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The Introduction of broadcast advertising in Norway

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The introduction of broadcast advertising in Norway

Hjelmesaeth, Frode Sture, M.S.

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**THE INTRODUCTION
OF BROADCAST ADVERTISING
IN NORWAY**

A Thesis

Presented to

**The Faculty of the Department of
Journalism and Mass Communications
San Jose State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science**

by

Frode Sture Hjelmesaeth

August, 1989

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Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	v
Chapter	
1 Introduction	1
Statement of Problem	1
Norway, Its People, Its Media	1
2 Literature Review and Historic Summary	7
The Beginning (1925-40)	7
The Parenthesis (1945-80)	12
The Spring Thaw (1980-)	18
The Current Situation	28
Policy Trends and the European Connection	36
3 Methodology	39
Population	39
The Interviews	39
4 Findings	46
General Observations	46
Factors Forcing a Change	47
Impact on Culture	49
Impact on National Identity	53

Table of Contents (continued)

Chapter		Page
	Impact on Political Party Structure	55
	Impact on Social Environment	57
	Evaluating Broadcast Advertising	59
	NRK	63
	Ratings	66
	Regulations	68
	Scandinavian Comparisons	70
5	Conclusions and Recommendations	74
	Impact of Broadcast Advertising	74
	NRK	80
	Regulations	83
	Works Cited	86

Tables

Table	Page
1. Mass Media	5
2. Party Programs	22
3. Daily Average Radio and Television Usage	29
4. Norway's Advertising Market 1986-88	30
5. Party Preference 1985-89	31
6. Interviews	42
7. Interview Schedule	45

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Statement of Problem

After half a century of advertising-free, government-sponsored broadcasting in Norway, the 1980s became a decade of radical changes in public mass media policy. Some of the changes include: (1) Commercial satellite TV channels available on cable, (2) experiments with local independent radio and TV, (3) the dissolution of the government's broadcasting monopoly, and (4) debate about a second national TV channel. Most significantly, in May 1988, the ban on broadcast advertising was lifted.

These fundamental changes have opened new opportunities and possibilities, and public and legislative attention is turning to the future. What lies ahead? The political views range from giving the market forces free reign, to opting for a slow, controlled development. But many also express fears and concerns for the impact on national culture, language, and society.

This thesis will examine three topics:

- (1) Broadcast advertising's impact on Norwegian society.
- (2) The future of the Norwegian Broadcast Corporation (NRK).
- (3) The prospects for broadcast advertising regulations.

Norway. Its People. Its Media

Norway is a Scandinavian social democratic welfare state with a mixed economy (regulated, free enterprise capitalism). It is dominated by the ideology of the

Norwegian Labor Party (Det Norske Arbeiderparti, DNA), which has headed the government for thirty-seven years during the period 1935-81 ("Norway" 263).

A modern, industrialized Western democracy, Norway is governed by a cabinet of eighteen ministers, responsible to a 157-member Parliament (Storting) that is elected for fixed four-year terms, on the basis of proportional representation, by all Norwegians eighteen years of age or older.

"Norway has one of the highest standards of living in the world" (260). The literacy rate is 100 percent, all schools are free, and much health care in the national health system is free. "A system of social security helps to maintain an adequate standard of living for all, regardless of income, and provides basic retirement pension, irrespective of former income" (262).

Christianity was introduced by King Olav Haraldsson in the eleventh century, and today the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Norway is a state church with 88 percent of the population as members (Faarlund 12).

A colony under Denmark 1380-1814, and junior partner in a forced union with Sweden 1814-1905, Norway has developed a strong sense of political independence and physical isolation from the rest of Europe. A general skepticism to supranational blocks led Norway to declare itself neutral in both World Wars, but the 1940 German Nazi assault and subsequent occupation triggered a post-World War II debate over Norway's vulnerability. Following the collapse of talks over a proposed Nordic military alliance and the 1948 communist coup in Czechoslovakia, Norway joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a founding member in 1949.

Anti-European (and especially anti-German) sentiments are still strong, and a proposal to join the European Community (EC) was rejected in a referendum in 1972.

Increased travel and tourism, growing immigration, a general trend of internationalization, and an ever successful EC, have contributed to a renewed EC-debate. Seventeen years after the emotional anti-EC referendum, Norwegian politicians now push for a slow, relaxed adjustment to the prospect of a possible Community membership. Although the anti-European and nationalistic sentiments still run high, the EC supporters want stronger ties with the European Free-Trade Association, and count on an inevitable drift into the European Community in the course of the 1990s.

The country is long and narrow; the distance from its southern tip to its northern mainland tip roughly equals the distance between San Diego and Seattle, and its width ranges from about 269 to four miles. Topographically, it is rugged and mountainous, with deep fjords, narrow valleys, and with some fifty thousand islands (6). The unique geography, the long distances, and the low population density (thirty-three persons per square mile) are major obstacles to overcome when establishing systems of communications and a national broadcast coverage.

Only 2.8 percent of the land is cultivated, less than 1 percent is populated, 20 percent is forest, 5 percent is lakes, and the rest is bedrock and mountains. Of a population of 4.2 million, approximately a hundred thousand are foreign nationals or immigrants (11).

Forming the western margin of the Scandinavian peninsula, Norway borders to Sweden, Finland, and the Soviet Union to the east, and fronts the Norwegian Sea (North Atlantic Ocean) to the west and the Barents Sea (Arctic Ocean) to the north.

Gross National Product (GNP) is 76.6 billion dollars, and GNP per capita is \$18,700 (Nordic Statistical Secretariat 27). The main industry is offshore petroleum

and natural gas production, which makes up about 20 percent of the GNP.

Norwegian is considered a Germanic language, and two official forms, Book Language (Bokmal) and New Norwegian (Nynorsk), are in use. Book Language is Norwegianized Danish, and evolved from the five centuries of Danish rule, when all written material had to be in Danish, which was the only official language. As part of a nineteenth century nationalist movement, philologist Ivar Aasen (1813-96) created New Norwegian, a written language based on the surviving old Norwegian rural dialects. The proportion of New Norwegian users has stayed relatively steady at 20 percent throughout this century, and is traditionally championed by some socialists as the "people's tongue," as opposed to the "bourgeois" Book Language. Norwegian students are expected to be proficient in both forms, in addition to Swedish, Danish, English, and a second non-Scandinavian language. Book Language and New Norwegian are both recognized as Norwegian--on equal terms--in the country's constitution, and are mutually comprehensible. The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (Norsk Rikskringkasting, NRK) has codified a minimum New Norwegian quota of 25 percent in its programming.

The earliest Norwegian literature is the Sagas and Eddas, oral mythological poetry and viking legends recorded in Old Norse in Iceland, during the early Middle Ages. The first newspaper, Norske Intelligenz-Seddel, was published in Kristiania (Oslo) in 1763, and the oldest existing paper, Adresseavisen, was established in Trondheim in 1767 (Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Newspapers" 2).

Since 1966, the Norwegian government has provided newspapers with direct and indirect financial aid. "It has been estimated that government support corresponds to between 15 and 20 percent of the newspapers' total turnover" (10).

In 1980, there were five cities with three or more dailies, twenty-two with two, and eighty-seven with only one. Over 60 percent of today's newspapers were established before 1910, and most are more or less affiliated with political parties or tendencies. The relatively high circulation (Table 1) reflects that Norwegians are avid newspaper readers.

Table 1
Mass Media

Medium	Quantity	Total circulation/ households	Year
Daily newspapers	159	2,512,725	1985
National weekly magazines	12	1,937,956	1988
Trade magazines	170	2,200,000	1983
Television	1	1,443,020	1986
Cable Television	-	410,000	1988

(Sources: Royal Norwegian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, 1983, 1986, and Culture and Science, 1988; Nytt fra Norge, 1989; NRK 1987)

Radio was started in 1925, and television in 1960. The single TV channel (NRK-TV) and the two (P2 was introduced in 1981) radio stations (NRK-radio) are run by the government-funded NRK, and have been advertising-free since 1940.

The conservative government that came to power in 1981, drastically altered traditional broadcasting policy. It granted experimental radio licenses to private organizations, and allowed cable operators to distribute foreign-originated satellite TV channels. In 1987, the local radio system was made permanent. NRK's legally sanctioned broadcasting monopoly was terminated the same year, and radio advertising was legalized.

Historically, advertising per se has never enjoyed unequivocal acceptance in Norway. As Sundar points out: "Although advertising is a natural part of our daily lives, . . . there are few other issues that are capable of triggering such strong emotional reactions" (83). Reflecting the skeptical view, Aaberge states that "advertising is basically partisan, and therefore contrary to the consumers' ideal desire for commodity information" (205).

Half a century of social democratic philosophical and ethical dominance has resulted in an atmosphere in which many (such as Aaberge) view advertising (and to some extent, private business and entrepreneurship) more as a social burden than an asset. Thus, when the idea of TV advertising was discussed in the mid-1960s, even a centrist Member of Parliament such as Einar Hovdhaugen (Center Party) could not imagine commercials "performing any important social task" (NOU, Broadcast advertising 22).

The Norwegian repugnance against broadcast advertising therefore takes a moral character: It is often viewed as vulgar, needless decadence that insults one's intelligence. Thus, according to Hoaas, "the whole corporate culture of . . . NRK gets twisted out of shape when one imagines advertisements for chewing gum and cat food along with honorable programs" (18).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review and Historical Summary

The Beginning (1925-40)

The first regular radio broadcasts in Norway were started 29 April 1925 in the capital Oslo by Kringkastingsselskabet (The Broadcasting Company). Although private capital, led by radio companies Marconi, Telefunken, and Western Electric, owned a considerable part of the stocks and dominated the board of directors, the government was still well represented on the board, through representatives from the ministries of church and commerce. This influence (without financial participation) was reasonable, according to Ostbye ("One monopoly" 247), since the government surrendered the claim to monopoly it was entitled to in the Law on Telegraphy. Although the public Telegraph Agency (Telegrafverket) would have preferred to operate all broadcasting on its own, Dahl states that "there were no public funds available to build a broadcasting operation in Norway" (Every day 14).

Kringkastingsselskabet was allowed three sources of financing: Listener fee, tax on radio sets, and radio commercials. The license contract limited the time allotted to commercials to 15 percent, but in reality the proportion never surpassed 1.2 percent of total air time (NOU, Broadcast advertising 17).

Although private radio companies were later established in Bergen and Tromsø, the Telegraph Agency was responsible for the technical equipment. In Alesund, the agency owned and operated the station. Thus the government secured its influence from the beginning, even though it let private entrepreneurs carry the financial burden of pioneering. One example of government interference is mentioned by Ostbye: "The Ministry of Commerce prevented an attempt by Kringkastingsselskabet to give a

presentation of the political parties' programs in connection with an election" (247).

The Telegraph Agency and the Ministry of Commerce criticized the private broadcasters for excessive bureaucracy and lack of rural coverage. Radio advertising as such was not under attack.

According to Dahl, there were two major concerns: Skepticism against private corporations making profit on a public utility (the airways), and the disproportional coverage of the country. Raaum blends the two concerns into the "principle of justice", that "all citizens have basically the same right to a public service - in this case radio broadcasts" (67). Since it wasn't profitable to extend broadcast services to the more remote areas of the country, all-national coverage would not be a priority for private companies. Thus, only Norwegians in the largest cities would receive radio signals, a clear violation of the principle of justice.

Consequently, in 1930, the government, pressed by the Ministry of Commerce, submitted a proposal for a partial public takeover. Programming would continue to be on private hands, but the government would be in charge of the rest. The proposal was opposed by the Ministry of Church, and was returned for new consideration.

Minister of Church Knut Liestol had become interested in the cultural and educational potential of radio through his position on the board of the Broadcasting Company. His ministry authored a renewed and expanded proposal for total government control that was submitted in 1932.

A Parliament majority consisting of the Labor Party (DNA), the Liberal Party (Venstre), and parts of the Agrarian Party (Bondepartiet, later known as Senterpartiet--the Center Party) passed the proposed monopoly law in January 1933. The Conservative Party (Hoyre), the Conservative Liberal Party (Frisinnede Venstre, folded later), and the rest of the Agrarian Party opposed the law.

Dahl suggests a firm NRK alliance between DNA and Venstre through the

mid-1970s. Since Liestol's choice for director general, Olav Midttun, was a New Norwegian advocate, the NRK was from its conception considered a "radical institution. Venstre and the New Norwegian movement closed ranks with the labor movement in the defense of a centralized government-run broadcasting institution based on the people's tongue" (34). The alliance was broken when Venstre was nearly wiped out from Parliament in the late 1970s.

The Broadcasting Act of 1933 granted NRK the exclusive right to broadcast in Norway. However, the government could, in special cases (section 1, subsection 4), or in connection with experimental activities (subsection 5), "grant parties other than the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation the right to engage in limited broadcasting activities" (Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Independent broadcasting" 1). These subsections were the legal loophole that allowed the conservative minister of Culture and Science to initiate experiments with independent local radio operations in 1981.

Rolland and Ostbye explain the wish for a radio monopoly controlled by the elected officials as a reaction to the problems experienced in the early days of broadcasting in the United States, when stations often crossed frequencies: "The American experience had shown that broadcast communication could not function without traffic regulations, otherwise the whole communication process would collapse. The European latecomers were determined not to repeat the mistakes made by the innovators" (120).

They also point to the fact that "there was a demand for national networks" concurrent with an economic depression (122). Besides, it was obvious that no commercial broadcasting company would bleed itself to death financially by building transmitters and relay stations to reach households out on the remote islands and in the deepest fjords. Raaum stresses this in his principle of justice. Ostbye introduces two

other reasons for Norwegians' complacency with broadcast monopoly. One is the feeling of participation and collective ownership: "With the government running NRK, we are all filled with the feeling of possessing the right to criticize--the owner's right" ("One monopoly" 295).

Norwegians felt they were part-owners, and loved to discuss and criticize "their" broadcasting operation. Another reason is the homogeneity and singularity of the country's institutions: One church system, one school system, one university system, one health care system, and all are the responsibility of the government, or "the public," as Norwegians prefer to put it. Pointing to the theories of Galtung and Gleditsch (756-765), Ostbye suggests four explanations for this singularity:

- 1) that Norway is a small and poor country that cannot afford double coverage,
- 2) that in Norway the ideology is that everybody should be treated equally, regardless of who they are or where they live,
- 3) that it's accepted that the government may run such institutions in a way that different voices can be heard within them . . . , and finally,
- 4) that the whole system is a heritage from the era of absolute power and the time Norway had colony status and was dependent on a center outside the country's border. (295)

Therefore, there was little public outcry when the radio monopoly was established, which happened only twenty-eight years after Norway gained independence from Sweden. The country suffered from an international depression, and people out in the districts wanted radio. As Dahl puts it: "From 1930 it was obvious that the government had to take over" (16).

The takeover was smooth. Only the top leadership was changed, by adding new board members and the new position of director general. The whole staffs of Kringkastingselskabet and the Bergen and Tromsø operations continued, but under new regulations.

Radio advertising was discussed by the Program Council in November 1933, and it unanimously decided to keep it, but to restrict it: "The regular radio advertising is a less-than-desired part of the programming, and should be limited to the least possible" (NOU, Broadcast advertising 17).

The daily schedule included fifteen minutes of commercials at 7 p.m., plus five minutes for local advertising. Revenues from the ads never exceeded 3.7 percent of NRK's total annual revenues, but in October 1937 the NRK leadership nevertheless decided to continue with advertising, partly because the operation had good use for the money. The other reason cited was the wishes of the business community (ibid.).

Dahl considers the pre-World War II years a "phase of consolidation." He quotes Arnold Raestad, chairman of the board: "In a time of transition and reorganization it's only natural that many feel their interests are being threatened and that the most aggressive people initiate attacks" (31).

Raestad came under attack himself, for alleged corruption, and Dahl suggests the massive public debate over NRK during its first years came about partly because of the novelty of radio, and partly because of the public ownership, which in itself incited citizens to criticize "their" institution.

Minister of Church Liestol saw broadcasting as a social institution that was especially vulnerable to irrational myth-spinning from its contemporaries. In a speech to Parliament in 1934, he said that "Raestad has become a mythical figure, a wizard. Fiction sprouts around him as if he were Charlemagne" (ibid.).

Radio advertising, however, never became a major issue until April 1939, when Social Party (Samfunnspartiet, later folded) representative Johannes Johansen submitted to Parliament a proposed expansion of advertising time, to cut down on listener fees. The proposal backfired; during a broad and thorough discussion on 13 June that year, a majority expressed their wishes to discontinue radio advertising

altogether. The NRK board of directors began working on a plan for gradually phasing out ads, but was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II on 1 September 1939. Although Norway--as in World War I--declared its neutrality, there still was a concern for foreign espionage from Norwegian territory. Fearing coded military messages might be hidden in commercials, NRK stopped all new advertising effective 21 September. The Ministry of Church and Education (as it now was called) later wholeheartedly supported the move. Thus the winding up was still in progress when invading Nazi German storm troops took over on 9 April 1940, definitely stopping all commercial messages (ibid.).

In 1941 Nazi commander Josef Terboven banned and ordered the confiscation of all radio receivers. Only trusted members of the miniscule local Nazi traitor party (Nasjonal Samling, led by Vidkun Quisling) were allowed to keep theirs. The Nazis feared that Norwegians would listen to "subversive" broadcasts from the exiled Norwegian King Haakon VII and the social democratic government (led by Prime Minister Johan Nygaardsvold) in London.

The Parenthesis (1945 - 80)

In Dahl's NRK anniversary article, reviewing half a century of broadcast monopoly, he suggests that the previous fifty years ultimately will be appreciated as more than merely a historical parenthesis ("Fifty years" 161). The main product of the period, he says, is the completion of the enormous task of bringing broadcast coverage to the entire country, to all corners of the long-stretched Norway. The implication is that a market-oriented free enterprise system in the field of broadcasting would not be able to achieve that goal, since it'd have been constrained by the profit motive.

Not discussed by Dahl here, however, is the position of broadcast advertising. After the German Nazis effectively terminated commercial messages over Norwegian airways in 1940, the issue evolved into a touchy question of radically altering what

had become national broadcasting policy and tradition. Relegated to a mere subdivision under the question of financing the broadcast operation, the NRK bureaucracy preferred government funding and listener fees. In that way, the operation was ideologically clean (not influenced by "outside" market forces), and budgeting was planned and predictable (when needs increased, just turn the fee screw or take a bigger bite of the national budget).

Besides, even from the start of Kringkastingsselskabet, the radio ads "were never popular among the radio staffers themselves. They viewed the toothpaste rignaroles and the praising of throat lozenges as objectionable banalities" (Dahl, Every day 37).

Social democratic paternalism and egalitarianism permeated Norwegian society during the reconstruction period after the ravages of World War II. After the former school headmaster and DNA ex-Minister of Church Kaare Fostervoll became NRK's new director general in 1949, "NRK became a responsible political institution, a consciously utilized information instrument for the [DNA] government" (44).

In this environment, even the introduction of television was something suspicious, scary, and alarming. According to Ostbye, the NRK leadership initially opposed TV, but in the early 1950s, Parliament and NRK agreed on a slow-paced, controlled development. Ostbye mentions two strong sentiments against television: There was a "general skepticism towards new things, and a fear that television would become too influential and powerful over people's lives," and there was also perceived a "danger of internationalizing Norwegian culture" ("One monopoly" 249).

It is hard to characterize this period any other way but a parenthesis, regardless of the efforts to complete the national coverage. What succeeding DNA governments did, was actually to expand the reach of what Dahl calls the government's "consciously utilized information instrument" (Every day 44).

As one of the last European nations to do so, Norway started regular TV

broadcasting in 1960, six years after Denmark.

During the 1950s' debate over TV, the advertising issue refaced. Maybe TV ads could help finance the new medium, it was suggested. The Television Committee of 1950 advised against the idea in its final report, submitted in September 1951: "The Committee cannot recommend that a Norwegian television operation--neither in part nor in whole--should be disposed to private advertising activity as it is, among other places, in the United States; the Committee therefore excludes the idea of financing television through such activity" (NOU, Broadcast advertising 19).

The only acceptable solution, according to the committee, was to follow in the footsteps of Great Britain and the other Scandinavian countries, and collect annual viewer fees.

The working committee in charge of TV development submitted a report in August 1956 wherein it recommended not to "veer off the course followed by NRK up to now" (20). The report also disputed the need for advertising: "What the consumers really miss today, is factual and informatory analysis, not suggestive and persuasive advertising" (ibid.).

After repeated requests from the Federation of Norwegian Advertisers (Norske Annonsører Forening), the Ministry of Church and Education conducted an inquiry with several organizations and institutions over the issue in the spring of 1958. An overwhelming majority of organizations involved with commerce and industry expressed support for TV advertising. The ministry decided to shelve its findings, and made no changes in policy.

That same year the Business Community's TV Council (Naeringslivets TV-utvalg) was established, and it relentlessly lobbied the ministry for further research. The ministry postponed all discussion, expressing hopes for new directions from debates in the Nordic Council, to be held the following year.

The Nordic Council, gathered in July 1959, found that "right now there's no sufficient basis to deal with the issue of television advertising on a Nordic level. The Council joined this view thirty-eight to seventeen votes, and decided not to do anything in this area" (21).

In February 1963, the Business Community's TV Council contacted NRK, arguing that neither NRK, Parliament, nor the Ministry of Church and Education had taken any final stand in the controversy over TV commercials, but had instead counted on some future bipartisan committee to thoroughly investigate the issue. The council suggested experiments with TV ads, but was turned down by NRK as well as by the ministry.

During the following years, Parliament debated the issue several times. Advertising advocates, according to the Kjolas report, argued that increased NRK revenues (from advertising) would result in higher-quality programming (22). Opponents stressed advertising's exploitation of human weaknesses, its creation of false values, and its contribution to increased retail prices.

Stalling bureaucrats scrambled to their feet when the Color Council (Farveradet) started a cable TV channel in parts of Oslo in 1965. With a programming schedule consisting mainly of entertainment and commercials, it was not clear whether this kind of TV distribution violated the exclusive right of the NRK to broadcast.

At this time, a non-socialist coalition government had just taken office, breaking a 30-year long period of continuous social democratic control. A broadcasting committee (the Bratholm Committee) was appointed in March 1966, and its mandate was two-fold: To inquire and recommend action in the Color Council cable case and to survey the issue of broadcast advertising.

The parliamentary debate over that issue on 25 April that year revealed deep-rooted skepticism against commercials within all parties. Einar Hovdhaugen

(Center Party--Sp) feared that broadcast ads would hurt newspapers and cause bankruptcies. He also could not imagine commercials "performing any important social task" (ibid.).

Halfdan Hegtun (Venstre) noted that "such advertising would be very expensive, and in reality be available to big-money enterprises only" (23). He would, however, not categorically reject possible TV ads in the future.

Torild Skar (Socialist People's Party, Sosialistisk Folkeparti) opposed any form of commercialization. She said advertising's "impact is far from purely positive; partly because it creates demand, regardless whether this is desirable from a social point of view; partly because it advocates values that can only be characterized as flat-out materialism" (ibid.).

Hakon Johnsen (DNA) charged that the Color Council's cable operation was an attempt to blackmail Parliament into accepting its commercials as a fait accompli.

Kristian Asdahl (Hoyre) reminded the others of the positive aspects of commercials; more revenue and more opportunities. He also quoted a recent opinion poll that showed that 82 percent of the TV viewers favored commercials if that would result in better programs (22).

The Bratholm Committee, in a separate report submitted in November 1966, recommended an extension of the Broadcasting Act of 1933 to include cable into NRK's exclusive domain. An addition to section 1 was quickly passed, and eventually sanctioned in 1971. The second Bratholm report, submitted in 1968, revealed a deep split in the committee. Three members were opposed to TV advertising, while the remaining three recommended it. The committee calculated that the daily press would lose 10 percent of its ad revenues, and the weekly press 20 percent, in case TV advertising was introduced. The committee unanimously rejected the idea of radio advertising, however, because "from a financial point of view, there

wouldn't be much to gain from radio ads, while the disadvantages would be considerable" (25).

Finally, in April 1970 the Ministry of Church and Education presented its long-awaited parliamentary report on broadcast advertising. The ministry joined the anti-advertising faction of the Bratholm committee, and adopted its arguments. Minister Kjell Bondevik (Christian People's Party, Kristelig Folkeparti--KrF) observed that the heaviest argument in favor of advertising--increased revenue--did not outweigh the disadvantages:

Even if the commercials were submitted to strict control when it comes to form and content, and were broadcast on a restricted schedule, the ministry believes that they would still entail inconveniences. One cannot allow a government monopoly like the broadcasting corporation to submit others to these inconveniences just in order to secure the monopoly's own expansion. (ibid.)

This expansion is the responsibility of the government, Bondevik said, and the pace of development must be adjusted according to the priorities given, without such outside financing. However, Bondevik said he was open to re-evaluate the question if other Scandinavian countries changed their stance, and "furthermore, the rapid technological development, for example with satellites and commercial broadcasts via them, may lead to a situation in which commercials on NRK no longer would be doubtful (ibid.).

Parliament's Standing Committee on Church and Education presented its recommendations in February 1971, basically supporting the ministry's report on all issues. During the parliamentary discussions over the recommendations, most speakers rallied behind the committee's conclusions. Committee member Lars Roar Langslet (Hoyre) said there was no urgent need for increased NRK revenues. Tor Oftedal (DNA) raised concern over a possible disproportionate power balance between

the printed press and broadcasting in case ad revenues were to boost NRK. Ola Rossum (Sp) feared that by allowing commercials, NRK would "weaken its free and independent position", and negatively alter its programming policy (27).

Jakob Aano (KrF) stressed the ethical aspect: "I recognize the often negative power of advertising, because I believe the forces driving people to profit hunger are so strong that if let loose, they would pursue their goals without considering what would benefit or what would hurt their fellow man" (ibid.).

After these massive condemnations of broadcast advertising, the issue was virtually dead, and the social democrats retained government control throughout the decade. In April 1979, an amendment banning all broadcast advertising cruised through Parliament, and was added to section 9 of the Broadcasting Act of 1933 (28).

The Spring Thaw (1980 -)

Lindh sees technology as the catalyst of what journalists and politicians call "the new media situation" and "the media spring thaw" in the early 1980s. The new situation, he says, "is a good example of how technology dominates development when politicians, official experts, and researchers don't stay sufficiently informed about what's happening in the field of technology" (98).

Keller, however, points to the impact of enthusiastic individuals and excited amateurs' relentless efforts:

While politicians fiddled in committees, loath to loosen their so far tightly upheld control of all airborne media and quick to mobilize the monster image of television run amuck as an orgy of sitcom-cum-ads, entrepreneurs burned brightly everywhere with attempts at establishing their own de facto alternative TV operation. (Entrepreneurs 124)

In the wake of the punk and new-wave movement that energized young Norwegians in the late 1970s, a new sense of aggressiveness and individual self-confidence spread throughout the musical and cultural circles, shattering the

mental chains of Marxism and dogmatism that had stymied bold innovativeness and creative initiative for two decades. NRK's programming, which according to Dahl, "in style and mood, had (always) been somewhat staunch and slow" (Every day 37), was publicly characterized by prominent DNA representative Reiulf Steen as "very boring" (Lindh 104). Norway was fed up, and ready for a change.

February 1980 marked a historic breakthrough in post-war Norwegian media debate. Hoyre's Broadcasting Committee presented a topic paper that radically changed traditional arguments and set a new agenda for the debate in the eighties. The conservative committee bluntly stated that "the original arguments in support of the broadcasting monopoly are either substantially reduced or totally nullified" (NOU, Broadcast advertising 29). Furthermore, it noted that cable had diminished the argument of limited frequencies, and that modern technology had drastically lowered the costs of radio and TV broadcasting. Most significantly, the committee declared that "it's hardly possible to imagine a sufficient basis of revenues for alternative, independent broadcasting unless some form of financing through advertising is accepted" (*ibid.*).

In the 1981 parliamentary elections, the non-socialist parties won the majority of the seats, and Hoyre established government, with party leader Kare Willoch as prime minister. The Willoch government immediately launched experiments with independent local radio broadcasting and cable TV, utilizing the loophole in the Broadcasting Act of 1933, provided by subsections 4 and 5 of section 1. Responsibility for broadcasting matters was transferred from the Ministry of Church and Education to the newly-formed Ministry of Culture and Science. Broadcasting reformist Lars Roar Langslet was appointed to head the new ministry and to administer the new policies.

Langslet moved cautiously, but already during the first trial period (until summer

of 1984), experimental permits were granted to "50 organizations, groups and clubs to operate local radio, 7 cable TV companies to broadcast TV programmes [sic] transmitted via satellite from the English company Satellite Vision Ltd (Sky Channel) and two companies to broadcast French broadcasts from Satellimage" (Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Independent broadcasting" 2).

Advertising was still illegal (banned in a subsection to the Broadcasting Act's section 9 in 1979), but in June 1982 the Hoyre government appointed a broadcast advertising committee, headed by Harald Kjolås, to research the issue. A majority in another committee, the Local Radio Committee, offered its report in November same year, and recommended legalized advertising "within specified limits" (NOU, Broadcast advertising 29). And most significantly, Rupert Murdoch's Sky Channel, distributed by cable to 92,400 households, brought for the first time since the Color Council's short lifespan TV advertising to Norwegian viewers. Several of the 2,500 commercial spots aired in 1983 were ads for Norwegian products.

In NRK's yearbook for 1982, Dahl writes that the idea of "the natural monopoly" finally had lost its hold over people's minds (162). NRK director general Bjartmar Gjerde capitulates; "the broadcasting monopoly is, in fact, broken" (3).

Feeling the competition from the successful experimental radio broadcasters, NRK soon launched a second radio channel--P2--with popular music and lighter entertainment. Parliament extended the trials for two more years from September 1984, but the volunteers and amateurs already struggled hard with financing, not being allowed to air advertising.

A note on NRK's reaction to the independent broadcasters: Lindh says it took two years before the NRK bureaucrats realized "that the new media actually represented competition to NRK" (104). And, suspiciously enough, in the report NRK in a new media situation, director general Gjerde hardly mentions the

experiments with local broadcasting. Instead he states: "It's natural to rely on the premise that NRK still will play a central part in the overall media picture, and fulfill cultural-political and national obligations that others neither can nor will take on in a new media situation" (6).

The Kjolas Committee on Broadcast Advertising submitted its report to Parliament in February 1984, recommending commercials, but with restrictions.

The non-socialist government initiated numerous reports and fact-finding committees on mass media topics. In June 1983, the Ministry of Culture and Science initiated a parliamentary committee to research the opportunities and possibilities for an alternative, second national TV channel, TV2. Before the TV2 report was completed, the Trade Union Movement's Research Center published its own suggested solution: A cooperative effort, involving unions, local special interest groups, cable companies, and NRK, combining local and national programming on a channel carried on cable, partially financed on the basis of pay-per-view (Gundersen 9). Gundersen doesn't consider advertising. Neither does the NRK board of directors, in its TV2 proposal (NRK-TV with two channels). It proposes a second NRK-TV channel, broadcast via a new yet-to-be-built ground based network of transmitters, financed through increased viewer fees (8).

The official TV2 committee rejected both proposals. The TV2 report, submitted in May 1985, suggests an independent TV 2 outside NRK, financed through advertising and viewer fees, and broadcast via satellite and the existing NRK transmitters (NOU, TV2 16). But the government wasn't able to act on the recommendations. It ran out of time.

In September that year, parliamentary elections brought back a social democratic government. The non-socialist parties held a slight majority in Parliament, but were unable to agree on a coalition platform, or to support another Hoyre cabinet. DNA,

with the support of the Socialist Leftist Party (the earlier Socialist People's Party); established a minority government.

Table 2 summarizes what the 1985-89 programs say about the parties' views on broadcast advertising. In Norway, the party programs are important, almost binding. To deviate from promised policies takes serious consideration, and necessitates massive support, both from within the party and from its voters.

Table 2
Party Programs

-
- * Labor Party--DNA (71 Members of Parliament--MPs): Opposes broadcast advertising; advocates pay-TV, subscription projects, and government support.
 - * Conservative Party--Hoyre (50 MPs): Aims to make advertising acceptable for independent broadcasters; advocates new laws.
 - * Christian People's Party--KrF (16 MPs): Wants to restrict advertising, but will view it in light of the general media development.
 - * Center Party--Sp (12 MPs): Against commercials this period, but wants to clarify the issue.
 - * Socialist Leftist Party--SV (6 MPs): Ardently against all broadcast advertising and commercial sponsorship.
 - * Progressive Party--FrP (2 MPs): Wants advertising, but only for the private stations.
-

(Source: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Science, 1987)

In the case of DNA, its change of party line in the advertising question in 1988 came about following strong rank-and-file pressure and mounting dissatisfaction in the opinion. The party still experiences difficulties in gathering its members behind its new line; opposition can be found both in the trade unions and in local party chapters.

Only Hoyre and FrP originally advocated broadcast advertising, but with DNA's conversion, the centrist parties--Sp and KrF--have followed suit.

Faced with potentially explosive media prospects and failed efforts to create a Scandinavian satellite, the NRK leadership and the new DNA-government dusted off the old idea of a second NRK-TV channel. In June 1986, the party's media policy spokesman Haakon Blankenborg made a sensational statement:

The starting point of a new TV channel is in many ways the same as for the local independent radio stations. We'd have preferred TV2 to be free of advertising, too, but at a certain point in time one ought to consider whether one should rely upon advertising there as well, if financial reasons should make it necessary. (Solvoll 5)

This trial balloon revealed that central DNA leaders were contemplating a 180-degree turnaround from their anti-advertising policy in the 1985 party program already the year after the election.

According to Magnus, this is just a sinister scheme to cement the power of NRK. Since NRK director general Gjerde "wants both TV2 and revenues from advertising," he plans to prevent private interests from creating their own TV2, and attract most of the prospective advertisers before independents get a chance to establish their own national channel (4). Regardless of the intentions, when NRK's director general and DNA leaders publicly accepted the idea of broadcast advertising, the most powerful moral-political barriers caved in. The main arguments against commercials were based on fears, fears that they would divert ad revenues from the press, fears that they would influence program content and schedules, and fears that they would favor big

business. Suddenly, no major political party--except for SV--accentuated or addressed those fears.

According to Ostbye, a "great skin-shedding" has taken place in the main political parties' media policies during the 1980s (87). In Hoyre, media policy control has been transferred from a group of culture-oriented politicians (pro-NRK, skeptical to advertising) to the party's more market and industry-oriented forces (pro-free trade and competition, anti-monopoly).

In the Christian People's Party, the main objectives are to spread Christian values and prevent the distribution of "immoral" ideas. Earlier, the party stressed the prevention strategy (pro-NRK, criticize "blunders"). These days, a more aggressive strategy is dominating (utilize the new opportunities to spread the gospel, through more Christian outlets).

The Center Party (Sp) has always emphasized decentralization and increased activities in the districts and on the countryside. Although it previously figured the NRK better suited to give these areas access to broadcasting, Sp now increasingly is attracted to the potential of local broadcasting activities.

The Labor Party (DNA) has traditionally controlled NRK (all post-World War II director generals have been social democrats) and is mainly responsible for its cultural and social informative programming. However, when the social democrats took over government in 1985, they found themselves administering a media development that was initiated by Hoyre, popular among the voters, and still gaining momentum. They have dragged their feet, but have compromised on several of their principles, because "there has for a long period been differences between the party leadership and the rank-and-file DNA voters over important questions of media policy" (103). And according to the research of Lund and Rolland, 77 percent of the population between fifteen and seventy-nine find TV advertising acceptable, and only 28 percent insist on a

TV2 controlled by NRK alone (27).

Consequently, in October 1987 a solid majority in Parliament's Standing Committee on Church and Education backed a proposed new law allowing advertising on local radio stations.

The new law was passed the following month, and at the same time, the Broadcasting Act of 1933 was heavily amended. NRK's exclusive right to broadcast was terminated, as was the ban on broadcast advertising. The Local Broadcasting Council (Naerkringkastingsnemnda, NKN), consisting of five government-appointed councillors for four-year periods, is delegated the authority to grant licenses and to "administer the regulations that at any time governs local broadcasting" (Law on local broadcasting 23). Section 8 of the law declares that radio advertising is an experiment to last until the end of 1992, and that 20 percent of all revenues from advertising will be transferred to a national fund, administered by NKN. The Broadcasting Council will distribute money from the fund to local stations in small markets and remote areas yielding sparse ad revenues. Money will also be allocated to aid radio entrepreneurs in the establishing phase.

Regulations restrict ad content, format, and air time. Ads aimed at children, and political, religious, and ideological ads are not allowed. Because of the state church in Norway, no ads are allowed on thirteen named Christian holidays. The commercials must be clearly set apart from regular programming by a specific sound signal, and they cannot take up more than 10 percent of the daily programming, and not more than six minutes per hour.

The law went into effect on 1 May 1988. Although the law doesn't open for local TV ads yet, TV commercials produced in Norway, by Norwegians, in Norwegian language, are already on about 410,000 Norwegian screens. Following considerable hoopla, in January 1988 local cable operators finally were permitted to carry the

Swedish-owned Scansat Broadcasting Group's signal, a commercial satellite channel (TV3).

The TV3 controversy marks a crucial watershed in the development of broadcast advertising in Norway. It is also a brilliant case study of the DNA leadership's maneuvering in media issues; its ability to sense the opinion's animus, change its tactics accordingly (without losing sight of the goals), and its talent for pushing ahead along the new course as if nothing had happened.

TV3 is a commercial satellite channel with programming and commercials in the Scandinavian languages Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian. It was launched on New Year's Eve 1987, and was distributed in Sweden and Denmark by cable. In Norway, however, Intelsat was denied a down-link contract for the channel in the twelfth hour, because according to the ministries of Telecommunications and Culture and Science, Norwegian-language TV advertising in Norwegian-language programming still was not legal in Norway. This was basically a correct interpretation of the existing broadcasting laws, and Minister of Culture and Science Hallvard Bakke sternly and repeatedly defended his decision to block out TV3.

Through December 1987, utilizing newspaper ads and outdoor billboards, Scansat Broadcasting Group had masterly built an unprecedented atmosphere of exhilaration and great expectations among Norwegian cable customers: On New Year's Eve they would experience the opening of a new, slick Scandinavian TV channel! Thus the disappointment was strongly felt among partying cable customers that night, as the screen stayed dark, and the explanation later was reported on NRK. Thousands felt ripped off, and Bakke and his media policy became anathema literally overnight.

In Parliament, Høyre and FrP eyed an opportunity to capitalize on Bakke's lost popularity. Claiming discrimination and inconsistency in allowing Sky and Super

channels, but banning TV3, Høyre parliamentary leader Jan P. Syse pledged to have Parliament override Bakke, and force through a down-link contract anyway. The tabloid papers reported public outrage, but Bakke stood firm.

Then suddenly, as a great surprise to everybody, Bakke called a press conference on 11 January and proclaimed that TV3 would be allowed cable distribution after all: "A total evaluation of new elements concerning the issue has resulted in a change of the previously held position" (Granheim 12).

Bakke claimed his earlier views had been misunderstood, in that he didn't really consider TV3's broadcasts to be illegal, but rather an evasion of Norwegian laws. He admitted to have erred in blocking a down-link contract, but rejected allegations that central DNA leaders had pressed him to abandon the efforts. On the other hand, Bakke acknowledged that "the strong reactions to the blocking" influenced his turnaround ("TV3 to Norwegian viewers" 14). At 7 o'clock that very night, TV3 could be viewed by cable subscribers all over Norway.

In Parliament that week, MPs from Sp and KrF declared that a new media situation had been established. Lars Gunnar Lie (KrF) proclaimed that with the TV3 decision, broadcast advertising was a fait accompli, and that the development was irreversible ("Yes to TV3" 4).

According to Valestrand (12-13), there was more pushing and shoving behind the scenes than Bakke was willing to admit. The DNA National Council met on 9 January 1988, and discussed among other issues, the TV3 controversy. Bakke reportedly defended his original views. Central leaders present, such as Arvid Jacobsen, Arne Strand, and Torbjørn Jagland, had already agreed on a new tactic to ensure NRK's dominance in the future. It entailed allowing advertising on NRK, in order to fend off competition from satellite channels.

Only two days after this session, Bakke held his historic press conference.

According to Valestrand, "somebody had some conversations" that weekend (13).

Since DNA's 1985 program opposes broadcast advertising, a major effort had to be undertaken in order to change course in the midst of a parliamentary period. Late in January, Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland said in a TV interview that she was open to the possibility of broadcast advertising in NRK.

Party secretary Torbjorn Jagland hastily organized local party hearings over the advertising issue. Although most local chapters voiced their support, the important Oslo chapter objected. Similar hearings in the trade unions showed that a number of the larger unions were opposed to the new policy. Nevertheless, in April 1988 DNA's Central Board publicly announced the radical changes. It formally proposed a second NRK channel--TV2--based outside Oslo, and it opened up for TV advertising on NRK's channel(s).

Although these moves seem to match Magnus' predicted intentions of Gjerde in safeguarding NRK dominance, Keller believes it's too late. Of TV2 he says: "Norway isn't likely to get one until the mid-1990s. . . . Meanwhile, cable operators are busy making it possible for foreign services to get a Norway toehold" (414).

The Current Situation

Table 3 shows that Norwegians still prefer NRK's programming, and watch TV on average just about two hours daily.

The total Norwegian advertising expenditure in 1987 was 10.13 billion kroner (table 4), which is approximately 1.56 billion dollars. Spending per capita was \$380. Table 4 indicates that newspaper advertising (40.5 percent of total) and direct mail (28.6 percent) are the major outlets for advertising. They are also the most likely to lose advertising revenues when TV advertising gets underway.

Table 3
Daily Average Radio and Television Usage

Medium	Percentage of TV/radio households	Minutes
NRK -TV	77	137
Satellite TV on cable	17	126
NRK - radio P1	46	144
NRK - radio P2	23	153
Local independent radio	14	139

(Source: Lund, 1987)

The ministry's projections for 1988's advertising market (table 4) proved to be too optimistic. Instead, according to Elsrud, the total advertising volume decreased, compared to the 1987 result (7). As almost half the advertisers cut their budgets in 1988, newspapers and sports teams and sports organizations were struck hardest. The shrinking ad market may have an impeding effect on the growth and success of broadcast advertising.

This development is symptomatic of the economic recession Norway was experiencing during the late 1980s. In 1988, radio and TV set sales dropped 10 percent ("Ten percent drop" 4), and new car sales dropped 40 percent. The total number of all privately registered motor vehicles dropped one-tenth of a percent that same year ("Stagnating car stock" 4). Unemployment reached its post-World War II high, 5.7 percent ("Post-war record" 2). In March 1989, in an austerity measure to

prevent pay increase negotiations between unions and employers, Parliament passed a "Wage Law" that regulates increases in salaries ("Strong repugnance" 3).

Table 4
Norway's Advertising Market 1986-88, in Million Kroners

	1986		1987		1988 (projected)	
	Kr	%	Kr	%	Kr	%
Daily press	3,800	42.7	4,100	40.5	4,100	38.6
Weekly press	290	3.3	330	3.3	330	3.1
Trade press	450	5.0	500	4.9	500	4.7
Movie theaters	50	.6	55	.5	55	.5
Outdoor	100	1.1	110	1.0	110	1.0
Sports events, sponsorship	300	3.4	330	3.3	330	3.1
Direct mail	2,600	29.2	2,900	28.6	3,100	29.2
Local independent radio	-	-	30	.3	75	.7
TV3 satellite channel	-	-	-	-	50	.5
Other	1,300	14.6	1,775	17.5	2,000	18.8
Total	8,890	100.0	10,130	100.0	10,620	100.0

(Source: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Science, 1988)

In those hard times, the traditional Norwegian tolerance was wearing thin. Third World immigrants and refugees were being subjected to increasing animosity from the most xenophobic elements of society. Thus in January 1989, the leader of the Popular

Movement Against Immigration (Folkebevegelsen Mot Innvandring) was arrested for allegedly planning to firebomb an immigration reception center in southern Norway. Political violence and terrorism is traditionally not experienced in Scandinavia.

Parallel to the economic and social problems evolved what Christophersen calls a "political system crisis" (4). The political stability of post-war Norway had been broken; voters exhibited a more fluid behavior, and both DNA and Conservatives (Hoyre) experienced drops in the opinion polls simultaneously. Table 5 shows the results from the September 1985 parliamentary elections (in percentages of the total, which is 100 percent), and the compatible numbers from a more recent opinion poll.

Table 5
Party Preferences 1985-89

	Election Sept. 1985	MPs 1985-89	Opinion poll Jan. 1989
	%	#	%
Labor Party	40.8	71	34.7
Conservative Party	30.4	50	24.4
Christian People's Party	8.3	16	6.9
Center Party	6.6	12	5.4
Socialist Leftist party	5.5	6	8.2
Progressive Party	3.7	2	13.1
Liberal Party	3.1	-	6.0
Others	1.2	-	1.4

(Source: Opinion A/S, 1989)

The growing success of the libertarian Progressive Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) can be interpreted as a general expression of decreasing confidence in the established party structure, and Christophersen predicts continued parliamentary uncertainty, combined with political ineptness (as Hoyre refuses any alliance with FrP) in the future. Next parliamentary elections were scheduled for September 1989.

Furthermore, the social democrats also face an internal split over their official media policy. In an April 1988 parliamentary report on the expansions in the TV field (On the expanded TV offer), the Ministry of Culture and Science proposed to allow advertising on NRK-TV, in order to finance a new NRK television channel, TV2. The DNA government and party leadership consequently altered their official policy, as manifested in the 1985-89 party platform, that vehemently opposed all broadcast advertising. The rationale was that a new media situation had occurred (the commercial satellite TV station TV3 aired commercials in Norwegian, for Norwegian products), and that time was running out for a second Norwegian TV channel. A majority of the labor union locals (collectively affiliated to DNA) opposed the flip-flop, and recommended DNA to stick to its original platform (Sandas 15). The Oslo chapter of DNA demanded new, extensive party discussions on the issue before a new policy was to be adopted (Stanghelle 15).

One reason for the disagreement can be traced to the inability of traditional media policy goals to cope with the new, altered media realities.

Ostbye outlines four established media policy objectives in democratic societies like Norway: "Conserve the structure of society" (implying culture, language, and norms as well), "strengthen democracy," "expand the freedom of expression," and "improve access to information" (Media policy 50). As Ostbye points out, these goals would "easily conflict with each other" today (51). An expanded freedom of expression that results in a multitude of entertainment-oriented channels and sectarian

propaganda outlets, can make access to factual information harder, and not simpler. Likewise, while "strengthening democracy" implies more openness toward new styles and ideas, "conserving societal structures" indicates a certain protective filtering of foreign impulses.

Before the microchip, video recorder, and satellite, it was possible to balance these conflicting objectives to a certain extent. In these times, it is not.

These dilemmas are keys to understanding Norwegian attitudes to broadcast advertising--the duality of a concern for culture and heritage and a reluctance to let the market forces loose on one hand, and an interest in free speech, free competition, and disdain for government control on the other.

Scandinavian social democrats have been credited for their ability to "reap the benefits from an internationally oriented domestic free-market economy, and simultaneously distribute the resources according to the relatively advanced objectives of solidarity and justice" (Meyerson 5). They have avoided ideology-founded socialist experiments in economy and industry, but, as former DNA minister of church and education Bjartmar Gjerde puts it, "we are used to, and we prefer, to view broadcasting basically as a cultural activity and not as an industry" ("Important trends" 12).

This implies that the Norwegian social democrats do not intend to exhibit the same constraints in dealing with broadcasting as they normally do, in their intercourse with private industry in general. While there are massive barricades to storm in attempts to impose socialist restraints on regular commerce, cultural activities have always been considered an area of public responsibilities and guarantees in Norway. Thus, by insisting on defining broadcasting an area of culture, and "not as an industry" (ibid.), DNA apparently attempts to construct a kind of political consensus over the need for strict regulations, and locking out anything that smells of commercial

interests, in the field of broadcasting. The rationale can also be used to calm DNA's internal opposition to any kind of broadcast advertising.

Norwegians are strongly skeptical to the concept of a cultural market purely based on profits, because the market will never be big enough to endorse or sustain adequate cultural activities and services. When FrP-politician and Oslo deputy mayor Peter N. Myhre, during the summer of 1988, suggested that the public theaters, concert halls, museums, movie theaters, and libraries be sold to private investors, he opened a can of worms. His justification, "the market never errs" (Baugsto and Sletten 12), stirred a barrage of indignant opposition, from culture workers and intellectuals, as well as from conservatives.

The sentiment was that the Norwegian marketplace is too small and too weak. Demand and profits alone will never be able to adequately guarantee the constant availability of Norwegian heritage in literature and the arts to all Norwegians. Without subsidies and public funding, the argument goes, classic Norwegian literature would not be published, and museums, galleries, and libraries would have to close down.

The unison upheaval against Myhre's ideas indicates a general agreement that public support is still needed in the cultural field. One does not readily see this as a question of socialism versus free enterprise; one views it as a matter of survival for a fragile, miniscule cultural minority in the middle of a mighty maelstrom of massive, foreign cultures. There are only four million individuals in the world that have Norwegian as their first language, and conventional wisdom holds that as a closed, ethnic market, Norway does not offer any outlandish profit opportunities. This was the rationale behind the creation of NRK, and is being used today as an argument against a commercial TV2: There isn't enough capital available in the country to make it profitable and satisfactory, and commercial interests will only concentrate on the big cities, and leave the unprofitable countryside without service.

It seems that the Labor Party (DNA) intends to capitalize on this kind of cultural protectionism. By classifying broadcasting as a cultural activity, DNA signals that it intends to keep commercialism out. The Ministry of Culture and Science defines commercial broadcasting as "having as its primary objective to make money, through attracting a maximum number of viewers that can be 'sold' to buyers of advertising time" (On the expanded TV offer 39).

The ministry does not, however, consider advertising in NRK as commercial broadcasting. A new government-owned company (Fjernsynsreklame A/S) is suggested established, to take care of the selling of air time. Advertising is proposed limited to twenty minutes per day, in four 5-minute blocks between programs, after 7 p.m. The report does not outline any provisions for the possibility of buying a particular spot on a specific day, but points to the Danish system, where "the advertisers only to some degree know what programs will be aired around their ads" (37). In its subsequent law proposal, the ministry explains that advertisers should pay for the ads on beforehand, "to prevent the advertiser from withdrawing a commercial just because it wasn't aired in connection to a particular program" (Temporary law on experiments 7).

By imposing strict regulations on the advertisers, and keeping NRK out of the physical money transactions, DNA hopes to create a situation where NRK is broadcasting commercials without practicing "commercial broadcasting." In the short run, the social democrats may be able to have the cake and eat it, too. In the long run, however, it will be difficult to conceptualize how long the advertisers will continue to risk capital on a medium where they can't get guaranteed placement for their ads.

Furthermore, on a purely semantic note, it seems that the broadcasting medium per definition turns commercial the moment it receives revenue from advertisers, regardless of how many middlemen it involves. Advertising is, after all, an intrinsic

part of the business of selling goods and services, and therefore itself commerce. The English synonym for a broadcast ad, "commercial," lends further credibility to this position.

It is with this same reasoning social democrats in the trade unions oppose broadcast advertising in NRK, and this is also why commercials on the air have come to be perceived as the spearhead of a movement in the direction of a commercialized culture.

In the midst of social frictions, economic stagnation, and political crisis, Norway has introduced broadcast advertising. It is still stirring some controversy. Its perceived power and impact incites awe, fear, and respect. To some Norwegians, the questions still remain: Should development be supervised by the authorities every step on the way, or will commercial broadcasting become the catalyst for increased commercialism in other fields as well? What will be the impact on culture and society?

Policy Trends and the European Connection

The key to the future of Norway's--and Europe's--broadcasting structure is satellites. The Norwegian Parliament legalized parabol antennas in June 1986, and anyone with a satellite dish can now tune in to a multitude of foreign-originated satellite channels. The last few years of dramatic changes in Norwegian broadcasting have been credited to technological advances (Lindh) and individual entrepreneurs (Keller). Future development will depend heavily on the entrepreneurs' persistence and initiative.

McQuail realizes that in "low-commercialized" Norway, "decisions about the extension of a very limited television service have to be taken quickly" (174), but it appears that the development so far has moved faster than he thought probable.

Throughout Europe, "the existing public broadcasting bodies . . . want to protect their present sphere of activity" (as NRK does), but individual countries approach the

issue in different ways (175). Countries with large populations and relatively low cultural considerations (such as Britain and Italy) are more inclined to let commercialism loose, while sparsely-populated countries (such as Sweden and Norway) are much more concerned about the threat to their perceived fragile cultural and national heritage. Hence Gjerde's perception of NRK as the guardian of Norway's unique traditions.

European liberalization can hardly be termed "deregulation." While American liberalization takes the form of loosening regulations on an existing commercial media environment, that environment is radically different from Europe's public broadcasters' dominance:

What is happening in Europe is certainly a measure of privatization, in that a private media sector is being newly established or extended, especially in relation to cable systems and radio. But this effectively involves an extension of regulation to set standards, control operating conditions and "police" the boundaries between the public and private sectors. (McQuail, Siune, and Tunstall 21)

Thus European regulations can be seen as "being more prescriptive and purposeful than proscriptive" (ibid.). The new Norwegian law on local broadcasting and the establishment of NKN exemplifies this trend.

Since satellite TV transcends national borders, there's a growing need for intra-European coordination in the field of regulating satellite-carried programming and advertising. In 1984, the European Community's Commission presented a "green book" proposing a common market for European television, drawn along the lines of other European Community (EC) industries.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) reacted negatively to that angle, and instead urged the Council of Europe (CE) to take care of TV matters. EBU argued that CE represented more countries (twenty-two, compared to EC's twelve), and that CE

would put more emphasis on the cultural aspects of broadcasting, not just the business side.

A summit of CE ministers in Vienna in December 1986 stressed the unique responsibilities of the public service stations to national culture, freedom of information, and creativity, and backed the creation of an all-European set of TV regulations (Gjerde, "Important trends" 12). In Stockholm, December 1988, the CE media minister conference reached consensus on a set of specific, binding rules and guidelines regulating TV programming and advertising.

The agreement sets limits on the amount of advertising (not exceeding twenty minutes a night), regulates the placement of the spots, and specifically bans ads for some products. The regulations also outlaw transborder broadcasting of programs containing pornography or excessive violence, and advertising aimed at children ("Agreement over European TV treaty" 14). The CE regulations still need to be ratified by each member nation, but representatives from the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Science are optimistic and very pleased with the efforts, which they consider of paramount importance to Norway's media policy.

Meanwhile, the European Community has moved closer to common regulations. In a March 1989 ministerial meeting in Brussels, Belgium, a consensus was reached on several important issues. According to Montgomery, the agreement put limits on the frequency of TV advertising (no commercial breaks closer than twenty minutes apart), and declared ads for tobacco products, and events sponsored by tobacco companies banned from the screens (41). Advertising for alcohol is strictly limited, and news, documentaries, and religious broadcasts cannot be interrupted by commercials (*ibid.*). The EC ministers also wanted to prohibit excessive violence, racism, and programming that harms the morals of minors. When the EC agreement is approved by the member countries, it will become law.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This thesis examines the differing opinions over the development, benefits, character, and future impact, of broadcast advertising in Norway, as reflected in a purposive sample of interviews: "Purposive sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling method in which the researcher uses his or her own judgment in the selection of sample members. It is sometimes called a judgmental sample" (Babbie 176).

This method does not allow the advantages of probability sampling, such as estimating sampling error and avoiding "conscious or unconscious biases in element selection on the part of the researcher" (173). But since this study concentrates on a non-classified, diverse population that is not listed anywhere, purposive sampling was found more feasible. Furthermore, since this study aims to present the opinions and arguments (as of 1989), and not necessarily their degree of popularity, this method was found better suited to represent the current ideas and trends in the debate over commercial broadcasting. However, this approach also tends to somewhat complicate evaluation of the findings. Since the sample is a nonprobability sample, no certain assessment can be made concerning the relative distribution of the opinions found, except in the case of the political parties. All political parties in Parliament are represented (the Labor Party through former Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation director general and ex-Minister of Church and Education Bjartmar Gjerde), as are private and public broadcasters, the academe, the advertising profession, government, and the arts; thus it is most likely a replication of this study will yield similar results.

This researcher lived in Norway from 1959 to 1983, visits the country annually, and has Norwegian as his native language. This personal experience, together with exposure to--and inside knowledge of--American TV/radio advertising and broadcasting industry, provides a cross-cultural foundation that is less inclined to carry any national or ideological bias.

Population

The interviewees were chosen on the basis of their position and function in the development of Norwegian broadcasting policy, their involvement in public debate, and their professional activities and interests in the area, so as to represent a comprehensive, broad range of philosophies, views, and attitudes manifested in the current process. The main purpose of the interviews was therefore to have represented the spectrum of competing ideas, and not necessarily their numerical rank, composition, or relative distribution in the population.

The Interviews

Contacts

Most interviewees were easily reached over the telephone, and readily agreed to participate. In some instances, a second call had to be made in order to set a date for the interview, but in most cases, an appointment was immediately granted.

Minister of Culture and Science Hallvard Bakke declined to be interviewed, and his personal secretary suggested vice manager Roy Kristiansen as a substitute. He agreed to participate.

National Federation of Labor Unions (Landsorganisasjonen) information director Magne Nedregard agreed to an appointment, but fell ill and was unable to make it.

NRK director general Olav Nilsen was willing to participate in the interview, but

did not want to be quoted verbatim in the study. His request has been honored, and his views are reported without direct quotes.

Time

All interviews were conducted between 3 - 20 January 1989 in Oslo, Norway.

Place

One interview was conducted in a public restaurant, three in the Parliament lunchroom, and the rest were held in the interviewees' office or place of work.

Duration

All eighteen interviews were personal, and lasted from thirty-five to seventy-five minutes.

Recording

All interviews were recorded with a cassette tape recorder and by written notes in Norwegian. Transcripts from the tapes--in Norwegian--were written in February.

Method

Each interviewee was asked the same set of ten open-ended questions (table 7), and invited to elaborate and digress at his or her leisure. All interviewees received the same introduction (table 7), and read and signed the required consent form.

The quotes in this thesis are translated from the transcribed interviews in their original form, and have neither been edited, abbreviated, nor digested. However, minor nuances and insignificant details may have been lost in the translation process. For example, the Norwegian expression "sette fingeren pa" ("put the finger at") has been modified into the less suggestive American word "pinpoint."

Table 6
Interviews

Name	Date	Position and organization
Andersen, Svein Erik	3 Jan.	Chairman, Association of Advertising Agencies (Reklamebyråforeningen).
Berg, Hallgrim	7 Jan.	Member of Parliament, Conservative Party; speaker, Parliament's TV2 Committee.
Berg, Ida	5 Jan.	Media director, Ted Bates Advertising Agency.
Berg, Rolf	16 Jan.	Parliament-appointed member of the NRK Broadcasting Council (Kringkastingsradet); general manager, Pax Publishing House.
Dahl, Hans Fredrik	18 Jan.	NRK historian; writer; professor, Department of Media and Communications, University of Oslo.
Dramdal, Torun	20 Jan.	Deputy member of Parliament, Center Party; parliamentary group secretary.
Gjerde, Bjartmar	17 Jan.	NRK director general 1980-1988, former Labor church and education minister.

Table 6 (continued)

Name	Date	Position and organization
Graver, Kjersti	10 Jan.	Consumer ombudsman; member of the Local Broadcasting Council (Naerkringkastingsnemnda).
Houg, Tora	6 Jan.	Member of Parliament, Socialist Leftist Party; member of Parliament's TV2 Committee.
Johnsen, Stein	4 Jan.	General manager, Radio 1 (commercial radio station in Oslo).
Kolberg, Kare	3 Jan.	Composer and conductor, multimedia modernism; former chairman of the Society of Composers (Komponistforbundet); co-organizer of artist panel against the "NRK toward the year 2000" report, March 1987.
Kristiansen, Roy	20 Jan.	Vice manager, Culture Department, Royal Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Science.

Table 6 (continued)

Name	Date	Position and organization
Lie, Lars Gunnar	19 Jan.	Member of Parliament, Christian People's Party; member of Parliament's Standing Committee on Church and Education.
Lund, Sissel	5 Jan.	Media researcher, NRK's Research Department.
Nilsen, Olav	12 Jan.	NRK director general from 1989; former editor of national Labor daily <u>Arbeiderbladet</u> .
Rynning, Erik	9 Jan.	General manager, TV Norge (commercial cable TV channel).
Simonsen, Jan	18 Jan.	Parliamentary group secretary, Progressive Party.
Ulvaer, Bjorn Petter	6 Jan.	Radio/TV research manager, Market and Media Institute (MMI).

Table 7
Interview Schedule

Introduction:

This research study is investigating the introduction of broadcast advertising in Norway. The result of this study should further our understanding of broadcast advertising's perceived role in influencing society's cultural, political and social environment, and national identity.

Questions:

1. What were the factors that forced the change in media policy?
 2. What will be the impact of broadcast advertising and commercial broadcasting on Norwegian culture?
 3. What will be the impact on national identity?
 4. What will be the impact on political party structure?
 5. What will be the impact on social environment?
 6. What are the fundamental positives and negatives of broadcast advertising?
 7. What is the future of NRK?
 8. What will be the impact of ratings and market research?
 9. What will be the status of the proposed regulations?
 10. What are the experiences and lessons one can draw from other Scandinavian countries?
-

CHAPTER 4

Findings

General Observations

The interviewees distribute themselves, through their responses, roughly into three categories: One group expresses a positive attitude towards broadcast advertising, another reveals a skeptical position, and a third group airs some concern, but is basically accepting the development towards commercialization.

The first group consists of the broadcasting executives (including the former Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation--NRK--director general), the advertising professionals, the university professor, the conservative and libertarian politicians, the ministry official, and the Market and Media Institute (MMI) research manager. The skeptics are the socialist Member of Parliament (MP), the consumer ombudsman, the composer, and the Broadcasting Council member (who also is a publisher). The concerned, third group is made up by the centrist politicians and the NRK media researcher.

The pattern of responses to the questions generally goes along the above mentioned demarcation lines, and the comprehensive impression is that broadcast advertising basically has become accepted in Norway. Even the socialist MP, who most vehemently opposes commercial broadcasting, admits that the battle is lost. Broadcast advertising is a fact, through commercials on local independent radio and satellite TV channels distributed via cable.

The controversies ahead include the alleged impact of broadcast advertising on the printed press (through loss of ad revenues), on broadcast programming (influence

toward light entertainment and hunt for rating points), and on national culture and language (through intensified internationalization). Another altercating topic is the fate of the once-monopolistic Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK). Some political forces, originally opposed to broadcast advertising, now suggest that NRK should be reserved the exclusive rights to domestic Norwegian TV advertising, while free-market advocates hold that NRK with advertising would vacuum the market for advertisers, and thereby undermine private efforts in the TV business.

The conclusive issue is the discussion over the future legislation for television advertising. The Labor (DNA) government has submitted a proposal for a second NRK-owned TV channel that grants NRK the exclusive rights to advertising, and that includes a set of unusually (in the Western world) confining regulations that some predict will function to prevent advertisers from utilizing the medium.

These three controversies--the impact, NRK, and the regulations--will be the focus of this study, and the following related questions serve to further clarify the core issues. The ten questions posed to the interviewees include the factors that contributed to the media development of the eighties, the possible impact, fundamental views on broadcast advertising, opinions on ratings and the future of NRK and regulations, and finally, the Norwegian situation seen in a Scandinavian context.

Factors Forcing a Change

The factors that are mentioned, can be divided into five categories:

- a) Technological advances.
- b) Entrepreneurs.
- c) Political initiative and opportunity.
- d) Satellites.
- e) Financial needs.

The technological advances were first discussed by Hoyre's Broadcasting Committee in its February 1980 topic paper, stating that the lowered cost of broadcasting had nullified "the original arguments in support of the broadcasting monopoly" (NOU, Broadcast advertising 29). Progressive Party (FrP) parliamentary group secretary Jan Simonsen says "the technological development has advanced so fast that the politicians have been compelled to yield to realities." This view is echoed by Lindh (98). It was the availability of inexpensive equipment that was the potential for the late 1970s' pirate radio stations.

Radio 1 general manager Stein Johnsen says "it was pure pioneering activity that made independent radio possible in the beginning." The importance of the entrepreneurs is also stressed by Keller ("Scandinavian entrepreneurs" 124). Johnsen says the entrepreneurs acted on an "urgent need for alternative programming."

The new policies of the Hoyre government in 1981 are considered "decisive" by Hoyre's parliamentary spokesman in media policy issues, Hallgrim Berg. The political initiative thus created opportunities for the entrepreneurs. Seen from a different perspective, the conservative surge is a part of a social trend. Consumer ombudsman Kjersti Graver says "we can see many tendencies toward an increasingly commercialized society."

Most of the interviewees stress the importance of satellites as a factor in the Norwegian media development, both through introducing commercialized programming and TV advertising, and by further actualizing the question of Norwegian broadcast advertising. According to former NRK director general Bjartmar Gjerde, "we are facing a situation . . . where we will get broadcast advertising no matter what." Ted Bates media director Ida Berg suggests "the radical conversion came about in 1988," when "we got a Scandinavian channel that the

authorities were unable to stop." This channel, TV3, carries Norwegian-language commercials within Norwegian-language programming, and Berg says the DNA government gave in to the pressure, with the reasoning that "if we're going to have TV advertising anyway, we at least want to keep the revenues here in Norway."

The final factor, the financial needs, can be divided into two parts, the broadcasters' need for revenue, and the advertisers' need for a more effective advertising vehicle. TV/radio research manager Bjorn P. Ulvaer says advertising is the only realistic alternative left for funding broadcast operations, and is further actualized by "commercial foreign TV stations carried via satellite." Similarly, NRK researcher Sissel Lund underlines that those stations "produced indignant reactions" among Norwegian merchants and manufacturers, who asked themselves why foreigners could "utilize broadcast advertising in the Norwegian market when domestic industry isn't allowed to answer with similar means?"

These five major factors have been pushing development forwards. With the advanced technology, the entrepreneurs were able to exert pressure through their activities. The foreign TV satellites and the domestic turn toward commercialism have legitimized broadcast advertising as a source of funding for broadcasters, and as a new vehicle for advertisers.

Impact on Culture

A large majority of the interviewees expects commercial broadcasting to have no, or modest impact on Norwegian culture. Only Broadcasting Council member Rolf Berg, NRK researcher Sissel Lund, consumer ombudsman Graver, composer Kare Kolberg, and Socialist Leftist Party (SV) MP Tora Houg express serious concern.

This may indicate that Borja's predicted "consequences for consumption habits, use of resources, environmental protection, and lifestyle" (22) find little support

among the politicians and professionals involved with advertising and broadcasting in this study.

While the skeptics accentuate the negatives of general commercialization of culture and the cultural community, impact on programming and life style, the optimists stress increased opportunities, competition, and consumer information, and are willing to take the "necessary garbage" (as Hoyre MP Berg puts it) in order to expand the total offer. Possible negative results are suggested offset by strengthened local initiatives and heightened education levels.

University professor Hans F. Dahl and broadcasting managers Olav Nilsen, Stein Johnsen, and Erik Rynning do not think broadcast advertising will have any impact on culture or cultural activities. NRK's Nilsen says Norwegians have been exposed to advertising in other media for generations, and that other countries likewise have experienced broadcast advertising without any fundamental impact on culture. Association of Advertising Agencies (RBF) chairman Svein E. Andersen says "if we keep NRK as it is, we won't experience any negative consequences. Additional commercial channels can then function to strengthen Norwegian culture." Former NRK director general Gjerde suggests income from broadcast advertising "is capital we can use to finance Norwegian cultural activities," and FrP's Simonsen adds that commercial stations "will provide increased opportunities for cultural workers, as they will be able to perform on more channels."

Center Party (Sp) deputy MP Torun Dramdal thinks "local TV and radio might also stimulate provincial culture. Regional news programs might contribute to a strengthened feeling of belonging to the region." Christian People's Party (KrF) MP Lars G. Lie likewise emphasizes "our ability to build something locally. . . . I am not afraid of that which enters our society as long as we are able to adopt it and make it

ours, in a positive and sound way."

According to Hoyre's Berg, Parliament already has imposed specific obligations on local radio, "by requiring local ownership, programming that reflects local relations, and in general, to function as a forum for local activation through heralding and featuring amateur performers."

Ulvaer admits that "the average time spent watching will somewhat increase, say fifteen to twenty minutes from today, but the most dramatic change will occur in the TV mix. NRK won't lose much in reach; people will continue watching in great numbers. But viewers will devote less time to the station, spreading the total time over more channels." Ulvaer tones down the fear of increased TV watching. Based on MMI's accumulated data, he concludes that "we are still facing a tremendous increase in the average educational level, mostly because of women's massive expansion into higher levels, but also because of the continued scaling off of the pre-World War II population groups with lower educational levels." Consequently, Ulvaer predicts this development "eventually will outweigh the pull of the expanded TV offer."

A major concern among the skeptics is the possible impact on programming. Thus NRK media researcher Lund states that "one fears that by introducing broadcast advertising, there will be a pressure against the narrow-appeal programs." Consumer ombudsman Graver points to the fact that on the English-language satellite channels, "there is a notable preponderance of slick entertainment programs, and that is, unfortunately, exactly what funding through advertising cultivates."

Broadcasting Council member Berg traces this development to a radically new definition of culture: "The quality of culture will . . . become measurable, based on the standard of profitability, at the expense of other, more classic criteria of culture." According to composer Kolberg, "the introduction of broadcast advertising will lead to

a commercialized twist, even if the advertisers have no direct influence," because the broadcasters still will aim to have maximum numbers of viewers during the airing of the commercials. Kolberg also maintains that the commercialization of broadcasting will have repercussions on other cultural activities, as well: "Unconsciously, the whole cultural community--in order to fit the medium--will adopt an accommodating policy, and in that way have the development in broadcasting rub off on it."

Kolberg also refutes the notion that commercialization and competition stimulate variety in programming: "Typical of competition in mass media" is that "it causes increased trifling. . . . The only variety we will get, is Dallas in one channel and Dynasty in the other." The development toward uniformness and conformity is also one of Borja's arguments against broadcast advertising (21).

In addition to the possible impact on programming, SV's Houg mentions advertising's promotion of a life style. She says that those who "want alternatives can not identify with, or fit into, the kind of world presented in the ads."

It appears that instead of an enthusiastic embrace of broadcast advertising, a mood of controlled resignation to internal and external pressures is taking hold among the legislators. Broadcasting professionals, on the other hand, see no danger. Although aware of possible negative consequences, the politicians have accepted the notion of commercial broadcasting. Thus Gjerde views it as inevitable: "There is no longer any national control over this." Sp's Dramdal admits that her party originally opposed broadcast advertising, "but not anymore. The issue moved on, and there was no use in just sitting there protesting."

Dahl probably expresses a dominating train of thought when he notes that "the positive element is that it makes a broadcasting economy possible; the negative is that it may influence programming in a commercialized direction. . . . The question is,

should one use the possible drawback as an argument against opening any more new channels?" Dahl doesn't think so: " I think we should approach the possible inconvenience, attempt to regulate it, and rather put emphasis on utilizing the positive aspect first."

Norway "will get broadcast advertising no matter what" (according to Gjerde), and the prevailing attitude is to make the best out of it.

Impact on National Identity

The respondents' answers are distributed slightly similar to the previous topic. Only a minority in this study sees commercial broadcasting as a threat to the national identity, mainly through the impact on Norwegian language. The media researchers and broadcasting professionals anticipate no effect at all, or a positive impact. The advertising professionals and the libertarian politician view the development as an asset, and the centrist politicians emphasize local initiative to offset possible negative consequences. Interestingly enough, in this case, Høyre's Berg joins the skeptics in worrying about the future of the Norwegian language.

NRK's Nilsen and TV Norge's Rynning cannot imagine any impact at all. TV/radio research manager Ulvaer states that "the set of values and the pattern of behavior we call Norwegian, are so deeply anchored in our culture, that there is nothing that will be changed just because of the occurrence of an, after all, miniscule ripple on the surface of entertainment in Norway."

Roy Kristiansen of the Ministry of Culture and Science declares that "this is a long-term process, so we may not see any possible impact until many years from now. At this time, however, we are not able to pinpoint any effect."

Simonsen (FrP) considers that "internationalization is a strength, an asset," and Kolberg affirms that "it's important for our common culture that we preserve a national

and cultural identity, but it's also crucial for that identity to maintain open channels outwards." Andersen likewise declares that "a national culture that is too isolated, will become weak, because it's never challenged. The strong elements of our own culture can only be further strengthened through a daily challenge from other cultures, and other forms of TV programming."

Radio 1 general manager Johnsen outright condones internationalization: "It is an advantage not to be grouped in nationalities, but rather break down borders and become more planet-oriented."

Although slightly skeptical, KrF's Lie and Sp's Dramdal rely on self-generated activity to outweigh any negative impact. Dramdal says "the final outcome depends on our efforts to ignite an active cultural policy, and our ability to support alternatives."

Broadcasting Council member Berg expects that the Norwegian language "will adopt an increasing amount of internationally borrowed words. There has always been a language development, but it's a question of tempo. I think the tempo might become too fast." Graver enunciates that "it's obvious that the pure Norwegian feeling for language is somewhat waning." Hoyre's Berg thinks that there is a "general weakening of the Norwegian language. There's too little of mother's tongue education in today's curriculum."

The concern for the uniquely Norwegian, what sets Norwegians apart, is also expressed by Berg (Broadcasting Council member): "The negative impact will be a disintegration of national identity. We will in a way become more similar, on an international scale."

Houg worries about the development toward increased international conformity, too: "I think we have something of value to contribute, and it is the opposite of what advertising's way of thinking represents. We are now in danger of losing that

valuable dimension."

The interviewees clearly outline two opposite evaluations of the ability of Norwegian national identity, language, and culture to survive, and continue to develop independently, under an onslaught of commercial and foreign broadcasting. Broadcasting Council (BC) member Berg and Houg predict a dilution of Norwegian identity, and a development toward conformity to international, commercialized standards. RBF's Andersen, however, represents an aggressive, optimistic outlook that welcomes the new challenges, and trusts the Norwegian heritage to come out of it stronger than before. Johnsen presents a third, alternative perspective, one that views nationalism as outdated. It can, nevertheless, be viewed as an optimistic view, together with the one represented by Andersen.

Impact on Political Party Structure

Although only FrP's Simonsen believes commercial broadcasting will have any considerable impact on the political party structure, some of the respondents express concern over an already traceable tendency toward increased media focus on personalities, instead of ideologies, issues, and arguments. The ministry official, the radio manager, the composer, and the socialist MP believe commercial broadcasting may contribute to strengthen, an even accelerate, this trend.

Most of the interviewees think the impact will be minimal, or that other factors are at work in this case. Many consider, as Høyre's Berg, that the proportional representation system averts radical changes: "The electoral system in Norway prevents focusing on individual candidates. . . . Since it's the party that assembles the fixed list of candidates, it is seniority, competence, and organizational perseverance that will get you nominated." With an eye to the United States, Berg affirms that "it's not the case here in Norway that typical media celebrities just walk straight in, without

first serving their time in the party machinery for several years."

Similarly, Andersen underlines that, as opposed to single-candidate representation systems, Norway is ruled by the powerful party apparatuses: "The parties nominate the candidates, and voters basically choose between parties. The voters also stick to the beaten path; they are loyal to their party. None of these factors will be influenced by commercial television."

This attitude is shared by the vast majority of the respondents, including NRK researcher Lund. But she notices that "we already see the increasing importance of being able to perform on television." Kristiansen of the Ministry of Culture and Science holds that "it's possible that the commercialization of the medium will contribute to accelerating the process" of focusing on personal traits. Radio 1's Johnsen, composer Kolberg, and SV's Houg agree. Johnsen also points to that FrP chairman Carl I. Hagen "became more widely known among the general public first when the media became more fixated on personality."

Although professor Dahl notes that political advertising most likely will continue to be outlawed, FrP's Simonsen still trusts his party will stand to gain from its pushing "the media policy forward. . . . We will reap the benefits of the increased freedom people experience by tuning in to more TV channels."

It is natural that the Progressive Party, which has championed broadcasting reform as one of its most important issues, also expects the most from liberalization. It is likewise understandable that the other parties want to downplay broadcasting's impact on the existing inter-party structure. Because, as Christophersen points out, the voters' loyalty to the major parties is eroding (4). In this situation, commercial broadcasting's movement toward what Houg "--with some contempt--call 'Americanized' campaign and propaganda," seems rather plausible, regardless of what

politicians and broadcasters would prefer to see happen.

Impact on Social Environment

Only Radio 1's Johnsen, former NRK director general Gjerde, and Kristiansen from the Ministry of Culture and Science doubt the likeliness of any impact on the social environment. The remaining respondents expect some form of effect in this area, and about half of them mention "purchasing pressure." The evaluation of this impact varies, but the most skeptical and worried group is constituted by SV's Houg, composer Kolberg, BC member Berg, KrF's Lie, and consumer ombudsman Graver. The rest is either relatively comfortable with the consequences, or expresses positive attitudes to them. Possible outcomes of a desirable nature include increased competition and variety in goods, expansions in the advertising business, more efficient marketing, enhanced access to products, strengthened abilities to create programs, and more effective social attitude campaigns. The negative consequences encompass enhanced purchasing pressure and consumerism, intensified materialism and egoism, a proliferation of unhealthy products, and an escalation in small-business bankruptcies.

The issue of purchasing pressure is approached from various angles. Graver thinks "advertising clearly emphasizes that happiness is the acquisition of goods or services. While watching television, you are constantly reminded that here are commodities you need, and should, relate to." The introduction of "broadcast advertising will contribute to further entrench the act of purchasing as a value in itself, to a much higher degree than today."

Lie says "an inevitable result will be stronger pressure to purchase commodities, and stronger materialistic attitudes in society. We view that as negative." Kolberg maintains that "there's a kind of egoism behind consumption. The objective is to fill

oneself up, to stuff oneself, to seek one's own enjoyment and gratification." He also underscores the fact that broadcast advertising will produce an enhanced purchasing pressure "at the same time the authorities encourage reductions in private consumption."

TV/radio research manager Ulvaer and RBF chairman Andersen do not believe in any escalated purchasing pressure. NRK director general Nilsen admits that broadcast advertising might produce an intensified pressure to buy goods, but cannot envisage any damaging effect.

FrP's Simonsen considers the argument "old-fashioned reasoning against advertising as such," but Hoyre's Berg turns the tables: "It's obvious that 'purchasing pressure' is a negatively charged expression. Simultaneously, just about everyone knows that if you can't sell your goods, then employment will stagnate." Consequently, Berg argues, "once in a while it might be important to propel the purchasing pressure. One just doesn't use that expression."

The consumer information aspect is also stressed. TV Norge's Rynning alleges that "we need to make commodities available to the consumers, and that requires a society with open communications." Dahl correspondingly holds that "marketers of new and old products will have a more efficient medium to their disposal." Ulvaer conceives "a growing competition, . . . a strengthened trans-border flow of goods, and increased pan-European marketing," that "might open for more variety" in consumer products.

To this, SV's Houg maintains that the advertising will promote "unhealthy goods, such as candy, soft drinks, luxury clothing, and cars." She also stresses that the growing foreign competition will cause "smaller businesses to go bankrupt; businesses that might have produced the more reasonable product."

NRK researcher Lund considers that "the part of industry that is guaranteed to profit from this, is the advertising business," which, according to Ted Bates media director Berg also produces "good, socially conscious and engaged TV advertising, for example against AIDS, drugs, and violence."

Andersen accentuates that broadcast advertising not necessarily will result in a massive barrage of new advertising: "All research shows that the total ad volume won't grow. . . . It will be a matter of redistributing advertising from other media channels to TV."

Purchasing pressure, unhealthy goods, and bankruptcies--traumatic as they might be to the individuals involved--are nevertheless intrinsic elements of a free-market economy. When Houg declares that we "need a planned economy and a sound market management in addition" to the market, she is suggesting socio-economic control measures that transcend the issue of broadcast advertising, and that lean toward a general indictment of the capitalist economy as such.

Although egoism, hedonism, and environmental pressures are negative side effects from consumerism one may want to address along the way, the more optimistic interviewees view broadcast advertising as a stimulating and enhancing addition to the existing economic structure, and of overriding value to society in general. With a more efficient link of communication between manufacturer and consumer, and an energized economy, society at large may be even better suited to deal with the cited unfortunate effects on the social environment. Media director Berg's emphasis on socially conscious utilization of broadcast advertising, "for example against AIDS," illustrate this point further.

Evaluating Broadcast Advertising

Predominantly, the interviewees are capable of simultaneously regarding negative

as well as positive fundamental aspects of broadcast advertising. The characteristics that cause uneasiness are advertisers' influence over programming, reduced ad revenues for the printed press, and the intensified purchasing pressure. The potentially positive aspects that most frequently are stressed, are the new opportunities for diversity and variety in broadcasting, and the utilization of the medium as a vehicle for advertisers. Other favorable facets include its informative and entertaining functions, and its importance as a kind of public expression, supposedly protected by the democratic principle of freedom of speech.

The expected transfer of advertising volume from the newspapers to broadcasting causes some apprehensiveness. Thus research manager Ulvaer maintains broadcast advertising "could harm the daily press, and force changes in its structure. . . . We have become accustomed to having one bourgeois and one social democratic daily in each and every city. That situation will disappear." On the other hand, Andersen believes there are currently too many newspapers, and that the "newspaper death" will have "a positive effect, as a cleansing act." This is in accord with the controversial stand of Norwegian School of Journalism president Per Olav Reinton ("Do eighty Norwegian papers have to die?" 2).

Composer Kolberg is troubled by the "kind of triviality and commercial philosophy" that will result in programming choices being "conducted on the basis of what benefits the advertisers, and not what's good for the viewers and listeners." Simonsen (FrP), on the other hand, opposes the current kind of programming, where NRK is "pushing programs on people that they don't bother to listen to, but that the NRK management thinks people would benefit from listening to."

NRK researcher Lund affirms that "there is no neutral form of financing. The moment you depend on advertisers for your income, it's obvious that they hold

considerable leverage. They're able to constantly threaten to withdraw their support."

Houg declares the folly in viewing ad revenue as some kind of manna from the heavens: "Those funds are taken from the general public, because it's the consumers that have to buy those additional products. So we might as well just raise the viewer fees." She also underlines the increased purchasing pressure.

Dramdal (Sp) emphasizes the fact that commercial stations often "compete by airing the same kind of programming at the same hours. . . . In that way, the programming becomes very similar." And apropos diversity, Graver concludes that "only a few big stations stand the chance to survive on the advertising-generated funds."

Dahl, on the other hand, maintains that "broadcast advertising can create a financial fundament for another TV channel, or several additional channels in Norway." Dramdal says "it contributes to fund a more varied supply and increased freedom of choice."

According to Kristiansen of the Ministry of Culture and Science, the advertisers' influence can be averted: "If you make sure that you operate under principles that prevent any ties between the program and the advertiser--ties that would enable the advertiser to directly assert influence over program content--then advertising is nothing but a pure form of financing that ensures the station's independence."

An additional positive feature, states Rynning, is that it is "another possible advertising medium." Ted Bates media director Berg opines that "it's about time Norwegian advertisers are given the same opportunities other countries' advertisers have to market their products."

In addition to boosting local business, KrF's Lie views broadcast advertising as having "an element of information, which is positive. Much of it also have

entertainment value."

Lund declares that "in the monopoly situation, one was basically oriented toward production and programs. . . . The new tendency, resulting from the competitive situation, is a growing awareness of the importance of the audience."

To Simonsen, democracy itself is at stake: "I consider advertising and the right to advertise as part of the freedom of speech, and actually as crucial as the right to express political views."

Broadcast advertising's contribution to a potentially expanded multifariousness in mass media overshadows the latent inconvenience of advertisers' influence over programming. As Lund affirms, "there is no neutral form of financing." Government-allotted funding constitutes similar, if not stronger, opportunities of influence. A momentous distinction between the two forms of financing, however, is that while there may be numerous advertisers, there is only one (domestic) government. And although the alternative funding provided by advertising may involve additional potentially influential brokers on the scene, that possibility appears definitely more pluralistic than the singular-source model.

The commercial broadcasting system does not rule out the opportunity for government to sponsor whichever broadcasting operation it sees fit. Outlawing commercial broadcasting, however, clearly limits the number of possible sponsors and sources of funding to one single organization, namely the government. This argument should be kept in mind while evaluating which system is more "democratic." An additional point is the freedom-of-expression aspect raised by FrP's Simonsen.

Concerning the expected "newspaper death," the newspaper industry (already artificially kept afloat by subsidies and direct financial government aid) cannot blame broadcasters for its problems more than skirt manufacturers can with the jeans

industry. In a capitalist market economy, there will be both winners and losers in the perpetual fight over audience, buyers, and advertisers, and the losers can neither blame the winners for their demise, nor claim some moral or constitutional reasons for preferential status.

NRK

The belief in NRK's continued dominance in Norwegian broadcasting runs deep among the interviewees. And with complete national coverage and a budget of 200 million dollars, NRK indeed commands an immense apparatus (NRK--Information Department 47). Only the independent radio broadcaster Johnsen and the conservative and libertarian politicians Berg and Simonsen openly challenge its potency, and aggressively aim to diminish NRK's current position.

Respondents offer varying reasons for their anticipations. The dominant rationale is the need to secure at least one ad-free, "public service" channel. Others argue that NRK's steady source of income, its complete national coverage, and its historic dominant position, further supply the institution with unique advantages. NRK critics point to this favorable position, combined with NRK's proposed exclusive TV advertising rights, as undermining potential competition and further cementing NRK's de facto television monopoly.

Pessimistic interviewees retort that there are not sufficient resources available to sustain additional TV channels in Norway.

Kristiansen outlines the current proposal of the Ministry of Culture and Science: "We are suggesting advertising in NRK, to finance a TV2. But the premise is that when TV2 is established, one of the channels is to be free of advertising. One can expect the advertising to be transferred to TV2. According to our model, NRK is to maintain its public service profile." The selling of air time, Kristiansen says, "will be

handled by an independent, government-run joint stock company, so that program policy is kept separate."

Ulvaer points to a problem with the proposed plan: "We will then have a weird situation where TV2--whose income will depend on NRK's ad sales--won't benefit from low NRK ratings at the time commercials are aired," and the ad-free channel therefore must attempt to prevent viewers from watching it during that period.

Although RBF chairman Andersen admits the plan will provide advertisers with "instant national coverage in a popular channel," he believes "in the long run, this might result in growing reluctance from the politicians' point of view, to grant more funds. They might want to keep the viewer fees down, and just tell NRK to survive on ad revenues alone." NRK researcher Lund agrees, and declares that "when NRK first starts with advertising, it won't be realistic to expect any national ad-free channel. If you commercialize NRK, you won't see any efforts to build a non-commercial alternative." She also maintains that "being public service and commercial at the same time is an inherent contradiction."

KrF's Lie likewise states that "what I fear . . . is that NRK will imitate the competition, and attempt to become an 'NRK-Sky' or 'NRK-Super'."

Ulvaer disagrees with Andersen's and Lund's concern for the viewer fees: "NRK will continue to be funded through viewer fees. There is no organization that is going to abandon an established source of income." Dahl alleges that "funding from viewer fees is firmly established in the public economy, and ensures NRK a steady income that is independent of the ups and downs of the marketplace."

Ulvaer and former NRK director general Gjerde trust that this will prevent an erosion of NRK's cultural profile. Ulvaer says the strengthened finances will make NRK "better qualified to remain true to its public service obligations," and Gjerde does

not "think NRK has anything to fear, as long as the foundation is viewer fees, and advertising is a supplement."

According to Dahl, NRK, with "the strongest economy in the broadcasting market," possesses that "competitive edge" that will ensure its dominance. Kristiansen says that "NRK is such a strong and large institution, and has existed for so many years, that it will continue to be the supreme most important broadcasting organization." NRK director general Nilsen maintains the dominance will be based on NRK's complete national coverage, and its predominant Norwegian-rooted programming. Lie declares that "NRK will keep its dominating position" plainly because "there aren't enough resources to build any alternatives."

On the contrary, Johnsen seems to be saying that there is not enough political courage to allow the existing resources be utilized: "If NRK acquires another frequency or two, and starts radio advertising, it might be able to beat us in the competition. But if we manage to get our own 24-hour frequency before that, NRK will be in bad shape." Currently, local radio broadcasters have to share one frequency with several other stations.

Similarly, Simonsen enunciates that "the only way to ensure NRK genuine competition, is to keep advertising out of NRK, but to allow it in all private radio and TV stations, so that they will have an opportunity to establish themselves as compatible competitors." He says DNA's strategy in this issue "is pretty smart. First, the social democrats appear to accept what Norwegians push for, namely advertising. Second, they'll be able to boost NRK, and prevent competition." The ultimate result, maintains Simonsen, will be "a renewed NRK monopoly."

Hoyre's Berg provides further arguments that seem to support Simonsen's claim. He says the DNA government vehemently refuses to legalize local TV advertising, so

that TV Norge, for instance, has to utilize satellite signals and cable distribution in order to operate legally. Consequently, "if NRK vacuums the advertising market now, there won't be any capital left to sustain the establishing of an independent TV channel."

It is apparent that DNA, in addition to capitalizing on NRK's current preferred status and dominating position, refuses to supply independent broadcasters with the means and legal opportunities they need to expand their business. This is not a case of bad business management in an open, competitive market, it is a case of de facto monopoly, preferential status, and legal restraints on independents. In order to compete on equal footing with NRK's two radio stations, it is required that the local Radio 1 be granted a 24-hour frequency. To permit local TV broadcasters such as TV Norge a fair chance, they need to be allowed to carry advertising, without having to detour via a satellite. This is the rationale behind Berg's opposition to NRK's proposed exclusive right to TV advertising.

Pointing to the general perception of the giant NRK's propitious position, and the often-heard colorful reassurances of its supreme attributes, Simonsen draws a comparison between the grudging reluctance to even the odds in the broadcast "competition," and the authoritarian insolence of feudalism: "This is just like the period of enlightened absolutism; the all-powerful, but 'concerned' king that grants his subjects the opportunity to enjoy some culture and some education--of his choice--but whose position and selection nobody may challenge."

Ratings

Although it is generally accepted that ratings are a necessity for broadcast advertising, some of the interviewees raise the issue of how ratings might influence programming and program schedules in a direction where the size of the audience

becomes the primary objective. Such a development, they say, might lead to the demise of high-brow programs and shows for smaller audiences with special interests. Others accentuate the advantages of continuous feedback, enabling the broadcasters to better match the programming with the audience. The same group of respondents that throughout the study expresses skepticism toward broadcast advertising also exhibits concern for the impact of ratings.

Association of Advertising Agencies chairman Andersen accentuates the necessity of ratings: "We are not going to pay for air time around programs we have no idea whether people watch. We are interested in buying the right kind of viewers at the right point in time. Therefore, we'll need audience measuring, in order to know where to place the ads." Andersen expects ratings to result in increased competition, and "more advertising capital to the programs that more people watch."

FrP's Simonsen assumes the goal then will be to "make the most consumer-friendly and listener-friendly programs." Radio 1 general manager Johnsen alleges that "as long as you get the majority of the listeners, that's evidence that you're doing a good job."

Broadcasting council member Berg considers that very attitude typical of commercial broadcasters; "they're more interested in quantity than quality. What is seen by many is defined as good, solely on the basis of the fact that many people saw it." Berg believes "this also involves the evaporation of minority programming." Composer Kolberg presumes "ratings will result in the squeezing-out of high-brow programming, and lead to similarity and conformity." Consumer ombudsman Graver expects more "slick entertainment that appeals to the largest number of viewers."

Dramdal (Sp) assumes that even though ratings might have some influence over programming, "at the same time, it's important with feedback for NRK and the TV

channels." Ratings can provide a kind of communication between the audience and broadcasters, providing valuable information about preferences and trends.

Professor Dahl considers "most likely there will only be one commercial station. And when a commercial station and a viewer fee-financed station compete, they don't compete over ratings, but over quality." Dahl claims the British model demonstrates "that a competition like that is beneficial to the development of quality television."

Considering the community standards of Norwegian TV viewers and radio listeners, Ted Bates' Berg predicts that ratings will probably not achieve the kind of all-encompassing importance they enjoy in the United States. Although significant in setting advertising rates, audience measuring in Norwegian broadcasting will not drastically alter the kind of programming Norwegians have grown accustomed to, according to Andersen. It may, however, Dramdal points out, contribute to preventing NRK from ever again airing educational programs on agriculture during Saturday night prime time.

Regulations

The proposed regulations for TV advertising do not allow commercial breaks inside the programs, but suggests a system of four 5-minute blocks (or five 4-minute blocks) of commercials between programs, after 7 p.m. (Royal Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Science, Temporary law 4). Only consumer ombudsman Graver, composer Kolberg, and former NRK director general Gjerde express a need for strict, or stricter rules.

Sp's Dramdal and SV's Houg consider the proposed regulations appropriate, while most of the remaining respondents admit that a future liberalization is inevitable. Adaption to European standards, pressure from advertisers, and the ineptitude of the proposed regulations are among the reasons given for eventual liberalization.

Kolberg is "in favor of public control over the rules. The alternative is that others will be in charge, and I prefer legislators at the helm, over for instance, yuppies in an advertising agency." Graver holds that "right now, the whole broadcast advertising scene is suffering from a lack of enforcement." Gjerde believes that "for a very long time, we're going to have--in an international context--stringent restrictions in Norway."

Dramdal announces that her party wants "to have commercials confined to blocks and clearly distinguished from the programs. We don't want to open for breaks within them." Houg warns that the pressure on the regulations should not be underestimated: "It's apparent that all advertisers want to appear nice and cooperative initially, to get a foot inside. But we will realize that once the foot is inside, the door opening will widen, and they'll want to increase their influence even further."

Even though KrF's Lie believes a certain liberalization highly possible, he is not willing to open for laissez-faire: "We won't accept that in our party. We want an ideological supervision, where we place it in a cultural-political context."

TV/radio research manager Ulvaer says the proposed "regulations are so rigorous that the whole venture might easily . . . flop," and he pinpoints some shortcomings: "An advertiser is not even granted the opportunity to choose which block to advertise in. . . . You will probably not be able to be guaranteed to have your commercial run on a specific day," which is important for campaigns and promotion coordination purposes. Ulvaer concludes that the proposed system "works like Lotto, and it cannot last long."

TV Norge's Rynning sees the proposal as "the same as saying they don't want advertising." Simonsen is convinced "it should be left up to the market itself to regulate how much advertising it can take."

RBF chairman Andersen declares that "our attitude is, okay, try it. We know it won't take a full year before they'll notice that nobody is buying time in a 5-minute block ahead of the nightly news." Andersen underlines that in other countries, they have tried out different systems, and everywhere they end up with the one that includes commercial breaks inside the program.

Thus Broadcasting Committee (BC) member Berg notes that in Denmark, "a liberalization is already taking place. Now, they are discussing to drop the block system in favor of a breaks system." Ministry of Culture and Science's Kristiansen introduces the European factor: "The European Community will, at one point or another, reach an agreement over a common set of regulations. If we are to join the EC--which we probably are, sometime--we would also have to adjust to those regulations."

When what Lie calls "ideological supervision" is a prominent component in broadcasting policy, the end result may be an elaborate set of ordinances, in Ulvaer's words, "so rigorous that the whole venture might easily trickle through our fingers and flop."

A general tendency is to accept the development toward increased liberalization. With the intensified significance of trans-border satellite broadcasting from other European nations, and the ongoing process to build stronger ties between Norway and the European Community, that liberalization might materialize in the form of accelerated efforts to as Kristiansen suggests, harmonize regulations with Community standards.

Scandinavian Comparisons

Since Sweden still has not legalized any form of broadcast advertising, and in many ways represents a previous stage in broadcasting's development, the

respondents turn to Denmark for inspiration and experience. According to BC member Berg, "the Danes have what the bourgeois parties in Norway want: An independent TV2 with advertising, in addition to the original, ad-free channel."

Because the Danish TV2 has experienced lower ratings and ad revenues than was expected, the respondents skeptical to such a model emphasize its shortcomings, and underline the impact of Norway's stand on the Swedish advertising debate. Those, who as media director Berg consider Denmark "really the pioneering country," on the other hand, view TV2's problems as only natural and temporary, and accentuate the significance of the station's survival, and the valuable lessons Norwegians can draw from its mistakes.

Former NRK director general Gjerde draws a pessimistic conclusion: "Denmark has more people, but is easier to administrate than Norway, because it's a small, flat area. Nevertheless, it turns out that there isn't enough financial resources in Denmark to run two adequate, competing TV channels." From this, Lie holds that Norwegians can "learn that advertising doesn't yield as much financial assets as many believed it would."

Concerning Sweden, Radio 1's Johnsen declares that the country "is basically even more bureaucratic and social democratic than Norway; it's hopeless to get anything going there." According to Ulvaer, Swedish "resistance to advertising is stronger" than it is in Norway, but nevertheless, as media director Berg affirms, "now they've begun arguing, too, that satellites have de facto established TV advertising in their country."

Consequently, NRK researcher Lund notes that "the Swedes fear what will happen when NRK gets TV advertising, because then it has become legitimized." Houg maintains that to the Swedish opponents to commercial broadcasting, "it's a

strong argument that Norway doesn't yet allow TV advertising. It's possible that in case we let it loose here, the Swedes will follow, because then they would be the only Nordic country without advertising."

Analogically, Dahl asserts the significance of the outcome of the Danish pioneer activity: "If Denmark's TV2 goes bankrupt, it would have considerable impact on the rest of Scandinavia."

Hoyre's Berg refuses to accept the gloomy predictions of TV2's "premature death." He says it "has to get a bit established; it has existed only since October last year. . . . You can't expect the station to have a program production and quality that measures up to that of a resourceful company with a 30-year head start." Berg also proposes that "one main obstacle to the success of their news show is that the viewers don't trust the anchors, since they've never seen them before."

This, says culture ministry vice manager Kristiansen, is an example of how "the Danish experiences will be of great value to our TV2 debate." The Danes "are struggling with the same dilemmas we have been discussing here in Norway," and Kristiansen mentions, for instance, "should we broadcast news shows in both channels simultaneously, to achieve genuine competition? Should we air same type of programming at the same time, or should we diversify?" The lesson is, he says, "that instead of having the two channels compete, as the Danes did, we should aim for the channels to supplement each other."

While Denmark's TV2 is struggling to establish itself, both sides in the Norwegian debate monitor its failures as well as successes. As BC member Berg points out, the Danes are already "discussing . . . a breaks system" for commercials. If the system of advertising in blocks failed to accommodate the Danish advertisers' needs, one might draw the conclusion that similar results will be likely in Norway, if

the proposed set of regulations is implemented.

Another interesting aspect of Danish broadcasting is that, since Denmark is a member of the European Community, its broadcasting regulations will have to comply with EC standards. This may well apply to Norwegian broadcasters too, sooner or later.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Impact of Broadcast Advertising

Historically, Norway has exhibited a certain wariness when confronted with innovations and drastical changes in mass media. The introduction of cinema in the early 1900s, the comic books and television in the 1950s, and the violent videos in the late 1970s (with the introduction of video cassette recorders, films with excessive violence that until then had been banned from Norwegian movie theaters--such as The Good, the Bad, the Ugly and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre--became widely accessible on the unofficial market)--all sparked angst and panicky legislation.

In the 1950s, it was thus argued that television constituted a "danger of internationalizing Norwegian culture" and would "become too influential and powerful in people's lives" (Ostbye 249). Consequently, TV was presented first in 1960, under close legislative scrutiny, and under strict informational, educational, and cultural obligations.

Today, the introduction of broadcast advertising, commercial broadcasting, and foreign satellite television is likewise considered by some a threat to the national culture, and the influence and power of the extended media menu is questioned. Thus Dahl suggests that "today's cultural pessimism on behalf of the media represents a vitalization of latent characteristics of our cultural development throughout this century" ("Is Norwegian culture threatened?" 15).

Nevertheless, this study shows that the current skepticism toward broadcast advertising entails more than a mere "vitalization of latent characteristics" and

deep-rooted, general antagonism to mass media.

The two most significant perceived negative results expressed by the interviewees are the increased purchasing pressure and the impact on broadcast programming. While the former is a direct effect on the individual from being exposed to broadcast advertising, and thus reflecting the classic line of television being "too influential and powerful," the latter is an indirect result on the actual program content (less informative, more entertaining), and therefore accepting the medium as such, but questioning the potential for an altered message.

The concern for the increased purchasing pressure evolves from a formula that, simply put, equals advertising plus broadcasting with intensified impact. Although Reklamebyråforeningen (RBF) chairman Svein E. Andersen doubts the extra power of television advertising, American broadcasters emphasize this quality:

Television is intrusive. It catches and holds attention to an advertisement and its message. It captures a share of mind.

Television is persuasive. With its ability to involve people, to demonstrate and create a desire, it tempts people to want--and buy--what's for sale.

Television is emotionally involving. It catches people, creates opinions, and moves people to buy the product.

Television is memorable. Television has the power to make a message remembered and then remembered again at the point of sale. (Television Bureau of Advertising 8)

Mass communication researchers are still discussing the influence of television on society and individuals, and theories have spanned from the minimal-effects model (Klapper), via the cultivation theory (Gerbner et al), to the powerful-effects model (Noelle-Neumann). No definite, conclusive model that once and for all outlines and explains every influence TV watching may have, has been arrived at. Thus, according to Harnett, a recent study in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, "showed no correlation between TV viewing and sales" (54).

Although TV Norge's Erik Rynning and Olav Nilsen of the Norwegian

Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) emphasize the fact that broadcast advertising has existed in numerous countries for many years without any major negative consequences, it is nevertheless comprehensible that Tora Houg of the Socialist Leftist Party (SV) and composer Kare Kolberg, who both consider advertising in general to yield unfortunate results, view broadcast advertising as an even worse eyesore. But, as Jan Simonsen of the Progressive Party (FrP) points out, this is really "arguments against advertising as such."

The argument concerning broadcast advertising's impact on programming, on the other hand, is more relevant, because it addresses a genuine problem facing print as well as broadcast mass media. As NRK researcher Sissel Lund asserts, "there is no neutral form of financing." Regardless of the source of funding one chooses, that source wields the ultimate power of withdrawing its involvement. This holds true both for advertising funds as well as for government subsidies.

An example of this power is the current incidents of "new puritanism," pushed by individual activists, that have influenced advertisers in the United States to withdraw from popular TV shows such as A Current Affair, Married . . . With Children, and Saturday Night Live (Walley 1). Although commercial broadcasting offers a larger number of potential sources of funding, through a variety of advertisers, the thrust of the argument in this study concerns the impact of the mere presence of advertising spots. Kolberg maintains that "even if the advertisers have no direct influence," there will still be a "commercial twist," because the broadcasters will aim to have a maximum number of viewers see the ads. And with their experience with foreign commercial television fare, consumer ombudsman Kjersti Graver and Torun Dramdal of the Center Party (Sp) allege that this "twist" involves light entertainment, sports, and popular movies.

This potential is widely acknowledged, even among the advocates for broadcast advertising. Thus Andersen and Hoyre's Hallgrim Berg suggest that preserving NRK-TV ad-free will ensure the continued provision of high-brow, special interest programming. Furthermore, professor Hans F. Dahl points to the British model, where commercial broadcasters, in competition with the British Broadcasting Corporation, produce and air quality programming. Consequently, commercial broadcasting does not necessarily imply complete commercialization of the medium.

Other possible results from commercial broadcasting, such as the effect on Norwegian language and political campaigns, can actually be viewed as general, international trends. In an age of intensified, expanding mass communications, the need for common expressions and words increases. With the escalating importance of instant appearances on television, politics also move towards more emphasis on personality and appearance worldwide. The 1989 Soviet elections, however, demonstrated that this approach also can successfully be combined with focusing on the personalities' agenda and political platform. Individualized politics, as opposed to party-block politics, open for a more diversified, faceted philosophical landscape, and may actually be more beneficial than the immediate, face value impression left by the traditional whipping boy, American campaigns, seems to portray.

Concerning the impact on newspapers, it is self-evident that the press itself is worried. With a new competitor on the market, the daily press necessarily will lose advertising funds. Nevertheless, in an international context, Norway has an exceptional number of dailies. With 159 dailies and a population of 4.2 million, Norway far outnumbers Italy, which has seventy-two dailies and 56.8 million people, and France, which has ninety dailies and 54.2 million inhabitants ("Media markets around the world" 36).

The worldwide trend (including in the United States) is that newspapers are on the decline. According to Kaufman, "newspapers are in a real struggle for both readership and advertising income" (15). "Newspaper readership has been dropping in all age groups in recent years" (Shaw 14), and "household penetration by daily newspapers--newspaper circulation divided by households--has been declining steadily" (Chakravarty and Torcellini 82).

The late introduction of television, the absence of commercial broadcasting, and the government newspaper subsidies, are factors that have kept Norwegian newspapers so dominant, and kept the global declining trend at bay. Journalism school president Per Olav Reinton maintains that the newspapers are too similar, and that their numbers are artificially high ("Do eighty Norwegian papers have to die?" 2). Ted Bates media director Ida Berg complains that the plethora makes efficient regional and national advertising campaigns more complex than necessary. Although broadcast advertising may contribute to some newspapers' death, the ultimate responsibility lies with the advertisers. They are the ones making the choice of advertising vehicle, and if they consider broadcasting to better fulfill their needs, they should be perfectly free to choose it, and spend their money on it. However, the long-term trend in the United States project decreasing newspaper readership (Shaw 14), and the press will just have to bite the bullet, and prepare for an uphill battle. Nobody should be in the position to force consumers to read newspapers, or advertisers to utilize print media. The only way the printed press can compete with broadcasting, is by offering a better deal to the advertisers, and a better product to the consumers. Subsidies and preferential status may seem tempting in the short run, but in the long haul it outright undermines a medium's credibility and integrity.

Even though some of the concerns raised deserve attention and precautionary

action, they are dwarfed by the positive aspects the complete liberalization of broadcasting will unleash. As former NRK director general Bjartmar Gjerde states, Norway "will get broadcast advertising no matter what," and the best way to ensure a diverse, strong, enthusiastic, and expansive national broadcasting environment, is to immediately allow Norwegian entrepreneurs to utilize their potential, energy, and vehemence to the fullest.

As Simonsen (FrP) affirms, an ad-free NRK will ensure diversity and competition. Broadcast advertising, on the other hand, will provide advertisers with a new vehicle, consumers with product information and expanded choices, and broadcasters with necessary funds.

The crucial issue at stake is freedom of expression. It is not just the freedom of advertisers to express commercial messages, which Simonsen stresses, but the granting of the opportunity for anybody to utilize the broadcast medium. With the complete legalization of broadcast advertising and commercial broadcasting, Norway will open a new channel of mass communication to its population, involving more people, giving everyone a fair chance to express themselves over the air waves, and not just limit this channel to a single, closed, exclusive agency. The expansion of franchise will not guarantee diversity, but it will at least provide the legal tools necessary for making multifariousness in broadcasting possible. The rest is up to individuals' initiative and entrepreneurship.

In order to dare this, the politicians and authorities need to obtain faith in their people, culture, and national heritage. They need the kind of faith Andersen (RBF) expresses, when he welcomes the challenge from foreign cultures. They need to trust the ability of Norwegians to choose freely what is best for them, without guidance and supervision, and that they, in Edward R. Murrow's famous words, will "learn to use"

commercial broadcasting, "and never abuse it" (Murrow and Friendly xi).

Recommendations

Based on the literature reviewed, the opinions expressed through the interviews, and personal experience, this researcher puts forth the following recommendations for changes in Norwegian broadcasting policies:

- * Study other societies' experiences with commercial broadcasting. Keep up to date on Denmark's successes and failures in their experiments. Initiate studies of the domestic development.
- * Remove government from involvement in mass media business. Leave it as an independent entity to private citizens.
- * Trust the people to make the choices; increase the amount of choices maximally.
- * If the authorities find negative results from broadcast advertising, resolve them through positive bargaining with broadcasters, not through unilateral legislative action.
- * Provide the audience with an ad-free alternative; keep NRK without commercials.

NRK

Although the respondents share a relatively common desire to maintain NRK as a "public service" channel, the main schismatic issue remains its monopolistic and Labor Party-controlled status. While socialists and social democrats do not see an urgent need for alternatives to NRK, but stress a further consolidation of its position, critics vie for competition, to provide balance in the broadcasting market.

Socialist Leftist Party (SV) Member of Parliament Tora Houg, in the February 1989 parliamentary NRK debate, typically declared that she "would not hesitate to characterize NRK as society's central nervous system," and that "there is little need for a second channel" (Parliament of Norway, No.16 2581). Her call to "strengthen NRK" was echoed by Labor Party (DNA) MP Haakon Blankenborg, who claimed that

such an effort now "is more important than ever before" (2571). In an all-out attack on the idea of competition, Blankenborg maintained that "it is a serious problem for public broadcasters in all countries . . . that one accomodates the growth of other competitors that only purchase the popular programs, and thereby contribute to increased prices" (ibid.). Thus the competition over TV shows becomes a major argument against competition as such.

Rynning (TV Norge) explains that DNA's strong ties to NRK "lie deep-rooted, almost like an umbilical cord. . . . In a way, the social democrats consider NRK the property of DNA." And according to Berg (Hoyre), that is the reason why "DNA fears the independents, because they see that the market forces will enter, and serve the political right." In Parliament, Berg maintained that "the main issue is power abuse. DNA has filled the head chair in NRK for forty years now" (Parliament of Norway, No.16 1860).

According to Nilsen, "NRK is locked and closed from any influence from the people, and is insensitive bordering to arrogant toward inquiries from the grass roots" (149). This impression matches Simonsen's (FrP) comparison with feudal society. Radio 1 general manager Stein Johnsen likewise stresses the choking effect social democracy has on private initiative.

In an effort to explain Scandinavian social democrats' tendency to self-righteousness, Hanssen accentuates their perception of their party as a movement, a social scene, a career path, and frame of reference, encompassing all aspects of life. This special affinity, coupled with their long period in government, produces a sense of legacy and inherited claim to power as their birthright, Hanssen insists (4). Understandably, as with the infamous Soviet bureaucratic hierarchy, this environment does not view competition and challenging propositions with enthusiasm.

During the parliamentary NRK debate, former minister of Culture and Science Lars Roar Langslet (Hoyre) declared that NRK "must be liberated from political alliance relations that have moved large parts of the population to perceive the Marienlyst system as the Labor Party's own broadcasting operation" (Parliament of Norway, No.24 2578). Simonsen's solution is to sell NRK to private investors. However, considering the strong popular desire to keep one broadcasting system ad-free, a reorganization along the lines of the American Corporation for Public Broadcasting would seem more likely to succeed.

By keeping its non-commercial "public service" profile intact, while simultaneously decentralizing its organizational structure, and basing its funding on voluntary contributions, NRK may well become the kind of qualitatively sound, but nevertheless independent and competitive, broadcasting station that Dahl contends will not "compete over ratings" with commercial stations, "but over quality."

Recommendations

Based on the interviews, the literature, and personal experience, this researcher presents the following recommendations for a changed NRK:

- * Reorganize NRK after the pattern of the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) in the United States of America.
- * Descalate government involvement and subsidies; discontinue the viewer fee system.
- * Reshape NRK's regional offices into local PBS stations with autonomous positions in a national network.
- * Keep NRK advertising-free; base its funding on voluntary contributions and membership fees.
- * Invite non-social democrats to apply for NRK positions; have conventions of supporting members elect executives.

Regulations

According to Heighton and Cunningham, a desirable broadcast advertising regulatory system is one "that strikes a balance between protecting the public (including children) and providing a free, competitive marketplace in which honest businesspeople can operate" (309). The Norwegian government's proposed regulations for TV advertising seems unable to strike such a balance, since in its effort to excessively protect the public, it effectively fails to provide advertisers and broadcasters with the necessary freedom to operate successfully.

As Andersen (RBF) underlines, most other countries eventually end up with a system that allows commercial breaks inside the programs. Furthermore, the lesson provided by Denmark's TV2 is that advertisers are unwilling to risk their capital as long as they are unable to calculate the cost per thousand viewers on beforehand. "Honest businesspeople" these days are too sophisticated in their marketing strategies to ignore the importance of reaching their target market. Thus, in order to make broadcast advertising attractive to Norwegian merchants and manufacturers, the regulations will have to be seriously liberalized; commercial breaks and advertising-time price rates based on audience measurements are necessary in order to create the above mentioned balance.

Norway already has a strict marketing and trade law (Markedsforingsloven) that forbids dishonesty, deception, and discrimination in advertising. Since the country, in the words of the culture and science ministry's Kristiansen, "probably" is going "to join the European Community" some time in the future, it would be wise to already now conform to the kind of regulatory system the European Community (EC) currently espouses.

With its recent agreement on a European standard in broadcast advertising

legislation (Montgomery 27-41), the EC appears closer to the kind of balance between business and public interests stressed by Houghton and Cunningham (309), than the proposed Norwegian regulations.

Expanded freedom brings with it heavier responsibilities. Norwegian commercial broadcasters should be able to earn the concept of public trust, if they are willing to "discourage unnecessary legislation, maintain a program of educating the regulators in the day-to-day problems of the industry" (ibid.), and to initiate and maintain a system of preventive, as well as corrective, self-regulation. The American networks' broadcasting standards departments, the National Association of Broadcasters' former Code Authority, and the National Advertising Review Board are evidence to the fact that it is possible for the broadcasting industry to impose ethical standards and voluntary codes and guidelines on its own activity.

But it requires mutual trust and respect between broadcasters, advertisers, and regulators to make it happen, and also reciprocal understanding and acceptance of each party's special interests in order to make it work. As it stands now, the authorities' proposed regulations--in Rynning's words--can be perceived as "the same as saying they don't want advertising."

The legislators must acknowledge that they also need to consider the rights and interests of the broadcasters in this process, not just those of the general public.

Recommendations

Based on the literature, the interviews, and personal experience, this researcher recommends the following government actions in regulatory policy:

- * Recognize the interests and needs of commercial broadcasters in regulatory legislation.
- * Investigate the possibility to adopt the European Community's standards in

broadcast regulations; apply the existing Markedsforingsloven.

- * Encourage broadcasters to establish voluntary self-regulatory measures.
- * Study the experiences of the United States' National Association of Broadcasters, the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and other countries' regulations and cooperation between broadcasters and government agencies.

Based on the findings of this study, this researcher makes the following recommendations for further research:

- * Replicate this study and compare the findings, to find possible changes over time.
- * Study changes in TV watching habits, and trace possible trends.
- * Conduct a study of possible changes in the Norwegian vocabulary, emphasizing the frequency of foreign-originated words and expressions.
- * Track developments in library usage and theater, gallery, museum, and concert attendance.
- * Trace possible changes in broadcast programming.
- * Research consumer habits and their links to products advertised in broadcast media.
- * Study competitiveness of Norwegian manufacturers and businesses, and the success of European brands.

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Note: { } = Title translated from Norwegian or Swedish.