on the essential dividing characteristics of the two types of local radio. The commercial local radio is aimed at the attraction of large audiences within its area. It may be owned and run by local companies or it can be a part of a larger network, an "affiliate" as known from the North American radio market. The programming is typically based on a special style or "format", defined by the music (classic, folk, rock, European Hit Radio etc.), the target group (children, young, young adults etc.), the topics (all news, traffic, current affairs etc) or the form (all-talk, music only, DJ). The financing is based on commercials or sponsorships and the staff is normally professionals. But the variations within this type are enormous, ranging from "small" commercial local radios in the Scandinavian countries with audiences of 50.000 – 500.000 to commercial local radios in the great capitals of Europe with audiences counted in millions. The notion of "local" in connection with this type of radio station refers mostly to its geographical position and partly to its programmes: the local news, the local service information (traffic, events, weather) and

the local audience from time to time participating in phone-in programmes. But it is a well known experience that the sound of commercial local radios is more or less the same whether you are in Tromsø in Norway or in Florence in Italy. What is really local about it? is an often asked question.

The non-commercial local radio is often called "community radio", indicating a more close or narrow orientation of the station, based on 'neighbourhood' – at least a small, geographically defined area: a town, a rural area or a well defined part of a large city. Or the community may be 'a community of interests', based on ethnicity, sexual preferences etc. Open access or at least easy ways of participation in the radio activities is essential for this type of radio and the fundings are normally non-commercial, based on contributions from associations, grass-root movements, municipalities or from the listeners. The staff normally is volunteers, but a few might get some kind of salary.

But as an often referred fact: those definitions are not exclusive, because you may find different kinds of combinations, between the nations as well as within the nations (Kleinstauber 1992, Jankowski et.al. 1992) and the consequence has been the growth of 'grey zones' between the three radio sectors: the public service sector, the commercial sector and the non-commercial sector. The breaking of the monopolies and the deregulation consequently has pointed out the need for the national public service radios to redefine their tasks and obligations.

To search for the more specific cultural functions of the local radios (commercial and non-commercial) in Western Europe you have to leave the level of media policy, national or regional media structure and try to get a closer and more focused look on specific types of local radio stations.

This intention of a more focused study, based on the findings from previous works on media policy and structural analyses, was the starting point of a small scale research project I started in late 1992 on "Local Radio in Western Europe – Forms of Cultural Resistance in Modern Media Culture". The project is ongoing, empirically based on the pilot study, conducted in three areas of Europe during Autumn 1992 and Spring 1993: in Brittany in France, in Eastern Jutland in Denmark and in Korgen in Mid-Norway and in this short presentation article I will concentrate on introducing the general framing of the research and present some of the central findings in my empirical studies of some of the radio stations, involved in the project.

The Two Types of Local Radio

Non commercial local radio in Western Europe was created in the early seventies as a movement of protest. Against bourgeois society in general, but specifically against the national public service radios, which had developed into self-complacent mastodons, almost inviolable in their inertia based on a simplistic philosophy of enlightenment, spreading out the unified culture of the nation to the people – only reluctantly opening up for different streams of culture. As an example the American pop-music having gained a firm hold on the youth from the middle of the fifties was not let in the *Danmarks Radio* (Danish Broadcasting Company) until the beginning of the sixties together with the employees from the commercial music pirate-radio *Radio Mercury*, closed by the authorities after a few years of existence. Regional or local culture was rarely represented in radio or television and when it happened the perspective was from the capital to-

wards the periphery with its exotic folklore or strange ways of living. (Jauert 1997: in print)

Kleinsteuber and Sonnenberg (1990:96) distinguishes between three types of non-commercial local radio: (1) radio stations growing out of clearly commercially dominated media environment; (2) radio stations based on protest against a public monopoly; and (3) radio stations that were established in coexistence with a public monopoly. Again one have to take notice of the particular national experiences where elements of the three types are to be found mixed together.

But in general two main lines can be drawn of the development of local radio in Western Europe going out from this common starting point: the model of Southern Europe and the model of Northern Europe.

Local Radio in Southern Europe

The first line has its centre in the south part of Europe and is called "the model of Southern Europe" (Kleinsteuber and Sonnenberg 1989:283). It includes first of all Italy and France, but also Belgium, Luxembourg and partly Ireland, Greece and Spain. The second main line includes the Nordic countries, except Finland and is referred to as "the model of Northern Europe". (Kleinsteuber and Sonnenberg op.cit.) The Dutch history is special, but in many ways similar to the Nordic countries. Add to this a group of countries not easy to place in either of the two categories, i.g. Germany, Great Britain and Switzerland.

Bens and Petersen (1992) are working with similar main lines, but characterises the model of Southern Europe as "the free market model". From this category two types of local radio developed: the

idealistic, community type of non-commercial local radio and the commercial local radio.

The non-commercial local radios grew from different (sub) cultures, some of them local in a geographical sense, others representing communities of interest, most of them in greater cities. The flora of names is indicating the diversity. You could find "democratic", "radical", "militant", "green", "free", "associative", and "socialist" community radios – not to speak of the radios having a religious message to spread or radios as mouthpieces for ethnic or sexual minorities. Though different in many ways they all shared the same attitude: the protest against the established, bureaucratic systems within the administration of society, cultural life and the media system. (Kleinstauber and Sonnenberg 1989, Bens and Petersen 1992, Østergaard 1992, Lewis and Booth 1989) The justification for their existence and their legality had to be won 'from below' during several years until the states started the debilitating of the public service radio and the deregulation, i.e. liberalized the broadcasting sector and introduced the possibility of a market based growth in the field.

The very fact of the introduction of market oriented elements in deregulation produced the commercial local radios. The pioneers took even the slightest possibilities to develop a profitable business, inspired by the North American local radio type. For a number of years they shared the conditions of the idealistic community radios – illegality, failing income and an uncertain future, but not so often in the searchlight of the authorities as their idealistic colleagues. Apparently 'commercialism' was not considered as big a threat to establishment as 'idealism'. (Bens and Petersen 1992)

With the increasing process of deregulation including commercials, sponsorships and other kinds of commercial financing of local radio and with the establishment of networking, "the model of Southern Europe" has favoured the market based, commercial local radio, while the non-commercial local radio has faced severe problem and for the last five to ten years has been on the retreating Southern Europe. Due to lack of public funding, either in the so-called "Robin-Hood-funds", as in France, or due to the insufficiency of the more local semi-public donations the financial problems of the non-commercial local radios have been more serious from the end of the eighties. At the same period the commercial networks bought up of a number of non-commercial local radios and expanded across the national borders of France with names like *NRJ*, *Nostalgie*, *Skyrock* and *Fun*. This development has increased in the nineties. (Machill 1996: 393-415)

But the lack of coherence between public, proclaimed cultural policy and the financial follow-up from the states is not the only and sufficient explanation of the decline of the non-commercial local radio. The changes in the socio-cultural patterns in the communities, especially among the young audience, play a great part in these alterations. The expanding supply of media commodities in general, its differentiation and its sophistication has created new relations between sound and picture, between radio, television and video, making a striking appeal to new generations of post-modernism. The visions from the early seventies, the symbols and the desires which involved strong demands for cultural activities to be rooted in the local areas has been pushed in the background and replaced by a wider international outlook, based

on the experiences and the leisure time lifestyles from the metropol. (Lewis and Booth 1989:163)

Local Radio in Northern Europe

The other main line is represented by the Scandinavian countries. In Southern Europe the non-commercial local radios had to fight 'from below' to achieve a position in the legal media pattern. In Northern Europe the deregulation of radio and television was set through 'from above', by the governments, as part of a proclaimed public media policy with determined cultural intentions.

The non-commercial local radio was planned as a supplement to the public service radio, which had expanded in the local areas through the seventies as miniatures of the nationwide radio, if we look upon programme policy, formats etc. In the eighties the non-commercial local radio was set up as a tool for the communities to speak about themselves, addressing themselves on their own conditions. Open access in order to bring messages of any kind to the public – a radical extension of the freedom of speech. But just as in Southern Europe this idealistic start was supplemented by established investors and companies from the media system, dominated by the local and regional printed media. At least that was happening in Denmark and Norway, while the Swedish non-commercial local radio exclusively was reserved for different associations. It was strictly observed by the authorities not allowing commercial excesses of any kind. This exclusion of the commercial local radio came to end in Sweden in 1993 when a new law was passed, giving access for commercials in private, especially authorized private radio station – and for commercials in the non-commercial local radios as well.¹

In Denmark and Norway the deregulation of the public service institutions caused severe political confrontations, especially about the creation of the second national TV-channel and the way of financing it – by commercials or by license fees? That meant that local radio and television originally planned as strictly local instruments for local cultural purposes were used by the professional parts of the media system to present themselves to the contending politicians in order to show that in fact they were even competitors to *Danmarks Radio* and NRK, the Norwegian Broadcasting Company – and were able to take the responsibility of creating an effective commercial alternative to public service radio and television. The public media policy in a few years turned out to be more and more defensive, regulating afterward the media legislation to the "current conditions of the market". Add to this the consequent denying of subsidies, the non-recognition of non-commercial local radio as a cultural activity and you have the central background for the expanding commercial local radio sector after the approval of advertisements in 1988. But recent new legislations (1996) in Norway and Denmark have resulted in a more strict two-layer system of commercial and non-commercial radio. In Denmark an annual public subsidy of approx. 8 mil. US\$ has been established, aimed at the subvention of producing non-commercial local radio and television programmes. Maybe this initiative will turn the decline of the non commercial stations.

In the general picture drawn here it must not be forgotten that the Scandinavian countries to a certain extent have realized the original cultural intentions of the non-commercial local radio. But local radios of all types are still dominated by commercial "middle of the road"-music

stations with a minimum of local programming (music, news, features, interviews, drama etc.) but a maximum of audience attraction.

Outside the two main lines you can find several countries where it is quite difficult to summarize their media policy concerning radio. Exceptions are Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and Finland, where the establishing of local radio has not caused political turbulence as in other parts of Europe. The common political factor is a less centralized and monopolistic media policy.

The Link Up

Despite the fact that "the model of Southern Europe" was established after pressure from below and despite the fact that "the model of Northern Europe" was installed from above, there has been a remarkable approach between the two main lines at the beginning of the nineties: the non-commercial local radios all over Western Europe are facing similar problems.

First of all the original aims of cultural policy has been reduced or abandoned. Instead you find a growing commercial local radio sector, operating in the border area between local/regional and national levels – some stations even with transnational aspirations. The ideas of public access, added freedom of speech and information in the local communities etc. are surviving in even smaller niches. (Jauert & Prehn 1995: 179, Kuhn 1995:106, Machill 1996:399).

Secondly the diversity of programming has narrowed. Unfortunately media research has not yet developed comprehensive analyses of programme policy and programming of local radios both within the nation states and comparatively – in Europe, for instance. Several of the sources to this presentation claim that chart

music in combination with ultra-short news and service announcements, perhaps supplemented by quizzes and phone/fax-ins is the dominating format. In the countries with the most advanced networking the weighting between local spots and nationwide programme flow normally depends on the potential for commercials in the area. (Bens and Petersen 1992, Kleinsteuber 1991, Kleinsteuber 1992, Miller 1992)

Center and Periphery – Conflicts Between Tradition and Innovation

To make research in the cultural functions of the European non-commercial local radio has to consider the development just described – we are not dealing with culture in a unambiguous sense, but with conflicting phenomena in quite different social contexts and practices. The research project is trying to explore – in specific contexts of nationality and locality- the activities of non-commercial local radio broadcasting: Those activities is not exclusively regarded as connected to the radio programmes themselves, but we want to focus on the radio when used as a cultural tool with explicit aims to pursue. Local radios in this sense are supposed to serve basic needs of a socio-cultural character in the local communities: the daily life experienced sense of belonging to a certain place, a group of people, a certain way of living etc. Those daily experiences can be characterized as experiences of integrity – of belonging to a tradition, related to a multitude of private and social activities in everyday life. In the modern society mediated activities or media activities form a greater part of leisure time (and work time, too). Therefore it is essential for the project to find out in which ways local radio activities are related to everyday life in the commu-

nities as peripheral, cultural activities, oppositionally related to the cultures of the centres. It is the assumption of the project that modern culture is dominated by these tensions between dominated local or peripheral cultures on retreat and in opposition the dominating, expanding cultures of the centres. The project will try to investigate the basis of the cultural pessimism expressed through the concept of peripheral culture as a kind of cultural reservation, a place for folklore more than of living or 'authentic' culture. Is the non commercial local radio a instrument in the movement of preservation? Or can signs be found of creative and innovative uses of the tools of information society where the radios are trying to bridge the gap between past and present, between tradition and innovation.

The theoretical inspiration for the project has first of all been the German social philosopher Jürgen Habermas and especially his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Neuwied-Berlin 1962) and his *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns I-II*. (Frankfurt a.M. 1981) and the related discussions in European sociology and media studies about the conditions for establishing citizenship in modern societies.² Another central source of theoretical inspiration for the project is the German philosopher Ernst Bloch and the so-called Tübingen school of "Volkskunde" or "Kulturwissenschaft", represented mainly by Herman Bausinger.³ Within this tradition periphery is considered to be a complex mental construction of conceptions about what is called the "non-simultaneous" and the "simultaneous." The "non-simultaneous" are mental horizons and cultural practices related to historically distanced ways of living and producing, but – still active as concepts and guidelines for everyday life. The "simultaneous" is related to

the present (modern) material conditions for production and socio-cultural interaction – and both mental horizons are pointing to the "beyond simultaneous", the possibilities of the future, embedded in the conditions of present society. It is essential to stress that all three mental horizons, all three kinds of "simultaneousness" can exist in communities at the same time – as kinds of archeological strata in the specific cultural context of the community, giving nourishment to social practices and defining the limits of adequate social behaviour.

The Pilot Project

The empirical part of the project was defined as a pilot study in the three above mentioned localities, chosen from their ability to illustrate the concepts of the framing – the non commercial local radios as reflections of the cultural paradigm of center vs. periphery. This kind of procedure was in other words totally intended. The aim of the project is not at the macro level to present a general or quantitatively based comparative study, but to point out the more specific cultural functions of non commercial local radio, based on a small-scale qualitatively organized, micro-level study of the stations.

The pilot study was conducted over two months in Fall 1992 and Spring 1993, where I spent two weeks in Britany on three local stations, three weeks in Norway on several local stations in Oslo, Trondheim and Korgen near Mo i Rana. Finally I conducted research in my own home area, in Eastern Jutland, in the cities of Viborg and Aarhus. I prepared the visits during exchange of letters and written material about the station and the visits consisted of observations and interviewing. Observations mainly at the stations themselves but occasionally at cultural events in the

community and interviews among staff at the stations, key-persons in the communities: Mayors, civil servants from the municipalities, representatives of different associations in the area and people or 'common citizens' using the radio – as producers as well as listeners, both individually and in groups. The focus points of the interviews were to get the interview persons to describe their kind of actual relationship to the station, their concepts of its function – especially in relation to the supply of nationwide and transnational radio and television.

After the pilot study the theoretical and methodological framing of the project was elaborated and the intention is to revisit the stations and interview the same persons (or groups) after 5 years to observe the changes in the aiming and the functions of the radio stations. How may the rapid development of the media systems and especially the electronic media have influenced the practices of the local radio stations and how may the concepts of peripheral culture vs. central culture have changed in this period?

The Essence of Three Case Studies

Local Radios in Brittany

In the middle of Brittany (Bretagne in French Breizh in the Breton language) in Western France far out in the country in the village of St. Nicodeme you will find a local radio station in the old school building. The radio is called *Radio Kreiz Breizh* which means – "the radio in the middle of Brittany." It has been on the air for 24 hours a day since 1984 on a totally non-commercial basis, subventioned by around 50 municipalities in the area (the radio covers around 3-400 sq.miles), the regional, departmental authorities and the French

state. Two full-time employees and around ten-fifteen volunteers are working at the station from eight in the morning to six in the evening.

During evening and night hours prerecorded band music is played – not rocknroll or pop, but music from the region, french traditional music and classic music. Four hours in the middle of the day around noon and to hours in the late afternoon are central for the program policy of the station. The title of the programme is: "How we live in Brittany" and it consists of direct or prerecorded programmes from ongoing events in the region: from markets, schools, exhibitions and most of all: from the festivals or "fez noz" as they are called. All in the Breton language, of course. Or rather – in one of the four Breton dialects. Features and portraits of people from the area, cooking and baking programmes with guests, playing and singing their own music or telling stories and anecdotes are other central elements of the programme. And then lots of music – 50% of the program time during the day is local music from Brittany. Each week you have 3 or 4 new CD's on the market in Brittany with local music or music from Gaelic area, from Wales and Ireland first of all. This programme – "How we live in Brittany" - expresses the aim of the radio: to reflect, challenge and be a party of the living popular and everyday culture in Brittany, threatened by the centralism in French culture and politics and threatened as well by a mono cultural wave of commercial radio networks with exotic names, such as NRJ or FUN-radio with affiliates in the area. In a very heroic way *Radio Kreiz Breizh* insists of being part of the breton culture, still alive. As the director of the station, Hervé ar Begh, expresses it: "Britany is not a province of France, it is a nation." Interviewing people in the area

gave a clear impression of a radio, close connected to its listeners, especially the middle-aged generation still using the Breton language as their first language. The pride of the local culture represented in the programmes was incostestable. In the research interviews several of the listeners added personal experiences to the examples in the *Radio Kreiz Breizh* programmes of the French suppression of the regional culture and language – and of the self repression of the local culture as a lifelong result of the earlier ban of the Breton language in the public school and in public life in general. The Breton language being the language of peasants and social underdogs.

If you travel 100 km east – towards France – you will arrive in Pontivy, a small town with around 8.000 inhabitants and here you will find another Breton local radio, *Radio Bro-Gwened*, which is the name in Breton of the area around Pontivy. The language in this radio is also Breton – most of the time, but some of the service programmes and the news are in French as well. The structure and financing is similar to *Radio Kreiz Breizh*, but the programming is different. You will find more old, retired people – and a lot of children. The generation in between is not familiar with the language, but quite a lot of the families in this generation are sending their children to special private schools where part of the teaching is in the Breton tongue and some parts of the curriculum about the culture of the region – a double faced cultural upbringing you may call it. The difference to the area round *Radio Kreiz Breizh* seems obvious: the programming is not dealing with "the ways we are living in the Breton way." But they are dealing with what is done and what we can do to support and protect the fragile cultural heritage of Brittany.

Another 100 km at east – now even 'closer to France' – you will come across Rennes, the capital of Brittany. Here – among quite a few local radios, most of them commercial and affiliates of the nationwide private radio networks – you will find *Radio Rennes*, a radio based on the regional cultures of France. Breton culture being a part of the cultures represented, but not the only one. The main interest expressed in the programme schedule is music, art, theater and literature. Mostly music, though and the main profile of the radio is Breton culture, but looked upon with an intellectual perspective, reflecting the dominant attitude in the audience: young, urban citizens, some of them maybe from the cities from the west, from St. Nicodeme, Pontivy and other provincial areas in Brittany. The main interest is Breton as art – not as everyday life. The language is French – just a few persons in Rennes speak the language – or understand it. In daily life in Rennes the medium for the Breton culture has in fact disappeared.

As you quite easily can understand this little journey through the non commercial local radio landscape of Brittany reflects three different stages of the decline of living, authentic Breton culture: from the heroic insisting on the living everyday culture in the *Radio Kreiz Breizh* area where you clearly distinguishes between a "we" in Brittany and a "they" in France. Next stage: the caring and concerned involvement in Pontivy where you try to protect and revitalize the Breton culture – and being French at the same time. And finally the third stage in Rennes, where the interest is about culture in its artistic forms.

Or – is it not that simple? Is it just a question of a hopeless defence – struggle against anglo-franco-american culture, spreading along the lines of the commercial ra-

dios networks and not to forget – television? Is the movement of the Radios Libres or Radio Locales not of gloomy prospects where you try to build fences around a culture, developing into folklore or similar forms to be kept in museums? Looking upon the figures you might be confirmed in that assumption: during the last decade several hundreds of non commercial stations in France have closed or have changed to commercial stations, most of them affiliates to the nationwide networks, broadcasting live from the local area to a very limited extent, maybe one or two hours a day, some of them even without manning at all. (Machill 1996:397)

Taken from the interviews it seemed that living in a mixed media culture was not experienced as a real problem in any of the three places. Being related to the Breton culture meant different things for the people interviewed, depending mostly – it seemed from the considerations when asked about it- of the practices and routines of everyday life.

Rural Radio in Norway

Twenty km out of Mo i Rana in Mid Norway you are in Korgen, a small village with 500 inhabitants in a municipality of around 5000 people. Korgen has one of the more famous local radios in the Nordic countries. Why this position? I can give three main reasons. First of all the radio is owned by the inhabitants, having bought shares of a hundred NOK each. Secondly the radio programmes are produced by the local people themselves and of all kinds: from the local truck-driver to the director of the municipality office. And thirdly: the programmes – a few hours every evening and a few more hours in the weekend you can hear different kinds of news, reports

and conversations about events in the local area: what happened today when the sheep were taken down from the hills to be in the village during wintertime? How is their condition, any tracks of hostile bears coming from Sweden? Topics of relevance for the inhabitants of the area and specific for the circular way of living in rural areas where the turns of the season and the activities connected to the work are having a key position in the local culture – even for people not working as farmers. These activities of the local working culture connects the "non-simultaneous" and the "simultaneous" for the local population. Another example from the same evening programme was a prerecorded report from the newly established refugee camp in the village where a group of refugees from Bosnia had arrived a few weeks earlier. The reportage dealt with the conditions in the refugee camp, the activities, the children preparing for the local school etc. and the host of the programme then told what was planned for at the get together party in the village hall on the next Saturday night? How was the local culture going to deal with the 'intrusion', resulting from events far away. Was Korgen going to face the problems of multiculturalism, known from the cities or should this event be dealt with in other ways, related to customs from the general accepted and prospected friendly rural attitude towards newcomers to the area? This was the unexplicite but quite clear theme of this part of the programme.

The music profile of the station was not quite clear, but the personal taste of the head of the station, the local haulage contractor, was dominating through the programmes: American – and a bit Norwegian – country & music was played over and again. On my question about the listeners reaction to this the answer was simple: you

may not understand all the lyrics but country & music reflects "the feeling" of living out in the rural areas of Norway.

Through this pilot study *Radio Korgen* turned out to be an example of a successful mixture of foreign, American culture and local everyday culture from a 'bygde-radio' in Mid Norway? No obvious traces of cultural conflicts between center and periphery. The regional policy of the government during decades, trying to keep up production, social security and cultural diversity in the rural areas may be one of the main factors to explain this lack of obvious oppositional cultural attitudes towards the centre. Another reason may of course be found in the short period in which this study was conducted.⁴

Radio Viborg – More Radios in One

Viborg (40.000 inhabitants) is a city in Eastern part of Jutland, about 60 km from the coast. In 1984, during the experimental period (1983-1986) with local radio and television *Radio Viborg* was established as a 'modern' all-round local radio with a clear ambition of becoming the most popular radio station in the area, including the nationwide channels of *Danmarks Radio*. In just a year the station fulfilled this ambition and after the experimental period the station went professional and commercial, when ads were permitted in local radio and television in fall 1988.

Radio Viborg is an independent company, based on an association consisting of individual members and a lot of private companies in the areas. It is fully supported by the municipal authorities in Viborg and the surrounding smaller cities meaning that no other radio stations are allowed to operate in the area. As a result *Radio Viborg* is a quite special radio, because it is combining the functions of the traditionally di-

vided local radios – the commercial and the non-commercial stations.

During daytime (6 a.m. - 7 p.m.) *Radio Viborg* is a professional, commercial format radio, based on flow intervals of three hours. The programmes are based on chart music and the elements are: news (local, nationwide and international); service (weather, traffic, events); sports (including live reports) and phone-ins (quiz, contests etc.). After 7 p.m. *Radio Viborg* changes its identity – or at least its functions- and becomes a block-organized open channel, giving access to a wide range of associations, grass-root movements and small communities of the area. From midnight to 6 a.m. music is played.

The idea of this construction is quite clear: as a 'fully equipped' station the local listener is not supposed to switch to other radios: i.e. one of the three channels of *Danmarks Radio*. *Radio Viborg* is the alternative to *Danmarks Radio*. Why come, because it is quite a unique position of a small local radio with a reach of only 180.000 persons? The founding of the radio was quite clear as an opposition to *Danmarks Radio* and the paternalistic, centralistic culture of Copenhagen, dominating the programmes in the monopolistic era. The format of *Radio Viborg* from the beginning signaled at the same time rooting in local culture and innovation, modernization. The core of this phenomenon is the modes of address, combined with the issues dealt with in the radio. In opposition to *Danmarks Radio* the programmes of *Radio Viborg* is in the local tongue – the dialect of Eastern Jutland. The horizon of interests and the way the conversation between station and listeners is conducted is closely related to the everyday routines, imitating almost the phatic modes of personal communication: talks about the weather, the work, the activities of the lei-

sure time, especially the weekends in not very dramatic ways, but rather as a kind of acknowledgement of the 'pleasant way of living' in Viborg.

The shift from flow-organized radio in daytime to bloc-organized radio in the evening brings along others modes of address. The audience is now more clearly addressed in their capacity as citizens. They are informed about political, culturel or religious issues from the communities and are from time to time able to listen to or to participate in discussions about conflicts and problems in the community. Similar to the way it has been done in the monopoly period of *Danmarks Radio* for decades, but with an important difference: the possibility of access, of getting in dialogue through the radio.

In this – and in many other ways – the different uses of *Radio Viborg* reflects the interaction of different cultural practices along the lines of conflicts between centre and periphery.

Perspectives

The pilot study of the cultural functions of local radio in different national contexts have shown that the stations can be considered as points of crystallization of the cultural changes in different regions of Europe. Apart from the specific differences, depending on history, political traditions and social conditions we have found a variety of functions of the radios, expressing resistance to the consequences of 'development', 'innovation' or 'modernity'.

Most conflictual among the stations represented in the study seems the radios in Britany, where the regional culture for centuries have been marked by the central state of France in repressive ways, still remembered and still a living part of the common cultural heritage – at least in

some parts of the region. Some of the radios consider themselves as important tools in the fight for cultural survival connecting to suppressed, gaelic cultures in others regions of Europe. But at the same time looking eastwards and confronted with the reality of the Breton culture, still more assimilated in the modernized you find an awareness among the radio activists in St. Nicodeme and Pontivy of the cultural resistance as important and not hopeless at all. The children and young people going to schools and learning the Breton language may be regarded as one of the more promising signs of on which to base an optimistic view of the possibilities for the survival of the Breton culture. Not as artifacts in a folkloristic museum, but as experienced social realities in daily life.

The local radio stations in Northern Europe have been founded on a similar self-consciousness of belonging to the periphery, but the opposition to the centre is not an opposition primarily related to different notions of culture, but more to specific practices in the nationwide media institutions: experiences of neglectance and a real peripheral position in the media representation seems to be the essence of the subjective conceptions of the local radio functions in Norway as well as in Denmark. The assimilation of modern media culture in the non-commercial local radio in Northern Europe is striking and differs in a very obvious way from the stations, studied in Britany. American music and artifacts from 'global' cultural industry, i.e. music styles, programme formats, modes of addressing the audience is not seen as contrast to or intrusion in local culture, but as an 'accepted' or 'natural' way of making local radio in the interest of the local audience. The local station is a local voice – still one voice among other voices in the

media choir – but with possibilities of connecting the specific local 'feeling' of cultural heritage and identity with the globalizing media culture

The pilot study has just located the surface of the specific cultural oppositions between the periphery and the centre as

expressed in the subjective experiences of cultural functions in local radio. Further research has to go deeper into the analyses of the relations between the daily life in the communities, the subjective notions amongst the population of 'local culture' and the representation of these notions in the local radio stations.

Notes

1. This is an exemplification of the difficulties in using strict terms in this field. The non-commercial local radio broadcasting commercials seems to be "a contradictio in adjecto", pointing to the more correct term community radio or in Swedish: "närradio". To a more extended discussion of this problem, see Jauert & Prehn 1994:137
2. An introduction to this discussion can be found in Murdock, Graham (1993): 'Communications and the constitutions of Modernity'. In: *Media, Culture and Society* 15,4.: 521-539 and in Dahlgren, Peter & Colin Sparks (eds.) (1991): *Communication and Citizenship. Journalism and the public sphere*. London. Routledge.
3. The main work of Ernst Bloch related to the concept of centre vs. periphery is "Erb-schaft dieser Zeit" (1935): Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt a. M. 1977 and a brilliant overview of the Tübingen tradition can be found in Elisabeth Moosmann (ed.) (1980): "Heimat. Sehnsucht nach Identität." Ästhetik und Kommunikation Verlag. Berlin.
4. It has to be stressed that the pilot study does not pretend to be ethnographic in its methods, which would at least require a longer period of living in the area, doing observations and making more interviews.

References

- Bens, E. d. and V.G. Petersen (1992) 'Models of Local Media Development'. In: Siune, K. and W. Truetschler (eds.): *Dynamics of Media Politics. Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe*. 154-178. London. Sage.
- Bergelman, J.-C. and C. Pauwels (1992) 'Audio-visual policy and cultural identity in small European states: the challenge of a unified market'. In: *Media, Culture & Society* 14, 2: 169-185. London.
- Drijvers, J. (1992): 'Community broadcasting: a manifesto for the media policy of small European countries.' *Media, Culture & Society*. 14,2: 193-202. London.
- Jankowski, Nick, Ole Prehn & Frank Stappers (eds.) (1992): *The People's Voice. Local radio and television in Europe*. London: John Libbey & Co.
- Jauert, Per (1997): 'Radio i en tv-tid' ['Radio in the Age of Television'] In: Klaus Bruhn Jensen (ed.) *Dansk Mediehistorie*, vol. 3. [Danish Media History, vol. 3.] Copenhagen. Samleren. In print.
- Jauert, Per & Ole Prehn (1994): 'Local Radio Policy in Europe and Scandinavia. *The Nordicom Review*, No. 1, 1994, Special Issue. Gothenburg.
- Jauert, Per & Ole Prehn (1995): *Lokalradio og lokal-tv. Nu og i fremtiden*. [Local radio and lo-

- cal television, present and future]. Copenhagen: Ministry of Culture.
- Jauert, Per & Ole Prehn (1996): 'Ownership and Concentration in Local Radio Broadcasting in Scandinavia.' *The Nordicom Review*, No. 1, 1996, Special Issue. Gothenburg.
- Kleinsteuber, H.J.(ed.) (1991): *Radio – das unterschätzte Medium*. Berlin:Vistas.
- Kleinsteuber, H.J. (1992) 'The Global Village Stays Local'. In: Siune, K. and W. Treutzschler (eds.): *Dynamics of Media Politics. Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe*: 143-153. London: Sage.
- Kleinsteuber, H.J. and U. Sonnenberg (1989): "'Radio in Grenzen." Nicht-kommerzielle Lokalradios in Westeuropa'. *Rundfunk und Fernsehen* 2/3.: 283-294. Hamburg.
- Kleinsteuber, H.J. and U. Sonnenberg (1990) 'Beyond Public Service and Private Profit: International Experience with Non – commercial Local Radio'. *European Journal of Communication* 5, 1: 87-106. London.
- Kuhn, Raymond (1995): *The Media In France*.London. Routledge.
- Lewis, Peter M. and Jerry Booth (1989): *The Invisible Medium. Public, Commercial and Community Radio*. London. Macmillan.
- Machill, Marcel (1996): 'The French Radio Landscape'. *European Journal of Communication*, 11,3. London.
- Miller, J. (1992) 'From *radios libres* to *radios privées*: the rapid triumph of commercial networks in French local radio'. *Media, Culture & Society* 14, 2: 261-281. London.
- Siune, Karen & W. Treutzschler (eds.) (1992): *Dynamics of Media Politics. Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe*. London. Sage.
- Trappel, J. (1991): *Medien Macht Markt. Medienpolitik westeuropäischer Kleinstaten*. Wien-St. Johann/Pongau: Österreichischer Kunst und Kulturverlag.
- Østergaard, B.S. (ed.) (1992) *The Media in Western Europe. The Euromedia Handbook*. London. Sage.