

**Public Service Priorities in Transition:  
Catering for Minority Interests in the Public Service  
Media Environments of the UK and Finland**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the impact of neo-liberal marketisation on the provision of two types of minority interest content; children's and religious programmes, in the terrestrial broadcasting environments of the UK and Finland between 1986 and 2009. Utilising a customised explanatory model devised for this study: the Industrial Equilibrium Model, which combines elements of historical institutionalism and the Structure-Conduct-Performance Paradigm, the thesis provides an empirical record of marketisation-driven changes in broadcasting institutions and their impact on the provision of children's and religious programmes. In so doing, the study allows us to evaluate the current state of and future outlook for minority interest content in the 21<sup>st</sup> century marketised multi-platform broadcasting environment.

The thesis demonstrates that notwithstanding significant social, political, cultural, economic and demographic differences between the UK and Finland, similar marketisation-driven changes have taken place in the strategies of broadcasting institutions. Increasing competitive pressures produced by liberalisation and reorientation of regulation have forced commercial broadcasters in particular to focus increasingly on majority preferences and populist content in their programming, while catering for minority interests occupies a lesser role in the agendas of these broadcasters. The thesis demonstrates that popular preferences increasingly inform programming strategies and production resource allocation. The rise in the preference to use commercial and economic yardsticks in measuring the performance of broadcasting companies has also resulted in an increasing preference for cost-effective and/or commercially lucrative types of programming with mass audience potential. All these changes have influenced the structure of the output of public service broadcasters, which is increasingly shaped by these populist, economic and commercial considerations, while the significance of the historically dominant social and cultural goals has declined to an extent.

Through these changes in broadcasters' institutional conduct, an understanding is gained of the impact of neo-liberal marketisation on the conceptual model of public

service broadcasting. The thesis demonstrates that broadcasters and regulators have adopted an increasingly consumerist interpretation of the missions of public service broadcasting, and use viewing preferences of the audience majority to set their public service agenda. This tendency has compromised their ability and willingness to cater for certain disadvantaged minorities. By highlighting potential areas of vulnerability in the emerging model for minority interest provision, the thesis also presents recommendations for securing diversity and plurality in future minority interest provision.

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

AC	The Administrative Council of Yleisradio ( <i>Yleisradion hallintoneuvosto</i> )
BARB	The Broadcasters' Audience Research Board
BBC	The British Broadcasting Corporation
BRU	The Broadcasting Research Unit
BSB	British Satellite Broadcasting
BSC	The Broadcasting Standards Commission
BSkyB	British Sky Broadcasting plc
CA	The Cable Authority
CoE	The Council of Europe
CRAC	The Central Religious Advisory Committee
DBS	Direct broadcasting by satellite
DTT	Digital terrestrial television
EBU	The European Broadcasting Union
EC	The European Communities
EU	The European Union
FCA	The Finnish Competition Authority ( <i>Kilpailuvirasto</i> )
FTA	Free-to-air
IBA	The Independent Broadcasting Authority
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILR	Independent Local Radio
IT	Information Technology
ITA	The Independent Television Authority
ITC	The Independent Television Commission
ITV	Independent Television
KT	The Communication Centre of the Church ( <i>Kirkon Tiedotuskeskus</i> )
MTV	<i>Oy Mainos-TV-Reklam Ab, MTV Oy</i>
NCP	The National Coalition Party (Conservative, <i>Kansallinen Kokoomus</i> )
Ofcom	The Office of Communications
Oftel	The Office of Telecommunications
Oy	Limited company ( <i>Osakeyhtiö</i> )
PSB	Public Service Broadcasting, Public Service Broadcaster
RPI	Retail Price Index
SCPP	The Structure-Conduct-Performance Paradigm
SDP	The Social Democratic Party of Finland ( <i>Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue</i> )
SPP	The Swedish People's Party of Finland ( <i>Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue</i> )
TV3	<i>Kolmoskanava</i>

VCR Video Cassette Recorder

YLE *Yleisradio*, The Finnish Broadcasting Company



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Public service television at a critical juncture

The last 25 years represent an interesting, while turbulent period in European broadcasting. Television broadcasting, which was previously under a state monopoly in most European countries, was opened up for commercial competition in all European countries by the end of the 1990s. Technological changes have been influential in the process: the introduction of digital broadcasting technologies has transformed the past spectrum scarcity into capacity abundance. Cable and satellite broadcasting technologies have facilitated foreign and transnational operators to enter previously secluded national broadcasting markets and challenge the national broadcasters. Even more influential, however, has been the rise in the political preference – often associated with the emergence of the neo-liberal agenda in political and social life – for organising social and economic life along the lines of the principles and practices of the capitalist market; marketisation in other words. The process has seen corporate goals and organisational procedures being introduced as the yardsticks against which the performance of all forms cultural enterprise are judged (Murdock and Golding 1999: 118). This wide and extensive process, which is still in progress, has seen disenchantment with public provision of goods and services, with whole industry sectors previously under state ownership being transferred to private hands. In this political climate, the social and cultural merits arising from public ownership and control of broadcasting were subdued to the efficiency gains that liberalisation realised in a host of sectors ranging from telecommunications to public transport. As a consequence, several transfers of power have taken place in broadcasting: ‘from public to private media, from normative to commercial goals, from the political system to the market, from national to transnational operators, and particularly from creative personnel to owners, administrators and advertisers’ (Blumler 1993: 404). Meanwhile, the ability of public institutions to impose order on these tendencies has been compromised. As changes in the political discourse make these transformations to seem increasingly ‘natural’ or

'just', it is often the case that even the political will to harness these tendencies is missing, and a policy of *laissez-faire* is preferred instead.

If the sheer number of companies in a market is considered as an indicator of success, then private broadcasters can be considered to have greatly benefited from the process, as it has both opened up markets for them and allowed them to operate with less public intervention. The number of private broadcasters in European countries has surged over the last quarter of a century. Their omnipotent presence has influenced not only the structure of the broadcasting market, but also the cultural form of television. This culture of commercialism also holds implications for television content: aside from an abundance of advertising matter, commercial content is likely to be more oriented to amusement and entertainment (escapism), more superficial, undemanding and conformist, more derivative and standardised (McQuail 2000: 105-7). The abundance of the populist offerings of commercial television has influenced the audience's image and expectations of the role of television.

Meanwhile, public service broadcasters (PSBs) have faced a crisis in terms of their political legitimacy as well as their audiences. While once a standard in European broadcasting, public funding of broadcasting is now assessed in more critical terms. The multitude of channels and alternative platforms have rendered PSBs less indispensable than they were in the era of analogue broadcasting. Simultaneously, they have been forced to reassess their relationship with their audiences and adapt to the fact that they no longer have the privilege of setting the agenda in broadcasting. In a number of countries, public broadcasters were in monopolistic positions until the 1980s, and the fact that in smaller countries like Norway and Iceland there was only one public channel available eliminated competition and effectively gave PSBs full control on viewing habits of the audience. As more channels and platforms are now competing for viewers' attention, channel competition is fierce and marketing strategies previously associated with commercial commodities (such as branding, packaging and positioning) have found their way into the cultural realm of public service television. To survive and retain legitimacy for public funding, PSBs adopted various institutional responses, which, according to Steemers, include:

changes in programming policy (competitive scheduling, extensions in broadcast hours, an extension of “popular” programming formats at the expense of cultural and information programming), cooperation with third parties (independent producers, outsourcing, co-producers, joint ventures), the exploitation of supplementary sources of revenue (advertising, sponsorship, subscription), rationalisation strategies and changes in working practices.

(Steemers 1999: 49-50)

Considering the competitive and commercial challenges marketisation creates for broadcasters that previously adhered to the public service paradigm, they could be predicted to modify their behaviour along the lines of a commercial strategy. While it is often assumed that one of the benefits of competition is that it widens the range and quality of goods made available to consumers, broadcasting provides an interesting counter-example: competition between broadcasters can encourage copycat programming strategies and lead to more uniformity of output than would occur in a monopoly (Doyle 2002: 73). Broadcasters may adopt competitive duplication strategies that target mass audiences by highly similar programmes, as it will be more profitable to carve up the majority-taste audience than to cater for minority tastes by alienating the majority (Doyle 2002: 74). A number of scholars suggest that public broadcasters have adopted a commercial agenda and the programming strategies of private broadcasters, and the diversity of their programming has consequently been compromised (see e.g. Ang 1991: 103-4; Blumler 1992c: 30-40; Dahlgren 1995: 13-4). Prophecies voiced in the late 1980s and early 1990s in particular painted particularly apocalyptic visions of a future of commercialist public service – or a future with no PSBs at all. A common feature for these interpretations is that they are mainly based on highly subjective interpretations and lack concrete evidence; therefore, they are contestable. Later studies (e.g. Siune and Hultén 1998; Bardoel and d'Haenens 2008) indicate that changes less radical have taken place in PSBs' strategies, and that the impact of commercial elements has been complementary rather than substitutional.

Of course, this does not mean that the strategies of PSBs would have remained unchanged. Bergg (2004: 14) argues that UK public service broadcasting (PSB) channels have attempted to ‘minimise the risk of losing audience share, [...] by

concentrating on the more popular genres to the detriment of the “niche market failure” genres such as arts’. He goes on to predict that with multi-channel penetration increasing, broadcasters will be increasingly concentrating on the safe and familiar. Meanwhile, risk taking, ‘at least in the sense of investment in new programming titles and those genres that are not big ratings winners, is in danger of diminishing further.’ Considering that programmes are fighting for the same scarce resources in this day and age when publicly funded PSBs can only expect modest increases in their budgets, while broadcasters with commercial funding are equally troubled with the maturing, possibly stagnating, television advertising market, this scenario suggests that broadcasters are under greater pressure to concentrate their resources on catering for mass audiences, while their ability to cater for viewers with minority interests and tastes will be compromised, as in an unregulated market the interests of minorities will be served only if the number of channels is large enough to exhaust the profits in competitive duplication, making minority interest programming as profitable as majority taste programming at the margin (Doyle 2002: 74).

## **1.2. Aims, objectives and research questions**

It was suggested in the previous section that imperatives produced by neo-liberal marketisation have compelled or encouraged broadcasters to change their strategies and corporate policies. However, given the nature of marketisation as a broad and complex phenomenon with socio-political, economic, ideological and institutional dimensions, its precise impact on broadcasting organisations has not been comprehensively documented. The policy impact of marketisation has hitherto attracted the greatest research interest: Crisell (1997), Goodwin (1998), Leys (2001) and Freedman (2003), to name a few, have conducted major studies on UK policy transformations, while Hellman (1988, 1999, 2010, 2012) and Jääsaari (2007) have analysed policy changes in the Finnish context. There are also numerous studies on the impact of marketisation on broadcasting institutions: for instance, O’Malley (1994) and Born (2005) have studied marketisation-driven institutional transformations within the BBC.

Yet to date no comprehensive attempts have been made to examine the impact of marketisation on broadcasters' willingness and ability to perform one of the key duties of PSB: to cater for minority tastes and interests. Such audiences are generally not a particular priority of commercial broadcasters because of their limited commercial potential, which suggests that programming for these audiences would be compromised in a marketised broadcasting environment. However, the process is far from being this straightforward and many of its aspects remain unclear. Although Gunter (1996: 198) argues in his article, written before the start of the digitalisation of television, that 'even with some regulatory protection, minority interest programming faces an uphill struggle in gaining access to the airwaves in the absence of a clearly established market or audience for such material', previous empirical studies on programming demonstrate that great differences exist in the way marketisation has affected different programming categories. While all programmes without mass audience appeal are undoubtedly disadvantaged with respect to programmes of mass audience appeal, it would be unfeasible to argue that the provision of these programmes would have followed a common developmental path over the last two to three decades.

This study aims to close this gap in the knowledge by undertaking a critical in-depth investigation in the influence of the aforementioned process of neo-liberal marketisation on broadcasters' behaviour with regards to two core cases of minority interest programming; children's and religious programmes, in two European countries that have historically featured robust and cultivated PSB systems; the UK and Finland, between 1986 and 2009. In so doing, the study serves to make a binary contribution to knowledge. First, it improves our understanding of the impact of neo-liberal marketisation on the selected programme cases, thus shedding light on an area that has been subject to little academic interest, at least in the UK-Finland comparative context of this study. While numerous studies have been made on UK minority interest programming in both academic and professional contexts, few studies have attempted to analyse the particular impact of the neo-liberal policy paradigm on programming in spite of its all-encompassing influence. In contrast to the abundance of UK research on children's and religious programming, little longitudinal

research on the relationship between broadcasting policies and television programming has been conducted in the Finnish context. Given the central role television has in reproducing and shaping culture and the society, this contribution can be considered particularly important.

As catering for minority interests and tastes has traditionally been considered a core duty of PSB, the study also examines whether the changes can be considered to have had repercussions on the theoretical model of PSB. The previous normative definitions for PSB were drafted in an era when access to airwaves was under a stricter political control, and politicians, media professionals and academic scholars had more capacity to set the agenda in mass communications through policy measures. The emergence of the neo-liberal policy paradigm has produced ideological transformations that have changed our expectations of the characteristics and missions of PSB. In some cases, PSBs' ability to meet the objectives imposed by these models is fundamentally compromised owing to marketisation-driven changes in the broadcasting environment. By contrasting the results of this research with the theoretical models, the study identifies potential changes in the theoretical models. In so doing, the study aims to contribute to the provision of a revised theoretical and pragmatic model of the relationship between PSB and minority interest programming in the 21<sup>st</sup> century public service media environment.

This contribution is delivered through the realisation of the following objectives:

1. To undertake a critical analysis of the academic and professional literature on the theoretical core of public service broadcasting and neo-liberal marketisation;
2. To identify, analyse and compare marketisation-driven political, ideological, and economic-commercial changes in the broadcasting environments the UK and Finland, and their influence on broadcasting organisations;
3. To undertake empirical research on changes in the provision of the selected minority interest programmes on selected UK and Finnish television channels over the research period;
4. To critically evaluate how the marketisation-driven changes in the broadcasting environments and institutions are reflected in the provisions of children's and religious programmes;
5. To contrast changes in broadcasters' conduct with the normative models of public service broadcasting;

6. To describe key characteristics of the emerging model for minority interest provision in the 21<sup>st</sup> century broadcasting environment.

With regards to the research objectives, the research will ask the following broad questions:

1. How has neo-liberal marketisation altered the media policies of the UK and Finland?
2. How have marketisation-driven policies shaped the broadcasting environments in which UK and Finnish broadcasters operate?
3. How have broadcasting institutions responded to changes in the broadcasting environments?
4. How have the marketisation-driven changes in institutional policies, strategies and structures altered the provision of the selected minority interest programme cases?
5. What institutional factors explain national differences in the provision of children's and religious programmes?
6. What do changes in the delivery of the research cases indicate about marketisation-driven changes in the public service paradigm?
7. From the evidence gathered, what kind of model is developing for minority programme delivery in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century multi-channel UK and Finnish broadcasting?

### **1.3. Definition of minority interest programmes**

The ambiguity of the concept of minority interest programming is somewhat problematic. There is no universal definition for minority interest – or specialist interest – programming, even though these programmes are regularly referred to in academic literature (e.g. Wedell and Luckham 2001) and by broadcasters and regulatory organisations. While catering for minority tastes and interests has certainly been a key feature within the theoretical concept of PSB, closer specification of the subject has been left to the discretion of these companies. Even recent studies on the future of PSB content (e.g. Ofcom 2008a, 2008b) – while referring to these programmes as small-audience PSB content – do not attempt to bundle these programmes under a single entity. Various publications by Yleisradio (e.g. annual reports of the Company and its Administrative Council, see e.g. Yleisradio (2007:

14)), in turn, refer to ‘specialist programmes’<sup>1</sup>, which include programmes for immigrants, classical music, religious programmes, programmes in minority languages, programmes on Finnish culture and arts, children’s programmes, parliamentary broadcasts and educational programmes. However, this definition is not comprehensive and tends to vary from report to report.

Indeed, minority interest programmes comprise a heterogeneous group, whose outlook and characteristics vary significantly. They contrast with so-called mass audience programmes, which include popular (and often populist) mass-audience content such as entertainment, reality television, lifestyle programmes, Hollywood films, game shows, light drama and popular sports (e.g. football in the UK and ice hockey in Finland). Programmes often bundled to the minority interest category include arts and culture, science, children’s programmes, educational programmes, personal interest programmes targeted at specific social groups (e.g. immigrants, the elderly), political programmes (e.g. programmes representing minor or alternative political views, parliamentary broadcasts and trades union issues programmes), programmes in minority languages, and religion (see e.g. Wedell and Luckham 2001; Ofcom 2008a: 68). While these programmes exhibit heterogeneity in respect of form, genre and target audience, they can, however, be considered to share certain common characteristics:

- They are considered to have only a limited audience appeal. This may be because they are targeted primarily at a specific group (or groups) in society (e.g. regional or local audiences; culturally, ethnically or linguistically-defined minority groups; groups that share a common taste, opinion, belief or interest; peer groups [e.g. children, the elderly]), or since there is a common and established view (often based on empirical data, e.g. audience figures) that the programmes regularly attract only limited audiences.

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<sup>1</sup> In Finnish: “erityisohjelmistot”.



- As they do not regularly attract a majority share of viewing, they are vulnerable because the audiences they attract may be insufficient to earn the support of advertisers in the commercial sector (see table 1.1). On publicly funded channels, they may be equally vulnerable, because audiences have to be found to obtain public support and to justify time, talent and resources devoted to them.
- In spite of their small reach, they are often considered to produce positive externalities by serving certain social and cultural goals.
- For the above reason, their provision is considered as a key duty of PSB (see e.g. Broadcasting Research Unit 1985; Blumler 1992b), and their output has traditionally been promoted by various regulatory measures.

For the purposes of this research, a definition for minority interest programming, which combines both their limited audience appeal and their limited potential for commercial revenue generation, is adopted: minority interest programmes are programmes, which, in the commercial arena, are generally unprofitable because of their relatively small audiences. Thus, in the words of Bergg (2004: 14), minority interest programming could also be referred to as 'niche market failure' programming, whose provision by public service broadcasters is particularly important. Examples of various areas of programming with different degrees of (un)profitability are presented in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Current profitability of areas of programming for commercially funded PSBs

Schedule margin of genres for commercially funded PSBs	Small audiences	Large audiences
Very profitable		Soaps Factual Entertainment
Marginally profitable	Arts Factual National News Natural History Human Interest	UK Entertainment Non-UK Film Football Factual Drama UK Drama Series and Serials
<b>Marginally unprofitable</b>	<b>Music</b> <b>Religion</b> <b>Hobbies &amp; Leisure</b> <b>UK Film</b> <b>Current Affairs</b> <b>UK Sitcom</b>	UK One-off Drama
<b>Very unprofitable</b>	<b>Nations and regions news</b> <b>UK Children's</b> <b>Nations and regions other programming</b>	

(Source: Ofcom 2008a: 68)

The term 'minority' itself deserves further examination. While programmes in this category seem at first glance to be targeted only at fractions of the audiences, it needs to be considered that everyone is likely to be in a numerical minority on some matter (Wedell and Luckham 2001: 144). Moreover, an average viewer is likely to have an interest for a variety of topics, extending over the borders of mass audience programming. Michael Wakelin, former head of the BBC Religion & Ethics, interviewed as part of this research, passionately challenged the categorisation of religious programmes under the 'minority interest' label on the grounds that religion has had a major influence on the cultural heritage of the UK, and thus its understanding is essential for everyone. It is also noteworthy that the definition of minority interest does not rest on subject alone. Some programmes will not be delivered for reasons of cost and would therefore only be provided rarely, like opera, even if they were enjoyed in repeat showings (Wedell and Luckham 2001: 144-5). Therefore, it would be more accurate to refer to these programmes as specialist interest programming. However, as minority programming is a common descriptive

convention, which also highlights the limited sizes of the audiences of these programmes, the term is used in this study instead.

As catering for minority interests and tastes has been widely considered a core component of the European PSB model, changes in broadcasters' priorities in this respect also reflect paradigmatic shifts in broadcasting. Minority interest programmes constitute a group of programmes whose production costs per viewer are relatively high, while their mass audience appeal is low. Thus, broadcasters may feel pressurised to cut their production resources to a level they consider to be more proportionate to the audiences, or reduce the volume of programming, in order to vacate resources for other purposes. While both public and private broadcasters in both the UK and Finland have maintained – rhetorically at least – their commitment to 'public service', great variations exist in the levels of service for minority audiences. Thus, minority interest provision can be viewed as a 'litmus test' of the traditional public service paradigm in broadcasting. A significant reduction in the volume or production resources of minority interest programmes can therefore be interpreted as a shift in the broadcaster's public service interpretation, which may have repercussions for the public service concept too.

#### **1.4. The culture realms of the UK and Finland**

There are some notable differences between the social and cultural environments of the UK and Finland in which the provision of children's and religious programmes takes place. These cultural and demographic differences between these countries deserve a brief overview, as they help to understand the origins of institutional configurations surrounding the provision of children's and religious programmes.

Finland is a predominantly homogenous Christian country, which is characterised by a high rate of church membership but a relatively low degree of religious activity (e.g. church attendance) amongst citizens (Ketola et al. 2011). There are two churches officially endorsed by the state. For historical reasons, both of these churches in Finland have retained certain privileges (e.g. the right to collect church tax) in

exchange for obligations to provide certain services (e.g. maintaining population registers and cemeteries). The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the largest church, with its membership covering 79.9 per cent of the population in 2009. The Orthodox Church is the minor church, with 1.1 per cent of the population being its members. 17.7 per cent of the population had no religious affiliation in 2009, and their share has been rising rapidly in the 2000s. The proportion of followers of other religions is just around 1.5 per cent (Statistics Finland 2011).

As the UK does not have a similar official system of registering religious affiliation in place, estimating the numbers of followers of UK religious affiliations poses a more difficult problem. Nevertheless, the UK features a much higher degree of religious diversity than Finland does. In the 2011 census, 59.3 per cent of the respondents in England and Wales identified themselves as Christians, while the proportion of Muslims totalled 4.8 per cent. 4 per cent of respondents identified themselves with other religious affiliations. Notably, 25.1 per cent of the respondents reported that they have no religion; an increase from 14.8 per cent in 2001. The proportion of respondents identifying themselves with Christianity had seen a particular drop from 71.7 per cent between the 2001 and 2011 censuses (Office for National Statistics 2012).<sup>2</sup>

The provision of children's programmes has also – to an extent – been different in the UK and Finland because of differences in the way childhood is perceived in these countries. In Finland, catering for child audiences has been done with great caution owing to a pervasive idea that in an ideal situation children should not be exposed to television. Wagner and Einarsdottir (2008: 265) refer to a pervasive child-centeredness in the notion of 'the good childhood' ideal that is a distinctive cultural feature in the Nordic countries. It 'presumes that children should enjoy childhood, have their rights respected and their voices heard' (Wagner and Einarsdottir 2008: 265). The state and its instruments, Wagner and Einarsdottir (2008: 265) argue, are

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<sup>2</sup> The religion question was the only voluntary question on the 2011 census and 7.2 per cent of people chose not to answer the question (Office for National Statistics 2012).

expected to 'share responsibility with parents for ensuring *the good childhood*, on both the individual and collective levels within society.' The central tenets of this ideal include:

naturalness of the childhood; equality and egalitarianism; democracy defined as lived daily experience for children; freedom, conceptualised as autonomy to play and to develop one's own self; emancipation, or liberation from over-supervision and over-control by adults; warm and cooperative social relationships with adults and peers; and solidarity with Nordicness, or connecting with Nordic heritage through consistent enactment of distinct cultural traditions.

(Wagner and Einarsdottir 2008: 265)

In terms of mass media, this approach highlights the state's duty to protect children from excessive media consumption and the harmful effects of media on children's physical and emotional development, while encouraging them to spend more time with creative play and physical activity (see e.g. Pulkkinen 2012). This approach steered the Finnish political administration and the public broadcaster Yleisradio to adopt several protectionist practices in children's programming, which included preventing the commercial broadcaster MTV from catering for pre-school audiences and Yleisradio adopting a strict pedagogic-paternalistic agenda in its children's programming policies. The influence of this doctrine was particularly evident in Yleisradio's children's programming in the 1970s, which focused mainly on factual and educational content (often produced in cooperation with senior pedagogues) (Suoninen 2007: 495).

UK media policies and values underpinning children's programming have been less influenced in this respect by such a consensual view on the importance of naturalness of the childhood – not least because the UK represents a more heterogenic society, where the traditional relationship between the state and the individual vis-à-vis Finland is also more complex to accommodate a similar consensus on the role of the state in promoting these values in family life in such a proactive and direct manner. Instead of adopting a highly critical view on the influence of television on children's development that was prevalent in Finland until the 1980s

(and even beyond), parents in the UK have a much more optimistic view on television's educational potential. In a study conducted by the University of Leicester in 1974, 45 per cent of mothers questioned for the survey actively encouraged their children to watch television. Of these, 80 per cent did so because of the educational merits of television (Messenger Davies 2001: 65). Preschool and factual programming, for instance, are widely considered to improve children's cognitive skills. Thus, the UK 'good childhood' discourse has been more preoccupied with the quality of children's television rather than debating about whether children should be exposed to television at all. Correspondingly, UK children's programming policies and regulatory guidelines were historically designed along the lines of harm prevention; for example, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) guidelines included recommendations against the use of bad language, violence and dangerous behaviour, while the organisation regularly expressed its desire for a higher proportion of educational and informing content in children's programming (Messenger Davies 2001: 31-7).

As historical institutionalism – the analytical framework adopted for this study – considers that actors' behaviour, and the consequent changes in the UK and Finnish children's and religious programming, can be best explained by analysing the institutional setting in which their production takes place, rather than treating these changes as outcomes of wider social, demographic and cultural transformations in the society, this study does not explicitly focus on the aforementioned factors, but considers changes in the provisions of children's and religious programmes to stem mainly from their respective institutional environments. The analytical framework of historical institutionalism will be justified and examined in closer detail in section 3.2.2.

## **1.5. The structure of the thesis and chapter outlines**

The thesis opens with an examination of the concept and history of the European PSB paradigm and the challenges set for it by the rise of the neo-liberal policy agenda. This section serves as a theoretical background for the study: by examining

various theoretical conceptions of PSB, it identifies the key characteristics and components of the model. It grounds the UK and Finnish broadcasting organisations to the theoretical model of PSB, thus enabling us to examine changes that have taken place in the broadcasting agendas of these broadcasting institutions. As the chapter draws on secondary academic literature, it also serves as a literature review on the impact of the neo-liberal policy agenda on the conceptual model of PSB and broadcasting institutions. The study then proceeds to define the analytical framework of the study; historical institutionalism, and examines the design and data gathering methods. The key contribution to the knowledge will be made in the three following chapters of the thesis. These chapters examine the impact of the neo-liberal agenda on UK and Finnish broadcasting policies, how these policies shaped the broadcasting market, their cumulative impact on UK and Finnish terrestrial broadcasting institutions, and how the institutional impact of neo-liberal policies is reflected in the children's and religious programme outputs of the UK and Finnish broadcasters selected for the study. In so doing, these chapters will provide empirical evidence of the impact of neo-liberal marketisation on the provision of children's and religious programmes that allows us to make conclusions about changes in the UK and Finnish broadcasters' institutional priorities. The thesis will conclude by discussing whether these changes in institutional priorities reflect changes in broadcasting paradigms, and in the theoretical model of PSB.

The theoretical and empirical contribution will be delivered in seven chapters. Chapter 2 is a theoretical chapter that examines the concept and theories of public service broadcasting. It begins with an examination of the origins of the public service model and details the common characteristics of PSB by comparing different interpretations of the model. The role of minority interest programmes within the model will also be discussed. The chapter then proceeds to analyse the process of neo-liberal marketisation and its ideological impact on broadcasting paradigm and policies, and explores institutional responses by PSB organisations to the challenge set by marketisation. Thus, the purpose of the chapter is to provide a historical and theoretical background for examining institutional changes in broadcasting.

Chapter 3 details the analytical framework, design and methodology of the study. It outlines the defining characteristics of the analytical framework selected for the study – historical institutionalism – and justifies its use in this research. The limitations of historical institutionalism are also discussed, and the chapter presents a modified model for analysing critical junctures in institutional continuity utilising the Industrial Equilibrium Model devised for this study. The chapter also examines and rationalises the case selection for the comparative study.

Chapter 4 provides a historical account of the institutional arrangements in broadcasting in the UK and Finland. It examines the origins of the broadcasting systems of these countries, focusing on their unique characteristics. It then charts the introduction of the neo-liberal agenda into national broadcasting policies and paradigms, and examines the impact of neo-liberal ideas and policies on broadcasting institutions. Thus, it grounds our research cases to the national policy environments and provides a basis for the analysis of the effects of marketisation on broadcasting institutions utilising the Industrial Equilibrium Model undertaken in the empirical chapters.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide empirical accounts of the marketisation-driven institutional changes on the provisions of children's and religious programmes in the UK and Finland. Based on empirical research on television outputs on UK and Finnish terrestrial free-to-air (FTA) channels, these chapters examine changes in broadcasters' children's and religious programming strategies utilising the explanatory framework of Industrial Equilibrium Model, as outlined in chapter 3. The Model enables us to use broadcast output as evidence of changes in broadcasters' conduct (i.e. changes in formal organisational structures, corporate strategies, internal policies, rules and conventions). Thus, its key benefit lies in the sharper analytical lens it provides in analysing the impact marketisation-driven changes in the broadcasting environments of the UK and Finland examined in chapter 4 on the conduct of broadcasting institutions.

Finally, chapter 7 summarises the research results and draws conclusions of the effects of marketisation with regards to the provision of the two cases of minority



interest programming on broadcasting institutions and on the conceptual model of PSB. It also examines the emerging use of alternative platforms in minority interest delivery and discusses the risks such a change presents for the provision of minority interest programmes. The thesis concludes with recommendations for further research in this field.

## **2. The public service paradigm and neo-liberal marketisation**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter drills down to the theoretical core of the European PSB model in a historical context. It briefly looks at the origins of the concept and identifies some of its key influences, whose legacy can still be found in the 21<sup>st</sup> century PSB institutions. The chapter will then analyse the characteristics of PSB, as theorised by academic scholars and political institutions, and contrasts the model with the commercial agenda in broadcasting. Finally, the chapter examines the concept of neo-liberal marketisation and its ideological influence on the public service paradigm. It analyses the technological, political and economic factors that facilitated the rise of the neo-liberal discourse that challenged the public service orthodoxy. The theory of neo-liberal marketisation, together with the different processes associated with it, will be presented. The chapter then presents a discussion about neo-liberal marketisation and transformations in the public service discourse. The chapter argues that these transformations have been mainly caused by the neo-liberal sentiments in media and communications policies and discourses. The impact of competition on programme diversity will also be examined in the light of the theory of 'ruinous competition' by van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg (2001). Thus, the chapter provides a theoretical foundation for analysing changes in broadcasting paradigms: as broadcasting systems of both the UK and Finland have historically been based on the public service ideology, understanding the theoretical roots of the concept is essential in order to identify marketisation-driven institutional changes.

### **2.2. History and characteristics of the European public service broadcasting model**

#### **2.2.1. Origins and characteristics of the European public service broadcasting model**

In broadest terms, PSB can be considered a sociological solution to a technical problem (Wheeler 1997: 87). Its historical justification was based on technological

grounds – the scarcity of the broadcasting spectrum – and on normative values associated with Western-style democracies, such as diversity, pluralism, universal service, and the maintenance of cultural identity (Steemers 2003: 125). As each European country was allocated just a limited number of frequencies, the spectrum was seen as ‘a valuable form of public property’ by national governments, as the British Sykes Committee on broadcasting put it in 1923 (Seymour-Ure 1996: 61). Thus, treating broadcasting as a public service was a ‘natural’ solution to avoid broadcasting becoming a private monopoly, and most European countries adopted this position.

Many European public broadcasters emerging in the inter-war period shared similar characteristics, and this has led observers to believe that smaller European countries, such as Finland and Norway, consciously adopted the institutional model of another broadcasting company, such as the BBC. While many ideological features of the early public service broadcasters were borrowed from the BBC, the concept of PSB came to be associated with a set of ad hoc practical arrangements concerning broadcasting in Europe. As might be expected, many organisational arrangements resulted from practical, not ideological reasoning (Hellman 1999: 58). The policy-makers of the day operated predominantly within a national context, and the similarity in the institutional characteristics of the early public broadcasters is more likely to be a result of the forces which helped bring about public broadcasting companies, taking a similar configuration in different countries (Syvertsen 1992). Factors such as market size, language community, socio-political structure, policy style, cultural characteristics, economic circumstances and ‘the lessons of history’ (e.g. in Germany’s case) have all played a key role in shaping the European countries’ broadcasting systems (Humphreys 1996: 117). Thus, each country adopted a unique application of PSB, reflecting characteristics of national political systems and the aforementioned national socio-cultural factors (Humphreys 1996: 2). Hallin and Mancini (2004: 27-33) refer to this symmetry between the structures of national political institutions systems and broadcasting policies as ‘political parallelism’. They argue that owing to their nature as public bodies, public broadcasting systems and the regulatory agencies

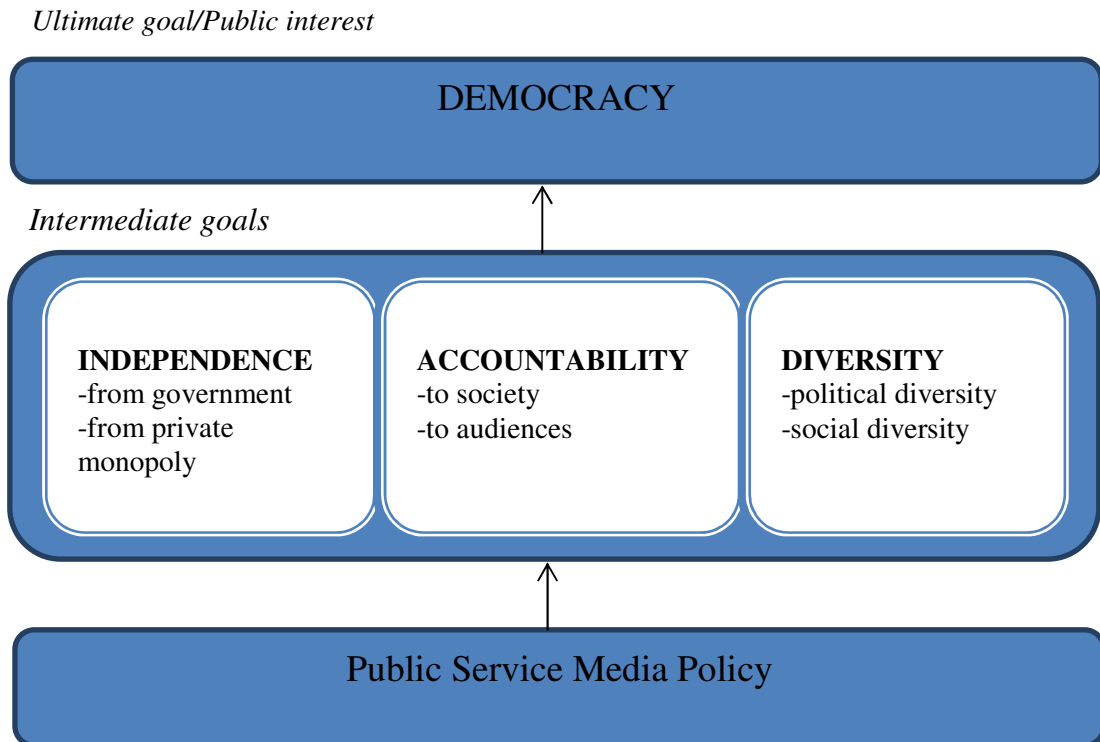
responsible for supervising commercial broadcasting in particular reflect various degrees of this parallelism.

While PSB arrangements were subject to national configurations, the vision of John Reith, the first Director-General of the BBC, became the most influential in the European PSB perspective. Reith cultivated this mission of broadcasting as a tool of national enlightenment, relying heavily on his personal views, which he presented to be representing those of the BBC. Reith believed that PSB was founded on four principles: monopoly, non-commercialism, universality and quality (McDonnell 1991; Franklin 2001). Referred to as 'Reithianism', the essence of this philosophy could be summed up with paternalism with high moral and cultural values. He strongly believed that broadcasting should give a lead to public taste rather than to pander it since 'few know what they want, and very few what they need' (cited in McDonnell 1991: 12). Broadcasting should act as an educational force for the improvement of knowledge, taste and manners. As McDonnell (1991: 11) notes, Reith considered himself to be best able to give define such values, and what constituted quality in broadcasting. This self-constructed authoritative certainty pertaining to virtuous norms and values in society was characteristic for early PSB organisations. Above all, broadcasting should contribute in creation of informed and enlightened democracy by enabling citizens to take interest in matters from which they had previously been excluded, thus enabling them to form informed and reasoned public opinion (Scannell 1990: 14; Price 1995).

This paternalist tradition coupled with the post-war project of construction of the democratic European welfare state (Tracey 1998: 18-9; Brants and De Bens 2000: 16). The policy focus was on socio-political rather than economic or national strategic concerns reflecting the spirit of progressive change and belief in social planning in all spheres of life (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 191-2). Broadcasting was considered an important tool in maintaining democracy, and its operations were subordinate to this duty (see figure 2.1). Thus, the traditional public service media paradigm was 'primarily shaped by normative concerns deriving from the needs of democratic (thus representative and participatory) politics'. It was 'largely bounded by the limits of the national territory' and focused on 'national interests'. It also

'legitimised government intervention in communication markets for social purposes' (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 194).

Figure 2.1: The post-war (1945-1980/90) paradigm of public service media policy



(Source: van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 194)

Reith's conception of the missions of the BBC; to inform, educate and entertain, was adopted as the universal mission statement for PSB, and is commonly featured in broadcasting licences and legislations around the world. Within this trilogy, the informative mission can be interpreted as a duty to provide a comprehensive news service, world news, current affairs programmes and documentaries. The educational mission is not limited to the provision of schools and adult educational programmes, but can be interpreted as a broader mission to enlighten and 'improve' the audience. It is noteworthy that the duty to entertain is commonly placed last, reflecting its less significant status in PSB, preferably as a vehicle to promote the two other missions without sacrificing the 'quality' aspect. In short, PSB should be conceived as an interventionist institutional practice: it should contribute to construction of 'quality'

citizens rather than catering to, and therefore reinforcing and reproducing, the already existing needs and wants of consumers (Ang 1991: 102). Consequently, the Reithian discourse was prescriptive, not descriptive: the formulation of programming policy was a normative issue based on the abstract principles of public service philosophy (Ang 1991: 105-110; McDonnell 1991). Although Reithianism was at its most influential in the pre-Second World War BBC, its influence stretched further than Britain alone and has indirectly affected the programming policy of PSB organisations, if not in its concrete policy impact then at least in its spirit of 'authoritative idealism' (Ang 1991: 101). Madge (1989: 34) even argues that BBC producers ignored their audiences and audience research until the competitive market forced them to pay a greater attention to their wants in the 1980s.

In spite of the differences in the institutional arrangements of PSB, the public service paradigm shares some uniform characteristics, which can be considered as core elements of the theoretical model of PSB. In his cross-national survey on Western European public service broadcasters, Blumler (1992b: 7-14) argues that most of the European PSBs share six features of the public service legacy, in contradistinction to the market-orientated American model. His first criterion is an '*ethic of comprehensiveness*', referring to omnibus services of education, information and entertainment, providing a universal service for the whole public. The second is that public service broadcasters were usually granted broadly worded '*generalised mandates*', giving a high degree of flexibility and liberty in interpreting their broadcasting obligation and public service mission. In most systems the enforcement and supervision of broadcasters' activities were entrusted to politically appointed bodies, either within the broadcasting organisation itself (as in the case of the BBC and Yleisradio), or above them (like the ITA/IBA/ITC/Ofcom). Humphreys (1996: 119) notes that these 'generalised mandates' typically provide in one form or another the requirement to supply diverse programming for all tastes, which is covered by Blumler's third criterion: '*diversity, pluralism and range*'. This refers to diversity at several levels: in terms of the multiplicity of audiences served, in terms of the range of programme genres supplied, and in respect of responsiveness to society. Fourth, public broadcasters were imbued with a '*cultural vocation*'; a responsibility for

sustaining and renewing the culture, community and national identity of the society. The fifth criterion refers to the fact that since the public broadcasting corporations were ultimately creatures of the state, they were highly *politicised organisations*. Although typically detached from direct relation to governments, they have a close binary relationship with the political realm. The sixth and last criterion in this typology is that European public service broadcasters are characterised by '*non-commercialism*'. Although some European PSB systems have accepted advertising revenue, it has been considered as a 'necessary evil' rather than the 'guest of honour'. No competition has usually existed for television advertising support until the advent of commercial television. However, the role of commercials was regarded as a supplement to the licence fee and they were confined to strict limits in terms of amount and placement.

The Broadcasting Research Unit has provided another much-cited categorisation of the mature PSB orthodoxy in their 1985 submission to the Peacock Committee. It outlines 'those main elements of PSB as it has evolved in Britain which, it is argued, should be retained within whatever systems are devised to provide broadcasting as new communications technologies come in use' (Broadcasting Research Unit 1985: i). The report is to a certain extent analogous to Blumler's classification, but its core nature is more normative than descriptive in consequence of the origins of the report. Although the report refers specifically to the British broadcasting system, its principles are still useful to apply to other European broadcasting systems. First, programmes should be *geographically universal* for the whole population regardless of their location. Second, programmes should *cater for all interest and tastes*, providing programmes of wide range and diversity for practically all kinds of taste, for audience groupings of large and small. Third, *minorities should receive particular provision*. This applies to disadvantaged minorities in particular: those without great purchasing power or political influence. Fourth, broadcasters should promote *national identity and community*, providing shared cultural experiences and engages people as citizens into the public sphere. Fifth, broadcasting should be *free from vested interests and government intervention*. Broadcasting authorities should be accountable to Parliament rather than to the government of the day. This somewhat contrasts to

Blumler's notion about broadcasting's place in politics, which can be partly explained by the fact that British broadcasters have been generally more independent from political control and party politics than their European counterparts (Humphreys 1996: 121). Sixth, at least the basis of the system should be *funded by the corpus of users*. This is best achieved by the licence fee. Other forms of funding – subscription, pay-per-view, government funding and sponsorship – are considered to jeopardise the democratic nature of the system and the independence of political and economic pressures. Seventh, broadcasting should encourage *competition in good programming rather than competition for numbers*. As the system is funded by its users, it does not need to compete for viewership figures by broadcasting mainly popular programmes, but can concentrate on winning repute by the range and quality of programming. In a duopoly situation, the broadcasters do not compete for the same revenue source, allowing them to compete for quality, as was the case in British broadcasting until the 1990s. Eight, although Broadcasting Research Unit argues that there is no such condition as unregulated broadcasting, *the public guidelines should be designed to liberate rather than restrict the programme makers*. If society fails to make regulations in the interest of its members, commercial and political imperatives will take control. Liberating regulation also shelters the freedom to experiment in new styles and subjects, and to make mistakes in doing this, which is particularly important for commercial public service broadcasters (Broadcasting Research Unit 1985).

A third model also deserves a brief inspection. This model, drafted by the Council of Europe (CoE) for the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy in 1994, is significant in that it represents a general European model of PSB for the CoE member states, which they are expected to adhere to in their national broadcasting jurisdictions. The model details PSB missions as follows:

- 1.) to provide, through their programming, a reference point for all members of the public and a factor for social cohesion and integration of all individuals, groups and communities;
- 2.) to provide a forum for broad public discussion in which as broad a spectrum as possible of views and opinions can be expressed;
- 3.) to broadcast impartial and independent news, information and comment;



- 4.) to develop pluralistic, innovatory and varied programming which meets high ethical and quality standards and not to sacrifice the pursuit of quality to market forces;
- 5.) to develop and structure programme schedules and services of interest to a wide public while being attentive to the needs of minority groups;
- 6.) to reflect the different philosophical ideas and religious beliefs in society, with the aim of strengthening mutual understanding and tolerance and promoting community relations in pluriethnic and multicultural societies;
- 7.) to contribute actively through their programming to a greater appreciation and dissemination of the diversity of national and European cultural heritage;
- 8.) to ensure that the programmes offered contain a significant proportion of original productions, and to have regard to the need to use independent producers and co-operate with the cinema sector;
- 9.) to extend the choice available to viewers and listeners by also offering programme services which are not normally provided by commercial broadcasters.

(Council of Europe 1994: 36)

The normative model by the CoE is different from the previous models in that it places the economic and commercial aims next to the cultural and social aims of the two previous models. Thus, it reflects the political and economic aims of the policy-makers rather than representing an ideologically purist attempt to capture the noble social and cultural ideas behind the concept. It nevertheless contains the same ideals of universality, diversity, impartiality and quality than the two earlier models. Components of the three aforementioned models of public service broadcasting are presented in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Three interpretations of the characteristics of public service broadcasting

	<b>The Broadcasting Research Unit (1985)</b>	<b>Blumler (1992)</b>	<b>The Council of Europe (1994)</b>
<b>Universal service</b>	Geographically universal service	Comprehensive service	To provide, through their programming, a reference point for all members of the public and a factor for social cohesion and integration of all individuals, groups and communities
<b>Diversity of output</b>	Catering for all interests and tastes	Diversity, pluralism and range	To develop and structure programme schedules and services of interest to a wide public while being attentive to the needs of minority groups
<b>Catering for minority interests and tastes</b>	Minority interest provision		
<b>Social and cultural missions</b>	Promotion of national identity and community	Cultural vocation	To reflect the different philosophical ideas and religious beliefs in society, with the aim of strengthening mutual understanding and tolerance and promoting community relations in pluriethnic and multicultural societies  To contribute actively through their programming to a greater appreciation and dissemination of the diversity of national and European cultural heritage  To provide a forum for broad public discussion in which as broad a spectrum as possible of views and opinions can be expressed
<b>Impartiality</b>	Freedom from vested interests and government intervention	PSBs as politicised organisations detached from direct government intervention	To broadcast impartial and independent news, information and comment
<b>Freedom from commercial imperatives</b>	Funded by the corpus of users	Non-commercialism	To extend the choice available to viewers and listeners by also offering programme services which are not normally provided by commercial broadcasters
<b>Programme standards</b>	Competition in good programming rather than competition for numbers		To develop pluralistic, innovatory and varied programming which meets high ethical and quality standards and not to sacrifice the pursuit of quality to market forces
<b>Independence and freedom of expression</b>	Public guidelines to liberate rather than restrict the programme makers	Generalised mandates	
<b>Economic and commercial missions</b>			To ensure that the programmes offered contain a significant proportion of original productions, and to have regard to the need to use independent producers and co-operate with the cinema sector

(Sources: Broadcasting Research Unit 1985: i; Blumler 1992b: 7-14; Council of Europe 1994: 36)

### **2.2.2. Public service versus commercial paradigm**

Another way to examine PSB paradigm is to contrast it with the commercial broadcasting paradigm, originating from the United States, whose salient institutional characteristics can be summarised with commercial funding, private ownership and a high level of freedom from regulatory intervention (Hellman 1999: 58). In essence, commercialism in broadcasting simply refers to the production and distribution of information and culture within a market structure, for profit (McQuail 1986). This profit is created by selling audiences' attention to advertisers, or by subscription fees from the audiences. The system operates according to the laws of the capitalist market economy, and thus a programme that is most attractive for the advertisers (or, similarly, a channel with the highest number of subscribers) generates most income for its proprietors, as demand drives the prices up. Thus, finding the right audiences is the driving force for commercial broadcasters' programming policies. In the past, this strategy involved simply attracting the largest possible audiences by programming of wide popular appeal. However, as Brants and De Bens (2000: 17) note, in the modern multi-platform media environment, the sheer audience size is not necessarily crucial, but commercial broadcasters' strategy includes aiming at two kinds of viewers: those that are interesting by size and those that should be targeted for spending potential. The latter include the socio-economic groups with the highest spending power. As these groups are perceived to be interested in 'quality' factual programming like news, current affairs and culture, commercial broadcasters feel that they have to provide these programmes as well to minimise the potential damage done by the public competition for the higher income audience groups. However, as they have only a limited appeal to advertisers and mass audiences, the provision of such types of programming is subordinate in the commercial agenda.

While commercialism may refer objectively to particular free-market arrangements, it has also come to imply consequences for the type of media content that is mass-produced and 'marketed' as a commodity, and also to imply consequences for the relations between the suppliers and the consumers of media. In the days when PSB was the norm in broadcasting, commercialism became identified with the pursuit of profit above else and was associated with mass audience, low-cost, populist

productions (McQuail 1998: 108). Commercialism was seen as antithetical to the values of PSB, which itself was considered as the ideal model, against which commercial television was contrasted (Ruoho 2007: 122). Two contradicting sets of values were associated with the models, and were used to highlight differences in programming of PSB and commercial systems (see table 2.2). The division was manifested in programming policies of broadcasters operating under the opposing paradigms.

Table 2.2: The dual standard of public service and commercial television

<b>Cultural form of television</b>	
Public service	Commercialism
<b>Primary mission</b>	
Information	Entertainment
<b>Objective</b>	
Cognitive process	Emotional experience
<b>Cultural standard</b>	
High culture	Popular culture
<b>Ideal content</b>	
Stimulating thinking or action	Balancing reality and dreams
<b>Portrayal of reality</b>	
Realist	Escapist
<b>Role of viewer</b>	
Citizen	Consumer
<b>Tastes defined by</b>	
Elites	Viewers
<b>Perception of realism</b>	
Empirical	Emotional

(Source: Ruoho 2007: 124; see also Hujanen 1996: 192; Livingstone, Lunt et al. 2007)

This division of values can be considered ultimately an outcome of the difference in the way PSB and commercial television models perceive their audiences. As Ang (1991: 26-8) argues, commercial television essentially treats its audiences as a market in which it generates the commercial profits. While other motives for programme production may exist, for instance, aspirations for communication excellence, social purposes or sheer creative autonomy, all such goals must be

subordinated to the overriding profit-maximising goal. Corresponding to this commercial logic, a programme with high commercial profit potential is more valuable to a programme with a potential to produce positive externalities. Thus, the commercial strategy concentrates on catering for the audiences' 'wants' (as defined by the majority tastes). In terms of programming, this means an emphasis on entertainment (Brants and De Bens 2000: 17). PSB, on the other hand, features a significantly more complicated interpretation of the role of the audience. As already noted, PSB is essentially a paternalist system, whose relationship to its audience is characterised by a pervasive sense of cultural responsibility and social accountability. Thus, it addresses its audiences as citizens, whose 'needs' it aims to serve to enable them to better perform their democratic rights and duties (Ang 1991: 29). It requires more from the audience than the commercial paradigm in broadcasting: it is not enough for audiences to just pay attention to the programmes offered to them, they must get something out of those programmes that is presumably 'good' for them. As Ang (1991: 102) notes: 'watching television as an activity is not considered meaningful or worthwhile as an end in itself, but is seen as a means towards a larger process of cultural change.' PSB programmes should be in the public interest and not necessarily what the mass audiences are interested in (Brants and De Bens 2000: 16).

### **2.2.3. Public service broadcasting and catering for minority interests**

While the theoretical conception of PSB has undergone changes over the years reflecting changes that have taken place in the broadcasting environment, the provision for minority interest content has been considered as a core element of PSB, as demonstrated by the aforementioned definitions. While highlighting the importance of diversity in programming, which itself could be understood to include catering for minority interests, they also exclusively state particular provision for minorities as a key mission. Historically, this mission can be considered to be an outcome of the nature of PSB as a universal service, which itself derives from the limitations of the analogue broadcasting spectrum. Because the licence fee as a universal tax on

television viewers places all consumers of broadcasting services into an equal position, it also requires the PSBs to serve all audience groups in equal terms. Consequently, as well as providing programming of popular interests, PSBs are also obliged to provide minority interest content, notwithstanding the fact that production costs per viewer are usually higher in these productions. Catering for minority interest audiences has also an important social function in promoting social cohesion, which is harmonious with the social functions of PSB. By promoting alternative, minority interests and sets of values through programmes that highlight and strengthen the national cultural heritage by recognising minority (ethnic, cultural, class) identities as valuable to society as a whole, minority interest programmes act to strengthen the social bond of the minorities with the civil society (Brants and De Bens 2000: 17). The past spectrum scarcity acted to strengthen this cohesion, as the limited choice of viewing options preceding the multi-channel era and audience fragmentation promoted the visibility of such programmes in main channels' schedules. Thus, broadcasting not only acted to serve these minorities socially and culturally, but also improved their social visibility in the society as a whole.

The nature of PSB as a paternalistic system has acted to protect the provision of many types of minority interest content that would have not survived in a commercial system. As Ang (1991: 103) notes, the classic public service paradigm did not consider audience numbers (or other purely quantitative measurements of popularity) as a definitive measure of its success, which had to 'encompass more qualitative and substantial achievements, ideally amounting to the persuasive transmission of ideas, values and tastes.' Ratings per se do not provide broadcasters with 'feedback' about effects and communicative accomplishment of its public service task. In this context, audience measurement did not have a 'natural' place in PSB paradigm, as it has in commercial television institutions. Hence, concepts such as 'mass audience' and 'minority interest' that were solely based on quantitative information of the size of the audience held much less significance than they did in a commercial broadcasting environment. The provision of minority interest content such as arts programmes, classical music, religion and education was simply considered an undisputable part of PSBs' social duties in addressing the perceived social, political, cultural and

educational needs of the audience. Audience sizes were a lesser factor in resource allocation, and certain types of minority interest content deemed socially or culturally important were treated in equal significance. The limitedness of the schedules and the limited choice of alternative viewing options often guaranteed these programmes with reasonable ratings in any case.

The expansion of commercial broadcasting and the ideological shift towards marketised audience-as-consumers discourse in broadcasting have set a challenge on minority interest programming on general interest PSB channels. Digital broadcasting platforms have enabled the introduction of niche channels targeting specialist interest audiences. This, however, does not offset the significance of PSB provision of these programmes. While this content may be available on digital terrestrial, cable and satellite channels, and over the Internet, concerns about accessibility, diversity, quality, cultural relevance and impartiality may be raised. Receiving these channels may be limited to those subscribing to digital cable or satellite services, or have internet access, which sets financial and technological barriers to the access. Most of the digital channels providing minority interest content are too small to make sufficient investments in original or domestic content. There are several issues with impartiality and diversity especially with regards to religious channels, which are often run by a particular religious group or sect, thus representing views of one doctrine only. Most of all, without costly measures of dubbing or subtitling programming, these international satellite channels are likely to serve only large language groups, while smaller nations and minority languages are unlikely to benefit from commercially-funded services. International channels are also unable to reflect local and national cultural characteristics in their programming, but contribute to the 'cultural imperialism' of large nations, whose markets these channels predominantly target in their programming. Consequently, minority interest provision by these channels does not meet many of the values and standards associated with PSB, and hence digital commercial operators cannot substitute PSB provision fully and satisfactorily.

## **2.3. Neo-liberal marketisation and its effects on broadcasting paradigms**

### **2.3.1. The neo-liberal challenge to the public service orthodoxy**

The traditional PSB orthodoxy in Western European broadcasting was challenged in the 1980s. The prevalent view stressing the cultural function of broadcasting and arguing that citizens' needs are best served by a universal broadcasting service supplied by a public organisation was challenged by a view that viewers are best served by a system based on free market competition, and consequently broadcasting should be freed from all but necessary regulatory constraints and treated as a private commercial enterprise.

The challenge against PSB had three main motives behind it, each brought about by changes taking place in the national broadcasting environments of the 1980s (see e.g. Hellman 1988; Syvertsen 1992; Humphreys 1996; Crisell 1997; Tracey 1998). The first is *technological*: advances in signal delivery technologies in the form of cable and satellite broadcasting (and, later, digital broadcasting technologies and the Internet) transformed the spectrum scarcity into capacity abundance, thus eliminating the need to limit the number of television channels. Technological innovations in cable networks and, in the late 1980s, in direct broadcasting by satellite (DBS) increased internationalisation and commercialisation in European broadcasting by facilitating the effective use of pay-per-view and subscription services. Satellite services operating outside national legislations (such as the Sky Television and German-language CLT, based in Luxembourg) added further pressures to avoid the drain of advertising money into offshore companies (Esser 2009: 187). New frequencies had been made available in the analogue terrestrial spectrum as technological progress had allowed for their more efficient use, and signal digitalisation was already under development. Consequently, broadcasters' ability to guide the viewing habits of the audience has been drastically reduced, thus increasing broadcasters' pressure to utilise competitive scheduling strategies for audience maximisation.



The second, *ideological* motive is related to the rise of neo-liberalism as a prominent political ideology. The ideological challenge can be associated with the macro-level shift from Keynesianism to neo-liberalism in economic policy preferences. It was first championed by the rising political Right, which gained power from socialist governments in several European countries in the 1980s (Esser 2009: 187). Neo-liberalism, 'a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (Harvey 2005: 2), ultimately seeks to limit the role of the state to creating and preserving such practices. If markets do not exist (in areas previously under public ownership), they must be created through marketisation, by state action if necessary. First trialled in the UK during the Thatcher administration (1979-90) and continued under the successive Conservative (1990-7) and New Labour (1997-2010) administrations, its values and practices were gradually introduced to all sectors in society (see e.g. Harvey 2005). Facilitated by the collapse of socialist economic system in the Eastern European countries in the late 1980s and the following general disillusionment with socialist ideas (and the consequent 'decline in ideology' in general (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 197)), the influence of neo-liberalism has since extended to parties of the Left as well (see e.g. Glyn and Wood 2001; Freedman 2003).

The neo-liberal view on broadcasting considers that the ideals of consumer sovereignty, public interest, efficiency of operation and diversity of supply are best served by treating broadcasting as a competitive market, where private enterprises compete with just minimal regulation. The advocates of this viewpoint commonly argue that as spectrum scarcity is no longer an issue, there is no need for state intervention in broadcasting, which also refers to PSBs. Neo-liberals promoted their case through a shift in the discourse of communication debate, which saw a re-articulation of the traditional dichotomy between public service and commercial values (Hujanen 1996: 191; Mäntymäki 2006: 29-30). Public service values that previously held positive connotations: gravity, high culture, information orientation, public service and democratic control, were replaced by negative attributes such as paternalism,

elitism, partisanship, bureaucratic organisational culture, antiquatedness and economic ineffectiveness in the neo-liberal communications discourse (for examples of the latter, see e.g. Home Office 1986; Hujanen 1996; Hobson 1999; Jacka 2003; Peacock 2004; Armstrong 2005; Murdoch 2005). A common argument expressed by ideological critics of PSB is that it does not serve the 'wants' of consumers (i.e. viewers) effectively enough as it does not allow consumers to voice their preferences, but who are rather tied to the old-fashioned moral paternalism of 'nanny-state' broadcasting (Humphreys 1996: 161). These critics argued that PSB institutions were dominated by small elite of governors, editors and journalists, and their programming reflected the views of these people rather than the actual tastes of the audiences. Other common arguments against PSB included its vulnerability to government pressure, the poll-tax nature of television licence, the size and economic inefficiency of the public broadcasting institutions (due to their alleged tendency to overinvest and their vulnerability to 'trade union exploitation'), and their unfair privileges in the broadcasting market, which distort competition. Consumer sovereignty can be better achieved by pay television or advertising funding. PSB, if it is to be preserved at all, should concentrate on mainly the market failure, i.e. producing or commissioning programmes that are socially important but commercially unprofitable.

The influence of the lobby of neo-liberal politicians would have been less successful if they were not supported by a powerful industrial coalition, thus setting an *economic* challenge on PSB. This coalition consisted of electronic industries wishing to exploit the audio-visual electronics market; commercial broadcasters, satellite and cable television lobbies wanting to expand their commercial services; PTTs wishing to develop new media technologies and to maintain market positions; newspaper publishers wanting to diversify their media operations; and advertisers seeking new outlets and wanting to strengthen their market position. National governments across the political spectrum considered liberalisation necessary to contribute to economic growth and to attract investors in the growing media industry, whose importance had been growing since the 1980s along with the general growth in service sectors and decline in manufacturing (Humphreys 1996: 176).

Policies of the European Communities (EC, from 1993 the European Union, EU) have arguably played a major part in this transition, as the EC/EU has been active in promoting the free market ideas and stands for maximum liberalisation and free market competition in broadcasting and telecommunications (see e.g. Humphreys 1996; Burgelman 1997; Murdock and Golding 1999; Stokes and Reading 1999; Collins 2002; Wheeler 2004; Rooke 2009; Svendsen 2011). The EC's first media initiative, the *Television without Frontiers* Green Paper was published in 1984, and made into a directive in 1989. The directive defines television as 'a product operating in a market' (Burgelman 1997: 126) rather than a cultural medium. It anticipated improved competitiveness of the European broadcasting and audiovisual sector following the creation of a Single Market, but rather than fostering pan-European television promoting European integration, the key legacy of the directive was the gradual liberalisation of broadcasting and the unprecedented growth in the numbers of commercial channels in national markets (Esser 2009: 183-9).

### **2.3.2. Neo-liberal marketisation and transformations in the broadcasting paradigm**

Murdock and Golding (1999: 118; 2001: 113-4) argue that a direct consequence of the rise of the neo-liberal agenda in media and communication policies is a wide-reaching process of marketisation. The concept can be summarised to mean 'all those policy interventions designed to increase the freedom of action of private corporations and to institute corporate goals and organizational procedures as the yardsticks against which the performance of all forms of cultural enterprise are judged' (Murdock and Golding 1999: 118). According to Murdock and Golding, marketisation entails four analytically distinct processes:

- 1.) The operating space allocated to capitalist enterprise was rapidly enlarged by opening up previously protected markets (*liberalisation*) and appropriating resources and markets previously managed by public institutions or held in common (*privatisation*);
- 2.) These structural shifts were accompanied by a fundamental *reorientation of regulatory regimes* in which established conceptions of the "public good" were effectively dismantled and redefined as primarily about open markets, unimpeded competition and consumer protection. A growing consensus emerged within the polity that digital

transmission technologies render the established practice of licensing a limited number of entrants to a particular market redundant, and that where scarcity remains an issue, as with the radio spectrum, resources are most efficiently (and profitably) allocated by auction;

- 3.) Market rhetorics and criteria of evaluation were established as the measures against which all organisations were judged, including those still formally in the public sector. Corporate market values: cost-efficiency, commercial revenue generation and customer maximisation, became the guiding norms of the organisations (*corporatisation*). Public sector organisations were encouraged and/or compelled (though cuts to their core public funding) to pursue commercial opportunities more aggressively and to adopt corporate forms of organisation. Murdock uses the BBC as an example of the contradictions set in motion by this process of corporatisation (see e.g. *Producer Choice*, chapter 4);
- 4.) These shifts were legitimated by a reinvigorated master ideology of *consumerism*, which invited people to think of themselves first and last as individual actors in the marketplace with a sovereign right (even a duty) to remake themselves and realise their aspirations by purchasing goods and services, rather than as citizens, whose right to full social participation carries with it an obligation to recognise and respect the needs and aspirations of others. By linking demands for expression and satisfaction to the logic of purchase and possession, marketisation promotes consumerism as the meta-ideology of the age.

(Murdock and Golding 1999: 118-20; 2001: 113-4; Murdock 2004: 30)

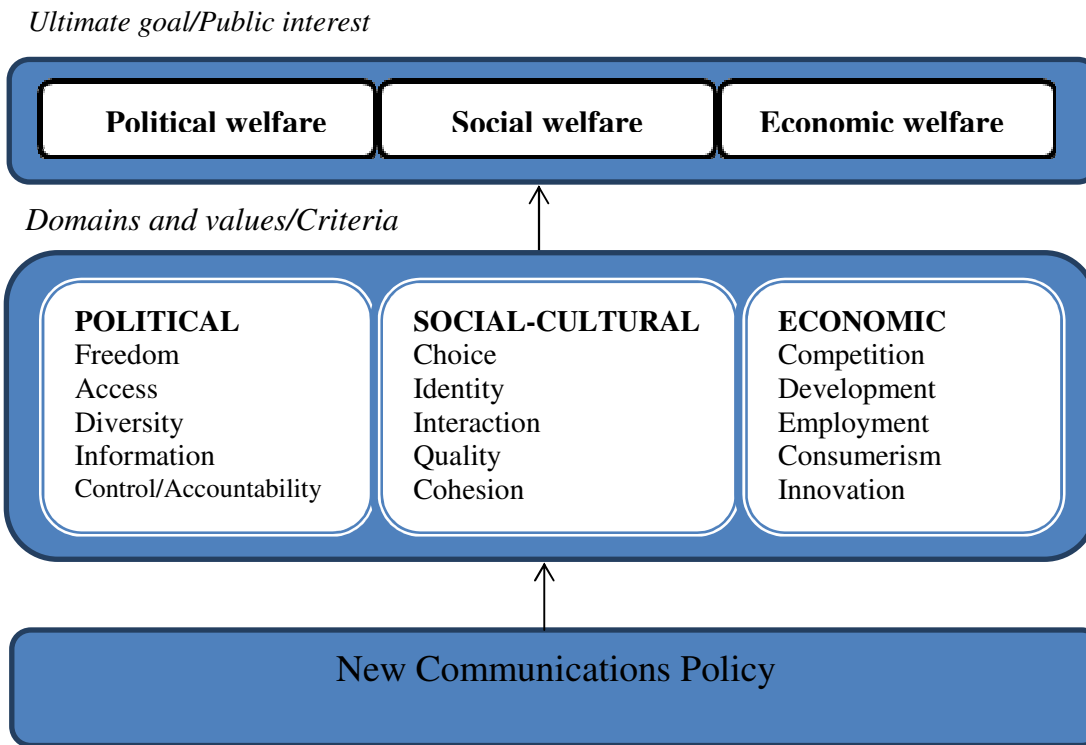
The impact of marketisation is not limited to the political sphere, but it can be considered a complex, all-encompassing socio-political, economic, ideological and institutional process, with direct and indirect effects on broadcasting institutions. Its political and ideological impacts have also caused repercussions for the structures of the broadcasting markets, while its institutional impact is a joint consequence of these political-ideological and structural changes. Thus, marketisation does not involve only policy shifts and economic restructuring, but represents a far more comprehensive process that manipulates institutional structures and practices; and, at the highest level, norms and values that guide behaviour. While liberalisation of broadcasting markets and reorientation of regulation are examples of processes of marketisation that have been carried out through political decrees, their impact has also changed the structure of the broadcasting market, which might be predicted to modify

institutional behaviour directly (through changes in regulation) and indirectly (through increases in competitive pressures). Thus, comprehensive analysis of the impact of marketisation requires us to examine socio-political and institutional structures in broadcasting, as well as changes in institutional norms, values and practices.

The rise in the neo-liberal policy agenda, together with new digital communication technologies and the prerequisites set by telecommunications convergence have resulted in a transformation in the broadcasting policy focus. van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003) argue that while the post-war public service media policy stemmed from collective socio-cultural and political goals, the emerging policy paradigm is driven by an economic and technological logic, with consumers' individual interests gaining prominence in policy objectives (see figure 2.2). Pragmatism and populism rather than idealism and ideologies increasingly drive policies (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 197). While the previous democratic policy goals are still valid in this new policy paradigm, economic welfare has risen in salience in comparison with political welfare, and the underpinning values pertaining to social welfare are more exclusively concerned about issues like access and functioning of the communication services rather than being designed to promote social equality (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 200-1).

Concurrently, the perception of the ways and means by which they are achieved has changed. Policy is attuned to the idea that a large and dynamic market is necessary to provide the communication needs of the society, while the field of communications is no longer primarily viewed as an appropriate area for collective welfare policies. Governments are retreating from regulation where it interferes with market development and giving relatively more priority to economic over social-cultural and political welfare where priorities have to be set (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 198-9). In a wider perspective, the shift can be associated with changing perception of the role of the state in creating and directing cultural policies that rejects the previous pervasive ideals of the nation state and monoculturalism (Ellis 2000: 69-70; Ruoho 2007: 122).

Figure 2.2: The new (1980/1990-) communications policy paradigm



(Source: van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 202)

This redirection of policy has been accompanied by transformations relating to underlying norms and values of the public discourse surrounding PSB. While changes in the political and cultural climate that have accompanied the recent technological and economic transformations do not make publicly regulated television impossible, they make traditional public service solutions appear less logical and natural than before (Syvertsen 2003: 160 & 163). Commercial business environment has become the cultural norm, whose preconditions: competition, commercialism and consumerism, are considered to apply to public service institutions (Mäntymäki 2006: 30). Because of postmodern and neo-liberal sentiments, larger segments of the population also perceive the potential demise of publicly regulated media as expressions of liberalisation and democratisation. This also provides a fertile ground for consumerist and neo-liberal arguments that consumers are the only relevant arbiters of taste. Such a position dismisses the traditional value hierarchies that favoured certain forms of content over the others, but suggests that viewers should

be able to make their viewing decisions based on their individual preferences; to be free to watch what they want (Syvertsen 2003: 163-4). This position equates mass audience preferences – manifested in ratings – as indicators of quality in programming (Ruoho 2007: 133). As the neo-liberal think-tank Adam Smith Institute declared:

[T]he quality argument is clearly elitist [...] The idea of a “quality” programme is a highly subjective one. The only fair criterion for judging programme quality is by how many people like it [...] High ratings ought to be accepted as the yardstick of what people want, and should not be regarded as the object of disdain.

(Adam Smith Institute (1984) "Communications Policy",  
cited in Goodwin 1998: 72)

Indeed, Syvertsen's (1999: 5-10) historical semantic analysis of the meaning of public service concludes that the interpretation of the concept has been influenced by different policy discourses, most recently by the influx of the neo-liberal discourse. The early interpretation of the concept referred to the institutional arrangement of broadcasting as a *public utility*, where the prime criteria of success was discussed in terms of features like universal access, uniform rates, regulated profits and high standards of engineering quality. The second general meaning of public service refers to the social, political and cultural externalities broadcasting produced; '*broadcasting in the service of the public sphere*' (Syvertsen 1999: 7). The public sphere represents institutions in which members of the public take part as citizens and collectively make decisions for common good. Thus, a medium in the service of the public sphere mainly guarantees that all members of society have access to the information and knowledge to perform their civic duties (Syvertsen 1999: 7). This interpretation corresponds with the democratic aims of the post-war media policy paradigm (figure 2.1), and gained substance in the era of public service orthodoxy that featured powerful regulatory practices to promote these goals. The third definition of public service stems from the equation of the public with audience, which implies a conception of the public as individual consumers of the media. In this context, public service may be translated as *broadcasting in the service of the listener/viewer (i.e. the consumer)*. This interpretation highlights the duty of a broadcaster to serve the

interests of individual consumers rather than the needs of the collective, the citizenry. As such, it has become a catch-all concept that ultimately includes the greater part of institutions of a relatively commercialised media system, from the BBC to BSkyB. It is the most recent to gain acceptance in the public service discourse, and draws its legitimisation from the rise of the aforementioned postmodern and neo-liberal sentiments (Syvertsen 1999: 6-7).

While none of these interpretations is exclusive in that elements of different interpretations have become interwoven, and each interpretation contains historical sediments of the previous renditions, actors tend to emphasise different components of the interpretations in different contexts (Mäntymäki 2006: 32-3). As public service has historically been associated with honorific connotations to values like national culture, professionalism and quality, and with certain institutional privileges and positive externalities arising from the association with such concepts, commercial broadcasters and their political champions have been systematically struggling to shift the content of the term from the two traditional interpretations towards the third, consumerist meaning (Ang 1991: 165-6; Syvertsen 1999: 6-9). In so doing, they have not only enhanced their status and weaken the justification for public broadcasters' privileges, thus gaining a competitive advantage over their public counterparts, but also legitimised their calls for reorientation of regulation in broadcasting sector to be more closely akin to any other economic activity. This includes the gradual abolishment of the traditional regulatory obligations for public service programming (Syvertsen 2003: 166).

### **2.3.3. Institutional responses to transformations in broadcasting paradigm: strategies for survival and implications of behaviour modification**

Marketisation has undoubtedly posed the greatest challenge to European public broadcasters, which have been compelled to adapt to competitive entry. According to Hultén and Brants (1992: 117-8), three possible strategies became apparent for



public service institutions: 1.) *adaptation*, which means competing with more or less the same logic as commercial stations, running the risk of diluting or abandoning the traditional public service. Hultén and Brants name RAI in Italy and RTVE in Spain as examples of broadcasters which have chosen the adaptation strategy; 2.) *purification* (also commonly referred to as the 'Monastery Model' (Aslama 2006: 22; Bardoel and d'Haenens 2008: 344)), restriction to public service only, which means withdrawing from competition and concentrating on programmes which the commercial channels do not prefer to offer, resulting effectively in marginalisation of PSB. Application of this strategy has been very limited, although commercial broadcasters and opponents of PSB frequently present this as the only fair model of modern PSB. France and Germany have introduced some thematic public service channels, such as Arte and 3SAT, and; 3.) *compensation*, which is the middle way between the previous two strategies, avoiding both the logic of commercial television and the role of marginalised cultural enclave and concentrating on the strengths of established public broadcasting.

While several scholars have suggested that accelerated commercialisation has prompted public broadcasters to adopt a programming strategy that imitates that of their commercial competitors (Ang 1991: 103-4; Dahlgren 1995: 13-4; d'Haenens 2001: 111), empirical evidence indicates more elaborate responses to the competitive entry. Syvertsen (1992), Siune and Hultén (1998) and Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008: 340-44) argue that the vast majority of public service broadcasters have chosen the compensation strategy, trying to balance between traditional public service values and commercialism. In addition, Siune and Hultén (1998: 29) and Brants and De Bens (2000: 18) argue that there is insufficient evidence to support the so-called convergence hypothesis, which stipulates that competition will gradually make public service and commercial channels increasingly alike. Experiences from European PSBs point rather towards a divergence hypothesis: public service channels and their commercial rivals emphasise different content segments, with public service channels stressing their fortes of e.g. news, current affairs and domestic fiction. Empirical research on Finnish television supports this argument: while Hellman's (1999) study demonstrated that certain convergence had taken place in Finnish broadcasters'

strategies in the 1980s and 1990s, Aslama et al. (2004: 126-7) concluded that the strategies of public (YLE TV 1 and TV 2) and commercial (MTV3 and Nelonen) channels had been increasingly diverging in the 2000s.

The new competitive market, together with the aforementioned transformations in the interpretation of public service, has forced PSBs to redefine their relationship with their audiences. While they were responsible mainly for political elites during their monopoly/duopoly era, the commercial market has necessitated PSBs to consider the multiple markets of television: the popular, political, technological, business and professional markets (Lowe and Alm 1997: 169-91; Hellman 1999: 26-7). In seeking legitimacy for their privileges, the previously dominant tradition of paternalism that was based on a priori, normative knowledge on audience 'needs' has been replaced by increased awareness to the presumed 'wants' of the mass audience (Ang 1991: 103-4). Ang (1991: 103-4) refers to this practice of measuring audience preferences by audience ratings and viewing shares as 'ratings discourse'; a system which is naturally geared at audience maximisation. Syvertsen (1992) argues that public service institutions have been forced to adopt a dual role in the post-monopoly/duopoly broadcasting landscape: they are simultaneously institutions providing a public service in the same sense than public libraries do and media corporations operating in a competitive media market. Balancing between these two roles requires them to constantly compromise between the potentially contradicting requirements of each domain: they are obliged to maintain their popular support – commonly measured by audience figures – while simultaneously fulfilling their social and cultural public service duties (Hellman 1999: 27-9; Mäntymäki 2006: 34).

Contrary to the scenario of Ang (1991: 103-4), rather than leading to a straightforward consumerist paradigm within public service institutions, empirical evidence suggests that they have adopted more elaborate frameworks for audience preference measurement than those simply based on ratings. However, quantitative audience measurements such as ratings and reach nevertheless play a key role in PSBs' considerations. How much they are weighed over cultural and social externalities depends on each individual case. For example, empirical research of the viewing of

Yleisradio's programmes has, since the 1980s, been conducted all but exclusively by its own audience research unit<sup>3</sup>. Its primary methods have mainly comprised quantitative research on audiences. Such an approach is considered to have a legitimate status in assessing the relationship between the broadcaster and the audiences, while the validity, significance and generalisability of qualitative research on individual media experiences is commonly challenged in the political discourse (Yleisradio Oy 2004: 12; Mäntymäki 2006: 27).

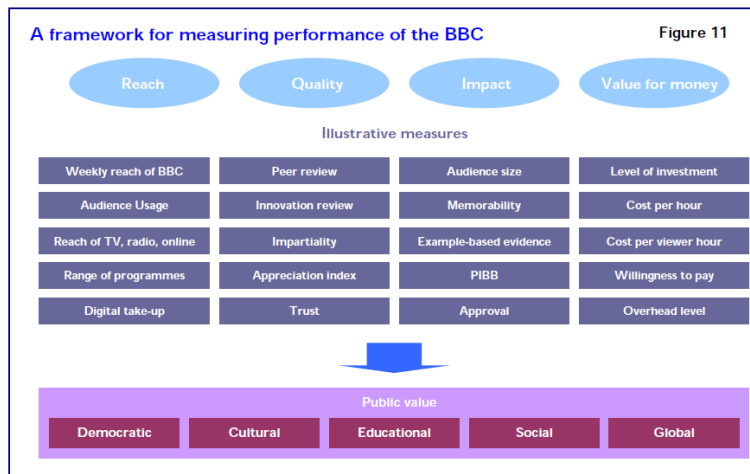
Public service institutions have recently introduced methods of assessing their impact that extend beyond conventional tools of audience measurement. In its 2004 report *Building public value: Renewing the BBC for a digital world* (BBC 2004) the BBC introduced a new concept; public value, as the measure against which its performance was to be measured. Introduced by the Harvard University professor Mark Moore in 1995 and combining a mix of economics and management theory, the concept and approach sought to improve the accountability and efficiency of public enterprises through a more pronounced framework for public value measurement (Coyle and Woolard 2010: 5-6). The public value of a public service was defined to include three components: value to individuals, value to society as a whole and impact on the performance of the wider commercial market (i.e. net economic value) (BBC 2004: 29). The BBC, the report states, contributes to public value in five main ways: by producing democratic, cultural, educational, social and global value. The realisation of these objectives will be measured by a number of diverse measures in four categories that the BBC considers to be 'the main drivers of public value': reach, quality, impact and value for money (see figure 2.3) (BBC 2004: 87). In contrast to the paternalist discourse of the traditional public service paradigm, the model contains several economic measures such as value for money that have little to do with the social and cultural value of broadcasting. By placing these measures to an equal significance with content measures, the model accepts that economic interests of the consumer are equal to those relating to citizenship, much in the same way that the

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<sup>3</sup> The unit was closed down in 2006 as part of the corporation's cost efficiency programme (Mäntymäki 2006: 27).

Communications Act 2003 paralleled citizens and consumers (Doyle and Vick 2005: 86). This indicates that the BBC has, to an extent, accepted the aforementioned interpretation of public service as broadcasting in the service of the listeners/viewers.

Figure 2.3: The BBC model for measuring public value



(Source: BBC 2004: 87)

In terms of evaluating positive externalities of programming, such a mixed method approach for public value measurement does not waive problems associated with the complexity of the accurate measurement of public value, especially from minority interest point of view. A key question can be raised whether this model can appropriately allow for social and cultural externalities of a programme, as these externalities – together with the values and objectives associated with them – are hard to quantify (Steemers 2003: 127). While certain programmes have impact on smaller audiences, the positive externalities they produce may be significant and extend beyond boundaries of the audience group. The model also features systemic bias against certain low-reach programme genres whose cost per viewer is high (e.g. arts and religious programming), as the reach, impact and value for money of these programmes are low in spite of the significant cultural, educational and social externalities associated with them. Thus, the model employs elements of the ratings discourse that are antithetical to the values of PSB and risk placing these minority interest genres to a lesser position to genres that enjoy a more widespread

acceptance amongst audiences. By mixing quantifiable concrete measures such as audience size, weekly reach and cost per hour, with abstract hard-to-measure content features such as impartiality, trust and impact, the system risks of bias towards the former, as they provide concrete information in numerical form about programme “performance”. The use of ‘[a]udience share and volume [...] as indicators of programme or service impact’ (BBC 2004: 83) is also problematical, since audience figures are heavily dependent on factors like scheduling and audience inheritance, as will be examined in chapter 6.

#### **2.3.4. Neo-liberal marketisation and programming diversity: risk of ‘ruinous competition’**

In terms of programming diversity across the systems, empirical experience suggests that the expansion in broadcasting, facilitated mostly by an expansion in commercial broadcasting, and the resulting intensification in the competition for viewers may produce adverse effects on programme diversity. Empirical studies by van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg (2001), Aslama et al. (2005) and Hellman (2010) demonstrate that intensification of competition will eventually lead to commercial broadcasters adopting similar (rather than different) programming strategies, at least in fierce market competition situations where the tendency is to compete for audiences and advertisers by offering the majority’s preference (van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg 2001: 216-7; Aslama 2004: 8). The cost leadership strategy, favoured by commercial broadcasters, initially involves maximising profits by acquiring structural cost advantage by realising economics of scale and scope and serving maximum audiences, and by minimising costs by a continuous process focus on cost reduction and investments in technological and non-technological process innovations. In limited markets with moderate competition, such a strategy would contribute to reflective diversity that fits the demand of the largest possible audiences. However, intensification of competition, inter alia, in a market where many competitors of similar size compete, or when significant new competitors enter a market, will lead to ruinous competition. In such a situation:

...too many companies adopt a cost leadership strategy, [and] these cost leaders will start to compete on price. They will start undercutting each other's prices until prices equal marginal costs. Given that marginal costs are very low and that fixed first copy costs are relatively high in broadcasting, price competition will easily push prices below average costs. When this happens, a negative cycle starts. Revenues will not be sufficient to recoup first copy costs. Investments in content development or process innovation will become unfeasible. Broadcasters will start replacing cost leadership strategies with short-term price competitive strategies<sup>4</sup> to minimize first copy costs. They will offer low quality content at low prices. Audiences will turn to other media markets and revenues will decline further. The end result will be that the remaining broadcasters all offer the same content.

(van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg 2001: 216)

Such a scenario suggests that ruinous competition would also radically reduce commercial broadcasters' willingness to provide minority interest programming, as low-cost mass audience programming is likely to produce higher commercial return. While digital terrestrial television (DTT) has facilitated the introduction of thematic channels, they usually specialise in certain types of programming of popular interest, such as sports, entertainment and films, and have benefited minority interest provision only in a limited way.<sup>5</sup> The study by Hellman (2010) demonstrates that the introduction of thematic channels in Finland has in long term only served to decrease the diversity across the system, especially among commercial operators. As Hellman notes, in trying to find content niches that serve increasingly fragmented target audiences, broadcasting executives produce variety rather than diversity of programming: viewers are provided with product differentiation, i.e. a wide choice between multiple shows of the same genre, while some minority interest genres remain under-represented.

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<sup>4</sup> The price competitive strategy involves broadcasters re-broadcasting content that has already been aired in the same or other markets. Alternatively, they will broadcast content that has already been proven successful in other markets and that can be replicated at low cost (van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg 2001: 215).

<sup>5</sup> With children's programmes being a notable exception.

## 2.4. Conclusion

Parallels between the models of PSB by the Broadcasting Research Unit (1985), Blumler (1992b) and the Council of Europe (1994) examined in the previous sections demonstrate that notwithstanding the differences in national PSB systems, certain characteristics of PSB are universal in European PSB systems. Catering for minority interests and tastes is considered one of these universal PSB duties. Originally stemming from the technological limitations set by spectrum scarcity, the obligation to cater for all interests and tastes, including those of audience minorities, universal service can be considered a natural outcome of the fact that the system is funded by the corpus of its users. The social and cultural objectives of the post-war PSB paradigm also backed catering for minority interests: the ultimate goal of the paradigm was to promote democracy through producing informed citizens. Thus, programming policies were based on a priori, normative knowledge on audience needs rather than their presumed 'wants', and audience size was a lesser factor in determining the output.

The prevailing public service orthodoxy was challenged in the 1980s for technological, ideological and economic reasons. However, Murdock and Golding (2001), argue that a direct consequence of the rise of the neo-liberal agenda in media and communication policies is a wide-reaching socio-political, economic and ideological process of marketisation, whose impact has penetrated broadcasting policies and institutional structures of broadcasting organisations. van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003) argue that a shift has taken place in broadcasting policy focus, with the emerging policy paradigm driven by an economic and technological logic. Concurrently, the public interest has been significantly redefined to encompass economic and consumerist values (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 200).

As one of its key legacies has been the liberalisation and re-regulation of commercial broadcasting, marketisation has created pressures for PSB institutions to modify their institutional behaviour. While Syvertsen (1992), Siune and Hultén (1998) and Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008: 340-44) note that most broadcasters have chosen to balance between the traditional public service values and commercialism, the previously

dominant tradition of paternalism that was based on a priori, normative knowledge on audience 'needs' has been replaced by increased awareness to the presumed 'wants' of the mass audience (Ang 1991: 103-4). However, Syvertsen (1992), Siune and Hultén (1998) and Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008: 340-44) argue that the vast majority of public broadcasters have adopted the compensation strategy, trying to balance between the traditional public service paradigm and commercialism. Siune and Hultén (1998: 29) and Brants and De Bens (2000: 18) argue that experiences from European PSBs point rather towards a divergence hypothesis: public service channels and their commercial rivals emphasise different content segments, with public service channels stressing their fortes of e.g. news, current affairs and domestic fiction. In order to better justify their privileges, public broadcasters have developed elaborate frameworks for public value measurement, that combine both social-cultural elements with economic and consumerist factors. Thus, these economic and consumerist objectives have been accepted as part of the emerging public service paradigm. van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg (2001) argue that intensifying competition between commercial channels will eventually lead to ruinous competition, in which broadcasters adopt similar types of mass-audience oriented programming policies that will lead to deterioration of programming diversity especially among commercial channels.



### **3. Analytical framework, research design and data gathering methods**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In the light of the objectives and underpinning questions of this research detailed in chapter 1, this chapter outlines the theoretical and associated methodological approach of the research in the process illuminating the underpinning analytical framework for the study: historical institutionalism. The chapter explores historical institutionalism over other varieties of 'new' institutionalism and elaborates the analytical framework of the approach to be deployed in the thesis. A customised explanatory model for analysing institutional change will also be presented here. The chapter then proceeds to an outline of the research design and methods, placing particular focus on the case selections for the research, followed by an account of each individual data collection methods. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical issues pertinent to the research.

Developing and presenting a sound methodological framework and research design are essential for the validity and reliability of the research (Jensen 2002: 40). The plethora of literature surrounding the subject is sometimes ambiguous in referring to methodology, methods and research design. Hence, these terms deserve clearer distinction. *Methodology* refers to 'the philosophical framework and the fundamental assumptions of research'. *Research design* is 'the plan of action that links the philosophical assumptions to specific methods'. Finally, *data collection methods* are 'techniques of data collection and analysis' (Marshall and Rossman 1995: 4).

#### **3.2. Analytical framework: historical institutionalism**

Broadcasting differs from other media in that it is under greater influence of public regulation than other forms media in Western Europe. Apart from times of war and national crisis, the press in most European democratic countries has remained free from direct state content control, and has developed along the rules and logic of the market (Humphreys 1996: 112). However, for reasons stemming from technological

necessity and later from a mixture of democratic choice, state self-interest, economic convenience and sheer institutional custom, television in Europe was typically placed under a relatively powerful regulatory control (McQuail 2000: 25). The relationship between broadcasting organisations and agencies responsible for supervising broadcasting as public bodies has obviously created a significant relationship between the broadcasters and the political system. Because of this, broadcasting has hardly anywhere acquired, as of right, the same freedom that the press enjoys, to express views and act with political independence (McQuail 2000: 25). As argued by Hallin and Mancini (2004: 30), the forms and degrees of this 'political parallelism' vary significantly depending on political traditions of each country, but each administration nevertheless shapes its broadcasting system in keeping with its own nature. Thus, changes in broadcasting policies and paradigms tend to reflect political discourses. Owing to the tendency of these policies to have a major and long-lasting influence on broadcasting organisations and their performance, it is necessary to examine the broadcasting institutions in the context of the policies, rules and conventions that shape their operation.

The institutionalist school of political science argues that institutional factors are the most appropriate points of departure for social analysis. Unlike advocates of individualist theories, such as behaviouralism and rational choice theory, institutionalists place a special emphasis on the role institutions play in structuring behaviour. They argue that outcomes in social processes are determined or best predicted by structural factors of the institutional setting in which these processes take place, rather than by the impact of individual human agents (Peters 2005: 156). In addition to formal constructions such as government structures and policies, 'new institutionalism' allows scholars to observe amorphous institutions like political and organisational conventions and social structures, which are essential to comprehend the full extent of the impact of the neo-liberal agenda in the context of broadcasting. Given the nature of broadcasting as collective activity that is heavily dependent on, and shaped by, the social, cultural, political and economic environment in which it takes place, and which takes place and is shaped by its institutional setting (e.g. organisational strategies, policies and conventions), institutionalism provides an apt

approach to analyse such changes and their effects on broadcasting institutions. Unlike many other forms of industrial activity that operate largely to the rules of the free market, media (and terrestrial broadcasting in particular) is constrained by numerous formal and informal rules, conventions and ideas of 'good' practice. The following sections will elaborate this approach, and rationalise why historical institutionalism in particular provides suitable analytical tools to understand the effects of marketisation on broadcasting.

### **3.2.1. 'Old' and 'new' institutionalism**

The institutional approach served as a dominant paradigm in political sciences until the 1950s with its methodological and theoretical premises left unscrutinised. Outside of political theory, this 'old institutionalism' focused on formal aspects of government (Lowndes 2002: 90; Peters 2005: 4). However, the emerging individualist approaches of behaviouralism and rational choice rejected the role of institutions in favour of individuals. Both approaches assume that people act autonomously as individuals, making their own choices based either on socio-psychological characteristics or rational calculation of their personal utility, and are not seriously constrained by formal or informal institutions (Peters 2005: 1). They dismissed the traditional institutionalist view on politics as the formal structures and processes of government as too narrow, and consequently institutionalism went out of fashion for three decades.

Since the advent of 'new institutionalism' in the 1980s, the approach has enjoyed a strong revival, bringing institutions back in the focus of political research. Growing out of the 'old institutionalism' as a reaction to the 'under-socialised' character of behaviouralism and rational choice, 'new institutionalists' vehemently reject the behaviouralist argument that observable behaviour is the basic datum of political analysis (Immergut 1998: 6). While 'new institutionalism' acknowledges the role of individual actors, it differs from behaviouralism and rational choice theories in that it believes that 'the organization of political life makes a difference' (March and Olsen 1984: 747): rules, which are 'routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies,

organizational forms, and technologies around which political activity is constructed', and the 'beliefs, paradigms, codes, cultures, and knowledge that surround, support, elaborate, and contradict those roles and routines' (March and Olsen 1989: 22) control our behaviour more than rational consequential calculation. 'New institutionalists' believe that these institutions play a dual role by both constraining and corrupting behaviour (Immergut 1998: 9); 'the state is not only affected by society but also affects it' (March and Olsen 1984: 738). Institutions are actors in their own right, who define and defend their interests. In the words of Campbell:

Institutions are settlements born from struggle and bargaining with each other. They reflect the resources and power of those who made them and, in turn, affect the distribution of resources and power in society. Once created, institutions are powerful external forces that help determine how people make sense of their world and act in it. They channel and regulate conflict and thus ensure stability in society.

(Campbell 2004: 1)

The 'new institutionalism' reflects many features of the 'old' institutionalism, but also 'enriches it with the research tools and the explicit concern for theory that had informed both behaviouralism and rational choice analysis' (Peters 2005: 2). Unlike 'old' institutionalism, it is not solely concerned with the impact of institutions upon individuals, but also examines the interaction between institutions and individuals (Lowndes 2002: 91). It also features a shift from a formal to an informal conception of institutions. Institutions are no longer equated solely with formal (political) organisations, but institution is understood more broadly to refer to a collection of formal and informal rules, norms, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and routines that define the context within which individuals and organisations operate and interact within each other (Campbell 2004: 1; Peters 2005: 29).

'New institutionalism' does not constitute a unified school of thought. At least three different varieties have appeared since the 1980s, with historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism representing the three main schools of 'new institutionalism' (Hall and Taylor 1996: 936). As Thelen (1999: 370) notes, each of these schools 'represents a sprawling literature characterised by tremendous internal diversity', and thus drawing lines between them can be difficult.

Researchers in the field also regularly cross borders between the schools and borrow liberally where they can, in order to answer specific empirical questions. For instance, certain rational choice institutionalists have attempted to document the pervasive effects of early choices, commonly utilised by the historical institutionalist approach, while historical institutionalists scholars Thelen, Steinmo and Longstreth appear quite comfortable with some aspects of the rational choice institutionalism (Peters 2005: 71-2). In spite of this, key differences exist e.g. in the ways the three main schools of 'new institutionalism' define institutions, how institutions influence actors' behaviour and how institutions are formed. For instance, with reference to the definition of institutions, rational choice institutionalists see institutions as formal and informal rules and the monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms that cause actors to comply with these rules. Similarly, historical institutionalists consider institutions to be the formal and informal rules and procedures that structure conduct. In contrast, sociological institutionalists tend to define institutions much more broadly than political scientists do to include symbol systems, cognitive scripts, taken-for-granted cultural frameworks and moral templates, thus breaking the conceptual divide between institutions and culture (Hall and Taylor 1996: 947; Campbell 2004: 4). Likewise, significant differences exist in the ways these schools consider institutions to influence behaviour: for sociological institutionalists, rules work by determining appropriate behaviour, while proponents of the rational choice variant assume rules to determine the basis of exchanges between utility-maximising actors (Lowndes 2002: 98). Acknowledging these differences is fundamental, as they do not only guide how the scholars conduct their analysis and interpret their results, but also have a key influence on how scholars focus their research. Key similarities and differences between rational choice, organisational and historical institutionalism are presented in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Similarities and differences in rational choice, organisational and historical institutionalism

	<b>Rational choice institutionalism</b>	<b>Organisational institutionalism</b>	<b>Historical institutionalism</b>
<b>Similarities</b>			
Favoured patterns of change	Punctuated equilibrium, evolution	Punctuated equilibrium, evolution, punctuated evolution	Punctuated equilibrium, evolution, punctuated evolution
Favoured causal concepts	Path dependence: Based on feedback, increasing returns and choice within institutional constraints  Diffusion: Based on information contagion, feedback and imitation	Path dependence: Based on constraining and constructive aspects of institutions  Diffusion: Based on mimetic, normative and coercive processes	Path dependence: Based on feedback, learning and choice within institutional constraints  Diffusion: Based on learning and coercive processes
Role of ideas	Increasing: Cognitive structures, beliefs and norms constrain actors (and make institutions inefficient)	Substantial: Taken-for-granted cognitive and normative structures constrain (and enable) actors	Increasing: Policy paradigms and principled beliefs constrain actors
<b>Differences</b>			
Theoretical roots	Neoclassical economics	Phenomenology, ethnomethodology, cognitive psychology	Marxist and Weberian political economy
Definition of institution	Formal and informal rules and compliance procedures; strategic equilibrium	Formal rules and taken-for-granted cultural frameworks, cognitive schema and routinised processes of reproduction	Formal and informal rules and procedures
Level of analysis	Micro-analytic exchanges	Organisational fields and populations	Macro-analytic national political economies
Theory of action	Logic of instrumentality	Logic of appropriateness	Logics of instrumentality and appropriateness
Theory of constraint	Action is constrained by rules, such as property rights and constitutions, and bounded rationality	Action is constrained by cultural frames, schema and routines	Action is constrained by rules and procedures, cognitive paradigms and principled beliefs

(Source: Campbell 2004: 11)

### 3.2.2. Historical institutionalism and its analytical framework

The institutional-based analysis in this research derives from the historical institutionalist approach. Although other institutionalist approaches are possible, several features of historical institutionalism are particularly apposite in terms of

illuminating the research questions and delivering the objectives of this research. First, historical institutionalism features a perspective on historical development that is highly compatible with longitudinal research and provides scholars with 'an avenue of looking at policy across time, while many other approaches are bound in time and even in space' (Peters 2005: 85). As already noted, broadcast media is under a more rigid public control than other types of digital and print media. This control does not only feature formal statutory and regulatory structures – e.g. broadcasting legislation and regulation – but also covers informal rules, ideas, conventions and expectations, which are grounded to the institutional past. A PSB organisation is expected to operate to a certain, established and recognised PSB model, which bears traces of its own history. Thus, past institutional choices have a long-lasting effect on organisational structures, policy choices and operational strategies. Historical institutionalism's concept of 'path dependency' provides an apt method to examine consistency and change in institutional practices and configurations, as it focuses its analysis on changes in the institutional continuity ('critical junctures'), but also provides a plausible explanation for the persistence of certain institutional configurations that do not necessarily represent the most rational or beneficial options for broadcasting institutions.

Second, since historical institutionalists focus on structural features of institutions that constrain and influence actors' behaviour and preference formation, historical institutionalism provides a particularly suitable analytical framework for a cross-national comparative study. Thelen and Steinmo (1992: 14) argue that historical institutionalism has been 'especially helpful in illuminating cross-national differences': the approach explains 'different policy outcomes in different countries with reference to their respective (stable) institutional configurations.' Historical institutionalism rejects the argument of so-called grand theories (such as Marxism) that the outcome of certain social, political and economic forces can be predicted in any context, but stress the contextual nature of causality and the influence of sequencing and timing of events on outcomes. Thus, historical institutionalists focus their research on systemic features that explain why similar processes and forces result in different outcomes in different national environments. In so doing, they also identify features in national

institutional configurations that have acted as key agents in shaping process outcomes.

Third, historical institutionalism allows suitable theoretical flexibility to accommodate elements of analysis from other schools of political research, which is required to analyse complex processes involving institutions of the polity and society, human agents, and the broadcasting organisations themselves. Historical institutionalism is not a rigid theoretical structure, but historical institutionalists are eclectic and use elements from rational choice and sociological institutionalism (Hall and Taylor 1996: 939-40; Peters 2005: 71-72). Differences between the ways the institutionalist schools consider institutions to shape individual behaviour serve as an apt example. While sociological institutionalists adopt a *cultural approach* in their analysis and consider human beings as norm-abiding rule followers, who act according to the logic of appropriateness ('what *should* I do'), and rational choice institutionalists adopt a *calculus approach* and believe that people base their decisions on strategic calculation to maximise personal gain using the logic of instrumentality ('what *do I get* out of this situation'), historical institutionalism use both these approaches to specify the relationship between institutions and action: human beings are both norm-abiding rule followers and self-interested rational actors. In such situations, individual behaviour is determined by the individual, the context and the rule. Historical institutionalists would use historical evidence to determine whether a political outcome stems from self-interest or altruistic/collective motives, or whether it reflects simply habitual behaviour (Hall and Taylor 1996: 939-40; Steinmo 2008). This theoretical synergy is particularly useful in analysing motives behind actions of broadcasting organisations, which are influenced by both their historical legacy and private, institutional interests (e.g. commercial aspirations).

Historical institutionalism lacks what one could call a 'universal tool kit' that can be applied to virtually any political setting, which proponents of theories of deductive logics such as rational choice theorists and Marxists have. Rather than 'deducing hypotheses on the basis of global assumptions and prior to the analysis', proponents of historical institutionalism 'generally develop their hypotheses more inductively, in



the course of interpreting the empirical material itself' (Thelen and Steinmo 1992: 12). They are not bounded by one theory, but use different approaches to examine the relationships between institutions and action (Hall and Taylor 1996). Scholarly differences exist within historical institutionalism in the scope of the definition of institution, with scholars like Thelen and Steinmo (1992) and Immergut (1998) appearing to support a looser definition that accommodates formal and amorphous structures ranging from government institutions to social classes, including 'formal rules of political arenas, channels of communication, language codes, or the logics of strategic situations' (Immergut 1998: 20). Yet Lowndes (2002: 103-4) warns about the risks of adopting a 'conceptually stretched' definition of institution that includes implicit rules and vague understandings, as it prevents their distinction from other social facts. In line with this recommendation, this study adopts a slightly narrower definition of institutions, considering them 'organizations and the rules or conventions promulgated by formal organizations', including 'the formal and informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure' (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938). In the empirical analysis of this study, the units of analysis are the broadcasting organisations, whose operating policies, rules, strategies, norms and routines provide the institutional setting that constrain and corrupt actors' behaviour and preferences.

Historical institutionalism has a distinctive perspective on historical development, which rejects the traditional postulate that the same operative forces will generate the same outcomes in all institutional settings. Instead, it argues that 'the effect of such forces will be mediated by the contextual features of a given situation often inherited from the past' (Hall and Taylor 1996: 941). This view, commonly referred to as 'path dependency' (Hall and Taylor 1996; Thelen 1999; Campbell 2004; Peters 2005; Capoccia and Kelemen 2007), asserts that the policy choices made when an institution is being established – through complex struggles and bargaining among organised groups – or, when a policy is being initiated, create a path which the institution follows until some significant forces intervenes to divert them from the established direction. This path will 'constrain the range of events that is possible at later stages' (Tilly 2009: 525). While the path may be altered, it requires a good deal

of pressure to produce this change (Peters 2005: 71). Thus, there is an inertial tendency for those initial policy choices to persist. Even when institutional change takes place, experiences of these past policy choices continue to constrain and corrupt future institutional configurations, as they serve as 'signals, models, threats, and/or aspirations for later actors' (Tilly 2009: 525).

As the phrase suggests, there is an expectation in the punctuated equilibrium model that for most of its existence an institution will exist in an equilibrium state, functioning in accordance with the decisions made at its initiation, or perhaps those made at the previous point of punctuation (Peters 2005: 77). Historical institutionalists focus their research on how institutions produce such paths; that is, what kind of institutional responses they make to new challenges. Patterns of institutional change and stability are frequently explained by a model of punctuated equilibrium. This model posits that relatively long periods of institutional stability and continuity are punctuated by short bursts of change: moments when substantial and critical institutional change takes place thereby creating a 'branching point' from which historical development moves onto a new path (March and Olsen 1989; Thelen and Steinmo 1992; Hall and Taylor 1996). During these 'rapid bursts of institutional change' (Peters 2005: 77), 'public policy is assigned new objectives, new priorities are established, and new political and administrative coalitions evolve to sustain those new policies' (Peters et al. 2005: 1276). These short periods of significant change that are hypothesised to produce distinct legacies<sup>6</sup> are referred to as critical junctures, that represent the choice points when a particular option is adopted among two or more alternatives (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007: 347). Critical junctures are characterised by a situation, in which 'the structural (that is, economic, cultural, ideological, organizational) influences on political action are significantly relaxed for a relatively short period, with two main consequences: the range of plausible choices open to powerful political actors

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<sup>6</sup> In their study on critical junctures, Capoccia and Kelemen (2007: 352) demonstrate that change is not a necessary element of a critical juncture, but contingency of such change may result in re-equilibration of an institution. However, since this study is primarily interested in institutional changes, such critical junctures that result in a re-equilibration deserve lesser attention in this study.

expands substantially and the consequences of their decisions for the outcome of interest are potentially much more momentous' (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007: 343). Historical institutionalists often stress the impact of crisis in particular, e.g. economic depression, civil unrest or military conflict, in triggering these junctures (Hall and Taylor 1996: 942). Accordingly, historical institutionalism considers the nature of institutional change to be more contingent and dependent on past policy choices, rather than a consequence of conscious process initiated by failure of an existing institution to meet the requirements for which it was formed, as argued by advocates of rational choice institutionalism (Peters 2005).

This idea of punctuated equilibrium, however, has come under increasing criticism from a number of scholars (e.g. Thelen and Steinmo 1992; Thelen 2000; Campbell 2004; Peters 2005; Streeck and Thelen 2005) for its inability to explain incremental change. Some scholars suggest that the periods of equilibrium occurring between punctuations are better characterised as incremental-evolutionary than static. The punctuated evolution model considers that there may be two different types of change, each driven by different dynamics. In this model, evolutionary periods, that are characterised by social learning during which self-reflexive actors gradually adjust their institutions in ways that are constrained by already-given institutional practices, rules, routines, and cognitive schema, are punctuated occasionally by crises that involve open struggles over the very core of the institutional status quo and that eventually result in truly fundamental institutional transformations (Campbell 2004: 34). Campbell (2004: 69) presents the process of bricolage – the process of crafting new institutional solutions by recombining existing institutional principles and practices with new ones – as an example of such an incremental-evolutionary process of change. Substantive bricolage involves the recombination of already existing institutional principles and practices to achieve various substantive goals that include such things as reducing transaction costs, increasing market share, improving product quality, and so on. As Fligstein (1991) demonstrates, new institutions existing in already existing fields may provide an example for other institutions: '[o]nce some set of organizations in a field has changed its strategies, and once others perceive that the change has resulted in some allegedly superior results, then other actors will

follow suit' (Fliegstein 1991: 316). Institutional models may travel from one country to another, occasionally with a coercive push from powerful states (Campbell 2004: 26; Peters 2005: 78).

Historical institutionalism challenges the ability of the political sciences to form 'grand theories' that provide explanations to various phenomena of political life in a universal context. It represented a shift away from concepts that tended to homogenise whole classes of nations, towards concept that capture diversity amongst them (Thelen and Steinmo 1992: 5-6). Reacting against such 'grand theorising' tendencies in behaviouralism and Marxism in the 1960s and 1970s, historical institutionalists have, often by using comparison, demonstrated that 'large-scale social, economic and political forces can produce divergent outcomes in different countries as a result of the diversity of their institutional arrangements' (Hopkin 2002: 263). Explaining such differences requires more explicit attention to the institutional landscape in which the forces take effect. While historical institutionalism shares the concern for building theory with behaviouralism and Marxism, its scholars emphasise the particularities and specificities of individual cases that these theories had obscured (Thelen and Steinmo 1992: 5-6).

Much of the work of historical institutionalism has been developed in a macro-level comparative context, and consists of cross-national comparisons of public policy (Hall and Taylor 1996: 938; Campbell 2004: 23). As Thelen and Steinmo (1992: 14) note, historical institutionalism has been particularly helpful in illuminating cross-national differences and the persistence of patterns or policies over time within individual countries. Though not initially branded as historical institutionalist as the use of the term itself was not coined until the early 1990s, Skocpol's (1979) study on the sources and patterns of social revolutions in France, China and Russia provides an example of early use of the historical institutionalist approach in a cross-national comparative context. It challenged the preceding orthodoxy that class structure and elite power (rather than the structure of state institutions in the pre-revolutionary period, as new institutionalists would argue) would explain different patterns between the nations. Hall's (1986) comparative analysis of the development and direction of

economic policy in the UK and France provides another example of early utilisation of the approach by explaining economic policy with an institutional model that focuses on socio-economic organisation of a nation. Immergut (1990, 1992), in turn, applied the approach in her comparative studies on health policies of France, Sweden and Switzerland, illustrating how the institutionalisation of 'veto points' within political systems explained the influence of pressure groups in health policy-making rather than the initial strengths of the 'veto groups' themselves. In the field of mass media research, Jääsaari (2007) has, more recently, utilised the approach in her comparative case study on the impact of marketisation on national broadcasting policy paradigms in Finland and Canada during the broadcasting digitalisation process. In particular, her study demonstrates that institutional structures and policy paradigms of the past shaped policies for the introduction of the digital television in the 1990s and 2000s. The critique by Humphreys (2012: 170-2) on the methodological weaknesses of the study by Hallin and Mancini (2004) highlights the benefits of historical institutionalism's utilisation in comparative studies on national media systems to better understand the relationship between media systems and the socio-cultural and political system in which they are embedded.

This study, too, demonstrates through a comparative study that institutional transformations in the UK and Finland can be explained through the model of punctuated equilibrium, and new institutional configurations and policy choices are shaped by ideas and institutional structures from the past. As per the analytical framework of historical institutionalism, this study considers that behaviour can be best analysed and explained through the institutional setting in which it takes place; in other words, institutions constrain and corrupt individual behaviour. Thus, changes in institutional policies and practices with regards to the provision of children's and religious programming are considered to emanate from institutional changes rather than to represent outright changes in viewing demographics that could be explained by a straightforward supply-demand box office model. For this reason, this study does not examine changes in demographics or audience data in detail, nor does it examine changes in the culture realms of the UK and Finland; while such changes may contribute to institutional change to a minor extent, historical institutionalists do not

believe that they represent punctuations powerful enough to punctuate the powerful institutional equilibria of broadcasters' programming policies.

### **3.2.3. The Industrial Equilibrium Model and its contribution in analysing institutional dynamism: a customised explanatory model for the study**

Historical institutionalism has several advantages in this study in analysing large industrial organisations. Above all, by treating broadcasting companies as institutions, historical institutionalism is able to illuminate underlying rules, values, ideas and conventions that influence the behaviour of broadcasting institutions, which would be largely disregarded by e.g. game theory and other methods commonly used in industrial organisation research. Its punctuated equilibrium model on historical development enables analysis of institutional consistency and change in institutional settings over time, while other institutional approaches are more bound in time and even in space (Peters 2005: 85). Its use is also justified in a cross-national comparative study like this, as it sheds light on systemic features that are rooted in institutional histories and national environments, which explain how the same forces result in different outcomes in different national and institutional settings.

In spite of these significant benefits associated with the approach, the main problem with the use of historical institutionalism in this study pertains to the degree of resolution of its analytical lens. As several scholars argue (see e.g. Hall and Taylor 1996: 942; Peters 2005: 79; Peters et al. 2005: 1286-7), historical institutionalism is not a fertile source of explanations for change in organisations and institutions, and has little capacity to predict them. The analytical framework of historical institutionalism 'appears premised upon the enduring effects of institutional and policy choices made at the initiation of a structure' (Peters 2005: 76). Thus, the approach is better suited to explaining of the emergence and persistence of patterns once established, than to explaining how those patterns might change. As historical institutionalism has been developed primarily in the context of political science

(Thelen and Steinmo 1992: 2), its analytical capacity is to an extent insufficient to analyse completely the impact of changes in broadcasting environment on the behaviour of broadcasting organisations operating in a dynamic, liberalised market environment, and hence must adjust their institutional strategies, policies and priorities in terms of the necessities of the broadcasting environment in order to survive.

More precisely, historical institutionalism lacks an explanatory model that establishes a causal relationship between the political and commercial forces in the broadcasting environment, the strategies of broadcasting institutions and their performance that is necessary for comprehensive analysis of the impact of marketisation on broadcasting organisations and their behaviour. In terms of this study, this poses a major weakness, as there appears to be no apparent logic in institutional change other than that of the legacy of the past institutional configurations. Analysing the effects of marketisation by using programme data as empirical evidence is also problematical, as the level of focus of historical institutionalism's analytical lens is too wide to plausibly explain how changes in industry structure are reflected in programming. In analysing institutional change in particular, historical institutionalists treat institutions mainly as passive objects of change and do not allow for the influence industrial organisations have on other institutions in the market, and the industry structure. As broadcasting organisations compete for the same limited resources (advertising income, public funding, viewers' attention, etc.), changes in the institutional strategy of a broadcasting organisation is likely to produce repercussions for the industry structure, whose impact may thrust other actors in the direction of institutional change.

This study addresses this lack of resolution of historical institutionalism's analytical lens in examining minute institutional changes in detail by devising a customised explanatory model – referred to hereafter as the Industrial Equilibrium Model – that employs elements of historical institutionalism and a variant of the Industrial Organisation Model, also known as the Structure-Conduct-Performance Paradigm (SCPP). The SCPP is a model in industrial economics that is commonly applied in

economic analyses of mass media and other oligopolistic industries (see e.g. Wirth and Bloch 1995; Chan-Olmsted 1997; Hellman 1999). The analytical contribution of the SCPP lies in its ability to analyse forces that produce institutional changes in an industrial organisation that operates under the imperatives of a dynamic market, together with its capacity to establish a causal interrelation between the broadcasting market, media policies, broadcasting institutions' strategies and their performance. By establishing a causal link between the broadcasting policies and industry structure; institutional conduct; and the performance of a broadcasting institution – manifested above all by television output, the SCPP also facilitates the use of television output as concrete evidence of institutional transformations.

The general methodological approach used by industrial organisation researchers focuses on three concepts: 1.) *industry* or *market structure*, which is defined by factors like barriers to entry to the market (political or economic); number of competitors in the market; size of companies; concentration of ownership; homogeneity or heterogeneity of products (channel concepts or programming strategies), i.e. product differentiation; number of suppliers (e.g. independent producers or acquisitions opportunities) available in the market; concentration of ownership; method(s) of financing broadcasting; subsidies; etc., 2.) *industry conduct*, i.e. strategies that firms pursue to gain competitive advantage, which is expressed by operating (or business) strategies, programming policies and production strategies and arrangements (e.g. investment in production facilities) of broadcasting organisations; and, 3.) *industry performance*, which refers to values like profitability, efficiency of operations, quality of service and fulfilment of institutional goals, and is ultimately manifested by the television output of the broadcasting organisations in our case (Wirth and Bloch 1995: 16-17; Waldman and Jensen 1998: 6-7; Hellman 1999: 18). The essence of the most widely accepted approach to industrial organisation analysis is that company performance is determined by the conduct of the firm, and that firm conduct is determined by various industry structure variables.

Early versions of the SCPP treated this causality in a rather simple, linear manner: since structure determined conduct, which in turn determined performance, it was



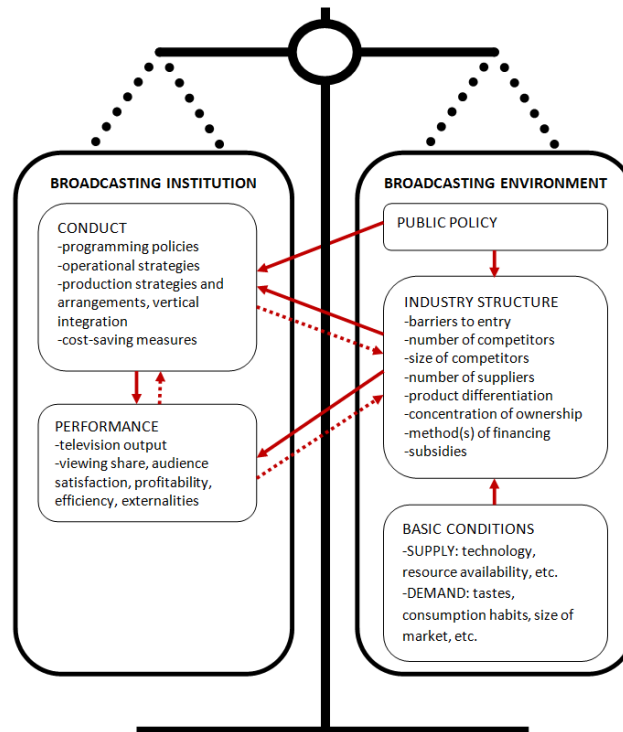
unnecessary to examine conduct, but analysis of industry structure would explain performance (Porter 1981: 611). These early versions of the SCPP, however, came under an increasing criticism for the reason that they did not properly depict the relations between the different elements of the model. They lacked internal dynamism and treated the industry structure as exogenous, although performance and conduct often affect industry structure (Porter 1981: 611-7; Wirth and Bloch 1995: 17-18; Ramstad 1997: 46). Stemming from this criticism, the classical SCPP model has been revised to allow for greater dynamism between the elements of the model. The revised SCPP model recognises that there are feedback effects of firm conduct (strategy) on market structure: for example, firm conduct has impact on the degree of product differentiation in the market. Similar feedback effects are also possible from firm performance back to conduct, and from performance to structure (Porter 1981: 616; Lipczynski et al. 2005: 7). The influence of *public policy* has also been incorporated to the model: policymakers may manipulate the structure of a market to improve firm conduct and ultimately market performance through *structural remedy*, or they may directly influence firm conduct by constraining firm behaviour through the establishment of behavioural regulations, or *conduct remedy* (Wirth and Bloch 1995: 16-18; Ramstad 1997: 46). Finally, the revised SCPP model accepts that each market has various *basic conditions* pertaining to supply and demand that also influence the industry structure (Lipczynski et al. 2005: 7). These conditions vary across industries and market areas. Supply conditions, referring to the willingness of producers to provide a given quantity of output at a given price, include factors such as underlying technological base and cost structure, resource availability and economies of scale. Demand conditions refer to the willingness of a customer to pay a given price for a given quantity of a good or service. In broadcasting, customer may refer to audiences or advertisers, depending on the method of financing of a broadcasting company. Factors pertaining to this category include tastes, preferences and media consumption habits of audiences, advertisers' ability and willingness to spend money on television advertising, the availability of substitutes (e.g. alternative platforms) and the size of the market area.

The Industrial Equilibrium Model combines key elements of historical institutionalism and the SCPP, thus forming a customised model that has better capacity to analyse change than those provided by historical institutionalism alone. It features the potency of historical institutionalism to treat broadcasting organisations as institutions that constrain and shape behaviour, and the merits of path dependency in examining consistency and change in institutional settings with the benefits of the SCPP in analysing the operation of industrial organisations, such as broadcasting companies. The key contribution of the Industrial Equilibrium Model is its sharper analytical lens compared to that provided by historical institutionalism or the SCPP alone. Industrial organisation researchers who utilise the SCPP, in turn, commonly use game theory in their analysis, which overlooks the influence of institutional factors in constraining and shaping behaviour. The Industrial Equilibrium Model is better able to identify and analyse institutional changes that are produced by more subtle changes in the broadcasting environment that do not necessarily meet the criteria for abrupt external ‘shocks’ or crises. Consistent with the historical institutionalist position, the model believes that actors’ behaviour is constrained in, and shaped by, institutions. The institutional context also shapes the strategies and the goals actors pursue (Thelen and Steinmo 1992: 8). Institutions usually exist in a state of equilibrium, with their operation in this equilibrium state following the logic of path dependency. Institutional change can be triggered by ‘triggering events’ or forces that punctuate the institutional equilibrium and initiate the process of institutional change. These events or forces may be relatively small, but if they occur at the right moment, they can have large and enduring consequences (Pierson 2000: 263).

Figure 3.1 provides a schematic representation of the Industrial Equilibrium Model and its elements. The institutional equilibrium is presented here as scales of equilibrium, representing the status quo in broadcasting institutions. The causal relationships between the elements of the model (as per the SCPP, with institutional performance being determined by the conduct of the firms in the industry, and with firm conduct being dependent on various structural variables and manipulated by the basic conditions of supply and demand and public policy, of which the latter also regulates the industry structure) are represented by red arrows. The feedback effects;

from performance to conduct, from conduct to structure, and from performance to structure, are presented by dotted arrows. It should be noted here that the lists of 'factors' in boxes representing industry structure, conduct and performance, are not exhaustive.

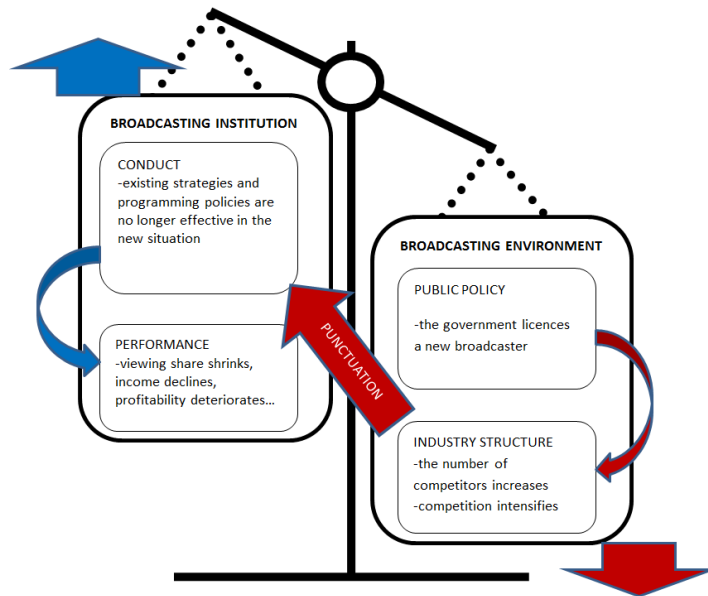
Figure 3.1: Schematic representation of the Industrial Equilibrium Model used in this study



In terms of the model, punctuations emanate from changes in the broadcasting environment, i.e. public policies, the industry structure or basic conditions. When powerful enough, these changes represent shocks that render old institutional configurations unfit for the conditions of the new situation arisen from such changes, and thus increase pressures for institutional change. Figure 3.2 presents an example of such a shock. In this hypothetical case, a change in public policy – the government's decision to grant a broadcasting licence to a new broadcaster – represent the shock that punctuates the institutional equilibrium of a broadcaster, as it results in an intensification of competition in industry structure. This punctuation is powerful enough to render the broadcaster's existing strategies and programming

policies impotent, as they can no longer address the changed market conditions effectively. This is eventually reflected in the performance of the broadcasting institution, with its viewing share shrinking, income declining and profitability deteriorating.

Figure 3.2: An example of punctuation in the institutional equilibrium emanating from a change in public policy

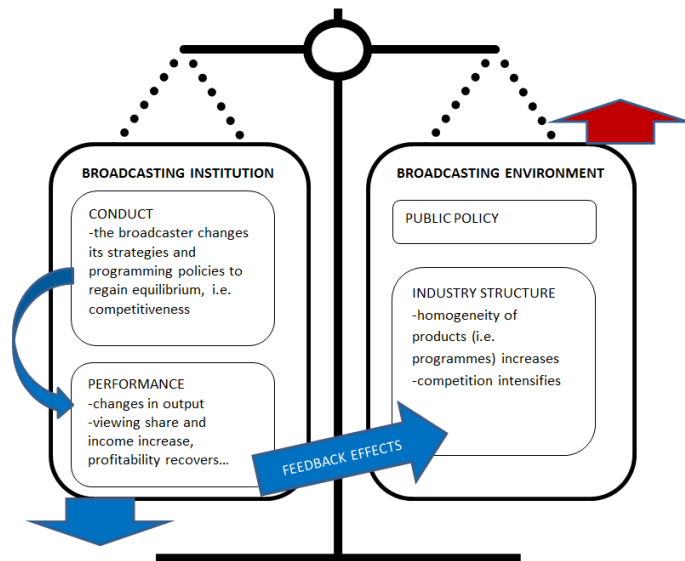


Since 'institutional survival depend[s] [...] on a process of institutional transformation, to accommodate powerful new actors and to adapt the institutions to address new imperatives, both economic and political' (Thelen 2000: 105), broadcasting institutions need to respond to the imperatives set by the new situation by changing their conduct, i.e. established institutional strategies and practices, in a way the actors involved in the process deem suitable to address the situation. This change may be rapid or incremental-evolutionary (punctuated evolution). In both cases, actors' logic in such a situation is driven ultimately by desire to minimise loss in institutional resources and power. As Campbell (2004: 176) put it, since 'institutions are settlements over the distribution of resources or power that are reached through struggle and bargaining', 'anything that threatens to upset this distribution is a problem that could trigger new struggles and bargains and eventually institutional change.' Changes in conduct will logically also influence performance of the

organisation – i.e. the television output – that represents the observable end product of a broadcasting organisation.

Figure 3.3 presents a visual representation of a hypothetical institutional response to punctuation that the institution takes to regain the state of equilibrium. The institution attempts to address the conditions of the new situation arisen from the punctuation outlined in figure 3.2 by changing its conduct. In this case, the institution amends its organisational strategies and programming policies. These changes are translated to changes in the broadcaster's performance, i.e. changes in its viewing share and profitability, amongst others, with changes in the television output representing the visible outcome of the changes in the broadcaster's conduct. If the actions are successful, the broadcasting institution will increase its viewing share and its profitability will eventually recover. It is noteworthy, however, that the actions are not necessarily successful, at least in the way the institution expected. They may not be sufficient to recover the viewing share or increase its profits. Once the institution has performed the changes it considers necessary to counter the impact of the punctuation, the institution returns to the state of equilibrium which it retains until the next punctuation. Thus, while institutions seek to regain the state of equilibrium, the model considers that institutions never reach a *permanent* state of equilibrium, but are in a perpetual state of flux.

Figure 3.3: An example of an institutional response to regain the state of equilibrium and the feedback effects it creates



Rather than treating institutions as passive subjects of change, the model accepts that industry structure is not exogenously determined since the conduct and performance of broadcasting companies often affect industry structure (Wirth and Bloch 1995: 17-18). Thus, the model allows for the impact of the feedback effects on industry structure. Similarly, the model accepts that the conduct of a broadcasting organisation is affected by its performance: it may come under pressure to change its institutional strategies if it fails to meet certain targets it has set for its performance in terms of e.g. audience share. An example of such a feedback effect is presented in figure 3.3. In this case, changes in institutional conduct and performance represent a feedback effect on the industry structure, which results in increasing homogeneity of programmes and intensifying competition. As other institutions need to adapt to the conditions of the market, these feedback effects may set off further punctuations in other institutions' equilibria, thus generating a chain reaction that may result in extensive changes in other institutions in the market.

### **3.3. Research design**

Research design can be summarised as ‘procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies’ (Marshall and Rossman 1995: 58). It defines the purpose and perspective of the research, and also suggests the choice of data collection techniques most appropriate for the chosen design. The function of research design is ‘to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible’ (De Vaus 2001: 9). The research design needs to address the requirements set by the research question: what type of evidence is needed to answer the question in a convincing way?

This study has been designed as a piece of comparative historical research with comparisons between two nations (Schutt 2009: 426-7). Comparative historical studies consist of five basic tasks:

1. Specify an analytical framework and identify parameters that should be examined to explain a phenomenon;
2. Select cases that vary in terms of these key concepts or events;
3. Measure the parameter values and assess the strength of their relationships;
4. By comparing differences and similarities in parameter values and structural relationships over space, as well as charting the development of parameter values and structural relationships over time, identify similarities and differences between the cases;
5. Propose a causal explanation for the historical outcome and check it against the features of each case.

(Adapted from Rosengren et al. 1992: 287; Schutt 2009: 438)

The following sections explain in more detail the selection of the comparative method employed in this research, the research cases and locations, and the data gathering methods.

#### **3.3.1. The comparative case study approach**

Marketisation is an abstract and dynamic process, whose comprehension, as Murdock (2004: 30) suggests, requires us ‘to develop a comprehensive comparative account of its variable impacts on the organization and ethos of public

communications and cultural institutions as it has unfolded across contrasting national sites grounded in different prior histories.’ Comparison across time is necessary in order to locate marketisation-driven changes in the institutional structures of broadcasting. As Tilly (2009: 536) notes, ‘every significant political phenomenon lives in history, and requires historically grounded analysis for its explanation.’ Nevertheless, comparison across countries with unique social and political characteristics enables us to identify consequences that would not necessarily be noticed in a single-country perspective. The comparison of such consequences facilitates more detailed analysis of the factors that have acted as catalysts in the process. The historical institutionalist research tradition also has strong links with the comparative method, as much of the work of historical institutionalism has been developed in a macro-level comparative context, and consists of cross-national comparisons of public policy. The key benefit of the comparative approach in historical institutionalist research is that it highlights the role of institutional configurations in explaining differences in policy outcomes in different countries (Thelen and Steinmo 1992: 14; Hall and Taylor 1996: 938; Campbell 2004: 23).

Comparative research is a principal method in social sciences and for political sciences in particular. As Ragin (1987: 1) points out, virtually all social research involves a comparison of some sort. In spite of the prevalence of the comparative tradition in social sciences research, most of the literature on the media is ‘highly ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers only to the experience of a single country, yet is written in general terms, as though the model that prevailed in that country were universal’ (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 2). One possible reason for this is the presumption that since media systems developed in a strictly national context and share so few uniform characteristics, ‘developments taking place in any one country can be explained by nationally unique political, economic and cultural factors’ (Hellman 1999: 7). However, as Livingstone (2003: 477) notes, the emergence of globalisation and the concomitant rise of globalisation theory has prompted the researchers in media, communication and cultural studies to increasingly involve themselves in cross-national comparative research.



Notwithstanding the limitations in the comparability and generalisability of cross-national cases owing to the problem of the high number of variables influencing national media systems in contrast to the relatively small number of cases to compare, the method has some significant benefits. The primary function of comparative research is that of developing, testing and refining theoretical propositions. Comparison can also be used to assess 'micro replications' of a proposition already validated in one setting in other national and cultural settings (Lijphart 1971: 685). As Peters (1998: 1) notes, in the absence of the possibility for experimentation in laboratory conditions, the comparative method is often the only way to test the validity of a theory in a wider context. Only comparative research can overcome space- and time-bound limitations on the generalisability of our theories, assumptions and propositions (Blumler et al. 1992a: 3). Equally, it can be used to challenge claim to universality. Moreover, comparative research enables us to evaluate the scope of marketisation in a transnational context in order to put the process better into perspective (Livingstone 2003: 479).

Comparative research is also important at the level of observation. By revealing unexpected differences or surprising similarities between the cases, comparison brings a sense of perspective to a familiar environment and discourages parochial responses to socio-political issues. Cross-national comparative research does not only improve understanding of other countries, but also of one's own country, and enables examination of transnational processes across different national contexts (Livingstone 2003: 479). It 'helps us to see our communication arrangements in a fresh light, enriches the raw material sources of communication theory building, and deepens appreciation of communication policy issues, learning how they have arisen and been dealt with in other places and periods' (Blumler et al. 1992a: 3).

As illustrated by Peters (1998: 10), comparative studies range from single-country case studies (small N) to quantitative statistical analyses of a large number or all countries in the world (large N). While some scholars (e.g. Lijphart 1971: 685; Hopkin 2002: 255) maintain that studies at the latter end of the range provide results which enable more robust generalisations, limitations in time, resources, availability and

comparability of data, and the theoretical approach selected, may point out to the utility of conducting small N research. The difficulty of large N studies in a PhD context to accommodate large volumes of qualitative data – e.g. interviews and documentary analysis – is also at odds with the objectives of this study.

### **3.3.2. Justification for programme type selection**

As examined in chapter 1, there is no universal definition for minority interest programmes. Rather it is a loose umbrella concept referring to programmes that share certain common minority interest characteristics, but whose outlooks are different. As minority interest programmes cannot be observed as a single entity, the research needs to focus on certain cases.

The ambiguity of the concept means that there are no minority programme types that should be observed self-evidently as representatives of this group of programmes. This requires selection of programme cases within certain boundaries as follows, set by the nature of the study as a comparative study, and practical requirements for historical data collection. First, the cases need to be *universal*: they need to be available in both countries and on both PSB and commercial environments over the entire research period. Second, they should be *distinguishable*: their determination needs to be relatively straightforward and they need to be recognisable in the schedules. Their formats should be unambiguous and commonly recognised in both broadcasting environments. Third, they should share the same general minority interest attributes, but they should not be too similar or overlapping in terms of subject area (as is the case with e.g. arts and classical music, or regional news and regional current affairs programmes) in order to make the comparative analysis worthwhile. However, perhaps most importantly, their characteristics pertaining to their production economics; e.g. the sizes and socio-economic characteristics of their audiences, their production costs, their international sales potentials, and their merchandising potentials, should be different, as these characteristics allow us to analyse the impact of marketisation-driven policies on programmes ('products') with different commercial

exploitation potential. As marketisation involves the introduction of values of the capitalist free market to sectors previously to a degree sheltered from such imperatives (see section 2.3.2), the significance of these characteristics in influencing broadcasters' programming strategies may be expected to be on increase.

Considering these prerequisites, two types of minority interest programmes were selected for this study: children's programmes (case I) and religious programmes (case II). While these programmes share some common characteristics, there are also some notable differences relating to their audiences, production costs and commercial exploitation possibilities and value. Most importantly, children constitute a natural audience, and catering for them cannot be substituted by other types of programming. While children aged 4-15 in the UK spend the vast majority of their time viewing programmes that are not specifically targeted for them (Ofcom 2007: 94), this is the only type of programming that is targeted at this audience segment in particular, and the only one that is considered to directly serve their needs. In contrast, audiences for religious programmes are defined by their interests and/or belief rather than their demographic consistency. Viewers of religious programmes are considered to have other interests as well; thus, in a hypothetical situation where religious programming would disappear altogether, it is likely that these viewers would not be left without output of their interest altogether. There are also significant differences in terms of the outlook of these programmes. Previous studies on children's programming (e.g. Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997; Buckingham et al. 1999; Ofcom 2007; Suoninen 2007a) have indicated in general terms a positive outlook for children's programmes, while studies on religious programmes (e.g. Svennevig et al. 1988; Gunter and Viney 1994; McDonnell 2009) indicate that these programmes are facing a future more difficult and insecure. Based on these conditions, it might be assumed that different effects would be discernible in these two programme categories. Children's might be assumed to have retained a somewhat stronger and more pluralistic provision in both countries than religious programmes on this basis. The provision of the latter might be predicted to have more or less deteriorated. Therefore, rather than representing 'average' cases in this group of programmes, they are at different ends of the spectrum: while children's programmes can be seen as a

popular type of minority interest content amongst the viewers, the provision of religious programmes is considered significantly less important by the general public (see e.g. Independent Television Commission 2001; Yleisradio Oy 2007: 15; Ofcom 2008a: 34). However, both programme types meet the criteria for classic public service programming, whose provisions have been considered to produce positive externalities and therefore secured by various regulatory measures, as will be examined in the following chapter. Thus, they are appropriate instruments to conduct a 'litmus test' on the changing priorities within public service provision.

### **3.3.3. Justification for the UK-Finland comparison**

The aim of a cross-national comparative study is to discover empirical macro-level relationships among variables. Thus, all meaningful comparisons need to meet the precondition that they are suitably comparable. Comparability in this context means that the cases should be similar in a large number of important characteristics (variables) which are to be treated as constants, but dissimilar enough to make the comparative analysis worthwhile (Lijphart 1971: 687). In terms of institutional research, this means that the political, fiscal and institutional structures of the national broadcasting sectors should be similar to allow rational comparison, whereas the national political, social, economic and cultural environments in which broadcasting takes place will serve, at the highest level, as independent variables for the study.

The UK and Finland are not commonly placed in a binary comparative context. After all, there are significant differences in the political, socio-cultural, demographic and economic models of these countries. One of the few existing large-scale comparative studies on Western media systems by Hallin and Mancini (2004) illustrates the differences between these countries. Based on theories of political and media studies, and empirical observations, Hallin and Mancini assign national media systems of Western developed capitalist countries into three models: the Mediterranean or the Polarised Pluralist Model, the North Atlantic or Liberal Model and the Northern European or the Democratic Corporatist Model. The first model,

represented by countries such as France, Italy, Greece and Spain, is characterised by low newspaper circulation, politically orientated press and high political parallelism. Broadcasting is under parliamentary or government model of governance and regulation, and periods of censorship and deregulation are distinctive for this model. The Liberal Model includes countries such as the United States, Canada, the UK and Ireland. This model is characterised by medium newspaper circulation, nonalignment (at least in formal terms) of commercial press and high professionalisation of journalism, including non-institutionalised self-regulation of media organisations. Broadcasting is governed by formally autonomous professional bodies, markets have historically controlled the media systems and the state intervention to media activities is limited (except for the PSB systems of the UK and Ireland). Finally, the Democratic Corporatist Model is characterised by high newspaper circulation, historically strong party affiliation of the press, but a current trend towards political neutrality, and strong professionalisation and institutionalised self-regulation. The role of the state in media activities is strong, with press subsidies in Nordic countries in particular, but with protection for press freedom. Broadcasting systems are characterised by parliamentary control (with substantial autonomy regarding political parallelism) and strong PSB. Countries in this model include Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway and Finland.

It is noteworthy, however, that the model by Hallin and Mancini (2004) is largely based on characteristics of the press, and does not accommodate broadcasting in a completely straightforward manner. For instance, the dominance of the PSB dogma and the strong regulatory control of television in the UK and Ireland (where commercial television started only in the late 1990s) place these countries in a category somewhat different to that of the United States and Canada, which feature highly commercialised broadcasting systems, whose regulation historically focused on their commercial elements rather than content. In a similar manner, the fact that commercial television was introduced in Finland as an institutionally independent service already in 1955<sup>7</sup> is not consistent with the Nordic PSB 'purism'. Herkman

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<sup>7</sup> TES-TV, Mainos-TV was founded in 1957.

(2009) has also challenged the model of Hallin and Mancini by pointing out that their analysis is based on outdated statistics and does not accurately reflect the recent commercialisation and re-regulatory measures taken in Finland. Thus, Herkman concludes that in Finland in particular, the global shift to neo-liberalism has challenged the Democratic Corporatist Model from the 1980s onwards, and the current media model is progressively adopting features previously associated with the Liberal Model. Hallin and Mancini (2004) themselves note that there has been a significant convergence towards the Liberal Model owing to political, cultural and technological changes in European media environments. Furthermore, a recent critique by Humphreys (2012) highlights some of the weaknesses of the Hallin and Mancini's taxonomy, namely relating to the limited range of elements integrated into the analytical framework used by Hallin and Mancini, their neglect of the salient political, legal and economic variables that bear on the media systems, and the liberal categorisation of media systems into their categories. Therefore the validity of the model in the 21<sup>st</sup> century marketised broadcasting environment can be questioned to some extent.

Several other significant parallels between the broadcasting institutions of the UK and Finland support a cross-national comparison between these countries. As for many other European PSBs, the BBC has served as a 'model organisation' for Yleisradio. The public service values and missions of the Reithian BBC had a clear influence on the founding of the company, and the policies adapted by the BBC were closely monitored and adopted by Yleisradio (Lyytinen 1996: 31-2; Salokangas 2007: 36). This influence has continued to shape the institutional choices of Yleisradio to date. Furthermore, the origins of the Finnish commercial television system can be traced to the UK. As already noted, Finland was the second country in Europe after the UK to launch commercial broadcasting, with the Yleisradio-MTV duopoly laid down in 1957. At the point of creation of the arrangement, the organisational structures and policy guidelines were based on those of the newly-founded ITV network (Salokangas 1996: 118; Hanski 2001: 59; Salokangas 2007: 42). The UK influence can be seen in the separation of advertisements from the programme content, and also in the strong public control of commercial broadcasting. This was entrusted to the parliamentary-

controlled Yleisradio, which owned and operated the transmitters like the ITA, and held the broadcasting licence for both companies. Until the reforms leading to the more widespread liberalisation of broadcasting in the late 1980s and early 1990s, only the UK and Finland hosted such public service oriented commercial television systems.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, Jääsaari (2007: 130) notes that the UK has served as a model for policy reform for Finland in the 1990s. In the seminal 1993 Niemelä report on the future of PSB, the UK is referred to as 'the spiritual home of PSB', where also the greatest efforts have been made to reform the model during 'the current period of PSB crisis' (Niemelä 1993: 8). In his 1995 parliamentary report, Mykkänen (1995: 18) goes even further, stating that 'the BBC tradition has had a great influence on the decrees with which Finnish broadcasting legislation has created.' The UK is also used to back the sustaining of features of the traditional broadcasting system, e.g. certain privileges of the PSBs. Given the cultural and political proximity of the Nordic countries, it is interesting that the BBC rather than Sveriges Television AB (or indeed any other Scandinavian broadcaster) is regularly selected for comparison and a yardstick for Yleisradio. This suggests that the diffusion of the BBC-originated PSB model to the Nordic countries has been so powerful, that the Nordic PSB models are considered even by the polity as variations of the BBC model rather than thoroughly independent models. Consequently, while there is a case for cross-national research between the Nordic countries in comparative politics as Anckar (1993) suggests, in terms of broadcasting research, the UK provides a better case for comparison.

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<sup>8</sup> Albeit commercial broadcasting was licenced in Italy by a Constitutional Court ruling in 1975, the Italian stations were from the outset deregulated and entertainment-oriented, and thus their programming was not public service oriented, as was the case with commercial broadcasters in the UK and Finland (Humphreys 1996).

### **3.4. Data gathering methods**

The identification of apposite data gathering methods occurred through visiting the research objectives outlined in chapter 1. First, it was necessary to establish how the structure of the programming has changed over the research period chosen. In order to enable comparison between the cases and locations, the results need to be concrete, measurable and comparable. They also need to be compared in the context of an analysis of changes in broadcasting environments: changes in broadcasting paradigms, policies, organisational structures and resources.

The predominantly quantitative character of the first task, involving a longitudinal survey on television output, in contrast to the qualitative character of the second task, point to the usefulness of mixed methods. While the research problem could, at least to some extent, be addressed without crossing the border between quantitative and qualitative methods, the combination of both approaches can provide a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Further advantages of the mixed methods approach include the ability to offset the weaknesses and bias of each individual approach, more comprehensive evidence for studying the research problem than either approach alone and the ability to answer questions that cannot be answered by either approach alone (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007: 9).

There are two important aspects to consider in designing the strategy for mixed method design: the timing of the data collection, and the priority given to each approach. This research adopts a sequential explanatory strategy (Brannen 1992), in which the collection and analysis of quantitative data are followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. This design gives weight to the quantitative data collection, whose results inform and guide the qualitative research. The latter phase, in turn, seeks to explain the quantitative results and develop the depth and level of detail for the interpretation of entire results.



### 3.4.1. Television output research

The purpose of the television output research conducted in this research was to gather quantitative data to construct a general picture of the changes in the provision of children's and religious programmes in the two locations over the research period. The data was gathered by a longitudinal survey on television output. As pre-coded data extending over the entire period was not available, two samples of seven days for each year were used instead. Trends in these data allow the creation of a long-term picture of the effects of marketisation on these types of minority interest content. In total, 22,077 individual programme titles, comprising 7,899 hours 53 minutes of output<sup>9</sup>, were analysed for this study.

The channels selected for this study are terrestrial (analogue or digital) free-to-air channels with public service obligations of various degrees. In the UK, these channels were BBC One; BBC Two; ITV1 (Granada Television)<sup>10</sup>; Channel 4; Channel 5 (1997-); CBBC, CBeebies, BBC Three and BBC Four (the 2003-2009 outputs of the four latter). Additionally, whilst not part of the UK PSB system, the CITV Channel (2006-2009) was included to the study as well. In Finland, the channels included were YLE TV 1; YLE TV 2; MTV (on Yleisradio's channels until 1993); Kolmoskanava (TV 3, 1986-1992); MTV3 (1993-); Nelonen (1997-); YLE Teema and YLE FST5<sup>11</sup> (the 2007-2009 outputs of the latter two) in Finland. The study refers to these channels collectively as terrestrial FTA channels. While all these channels except the CITV

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<sup>9</sup> Of which 18,873 titles, or 6,672 hours 52 minutes on UK television; and 3,204 titles, or 1,227 hours 1 minute on Finnish television.

<sup>10</sup> Given the past nature of ITV as a network of regional broadcasters, each featuring a relatively high proportion of regional programming, it was impossible to observe the output of the entire ITV network within the scope of a single study. Therefore, the output of Granada Television (later ITV1 Granada) was selected for this study.

<sup>11</sup> Prior to the digital switchover in 2007, much of the Swedish-language output on Yleisradio's main channels was simulcast on the FST5 channel. As these digital channels' simulcasts do not constitute real alternatives to main channels' programming, they have been omitted from this study in order to give a more accurate picture of the choice available to the viewer.

Channel have public service obligations of various extent, for the purposes of the analysis this study differentiates between channels that get their primary income from public sources (YLE TV 1, TV 2, YLE Teema and YLE FST5; BBC One, BBC Two, CBBC, CBeebies, BBC Three and BBC Four; collectively referred to as *publicly funded channels*) and commercial sources (MTV, Kolmoskanava, MTV3 and Nelonen; ITV1, Channel 4, Channel 5 and the CITV Channel; collectively referred to as *commercially funded* or *commercial channels*). In children's programming, the study also differentiates between *main* (general interest) *channels* (YLE TV 1, YLE TV 2, YLE FST5, Kolmoskanava, MTV, MTV3 and Nelonen; BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 and Channel 5) and *digital channels* (CBBC, CBeebies and the CITV Channel).

Programme data gathered from television listings contain information about programme scheduling and length<sup>12</sup>, and content. This data was supplemented by information on programme format and origin using various printed and online listings and databases, such as the children's television encyclopaedias by Lewis (2001) and Sheridan (2004), and the British Film Institute's Film and TV online database, broadcasters' annual reports and yearbooks, and previous studies on minority interest programming.

The quantitative data from television listings were coded into variables in spreadsheet databases. This data was then analysed using a variety of measurements:

1. *Volumes* of output of children's and religious programmes;
2. *Proportions* of output of children's and religious programmes of all programmes;

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<sup>12</sup> The timings of programmes in listings magazines and databases are only approximate, and do not account for advertising breaks, continuity links, programmes guides and so forth, which, especially on commercial channels, can make up a significant proportion of programme time. The EU's Television without Frontiers Directive (Directive 89/552/EEC) permits broadcasters to schedule up to 12 minutes of spot advertising in a given one-hour period.

3. *Volumes and proportions* of different *sub-categories* of children's and religious programmes;
4. Programme *scheduling*;
5. Programme *origin*.

#### **3.4.1.1. Description of data collection and sampling**

Television programme data was collected from television listings magazines. Some previous UK studies have used programme data acquired directly from the broadcasters and the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board's (BARB) database, while Finnish studies have utilised data submitted by BARB's Finnish counterpart Finnpanel, but there are major difficulties using data from these sources in a cross-national comparative study. The main problems concerning data submitted by external bodies relate to inconsistencies in data provided by two different organisations. Organisations – and even researchers within the same organisation – use different methods in classifying data, thus resulting in dissimilar results. For instance, Messenger Davies and Corbett (1997: 237) note that the data submitted for their study by broadcasters did not include Channel 4's *Sesame Street* (which clearly would qualify as a children's programme in most other studies) as it was categorised as a different type of programme by the broadcaster. Furthermore, differences in national traditions in classifying programmes would have made it impossible to use the data provided by external bodies in a comparative context. Therefore, manual collection and coding of data turned out to be the best option for the valid and reliable analysis of the research data.

For the UK, before the deregulation of television listings in March 1991, television listings were published separately in two magazines: the BBC's programmes in *Radio Times*, and those of ITV and Channel 4 in *TVTimes*. Programme data from the sampling year 1991 onwards were gathered using *Radio Times* only, as listings for ITV and Channel 4 were included in the magazine only then. Finnish television data for the entire period were gathered using the *Katso* television listings magazine.

Programme data for CBBC, CBeebies and the CITV Channel were collected using the Television and Radio Index for Learning and Teaching (TRILT) database.

In order to minimise the selection bias produced by the use of random sampling (e.g. the over-representation of certain weekdays or religious festivals in samples), programme data was gathered using two consistent and chronological seven-day sampling periods for each year, roughly six months apart from each other. This gives an annual sample size of 14/365 for common years, or ca. 4 per cent of days on any given year. These periods were chosen to represent the average television week as accurately as possible; that is, to omit all festive seasons with special programming (such as Christmas, New Year and Summer seasons with revised schedules), bank or school holidays (with increased children's output and revised schedules), or major religious feasts in either country. These periods also needed to be identical for both countries to maintain the comparability of the results. Given these requirements, the first sampling period was set to start on the first Tuesday after the British May Day bank holiday (to avoid the inclusion of the revised schedules for bank holidays and the Finnish 'Vappu' [First of May] public holiday), and end on the following Monday. The second period covered was November 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> inclusive in each year.

#### **3.4.1.2. Programme type definition and data selection**

Perhaps the most important but also the most problematic prerequisite for data collection is the formulation of unambiguous definitions for the research cases, that is, the two programme types selected in the research. The key issue here is *how to define what counts as a children's or religious programme*. Unfortunately, there is no straightforward solution to this matter, as demarcation lines between programme types can be vaguely defined, and programmes often cross boundaries of different programme classes, even though identifiability was one of the factors considered when selecting the cases for this study. To make matters even more complicated, the most popular programmes with children have always been those intended for a general audience (Buckingham et al. 1999: 79).

Programme selection criteria were slightly different for the two minority programme types selected for the study because of the differences between the programme types. Children's programmes for this study were selected using a narrow definition of children's programmes: only programmes specifically targeted for child and pre-teen audiences of roughly ages 0-12 were selected.<sup>13</sup> Feature films (including animated films), programmes for family viewing and general entertainment programmes<sup>14</sup> were thus excluded from this study, even though a majority of their viewers may be children. In addition, programmes for schools and colleges broadcast in separate daytime 'programmes for schools' blocks were excluded, as previous studies on children's programming (e.g. Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997; Lehtinen 2010) have classified these programmes as education programmes.

As religious programmes do not constitute a homogenous group sharing a common attribute (such as the age of the audience), their definition is somewhat complicated. Religious programmes also come in different formats and are produced outside religious departments too. Therefore, this study adopts a relatively eclectic definition of religious programmes: a programme is considered to belong to the religion category if its central theme is religion. This definition accommodates confessional programmes (Sunday services, prayers etc.) as well as religious music, talk shows and documentaries on religious matters. More specifically, the Central Religious Advisory Committee's (CRAC) guidelines from 1996 provide a more articulated definition for religious programmes that can be applied to this study too:

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<sup>13</sup> As Buckingham et al. (1999) note, drawing a border between childhood and adolescence is difficult particularly in a study that spans over a relatively lengthy period of time, as the nature of childhood is changing. Series such as *Thunderbirds* and *Batman* have evolved from family entertainment (in the 1960s) to children's – or cult/kitch – television. This study draws a nominal line between the childhood and teenage so that programmes targeted mainly for audiences over 12-13 years of age are classified as "teen" programmes, and thus are excluded from this study. Examples of such programming blocks include Channel 4's T4 for older teens and young adults. Channel 5's Shake!-block (under various names in 2000-2007 and since 2009) contains programmes targeted for pre-teens (e.g. *Hannah Montana*, *The Tribe*), which were included in this study.

<sup>14</sup> Such as chart (e.g. *Top of the Pops*, *The O-Zone*) and variety shows.

- presents conventional religious belief and practice, worship and ceremonial, the reality and significance of being a believer;
- reflects, scrutinises, proclaims or challenges aspects of the world of faith and the impact of faith (and non-faith) on the world;
- keeps the audience in touch with issues which shape the world of belief and which are shaped by the world of belief;
- addresses itself to questions and concerns which religions (but not necessarily religions alone) address, and affirms values which religions also affirm;
- deals with a view of life not enclosable by the visible world;
- acknowledges the spiritual dimension in human experience; and
- does not fail to bring a religious perspective to bear on its subject matter, be it (for example) social justice, ethics, suffering or celebration.

(CRAC (1996): "Religion in Religious Broadcasting: Report of the CRAC Working Party", cited in Viney 1999: 21)

In addition to these genre-specific general guidelines, a set of five criteria developed by Suoninen (2007b: 11-3) for her survey of children's output in Finland were used in programme categorisation:

- 1.) *Programme details published in television listings.* These listings often contain some sorts of information about programme types and target audiences. The programme name itself is often a good indicator of the content.
- 2.) *Transmission time and slot.* Children's programmes in particular have been traditionally broadcast in separate programme blocks. Programmes broadcast late at night are not considered children's programmes in this study, even if their format and content would suggest so.
- 3.) *Categorisation of a programme in previous studies.* The study by Suoninen aims to match the programme selection criteria of the other annual reports on Finnish television output published by the Ministry of Transport and Communications. In addition to these, reports by Blumler (1992c), Messenger Davies and Corbett (1997), Buckingham et al. (1999) and Ofcom (2007), among others, were used for this study.
- 4.) *Composition of the audiences of a programme.* This criterion applies mainly for children's programmes, as audiences for religious programmes do not consist solely of viewers of certain ages. While certain programmes (e.g. action cartoons) are not necessarily formally categorised as children's programmes in

schedules, they are clearly targeted at a child audience, and the vast majority of their viewers are children. Such programmes are thus included in this study. Nevertheless, animated sitcoms such as *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill*, which have high proportion of child viewers, are excluded from this study, as their themes are mainly targeted for adult viewers.

- 5.) *Programme content.* Although a programme may not be exclusively targeted for a specific minority interest group, its content may indicate that the programme should be classified as a minority interest programme. Examples of programmes meeting this criterion include certain documentaries on religious matters, which are not produced by a religious department, but whose content clearly meet the criteria of a religious programme.

Of course, this selection system is not without weaknesses. With the historical boundary between factual programming and entertainment eroding, and the fusion of different genres and formats into new ones that cannot be pigeonholed using the categorisation systems created in the past, unequivocal and precise categorisation is impossible. Previous studies conducted by different authors contain different criteria for categorising these programmes and thus provide essentially different results that are not comparable.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, the effect of subjective judgement of the researcher is impossible to eliminate and must be acknowledged. This said, in both countries matching criteria for programme selection were used so that results between the research cases would be comparable.

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<sup>15</sup> For instance, the study by Messenger Davies and Corbett (1997) excluded programmes like Channel 4's *Sesame Street*, as these were classified under education subgenre. Likewise, the study by Suoninen (2007) uses a narrower categorisation for children's programmes than the annual reports on television programming by the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications, in which programmes like *Buusteri*, which, judged by its themes, was clearly targeted to teen audiences, are included in the category of children's programmes.

### 3.4.1.3. Programme sub-category classification

Programme data gathered from television listings was coded in sub-categories to enable the analysis of structural changes within each research case. The following sections explain the criteria and definition for each sub-category.

#### 3.4.1.3.1. Categorisation of children's programmes

In the absence of a universal classification system for both countries,<sup>16</sup> children's programmes were grouped using categorisation used by the BARB, which has been widely employed in studies on children's programming (see e.g. Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997; Buckingham et al. 1999; Ofcom 2007). While Davies and Corbett note that this system is far from perfect, mostly owing to the fact that its categories are 'very broad and non-specific' (Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997: 14), allowing mis-categorisations to happen, its broadness can also be considered a strength. The categorisation accommodates programmes from the two different cultures and broadcasting traditions under research in this project. It also allows accurate coding of data in cases in which little information is available of the programme. Broad categories also take into account the evolution and changes in children's programme traditions over time.<sup>17</sup>

The BARB categorisation employs five sub-categories for children's programmes:

- **Animation** is a format rather than a genre; it refers to mostly fictional films produced with hand-drawn, stop motion or computer-generated animation

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<sup>16</sup>In fact, no widely-used and recognised system of categorisation for children's programmes exists in Finland. While the report by Suoninen (2007) classifies children's programming into subcategories similar to those of the BARB, the annual reports on television output by the Ministry of Transport and Communications employ a different system of categorisation that classifies programmes according to their function.

<sup>17</sup> For example, storytelling programmes (e.g. *Jackanory* and *Itasatu*), while itself a sub-category of its own in Blumler's (1992) survey, have all but disappeared from children's schedules in the 2000s.



techniques. It is a wide category containing programmes as diverse as the critically acclaimed preschool series *Postman Pat* and the more controversial *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, *Care Bears*, *Transformers* and *My Little Pony*, created for toy marketing purposes (Gunter et al. 2005: 27-8; Steemers 2010: 31).

- **Drama** is a genre consisting of live-action fiction for children. Traditional storytelling programmes (such as *Jackanory*) are also classified as drama in this research.
- **Entertainment** is a catch-all category for entertainment-oriented live-action or magazine programmes, which do not fit any other categories. It contains weekend morning presenter-led entertainment magazines (such as *SM:TV Live*, and *Harlekiini-klubi*, some of which contain high proportions of animation) as well as variety and music shows, comedy and sketch shows. Quizzes and game shows exclusively for children are also included in this subcategory.
- **Factual** is another umbrella category for all non-fiction programmes, such as children's documentaries, news, educational programmes, arts and crafts programmes, and presented hobby shows, such as the critically acclaimed *Blue Peter*. Programmes in this category often include an educational element, intended to stimulate children's learning.
- **Preschool** refers to a certain category of live action or presented programmes targeted at preschool audiences. Although Steemers (2010: 4) argues that the term is a blanket category for age and stage-specific programmes rather than a genre-specific categorisation, this study adopts a narrower, genre-specific definition of the genre in order to maintain consistency with previous studies (e.g. Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997; Buckingham et al. 1999; Ofcom 2007). Preschool programmes may contain drama, puppetry and/or factual segments and usually serve a pedagogic purpose. Preschool programmes are intended to stimulate children's learning and support their growth as members of a society. *Play School* and *Sesame Street* are classic examples of programmes in this category.

In addition, an **unknown** category was added for programmes of which insufficient information was available.<sup>18</sup> In order to get a more comprehensive picture of the structure of programming on the CBBC channel, the categorisation also contains a **schools** category for the channel's Class TV strand between 2003 and 2008. As already mentioned, such programmes for schools and colleges were omitted from the main channels' schedules.

Different traditions between the two countries naturally create a problem for accurate categorisation. For instance, the classic format for children's programmes in Finland is children's magazine (such as *Pikku Kakkonen*, *Lasten TV Puoli Kuusi* and *Veturi*), containing both entertaining and factual segments, comparable to the 'mini-schedule' tradition of the BBC. As borders between these programmes are obscure and programme details contain insufficient information to differentiate between the segments, these programmes (typically produced by Yleisradio) were mainly placed under the preschool category because of their target audience and pedagogic objectives.

#### **3.4.1.3.2. Categorisation of religious programmes**

Religious programmes pose a greater problem for categorisation. In previous studies on religious television, religious programmes have been treated as a single entity, and their output has not been separated into different categories. Therefore, no established system of sub-categorisation exists for this genre. As there are, however, significant differences between programmes in this genre, a system of categorisation was developed for this study, consisting of four sub-categories:

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<sup>18</sup> Some imported programmes on Finnish channels in particular were unidentifiable, as their original titles had been translated to Finnish, making it impossible to establish the connection to the original programme. Unknown programmes, however, averaged just 2 per cent of all Finnish children's programmes in the research, and less than 1 per cent of the UK programmes.

- **Worship & devotion** is a category for programmes of devotional and confessional nature. It includes televised broadcasts of religious ceremonies (e.g. Sunday services, religious festivals), sermons, prayers, and various religious 'thought-for-the-day' or epilogue styled programmes, usually given or led by a member of religious clergy. Programmes in this category aim to include the viewer in a religious act of worship, reinforce the viewer's religious belief and strengthen the relationship of the viewer and the religious community.
- **Religious magazine and music** is a catch-all category of programmes comprising talk shows on religious and ethical matters, religious current affairs programmes, magazines and music (e.g. hymns or gospel concerts). Programmes in this category are often less confessional in nature than those in the previous category and may take a more investigative look at questions of religion and matters of ethics than programmes in the previous category. *The Heaven and Earth Show*, *Big Questions*, *Songs of Praise*, *Highway* and *Credo – Minä uskon* fall into this category, as well as televised gospel concerts.
- The **documentary** category includes documentaries and factual features on matters of religion and ethics. It also includes portraits of religious figures and other people, who have religious conviction, and in which religion is a central theme. Documentaries dealing with religious groups and politicised religion are also included in this category.
- **Children & schools** is a category for programmes intended for religious education mainly for children and youth, but sometimes for adult learners. They comprise of religious children's programmes (such as *Revelations*, *Rooted* and *Rowanne Pasco's Sunday Club for Children*), religious education programmes for schools and colleges, as well as Open University programmes.

### 3.4.2. Interviews

While the quantitative research for this study provides an accurate image of the changes in the provision of minority interest programming, it fails to provide reasons why has this change taken place. In order to compose a more detailed and extensive empirical picture of the research domain, a total of 23 interviews with former and present broadcasting executives, production executives and staff, members of regulatory organisations, professional organisations and advocacy groups in the UK and Finland were conducted for this research. These interviews serve as a source of additional evidence, confirm the researcher's understanding of the empirical research results, fill in gaps in written sources and generally add a finer grade of detail for analysis, which cannot be obtained from other sources (Pierce 2008: 119). Selection of the interviewees and measures to overcome institutional spin are explained in more detail in the *Triangulation* section.

In addition to the aforementioned triangulation aspects, and taking into consideration the limitations of the study resources, the interviewees were selected so that they would cover subjects and issues not covered by previous studies. Therefore, the selection of interviewees was uneven between the cases and countries. For instance, UK children's programming is a relatively well-researched subject, with a number of comprehensive secondary sources available. There is on the other hand less research on religious programming, making it logical to concentrate the interviews in this area. For the same reason, more interviews were conducted in Finland than in the UK.

The interviews were semi-structured and in-depth by nature. An interview guide was prepared for each interview, together with some questions, but questions and themes for discussion were tailored for each interview separately. The advantage of such interviews is that they provide enough flexibility for the interviewer to follow leads arising in the conversation, but also for respondents to steer the conversation, for example to bring in all sorts of tangential matters that, for them, have a bearing on the main subject (Hakim 2000: 35). The interviews were conducted face-to-face or over

the telephone. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. In some cases, when follow-up questions emerged, interviewees were contacted by email afterwards.

### **3.4.3. Analysis of primary and secondary source documents**

The third method used in this research was analysis of primary and secondary source documents. Primary source documents here comprise statutes, government reports and other legal documents, broadcasting licences, memoranda, annual reports, yearbooks and reports by regulatory authorities.

The access to primary source documents (other than those regarding broadcasting legislation) turned out to be problematic, as many of the internal documents produced by broadcasting organisations such as internal memoranda, minutes, plans and schedules are treated as sensitive data, which are not available to researchers. The archiving of such data is also limited. Historically, broadcasting organisations rarely had systematic archiving policies concerning such documents, and records have largely not been kept. Secondary source research was used whenever primary sources were not available or accessible.

In addition, a comprehensive literature review was conducted on academic and professional literature on production and output of the selected programme types. These sources comprised of monographs, theses and dissertations, textbooks, anthologies and readers, professional surveys and reports, newspaper articles and other 'popular media' sources, as well as personal accounts of people associated with broadcast industries, including autobiographies and memoirs. This literature review served to indicate gaps and methodological shortcomings in previous research, and to provide additional and supporting evidence for issues the research is addressing (Ridley 2008: 17).

### 3.4.4. Triangulation

Triangulation is a method of increasing the reliability and validity of empirical research data. It involves seeking accounts from three or more perspectives, using a variety of methods, approaches or sources (Pierce 2008: 90). Similar results achieved with different measures of the same variable indicate a higher level of validity of each measure (Schutt 2009: 122). Triangulation has been used in this study in two ways. First, *methodological triangulation* has been used to combine empirical data collected using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The aim is to 'address aspects of the research question that the exclusive use of either quantitative or qualitative methods cannot cover' and 'to add validity to results produced by one or other method' (Read and Marsh 2002: 238).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have their well-documented limitations, mostly with regards to the nature and scope of data they can excavate. While quantitative research, i.e. research on television schedules, is useful in producing a realistic picture of the changes in minority interest output in the two locations through analysing high volumes of historical data, it fails to explain the changes. Therefore, the research employed interviews to add a level of detail to the research. The subjectivity of interviews was balanced by research on primary and secondary source documents, which included a review of previous studies on the subject.

Secondly, *data triangulation* was used within each empirical research method. The quantitative television schedules data were critically reviewed against, and, where applicable, supplemented by, previous studies, reports and statistics on television output to assess and improve its reliability and validity. Primary and secondary source documents were, when possible, selected to represent different sources and points of views. Reports and other publications released by broadcasting organisations were critically reviewed against academic studies and external reviews to minimise the effects of 'public relations spin' from representatives of broadcasting organisations wishing to give unrealistically favourable accounts for the benefit of their organisation.

Data triangulation was also utilised in the selection of interviewees to reduce the effects of opinionated views. In conducting the interviews, it was necessary to ask

questions that returned rather subjective answers, or dealt with issues regarding an organisation the interviewee was employed in or commercially connected to that could portray the organisation in a negative light. In these cases, some interviewees were reluctant to express views and opinions which portrayed their organisations and policies in an unfavourable light, but expressed views that were biased towards their organisation or avoided answering the question altogether. Moreover, many of the questions concerned past events, which the interviewees may not have had a good recollection of, or their view may be affected by later events, e.g. dismissal or strained relationships with the company. To neutralise these effects, interviewees for the research cases were selected from three balancing positions. First, both past and present broadcasting executives were interviewed. To gain a more concrete view on institutional changes, production staff working with minority interest programmes – producers, editors and screenwriters – were interviewed as well. Finally, interviews with representatives of professional associations and interest groups were used to give an external insight into the subject.

### **3.5. Ethical considerations**

Kimmel (1988: 36) demonstrates that ethical problems can be categorised according to the level of the research process that they most directly affect. The three levels are the participants; the society in and for which the research is conducted; and the body of scientific knowledge to which the results and conclusions are incorporated. With no specific requirements with regards to research methods or the use of the data set by the funding bodies (the university and the foundations named in the foreword to this thesis), and with no potential harm to society resultant from this research, ethical issues concern the interests of the human participants and the scientific accuracy of the data. These issues will be elaborated in the following sections.

### **3.5.1. Ethical issues relating to the participants**

With the absence of experimentation, covert methods, participant observation etc., ethical issues regarding the participants of the research mainly concern the *principle of informed consent* and *publishing of sensitive information*.

Ethical research includes the principle of informed consent, whose essence is that 'the human subjects of research should be allowed to agree or refuse to participate in the light of comprehensive information concerning the nature and purpose of the research' (Homan 1991: 69). Along to these guidelines, all participants in this research were given a comprehensive account of the nature of the research prior to participation. Moreover, all interviews were conducted to interviewees' consent and no data collection took place without participants' consent and prior knowledge. Interviews were recorded with interviewees' permission, and the interviewees were informed about the use of the data.

Information gathered through empirical research was used for research purposes only. In cases in which the use of primary sources required permission from a relevant authority, only non-confidential documents relevant for research purposes were used.

As some of the interviews contained data which the interviewees considered sensitive, the interviewees were offered an opportunity to give their account 'off the record' or 'unattributable'. However, nobody chose to use this opportunity. If an interviewee expressed concerns during an interview about publication of sensitive information, a confirmation was sought at the end of the interview to associate the information to the interviewee. Interviewees' requests that sensitive data would not be used in the research in a way that could cause an offence were respected, where appropriate. If an interviewee gave information with potential to cause controversy or harm, but which was otherwise crucial for the aims of the research, efforts were made not to reveal the interviewee's identity.



### 3.5.2. Ethical issues and interests of scientific knowledge

Ethical research practice also includes a commitment to achieving valid results, which are not collected simply to verify our pre-existing prejudices or convince others to take action on behalf of our personal interests (Schutt 2009: 72-3). *Bias*, essentially ‘a predisposition or prejudice for or against a theory, person, group or institution which may distort or skew cognisance and interpretation of phenomena’ (Pierce 2008: 17), may occur if a researcher tries to hide something they have found in a study, or highlight something disproportionately to its true existence. This includes ‘cooking’ (the selection of only those data that fit the research hypothesis), ‘trimming’ (the manipulation of data to make them look better), or ‘forging’ (the complete fabrication of data) (Kimmel 1988: 39). The use of inappropriate methods or procedures, which are known to produce misleading and biased results, are also considered forms of bias (Kumar 1996: 195).

Bias may occur in either gathering the empirical data or reporting the research results. At the data gathering stage, this includes intentional selection of sources and/or data. Measures to avoid data gathering bias taken for this research included developing a robust methodological framework for gathering of quantitative data (see *Television output research*). Interviewees were – where possible – selected to represent different organisations (see *Triangulation*) to gain a more balanced picture.

In a similar manner, in reporting the empirical research, the principle of ‘the pursuit of truth’ (Homan 1991: 6) was respected and aspired to throughout the study. A detailed description of study procedures, methodological approach and research methods is provided in the thesis (Schutt 2009: 74). Empirical research results were presented truthfully, without omitting data from the study on grounds of mismatch with other results. Efforts were made to truthfully present a balanced view of contrasting opinions where applicable.

Good research practice also requires it to be declared that funding for this research was received from sources that are associated with some of the institutions under observation in this research; the Finnish Cultural Foundation’s MTV fund, the Research Centre of the Church (Kirkon Tutkimuskeskus) and the Media Foundation

of the Church in Finland (Kirkon Mediasäätiö). However, the grant from the MTV fund was received through the Finnish Cultural Foundation, which ensures that there is no direct connection between MTV Oy and the grant recipient. The Research Centre of the Church and the Media Foundation of the Church, in turn, are both administratively part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, which also funds the provision of devotional programmes produced for Yleisradio by Kirkon tiedotuskeskus. The two latter organisations support independent and objective research on matters of religion and operations of the Church, and did not set requirements of any kind for the research conduct or interpretation of the research results. Furthermore, both grants were received at the writing up stage (both in December 2011), when conclusions and recommendations had already been made.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

This chapter examined the analytical framework, research design and methodologies utilised in this study. As marketisation is a process, whose comprehension requires a comparative account of its impacts on organisations and political institutions grounded in different prior histories (Murdock 2004: 30), the study adopts a comparative case study design. The UK and Finland were selected as the national cases because of the comparability of their broadcasting organisations, whose organisational cultures were – until recently – heavily influenced by the legacy of the public service paradigm. Furthermore, children’s and religious programmes were selected for the research mainly because previous research demonstrate that these programme types represent two ‘most different’ cases in the minority programme spectrum in terms of their prospects, but also because these programme types have enjoyed a specific regulatory protection, thus enabling analysis of the role of regulation in maintaining output of these programmes.

Given the nature of broadcasting as social activity which takes place in – and is shaped by – its institutional setting, i.e. broadcasting organisations, institutionalism provides an apt analytical framework for the study. The historical institutionalism variant of new institutionalism was selected to the study for its benefits in undertaking

longitudinal analysis on large-scale historical processes and its capacity to examine continuities and changes within institutions utilising the theory of path dependence. The key deficiency of historical institutionalism, however, pertains to the degree of resolution of its analytical lens. Historical institutionalism is not a particularly fertile source of explanations for institutional change especially in organisations that operate in a dynamic market environment and must therefore adjust their conduct according to the requirements of the market. In order to address this key deficiency, a customised explanatory model utilising the Industrial Organisation Model – or the Structure-Conduct-Performance Paradigm (SCPP) – is posited. The customised model is referred to in this study as the Industrial Equilibrium Model. The key benefits of the Industrial Equilibrium Model pertain to its ability to sharpen the analytical lens of historical institutionalism in analysing institutional change, while it also provides a dynamic model of the causal relationship between the structure of an industry, firm conduct and performance. As historical institutionalism lacks a model that explains institutional logic at critical junctures beyond that of the legacy of past institutional configurations, the Industrial Equilibrium Model can be considered to greatly improve the explanatory power of historical institutionalism, as successful analysis of the impact of marketisation-driven changes in a broadcasting company operating in a dynamic market environment requires an explanatory model that establishes a causal relationship between the political and commercial forces in the broadcasting environment; the strategies of broadcasting institutions; and their performance. In so doing, it facilitates the use of programming data as empirical evidence of consistency and change in institutional conduct.

This mixed method study utilises three primary data gathering methods. Changes in television output were examined through a quantitative analysis of television output on selected UK and Finnish terrestrial channels between 1986 and 2009. Analysis of this quantitative data informs and guides the second method: interviews with broadcasting associates, which seek to explain the quantitative research results in more detail. Analysis on primary and secondary source documents and literature represents the third method in the study.

## **4. Marketisation and transformations in broadcasting policies in the UK and Finland**

### **4.1. Introduction**

Historical institutionalists argue that institutions are shaped by past actions and policy choices. Therefore, analysis of institutional configurations requires a historical inquiry on forces and circumstances that have influenced institutional development. This is particularly important for broadcasting research, as broadcasting is an activity that is specifically constrained and shaped by national policy frameworks. The full comprehension of institutional configurations also requires the analysis to be grounded to the institutional milieus and temporal contexts.

The following chapter provides a historical analysis of changes in the policy frameworks of broadcasting in the UK and Finland. By examining the introduction of neo-liberal policy paradigm through a series of policy processes, it provides an empirical inquiry into the neo-liberal policy impact on institutional components of the national broadcasting systems of the UK and Finland. In so doing, it grounds the two programme cases under observation in this study; children's and religious programmes, into the national political and institutional environments in which their production and broadcasting take place, and provides a foundation utilising the parameters of historical institutionalism and the Industrial Equilibrium Model outlined in the previous chapter for analysis of the effects of marketisation on broadcasting institutions and their performance undertaken in the empirical chapters (chapters 5 and 6). In terms of research objectives, this chapter serves to address objectives 1 and 2 as outlined in chapter 1 by undertaking a critical analysis of academic literature on the impact of the neo-liberal doctrine on broadcasting policies and institutional practices.

The chapter is split in two sections, each of which focuses on national policy frameworks of the UK and Finland. In order to provide a better understanding of the formative ideas, values and institutional practices that have shaped the national broadcasting systems in the UK and Finland, the origins of UK and Finnish broadcasting organisations are examined briefly. The primary focus of the chapter,

however, is on policy changes that have taken place within the research period. Consistent with the historical institutionalist approach, the chapter focuses on actors and forces that have been central in producing critical junctures in institutional continuity.

The chapter draws on both primary and secondary source documents. Primary sources for this section consist mainly of policy documents and other published material by institutions of the state: publications by organisations, committees and working groups, reports and licensing documents. However, as the impact of neo-liberal marketisation on UK and Finnish broadcasting policies is a subject that has attracted relatively wide academic interest, secondary sources are the primary source for this chapter. In addition to seminal studies on institutional histories of broadcasting organisations (such as *Independent Television in Britain* and *Yleisradion historia*), neo-liberal marketisation has been subject to a number of critical studies. The studies by O'Malley (1994), Born (2005), Brown (2007) and Fitzwalter (2008) provide useful bases for analysis of the impact of marketisation on broadcasting institutions, whereas Goodwin (1998) and Freedman (2003) have examined the neo-liberal doctrine in media policies. In Finland, the studies by Hellman (1999, 2012) and Jääsaari (2007) stand out in particular. Additionally, these academic and professional sources are supplemented by newspaper articles that serve to close the gaps in the knowledge outside the academic research on the subject.

## **4.2. History of broadcasting and broadcasting policy in the UK**

### **4.2.1. Origins of the UK broadcasting system**

The UK features one of the oldest broadcasting systems in the world, whose structure remained unchanged from the 1950s to the 1990s. It comprised a public service duopoly of the BBC and ITV (and, later, Channel 4). Commercial broadcasters' public service standards were maintained by powerful proactive regulation. Thus, the commercial elements of the system were harnessed to serve the ideological missions

of PSB rather than to operate according to the rules of the free market. Institutional arrangements in broadcasting reflected this PSB idealism. Nevertheless, the arrangement was highly successful in producing both cultural and commercial benefits. Most of all, competition in programming is considered to have produced benefits for quality, while moderate competition also addressed audience preferences more effectively than a monopoly did (Scannell 1990; Curran and Seaton 2010).

The origins of the institutional arrangements of the British broadcasting system can be traced back to the telecommunications acts of 1869 and 1904, which defined telegraphy and telephony as public utilities and universal public services (Briggs 1985: 10). The electro-magnetic spectrum used for broadcasting was considered a limited and valuable public resource, and while the first radio stations were set up by private enterprises in 1922, the Postmaster-General called these companies to form a joint broadcasting syndicate. As a result, the private British Broadcasting Company began broadcasting on 14 November 1922 with a *de facto* monopoly on airwaves (Briggs 1985: 26; Crisell 1997: 13). However, the successive Sykes committee on broadcasting considered it a service too powerful and important 'to be allowed to become an unrestricted commercial monopoly' (McDonnell 1991: 10), leading to the establishment of the British Broadcasting Corporation under the Royal Charter on 1 January 1927. It was a publicly funded, yet quasi-autonomous organisation, controlled directly neither by the government nor by industry, but by a regulatory body; the Board of Governors (Cave 1996: 22). It is notable that that the Royal Charter did not lay down detailed public service obligations for the BBC (McDonnell 1991: 14), but the guidelines of the BBC's programming policy, which survived largely intact until the end of the Second World War and even beyond, were largely based on the personal vision of the Corporation's first Director-General Sir John Reith (in office 1927-1938) (McDonnell 1991: 2-3). His vision of the mission and purposes of broadcasting (examined in more detail in chapter 2) served as a foundation for British broadcasting policy. One of the earliest attempts to articulate the principles of PSB was conducted by C. A. Lewis, the BBC's organiser of programmes, in 1924. He identified the four major criteria governing BBC programme-making as follows:

(1) to cater for the majority of the time to the majority of the public, though without forgetting the needs of 'minorities'; (2) to keep programming on the 'upper side' of public taste and to avoid giving 'offence'; (3) to provide a forum for public debate which would be impartial and free from governmental interference; (4) to provide religious broadcasts which were both non-sectarian and non-dogmatic.

(Lewis, C. A. (1924) "Broadcasting from within", cited in McDonnell 1991: 13)

Television broadcasts, formally commenced on 2 November 1936, were initially a privilege of the BBC and financed from the existing radio licence fee, with the Selsdon Committee having ruled out advertising financing in 1935. However, advocated by a lobby of the liberal market Right, audiovisual equipment manufacturers and advertisers (McDonnell 1991; Crisell 1997: 76-7; Johnson and Turnock 2005: 16-7), the Television Act of 1954 introduced advertising-funded commercial television to the UK in 1955. It consisted of a network of 14 regional ITV broadcasters, each holding a monopoly on their local area to avoid direct commercial competition between the companies, regulated by a powerful regulatory body, the Independent Television Authority (ITA)<sup>19</sup>. Its regulatory powers covered owning and operating the transmitters, regulating programming and advertising, and awarding of regional licences on the basis of programming and financial plans of the candidates through an administrative process referred to as the 'beauty contest' (Cave 1996: 19). The ITA/IBA held considerable interventionist powers on programme scheduling and it could also prohibit transmission of any programme it deemed objectionable (Johnson and Turnock 2005). Its regulation was not based so much on formal quotas; rather it held considerable powers in interpreting what constituted 'taste', 'decency' and 'due impartiality' in broadcasting, as specified in the 1954 Television Act (Cherry 2005: 20). It did not only approve the schedules, but periodic competitions for regional ITV franchisees also gave the regulator considerable leverage over the ITV companies, especially in the period of franchise renewal (Cave 1996: 19). The allocation of the franchises for set periods through a 'beauty contest' that was based on programming and financial plans of the applicants allowed the ITA/IBA to 'impose its own

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<sup>19</sup> Since 1972 the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA).

programming priorities to a considerable degree, although its capacity to enforce promises was limited' (Cave 1996: 19). Thus, this administrative process of franchise allocation represented a 'quasi-auction', through which the ITA/IBA was able to grant franchises only to candidates whose programming plans were deemed to match the public service missions set in the legislation, which also acted as a powerful incentive for the ITV franchisees to maintain a public service agenda in their programming (Cave 1996: 19). For example, broadcasting legislation did not mandate ITV to broadcast religion until 1990, but the acceptance of the public service ethos made it axiomatic that a certain part of broadcasting time should be devoted to religion (McDonnell 2009: 151), and thus all ITV companies provided a certain amount of religious programming in fear of sanctions from the ITA/IBA for non-compliance. Therefore, rather than being a shift towards commercialisation in British broadcasting, commercial broadcasting was at an early stage developed into an extension of the UK PSB system, with the 1963 Television Act placing ITV formally within the public service framework, with public service missions similar to those of the BBC (McDonnell 1991: 44).

Thus, commercialisation of the UK television system did not lead to a straightforward and immediate marketisation of broadcasting, but the system was merely a duopoly in extent as financial competition commonly associated with free-market capitalism was restricted, while competition for programming is widely considered to have positive effects on the quality and diversity of UK television programming (Cave 1996: 19; Goodwin 1998: 15). In the course of the 1960s regulatory actions manoeuvred ITV's programming towards that of BBC1 (Milland 2004: 96), with both channels providing equally diverse mixes of the Reithian staples of information, education and entertainment. The Broadcasting Act 1963 empowered the ITA to mandate ITV network companies to produce programming of public service nature, and require all ITV contractors to broadcast them at prescribed times in the schedule (Crisell 1997: 113). Furthermore, a levy was imposed on net profits of the ITV companies, which encouraged them to reinvest much of their revenues into programme production (Bonner and Aston 1998: 317). Meanwhile, the 1962 Pilkington report recommendation to allocate the third television channel to the BBC allowed the



Corporation to schedule programmes of minority and specialist appeals to the new channel, BBC2, and increase its overall audience share to 50 per cent by scheduling more programmes of populist tastes to BBC1, which was considered essential for maintaining the justification for the licence fee (Humphreys 1996: 130; Crisell 1997: 18). The arrival of Channel 4 (and its much-awaited regional Welsh counterpart S4C) in 1982, can be seen as a compromise between the public service idealism of the Annan committee and the political and commercial aims of the first Thatcher administration and ITV. It did not contest the duopoly, as advertising for the channel was sold by ITV companies, an arrangement which maintained ITV's monopoly on television advertising sales (Johnson and Turnock 2005: 26). This continuity extended to an ideological level too; while the channel's early multicultural and minority-oriented agenda can, to a lesser extent, be seen as a step away from Reithian paternalism and monoculturalist view on the society, its focus on arts and culture, politics, specialist interests and minority groups indicate a strong commitment to the public service ethos in UK broadcasting (Scannell 1990: 25).

#### **4.2.2. Thatcherism and UK broadcasting policies**

Few attempts to challenge the established duopoly were made by the first Thatcher government (1979-1983). Despite the well-documented schism between the BBC and the Conservative Party, whose nature was mainly political (see e.g. Walters 1989; Prosser 1992; Goodwin 1998; King 1998; Tracey 1998; Born 2005), there were no initial plans for changes in the institutional framework of the BBC (Goodwin 1998: 36-7). This can be put down partially to the fact that Home Secretary William Whitelaw was a firm defender of the duopoly and even threatened to resign if the funding basis of the BBC was to be changed (Goodwin 1998: 76). The government renewed the Corporation's Royal Charter virtually unchanged for 15 years from 1981. However, while leaving the powers of the IBA untouched, the Broadcasting Act 1980 introduced the first elements of marketisation by requiring the ITV companies to become public limited companies within eight years. This not only made them liable to takeover, but also far more vulnerable to shareholder pressure to change their programming

policies towards a more populist direction for advertising revenue maximisation (Goodwin 1998: 36-7; Leys 2001: 114).

The first major attempts to challenge the established PSB duopoly took place only after the 1983 General Election, which gave the Conservative Party the most decisive election victory since that of Labour in 1945. With the parliamentary Left largely split and the Conservative Party increasing its parliamentary majority over other parties, the second Thatcher administration was able to carry out more radical economic and political reforms than those carried out by her previous cabinet. The government extended its programme of marketisation to the telecommunications sector with liberalisation of the sector in 1983 and privatisation of British Telecom in 1984 (Johnson 1991: 159). Thatcher's aspiration was to transform broadcasting along the lines that she was implementing on telecommunications. In terms of regulation, this included a radical shift from interventionist or planning bodies (such as the IBA), to reactive regulatory bodies (such as the newly-established Office of Telecommunications [OfTel]), whose primary function was to maintain the operation of competitive markets (Wilks 1997: 694).

The liberalising reforms in telecommunications and broadcasting had both ideological and economic motives. Thatcher's views on broadcasting were characterised by both ideological opposition to the very concept of public service broadcasting, and the desire to break the BBC-IBA public service monopoly and implement a free market of television production and broadcasting in Britain. Her opposition was specifically directed at the licence fee, which she considered as antithetical to the free-market principles, as it connected the viewers with the broadcaster only indirectly and did not correspond to the actual use of the service (Prosser 1992: 181; King 1998).

In addition to this ideological antagonism, the government wanted to introduce a free market in broadcasting by opening up the market for new entrants and competition as part of its Information Technology (IT) strategy seeking to modernise structure of British industries. New high-capacity cable services were anticipated to provide information services for subscribers, thus generating business opportunities for private companies and boosting the economy (Goodwin 1998: 55; Tracey 1998: 205;

Murdock 2000: 122). Such a free-market strategy required liberalisation of cable broadcasting. The government's broadcasting policies first focused on promoting the expansion of cable television services, which, prior to the 1980s, were limited to local experimental systems with limited success (Goodwin 1998: 54; Tracey 1998: 212-3). Impressed with the success of cable systems in the US, the government issued thirteen experimental cable pay-TV licences, of which the first came into operation in 1981 (Goodwin 1998: 54). Instead of entrusting the regulation of these channels to the IBA, which held considerable interventionist powers to exercise proactive regulation, the Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 established the Cable Authority (CA) to oversee cable operations.

The CA's approach to regulation was fundamentally different from that of the IBA: it was a light-touch reactive watchdog, whose regulatory remit was intentionally limited in order to secure maximum financial interest to cable systems from the private sector (Goodwin 1998: 58; Tracey 1998: 208). In line with the cable industry lobby's desires, cable channels were not given extensive public service obligations, but the CA's content regulation was limited to monitoring programme standards in a reactive rather than constant manner (Tracey 1998: 208; Murdock 2000: 123). Matters like broadcast content and advertising on cable were largely left to the market forces to decide. In so doing, the Act treated cable television as a supplement to, rather than a branch of, PSB (McDonnell 1991: 74; Murdock 2000: 123).

The Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 left a permanent institutional legacy to the UK broadcasting policies. Prior to the Act, the role of broadcasting was defined in predominantly cultural terms, while the commercial element was considered something that needed to be restrained. In adopting an approach to broadcasting that placed commercial imperatives to an equal (if not higher) position to cultural considerations, the Conservative government introduced a fundamentally different approach to broadcasting, whose ideological essence was reflected in the following broadcasting acts, as will be examined in the following sections. As such, the Act and the road to its passage can be considered a major punctuation in the UK broadcasting policy equilibrium (Murdock 2000: 123). In allowing cable broadcasters

to focus solely on populist output, the Act also facilitated the influx of US-based entertainment channels (Tracey 1998: 211-2), whose agenda of light entertainment and imported films challenged the traditional public service programming agenda of UK PSBs. This new source of competition – for audiences, for advertising, and for programme rights, and the impact of new legislation, have been major factors in public service broadcasters' shift towards a more populist agenda in programming (Murdock 2000: 127; Born 2005: 52), as will be examined in the following sections.

#### **4.2.3. The Peacock Committee and the BBC**

Before the 1980s, few calls had been made for a reform in the organisation and funding model of the BBC. From 1983 onwards, however, criticism against the Corporation began to mount from forces aligning themselves with free-market views, such as the right-of-centre think-tanks the Adam Smith Institute and the Institute for Economic Affairs that advocated neo-liberalist policies; discussion groups close to the Conservative party; and Conservative newspapers, those owned by Rupert Murdoch's News International Group in particular<sup>20</sup> (O'Malley 1994: 13-87).

The BBC's request for a 41 per cent increase on the licence fee in December 1984 gave the government a rationale to commission a full enquiry on alternative methods for the funding of the Corporation from a committee chaired by Professor Alan Peacock, a distinguished liberal economist (McDonnell 1991: 95; Goodwin 1998: 76-7). As Scannell (1990: 21) notes, whereas the previous committees had considered broadcasting in social, cultural and political terms, Peacock's approach was radically different: he considered broadcasting as a predominantly commercial activity; a private commodity rather than a public good (Scannell 1990: 26). Related to this approach was another core element of the Committee's philosophy and one of its lasting legacies: its emphasis on efficiency of resource allocation as a prime goal of broadcasting policy (Goodwin 1998: 80). The overall aim of the report was to

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<sup>20</sup> O'Malley (1994) argues that the hostility of his press towards the BBC was motivated because of Murdoch's businesses aspirations in satellite broadcasting.

establish a 'sophisticated market system' based on consumer sovereignty (Home Office 1986: para 133), free from state or broadcasting authority intervention.

Already prior to the publication of the Committee's report, the Committee was widely expected to propose the introduction of advertising on the BBC (McDonnell 1991: 95; Goodwin 1998: 77; Franklin 2001: 25). However, the final report, published in July 1986, clearly recommended the retention of the licence fee in the short term and rejected the immediate introduction of advertising on BBC television, stating that it would, in the current limited duopoly, 'reduce consumer choice and welfare' (Home Office 1986: para 617). In order to subject the Corporation to a greater financial discipline and to make it to look for other (commercial) sources of income, the Committee recommended that the licence fee should be pegged to the retail price index (RPI) to subject the Corporation to a tighter budget responsibility (Crisell 1997: 214). Considering the longer-term future of the BBC and the whole broadcasting system, the Report contains recommendations for a three-stage transition to a free market in broadcasting. At the first stage, cable and satellite services would be developed. This would be followed by the crucial second stage (forecast to take place in the 1990s), during which the rapid expansion in the broadcasting systems, channels and methods of payment would replace the current system and subscription would replace the licence fee. At the third stage (taking place 'in the next century'), a full market of different technologies would be created based solely on direct payment (Home Office 1986: paras 608, 673, 700).

It is noteworthy that even Peacock did not believe that the market could replace PSB completely. The role of PSB, however, would be limited to providing 'those programmes of merit which would not survive in a market where audience ratings was the sole criterion' (Home Office 1986: para 683). For the Committee, these programmes included, among others; news and current affairs; documentaries; and minority interest programmes: education; arts; and 'critical and controversial programmes, covering everything from the appraisal of commercial products to politics, ideology, philosophy and religion' (Home Office 1986: para 683). At the second stage of the Committee's plan, the financing of the production of these

programmes would be organised through a new Public Service Broadcasting Council, financed by general taxation or levies on commercial broadcasting, which would allocate grants for individual programmes which it deemed merited public service support on any particular channel (Home Office 1986: paras 686-9).

Peacock's institutional legacy turned out to be the most influential for the organisational culture of the BBC, to an extent which prompted Scannell (1990: 22) to argue that public service broadcasting as it was known ceased to be the definitive feature of the British broadcasting system. Although the government announced in January 1988 that it accepted the Committee's recommendations on keeping advertising out of BBC television and pegging the licence fee to the RPI, the Corporation was forced to adopt a stricter approach to cost efficiency (Tracey 1998: 115), and adopt elements of marketisation into its institutional structures (Born 2005: 64). Changes in the Corporation's administration were a key measure in introducing elements of the neo-liberal agenda to the institutional culture of the BBC. In 1986, the Thatcher administration appointed Marmaduke Hussey as the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the BBC, who then persuaded the Board of Governors to replace the BBC's Director-General Alasdair Milne with Michael Checkland. Initiated by Checkland (1987-1992) in the early 1990s and gathering pace under the term of his deputy and successor in the role, John Birt, since 1993, the Corporation's institutional culture was transformed along neo-liberal lines, with markets, competition, efficiency and the pursuit for commercial activities taking a prominent position in the Corporation's institutional culture (Tracey 1998: 118; Steemers 1999: 52; Born 2005: 58). In order to cut production costs and meet the independent production quota, a programme of outsourcing and job cuts was implemented, with the Corporation's losing approximately 5000 permanent jobs between 1986 and 1996 (Born 2005: 58). Co-productions, co-financing, sponsorship and commercial operations (such as foreign sales, joint commercial operations, publishing, home video sales and merchandising), all of which previously had been to a lesser extent important for the financing of the BBC, began to play an increasingly important role in the Corporation's institutional agenda, responding to both the Thatcherite imperative to become

commercially oriented and the need to supplement the licence-fee income (Tracey 1998: 118; Steemers 1999: 52; Born 2005: 58).

Born (2005: 252) argues that while this discourse of measurement might well form *part* of a redefinition of the practice of public service broadcasting, these economic measures stood more as ends in themselves. By the mid-1990s, this preoccupation with measurement was translated into the Corporation's public service paradigm, whose essence was now being set by marrying the Programme Strategy Review with audience research (Born 2005: 63-4). Propelled by the critique of producer elitism, consumer sovereignty; a key neo-liberal doctrine, was placed at the centre of the Corporation's focus. Strategy, marketing and research informed the schedule, while the needs of the schedule determined commissioning (Born 2005: 287-9). However, Born (2005: 287) argues that 'rather than strengthening accountability, the use of research in this period, by undermining creative responsibility, eroded the BBC's capacity to carry out its central obligation: the production of high-quality programmes.'

In addition to expanding the Corporation's ventures to external markets, Birt introduced another element of marketisation to the Corporation with the creation of an internal market in 1991. Known as *Producer Choice*, the intention of the scheme was to cost all the Corporation's production activities and compel the internal production departments to compete with those provided by external providers, thus allowing the Corporation to root out its alleged inefficiencies and save money. The scheme served as an important stepping stone in the process of marketisation: all production operations of the Corporation – previously provided nominally free of charge – were individually priced to create a better understanding of the real production costs. However, while successful in increasing the financial efficiency of the Corporation to a degree, the ideological impact of *Producer Choice* and the new accounting culture was that corporate values and efficiency became an obsession within the institutional culture of the Corporation, paving way for more cuts and closures and eroding its central obligation to produce high-quality programmes (Tracey 1998: 118; Leys 2001: 137; Born 2005: 60, 106-9 & 287).

#### **4.2.4. The Broadcasting Act 1990 and re-regulation of British broadcasting**

The White Paper on *Broadcasting in the 90s: Competition, Choice and Quality*, the government's response to the Peacock report, was published in November 1988. It retained essential aspects of the traditional BBC-ITV duopoly, and in this sense, halted the move towards a fully-fledged market system, envisaged by Peacock (Deakin and Pratten 1999: 338). The White Paper made four main proposals, of which the two latter were adopted directly from the Peacock report, and all of which would be core elements of the Broadcasting Act 1990: 1.) it proposed a fifth free-to-air commercial terrestrial television channel; 2.) the IBA was to be replaced with a new, lighter touch regulator, the Independent Television Commission (ITC); 3.) licences for ITV companies were to be allocated (subject to qualifications) to the highest bidder in an 'auction', rather than through an administrative procedure; and 4.) Channel 4 was to gain organisational independence and was to be allowed to sell its own advertising (Home Office 1988; Goodwin 1998: 93). The White Paper maintained that the new framework it proposed would promote more open and competitive broadcasting market without affecting programme standards and quality, but was rather ambiguous in specifying how the changes would be carried out to maintain quality and plurality. Outside observers were more sceptical, as each of the proposals had the potential to transform the core nature of the UK public service broadcasting system, with both programme standards and quality at risk (Goodwin 1998: 93).

The proposal for a radical regulatory reform within the commercial broadcasting sector was without doubt the most ambitious and controversial element of the White Paper. The new regulatory body for commercial terrestrial, satellite and cable broadcasting, the ITC, would assume the powers of the IBA and the CA. However, its primary role was to award broadcasting licences and oversee programming in a retro-rather than proactive manner. Thus, the ITC's regulatory approach reflected the institutional legacy of the CA, rather than that of the IBA. The ITC was no longer to be the legal publisher for ITV: it was stripped from the right to preview programmes or organise ITV schedules to the extent the IBA did. Its duty was to enforce the "consumer protection" requirements' on all commercial services: to monitor the



impartiality of news, political and religious programmes, and to consider the violations against 'taste', 'decency' and 'public feeling' (Home Office 1988: para 6.10). Additionally the White Paper proposed that the ITV companies would be given detailed programme requirements, such as requirements to broadcast regional programmes, 'high quality news and current affairs' and to 'provide a diverse programme service calculated to appeal to a variety of tastes and interests' (Home Office 1988: para 6.11). The ownership and operation of the transmitters was also to be transferred to an external company.

The organisational reform of Channel 4 also laid within the government's proposals for a more competitive independent television sector. Channel 4 was still a subsidiary of the IBA, with its advertising sold by the ITV companies. The government wanted to transform Channel 4 to an independent, commercial broadcaster and a competitor to ITV, with its ownership under a public trust. Simultaneously, it maintained that this would not affect Channel 4's public service remit, which aimed to serve underrepresented minorities in particular. The White Paper did acknowledge the concern that a fully commercial Channel 4 would be anxious to maximise profits at the expense of the public service remit. Apart from outlining three possible options for Channel 4 organisational structure (a private company, a non-profit-making-body or a joint operation between Channels 4 and 5) it was uncertain about the new Channel 4 structure and its effects on the channel's special remit (Goodwin 1998: 98-9).

O'Malley (1994: 134) argues that the Act 'created a relatively deregulated commercial TV, satellite, cable and radio sector' and 'left the BBC and Channel 4 as the only mainstream broadcasters with the sort of public service broadcasting obligations which had been embodied in the Broadcasting Act 1981 and which previously had been imposed on all TV and radio organisations'. However, it did not go as far in institutional privatisation and deregulation of the television system as some neo-liberal politicians, businessmen and think-tanks wanted, mainly because of vocal criticism against the market elements of the Act from politicians and industry professionals (Bonner and Aston 1998: 381-419). Deakin and Pratten (1999: 325) maintain that the institutional changes produced by the Act modified, but did not

abandon, the ideal of PSB. Changes to the ITV network were minute,<sup>21</sup> the organisational structure of the BBC was left untouched, and Channel 4's public service role remained – theoretically at least – unchanged. Moreover, the process of allocating ITV licences was not based solely on financial considerations (i.e. the size of the bid). The ITC's invitation to apply for Channel 3 (ITV) licences in the 1993 franchise auction contained minute details about the public service programming strands (such as news, education, religion and children's programmes) that applicants were expected to include in their schedules, and quotas for these strands were included in the broadcasting licences of the successful applicants.

Nevertheless, Goodwin (1998: 166) contends that the introduction of the 'light-touch' regulatory regime of the ITC has undoubtedly been a factor in replacing public service by marketisation on commercial channels. The ITC's regulatory powers to enforce the quality requirements proved to be insufficient once the competition for audience share intensified, since, unlike the IBA, it only monitored and commented on programmes retrospectively, imposing financial penalties in respect of breaches of its code of conduct. It was not able to withstand changes in the spirit or even the letter of public service obligations, such as changes in scheduling (Leys 2001: 146). Born (2005: 52) argues that throughout its existence the ITC was reluctant to exercise its controls and sanctions to the full because it 'grew intimate with the industry it was supposed to police'. The result of the regulatory reform, Born maintains, has been an increasingly populist programming policies of the commercial broadcasters, to which the BBC had been impelled to respond. Johnson and Turnock (2005: 28) and Harrison (2005: 130) argue that the populism in ITV's programming policies caused the network to move a number of its mandated public service programmes (such as news and religious

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<sup>21</sup> Only four franchisees out of the 16 lost their licences: Thames Television's previous licence was awarded to Carlton Television, Television South's to Meridian, Television South West's to Westcountry Television and TV-am's breakfast TV franchise was awarded to GMTV. Only GMTV's licence was awarded purely on grounds of highest bidder – the others were outbid in the auction, but licences were awarded to them on quality grounds. Thus, the process did largely preserve the IBA "beauty contest" administrative choice (Prosser 1993; Goodwin 1998).

programmes) from peak hours to the fringe. When Channel 5<sup>22</sup> was launched in 1997, it too was given rather modest public service obligations, which were eventually either reduced by the regulator, or broken at the margin with ‘relative impunity’ (Leys 2001: 145), owing to the aforementioned inherent impotence of the ITC.

The very process of auctioning the ITV franchises created pressure for ITV companies to review their programming. While a few uncontested licensees paid a nominal sum for their licences (such as Central Independent Television’s £2000 bid), the others ended up submitting excessive bids that, in some cases, exceeded their financial endurance.<sup>23</sup> This not only affected ITV companies’ ability to invest in programming, but also created pressures for revenue maximisation through populist programming (Fitzwalter 2008: 102). Faced with increased competition from cable and satellite broadcasters; and, since 1997, Channel 5, the ITV companies felt they needed to grow in order to operate more effectively and economically against competition. The large ITV companies in particular lobbied for relaxation of the ownership rules, particularly as they faced an additional risk of foreign take-over. The Broadcasting Act 1990 prevented any ITV company from owning or controlling more than two licences, but it did not prevent a media company from an EU country to take over an ITV company. In response to fears of foreign takeover of the ITV companies the government amended the anti-monopoly ownership rules at the end of 1993 to allow companies to own up to two large ITV franchises (except for both London franchises) (Johnson and Turnock 2005: 28). These rules were relaxed further in the Broadcasting Act 1996, which permitted mergers as long as they were not considered to affect the quality and range of programmes, and the regional representation of the company and its programming. It also relaxed restrictions on cross-media ownership, allowing newspaper owners to enter the terrestrial television market (Goodwin 1998: 148). The result was a set of mergers, and by 2000 11 of the 16 ITV networks were

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<sup>22</sup> Rebranded as Five in September 2002. The original name was re-adopted in February 2011.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Yorkshire Television submitted a bid for £37.7 million per annum for a licence for a much smaller region, which meant that it needed to spend 33 per cent of its annual revenues just to cover the licence costs (Fitzwalter 2008: 102).

owned by just two companies, Granada and Carlton. Following an inquiry by the competition watchdog, they were finally allowed to merge in 2004 creating ITV plc, which reduced the number of ITV companies to just five (Johnson and Turnock 2005: 29).<sup>24</sup> This concentration of ownership in the ITV network was accompanied by centralisation of programming production and drastic cuts in regional production budgets that served to reduce internal pluralism in ITV's programming and compromise the quality of ITV's regional programming (Fitzwalter 2008: 161-2).

The passing of Channel 4's control from the IBA-controlled Channel Four Television Company to the Channel Four Television Corporation, a statutory corporation that was institutionally independent from the IBA and responsible for its own advertising sales, in 1993 also had a profound influence on Channel 4's programming policy. Originally envisaged as mainly complementary to the ITV network, the channel's new position as an independent competitor to ITV made it exposed to commercial pressures of the broadcasting market, and hence shifted its programming radically towards that of a mainstream commercial channel.<sup>25</sup> While the channel acted as a 'voice of plurality' in its early years, with its alternative and experimental agenda facilitated by subsidies from the ITV network, it began to target mainly the three audience groups that were favoured by the advertisers; teenagers and young adults, light viewers and viewers from the ABC1 socio-economic group, in order to maximise its advertising revenue (Brown 2007: 155-64). Correspondingly, its programming shifted to a more populist direction, with ratings-boosting soap operas and imported American series dominating the peak-time schedules and minority interests occupying an increasingly marginal position in the channel's organisational priorities (Ellis 2000: 158-9; Born 2005: 46; Hobson 2008: 194). As Born (2005: 46) notes, this

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<sup>24</sup> ITV plc currently holds all but the following ITV franchises: Scottish and Grampian (owned by STV Central), Ulster (UTV Media) and Channel (Yattendon Investment Trust). It also owns 75 per cent of GMTV plc, which holds the national breakfast television franchise.

<sup>25</sup> The link between ITV and Channel 4 was not, however, broken, but Channel 4 was guaranteed a share of ITV income should it run to financial difficulties (Brown 2007: 157).

has only served to increase the similarity between the schedules of Channel 4 and its commercial rivals, thus further intensifying competition in the broadcasting market.

Paradoxically, considering that the ideological father of the Act, the Peacock Committee, was originally set up to scrutinise the BBC's financing and position, the Broadcasting Act left the BBC untouched (apart from imposing a 25 per cent independent production quota<sup>26</sup> and moving from the system of pegging the licence fee to the RPI to setting the fee below the RPI in April 1991 (O'Malley 1994: 134-5)). The fact that the Home Office and the Department of Trade and Industry were negotiating with the BBC and IBA about moving BBC2 and Channel 4 to satellite to free terrestrial frequencies for new advertising-funded commercial channels only five months before the White Paper demonstrates that the government was still uncertain about the future of the PSB system prior to the Act (Goodwin 1998: 89). The White Paper, however, acknowledged that 'the BBC will continue as the cornerstone of public service broadcasting' (cited in Reville 1991: 4). Reville (1991: 4) suggests that this fact 'explains, in part, the policy of the 1990 Act in imposing on all independent services, other than Channel 4, programming requirements that fall short of those found in public service broadcasting.' In other words, the government's intention was to shift the public service 'burden' from commercial channels to public channels, thus allowing greater competition between the commercial channels.

#### **4.2.5. The rise of the New Labour and the neo-liberal consensus in the UK broadcasting policy paradigm**

The commercial broadcasting sector in the UK was relatively sheltered from serious competition prior to the 1990s as ITV and Channel 4 were operating as companions

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<sup>26</sup> The independent production quota had actually already been proposed by Peacock and unofficially set as a target well before the White Paper. Furthermore, the 1989 EC Television without Frontiers Directive (Directive 89/552/EEC) had set a 10 per cent quota for independent productions. Both the BBC and ITV were pressed to meet this quota by 1992, thus the Act only made this requirement statutory (Goodwin 1998).

rather than competitors, and were not yet seriously challenged by non-terrestrial channels. Their hegemony was brought to an end in the 1990s, when the number of commercial television channels began to rise as cable and satellite services began to gain popularity amongst consumers. Their licences were not put to an auction like the ITV franchises, but companies received their licences free of charge (Leys 2001: 145; Hobson 2008: 194). Their low programming obligations, a feature already implemented in the Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984, enabled them to focus solely on populist forms of programming with low production or acquisition costs (e.g. imported films and sports) with mass audience potential (Leys 2001: 145), which gave them a significant advantage over terrestrial public service channels. The relatively steady income of subscription funding enabled these cable and satellite channels to invest substantial sums on securing exclusive rights for films and sporting events, such as live Premier League matches, which further increased their viewing share. The Broadcasting Act 1990 also gave a significant commercial boost to cable services, as it allowed cable operators to offer telecommunication services to their customers (Crisell 1997: 243).<sup>27</sup> After a slow start, satellite services began to develop in the late 1980s, with two companies; British Satellite Broadcasting (BSB) and Sky Television, competing for subscriptions with their own satellite television packages. Since Sky, owned by Rupert Murdoch's News International, was based abroad, it fell outside the regulatory control of the IBA, while London-based BSB was obligated to originate a major part of its own programming on all channels (Crisell 1997: 222). This, together with the massive financial support from News International funds, gave Sky a vital competitive advantage and after a short period of costly competition between the two services BSB collapsed. Sky immediately absorbed BSB in a merger to form British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB) in late 1990, which had a virtual monopoly on satellite broadcasting in the UK.

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<sup>27</sup> Additionally, they were protected from competition from British Telecom (which, although privatised, still had a dominant status on the market), which was forbidden to transmit entertainment on its phone lines until 2001 (Leys 2001).

Changes in the Labour Party's political course in the mid-1990s were fundamental in the cementing the neo-liberal agenda as the dominant paradigm in UK media policies. The traditional policy of the Labour Party had been broadly against any efforts to introduce elements of marketisation into British broadcasting (Goodwin 1998: 145; Freedman 2003: 142-3). Thus, inasmuch as it had influence on the outcome of government broadcasting policy, the Labour Party had consistently exerted that influence to restrain the Conservatives' more deregulatory ambitions, thus acting as a political counterweight to the neo-liberal agenda of Thatcherism (Goodwin 1998: 145). Labour had an influential role in introducing several amendments to the Broadcasting Act 1990, which blunted the most severe free-market proposals, most notably the concession of an 'exceptional circumstances' clause in the awarding of ITV franchises that would allow the ITC to reject the highest bidder because of the poor quality of its proposals (Freedman 2003: 146).

After losing its fourth consecutive general election in 1992 the party elected Tony Blair as its leader in 1994. Blair accelerated the party's shift towards the political centre in a process already started under its previous leader Neil Kinnock. Rebranding itself as New Labour, the party adopted much of the free market philosophy, endorsing the view that the economic performance is best improved by keeping government intervention and regulation to a minimum, and accepted the economic and social restructuring of the Thatcher and Major years (see e.g. Goodwin 1998: 145; Glyn and Wood 2001: 200-222). The party also adopted the market-led non-interventionist approach to its communication policies, in which the government's role was limited to creating the appropriate competitive environment and promoting the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).<sup>28</sup> Another significant part of this 'modernisation' process was reassessing the party's relationship with commercial media and its owners, some of which (the Murdoch press in particular)

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<sup>28</sup> It is notable that while Labour had previously introduced policy plans for a technological revolution (e.g. under Harold Wilson's premiership in the 1960s), they were strongly interventionist in character and aimed to plan a government-administered industrial strategy, while New Labour left the development of such technologies mainly in the private sector (Freedman 2003).

were traditionally unrelentingly hostile to Labour, through adopting a free-market approach to media policies and a relaxed attitude towards concentration of ownership (Freedman 2003: 158-61). This policy outlook was considered more neo-liberal in nature than that of the Conservative government (Goodwin 1998: 146). The fact that the government and the opposition now accepted the restructuring of the UK broadcasting policies by the Thatcher and Major administrations represented punctuation in the policy equilibrium, as there has been no major political counterforce to challenge the neo-liberal agenda in broadcasting policies since.

Freedman (2003: 167-8) argues that one result of New Labour's ICT initiative was an institutional shift in the party's focus in communication policies from social and cultural to economic and technological considerations. Broadcasting became a part of the party's industrial policy, which until that point had been more of a feature of the Conservatives' rather than Labour's policy approach. This meant that the party saw less need for separate media policies, but an urgent requirement to formulate a communications policy in tune with the more competitive market. A policy forum was set up by Tony Blair to outline New Labour's communication policy in 1995. Although its report *Communicating Britain's Future* contained few references to television, it promised to merge the telecommunications regulator Oftel and the ITC into a more streamlined structure, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), which would regulate the whole communications infrastructure. The report also indicated its deregulatory stance by hinting that a 'revamped' ITC would regulate content 'albeit with a lighter touch' (Freedman 2003: 167).

After the 1997 general election landslide victory, which was assisted by powerful media support from the Murdoch press, New Labour positioned the 'communications revolution' as the heart of its vision for modern Britain (Sampson and Lugo 2003: 86). In line with the party's pre-election plans, the Labour government began organising the regulatory reform in order to bring the various telecommunications and media regulators under a single organisation. The 2000 White Paper titled *A New Future For Communications* dismissed the existing regulatory structure as a by-product of a bygone era and proposed for a thorough regulatory reform through new



communications legislation (Doyle and Vick 2005: 75). The document demonstrated a clear vision of a deregulatory approach, indicating that '[r]egulation should be the minimum necessary to achieve clearly defined policy objectives. The presumption that broadcasting and communications should be regulated should therefore in general be reversed' (cited in Freedman 2003: 173). Although the government acknowledged that there was still the need for continuing content regulation of generalist television services mostly in advertising and on matters of violence, taste and decency, there should be a shift in the general trend of regulation from setting cultural objectives to be guided by economic considerations in line with Labour's aim to make the UK home to the 'most dynamic and competitive communications and media market in the world' (cited in Freedman 2003: 174). Sampson and Lugo (2003: 85) point out that this policy direction 'echoes a goal of the former Conservative government, expressed by the 1986 Peacock Committee, to create a "sophisticated market system based on consumer sovereignty" rather than public service goals.'

#### **4.2.6. The Communications Act 2003 as a deregulatory shift in UK broadcasting policies**

On 29 December 2003 the newly-established Ofcom assumed the functions previously carried out by the ITC, the Radio Authority, the Broadcasting Standards Commission, the Radiocommunications Agency and the Oftel. It drew its powers from the Office of Communications Act 2002 and the Communications Act 2003, of which the latter was essentially umbrella legislation on broadcast media and telecommunications. The government's decision to bring five distinctively different regulators under one 'super-regulator' can be described as ambitious, considering that each legacy regulator had conducted its relations with the government, industry and the public in distinct ways (Livingstone et al. 2007: 613). The principal duties of Ofcom, as specified in the Communications Act 2003, are 'a) to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters; and b) to further the interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition' (The Communications Act 2003: s 3). This binary nature was an outcome of the

amalgamation of the duties of Ofcom's predecessors, whose focus was mainly economic (promoting consumers' interests; e.g. Oftel) or cultural (promoting citizens' interests; e.g. the Broadcasting Standards Commission [BSC]). Nevertheless, as Doyle and Vick (2005: 90-1) point out, promoting interests simultaneously can create policy tensions and contradictions: as evidence gathered from the previous amendments in broadcasting legislation demonstrates, public service and commercial values are difficult to combine without putting one above the other. The fact that the new regulator inherited its functions and institutional legacy from regulators whose primary duties were economic (e.g. Oftel) and cultural (e.g. ITC, BSC) resulted in a conflict of interest between the two regulatory traditions, and risked the domination of one tradition over the other (Doyle and Vick 2005: 90-1). Since the *raison d'être* of a convergence regulator was economic rather than socio-cultural, economic and consumerist interests preceded social and cultural goals in the new regulatory regime (Doyle and Vick 2005: 90-1; Livingstone et al. 2007: 628-9).

The Communications Act introduced a three-tier system on television content regulation. On first tier are the basic obligations, which apply to all broadcasters in the UK and are to ensure that their programming output complies with basic domestic, European and international obligations. This category includes the EU quota on European content and independent programming, certain obligations on taste and decency, guidelines for advertising and sponsorship, and the protection of minors. The second tier consists of quantifiable and measurable public service obligations for channels with public service obligations (the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5). Examples of these are the quotas for original or independent productions, targets for regional programming and targets for scheduling of news during the peak time. The conditions are not uniform for all channels: for example, ITV has more public service obligations than Channel 5, but fewer than Channel 4. The third and the highest tier concerns high-level qualitative aspects of public service broadcasting provided by the commercial public service broadcasters (ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5). This category comprises numerous quality and diversity obligations, such as a requirement to broadcast children's, educational, arts and religious programmes and a duty to cater for minority interests, similar to those previously imposed and monitored by the

ITC. However, assuming that the traditional style of monitoring of these abstract and qualitative requirements would lead to what the government referred to as 'box-ticking', the government's new framework involved a system whereby these obligations are to be delivered and monitored through self-regulation. Each licenced public service broadcaster is required to develop detailed statements of programming policy consistent with its public service remit, and to provide an annual self-evaluation of its performance in the light of its stated policy. Backstop powers have been reserved to Ofcom in the event that self-regulation fails, provided that failure is not attributable to economic factors (The Communications Act 2003: ss 264 & 270; Doyle and Vick 2005: 78-81).

Section 264 of the Act also requires Ofcom to review and report on the state of PSB periodically, with specific focus on minority interest provision:

(6) A manner of fulfilling the purposes of public service television broadcasting in the United Kingdom is compatible with this subsection if it ensures— [...]

(f) that those [public service television] services (taken together) include what appears to OFCOM to be a suitable quantity and range of programmes dealing with each of the following, science, religion and other beliefs, social issues, matters of international significance or interest and matters of specialist interest;

(g) that the programmes included in those services that deal with religion and other beliefs include—

(i) programmes providing news and other information about different religions and other beliefs;

(ii) programmes about the history of different religions and other beliefs; and

(iii) programmes showing acts of worship and other ceremonies and practices (including some showing acts of worship and other ceremonies in their entirety);

(h) that those services (taken together) include what appears to OFCOM to be a suitable quantity and range of high quality and original programmes for children and young people.

(The Communications Act 2003: s 264)

While the section clearly acknowledges children's and religious programmes as parts of public service and even lists different religious programming sub-categories that were missing from the Broadcasting Act 1990 and the broadcasting licences of Channels 3, 4 and 5, the amount of discretion allowed to the regulator gave less protection to these programme types than the preceding acts. The Act required Ofcom to review the combined output of the PSBs, but its duties do not include promoting the provision of these programme types through anything else than recommendations. Thus, in terms of content regulation, the legislation did not guarantee Ofcom the necessary powers to secure the provisions of these programming types on commercial PSB channels. As the Act featured a move to a system in which the combined output of PSB channels was reviewed instead of monitoring outputs of each individual channel in fulfilling public service commitments, it also gave Ofcom a great deal of freedom in interpreting whether these commitments had been reasonably met, considering that the BBC's remit alone could be deemed to fulfil the purposes of PSB in this respect (Born 2005: 501-2).

In its first PSB review, published in 2004, Ofcom began drafting a revised interpretation of PSB that was essentially different from that presented in the Communications Act:

PSB should in future be defined in terms of its purposes and its characteristics rather than by specific genres (programme types). Many of the most successful examples of broadcasting over the past five years have defied traditional categorisation. Audiences are, for instance, drifting away from specialist arts, religious and current affairs programming.

(Ofcom 2004a: para 1)

By concluding that PSB should not be defined in terms of its programme types but its purposes and characteristics Ofcom also proposed that the positive externalities delivered by minority interest programming could be delivered by other – more popular – programme types, such as drama and entertainment. The review also contained several propositions that contradicted with the traditional principles of public service. A proposition was put forward in the review that commercial methods of programme delivery, that are contrary to the universality principle of PSB, should

be considered for the delivery of minority interest programming: '[w]here a high cost of delivery is associated with low viewing figures, it will be harder to justify continued public intervention. Alternative means of funding, such as subscription, should be considered for these services' (Ofcom 2004a: 12). As subscription services were never considered as a legitimate substitute to PSB, Ofcom's newly-adopted policy approach indicates a significant branching point in the course of the UK's broadcasting policy.

The Act had a profound effect on the organisational cultures of commercial broadcasters. It allowed them to drift further away from the public service paradigm and to adopt increasingly populist commercial programming strategies, which, in turn, would push these broadcasters further towards 'ruinous competition'. Brown (2007: 275-6) argues that the greatest changes took place in the institutional culture of Channel 4, whose public service obligations were reworded. The previous obligations to catering for minority tastes and interests not served by ITV were replaced with more general and vague duties to be creative, to innovate, experiment and appeal to a culturally diverse society, as it was considered that minority interests would be well served by digital channels, and such a minority focus was increasingly inappropriate for a general interest channel. Shortly after the revision, evidence began to mount that the channel began to drift towards a more predictable and commercial schedule (Brown 2007: 275). This only accelerated competition between ITV and Channel 4, creating a 'vicious circle' of ruinous competition between the channels. ITV became alarmed of Channel 4's aggressive counter-scheduling tactics of competing head-on with ITV with populist talk show or game show content in the evening peak time (Brown 2007: 275). Fitzwalter (2008: 244) regards that the deregulatory measures introduced by the Act encouraged ITV and Channel 5 to become even more commercial, counter-scheduling populist content against Channel 4's public service slots, which would push Channel 4 even further away from its mandate.

The concerns of Doyle and Vick (2005: 89) that the creation of a single regulator, whose authority extends to the regulation of the economic, technical and programme content aspects of telecommunications and broadcast media, 'may ultimately facilitate

the triumph of a market-driven media policy', and that a converged regulatory environment is likely to be more sympathetic to the perceived economic imperatives of communications industries appear to be realised in the light of recent media policy developments. 'The current regime for Public Service Broadcasting, covering the BBC, Channels 3, 4 and Five, set out in the Communications Act 2003 is not surviving the transition to a fully Digital Britain', concluded the government's Digital Britain 2009 report (Department for Culture Media and Sport and Department for Business Innovation and Skills 2009: 136-7). At the same time, Ofcom has adopted an approach to content regulation that places consumerist and economic interests increasingly at the centre of its regulatory approach, and accepts the decline of the current PSB system as an inevitable, if not a 'natural' process. Ofcom's second review on PSB was published in 2008. It concluded that minority interest programmes like religious and arts programmes require lesser future regulatory intervention because of their relatively low audience support and commercial profitability. Instead, it proposed online and digital services as substitutes to main channels in delivering these programmes (Ofcom 2008b: 33). As such, the review reinforced Ofcom's consumerist approach to content regulation already featured in its first PSB review. Whether it is possible to preserve the present amalgamated public-commercial public service broadcasting model in an increasingly commercial and digital future, the polity's answer appears to be negative, and public service delivery is increasingly being considered as the exclusive duty of the public broadcasters; the BBC and Channel 4.

## 4.3. History of broadcasting and broadcasting policy in Finland

### 4.3.1. Origins of broadcasting in Finland

Radio broadcasts were started in Finland in the 1920s amidst social and political unrest stemming from the 1918 Civil War. State structures were still relatively weak, while tensions between social groups were intense. Nevertheless, as early as in 1921 the government began granting local broadcasting licences to low-power radio stations operated by 'politically trustworthy' organisations (i.e. those associated with the right-wing paramilitary White Guards, the winning party of the Civil War), private companies such as newspaper publishers, and military units. The Wireless Act 1919 restricted the ownership of radio receivers to those who obtained a specific licence through a complex process from the Ministry of Transport and Public Works. Calls to bring broadcasting under public control soon arose in the parliament, justified by the lack of radio broadcasting in countryside and the need to provide enlightenment and spread a patriotic mood to the nation, still largely split by the Civil War (Lyytinen 1996: 15-22).

In 1925, the parliamentary radio commission invited various organisations, companies and voluntary associations, some of which were already involved in broadcasting, to establish a national broadcasting syndicate O.Y. Suomen Yleisradio - A.B. Finlands Rundsradiön.<sup>29</sup> The company did not yet have a monopoly on broadcasting, but following its initial transmission on 9 September 1926, most of the existing local radio stations ceased transmissions. As advertising was not considered a preferred option for cultural reasons, the Company began collecting its funding by licence fees, which were legislated by the 1927 Act on Radio Equipment (Lyytinen 1996: 22-8).

The early Yleisradio considered the Reithian BBC as a model organisation and adopted its values, with the aim to improve moral and educational standards of the citizens (Lyytinen 1996: 31-2; Hujanen 2007: 115). The ownership structure of the

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<sup>29</sup> Under the arrangement, Yleisradio was responsible for programming only. Broadcasting transmitters were owned by the National Board of Post and Telegraph.

Company, which included commercial companies, was soon found unsatisfactory for the fulfilment of these aims. The parliament voted to set up a committee to scrutinise options for broadcasting as a state enterprise. The committee published its report in March 1931, in which it recommended the government to take urgent action to ensure that a majority stake in Yleisradio was obtained by the state. As most members of the incumbent conservative government, however, were against the restructuring, it took until 1934 before the state finally acquired full ownership and control of Yleisradio (Lyytinen 1996: 69-80).

Following nationalisation, the regulatory control of Yleisradio was delegated to the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, which elected the members of the company's highest executive body, the Administrative Council (AC). However, following Hella Wuolijoki's term as the company's Director-General (1944-1949) and allegations of her pro-Communist bias in the company's programming policies, the selection of the members of the AC was passed to the parliament in 1948 (Salokangas 1996: 13). The political composition of the AC has tended to mirror that of the Parliament thereafter, with a new AC appointed after each General Election.

#### **4.3.2. The Finnish television duopoly arrangement**

Initially, Yleisradio's administration did not express interest in commencing television broadcasts. The medium was considered expensive for a poor, geographically vast and sparsely-populated country like Finland, and Yleisradio's resources were tied in the development of the frequency modulation (FM) radio network (Salokangas 1996: 115). As Yleisradio did not have a *de jure* monopoly on broadcasting,<sup>30</sup> the National Board of Post and Telegraph issued a temporary licence to a consortium of

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<sup>30</sup> The Act on Radio Equipment 1927 did not specify Yleisradio as the nation's sole broadcaster, but the successive governments had refrained from granting operating licences to other broadcasters (Salokangas 2007). Salokangas (2007) notes that TES-TV's licence was greatly advocated by the Director-General of the National Board of Post and Telegraph, who personally supported the dissolution of Yleisradio's broadcasting monopoly.



broadcasting engineers and technical students. They set up a television service, TES-TV, which started with experimental broadcasts in the Helsinki region on 24 May 1955, and a regular service in March 1956. The TES-TV service was financed by commercials, which gave Yleisradio another reason to resist co-operation. By 1963 its viewing area covered the three biggest metropolitan regions of Helsinki, Turku and Tampere (Salokangas 2007: 40).

Nevertheless, Yleisradio faced continual and mounting political pressure to launch a national television service<sup>31</sup>, however, and was forced to rethink its position. The costs associated with setting up a television service, too substantial to be covered by a television licence fee alone, remained an issue. The majority of the members of Yleisradio's AC were initially against advertising, which was seen as a corruptive threat to the enlightening values of public service broadcasting, and conflictual with the company's broadcasting licence. However, there were members who, together with lobbyists from advertising industry, supported an arrangement similar to the British ITV system, in which advertisements were separated from programmes by commercial breaks and thus were not an integral part of a programme. As a solution, advertising was outsourced<sup>31</sup> to a separate, institutionally independent company, Oy Mainos-TV-Reklam Ab (MTV), set up by a consortium of advertisers, advertising agencies and film production companies in 1957. It hired mainly peak time broadcasting blocks from Yleisradio for its advertising-financed programmes in exchange for a share of its profits (Salokangas 1996: 118; Hanski 2001: 59-61). Thus, its primary role was to subsidise Yleisradio's public service operations; its role as an independent broadcaster was considered secondary to this role. While the arrangement was a duopoly in economic terms, the companies were not considered equal competitors (as in the British BBC-ITV duopoly): MTV's role was subordinate to

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<sup>31</sup> Salokangas (1996) notes that the introduction of Finnish-language programming in the television service of the Estonian SSR in 1954, whose transmissions could be received in southern Finland, and the threat of Soviet propaganda forced Yleisradio to reconsider its previous position following diplomatic pressure from the United Kingdom.

that of Yleisradio.<sup>32</sup> Commercial broadcasting was tolerated for economic reasons, but its extent and influence was strictly limited (Hellman 1999: 136).<sup>33</sup> The fact that MTV did not have a broadcasting licence of its own but operated as Yleisradio's auxiliary under its broadcasting licence also meant that Yleisradio was able to exercise regulatory control over MTV, which included Yleisradio coordinating the schedules of MTV (Hanski 2001: 59-61). An outcome of this was that while MTV's fundamental role as Yleisradio's subsidiser naturally slanted its programming towards light entertainment, throughout its existence as Yleisradio's lessee its programming demonstrated significant commitment to the public service tradition, with a broad programme portfolio including in-house produced drama, documentaries, arts, educational and minority interest programmes (Hellman and Sauri 1988; Hanski 2001). This also demonstrated MTV's desire to justify and reinforce its role as a broad-ranging broadcaster, which was necessary for its long-term aspiration of independence from Yleisradio's control.

This initiation of broadcasts under the above arrangement in August 1957<sup>34</sup> under the name Suomen Televisio<sup>35</sup> started a period in Finnish broadcasting commonly referred to as the 'longstanding experiment' (Meier and Trappel 1992: 140; Hellman 1999: 1; Jääsaari 2007: 5), which included both public service and commercial broadcasters operating under a single mixed system for mutual interests. Together the two companies formed such a powerful union that TES-TV (renamed Tesvisio in 1960), whose transmissions were limited to southern Finland, was forced out of the

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<sup>32</sup> This was reflected in Yleisradio's broadcasting licence, which, until 1993, stated that Yleisradio can (but was not obliged to do so) in its television operations to make use of MTV's assistance (Hellman 1999).

<sup>33</sup> This included placing limitations on MTV's remit, which included a ban on news, current affairs and sports programmes, and restrictions on advertising and programming concerning political and religious topics (Hanski 1997).

<sup>34</sup> Broadcasts were initially experimental, but became regular on 1 January 1958 (Salokangas 2007).

<sup>35</sup> In English: "Television of Finland".

market and acquired by Yleisradio in 1964. Its facilities in Tampere became TV 2, while Suomen Televisio was renamed as TV 1. As a legacy of the two separate institutions, both channels were organised under largely independent organisations, each providing a full range of programming rather than adopting a particular niche profile. This created competition for audiences between the channels (and between Yleisradio and MTV), which constituted a degree of internal pluralism within the system (Hellman 1988: 65).

### **4.3.3. Liberalisation of broadcasting in the 1980s**

The Yleisradio-MTV duopoly remained mostly unchanged for two decades until the mid-1980s. A period of strong politicisation had started in Yleisradio in the mid-1960s and continued throughout the 1970s, during which the composition of the company's administrative bodies was dictated according to the relative strengths of the parliamentary political parties, which transferred most of the executive power to politicians (Salokangas 1996). This was reflected in the company's paternalistic approach to its programming policy, which, as Ruoho (2007: 122) argues, reflected ideals and objectives of the political parties more accurately than the actual tastes of the majority of the audience. As Yleisradio's programming was directly administered and monitored by Programme Councils, whose members were elected mainly by political mandates, it was deemed unnecessary to introduce external regulation or detailed public service obligations in the company's broadcasting licence (Salokangas 1996). Notwithstanding the political struggles within Yleisradio, there was a broad-ranging political consensus on the significance of the duopoly and Yleisradio's role as the nation's primary broadcaster.

Yleisradio's hegemony in Finnish broadcasting began to break in the 1980s for widely similar political, technological and economic reasons that were examined in chapter 2. The political demarcation line between the proponents and opponents of liberalisation was drawn between the Parliamentary Left and Right, with the Left opposing all measures that it considered to strengthen commercial interests in

broadcasting. The Social Democratic Party (SDP), however, gradually grew more supportive to liberalisation towards the end of the decade (Hujanen 1996; Salokangas 1996; Hellman 2012), while the political significance of the communists declined further following the General Elections of 1983 and 1987.<sup>36</sup> The decline of the far-left was countered with the rise of the political influence of the centre-right National Coalition Party (NCP) to the government after the 1987 General Election. Having spent the preceding 21 years in opposition, its pro-liberalisation agenda was now adopted in the government's media policies.

The first concrete sign of the liberalisation of broadcasting policy was the decree to allow MTV to start its own news in 1981. The decision can be considered to have improved MTV's institutional credibility as a 'serious' broadcaster, and was considered an important accomplishment for the company in its quest for an own channel (Lyytinen 2007: 187-8). Another important step was the licensing of independent local radio (ILR) in 1985, which broke Yleisradio's monopoly on radio broadcasting (Salokangas 1996: 343). While the discursive legitimisation of ILR utilised calls for democratisation of communication through granting licences to various community radio ventures, commercial considerations soon replaced the democratic aims in their agenda, and commercial radio became a taken-for-granted fact in cultural and political terms (Hujanen 1996). Hujanen (1996: 191-3) concludes that the 'democratic utopia of communication' was utilised in the discourse to break the traditional dichotomy between public and commercial broadcasting and cement the commercial paradigm in broadcasting as a legitimate alternative for the public service paradigm.

Emerging innovations in consumer electronics and technology eroded Yleisradio's position further. Hellman (1999: 114) and Salokangas (1996: 389) identify the breakthrough of the video cassette recorder (VCR) in the consumer market in the early 1980s and the rise of cable systems in the mid-1980s as the key factors to

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<sup>36</sup> Hujanen (1996: 188) notes that the reason for the change in the attitude of SDP was the crisis of the labour press. The social democrats wanted to increase their power in mass media through expanding their media activities to ILR stations.

challenge the hegemony of the duopoly. Pay-TV services had already emerged in the 1970s, when it was realised that urban households with central aerial systems could be connected into cable networks, across which programmes could be broadcast without a broadcasting licence. Owing to the structure of the Finnish broadcasting system, in which Yleisradio exercised regulatory control on commercial broadcasting owing to its monopoly on broadcasting licence, as well as the fact that the 1927 Act only recognised terrestrial broadcasting, cable and satellite broadcasting were practically outside all licencing and regulation. Cable operators were quick to realise that they could not compete with terrestrial channels by costly forms of original and local programming, but opted for imported, populist forms of programming instead (Salokangas 1996: 389; Hellman 1999: 112).

While the 1987 Act on Cable Broadcasting made it mandatory for cable broadcasters to apply for broadcasting licences and gave some guidelines on content, their regulation and programming obligations were nominal in contrast to those of terrestrial channels (Hellman 1988: 52-4). These requirements did not apply to transnational satellite channels, whose position vis-à-vis domestic channels was consequently strengthened by the Act (Hellman 1999: 114-5). Available through most cable networks, their programming was significantly more entertainment-oriented than that of the terrestrial channels. Cable and satellite reach comprised almost 30 per cent of the population in the late 1980s, with 6-7 per cent of the population viewing these channels on a daily basis. A 1986-1987 survey on cable viewing concluded that its share of households in the three biggest cities was 20-35 per cent, with children aged 9 to 14 years being the keenest users of satellite services (Hellman 1999: 113-5).

#### **4.3.4. The Kolmoskanava project as a defensive measure to protect the duopoly**

The 'threat from the sky' was not the only reason for Yleisradio and MTV becoming concerned about their position: both companies aspired to maintain the control of

broadcasting under the duopoly, and to increase their revenues by increasing MTV's advertising time (Salokangas 1996: 393). Although their inter-company relationships had been strained since the 1960s (Hellman 1999: 137; Hanski 2001), they decided to ally and defend their mutual interests. In 1985, negotiations were started between Yleisradio, MTV and the technology conglomerate Nokia to launch a third terrestrial network, Kolmoskanava<sup>37</sup>, under a joint-stock company, Oy Kolmostelevisio Ab, with Yleisradio holding the stock majority of the channel.<sup>38</sup>

While the channel would operate under Yleisradio's operating licence, its remit was designed to be very different from those of Yleisradio and MTV. The channel's programming would be only partially free-to-air; early plans contained proposals for reserving prime time for pay television programming only. Thus, the channel would receive its funding from a combination of advertising and subscription fees. Although the British Channel 4 was originally considered as an ideological model for Kolmoskanava, and the committee set to consider the conditions for the third network originally set significant minority interest service obligations for the channel (Hellman 2012: 153-4), Salokangas (1996) and Hellman (1988, 2012) argue that these cultural aims turned out to be purely rhetorical: they were intended mainly to win over parliamentary support for the channel. Very few of Channel 4's original cultural aims were actually implemented on Kolmoskanava, whose programming policies were populist and entertainment-oriented from the outset (Hellman 1988: 77-9). In so doing, the channel adopted a more outspoken commercial agenda than any Finnish terrestrial channel had done before. In order to cover the costs associated with establishing the new channel, Kolmoskanava's broadcasting range would initially be limited to the large cities of Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and Lahti in southern Finland, whose citizens were also considered desirable for advertisers because of their urban affluent status (Salokangas 2007: 47); a policy choice that further highlighted the commercial emphasises in the channel's character.

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<sup>37</sup> In English: "The Third Channel".

<sup>38</sup> Ownership of the new network was divided between Yleisradio, MTV and Nokia so that Yleisradio owned 50, MTV 35 and Nokia 15 per cent of the stock (Salokangas 1996).

Yleisradio's operation licence was amended in July 1986 so that Kolmoskanava could commence broadcasts as Yleisradio's auxiliary on 1 December 1986. The decision was preceded by an intense political and public debate, which had effect on Kolmoskanava's final structure. The channel was obliged to provide its prime-time programming free from subscription charge and thus the pay television plans had to be abandoned. Yleisradio was also required to diversify the channel's coverage, with modest and loosely-defined programming obligations set for the channel (Hellman 1988). An important prerequisite for the channel's remit was that it would support the growth of the independent production sector by commissioning its programming mostly from independent producers, thus operating as a publisher-broadcaster without in-house production. In an amendment to Yleisradio's broadcasting licence, the company was obliged to ensure that at least one fifth of Kolmoskanava's programming was of domestic origin, and to increase this proportion by the end of the licensing period (which ended in 1989) (Soramäki 2007: 81). The channel was also required to target a 'sufficient proportion' of its programming at the Swedish-speaking minority (Salokangas 1996: 401).

The Kolmoskanava project can be seen as a defensive move from the established broadcasters, which was intended to delay the full liberalisation of the television sector in Finland by maintaining the established duopoly and preventing new entrants to the market (Salokangas 2007: 47; Hellman 2012). Its populist orientation and openly commercial objectives nevertheless indicate a certain branching point in continuity of Finnish broadcasting policies; a step towards marketisation in a system, whose commercial elements were traditionally subordinated to serve social and cultural aims. Hellman (1988) and Salokangas (1996) argue that motives for Kolmoskanava's formation were predominantly economic rather than social or cultural, underpinned by an underlying demand for the expansion of the independent audio-visual sector, and a need to expand the scope available for advertising.

An important feature in the Kolmoskanava project was also that it was aimed at protecting the traditional consensus in Finnish broadcasting. The ultimate aim of the process was to strengthen the duopoly rather than to contest it by introducing a

commercial competitor to Yleisradio. Thus, it was not designed – intentionally at least – to challenge the formative principles in Finnish broadcasting policy: Yleisradio's special superior role over other broadcasters, cultural protectionism against foreign broadcasters and the duopoly arrangement, in which commercial broadcasting financed PSB. However, in terms of marketisation of the system, Hellman (2012: 299) argues that the third channel changed the political climate more favourable for the liberalisation of broadcasting in the 1990s, which culminated in MTV's independence of Yleisradio's control and its own channel in 1993, followed by the introduction of commercial competition in terrestrial broadcasting in 1997.

#### **4.3.5. The 1993 Channel Reform: the end of the 'longstanding experiment'**

While previously strictly against all attempts to increase MTV's independence, by 1988 Yleisradio's administration had accepted the idea of allowing MTV to have a channel of its own, as long as Yleisradio's funding could be secured. Hellman (1999: 94-5) and Salokangas (1996: 406) ascribe this policy U-turn to Yleisradio's management's desire to find a solution to the strained relationship between the two companies, caused by MTV's demands for further increases in its broadcasting hours and peak-time broadcasting slots. These stemmed from MTV's serious financial difficulties, which it had encountered following the launch of Kolmoskanava. While previously having a monopoly on television advertising – and thus being able to uphold high advertising fees – it now had to compete against Kolmoskanava's entertainment-oriented schedules, whose advertising rates were also significantly lower than those of MTV (Hellman 1988). Additionally, MTV was suffering from large-scale inefficiency and overcapacity. It operated like a full channel employing over 700 people, but produced less than ten weekly hours of in-house produced programming, while Kolmostelevisio's staff numbered only 35 (Hellman 1988: 94).

In 1989, an agreement was reached in negotiations between Yleisradio and MTV that Kolmostelevisio would become MTV's subsidiary, and all of its programmes would be



migrated to this channel in 1993, leaving Yleisradio with two national advertising-free channels. The agreement was preceded with informal negotiations between Yleisradio and MTV, and Yleisradio's AC accepted this resolution unanimously after it was agreed that MTV would operate under Yleisradio's broadcasting licence for ten more years (Salokangas 1996: 408). MTV would also continue to subsidise Yleisradio by rental payments for the use of the transmission network (which Yleisradio owned and operated), together with a new 'public service fee'; a levy on MTV's income (Salokangas 2007: 49). Yleisradio's intention was to keep MTV as a part – and an economic guarantor – of the public service system (Hellman 1999: 95). Salokangas (1996: 409) argues that the process was part of Yleisradio's strategy to win more time for the duopoly in order to be more prepared to face the challenge of the anticipated liberalisation of broadcasting.

In September 1992 the Minister of Transport – the minister in charge of telecommunications – Ole Norrback (Swedish People's Party, SPP) appointed the Chairman of Yleisradio's AC, Seppo Niemelä (Centre Party), to prepare a report on the 'role of public service broadcasting in electronic media within the communication policies of the 1990s' (cited in Hellman 1999: 99). While the report was strongly in favour of maintaining the established duopoly in broadcasting, its key recommendation was a reform in broadcasting legislation, which would split public and commercial broadcasting into two separate entities. The role and responsibilities of Yleisradio as a public service broadcaster, the report proposed, would be defined by skeleton legislation for broadcasting, which would also create a legal framework for issuing licences to commercial broadcasters and for their economic obligations to Yleisradio (Niemelä 1993: 52; Hellman 1999: 147). The report also recommended that MTV should be issued with a broadcasting licence of its own (Niemelä 1993: 52) – contrary to what was previously agreed between the companies.

Following the publication of the Niemelä Report, the Minister of Transport, Ole Norrback, announced that in line with the report's recommendations, the government would both strengthen Yleisradio's institutional status in Finnish broadcasting system by legislative measures and grant an operation licence for MTV3. At this stage,

Yleisradio's AC had no objections and was only concerned about the continuation of the company's funding. Consequently, MTV3's broadcasting licence was issued in September 1993. It was no longer regulated by Yleisradio, but directly by the Ministry of Transport, and gained a full institutional independence of Yleisradio's oversight. This meant that Yleisradio's AC lost even the hypothetical control on MTV3's programming policies.

MTV3's broadcasting licence set some modest and rather vaguely worded programming requirements for the channel (Hellman 1999: 171-3). These included a requirement for the provision of 'diverse programming of high quality', which includes 'useful information and news, as well as appropriate entertainment'; a requirement for the inclusion of a 'sufficient' part of programming of domestic origin; and a requirement for 'a sufficient amount' of programming to 'be understood by the Swedish-speaking population' (Valtioneuvosto 1993: para 2).<sup>39</sup> Notably, neither the broadcasting licence of MTV3 nor the Ministry of Transport specified what constitutes a 'sufficient amount' or which public service programme types MTV3 was expected to provide. The fact that the Ministry of Transport paid little interest in monitoring MTV3's compliance with these programming obligations demonstrates the polity's faith in MTV3's programming policies: the company was considered a trustworthy candidate to interpret these requirements without active supervision. In this respect, Hellman (1999: 101) notes that the outcome of the re-regulatory process reconciled elements of self-regulation by the broadcasting companies and external regulation by the state. The fact that no specific PSB obligations (apart from 'useful information and news') were specified in MTV3's licence also reflects the Finnish pragmatist tradition of treating Yleisradio as the nation's primary provider of public service television. However, MTV emphasised its public service role by introducing a wide portfolio of programming including programming associated with PSB such as news, current

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<sup>39</sup> Moring and Wiik (2007) and Österlund-Karinkanta and Moring (2007) note that Swedish-language programmes on MTV/MTV3 consisted mainly of Swedish co-productions, while some Finnish programmes were subtitled in Swedish. The proportion of these programmes, however, was negligent compared with Yleisradio's Swedish-language output.

affairs and minority interest programming, and becoming a full member of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the European association of PSBs, in 1993 (Hellman 1999: 98).

The act of granting MTV3 a broadcasting licence annulled plans for skeleton legislation for broadcasting. In parliament, preparations for broadcasting legislation reform turned to concern Yleisradio alone. Along with securing the status of PSB, politicians had a growing interest in introducing a more business-like institutional structures and management for the company (Salokangas 1996: 430). This included replacing the post of the Director-General by Managing Director, which, according to Hellman (1999: 100) emphasised 'corporate strategic aspects of operations and the company's role as a media industrial firm instead of a cultural institution', and introducing the director of television as a head of the directors of TV 1 and TV 2, thus enabling a better coordination between the two previously independently-operated channels, but removing a great degree of the previous internal pluralism within the company. The Act on Yleisradio Oy, enacted in December 1993, strengthened Yleisradio's status by legally acknowledging its existence as the public broadcaster and guaranteeing it a privilege to broadcast without a renewable broadcasting licence, thus making it exempt from the decrees of the Act on Radio Equipment 1927 still effective on commercial broadcasters. While granting these privileges, the Act was also remarkable in that for the first time it defined Yleisradio's public service duties, which, until then, were largely set internally. The Act divided the duties of the company into 'general public service' and 'special duties involving public service'. The general public service requirement stipulated that 'the company shall be responsible for the provision of comprehensive television and radio programming for all citizens under equal conditions' (Act on Yleisradio Oy 1993: s 7). In addition to the classic Reithian public service duties of supporting democracy and citizenship through comprehensive provision of informing and educational programming, the special duties involving public service stipulated by the Act included provision for minorities and special groups in the society, specifically referring to programmes in minority languages, educational and devotional programmes (Act on Yleisradio Oy 1993: s

7).<sup>40</sup> Advertising on Yleisradio's channels was ruled out by the Act (Act on Yleisradio Oy 1993: s 12).<sup>41</sup>

#### **4.3.6. The Government's IT policy and digitalisation as catalysts for marketisation**

Jääsaari (2007: 73-4) associates the acceleration of marketisation in Finnish broadcasting policy with a new IT-focused industrial policy, adopted as a solution to economic problems caused by the severe recession of the early 1990s. The centre-right Aho government (1991-1995) was particularly interested in developing national strategies for fostering the information society, and this enthusiasm was sustained by the subsequent Lipponen coalition governments (1995-2003)<sup>42</sup>. Importantly, the process was to be financed by businesses and consumers on a commercial basis, while the role of the government was limited to safeguarding the general prerequisites for developing the information society and, if necessary, to provide resources. Digital television was considered as one element of the strategy, and thus rapid digitalisation was seen as an essential part of the mission to take Finland to the international forefront in information and communication technology (ICT) development. As Kangaspunta (2006: 47) argues, economic and technological discourses; the more effective use of the broadcasting spectrum, together with the economic benefits received from new digital services, were used as the primary motives for digitalisation. The bundling of broadcasting strategies to the ICT strategy marked also

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<sup>40</sup> Provision for children was added to these obligations by an amendment in 2005.

<sup>41</sup> The original Act includes an exemption to this ban, allowing the Council of State to permit advertising in individual programmes 'for particular reasons' (Act on Yleisradio Oy 1993: s 13). In fact, Yleisradio broadcast advertising sporadically during major sporting events. All advertising and sponsorship of programmes was banned in a 2002 amendment (492/2002) of the Act.

<sup>42</sup> Lipponen's first and second cabinets were formed around Lipponen's centre-left SDP and the centre-right NCP, but also included ministers from the SPP, the Green League and the Left Alliance. The governments were in office for two terms in 1995-2003.

a branching point in the policy continuity, as broadcasting discourses of previous governments had addressed broadcasting in predominantly social and cultural terms. Jääsaari (2007: 94) argues that the seemingly neutral, technological framing of the digitalisation process provided an opportunity for the reshaping of interests and the introduction of new normative and cognitive ideas to Finnish broadcasting and communications policy making; thus, digitalisation provided the polity an opportunity to introduce marketised policy discourse to Finnish broadcasting policy paradigm. It featured the introduction of the norms and rules of the market in determining what was considered appropriate, fair and reasonable in policy considerations, accompanied by an increasing focus on choices of individual consumers and the right to the utilisation of the opportunities provided by the market (as opposed to the 'needs' of viewers as citizens). Correspondingly, the principles of public service, 'culture' and equality between regions and social groups were faded into background as justification for actions (Jääsaari 2007: 94-103).

In September 1995, the newly-appointed Minister of Transport Tuula Linnainmaa (NCP) appointed another one-man committee to analyse the state of Finnish broadcasting and to outline a future strategy in response to the oncoming digitalisation of television and radio broadcasts (Hellman 1999: 156; Jääsaari 2007: 75). The task was given to Jouni Mykkänen (NCP), a former Yleisradio director. While his report, like that of Niemelä, favoured the dual order of Finnish television, it contained recommendations that can be interpreted to be more clearly in favour of marketisation. While acknowledging that the analogue spectrum allows only one additional national television channel, the report recommended that a licence be granted for a commercial company to provide competition to MTV3. This, the report argues, would strengthen terrestrial broadcasters in competition against satellite broadcasting (Mykkänen 1995: 17). Technology policy (to pave way for digitalisation), industrial policy (to promote the independent production sector), employment policy (to create new jobs in the audiovisual sector) and financial aspects (to increase the television advertising turnover to the average western European level) are also mentioned as impetuses for the new channel; issues of programming policy, however,

were subordinate in the report, which does not address the preferred social and cultural objectives for the new channel (Mykkänen 1995; Hellman 1999: 156).

In addition to introducing competition in the commercial broadcasting market, the Mykkänen report was also significant in that it makes recommendations, which formed the subsequent Finnish regulatory and licensing policy. While cross-media ownership was previously prevented by licensing practices, the report recommended that newspaper publishers should be allowed to partake in the business of broadcasting. More importantly, the report rejected the role of the state as a proactive regulator and the use of detailed programming obligations. The report referred to the negative experiences from granting too detailed programme obligations to local radio stations, which Mykkänen considered to have become 'a dead letter' as they could not be observed for mainly financial reasons. Instead, the overall assessment of the candidate prior to granting the licence should become the most important regulatory instrument (Mykkänen 1995: 35). This position was adapted as the policy approach to commercial channels' regulation, and their programming obligations (while already missing quotas) began to be withdrawn gradually. In the 2000s, these obligations have been increasingly considered as part of Yleisradio's exclusive duties (Moring and Wiik 2007: 442; Österlund-Karinkanta and Moring 2007: 104-114).

In September 1996, the government granted an analogue broadcasting licence for the fourth national channel to Ruutunelonen, a fully owned subsidiary of the Sanoma Corporation, the publisher of Finland's largest daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat. The channel commenced broadcasts on 1 June 1997 under the name Nelonen<sup>43</sup>. While concerns were expressed about overt concentration of Finnish media, the decision to grant the licence to Ruutunelonen reflects the pragmatic tradition in Finnish media policies in that the licence was awarded to a candidate which was deemed to have the best capacity to establish itself as a broadcaster and promote domestic culture in its programming, although in Nelonen's case the decision can be considered to be based mainly on the robustness of the commercial strategy of the

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<sup>43</sup> In English: "Four" or "Channel Four".

candidate<sup>44</sup> (Hellman 1999: 158-9). The fact that the competing application by A4 Media included a much more culturally ambitious programming strategy emphasizes the pragmatist tradition in Finnish broadcasting policies, as the Ministry of Transport concluded that such a strategy would be likely fail commercially. The Ministry was also concerned of the fact that a candidate with an exclusive programming strategy would not yield enough profit to allow investments in the digitalisation (Hellman 1999: 160).

Nelonen's strategy was significant in the sense that it was the first channel in Finland which did not aim to attract mass audiences from all groups in society, but targeted young urban viewers aged 10-44 years<sup>45</sup> because of their perceived purchasing power and desirable consuming habits (Kaarlela 2004: 36-7). Thus, the channel's programming was from the beginning strongly entertainment-oriented, consisting mainly of US-imported fiction and entertainment, which has constituted 40-50 per cent of the channel's programming (Österlund-Karinkanta and Moring 2007: 110-1). Unlike MTV3, which still provided a relatively wide range of programming, Nelonen's schedules contained little content associated with PSB, e.g. current affairs, domestic drama, arts and education (Kaarlela 2004, pp 46-8). Its entertainment-oriented schedules forced MTV3 to reassess its programming strategy, cut the size of its operations and focus more explicitly on commercially lucrative forms of content (Oksanen 2001; Virtanen 2001).

Along with the recommendations of Mykkänen's report, Nelonen's broadcasting licence contained only vague programming obligations, similar to those of MTV3, but did not include the obligation to provide programming in Swedish (Hellman 1999: 173;

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<sup>44</sup> While Sanoma Corporation already operated a semi-national cable network PTV (renamed PTV4 in 1996 to highlight the network's status as the fourth network), the decision to grant the licence to it can be considered to be based mainly on the financial strength of the candidate, as PTV's programming consisted mainly of US fiction, entertainment and sports, with little domestic or factual content (Hellman 1999).

<sup>45</sup> This target audience was later adjusted to those aged 25-44 years, as affluent consumers favoured by advertisers were primarily in this age group (Kaarlela 2004).

Moring and Wiik 2007: 430).<sup>46</sup> Programming obligations for the two commercial channels were harmonised and reduced further in the renewed licences issued in 1999 for analogue and digital broadcasting, which no longer contain obligations for the provision of Swedish-language programming for MTV3 and Nelonen. These licences specified the provision of news, current affairs and entertainment as the only itemised programming requirements (Valtioneuvosto 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d).

#### **4.3.7. Digitalisation and its impact on broadcasting organisations**

The Act on Radio Equipment 1927 and the Act on Cable Broadcasting 1987 were replaced by the Act on Television and Radio Operations in January 1999. The Act maintained the practice of granting broadcasting licences through ‘beauty contest’, defining ‘safeguarding the diversity of the provision of programmes as well as the needs of special groups of the public’ as its policy aims (Act on Television and Radio Operations 1998: s 10). It also marked a significant degree of deregulation for cable television as it was released from any content obligations (other than those required by the EU Television Without Frontiers Directive [89/552/EEC]), since broadcasters on cable networks no longer required a broadcasting licence, but were only obliged to register with the Telecommunications Administration Centre (Hellman 1999: 174; Jääsaari 2007: 85).<sup>47</sup> The Act also re-confirmed Yleisradio’s funding through revenues from television licence fees and ‘operation licence fees’, levied on commercial broadcasters’ income and formerly called public service fees, now paid into the State Television and Radio Fund instead of channelled to Yleisradio

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<sup>46</sup> Moring and Wiik (2007) note that Nelonen had initially sporadic Swedish-language programming, consisting mainly of programmes produced in Sweden, and one mini-series specifically produced for the channel. Österlund-Karinkanta and Moring (2007) note that the latter served to improve the public image of the channel, even though its audience figures were low.

<sup>47</sup> The obligations stipulated in cable channels’ licences had been minimal even before the 1998 Act, mostly concerning the minimum level of domestic content, with some limitations with regards to violent or pornographic content (Hellman 1999).



directly.<sup>48</sup> These fees were remnants from MTV's former role as Yleisradio's auxiliary and collected in compensation for not providing certain minority interest programme types associated with full service but commercially unprofitable (Salokangas 2007: 53).

The legal status of the operating licence fee was, however, already being disputed by the Finnish Competition Authority (FCA). In its 1996 ruling, it concluded that the fees constituted a form of marked restraint by placing commercial terrestrial broadcasters in a disadvantaged position compared with commercial radio and cable television operators. The FCA questioned the justification for the fee, maintaining that both commercial broadcasters provided increasing levels of programming such as news, factual and current affairs output that satisfied the public service criteria. These considered, the Authority delivered a motion to the Ministry of Transport for the abolishment of the fee (Kilpailuvirasto 1996). FCA's position was reflected in two reports compiled by the consulting company LTT-Tutkimus Oy (1997) and the Backman all-party working group (Backman 2001). Both reports were commissioned to scrutinise the financing of Yleisradio, and both concluded that the operation licence fees should be abolished in stages. The reports suggested that the consequent deficit in Yleisradio's finances could be covered by increasing the licence fee, making Yleisradio's operations more effective and selling its assets in technical distribution operations (LTT-Tutkimus Oy 1997; Backman 2001: 46-51). The subsequent report by the Niemelä committee (2004) on public service television and radio broadcasting in 2010 recommended that the fee should be waived altogether after the digital switchover.

Digitalisation of Finnish television was carried out in a rather hasty process: the first digital licences were granted in 1999, while analogue broadcasts were ceased in 2007. Yleisradio maintained its special status throughout the process, with one multiplex reserved for its channels. The remaining multiplexes were allocated to commercial operators through an administrative process based on the commercial

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<sup>48</sup> However, these funds were continued to be used exclusively to fund Yleisradio's operations.

credibility and programming proposals of candidates in three licensing rounds so that in the autumn of 2009 30 channels were available on digital platform. Notably, in the two latter licensing rounds, 18 channels were allocated to subscription services, as the Ministry of Transport and Communications believed that pay-TV would stimulate the public to acquire digital set-top boxes, with just 63 per cent of the households owning one in 2006, just one year prior to the switchover (Miettinen 2006; Hellman 2010). The high number of licences granted to subscription channels does not only highlight the polity's policy focus of promoting economic and technological growth in the broadcasting sector, but also the polity's willingness to accept subscription services as substitutes to FTA services in increasing the available viewing options.

The digital switchover has also presented difficulties to Yleisradio's finances. In accordance with the recommendations of the Backman committee (2001), the operation licence fees of commercial broadcasters – representing some 10 per cent of Yleisradio's income – were halved in 2002, which instantly created a funding gap of 25 million euros on Yleisradio's budget for 2003 (F&L Management Services Oy and Asianajotoimisto Peltonen 2004: 40).<sup>49</sup> The fees were abolished altogether after the completion of the digital switchover in 2007. As a result, Yleisradio has been forced to cut its staff numbers by nearly a third between 2000 and 2008 (Yleisradio Oy 2001, 2009b). All this has taken place in a period of heavy investments in digital broadcasting technology, rapid expansion of broadcasting hours and the introduction of new services on digital platforms, and has meant that production resources have been compromised.

Jääsaari (2007: 98) argues that the digitalisation process served to shift the balance of private interests in regulatory considerations between public and private interests towards the latter by strengthening the position of commercial television through gradual withdrawal of the financial obligations regarding public service funding. The fact that the original broadcasting licences of MTV3 and Nelonen imposed only

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<sup>49</sup> The 2002 amendment which banned its special right to broadcast advertising during major sporting events cost Yleisradio a further 1.7 million euros annually (F&L Management Services Oy 2004).

minimal constraints to their operations and even these were further reduced in 1999 – in line with Mykkänen’s recommendations – also served to strengthen commercial interests in these broadcasters’ agendas. While the digitalisation process saw the end of the tradition of commercial broadcasters contributing in Yleisradio’s financing in exchange for their lesser participation in the public service programming provision, commercial broadcasters’ programming obligations were not increased in the process. Instead, along the neo-liberal notion adopted by the polity that the free market – rather than the state – is the most capable to address the policy objectives of digitalisation (Jääsaari 2007: 108-9), emerging digital services were expected to increase the diversity in channels available to viewers, and, in so doing, serve to increase the diversity in programming available to viewers. However, the polity adopted a revised interpretation of the concept of diversity, associating in with *diversity in different viewing options* rather than representing actual *diversity in programme content*, i.e. programming for different audiences and tastes (Jääsaari 2007: 111; Hellman 2010). Hellman’s study (2010) on Finnish DTT channels actually demonstrates that most of the channels focus on commercially profitable types of programme types, e.g. sports, films, music and adult entertainment, and the actual diversity of different programme types has not increased. Hellman (2010) concludes that the Finnish DTT system represent a ‘poor man’s version of satellite television’, whose viewing options resemble those of subscription satellite television.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

A comparison of the marketisation-driven institutional changes in the UK and Finland reveals a number of similarities considering the significant differences in the political and economic characteristics between the countries. Until the mid-1980s, commercial broadcasting in both the UK and Finland was subordinated to goals and values of the PSB paradigm. This traditional policy equilibrium was punctuated in the mid-1980s by broadly similar technological, political-ideological and economic forces as examined in chapter 2. The norms and rules of the free market in determining what was considered appropriate, fair and reasonable were gradually introduced as guidelines

to broadcasting policy considerations. In the UK, political and ideological motives were primary in the process, and the introduction of neo-liberal initiatives into the broadcasting policies as well as the institutional culture of the BBC can be associated with the greater neo-liberal social and economic reforms of the Thatcher administration (1979-1990). In Finland, on the other hand, elements of the marketised policy paradigm were rather paradoxically initially adopted as a defensive measure to sustain the established duopoly against the influx of foreign cable and satellite channels. Thus, while the reasons were technological and economic, they were not ideological in that no party had a political motive to question the role of Yleisradio in the system.

By the mid-1990s, the neo-liberal policy discourse had penetrated the political spectrum. Media policy focus shifted towards promoting economic growth in the media and communications sectors. Both New Labour in the UK and SDP in Finland adopted the neo-liberal policy position that economic growth in the audiovisual and ICT sectors can be best fostered through greater commercial competition and lesser public intervention. The seemingly neutral, technological framing of the digitalisation process provided an apt vehicle for the polity to introduce the neo-liberal policy discourse into communication policies. As a result, a series of policy reforms, whose primary objective was to foster growth in the ICT industries and address the challenges of the emerging telecommunications convergence more effectively, were performed in the UK and Finland. In broadcasting policy considerations, the prominence of these technological and economic aspects over the social and cultural concerns increased further, while traditional approaches to content regulation began to be increasingly considered hindering growth in the commercial broadcasting markets. Concurrently, the discourse of individual consumer choice was adopted, while the principles of public service, 'culture' and equality between regions and social groups were faded into the background in broadcasting policy objectives. The new channels launched in this period; Channel 5 in the UK and Nelonen in Finland, were allowed to start with a geographically limited service that targeted urban viewers that were most attractive to advertisers. This indicates that the polity were willing to

compromise the past policy focus of universality and geographical equality in broadcasting services to commercial objectives.

Deregulatory measures that further reduced public service obligations of the commercial broadcasters were introduced. In the UK, the remodelled regulatory framework introduced in the Communications Act 2003 represented the greatest critical juncture for minority programme provision, as it featured a move to self-regulation with respect to many categories of minority interest content. Similarly, programming obligations stipulated for Finnish commercial broadcasters were relaxed in the late 1990s. The broadcasting licence of Nelonen, issued in 1997, contained fewer obligations than that of MTV3, and the digital licences of both MTV3 and Nelonen were harmonised in 1999 with no other references to minority interest provision than a vague obligation for diversity in programming. The hasty launch of DTT increased the freedom of commercial broadcasting sector and competition between broadcasters further. It also marked the end of the longstanding practice of levying of commercial broadcasters' profits in order to finance the operations of Yleisradio, resulting in severe cuts in the company's budget.

In terms of the impact of the aforementioned policy changes on broadcasting institutions, the impact of the four fronts of marketisation examined in chapter 2 could be identified in the following changes in the institutional cultures of UK and Finnish broadcasting organisations. First, in terms of policy focus, a shift took place from the previous social and cultural considerations in broadcasting policies that maintained the previous PSB orthodoxy, towards economic and commercial objectives. As suggested by van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003) (see section 2.3.2), the broadcasting policy focus shifted towards promoting economic and technological growth in the sector in both the UK and Finland. The operational freedom of commercial broadcasting sector was increased through liberalisation of the sector and reorientation of regulation, which saw a gradual reduction in commercial broadcasters' public service obligations. The delivery of public service programming began to be increasingly considered the exclusive duty of public broadcasters. Second, a shift took place in the interpretation of the concept of public service. As

examined in section 2.3.2, public service in broadcasting was increasingly interpreted as 'broadcasting in the service of the listener/viewer' (Syvertsen 1999: 6-7) by broadcasting institutions and regulatory organisations. While the previous interpretation of the public service paradigm was based on normative knowledge on audience's presumed 'needs' (as defined by the elites), this consumerist interpretation of public service uses preferences of mass audience in building its programming policy and priorities. In the UK, the practices adopted by the BBC and Ofcom to set their public service priorities based on viewing preferences of the audiences (see e.g. BBC 2004; Ofcom 2008a, 2008b) illustrate this approach. Third, broadcasting institutions that were previously considered primarily as cultural institutions and whose organisational structures and institutional values reflected their cultural objectives were encouraged or compelled to adopt corporate structures and institutional practices. Corporate yardsticks such as efficiency of operations and audience maximisation were adopted as measures of assessing the functioning of the broadcasting institutions.

There are, however, notable differences in the extent of changes between the UK and Finland that reflect institutional features distinct to these two broadcasting systems. While it was demonstrated in section 4.3.5 that there has been a shift in the focus of Finnish broadcasting policies, the aforementioned shifts were less pronounced in Yleisradio's institutional structures and practices. This reflects Yleisradio's special role in the broadcasting system and the traditional division of labour between public service and commercial broadcasting in Finland. The light-touch regulatory approach carried out through a policy of licensing (i.e. structural regulation) instead of employing a regulator to monitor programming was a by-product of this Yleisradio-centred policy. It featured loose programming obligations stipulated in commercial broadcasters' broadcasting licences that were a legacy of MTV's role as Yleisradio's auxiliary; an arrangement that gave Yleisradio's a significant regulatory control over MTV's programming and made it unnecessary to establish an external regulator. In comparison to the UK BBC-ITV duopoly, the Finnish arrangement undermined commercial broadcasters' role in providing public service programming. Consequently, they were given no detailed public service programming obligations,

but were allowed to define the programme types and volumes of programming they deemed to fulfil the obligations for comprehensive programming by themselves.

Yleisradio's public service role, in turn, has been gradually enhanced by articulating its public service obligations in state legislation. While the pre-1993 broadcasting licences of Yleisradio defined the company's public service duties in vague terms, thus leaving largely to Yleisradio's administration to interpret the essence of these duties, in enacting the Act on Yleisradio Oy 1993 the polity assumed the responsibility to define these duties in more exclusive terms (Salokangas 1996: 430). These duties were increased further in a 2005 amendment to the Act, while Yleisradio's commercial functions were limited by amending section 12 of the Act that allowed the company to sell advertising by the special permission of the Council of State in 2002.

## **5. Case I: Children's programmes**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter will examine changes in the patterns of provision of children's programming in the UK and Finland between 1986 and 2009 utilising the Industrial Equilibrium Model in analysing forces that have contributed to changes in children's programming. The analysis will focus on changes in broadcasters' performance, manifested by television output (volume, content, scheduling and origin). Each of these attributes will be subjected to individual analysis. As the model proposes, changes in television output are treated as indicators of punctuations in the corporate strategies and programming policies, which stem from changes in the broadcasting environment to which an institution is compelled to react by amending its conduct. By examining patterns of consistency and change in programming, this chapter provides an empirical account of the effects of neo-liberal marketisation on broadcasters' institutional policies with regards to children's programming. Interviews with industry professionals and primary and secondary source documents serve as additional evidence.

Analysis of the programming output in the chosen research period is somewhat problematic, as significant changes have taken place in the Finnish and UK broadcasting environment and associated viewing habits. While children's programmes in the 1980s were provided mostly by terrestrial channels and the reach of cable and satellite channels with children's programming was relatively low, children's viewing has rapidly migrated to specialist children's channels and the Internet in the 2000s. Therefore, provision on the main generalist channels is in decline particularly in the UK, where an increasing number of children's channels are available, and both the BBC and ITV now provide programming on their own children's channels (CBBC, CBeebies and CITV). These channels now have to compete with an increasing number of dedicated children's channels. While just 6 such channels could be received in the UK in 1998, the number of these mainly commercial channels totalled 22 in 2007, with a total combined output of over



100,000 annual hours of programming<sup>50</sup> (Ofcom 2007: 22-4). As these channels operate on cable, satellite and online platforms, they are effectively exempt from content regulatory obligations that apply to CBBC and CBeebies. Thus they are able to fill their schedules with populist and cost-effective content such as imported animation, which gives them both popular and commercial advantage over channels with public service obligations: their combined viewing share amongst children in cable and satellite households totalled 26 per cent of total viewing in 2006 (Ofcom 2007: 92). Owing to the differences in the nature of provision on these channels to main generalist channels, the outputs of dedicated children's channels will be analysed mainly separately, as their high volumes of output, together with the high proportion of repeats on these channels, make direct comparison fruitless.

The empirical evidence underpinning this chapter was produced by the author's research on children's programming using programme data from television listings and databases, closer details of which are detailed in chapter 3. Two one-week sample periods, in May and November, were selected for each year. Thus, the volume of output depicted in the charts represents that of these two-week samples rather than a weekly average.

## **5.2. The volume of output of children's programmes**

As noted in previous studies on children's programming (e.g. Blumler 1992a; Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997; Buckingham et al. 1999; Ofcom 2007; Suoninen 2007a), the volume of children's output has continued to grow progressively since the 1980s in both countries owing to an expansion of broadcasting, facilitated by liberalisation of industry structures and regulatory changes in broadcasting policies. The 1990s saw an escalated growth in programming, largely as a consequence of new terrestrial channels being introduced, which all adopted children's programmes in their schedules. In addition, individual channels felt obliged to increase their provisions in order to be better able to compete with one another and

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<sup>50</sup> Includes output of the CITV channel.

the emerging challenge from cable and satellite platforms. As illustrated in table 5.1, the volume of children's output on general interest channels in both the UK and Finland has more than doubled between 1986 and 1998. Charts 5.1 and 5.2 demonstrate that publicly funded channels in particular have increased their provisions in response to the introduction of new commercial channels' competing strands of children's programming. However, the growth on commercially funded channels seems to have slowed down in the 2000s indicating that a 'saturation point', where it is no longer commercially feasible to increase the volume of provision, has been reached. In contrast, the output on the main channels exhibits a slight decline in the UK, where commercial channels have recently cut their provisions following the enactment of the Communications Act 2003, which cancelled the statutory quotas for the provision of children's programmes.

Table 5.1: Average weekly hours of children's programmes on general interest channels

	UK	Finland <sup>51</sup>
1986 – 1990	41:29	14:30
1991 – 1995	55:35	15:25
1996 – 2000	71:45	23:28
2001 – 2005	88:55	28:47
2006 – 2009	84:49	32:28

<sup>51</sup> Figures include Swedish-language output. Changes in the volume of Swedish-language programming will be scrutinised in more detail in section 5.6.

Chart 5.1: Hours of output of children's programmes on main channels in the sample weeks in the UK, 1986-2009

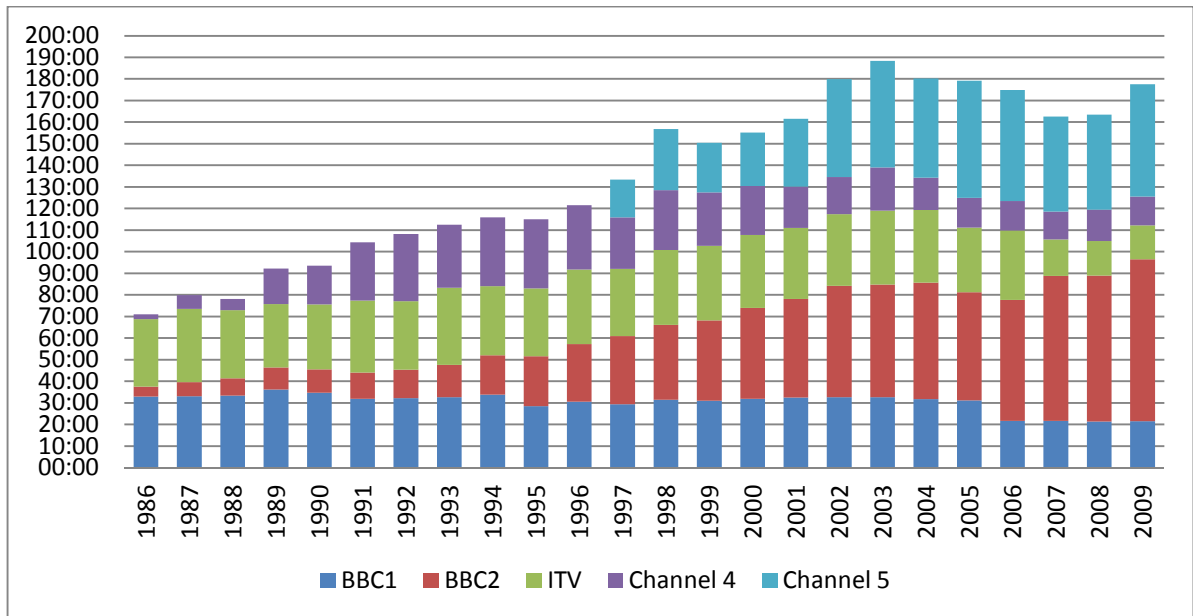
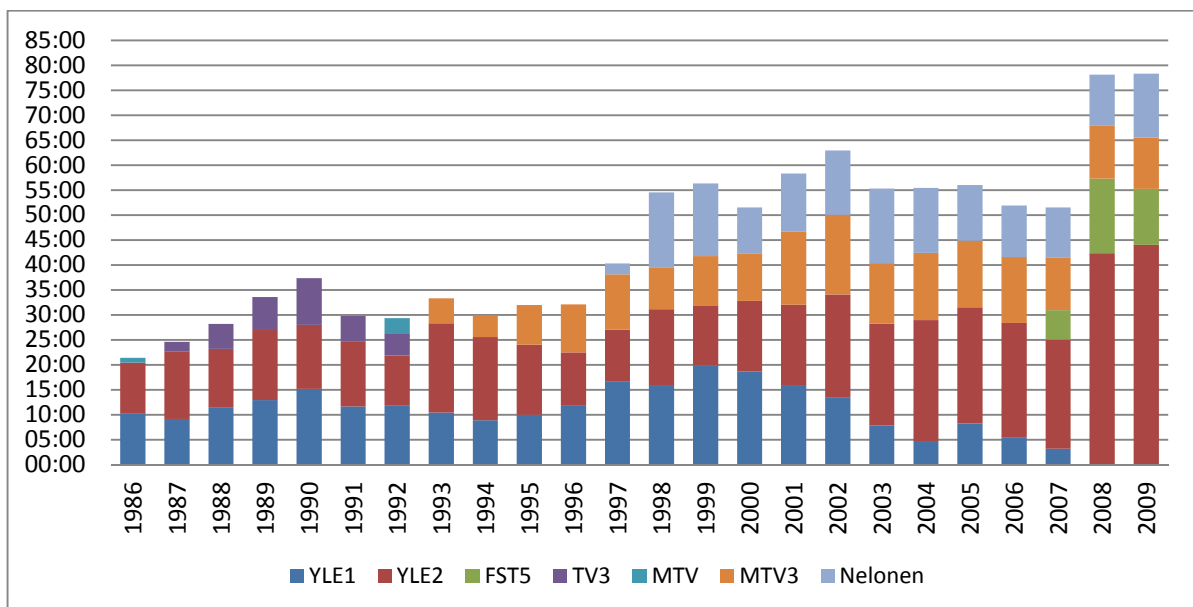


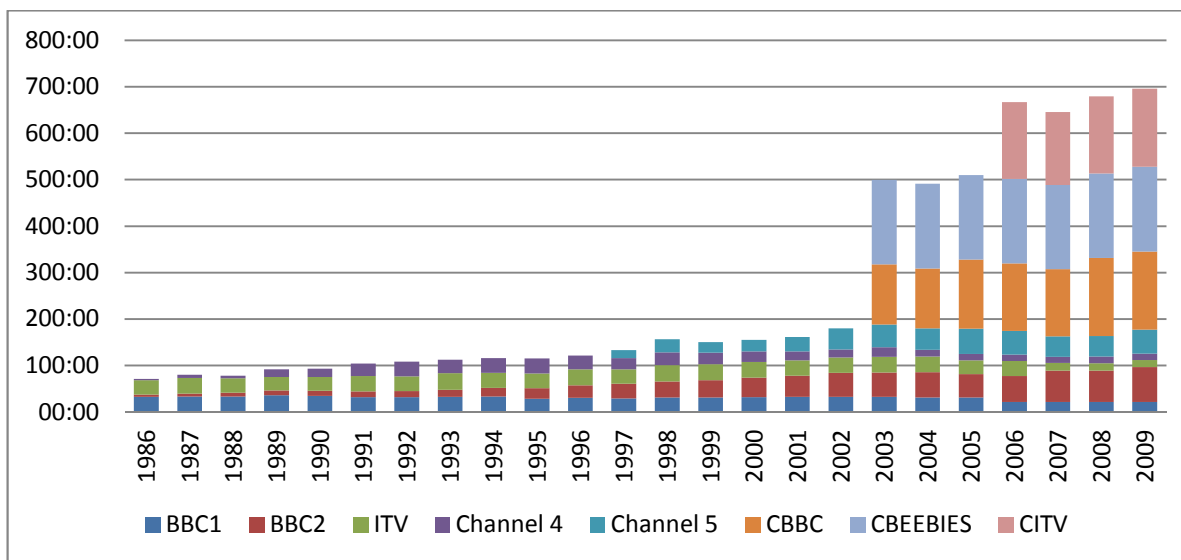
Chart 5.2: Hours of output of children's programmes on main channels in the sample weeks in Finland, 1986-2009



The provision on UK free-to-air (FTA) digital children's channels, launched in the 2000s, has greatly added on the total volume of children's programmes, as illustrated in chart 5.3. Each of these channels now provides nearly the same amount of

programming as the five general interest channels together, and the introduction of CBBC and CBeebies in 2002 and CITV in 2006 has tripled the dedicated programming available to child viewers. With the viewing of children's programmes continuing to migrate to these channels as a consequence of increasing digital penetration and audience figures for generalist channels' children's programmes declining (Ofcom 2007), the provision of digital children's channels will play an even more important role. Such FTA channels do not exist in Finland, where Yleisradio has chosen to focus its strategy on developing children's online services instead (Teija Rantala, author's interview, 17 December 2010).

Chart 5.3: Hours of output of children's programmes in the sample weeks in the UK, 1986-2009, including free-to-air children's channels<sup>52</sup>



Charts 5.4 and 5.5 demonstrate that there has been a shift in the provision from commercial to publicly funded channels following commercial channels' cuts in children's programming in the 2000s. The shift has been less pronounced in the UK, where commercially funded channels still provide around 45 per cent of the output. Nevertheless, considering that these channels' output accounted for on average 55 per cent of the output in the 1990s, the shift can be considered notable. The inclusion

<sup>52</sup> Figures exclude CBBC's programming for schools.

of the UK FTA children's channels into these figures makes this division starker and highlight the BBC's central role in the provision of children's programming, as the CBBC channel and CBeebies provide twice the volume of programming of the CITV Channel. In Finland, commercial broadcasters' share of all children's output has seen an even more dramatic decline. In the early-to-mid 2000s the two commercial channels provided up to 45 per cent of the output, but this proportion has since declined to just 28 per cent. Consequently, children's television is increasingly dependent on the activities of publicly funded broadcasters in both locations.

Chart 5.4: Share of total children’s output between publicly funded and commercial channels in the UK, main channels

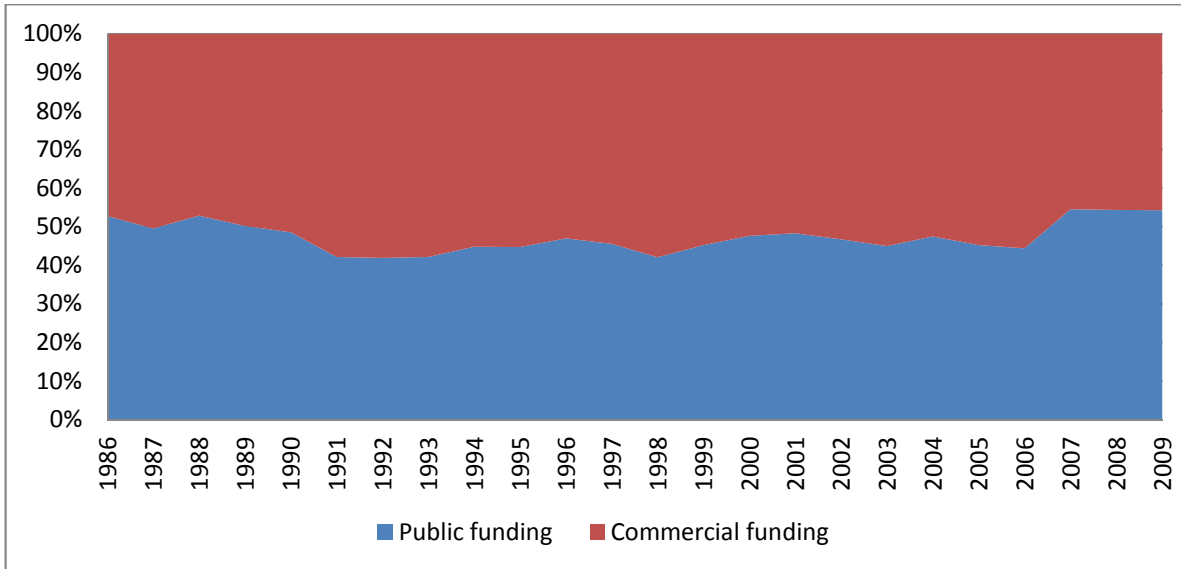
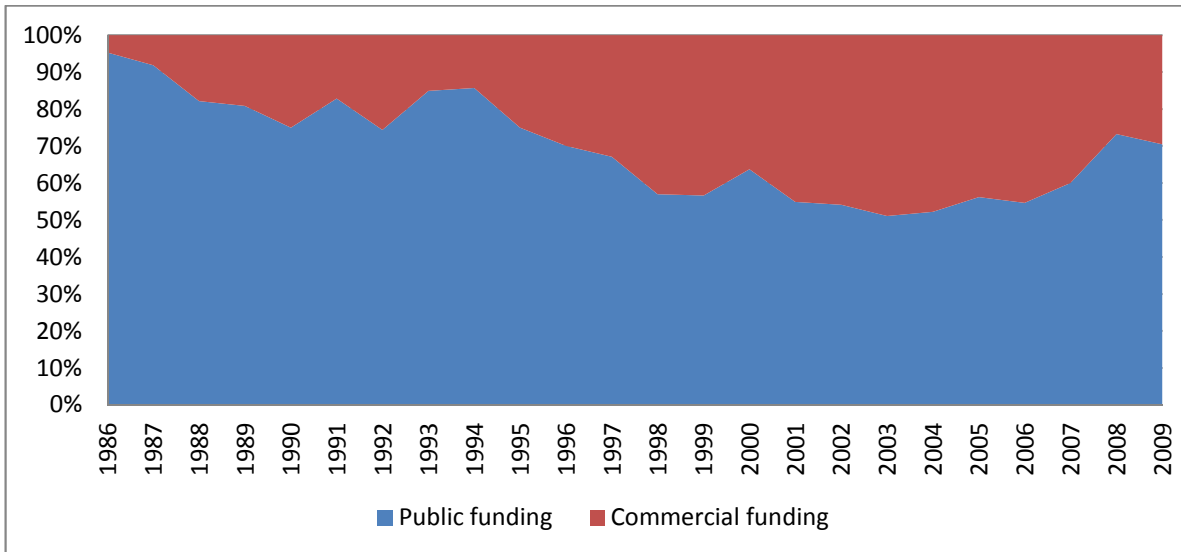


Chart 5.5: Share of total children’s output between publicly funded and commercial channels in Finland, main channels



### 5.2.1. Volume of output on publicly funded channels

Charts 5.6 and 5.7 represent the volume of children's programming on publicly funded general interest channels in the UK and Finland. Both the BBC and Yleisradio saw a radical increase in their general interest channels' children's programming over the research period, whose volume more than doubled. On the BBC channels, this increase has been stable and constant, while Yleisradio's programming has seen a radical expansion only in the late 2000s.

Although both Yleisradio and the BBC had two channels in the 1980s, the volume of the BBC's children's programming in the late 1980s was notably higher than that of Yleisradio's at the time, with around 20 hours of weekly programming. This reflected the fact that the BBC had long been forced to compete against ITV's counter-scheduled programmes, and thus children's programmes did not employ such a pronounced pedagogic-paternalistic agenda as Yleisradio's programmes were able to employ owing to Yleisradio's virtual monopoly on children's programming. Weekend mornings featured entertainment shows and 'cartoon marathons', which were absent from Yleisradio's schedules. The output concentrated on BBC1, while BBC2 provided only 2-3 hours of programming per week, consisting mainly of daytime educational preschool series (e.g. *You and me*). While the volume of BBC1's programming remained somewhat unchanged, BBC2's output grew rapidly in the 1990s and overtook that of BBC1 in 1997. The growth in the BBC's output reflects the increasing competition against children's channels on cable and satellite platforms (Buckingham et al. 1999: 57) – TNT and The Cartoon Network were launched in 1993 and the Disney Channel in 1995 (Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997: 77). In the period between 2006 and 2009, the Corporation provided on average 44 weekly hours of children's programming on its two main channels.

Yleisradio's children's output in Finland in the late 1980s was still limited to just about ten hours of weekly programming, of which roughly two hours were in Swedish. Saturdays and Sundays featured on average one hour of additional programming, but elements commonly associated with commercial channels' children's programming, such as weekend morning 'cartoon marathons', were still absent. In terms of the

volume and structure of provision, programming still indicated a commitment to Reithian paternalism and measured pedagogic values, which included controlling children's viewing habits by prescriptive programming practices. Yleisradio's traditional children's programming strategy favoured presenter-led magazines, which, according to TV 2's producer of children's programmes Anna-Liisa Kirsi (author's interview, 17 December 2010), contained a varied mini-schedule of informative, educational and entertainment-based content. Heikki Takkinen, former screenwriter and presenter of TV 1's preschool magazines *Noppa* and *Lasten TV Puoli Kuusi*, noted in author's interview (29 April 2010) that programming was not even intended to be extensive, but Yleisradio's then children's programming policy was to discourage 'excessive' viewing in accordance with classic ideals of Reithianism. The length of individual children's programme slots was also limited to circa 30-60 minutes, and lengthy ring-fenced children's programme blocks (such as the CBBC or CITV blocks) did not exist. As the schedules of neither Kolmoskanava (TV 3) nor MTV3 were extensive enough to challenge Yleisradio's hegemony in the provision of children's programmes, Yleisradio's programming policies with in this respect sustained the state of equilibrium. In addition, because of Finland's small size and linguistic isolation, Yleisradio had little competition in children's programming from cable and satellite platforms. Consequently, its average children's output grew only moderately; from 12 hours 8 minutes weekly between 1986 and 1990 to 12 hours 26 minutes in the 1991-1995 period.

Another unique feature of the Finnish system was that both TV 1 and TV 2 had their own independent children's programming units; a practice which originated from the 1960s when Tesvisio was acquired by Yleisradio, resulting in two institutionally independent units. Because of this institutional independence, both units had their own distinctive institutional cultures, while operating under the general programming policy guidelines of Yleisradio. Thus, while there was little competition in programming from commercial channels, the arrangement constituted a degree of internal plurality in the system. Swedish-language programmes were gathered under a single production unit, Finlands svenska television (FST) in 1988, and Swedish-language children's programmes were thereafter broadcast mostly on TV 2



overlapping with TV 1's Finnish-language programming. Only in the early 1990s was a division of labour established between the two channels, with TV 1 concentrating on catering for schoolchildren and teenagers; and TV 2 on preschool programming. The company's two separate children's programme departments were merged in 2001 under TV 2's organisation, and since 2003 most Finnish children's programmes have been broadcast on TV 2 (Suoninen 2007a: 504).

Changes in the industry structure – namely the intensification of competition from commercial channels (Nelonen started its operations in 1997) – finally created a force strong enough to force Yleisradio to depart from its traditional paternalist practices in children's programming in the late 1990s. The significance of children's programming as a vehicle of public value began to increase, as Yleisradio saw that it could use its role as the sole provider of Finnish children's programming to justify the case of PSB further in the multi-channel broadcasting environment, where its status was no longer as self-evident as it had been during its *de jure* monopoly. Furthermore, the 1993 Act on Yleisradio Oy was amended in 2005 to include provision for children as a statutory requirement. Consequently, Yleisradio allocated additional resources on children's programmes, which facilitated the introduction of daily morning schedules for children in 2008. This doubled TV 2's children's output, introducing ten additional hours of weekly programming. Teija Rantala (author's interview, 17 December 2010), Yleisradio's incumbent Head of Children's Programmes, notes that increasing the volume of programming was part of Yleisradio's institutional strategy to improve the share of viewing of its children's programmes, thus granting the company with a competitive advantage over its commercial rivals. Swedish children's programmes were migrated to the digital FST5 channel in 2007, which too facilitated an increase in the volume of Swedish-language programming. All these actions together increased the average weekly output of Yleisradio's children's programmes by 39 per cent from the first half of the 2000s to the second one, averaging 21 hours 28 minutes between 2006 and 2009. Considering that Yleisradio has undergone severe cuts in its budgets and staff levels in the 2000s – it has lost a quarter of its income following the gradual abolition of commercial channels' broadcasting licence fees – its significant expansion in children's provision in the late 2000s can be considered a considerable investment

and signal that children's programmes are now placed at the centre of Yleisradio's institutional priorities.

Chart 5.6: Hours of output of children's programmes on the BBC's main channels in the sample weeks in the UK, 1986-2009

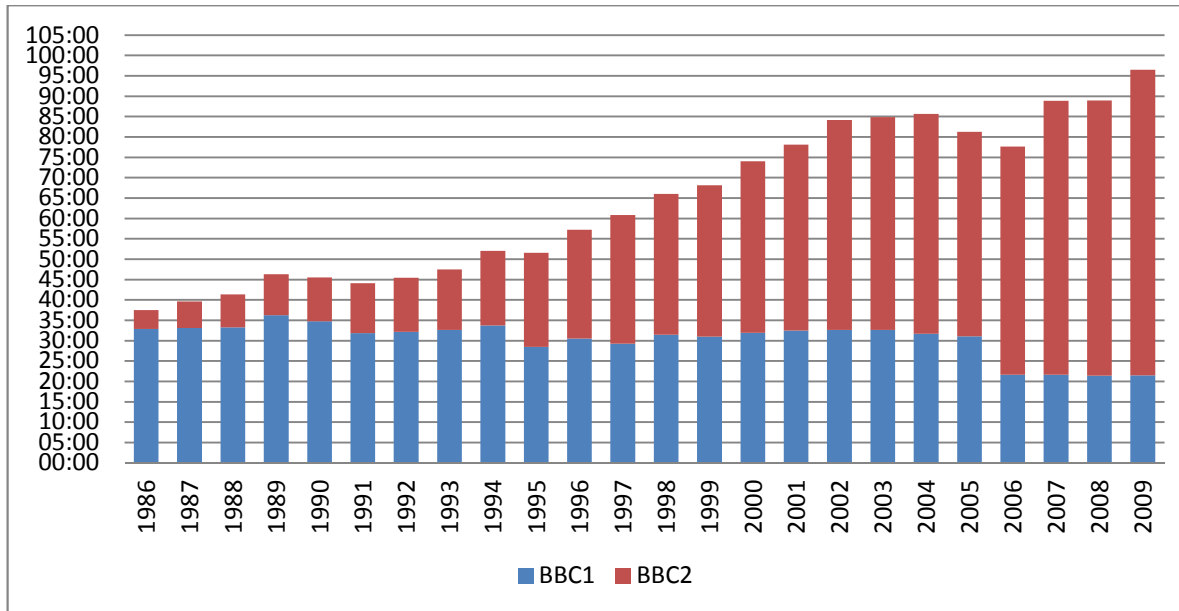
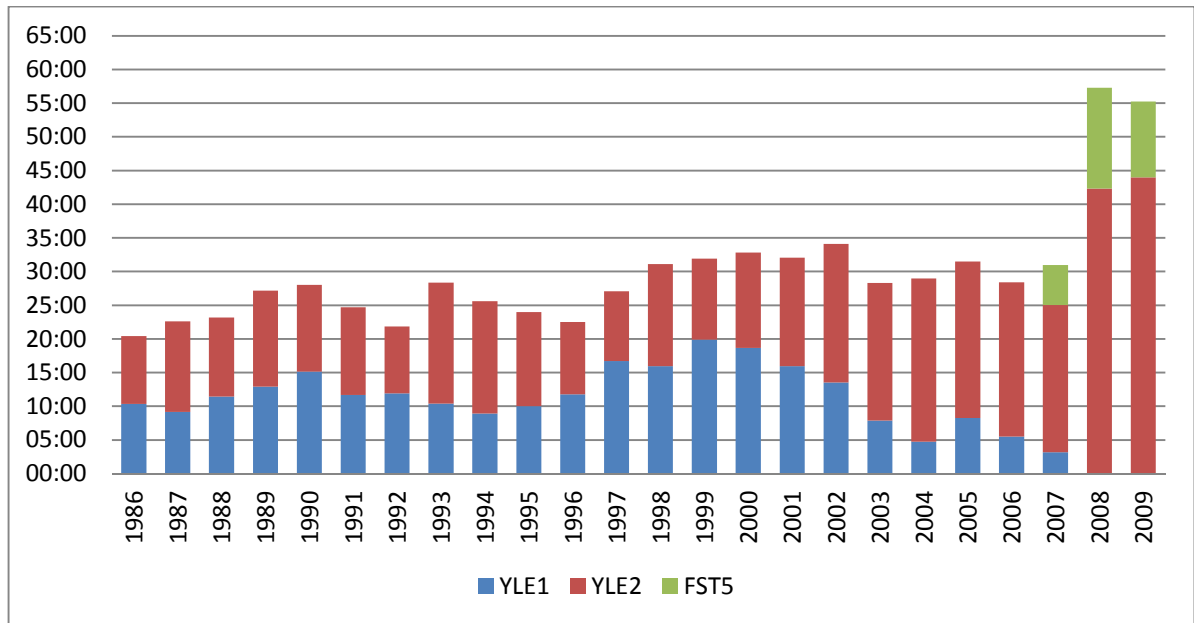


Chart 5.7: Hours of output of children's programmes on Yleisradio's main channels in the sample weeks in Finland, 1986-2009



While there undoubtedly has been a great increase in the volume of the output, much of it has been facilitated by increased use of repeats. As growth has taken place during a period in which PSBs' programming has in general grown dramatically with the advent of digital channels, but without significant rises in licence fee revenues, PSBs have been unable to keep up with the expanding schedules through the supply of more original programming. Thus, Anna Home (author's interview, 2 November 2010) argues that while this expansion has created more airtime, it has not necessarily created any more new content owing to the high proportion of repeats. CBBC and CBeebies channels feature particularly high repeat rates of up to 95 per cent (Ofcom 2010a). Likewise, Virve Schroderus and Teija Rantala (author's interviews, 17 December 2010) note that the repeat cycle for Yleisradio's children's programmes has become shorter and the proportion of repeats has increased slightly. Moreover, the increase in the volume of Yleisradio's children's programmes has been largely facilitated with an increasing proportion of imports and acquisitions. This will be scrutinised in more detail in section 5.5.1.

### 5.2.2. Volume of output on commercial channels

As illustrated by charts 5.8 and 5.9, the volume of children's programmes on commercial channels in both the UK and Finland generally benefited from the expansion of commercial broadcasting in the 1990s, with new channels established in this period (Channel 5 in the UK and Nelonen in Finland) adopting children's programmes in their schedules. The intensification of competition in the 2000s has prompted most channels to adopt a more outright commercial strategy in their programming and cut their provision of children's programmes correspondingly. In the UK in particular, the influence of changes in broadcasting policies has been influential in this process, with the Communications Act 2003 representing a major critical juncture in commercial broadcasters' programming strategies.

Children's programming in the UK was traditionally ITV's forte. It provided over 80 per cent of commercial channels' children's programmes in the 1980s. ITV featured a weekday afternoon 'mini-schedule' complementary to the BBC's children's programming, together with its weekend morning 'children's entertainment marathons', provided by the breakfast franchises TV-AM and, since 1993, GMTV. In addition, ITV had a 30-minute slot for educational preschool programming at noon weekdays. The volume of ITV's output in the late 1980s was comparable to that of BBC1, with an average of 15 hours 36 minutes of weekly programming between 1986 and 1990.

Although the Broadcasting Act 1990 represented a critical juncture for ITV with respect to its programming strategy by bringing the IBA's control over its schedules to an end, the provision of the act to ensure that a 'sufficient amount of time' was dedicated to children's programmes (The Broadcasting Act 1990: s 16), and detailed quotas were introduced for ITV companies containing detailed obligations for provision of different types of children's programmes, as well as original programmes and regional productions<sup>53</sup> served as a counter-balance that safeguarded ITV's

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<sup>53</sup> More precisely, Granada Television's broadcasting licence effective from 1 January 1993 set the following weekly obligations for children's programmes: 2 hours 3 minutes of drama, 8 hours 9 minutes of entertainment and 56 minutes of information. In addition, Granada's obligation included 6 hours 56

equilibrium from forces that arose from the intensification of the competition in the UK broadcasting market in the 1990s, and the volume of ITV's programming remained unchanged until the mid-2000s. The Act also licenced Channel 5, which eventually began broadcasting in 1997. Its licence bid included a pledge to broadcast around 14 hours 40 minutes of children's television per week, which was later formally set as a quota in its first broadcasting licence (Independent Television Commission 2003).<sup>54</sup> Most of the channel's children's output (branded *Milkshake!*) was scheduled in the early morning (as the channel felt unable to compete with the BBC's and ITV's afternoon programming) and was aimed at preschool children (Ofcom 2007: 9).

By contrast, Channel 4's contribution to children's television until the mid-1980s was marginal: while some regular commissioned factual and educational titles can be singled out (such as *The Pocket Money Programme*), the average weekly output totalled only 4 hours and 50 minutes. This reflects the fact that children's programmes were not initially considered a core priority in the company's agenda, as they were already sufficiently served by the BBC and ITV. Channel 4's original remit was considered to complement rather than compete with that of ITV, and Channel 4's licence did not impose a quota for children's programming (Buckingham et al. 1999: 64).

In Finland, prior to the 1993 Channel Reform, the commercial broadcaster MTV did not provide programmes which targeted preschool audiences. Under a mutual agreement between Yleisradio and MTV, these were considered Yleisradio's exclusive (Tauno Äijälä, personal communication, 2 October 2011), reflecting the Finnish perception of commercial television as a complementary service that was not

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minutes of regional children's programming per annum, increased to 8 hours 40 minutes in 1997 (Independent Television Commission 1991).

<sup>54</sup> This quota for Channel 5 in its original 1997 broadcasting licence was 5 hours 30 minutes of drama, 3 hours 40 minutes of entertainment and 5 hours 30 minutes of information (including preschools) per week. These quotas were amended in numerous variations to the licence; to 608 hours per annum (or 11 hours 40 minutes per week) in 2001, and reduced further to 570 hours per annum (or 10 hours 56 minutes per week) in 2003.

supposed to compete with Yleisradio in its central domains of public service provision, including children's programming. In spite of this, the sample weeks between 1986 and 1992 contain a few programmes that meet the characteristics of children's programmes, indicating MTV's desire to demonstrate its commitment to 'full service'. This strategy, masterminded by MTV Oy's then-Programme Controller Tauno Äijälä and the company's former CEO Pentti Hanski, was part of its strategy to gain institutional independence and a channel of its own. Due to the low level of MTV's output on Yleisradio's channels in the mid-to-late 1980s (around 20 hours per week), the volume of children's programmes is insufficient to make any further generalisations of MTV's children's programming. Regular output for children on commercial channels commenced only in 1987, when Kolmoskanava (TV 3) adopted children's programmes into its schedules. However, throughout its existence, Kolmoskanava's children's output was limited to 2.5-3 weekly hours of programming, and as such it did not seriously challenge Yleisradio's hegemony in children's programming. The volume of commercial output began to grow only in the mid-1990s, when MTV3 began extending its weekend morning entertainment slots and introduced programming on early weekday afternoons. The fourth national channel Nelonen began broadcasting in 1997, and together these channels provided on average 8 hours and 56 minutes of weekly programming in the 1996-2000 period.

Continuous growth in broadcasting hours and modest competition between terrestrial channels had positive effects on commercial channels' children's programming, whose output peaked in both countries in the first half of the 2000s. However, changes stemming from the broadcasting industry structure; intensification of competition and financial pressures created by the maturing television advertising market and fragmentation of audiences, together with changes in public policies that directly affect the conduct of broadcasting institutions (i.e. content regulation policies) created pressures for commercial broadcasters that eventually punctuated their equilibria, forcing them to respond by changing their conduct and adopting a strategy that focused more explicitly on lucrative types of populist programming for adult audiences. In the UK, the Communications Act 2003 served as a critical juncture for commercial channels' programming policies, as it removed ITV's and Channel 5's

statutory quotas for children's programmes. Another, although less dramatic, external shock was Ofcom's 2007 ban on 'junk food' advertising in children's programmes (Steemers and D'Arma 2013: 131-2). In addition, changes that were more evolutionary in nature took place in the broadcasting industry structure. Competition for viewers intensified following the increase in the multi-channel penetration in the early 2000s, while competition from transnational children's channels intensified concurrently. Structural challenges to commercial channels' core business (a maturing, possibly declining television advertising market), accompanied by fragmentation of audiences and the migration of viewing from main terrestrial channels to digital niche channels (Ofcom 2007: 71-2; D'Arma et al. 2010: 231-2), have also created pressures to commercial channels for behaviour modification (Steemers and D'Arma 2013: 131-2).

In response to these cumulative pressures stemming from changes in the industry structure and public policies, commercial broadcasters have changed their conduct by adopting strategies that give priority to audience maximisation and commercial profit generation, and favour populist content accordingly. The combined output of commercial channels in the sample weeks of this research decreased by 14 per cent in the UK and 17 per cent in Finland between the 2001-2005 and 2006-2009 periods. In the UK, the decrease would have been even more radical had Channel 5 not increased its provision during the period. In the face of commercial pressures, ITV in particular have adopted a more pronounced commercial strategy (Steemers and D'Arma 2013: 131-2). The renewal of ITV network broadcasting licences in December 2004 served as a critical juncture in ITV's programming policy, as it removed the statutory quotas for children's programmes. ITV's children's programming was subsequently subject to severe cuts, with its daytime children's programming replaced with more lucrative forms of programming, such as soaps and game shows. While ITV delivered ten hours of weekly programming in 2005, it unilaterally dropped this commitment to four hours in 2007 and further down to 40 hours annually – i.e. less than one hour per week – in 2009 (Ofcom 2010b), arguing that transmissions on general interest channels are no longer economically viable in the face of competition from well-resourced competitors such as Disney and Nickleodeon (D'Arma et al.

2010: 231-2; Steemers and D'Arma 2013: 131).<sup>55</sup> Consequently, while empirical data demonstrates that it provided an average of 16 hours 23 minutes of weekly programming between 2001 and 2005, its average weekly provision of children's programmes declined to 8 hours 5 minutes in the 2007-2009 period.

Changes of a similar nature have taken place with Channel 4's programming policy, although given the fact that Channel 4 had no children's programming quotas, the process started in the 1990s. Channel 4 gained full institutional independence in 1993 as per the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1990, which effectively made Channel 4 a rival of ITV and introduced commercial competition to the British terrestrial broadcasting market. The competitive entry represented a major critical juncture for Channel 4's corporate strategy. Channel 4's institutional response to these changes in the industry structure was to adopt a more populist agenda in its programming that was more explicitly focused on commercial profit maximising. The increasing awareness of strategy, installed by Channel 4's new Chief Executive Michael Jackson in 1997, placed market analysis into a central role in the corporation. The 1999 corporate strategy for the channel proposed that Channel 4 should centre its brand on film, entertainment, sports and factual programming, while diversity – originally a key concept in Channel 4's remit – was not addressed in this strategy (Born 2003: 210-1). Children's programmes (particularly those scheduled in the afternoon and early evening) were replaced with more commercially lucrative types of programming targeting grown-ups, and the channel's focus with regards to young audiences turned more towards the more commercially lucrative markets of teenagers instead. Changes in Channel 4's strategy were reflected in its programming, with empirical data demonstrating that its children's programming entered a slow but steady decline in the mid-1990s. By 2006 it was no longer commissioning first-run original programmes for children. Thenceforth, its children's output was made up of a low volume of animation, together with repeats of preschool programmes (Ofcom 2007:

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<sup>55</sup> In 2010 ITV informed Ofcom that it did not intend to specify any minimum amount for its children's programming, indicating that it was prepared to drop children's programming altogether if commercial demands so required (Ofcom 2010b).



25). Consequently, by the 2006-2009 period, Channel 4's average weekly output had declined to 6 hours 47 minutes.

In the light of the above, Channel 5's sustaining commitment to children's television is an interesting case to consider. It appears to have been largely immune to the pressures that have forced ITV and Channel 4 to adopt programming policies that focus more exclusively on older audiences. Between 2006 and 2009, Channel 5 provided an average of 23 hours 56 minutes of weekly children's programming, which is well above the previous ITC quota of 11 hours 40 minutes and more than any other commercial channel has ever provided. In its own words, children's content 'is an area in which it has chosen to focus in order to deliver its PSB remit' (Five 2008: 5). Nick Wilson (author's interview, 7 October 2010), Channel 5's former Controller of Children's Programmes, put the reason for the channel's commitment to child audiences down to the fact that the channel's programming has always been commercially profitable, owing to the morning broadcasting slot and the successful branding of the channel's preschool programming under the *Milkshake* strand. This will be examined in more detail in section 5.3.2.1.

Competitive pressures have resulted in a comparable – although less radical – shift in institutional priorities in Finnish commercial broadcasters, which have never had formal quotas with respect to the provision of the genre. Following the intensification of commercial competition between commercial channels in the 2000s, both MTV3 and Nelonen have largely replaced their afternoon slots of programmes for children and younger teens with commercially lucrative types of programming for adults, while shifting the remaining content to the early morning hours. Furthermore, as licensing practices have been relaxed, with fewer public service obligations imposed on commercial channels' digital licences, extensive public service schedules are no longer required to demonstrate commitment to public service values, as public service programming is increasingly considered Yleisradio's remit. While MTV3 and Nelonen provided on average 6 hours 56 minutes and 6 hours 22 minutes of weekly children's programming in the 2001-2005 period, their average volume had declined to 5 hours 34 minutes and 5 hours 25 minutes respectively.

Interviews with Finnish commercial television executives reveal that while children's programmes are not particularly profitable types of programmes, their provision may produce certain positive externalities and indirect commercial revenue that may justify limited investment in these programmes even beyond their cost. Jani Hartikainen (author's interview, 10 December 2010), the Head of Acquisitions of MTV Media, argues that while children are not particularly lucrative target audience for advertisers and children's programmes could be replaced by commercially more lucrative types of e.g. lifestyle programming, it would not serve the goals of MTV3's advertising strategy. Families are an important target group for advertisers on MTV3, and children's programmes have potential to attract children's parents to the channel. Furthermore, Pirjo Airaksinen (author's interview, 8 December 2010), Senior Vice President of Nelonen Media, notes that while Nelonen's youth programme *Breikki/Buusteri* (while not in this research) was not commercially profitable for the channel, it had an important role in introducing young audiences to the channel and building up their viewing loyalty at the early stages of the channel. As Nelonen was from the outset targeted for young urban viewers and needed to gain a solid viewing share in this audience segment quickly, the benefits of such an investment may have been justified by future commercial return. According to Airaksinen, the programme also had public relations functions in signifying the 'goodwill', or public service commitment, of the channel. Both Hartikainen and Airaksinen also note that MTV3 and Nelonen interpret the obligation for comprehensive service in their broadcasting licences to include catering for audiences of all ages, including children (see also Sihvonen 2013: 119-20).

Chart 5.8: Hours of output of children's programmes on commercial channels in the sample weeks in the UK, 1986-2009

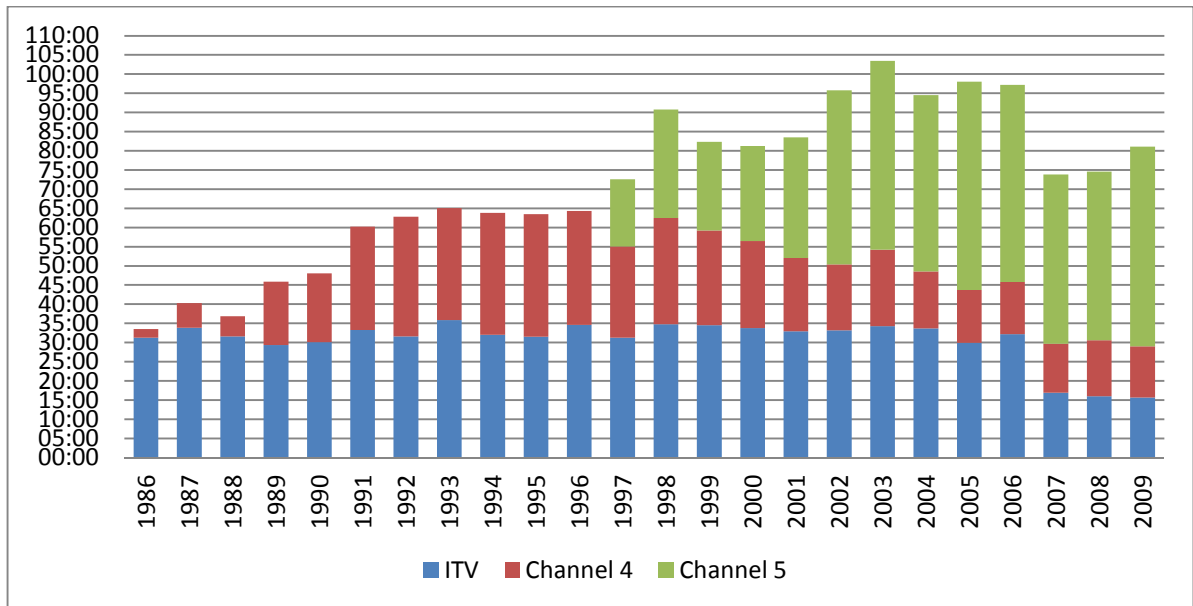
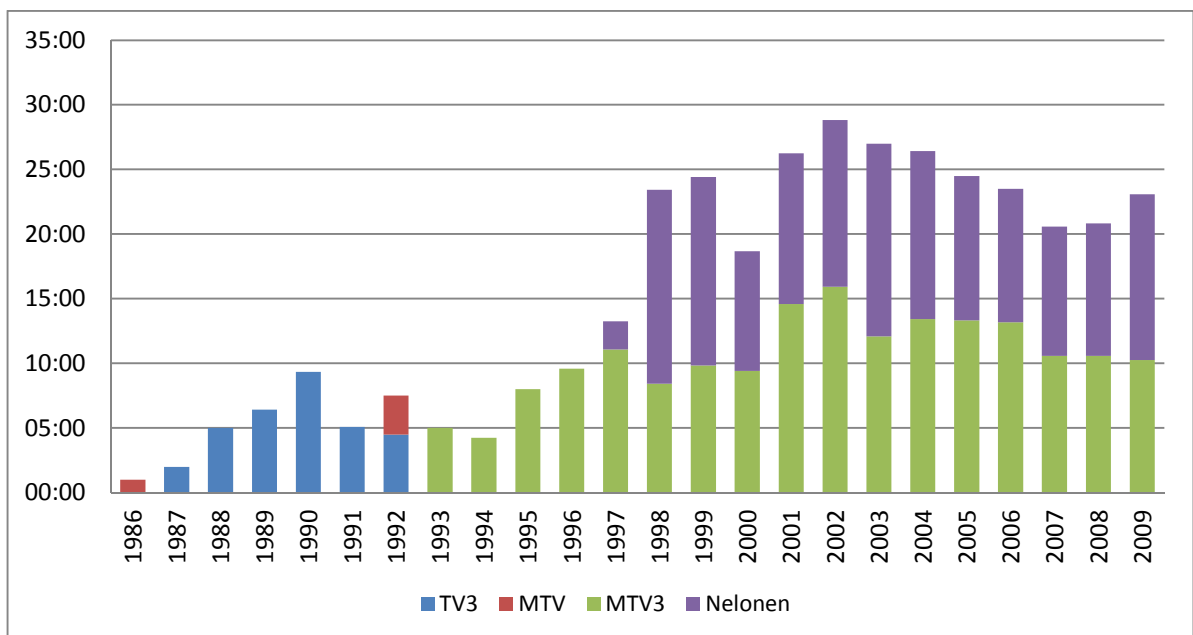


Chart 5.9: Hours of output of children's programmes on commercial channels in the sample weeks in Finland, 1986-2009



### 5.2.3. Proportion of children's programmes in the main channels' output

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 represent the proportions of children's programmes of main channels' output in the sample weeks. The growth in the volume of children's output

has taken place in unison with the general growth in broadcasting hours on most channels. Publicly funded broadcasters in particular have concentrated their children's provisions on their second channels (BBC Two and YLE TV 2), which are targeted at specialist interests. Provision on these channels has risen since the 1980s in both the UK and Finland. Considering that the provision of YLE TV 2 in 1986 consisted of just five weekly hours of programming – of which roughly one hour was in Swedish – the provision can be considered to have risen dramatically on this channel. However, the overall proportion of children's programming on commercial channels has declined in the recent years, as commercial broadcasters have cut their provisions of children's programming. Channel 5 makes is notable exception to this trend, with its children's output having remained at 13-15 per cent for the most of the 2000s.

Table 5.2: Proportion of children's programmes of main channels' output in the sample weeks in the UK

<b>Year</b>	<b>BBC1</b>	<b>BBC2</b>	<b>ITV</b>	<b>Channel 4</b>	<b>Channel 5</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1986</b>	14.6%	2.3%	12.2%	1.5%		<b>8.5%</b>
<b>1987</b>	13.3%	3.1%	13.1%	3.3%		<b>8.7%</b>
<b>1988</b>	13.4%	3.7%	9.4%	2.2%		<b>7.5%</b>
<b>1989</b>	14.3%	4.5%	8.7%	5.9%		<b>8.4%</b>
<b>1990</b>	13.9%	4.5%	9.0%	6.4%		<b>8.4%</b>
<b>1991</b>	12.7%	5.0%	9.9%	9.7%		<b>9.4%</b>
<b>1992</b>	12.5%	5.3%	9.4%	11.0%		<b>9.6%</b>
<b>1993</b>	12.7%	5.9%	10.7%	10.5%		<b>10.0%</b>
<b>1994</b>	12.6%	6.7%	9.5%	11.2%		<b>10.0%</b>
<b>1995</b>	10.7%	7.9%	9.4%	10.9%		<b>9.7%</b>
<b>1996</b>	11.1%	8.5%	10.3%	9.8%		<b>9.9%</b>
<b>1997</b>	10.6%	9.9%	9.3%	7.1%	5.2%	<b>8.3%</b>
<b>1998</b>	9.4%	10.3%	10.3%	8.3%	8.4%	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>1999</b>	9.2%	11.1%	10.3%	7.4%	6.9%	<b>9.0%</b>
<b>2000</b>	9.5%	12.5%	10.0%	6.8%	7.4%	<b>9.2%</b>
<b>2001</b>	9.7%	13.6%	9.8%	5.7%	9.4%	<b>9.6%</b>
<b>2002</b>	9.7%	15.3%	9.9%	5.1%	13.5%	<b>10.7%</b>
<b>2003</b>	9.7%	15.5%	10.2%	6.0%	14.7%	<b>11.2%</b>
<b>2004</b>	9.4%	16.1%	10.0%	4.4%	13.7%	<b>10.7%</b>
<b>2005</b>	9.3%	14.9%	8.9%	4.1%	16.2%	<b>10.7%</b>
<b>2006</b>	6.4%	16.7%	9.6%	4.1%	15.3%	<b>10.4%</b>
<b>2007</b>	6.4%	20.0%	5.0%	3.8%	13.1%	<b>9.7%</b>
<b>2008</b>	6.4%	20.1%	4.8%	4.3%	13.1%	<b>9.7%</b>
<b>2009</b>	6.4%	22.3%	4.7%	4.0%	15.5%	<b>10.6%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>

Table 5.3: Proportion of children's programmes of main channels' output in the sample weeks in Finland<sup>56</sup>

Year	YLE1	YLE2	FST5	TV3	MTV3	Nelonen	Total
1986	12.5%	13.6%					13.0%
1987	9.1%	14.7%		3.7%			10.0%
1988	10.3%	12.1%		6.2%			9.7%
1989	12.4%	15.5%		8.0%			12.1%
1990	12.8%	14.6%		8.7%			11.9%
1991	10.4%	14.4%		5.1%			9.8%
1992	10.0%	10.7%		3.8%			8.0%
1993	6.3%	14.4%			3.1%		7.4%
1994	4.5%	14.1%			2.3%		5.9%
1995	5.1%	10.3%			4.1%		6.1%
1996	5.9%	7.4%			4.4%		5.7%
1997	6.8%	6.4%			4.4%	3.3%	5.5%
1998	6.4%	9.2%			3.1%	9.5%	6.5%
1999	7.9%	6.9%			3.8%	7.9%	6.5%
2000	7.5%	8.3%			3.8%	4.9%	6.0%
2001	6.4%	9.2%			5.9%	5.5%	6.6%
2002	5.4%	11.5%			6.9%	6.1%	7.2%
2003	3.2%	10.5%			5.0%	6.9%	6.2%
2004	1.9%	13.4%			5.8%	5.8%	6.3%
2005	3.5%	12.4%			5.8%	4.9%	6.3%
2006	2.4%	12.4%			5.5%	4.5%	5.9%
2007	1.3%	10.4%	5.3%		4.4%	4.3%	5.0%
2008	0.0%	15.6%	10.3%		4.2%	4.3%	6.7%
2009	0.0%	17.8%	6.7%		3.7%	4.7%	6.5%
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>

### 5.3. The structure of output in children's programmes

Analysis of the output reveals that parallel changes have taken place in the structure of output in both countries. There has been an evident departure from the pedagogic-paternalistic tradition in public service children's programming, with an increasing focus on audience maximisation and cost-effectiveness. Examination of the changes through the analytical lens of the Industrial Equilibrium Model suggests that the aforementioned changes in broadcasters' children's programme strategies were

<sup>56</sup> The children's output of MTV (1986-1992) was negligible and has been omitted as statistically inaccurate.

largely produced by broadcasters' desire to increase their shares of populist and cost-effective types of output. Changes in the broadcasting market in the 1990s served as key incentives for these changes. The intensification of competition forced broadcasters to focus on populist types of content in order to maintain favourable ratings. Additionally, in trying to resolve the dilemma with their rapidly expanding children's schedules and budgetary limitations in this respect, broadcasters opted for cost-effective types of programming. In terms of output, these changes are manifested predominantly by increases in the proportion of animation.

In the UK, where commercial television was already in full competition with the BBC in the provision of children's programming, children's television reflected a less pronounced pedagogic-paternalistic tradition than was evident in Finland, where Yleisradio had no external pressure from the broadcasting market to change its programming policies in this respect. Evidence of this can be seen in the 1986 UK schedules, which contained a much higher level of animation (23 per cent) and entertainment (29 per cent) than those in Finland (13 and 10 per cent respectively).<sup>57</sup> Notably, British broadcasters' entertainment-oriented agenda, which featured a number of elements commonly associated with commercialism in children's television, was manifested in the presence of series containing cartoon violence (e.g. *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*) and toy marketing (e.g. *Care Bears*), which were deemed incompatible with the pedagogic mission of Yleisradio and completely absent from its schedules. The levels of drama (14 per cent) and factual programming (14 per cent) were equal to those of Finland (13 and 17 per cent respectively).

In both countries, a striking feature is that while the output on terrestrial main channels has increased by nearly four-fold in Finland and more than doubled in the UK since 1986, this increase has all but completely been facilitated by an increase in animation. In Finland, animated content has increased five-fold, while the outputs of all other sub-categories have seen less substantial increases or remained at their

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<sup>57</sup> Considering that UK weekend morning shows in the entertainment category contained cartoons, the proportion of animation is likely to have been even higher.

late-1980s levels. In this respect, concerns of animation replacing other sub-categories in the schedules in an unregulated market, articulated in the survey by Messenger Davies and Corbett (1997: 171), appear to have become manifest. While the weekly output of this sub-category between 1986 and 1990 averaged just 3 hours 39 minutes, or 26 per cent the output, by the 2006-2009 period the volume of animation had increased to 18 hours 18 minutes and already represented 56 per cent of the output. The second biggest rise has taken place in the volume of entertainment from an average of 46 minutes between 1986 and 1990 to 2 hours 23 minutes between 2006 and 2009. Within the same period, the average output of drama has risen just by 8 minutes from 2 hours 27 minutes to 2 hours 35 minutes, and the average output of factual programming has actually contracted from 2 hours 4 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes. Given the significant increase in the overall volume of output, the proportion of drama actually contracted from 17 to 8 per cent, with an even more significant decrease in the proportion of factual programming from 14 to just 5 per cent. Chart 5.11 illustrates changes in the structure of children's programming on Finnish channels.

Likewise, in the UK between 1986 and 1990, weekly output of animation averaged 10 hours 44 minutes, or 26 per cent of the total output. By the 2006-2009 period, output of this sub-category had increased by nearly four-fold to 37 hours 41 minutes and comprised 44 per cent of the total output. Contrary to concerns of Blumler (1992a) and Messenger Davies and Corbett (1997), an average volume of preschool output had also more than doubled in this period, from 9 hours 28 minutes (23 per cent) to 22 hours 14 minutes (26 per cent). Meanwhile, lesser growth had taken place in drama (averaging 5 hours 21 minutes between 1986 and 1990; 5 hours 53 minutes between 2006 and 2009) and factual programming (averaging 5 hours 9 minutes between 1986 and 1990 in contrast to 8 hours 54 minutes between 2006 and 2009), with their proportions actually declining from 13 to 7 per cent and 12 to 10 per cent respectively. Changes in UK output are detailed in chart 5.10.



Chart 5.10: Proportions of different sub-categories of children's programmes in the UK, main channels

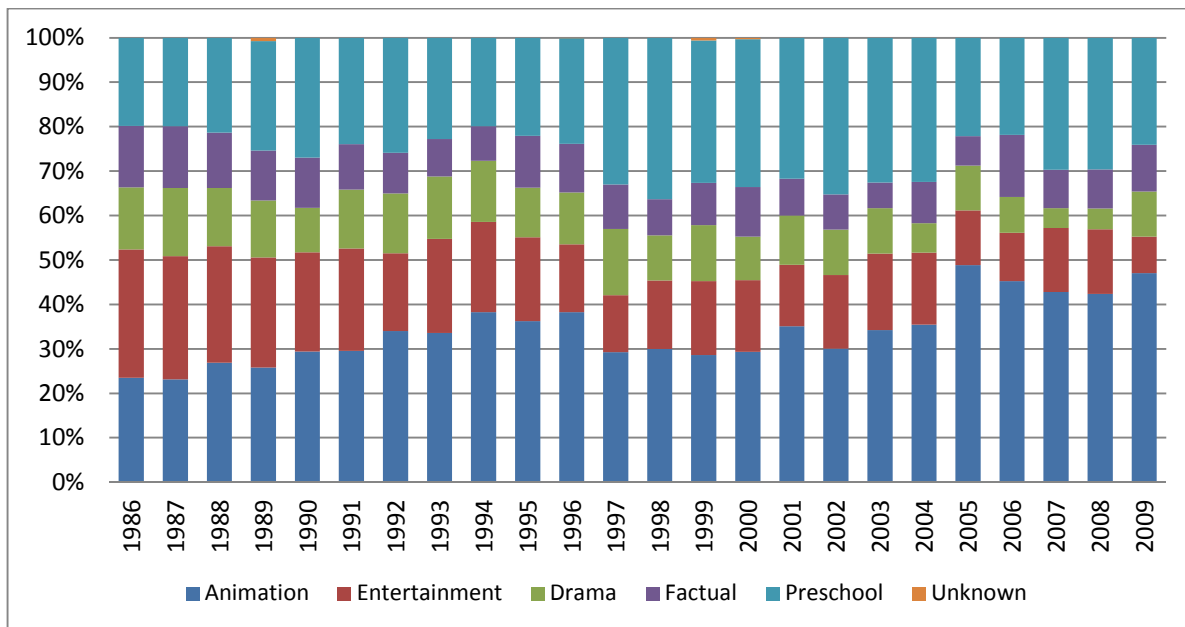
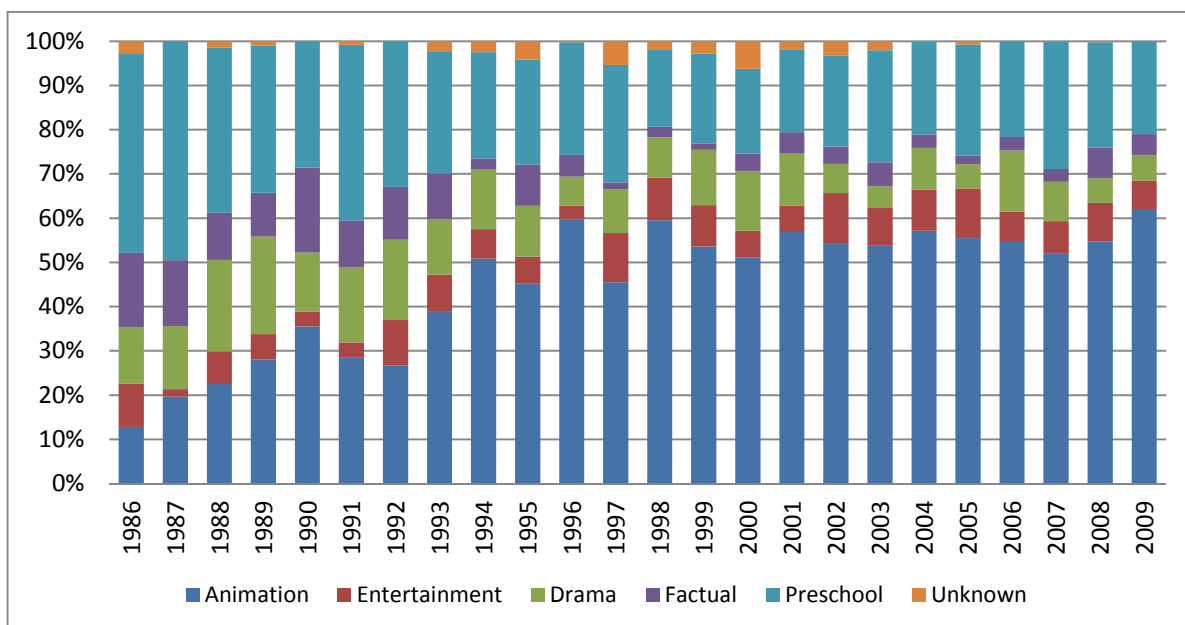


Chart 5.11: Proportions of different sub-categories of children's programmes in Finland, main channels



The rise of animation and preschool programming in both countries can be considered as a consequence of broadcasters' growing desire for cost effective programming, which in turn partially was an outcome of a continuous growth in the volume of children's programmes, accompanied by a disproportionately low growth in children's programming budgets. Animation and preschool constitute programming sub-categories, whose acquisition costs are low because of the high volume of imports and acquisitions available (Steemers 2004: 33-4; Ofcom 2007: 45). As these formats often rely on stylised characters and generic time that requires minimal cultural interpretation, they also have a wide appeal for children of different genders, socio-cultural backgrounds or ethnicities, and are often a safe option for broadcasters in commercial terms (Pecora 1998: 136). Technological advances have also facilitated the use of computer-generated animation techniques, which has brought down costs of this sub-category radically since the 1980s. The international commercial success of the *Teletubbies* in the 1990s, on the other hand, boosted producers' interest in preschool programming, and reformed and opened up this sub-category – which had previously been largely produced in a national context – for large-scale international productions.

In a wider perspective, the changes also reflect changes in PSBs children's programming strategies forged by changes in the broadcasting ecology. The traditional public service ethos in children's programming was premised upon a philosophy that, given choice, children will not naturally consume a healthy diet but will instead consume only content that has less educational benefits and is thus considered 'unhealthy' (Whitaker 2011: 14). For this reason, the ideal type of schedule contained a carefully balanced mix of programming, in which formats and genres that were deemed most beneficial in pedagogic terms, e.g. news and factual programming, were well represented. Promotion of a healthy 'diet' of programming was relatively easy within the *de facto* public service children's programming monopoly (Finland) or duopoly (UK), when there was only a few alternative viewing options (Whitaker 2011: 13-14). Audience maximisation or commercial profit generation were not considered important goals per se, but programmes were charged with several cultural and pedagogic missions. With the absence of the

commercial populist paradigm in children's programming, broadcasters were able to deliver these missions readily by prescriptive scheduling of social drama; storytelling; factual programming and documentaries; news; and educational content, all of which were considered to support children's development. Domestic programming had a self-evident priority over imported programming. Pertti Nätilä (author's interview, 17 December 2010) and Heikki Takkinen (author's interview, 29 April 2010) explain that Finnish children's magazines of the 1970s and 1980s featured programming produced predominantly within the domestic context, and even most of their carefully-selected animated segments were commissioned from domestic animation studios notwithstanding the high costs associated with its production.

While many of these goals have persisted, the growth of the commercial children's channels available through cable, satellite and DTT platforms and the consequent escalation of competition for child audiences' attention have significantly eroded PSBs' willingness and ability to implement these goals through their programming. As the multi-channel broadcasting environment has enabled a greater choice for viewers, even publicly funded broadcasters now feel unable to maintain the traditional paternalist approach to programming, needing as they do to compete to a certain degree for audiences to ensure maximum viewing to avoid excessive marginalisation and maintain justification for their public funding. Joe Godwin (2010), Director of BBC Children's, summarised this dilemma between populist and socially beneficial content as not being able to 'offer sprouts and a glass of water, when there's a world full of burgers and coke beckoning. To give children the benefit of our content, we have to make it attractive to them.'

### **5.3.1. Structure of output on publicly funded channels**

#### **5.3.1.1. Terrestrial channels**

Increases in the overall proportion of animated content in the UK can be put down mainly to expansion of such output on commercial channels, as analysis of the BBC's output reveals that its children's programming has undergone fewer structural

changes, although the proportions of animation and preschool programming have seen modest rises since the 1980s (see chart 5.12). While the BBC's agenda in children's programming in the 1980s lacked such an exclusive pedagogical focus typical of Yleisradio's programming at the time (characterised by e.g. limited volume of overall output, low levels of animation and entertainment, the absence of 'commercial' cartoons and high share of educational preschool content), its output in the late 1980s featured a high factual output (averaging 17 per cent) and moderate animation output (29 per cent).

The proportion of animation on the BBC's schedules increased from 23 per cent in 1986 to around 32-36 per cent in the 1990s and 2000s. In terms of the Industrial Equilibrium Model, the impetus came from the intensification of competition against commercial channels and the subsequent pressure to maintain ratings. This, in turn, was facilitated by changes in the BBC's institutional culture following the introduction of the 'culture of measurement' by John Birt in the early 1990s, which saw ratings being introduced as a yardstick for measuring performance and the Corporation adopting an increasingly populist strategy in its programming (Born 2005). Teresa Plummer Andrews and Michael Carrington; former Head and Deputy Head of BBC's Acquisitions, argue that this culture of measurement extended to children's programmes and influenced the Corporation's children's programming strategy: '[t]he performance reviews at the BBC are, basically, ratings pressures. If you have not performed, why not and what can you do to change it?' (cited in Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997: 37; see also Born 2005: 90). In the period 2006-2009, however, the proportion of animation has dropped to 27 per cent, which is the lowest since the late 1980s. Preschool programming has increased from an average of 22 per cent between 1986 and 1990 to around 27 per cent between 2001 and 2009. Other sub-categories of output have remained unchanged, with drama averaging at 9 per cent and factual programming at 16 per cent between 2006 and 2009. Thus, in spite of the moderate rise in animated and preschool content, which can be accounted for by the aforementioned desire for cost-effective content, similarities in the structures of the BBC's output between 1986 and 2009 indicate strong institutional continuity in this respect.

As the BBC's former Head of Children's Programmes Anna Home (author's interview, 2 November 2010) notes, changes in children's production economy also acted as catalysts in the shifts in its programming. As examined in chapter 4, in order to defend against the threat of privatisation by the Thatcher and Major governments that were broadly critical of what they considered economic inefficiency within the BBC, it was forced to adopt certain marketised institutional practices while its income was cut by setting the licence-fee to a level below the RPI in 1991. Thus, in terms of the Industrial Equilibrium Model adopted for this study, the pressure originated from the government, represented by the public policy element. These political and economic pressures – occurring in a period when funding was flat while services were expanding – that the Corporation considered potentially jeopardising its institutional privileges and continuity were powerful enough to forge an institutional change within the Corporation's production strategies in order to achieve a greater degree of efficiency in its performance. Under the Director-Generalship of John Birt, the BBC introduced an increasingly commercial corporate culture. Its programmes were compelled to seek commercial business opportunities in international sales and merchandising more actively. The Corporation now encouraged such commercial activities as an appropriate 'top up' to the licence fee, 'helping us to invest more in programming and services for [...] the licence fee payer' (cited in Buckingham 2002: 44). Consequently, in the course of the 1990s, co-production and co-financing became established as the norm to share the costs and risks of the production (Born 2005: 165-6; Steemers 2010: 33). Broadcasters such as the BBC also began to seek international programme sales and merchandising opportunities more actively to substitute their revenues (Steemers 2003: 133). In the UK, animation and preschool programming have a higher commercial return, as they receive the least income from broadcasters but account for nearly 90 per cent of secondary revenues of broadcasters. Presenter-led or live action formats, in turn, are largely dependent on income from the commissioning broadcaster to cover the cost of production and a low profit margin (Ofcom 2007: 48). In terms of licensing revenue, licensing executives prefer costumed character shows and animation over presenter-led live action series or storytelling because these more culturally neutral forms have better toy-marketing

potential (Steemers 2009: 54). The potential conflict between local culture and international (commercial) television markets also sets certain requirements and limits for content. Culture-specific programmes are more difficult to sell in international markets, as is non-fiction; thus, animation and some character-based preschool formats have an upper hand over drama and factual programming in acquisitions and international co-productions (Blumler 1993: 419; Pecora 1998: 136; Buckingham 2002: 43; Steemers 2004: 34).

These recent changes in the structure of the BBC's output demonstrate that its commercial activities have actually benefited its output in terms of diversity. While its drama and factual programmes have few sales opportunities in the international market because of their cultural references (Steemers 2004: 33-4, 168), Steemers (2004: 168-173) argues that the BBC has managed to cultivate its public service tradition in children's programming to a competitive advantage over their rivals, that has enabled them to sell their preschool and animation in particular in foreign markets. Its involvement in co-production with independent producers and its commercial arm BBC Worldwide has also facilitated savings in certain expensive productions, such as *In the Night Garden* (Ofcom 2007: 189).

As chart 5.13 illustrates, changes that are more fundamental have taken place in Yleisradio's provision. Yleisradio's children's programming in the 1980s indicated strong commitment to traditional pedagogic-paternalistic values, facilitated by its *de facto* monopoly on children's programming. Programming was arranged to a 'mini-schedule', with equal segments of different sub-categories of programming. This paralleled the still-prevalent Reithian approach to scheduling, which considered television as a cultural medium with a duty to create informed citizens, and whose schedules should be aptly balanced to fulfil this obligation, with a diverse range of enlightening and socially beneficial output to balance the more populist output (Ang 1991: 101-2). In terms of the structure of programming, this paradigm was manifested by relatively high proportions of preschool (47 per cent), factual (18 per cent) and drama (13 per cent) programming, and a very low proportion of animation (13 per

cent).<sup>58</sup> The fact that there was no serious challenge from commercial channels (as Kolmoskanava's schedules and network coverage were still limited) maintained a state of equilibrium in Yleisradio's children's programming policies. However, in the light of empirical data, changes in the industry structure – i.e. the competitive entry of MTV3 in 1993 – represented the exogenous shock that punctuated Yleisradio's children's programming policy equilibrium in this respect. Already suffering from decreasing ratings following the initial success of MTV3, Yleisradio responded by departing from its past pedagogic-paternalistic agenda in children's programming and giving in to a degree to elements of commercial channels entertainment-oriented agenda.

Yleisradio's institutional response to this punctuation was manifested in two ways. First, anxious to maintain its share of viewing, Yleisradio was obliged to depart to a certain extent from the pedagogic-paternalistic practices in children's programming by introducing more populist children's schedules that include higher proportions of animation and entertainment. Anna-Liisa Kirsi (author's interview, 17 December 2010) and Heikki Takkinen (author's interview, 29 April 2010) note that the competitive challenge increased pressure to make the content more appealing for children. Takkinen argues that the popularity of TV 2's *Pikku Kakkonen* added pressure on the administration of TV 1 to increase their share of viewing through adjusting the channel's children's output towards a more populist and 'commercial' direction, which resulted in increases in fast-paced, audience-friendly and entertainment-based content. Thus, while the shift in the agenda of Yleisradio's children's programming was already in motion owing to internal competition between Yleisradio's channels, the introduction of commercial television acted as a catalyst in this institutional change, as is exhibited by increases in imported animated content in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Second, in order to be able to compete with commercial broadcasters, it was compelled to expand the volume of its programming. However, given the fact that its revenues have not increased proportionately, the expansion has

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<sup>58</sup> The preschool magazines contained segments of other sub-genres, which these figures do not reflect. Nevertheless, the proportion of animation was low even within these magazines.

been facilitated mainly through increasing the share of imported animation. Unlike broadcasters in the UK, Finnish broadcasters cannot acquire e.g. foreign drama and factual programmes owing to difficulties associated with dubbing these programmes. Animation, however, has low acquisition costs, fewer cultural references than drama, and it can be easily dubbed. Furthermore, owing to the small population of the country and the low number of national broadcasters, there is no secondary market for domestic children's programmes to be acquired from commercial broadcasters. Nor is there a significant independent production sector akin to that of the UK that would facilitate co-productions. Hence, the increase in the animated content can be explained by the budgetary constraints of Yleisradio and, on the other hand, the lack of co-production opportunities owing to the small size and cultural isolation of the market. For these reasons, unlike the BBC, Yleisradio's own children's programming has not benefited from commercial activities.

In terms of programming, this change was manifested by an increasing level of animation and entertainment, whose weekly average provisions doubled from 2 hours 2 minutes (17 per cent) and 1 hour 21 minutes (6 per cent) in the 1986-1990 period to 4 hours 46 minutes (33 per cent) and 3 hours 7 minutes (11 per cent) between 1996 and 2000 respectively. This increase was countered by a decrease in factual programming, which saw a decline from 3 hours 32 minutes (15 per cent) in the 1986-1990 period to 1 hour 16 minutes (4 per cent) between 1995 and 2000. By the period 2006-2009, the provision of animation had doubled again and stood at 8 hours 52 minutes, or 41 per cent of all programmes. However, volumes of drama and factual programming have remained at their 1980s levels, and their proportions have consequently decreased in schedules; the former from 17 per cent in the 1986-1990 period to 10 per cent in the 2006-2009 period, and the latter from 15 to just 6 per cent respectively.



Chart 5.12: Proportions of different sub-categories of children’s programmes in the UK, the BBC’s main channels

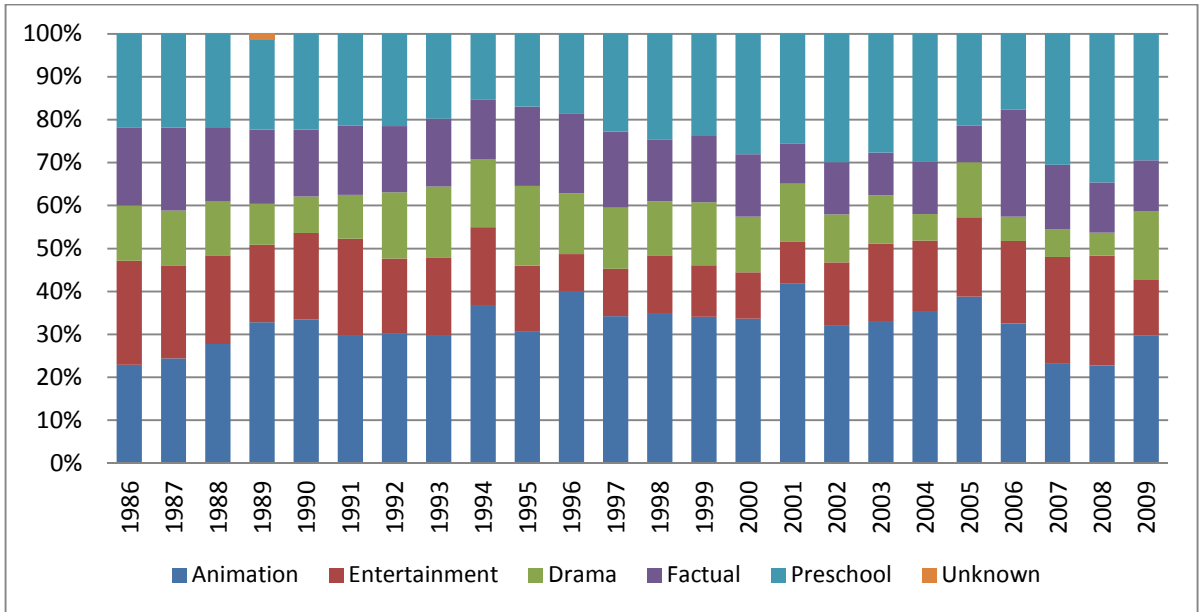
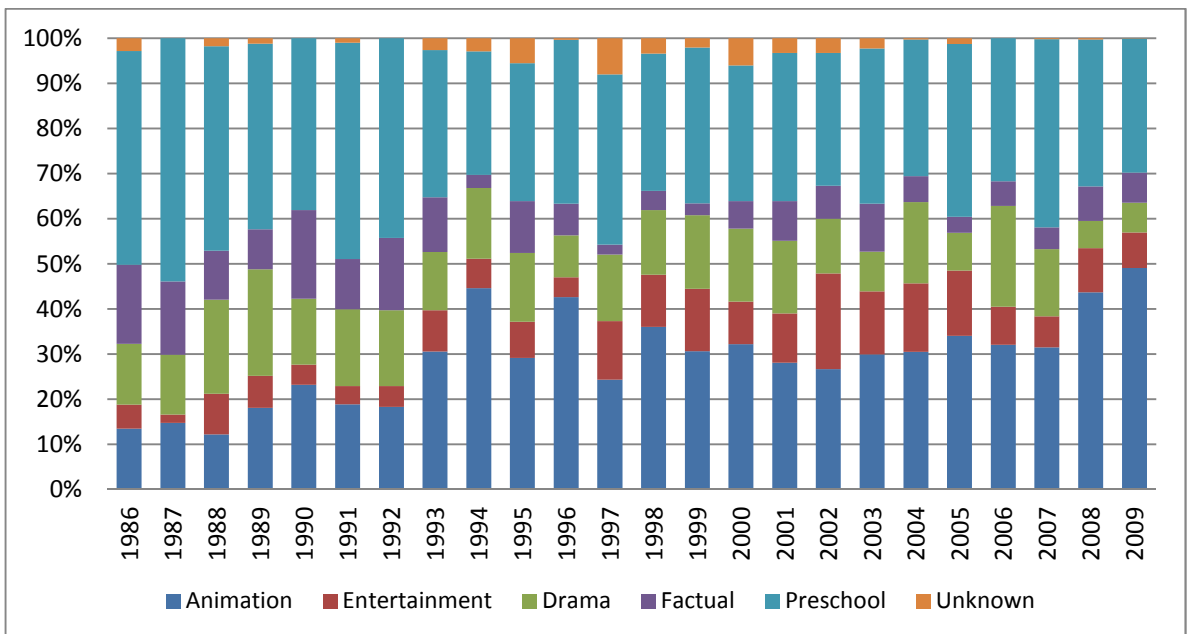


Chart 5.13: Proportions of different sub-categories of children’s programmes in Finland, Yleisradio’s main channels



### 5.3.1.2. Digital channels

Compared with the CITV Channel, the structures of outputs of both the CBBC channel and CBeebies demonstrate a stronger commitment to diversity and pedagogic missions, with the shares of drama and factual programming considerably higher on CBBC than on CITV. No major changes have taken place in the structures of these channels' programming, indicating that they have largely maintained their institutional equilibria in this respect.

The structure of programming of the CBBC channel represented in chart 5.14 demonstrates that the structure of its programming has been similar to that of the BBC main channels, with the evident absence of preschool programming. The entertainment category comprises the biggest group of programmes with 35 per cent of programmes. Interestingly, CBBC featured a lower average proportion of animation (20 per cent) than the programming on the BBC's main channels, although its proportion was slightly increasing between 2003 and 2009. The only significant change in the structure of CBBC's programming was the cancellation of its Class TV daytime schools programming in 2008, when CBBC's remit was changed to remove the schools programming from the channel. These programmes were replaced mainly by increases in the provision of factual content, whose proportion averaged 13 per cent in the research period.<sup>59</sup> The channel also featured a high proportion of drama (19 per cent).

Chart 5.15 demonstrates that preschool programming constitutes the bulk of CBeebies' output with three quarters of total programming, followed by preschool animation, which comprises one fifth of the channel's output. The rest of the channel's output consist of low levels of factual (e.g. *Nina and the Neurons*), entertainment and drama productions (e.g. storytelling).

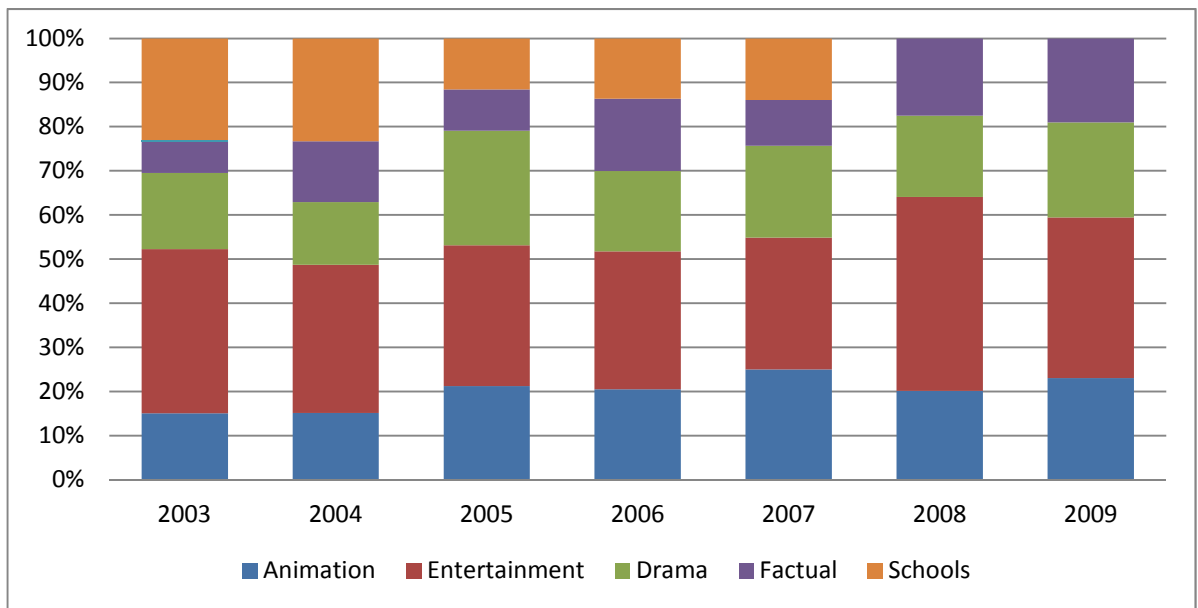
While both CBBC and CBeebies provide 80-90 hours of weekly programming, up to 95 per cent of the content consists of repeats (Ofcom 2010a). However, the

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<sup>59</sup> Following the cancellation of the schools programmes on the channel in 2008, however, the proportion of factual programmes increased to 18 per cent.

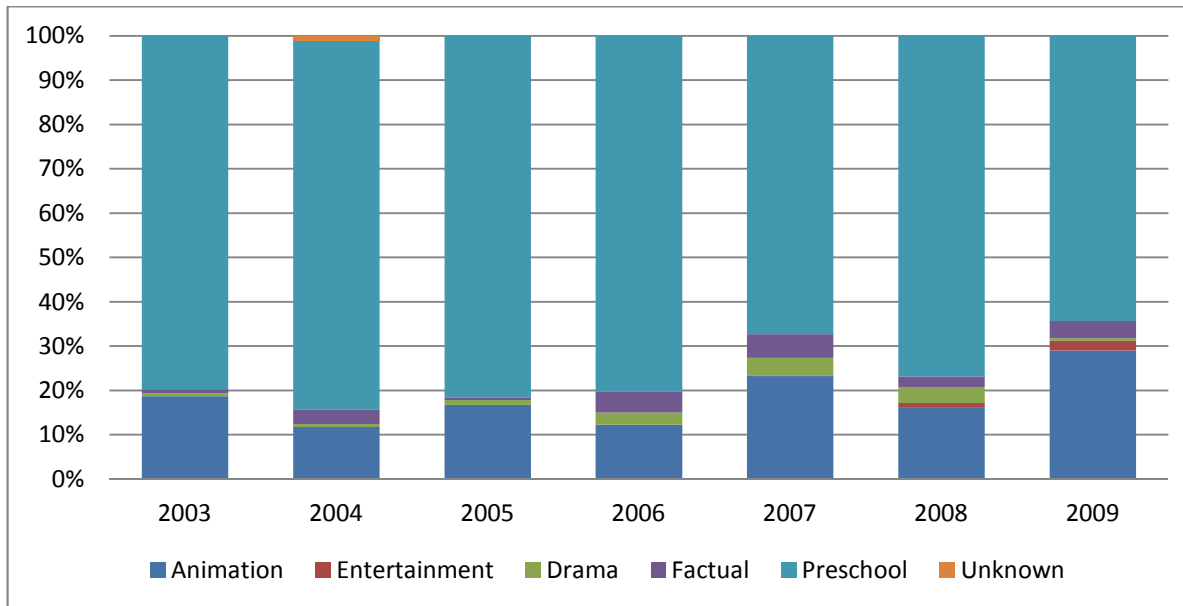
proportion of first-run content on CBBC has been on the rise in the last few years, albeit modestly (Ofcom 2010c). Both channels have significant commitments to invest in original productions. For instance, in 2008-2009, 70 per cent of the CBBC’s output and 80 per cent of CBeebies’ output was designated for BBC-commissioned original productions<sup>60</sup> (British Broadcasting Corporation n.d.-b).

Chart 5.14: Proportions of different sub-categories of children’s programmes on CBBC



<sup>60</sup> These include all BBC-commissioned programming, including originations and all repeats of programming first shown on any BBC channel.

Chart 5.15: Proportions of different sub-categories of children's programmes on CBeebies



### 5.3.2. Structure of output on commercial channels

#### 5.3.2.1. Terrestrial channels

Out of all channels included in this study, the greatest marketisation-determined changes can be found in UK commercial channels' programming strategies concerning their approach to children's programming, as chart 5.16 illustrates. By contrast, chart 5.17 demonstrates that little changes have taken place in the structures of children's programmes on Finnish commercial channels, which indicates that these broadcasters have maintained an outright commercial strategy in their children's programming in absence of political or regulatory forces that would have obliged them to change their conduct.

ITV's structure of programming in the 1980s was very similar to that of the BBC, indicating that these channels were operating under a powerful public service paradigm. The IBA-imposed regulation instated an institutional culture that placed social, cultural and pedagogic considerations before commercial ones, and maintained a diverse output that included high proportions of socially worthwhile

types of programming, such as drama, factual and preschool programming. Interestingly, ITV provided less animation (on average 22 per cent of the total output between 1986 and 1990) and slightly more drama (16 per cent) than the BBC provided in that period. The share of factual programming was lower at 7 per cent. Channel 4, which was not given particular obligations with regards to children's programming, and which did not provide in-house programming, provided children's schedules whose structures were more preschool-oriented, with 52 per cent of the channel's programming in this subcategory. Animation represented 26 per cent of the channel's output. Drama and factual programming represented 12 and 8 per cent of the output respectively.

The 1990s saw commercial channels' children's programming policies punctuated by political and commercial forces. The Broadcasting Act 1990 did result in the weakening of centralised regulation in commercial broadcasting, with the new regulator, the ITC, adopting a less interventionist, reactive approach to content regulation (Buckingham et al. 1999: 57). Furthermore, increasing competition with cable and satellite channels, whose cartoon-oriented children's schedules challenged the provision of the PSB channels, forced commercial PSBs to respond by changing their conduct by adopting a more populist strategy in children's programming, with increased proportions of animation (Messenger Davies and Corbett 1997: 257). The volume of drama and factual programmes remained fairly unchanged owing to the fact that their provision on ITV was secured by quotas, but owing to the fact that commercial channels' output grew rapidly in the 1990s, their actual share in commercial channels' schedules contracted. Nevertheless, given the fact that the ITC-imposed quotas served to maintain diversity in the programming of ITV and Channel 5, the impact in terms of the structure of programming was still somewhat limited.

The enactment of the Communications Act 2003, which removed the genre-specific quotas for children's programmes from commercial channels' renewed licences in December 2004, represented another critical juncture in the institutional strategies of commercial channels. Declining commercial returns of children's programmes as a

consequence of a range of factors, including increased competition, financial pressures created by the maturing television advertising market and migration of viewing to specialist channels and online platforms acted as catalysts in this process (Ofcom 2007: 51). Commercial channels responded to these challenges by adopting a more pronounced populist children's programming strategy, with focus on cost-effective forms of imported or acquired programming of wide appeal. Consequently, the proportion of animation on Channel 5 increased from an average of 41 per cent in the 2000-2004 period to 75 per cent between 2005 and 2009. ITV adopted a strategy that prioritises commercial considerations even more. Its proportion of animation more than doubled in this period; from 26 to 64 per cent respectively. In contrast, proportions of drama have reduced from already-low 5 to 4 per cent on Channel 5, and from 15 to 12 per cent on ITV. Factual programmes have remained at their 1990s level at 4-5 per cent on both channels. Animation now dominates the output of UK commercial channels, with shares of other types of children's programming disproportionately low.

As chart 5.17 illustrates, the output of the Finnish commercial channels reflects the predominantly populist-commercial approach to children's programming these broadcasters adopted during the broadcasting liberalisation process in the absence of regulation. This approach is characterised with the unprecedented domination of animation, averaging 84 per cent of the output over the entire research period. As Kolmoskanava was a commercial publisher-broadcaster without an in-house production department for children's programmes, its children's schedules consisted exclusively of imported programming: mainly US animation and drama. MTV3 'inherited' Kolmoskanava's children's schedules, and having no specific programming obligations in this respect (apart from the obligation for comprehensive service), it saw no reason to depart from Kolmoskanava's children's programming strategy. As commercial channels were unwilling to invest in domestic commissions, and neither MTV3 nor Nelonen considered it necessary to set up an in-house children's production department, both companies opted for filling their schedules with low-cost imported animation. Provisions of other types of children's programming have been much more limited, with preschool programmes accounting for 5 per cent of

programmes, and entertainment and drama both for 4 per cent. The provision of factual programmes has been marginal, totalling just one per cent for the research period. The structure of programming reflects the lack of detailed children’s programming obligations, but can also be explained with the small size of the domestic independent children’s production sector and the secondary market for children’s programmes in Finland.

Chart 5.16: Proportions of different sub-categories of children’s programmes in the UK, commercial channels

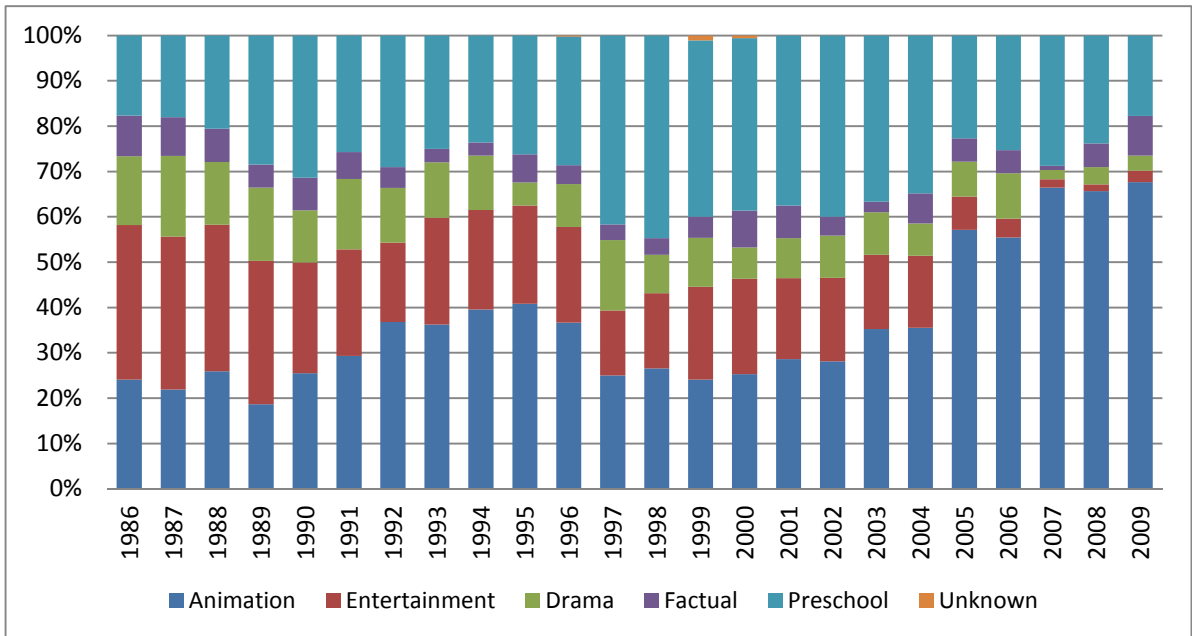
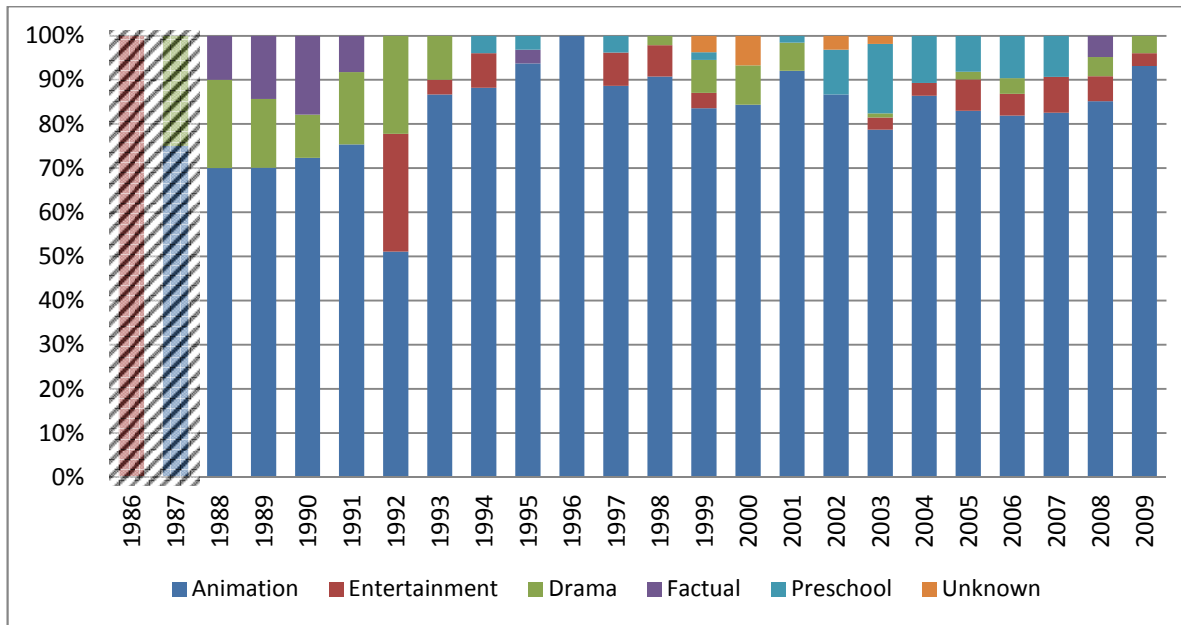


Chart 5.17: Proportions of different sub-categories of children's programmes on commercial channels in Finland, commercial channels



(N.b.: Samples for 1986-1987 are too limited in size to make generalisations about structure of output in these particular years)

Commercial channels' inclination to animation can be accounted to the wide appeal of the format for children of different ages. Older children in particular are an attractive audience for advertisers because of their ability to express and act on their consumer preferences (Steemers 2004: 169). In Finland, commercial channels target children aged 8-12 years in particular (Pirjo Airaksinen, author's interview, 8 December 2010; and Jani Hartikainen, author's interview, 10 December 2010). To an extent, this can be considered to be a consequence of Yleisradio's historical privilege in catering for this age group, which is still reflected in its hegemony in the provision for preschool children, but commercial reasons are equally important. According to Jani Hartikainen (author's interview, 10 December 2010), the focus in MTV3's children's programmes is boys' action series, as boys of primary school age are more attractive to advertisers. Preschool children in Finland are better served by Yleisradio and subscription channels (e.g. MTV Media's Sub Juniori<sup>61</sup>, which is specifically targeted at this age group). Animated content also has better merchandising opportunities and

<sup>61</sup> Renamed MTV3 Juniori in 2010.



therefore is more attractive to advertisers and broadcasters alike, as broadcasters may be able to negotiate revenue share deals for merchandised products.

This considered, Channel 5's strategy appears to challenge the assumption that older children are a more profitable audience. While always focusing primarily on children of preschool age, it refocused its programming more exclusively on younger children in 2007. Notwithstanding the rise of animation in its schedules in the 2000s, most of this content it targeted at preschool audiences, and includes internationally-renowned titles such as *Fireman Sam* and *Peppa Pig*. According to its own view, younger children's productions – especially animations – are more likely to garner co-production and merchandising income than other types of children's programming. Furthermore, preschool audiences bring with them an adult audience, which can yield greater revenues than an unsupervised audience of older children. Channel 5 also notes that owing to the lower costs and higher audiences associated with it, younger children's and preschool programming is likely to have a lower opportunity cost for a broadcaster than older children's programming (Five 2008: 7).

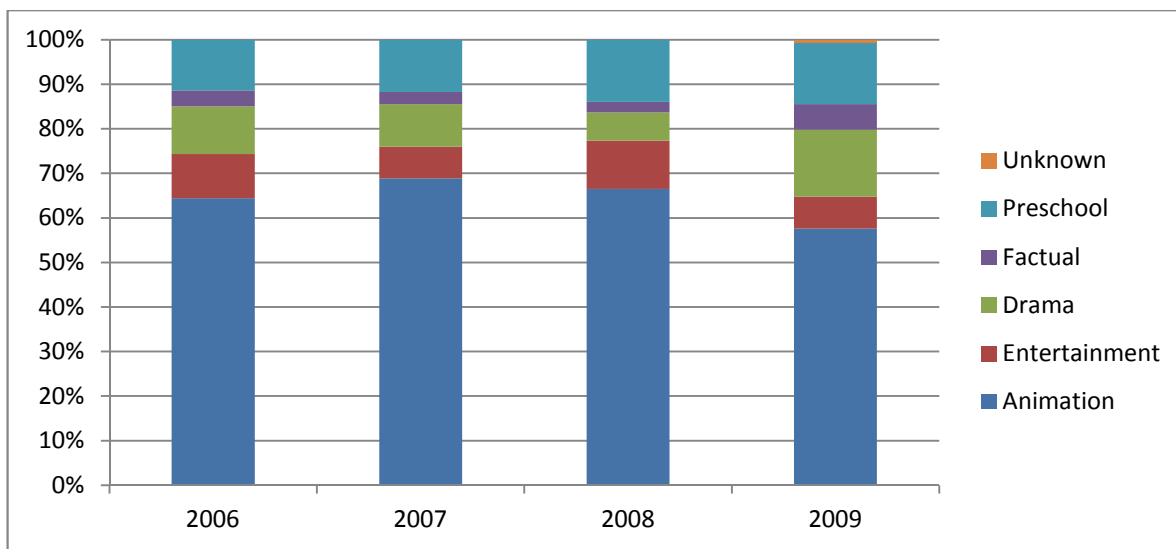
#### **5.3.2.2. The CITV Channel**

The structure of the output of the CITV Channel (illustrated in chart 5.18) is similar to that of ITV1 in the late 2000s, and features a high proportion of animation (on average 64 per cent in 2006-2009). It appears that the channel, which has no PSB obligations and is operating on purely commercial basis, has deliberately adopted an entertainment-oriented programming strategy to maximise audiences. The fact that the channel's levels of factual and preschool outputs are, at 4 and 13 per cents, below the average of terrestrial channels supports this theory, as these particular sub-categories are less attractive for advertisers. However, its provision of drama is slightly higher (10 per cent), as the channel has benefited from ITV's extensive portfolio of drama already broadcast on ITV1.

Contrary to the BBC and subscription children's channels, little output has been specifically commissioned for CITV, whose output consists mainly of repeats of

ITV1's old children's programmes. In 2006-2008 no original children's programming was commissioned for the channel (Conlan 2008). Even in 2008, when the CITV commission freeze finally ended following the cancellation of ITV1's weekday afternoon children's programming, the entire budget of the channel was just £3.5 million (Sweeney 2008) in contrast to ITV1's £27 million investment in children's programmes still in 2006 (Oliver & Ohlbaum Associates Ltd. 2007: 25).

Chart 5.18: Proportions of different sub-categories of children's programmes on CITV



#### 5.4. Marginalisation in the scheduling of children's programmes

While the volume of children's programmes has grown radically over the years, commercial pressures stemming from increasing competition and challenging conditions in the television advertising market, together with the expansion in broadcasting hours have resulted in changes in the scheduling practices and priorities on terrestrial channels, as scheduling data presented in charts 5.19 and 5.20 demonstrate. Children's programmes are increasingly being shifted to the early fringe of the schedule, where competition with programming for adults is at its lowest. Commercial channels in particular have replaced their afternoon schedules with

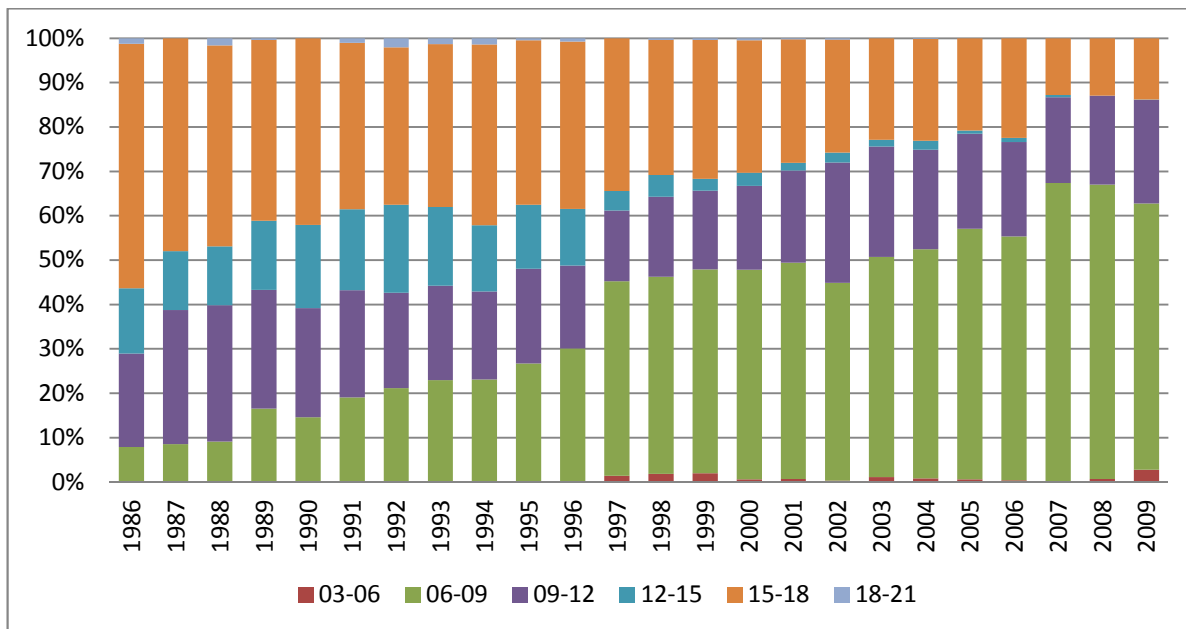
commercially lucrative forms of programming, which is another indication of change in broadcasters' institutional priorities and demonstrates that economic considerations have replaced the previous social and cultural priorities in scheduling.

A core feature of the public service tradition in children's programming was that children's programmes on general interest channels were scheduled when most children were available to view and scheduling was designed to encourage audience exposure to a variety of offerings (Blumler 1993: 417-8). The after school slot (at circa 16:00-17:30 in the UK; 17:30-18:30 in Finland) was the main domain for children's television. Children's programmes had been broadcast in this slot since the early days of children's television, as these programmes traditionally opened the evening schedules. Between 1986 and 1990, 46 per cent of the programmes in the UK and 79 per cent in Finland were broadcast in this slot. UK channels also provided daytime output in the early afternoon, targeted mainly for preschool audiences. Additionally, weekend mornings featured children's programmes. These slots were limited in length in Finland compared with the all-morning entertainment marathons featured on UK channels. Output in this 06:00 to 12:00 slot comprised 38 per cent of the total output in the UK and 14 per cent in Finland. The schedules were nevertheless balanced towards the afternoon, with the median point of output (i.e. the time when half of the output has been broadcast) at 16:00 in the UK and 17:30 in Finland in 1986.

Broadcasters' scheduling practices began to change in the 1990s. In terms of the Industrial Equilibrium Model, this change emanated from increasing competition for audiences and advertising revenue. While afternoon remained the primary domain for children's television and output in this slot was not yet subjected to cuts, the expansion in broadcasting hours took place mainly in the morning hours, with commercially lucrative types of adult programming with mass audience potential (e.g. talk shows, lifestyle programmes, soaps and game shows) increasingly occupying the afternoon slots. By the 2000s, increasing competition for audiences between the channels (especially from those featuring such populist afternoon schedules) had increased commercial channels' pressures to replace their afternoon children's

programmes with more commercially lucrative forms of programming, often justifying these shifts by commercial loss the less-lucrative programmes produce in comparison to more profitable types of content.<sup>62</sup> With publicly funded channels simultaneously increasing their morning provisions in response to the competition from commercial broadcasters, the early morning has now become the new peak time for children's television, with 62 per cent of programming in the UK and 53 per cent in Finland having been scheduled in the 06:00-09:00 slot between 2006 and 2009.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the median time for children's output had moved ahead to around 08:15 in both the UK and Finland in 2009.

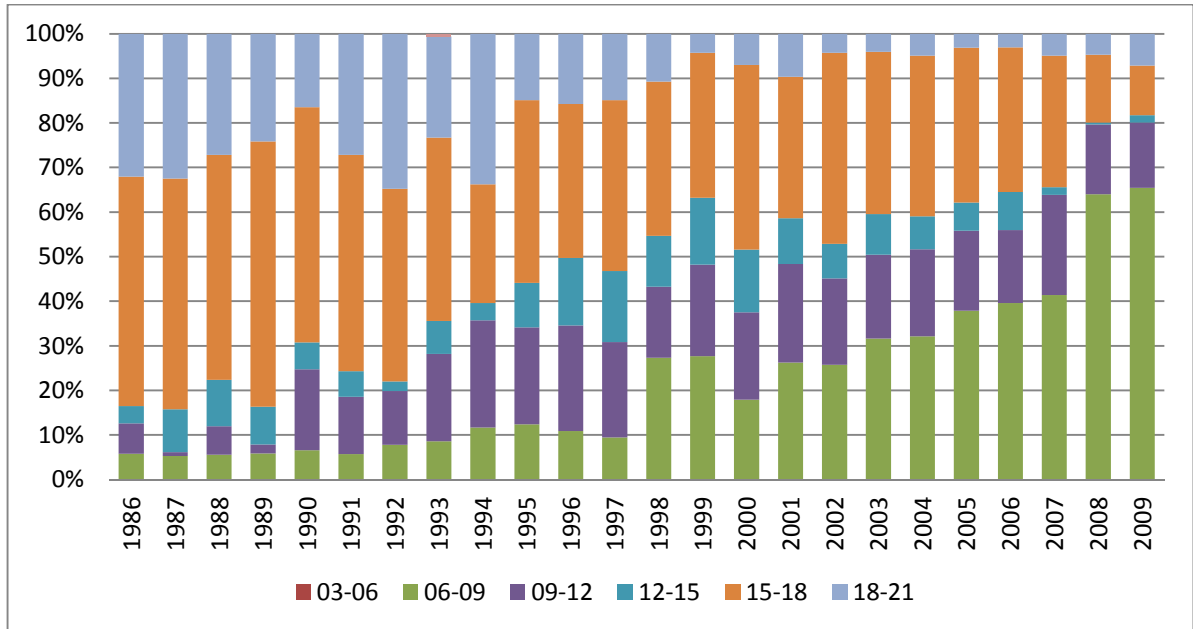
Chart 5.19: Proportions of children's programmes across the schedule in the UK, main channels



<sup>62</sup> See Ofcom (2007: 55-8) and Doyle (2002: 6-7) for more about this "opportunity cost".

<sup>63</sup> In 1986-1990 the corresponding figures were 12 per cent for the UK and 6 per cent for Finland.

Chart 5.20: Proportions of children's programmes across the schedule in Finland, main channels



#### 5.4.1. Marginalisation in the scheduling of children's programmes on commercial channels

The aforementioned shift in scheduling practices is mostly accounted for by changes in commercial channels' scheduling priorities, which indicate that children's programming is now a lesser priority for these channels. Children's programmes on commercial channels in both the UK and Finland are now almost exclusively scheduled in the margins of the schedule.

The scheduling of children's programmes on UK commercial channels is represented in chart 5.21. The IBA-imposed proactive regulation maintained consistency in ITV's scheduling policies in the late 1980s. ITV's children's programmes were counter-scheduled to the BBC's programmes, with nearly half of the programmes being broadcast in the after school slot. The Broadcasting Act 1990 ended the IBA's regulatory control of scheduling practices. Consequently, commercial channels' scheduling practices began to change in the late 1990s, with programming increasingly occupying the morning slots. Channel 4 gained full institutional

independence in 1993 as per the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 1990, which effectively made Channel 4 a rival of ITV and introduced commercial competition to the British terrestrial broadcasting market. The competitive entry represented a major critical juncture for Channel 4's corporate strategy. Channel 4's institutional response to these changes was to adopt a more populist programming strategy that was more explicitly focused on commercial profit maximising. Consequently, it began shifting its children's programmes away from the afternoon hours and introduced commercially more profitable programming for adults in these slots. By the end of the decade, Channel 4 had shifted most of its output to the early morning, with practically no programming in the afternoons. Channel 5 was launched in 1997 and it scheduled all of its children's programming in the morning, as it felt unable to compete with the provisions of the BBC and ITV (Ofcom 2007: 9).

Channel 4's decision to introduce more populist programming in its weekday afternoon schedules produced a feedback effect that resulted in increasing competition for viewing and mounting commercial pressures for ITV in the 2000s. These pressures eventually punctuated ITV's equilibrium, forcing it to respond by changing its scheduling practices. Until 2005, children's programmes occupied the 15:30-17:00 slot on ITV1, but according to an Ofcom estimate, they resulted in an opportunity cost of £18-28 million per annum in 2005 figures (Ofcom 2007: 56). Fierce competition from Channel 4's counter-scheduled *Deal or No Deal* game show finally prompted ITV to respond by moving its children's programmes to an earlier slot in the autumn of 2005 in order to better compete for advertising revenue (Brown 2007: 275). In the end of 2006, ITV axed its afternoon provision altogether, justifying this cut by commercial pressures stemming from intensified competition and decline in children's programme advertising revenues (Davidson 2006; Ofcom 2007: 55). In 2009, 86 per cent of all children's programmes on UK commercial channels were broadcast between the hours of 05:00-09:00, and the remaining output between the hours of 09:00-12:00, with no programming outside these times.

Chart 5.22 details changes in scheduling of children's programmes on Finnish commercial channels. The scheduling of Finnish commercial channels' output was

much more irregular, owing to the fact that prior to Kolmoskanava, commercial channels had no tradition in the regular provision of these programmes since MTV had agreed not to compete against Yleisradio in children's programming. While Kolmoskanava introduced fixed schedules to Finnish television, children's programmes were not allocated their own slots in the original plans drafted by MTV's Senior Vice President of Programming, Tauno Äijälä (Hellman 2012: 330). Kolmoskanava initially counter-scheduled its children's programmes against Yleisradio's children's programmes, which was met with condemnation from the press, and Kolmoskanava moved these programmes to an earlier slot in the spring of 1988 (Hellman 2012: 228). Since Yleisradio was historically considered the sole provider of the genre, with Kolmoskanava's attempt to introduce competition to the early evening slot met with such an objection, Kolmoskanava confined its children's programmes to weekend morning 'kid-vid ghettos'. MTV3, which 'inherited' Kolmoskanava's children's schedules, continued this practice even after the 1993 Channel Reform. While it introduced programming in the early afternoons in 1995, it chose to focus on more lucrative adult genres of imported soaps, talk shows and game shows in its early evening schedules. On the other hand, this practice also reflects Yleisradio's almost canonical hegemony in the provision of children's programming in the Finnish broadcasting landscape. Nelonen initially provided programming in weekday evenings, but these programmes were moved to a regular slot on weekday mornings between 07:00 and 08:00 to counter the breakfast shows of Yleisradio and MTV3 in 1998, as Nelonen had no breakfast show of its own. Nelonen also broadcast imported cartoons in weekday afternoons, in addition to a daily youth magazine *Buusteri* (although not included in this study) and repeat later in the afternoon.

In Finland, too, commercial pressures forced children's programmes out of the afternoon slots in the late 2000s. MTV3 cancelled its early afternoon cartoons in 2008, while *Buusteri* had been cancelled in the previous year. Like UK commercial channels, both MTV3 and Nelonen replaced these programmes with a mix of lifestyle programmes, imported drama and interactive games and quizzes. These programmes attract a larger share of advertising income than children's programmes,

or as is the case with interactive games and teleshopping, have very low production costs and bring in additional income through phone-in revenues or airtime sales.

As commercial broadcasters have recently reduced their commitments to catering for children following increasing competition and commercial pressures, early morning scheduling may turn out to be the decisive factor in maintaining children's output on commercial general interest channels. As there are little additional opportunities for commercial exploitation in this slot other than breakfast television, the slot offers a 'natural' habitation and guaranteed audiences for children's programmes even in a multi-platform media environment. As Nick Wilson put it:

...I think it's the one area where there's a certain amount of protection against the child audiences disappearing to broadband or multi-channel because in the morning everybody's in a rush or a hurry, it's easy to switch on the TV. What we've done is offer a consistent high quality reliable schedule so that parents and children know what they're going to find and when they're going to find it. Just press one button in the morning, you're on Milkshake and, you know, at half past seven you're going to see *Roary the Racing Car*. And you fiddle with that reliability at your peril.

(Nick Wilson, author's interview, 7 October 2010)



Chart 5.21: Proportions of children's programmes across the schedule in the UK, commercial main channels

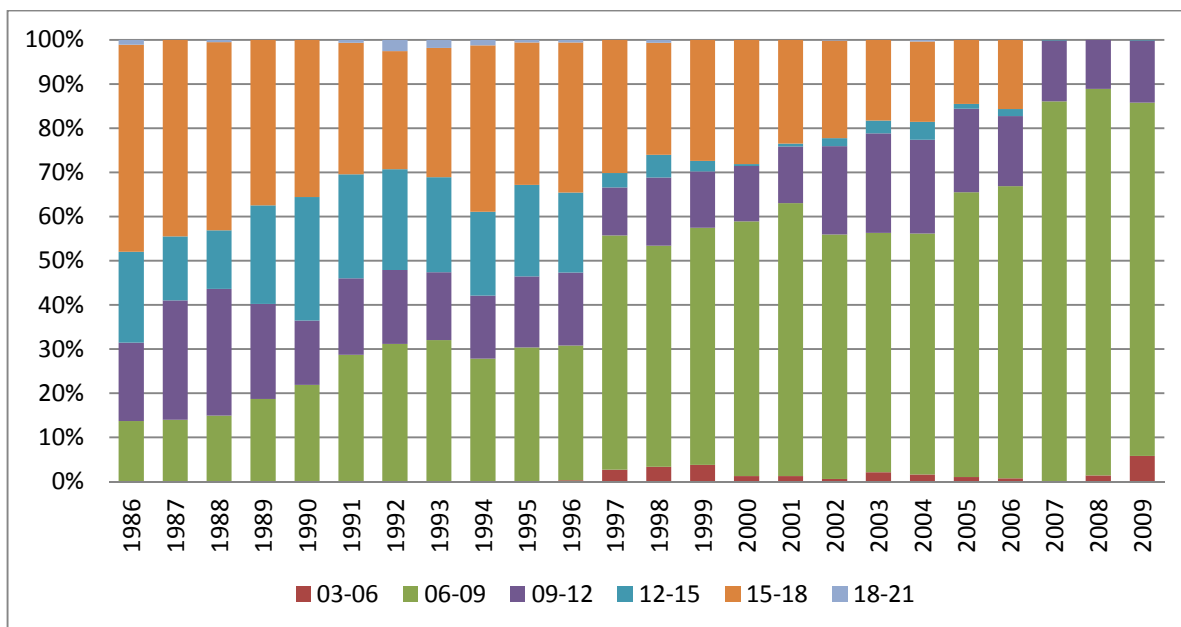
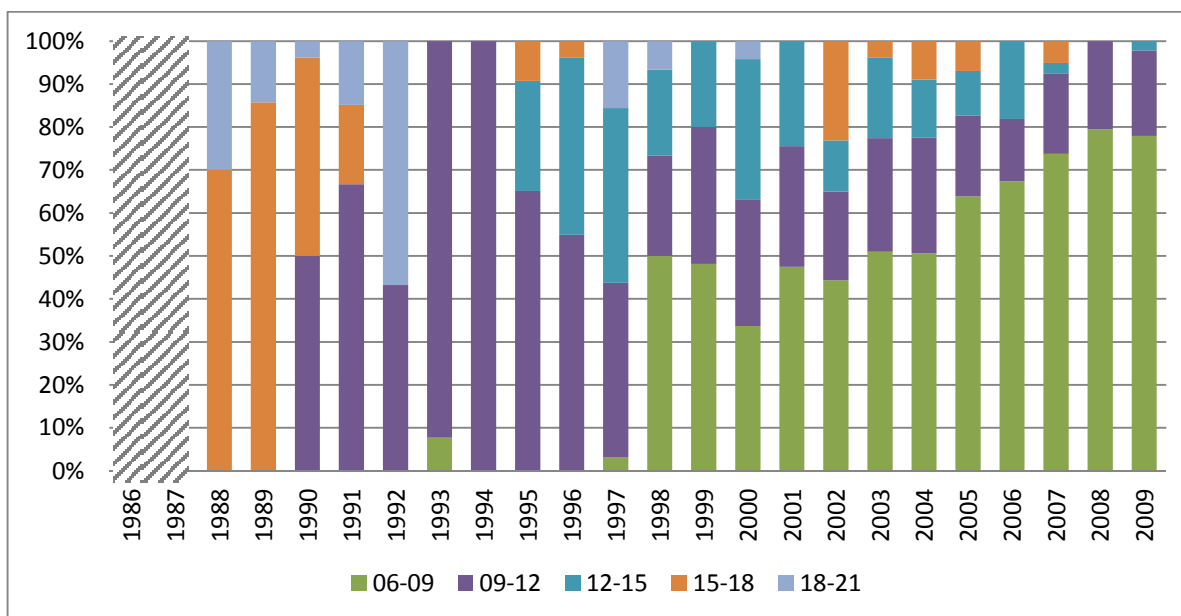


Chart 5.22: Proportions of children's programmes across the schedule in Finland, commercial main channels



(N.b.: Samples for the late 1980s are too limited in size to make generalisations about scheduling in these particular years)

#### **5.4.2. Marginalisation in the scheduling of children's programmes on publicly funded channels**

While similar trends can be found in the output of publicly funded main channels, changes in these channels' scheduling have been somewhat less dramatic owing to the fact that both the BBC and Yleisradio continued to provide children's programming in weekday afternoons on their main channels throughout the research period, as demonstrated in charts 5.23 and 5.24.<sup>64</sup> Joe Godwin (author's interview, 3 November 2010) considered the provision of children's programmes on BBC main channels as an important symbolic sign of the Corporation's commitment to children's television, although viewing of these programmes had declined so dramatically in the 2000s that their presence on the BBC's main channels had little justification in terms of public service. In Finland, where Yleisradio has no dedicated children's channels, the visible presence of these programmes on main channels serves an even more important function indicating its commitment to comprehensive service and public service values. Thus, this symbolic significance of these programmes for these PSB institutions has served to protect the equilibrium in scheduling practices to an extent from competitive challenges from the market.

The shift in the balance of their schedules was caused by the rapid expansion in the BBC and Yleisradio's morning schedules; while output in these slots in the 1986-1990 period represented just 38 per cent of total output in the UK and just 12 per cent in Finland, in 2009 output in this daypart comprised roughly three quarters of the total output in both countries.

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<sup>64</sup> Children's programmes on BBC One were discontinued on 21 December 2012 following the completion of the digital switchover, while the CBeebies morning slots on BBC Two were discontinued on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Chart 5.23: Proportions of children’s programmes across the schedule in the UK, the BBC’s main channels

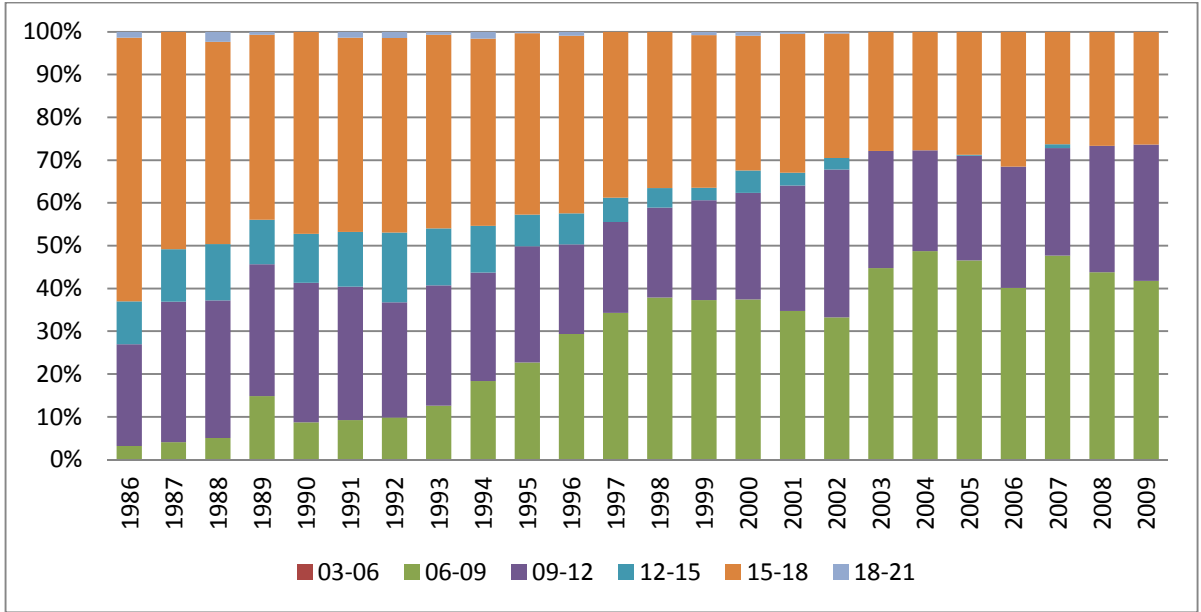
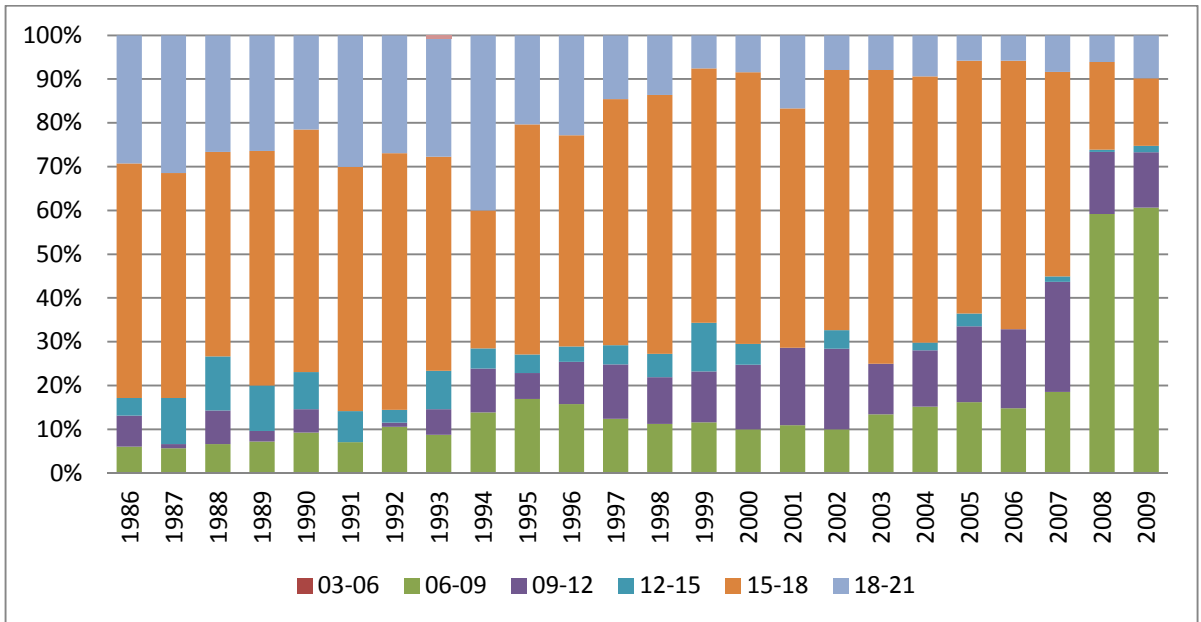


Chart 5.24: Proportions of children’s programmes across the schedule in Finland, Yleisradio’s main channels



### 5.5. The origin of children's programming

Empirical data on programme origin demonstrate that changes in broadcasting industry structure and broadcasting policies have produced changes in the institutional conduct of UK and Finnish broadcasters in this respect. The traditional PSB paradigm considered television an instrument for representing and reproducing national and regional culture and identity, and thus domestic content was preferred for various cultural externalities it delivered (Blumler 1993: 406-7). However, increases in the volume of output and the shift towards a commercial-populist agenda in programming have resulted in gradual increases in the levels of imported content on commercial channels in particular. Broadcasters' desire for cost-effective programming has been a major stimulus in this transformation: for broadcasters, imported content represents an economically attractive way of filling the schedules, as its price remains much lower than that of original productions (Steemers 2004: 23).

As our analysis on changes in the structure of programming indicated, Finnish children's programming has undergone changes that are more radical than those in UK programming, and these changes extend to the origin of programming too, depicted in chart 5.26. In the mid-1980s, Yleisradio still had a virtual monopoly on children's programming. Its pedagogic-paternalistic paradigm in children's programming, which gave priority to domestic content over imported material, had remained largely intact because of the absence of competitive forces from the market that would have punctuated its institutional equilibrium in this respect. Accordingly, up to 73 per cent of Finnish children's programming (almost completely delivered by Yleisradio) in 1986 consisted of domestic content. The gradual liberalisation of broadcasting in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in steady increases of the proportion of imported content, as the schedules of Kolmoskanava and MTV3 consisted of mainly imported content. While the average proportion of imports was 48 per cent<sup>65</sup> between 1991 and 1995, by the period 1996-2000 this had risen to 67 per cent<sup>66</sup> and remained

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<sup>65</sup> With the origin of content unknown for 4 per cent of programming in this period.

<sup>66</sup> With the origin of content unknown for 6 per cent of programming in this period.

somewhat unchanged for the 2000s. Notably, while Finnish channels broadcast on average 8 hours 28 minutes of weekly domestic programming between 1986 and 1990, their volume had risen to just 10 hours 31 minutes by the late 2000s notwithstanding the fact that the overall volume of programming nearly quadrupled in the research period. This demonstrates that the increase in the volume of children's output has been facilitated for the most part by an increased use of imports, with domestic audio-visual industries gaining little benefit from this increase.

Chart 5.25 demonstrates that UK output also featured an equally high share of domestic programming in the 1980s, whose proportion was 74 per cent between 1986 and 1990. Like in Finland, the share of imports began to rise rapidly in the late 1980s mainly since Channel 4 facilitated its expansion in the volume of children's programming through exports, and remained at around 40-45 per cent between 1991 and 2005. However, given that the BBC has increased its volume of UK programming in the late 2000s, the proportion of imports decreased slightly to 35 per cent in the 2006-2009 period following the decline in the outputs of ITV and Channel 4. Meanwhile, the volume of UK content on main channels has doubled between 1986 and 2009.

Chart 5.25: Origin on children’s programmes in the UK, main channels<sup>67</sup>

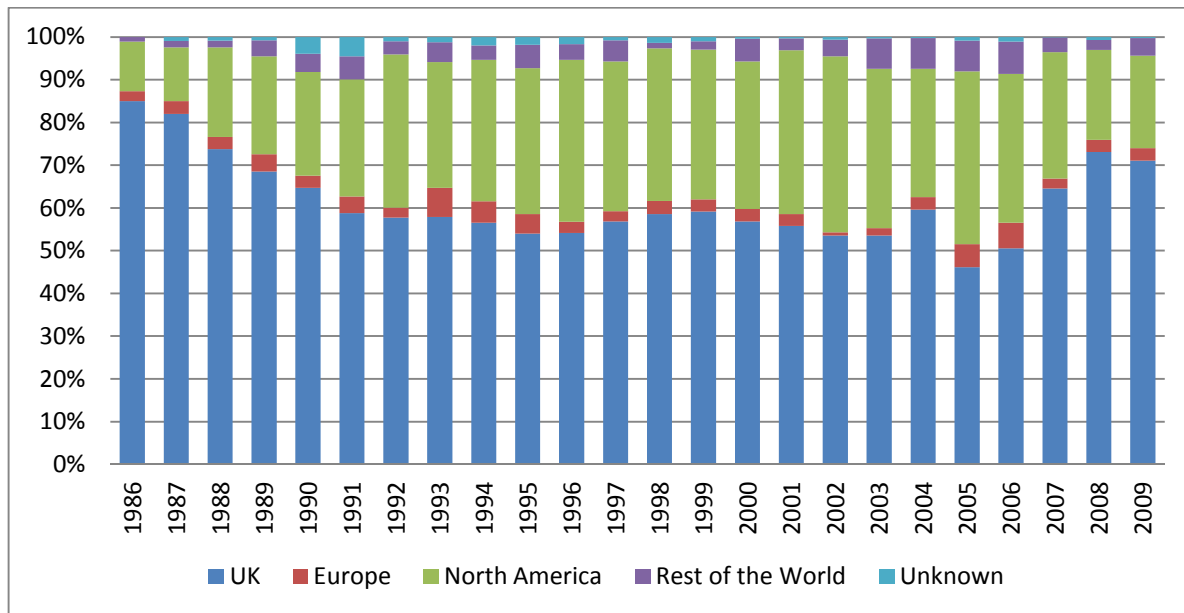
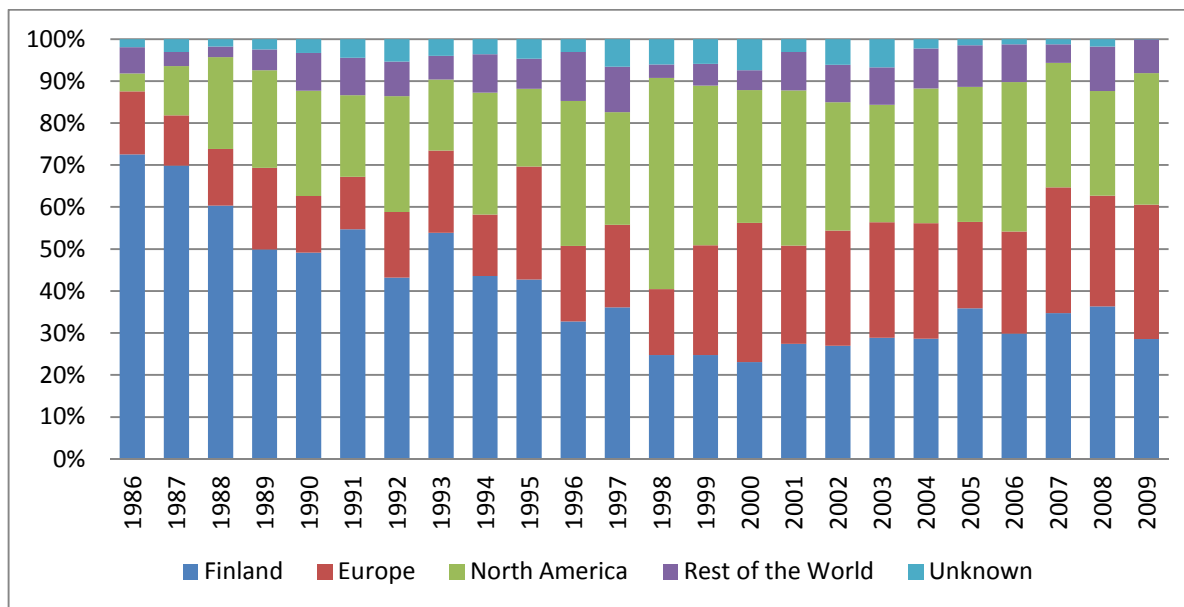


Chart 5.26: Origin on children’s programmes in Finland, main channels<sup>68</sup>



<sup>67</sup> These figures do not account for the significant proportion of imported material in entertainment magazines, and thus the figures for imports are likely to be underestimates.

<sup>68</sup> These figures do not account for the significant proportion of imported material in entertainment magazines, and thus the figures for imports are likely to be underestimates.

In both the UK and Finland, the increase in the rate of imports correlates strongly with the rise in animation (see charts 5.10 and 5.11), suggesting that broadcasters have used imported animation to facilitate the expansion in the volume of output, as it allows greater cost efficiency in programming. As Home (1993: 67) notes, animation is an expensive format to produce, and thus its demand cannot be fulfilled by domestic production alone. Out of all animated content broadcast between 1986 and 2009, 69 per cent in the UK and 99 per cent in Finland<sup>69</sup> consisted of imports or international co-productions. While the proportion of Finnish animation (consisting mainly of co-productions) has not exceeded 2-3 per cent in the research period owing to the small size of the national audio-visual market, there has been a significant rise in UK animation in the 2000s, from an average of 23 per cent between 1996 and 2000 to 54 per cent between 2006 and 2009. Preschool programming makes up the second largest sub-group of imports in the UK, with 40 per cent of programming imported or internationally co-produced. This explains its prevalence in the 2000s. In contrast, sub-categories with the lowest rates of imports are factual programmes (2 per cent in the UK; 16 per cent in Finland), and entertainment (2 per cent in the UK; 9 per cent in Finland).

### 5.5.1. Origin of programming on publicly funded channels

Charts 5.27 and 5.28 represent the origin of children's programmes on the BBC's and Yleisradio's general interest channels. Both the BBC and Yleisradio featured high proportions of domestic content in their schedules in the late 1980s (79 per cent in the UK; 69 per cent in Finland), while the proportion of North American imports was remarkably low in both countries (15 per cent in the UK; 5 per cent in Finland). Both of these features reflect the Reithian tradition in the children's outputs of the BBC and Yleisradio: promotion of domestic culture in children's programming was considered to be a core duty of PSB, while American content in particular was treated with

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<sup>69</sup> This figure excludes animated segments in preschool magazines, such as *Pikku Kakkonen* and *Lasten TV Puoli Kuusi*.

suspicion, as it was considered to undermine national traditions and endorse commercialism and television violence (Home 1993: 29; Buckingham et al. 1999: 17 & 99; Oswell 2002: 140-8).

This cultural protectionism was a formative element of the Finnish media policy paradigm (Jääsaari 2007: 70-1). The unpublished 'handbook' of Yleisradio TV 2's *Pikku Kakkonen* magazine, composed by Pertti Nätilä for guidance for the production team of the programme, highlights this devotion to domestic content in explicit terms: '[o]ne of the most important duties [of *Pikku Kakkonen*] is to act as a counterbalance to *supranational entertainment junk* [emphasis by MS], and thus *Pikku Kakkonen* has an important national mission' (Nätilä 1985). The handbook notes that over 90 per cent of the content of *Pikku Kakkonen* was of domestic origin. Likewise, Heikki Takkinen (author's interview, 29 April 2010) notes that segments for Yleisradio TV 1's children's magazine *Lasten TV Puoli Kuusi* were predominantly of domestic origin, with even animated segments commissioned from Finnish animation studios. The low proportion of North American content in Yleisradio's schedules (around 5 per cent of the output in 1986) is another notable feature, and reflects children's programme producers' aforementioned suspicion with American animation, whose production standards and values were considered to be at odds with the pedagogic missions of Yleisradio's children's programmes. Pertti Nätilä (author's interview, 17 December 2010) notes that when imported content was used, it was acquired rather from the Nordic and Eastern European countries on quality grounds.<sup>70</sup>

Pressures to increase the volume of output for children within the limits of the existing budgets, while simultaneously improving the viewing figures of children's programmes, produced by the intensification of competition with commercial channels, began to take their effect on the children's outputs of the BBC and Yleisradio already in the late 1980s. Both companies responded by changing their conduct in this respect. The BBC increased its share of exports in the 1980s and

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<sup>70</sup> Buckingham, Davies et al. (1999: 99) refer to similar UK tendency to distinguish between "good" imports; e.g. Czechoslovakian folk tales, and "bad" imports; principally in the form of US cartoons.



1990s, which reached a high of around 35 per cent in the early 2000s. In Finland, too, Heikki Takkinen (author's interview, 29 April 2010) notes that the 1980s saw an increase in the volume of imported content in TV 1's children's programmes. He argues that resources for domestic in-house production were cut, as importing animation from Eastern European countries represented a more cost-effective method of filling the schedules than commissioning them from Finnish animation studios. Following the 1993 Channel Reform, which left Yleisradio with a gap of 1300 annual broadcasting hours in its schedules, Yleisradio's average proportion of imported children's programming increased to 58 per cent of the output between 1996 and 2000. In both countries, the largest increases in this period took place in the proportion of North American content, which peaked at 27 per cent in the UK and 20 per cent in Finland between 1996 and 2000.

In the late 2000s, however, contradictory patterns to this trend have emerged. As already noted, the BBC has been able to benefit from commercial activities and co-production in expanding the volume of children's programming. Consequently, the BBC's average share of imported programming decreased to 20 per cent between 2006 and 2009. Meanwhile, the expansion in the volume of Yleisradio's children's programming in the late 2000s has been mostly facilitated with the use of imports, which has increased the average proportion of imports to 55 per cent from the slightly lower figures of the early 2000s. As Teija Rantala (author's interview, 17 December 2010) noted, the increased proportion of imports can be accounted for by the fact that the budgetary increases in children's programming have been disproportional to the increases in output: while the latter has doubled in the 2000s, Rantala estimates that the budgets have only seen an increase of 30 per cent. Notwithstanding this, the massive increase in imported content can be considered a significant departure from Yleisradio's pedagogic-paternalistic institutional paradigm of the 1980s, which promoted national culture in all areas of children's programming and limited the volume of imported programming to a minimum. This increase in the use of imports corresponds with Jääsaari's (2007: 174) argument of the cognitive re-conceptualisation of the operating environment of Finnish broadcasting as an

international instead of a primarily domestic one, and supports her position of a partial surrender of cultural protectionism.

Chart 5.27: Origin on children’s programmes in the UK, the BBC’s channels

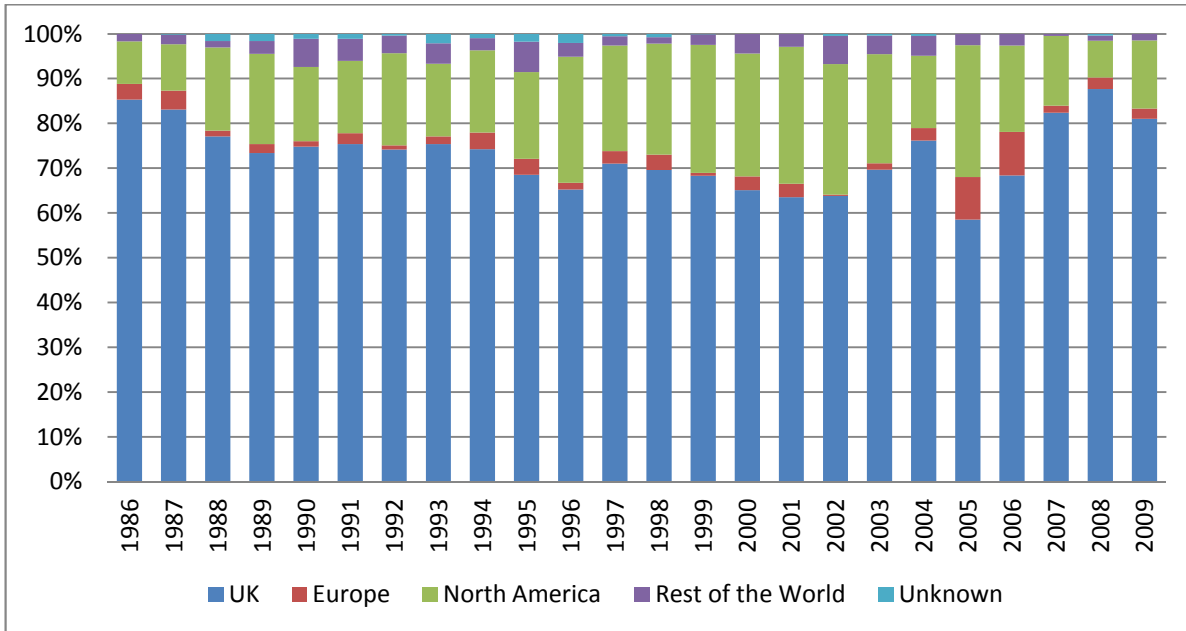
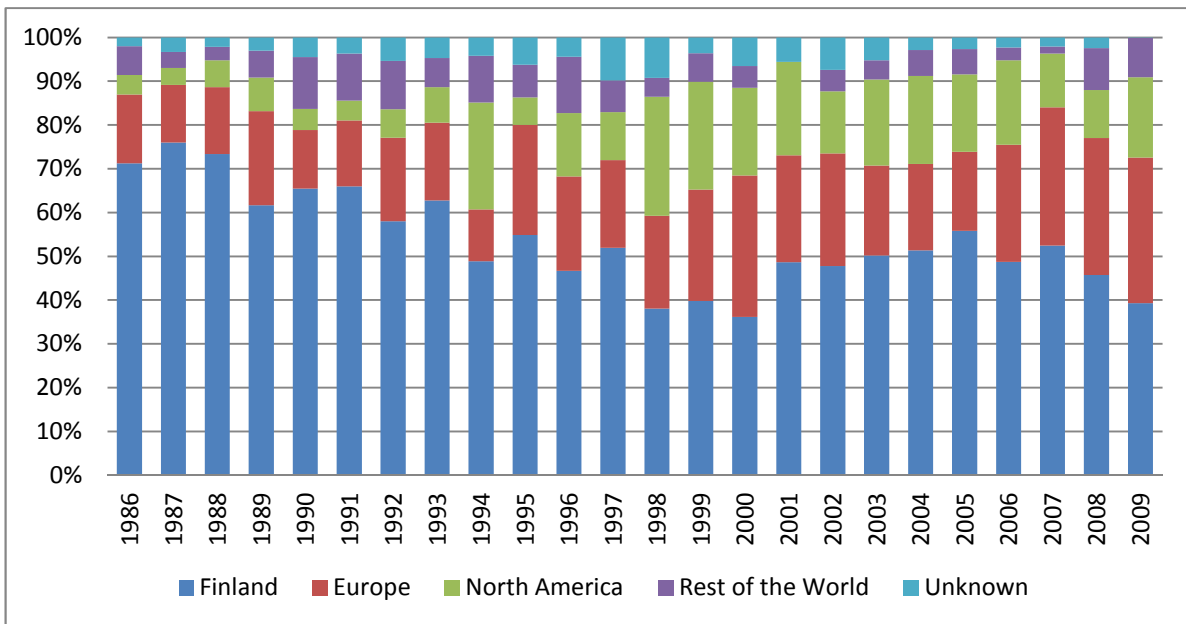


Chart 5.28: Origin on children’s programmes in Finland, Yleisradio’s channels



### 5.5.2. Origin of programming on commercial channels

As chart 5.29 demonstrates, domestic programming dominated commercial channels' schedules in the UK in the 1980s, indicating that they too were committed to the same public service ethos of promoting domestic culture in programming that guided the output of the BBC. Between 1986 and 1990, 70 per cent of the combined output of ITV and Channel 4 was of domestic origin, while North American content – the biggest group or imports – represented a modest 23 per cent of the output. The IBA's proactive approach to content regulation played a major role in maintaining the state of equilibrium in ITV's institutional conduct.

ITV's programming in the late 1980s was produced or commissioned largely by individual ITV network companies. Their average share in the 1990s was 75 per cent, indicating a high commitment to domestic productions in ITV's children's programming policy. The regulatory reform implemented in the Broadcasting Act 1990 did not have an effect in the share of owing to the fact that ITV licences contained quotas for commissions of drama, factual and preschool programming (D'Arma et al. 2010: 229), while the share of domestic programming remained at over 70 per cent until the mid-2000s. Meanwhile, the fact that Channel 4 had no specific quotas or obligations for domestic children's programming was reflected in its output, which had just an average of 12 per cent of UK content in the 1990s. While the channel's children's output grew rapidly at the turn of the 1990s, practically all this growth was facilitated with imported content mainly from North America. Channel 5, whose children's programming obligations were similar to those of ITV, with similar quotas for commissions, provided an average of 60 per cent of UK content in the late 1990s, but it too facilitated the expansion of its programming through imported content, with the proportion of UK content dropping to 30-40 per cent in the early 2000s.

As was the case with the structure of programming, the Communications Act 2003 represents a critical juncture in the institutional strategy of ITV in this respect too. The Act removed detailed quotas for children's programmes, including quotas for commissions. ITV responded to mounting commercial pressures by halving its provision of UK content in 2005 and replaced these programmes mainly with North

American imports, before axing its weekday afternoon output and closing down its in-house production unit ITV Kids in 2007 (Steemers and D'Arma 2013: 131), with little UK content commissioned for the network since (Five 2008: 6). Between 2006 and 2009, the share of UK original output on ITV1 averaged just 39 per cent. Channel 5, on the other hand, has increased its provision of UK content in the late 2000s significantly. Consequently, the share of UK output on commercial channels has risen in 2006-2009 to an average of 47 per cent.

The lack of quotas for commercial broadcasters in Finland and the small size of the domestic independent production sector for children's programmes are pronounced in the children's schedules of Finnish commercial channels, which consist mainly of imported content, as chart 5.30 demonstrates. Consistency in this respect reflects the fact that no forces stemming from the industry structure or public policies have forced Finnish commercial broadcasters to change their programming strategies, whose characteristics are typical for outspokenly commercial types of broadcasters (e.g. UK commercial children's channels on cable and satellite platforms – see e.g. Ofcom (2007: 43)) rather than PSBs. North American productions dominated the output, averaging 59 per cent for the research period, but the proportions of programming originated from the European countries (24 per cent) and Asia and Oceania (10 per cent) were also notably higher the UK figures, although much of the European content originated from the UK. The proportion of domestic programming averaged just 5 per cent for the entire research period. Nevertheless, a handful of independent producers have begun to develop children's programmes for both domestic and international sales in the 2000s, and more of such productions can be found in the schedules of the late 2000s. However, in contrast to the UK, children's programmes are not of commercial interest to independent producers in Finland. Hanna Kallankari (author's interview, 8 March 2011), MTV Media's Acquisition Executive for children's programming, claimed that MTV3 is constantly looking for more domestic children's productions, but their low availability limits their provision on the channel.

Chart 5.29: Origin of children's programmes in the UK, commercial channels

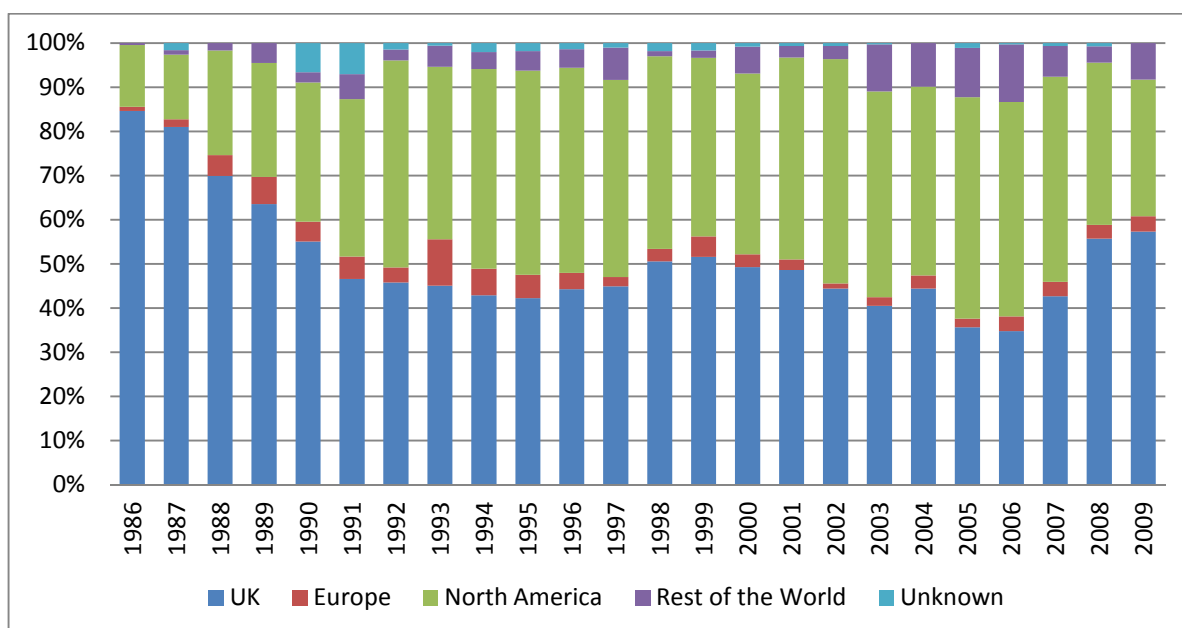
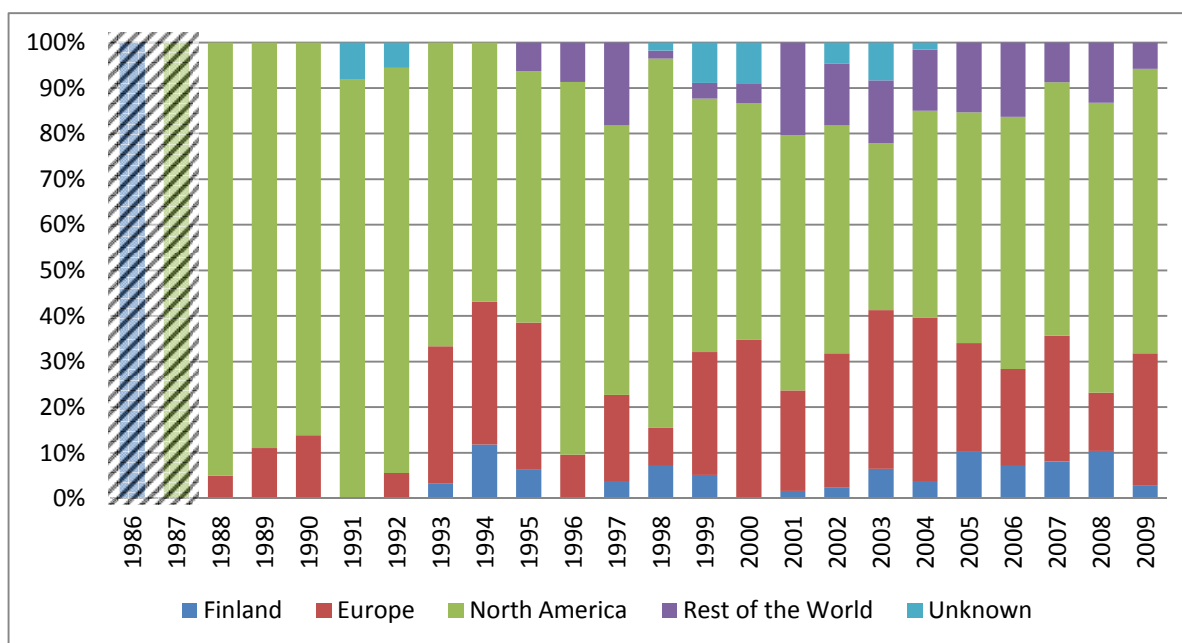


Chart 5.30: Origin of children's programmes in Finland, commercial channels



(N.b.: Samples for 1986-1987 are too limited in size to make generalisations about structure of output in these particular years)

### 5.5.3. Origin of programming on UK children's channels

Changes in the origin of children's programming on CBBC and Cbeebies channels are detailed in charts 5.31 and 5.32. Both BBC digital children's channels featured proportions of UK programming much higher than the output on the BBC main channels; the share of UK content averaged 80 per cent on CBBC and 94 per cent for Cbeebies in the period 2003-2009. There have been little changes here over the years. The high proportions of UK programming reflect the fact that both channels have various detailed PSB commitments related to investing in domestic productions. While these commitments change on an annual basis, in 2006-2007, for instance, Cbeebies' commitment included spending 75 per cent of its investment in new UK programming (British Broadcasting Corporation n.d.-a). However, while both channels feature a high investment in the UK content, they also feature repeat rates up to 95 per cent (Ofcom 2010a).

Chart 5.31: Origin of children's programmes on CBBC

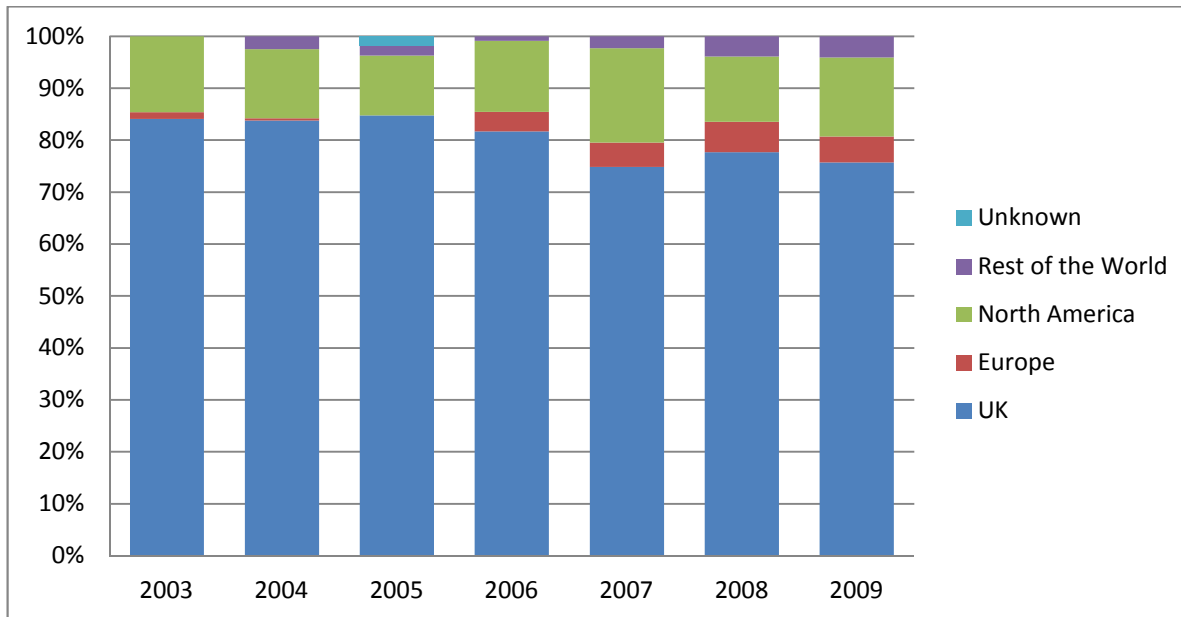
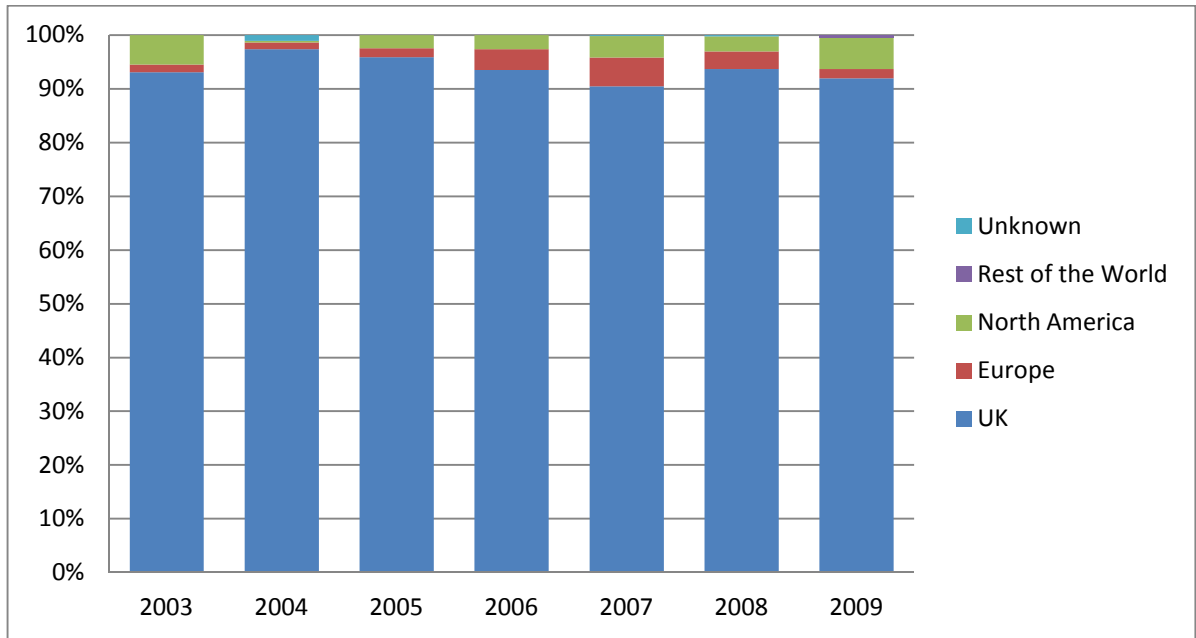
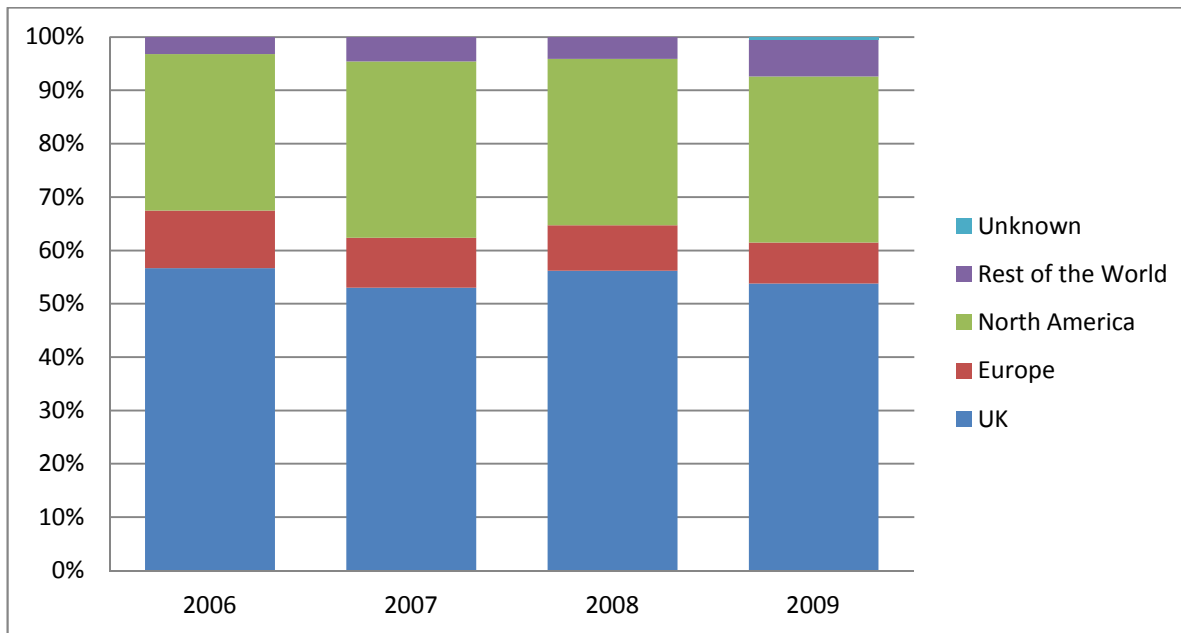


Chart 5.32: Origin of children's programmes on CBeebies



Programming on the CITV Channel (chart 5.33) included a higher proportion of UK-originated content (55 per cent) than on ITV1 (39 per cent) between 2006 and 2009. Like programming on ITV1, CITV's programming also featured a high proportion of North American programming (31 per cent). The relatively high proportion of imported content implies that in the absence of regulatory obligations the channel has adopted a predominantly commercial approach to its children's programming, while its investment in original UK content has been relatively low (Conlan 2008; Five 2008: 6).

Chart 5.33: Origin of children's programmes on CITV



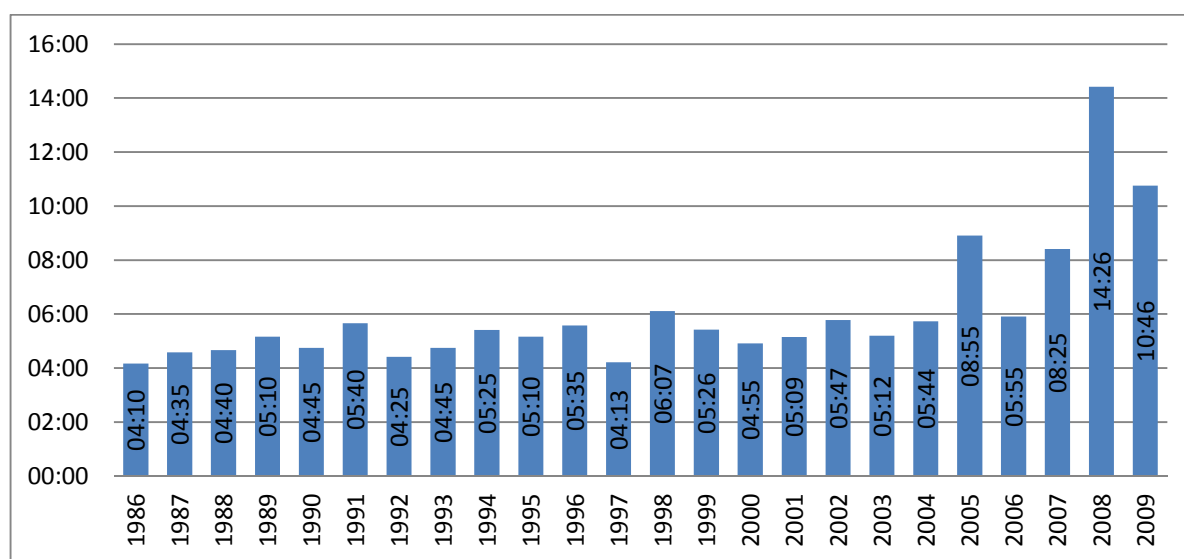
### 5.6. Swedish-language children's programming in Finland

Swedish-language children's programming in Finland is an interesting case to observe, as it represents a 'minority within a minority'. Both MTV3 and Nelonen provided, at their early stages, marginal amounts of general interest programming in Swedish or with relevant subtitles owing to the programming obligations stipulated in their early broadcasting licences (Moring and Wiik 2007). However, Swedish-speaking children in Finland have been catered for solely by Yleisradio, which has aimed to provide a scaled-down version of the full children's schedule, including all types of programmes for all age groups. This has been a challenging task considering the restraints concerning programme budgets and broadcasting hours available for Swedish-language programming. Nevertheless, as chart 5.34 demonstrates, the volume of Swedish-language children's programming has remained even over the years, with approximately 2.5 hours of programming per week in the 1980s and 1990s. The introduction of the FST5 channel has significantly increased the volume of output, which doubled from its 1990s levels in the 2000s to approximately 5 hours per week between 2006 and 2009. In terms of diversity, the structure of Swedish-



language programming has been akin to Finnish-language provision, but with preschool programmes constituting over half of the overall output. The broadcasting slots for these programmes have also remained constant and there is no evidence of these programmes being marginalised in scheduling in spite of their small audiences.

Chart 5.34: Hours of Swedish-language children's programmes in the sample weeks in Finland, 1986-2009



(N.b.: Includes Swedish-language children's programmes on Finnish main channels and FST5's programming since 2007)

## 5.7. Conclusion

Changes in the volume, content, scheduling and origin of children's programming in the UK and Finland suggest that broadly similar marketisation-driven changes have taken place in public and private broadcasters' children's programme policies. There has been an evident shift away from the social and cultural goals of the past public service paradigm in children's programming, which, in terms of output, were manifested by high diversity in output, low proportion of animation and relatively high proportions of drama and factual programming, as well as high investment in domestic content. In terms of broadcasters' performance – i.e. the output, this

paradigmatic shift was manifested by increasing proportions of populist types of programming (e.g. animation and entertainment) and lower proportions of factual programming, lower overall diversity in programming, increased share of imports and scheduling practices that give priority to commercially lucrative or populist types of adult content over children's programmes while pushing them to the early fringe of the schedule. The extent of these changes was significantly different depending on the primary funding methods of the broadcasters. All of the aforementioned changes were more manifest in the provisions of broadcasters that receive their funding mainly from commercial sources, suggesting that they have adopted a more pronounced commercial strategy. Most commercial broadcasters in this research have also cut their provisions of children's programmes in the late 2000s owing to commercial pressures and changes in the commercial profitability of these programmes, suggesting that their commercial models may not be able to accommodate schedules for children in their current extent.

While pedagogic goals in programming have not been completely replaced by commercial or populist considerations, evidence suggests that they have an increasing influence on UK and Finnish broadcasters' programming policies. Economic and consumerist considerations: audience maximisation, commercial profit generation and cost-effectiveness have been accepted as new 'virtues' alongside the previous social and cultural goals in the children's programming policies of UK and Finnish broadcasters. The increase in viewing options available for children has also produced a shift away from the past normative knowledge on children's needs to catering for their preferences, while the expert views of broadcasting professionals and pedagogues have a lesser influence on broadcasters' children's programming policies. Popularity and reach were introduced as the primary yardsticks against which the performance of all broadcasters was measured. These developments reflect the changes in the communications policy paradigm examined in chapter 2, with policies now driven increasingly by pragmatism and populism rather than idealism and ideologies. Meanwhile, the field of communications is no longer primarily viewed as an appropriate area for collective welfare policies (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 197-202).

In terms of the Industrial Equilibrium Model, empirical evidence suggests forces that punctuated broadcasters' equilibria and stimulated them to change their children's programming strategies originated from changes in the industry structure. The 1990s saw an unprecedented intensification of competition, facilitated mainly by the expansion of commercial broadcasting sector through liberalisation, but also by advances in broadcasting technology, which increased the number of viewing options available for child audiences and prompted broadcasters to attract larger audiences through increases in populist programming. These changes were accompanied by changes in regulatory regimes that allowed private broadcasters in particular to operate with lesser public intervention. Publicly funded broadcasters, in turn, were subjected to a tighter budget discipline that forced them to seek out less expensive types of programming and, in the BBC's case, encouraged to look for commercial income and co-production opportunities.

The aforementioned processes have only intensified in the 2000s, as the advance of digital broadcasting technologies have increased the competition further, while deregulatory measures in content regulation policies have allowed commercial broadcasters to adopt children's programming strategies that focus more explicitly on profit maximisation. At the same time, financial pressures created by the maturing advertising market and changes in children's media consumption habits (i.e. the increasing use of online platforms and specialist children's channels) have reduced commercial broadcasters' willingness to invest in the genre, and the focus of their programming priorities has increasingly turned to lucrative types of adult programming instead.

National differences highlight historical differences between UK and Finnish broadcasting institutions. Commercial broadcasters in the UK have had a stronger and longer-running tradition in children's programming, whose volume and diversity was maintained by regulatory measures until the Communications Act 2003. The Act served as a critical juncture in their programming policies, after which the provision on ITV in particular has declined. The Act has also resulted in a drop in the diversity of programming, with commercial broadcasters focusing increasingly on cost-effective

and audience-maximising populist types of children's programming. Nevertheless, compared with the offerings of the Finnish commercial channels, which have had no quotas or obligations to contribute to children's programme provision, diversity in the provision of the UK commercial channels has remained slightly higher owing to the more robust tradition in commercial channels' children's provision. The fact that the UK has a larger secondary market for children's programmes has also contributed to this. Finnish commercial channels, in turn, have far fewer opportunities for domestic acquisitions because of the negligible size of the independent children's production sector. They are forced to resort to imports, which slants the programming towards animation owing to the fact that the format is typically based on fictional characters that are not culturally bound.

Fewer changes have taken in the programming strategies of Yleisradio and the BBC. For instance, while the expansion of the schedules has taken place mainly in the morning hours, programming has not been completely shifted to the early fringe of the schedule, and the diversity of the output has remained high in spite of increased volumes of imported animation and decreases in the proportions of factual programming, indicating that public funding has served to protect the public service paradigm in children's programming to an extent. Nevertheless, increasing competition for audiences has forced Yleisradio in particular to give in to the audience's preferences and depart from its past pedagogic-paternalistic paradigm in its programming (manifested by a low proportion of animation and high proportions of drama, factual and preschool programmes; a high proportion of domestic content and low share of commercial animation in particular) to an extent. Even the increase in the volume of its children's programmes, which was previously limited for pedagogic reasons, can be considered a departure from the past paternalist tradition that considered excessive viewing potentially harmful and encouraged children to engage themselves in other activities instead.

The output of the UK children's channels: CBBC, CBeebies and CITV, was also analysed as part of this study, although independently from the main channels' output. The schedule of the CBBC channel contained relatively low proportions of

animation and high proportions of programmes in the entertainment, drama and factual categories. Preschool programming logically comprised the bulk of the output on CBeebies. Both channels also featured high shares of domestic content (80 per cent for CBBC and 94 per cent for CBeebies). In contrast, the structure of programming of the CITV Channel indicates in the absence of regulatory guidelines with respect of the structures of its content, the channel has adopted a programming strategy typical for a commercial channel. Its proportion of animation was at 64 per cent higher than that of ITV1, and its shares of factual and preschool programmes were below those of the main channel.

Differences between the structures of the BBC's and Yleisradio's children's output highlight differences in national factors that have facilitated the BBC utilise commercial activities to sustain the structure of its children's programming, while Yleisradio has been forced to increase its share of imports in order to fill its expanding schedules. The fact that the BBC has engaged itself in co-productions and substituted its income from licensing and secondary sales deals has facilitated its continuous investment in original UK animation, drama and preschool programming. Furthermore, commercial income from these sources has facilitated investment in factual programming, whose co-production and merchandising potential is low. Yleisradio in Finland, however, has been very cautious with merchandising opportunities in particular, as it wants to maintain the non-commercial brand of its children's programmes. The small size of the independent production sector specialising in children's programmes in Finland also prevents Yleisradio from engaging itself into such co-production opportunities.

While these changes have undoubtedly had a profound effect on children's programming, this study does not attempt to comment on whether these changes have had an effect on programme 'quality'. While the concept of quality in children's programming is debated in a number of academic and professional studies (see e.g. Alexander et al. 1998; Ofcom 2007; Briggs 2009; Grewenig 2009; Mikos 2009; Wassmer et al. 2010) – mainly from children's parents' point of view – 'quality' remains 'an emotive subject that is notoriously difficult to define, largely because

quality means different things to different people' (Ofcom 2007: 17). Notably, the key deficiency of these studies is that they often associate 'quality' with value-laden concepts such as 'well-funded and well-produced' (Ofcom 2007: 14). While some of the quantitative methods used in this research measure changes e.g. in domestic content and diversity in programming, which are commonly associated with quality, measuring value-laden concepts (such as informative content and pedagogic approach) that require qualitative methods in such a large-scale longitudinal comparative study would be infeasible. Thus, the marketisation-determined changes in the structure of children's programming cannot automatically be equated with a decrease in quality, but instead simply indicate changing institutional behaviour in the provision of children's television. For instance, in spite of the significant changes in the structure of Yleisradio's programming, the quantitative research methods used for this research fail to capture the continuity in Yleisradio's children's programming values, which include non-violence, safety, non-commerciality and pedagogic approach in programming, all of which are strongly associated with quality in the aforementioned studies on the subject. Generally speaking, the children's programmes of the BBC and Yleisradio have become popular and robust brands, which enjoy a high status and appreciation amongst parents (see e.g. Ofcom 2007; Yleisradio Oy 2009a).

## 6. Case II: Religious programmes

### 6.1. Introduction

The provision of religious programmes, the second case in this research, is analysed in this chapter. Like the previous chapter, this chapter provides an empirical account of religious programming in the UK and Finland between 1986 and 2009, and examines the changes in patterns of provision utilising the Industrial Equilibrium Model detailed in chapter 3. Evidence in this chapter is based on empirical research on religious programming conducted by the author.

Religious programmes differ from children's programmes in that they are a thematic group of programmes rather than targeted to a specialist interest group, as is the case with children's programmes. Previous studies on religious programming (e.g. Svennevig et al. 1988; Gunter and Viney 1994; McDonnell 2009) also suggest that the outlook for religious programmes is more insecure than that of children's programmes, as their popular support is more limited (see e.g. Independent Television Commission 2001; Yleisradio Oy 2007: 15; Ofcom 2008a: 34). Thus, while competition in the provision of the genre is more limited, the low volume of the provision on PSB channels means that the genre is also more vulnerable to changes in the output. Consequently, religious programmes can be considered to represent a genre that is at higher risk than several other types of minority interest content.

While certain religious organisations have set up their specialist religious channels on cable, satellite and online platforms, neither UK nor Finnish terrestrial broadcasters have launched their own specialist channels for this subject, although certain digital FTA channels now specialise in religious programming. More such channels are available on cable, satellite and online platforms, such as the UK-based transnational God TV, Revelation TV and Muslim Television Ahmadiyya International. Ofcom's move to lift its ban on religious on-air fundraising in 2007 has improved the commercial prospects of such channels. Compared with the viewing figures of religious programming on PSB channels, these specialist religious channels, however, attract just tiny audiences (McDonnell 2009: 168). While these channels cater for smaller Christian denominations as well as for followers of other faiths, their

approach to religious matters usually differs radically from that adopted by PSBs: although the obligations regarding responsibility, objectivity and protection of vulnerable members of audience implemented in the Ofcom Broadcasting Code apply to these channels too, their programming does not necessarily treat the highly sensitive matters of religion in a responsible and objective manner, but their missions may include to subtly seek recruits or raise funds to a particular religious group. Because of this, they do not provide an ecumenical forum for inter-faith discussion, but rather act as electronic pulpits for sectarian preaching and proselytising, thus not offsetting the need for programming on religious matters by PSBs.

Given the low level of weekly religious output in both the UK and Finland, most of the statistical analysis in this chapter is conducted by analysing the data in five-year quintiles (except for the last period of 2006-2009, the length of which is four years). This gives a more accurate picture of the output, as it represents an average output of a period rather than that of an individual year, which may be influenced by e.g. scheduling of a particular series or the occurrence of a religious event. While annual changes in the provision are not reflected in this type of analysis, the long-term trends are nevertheless observable.

## 6.2. The volume of output of religious programmes

[Religion on] television, [...] it's been [on] a steady decline since 1986. I arrived at the BBC in 1986. I was actually working in radio, and in television, there was a massive amount of [religious] television going on. There was the *Rock Gospel Show* on the Sunday night. There was *Everyman* current affairs strand, posh documentaries. There was *Heart of the Matter*, a more quick turnaround documentary strand on television. *Songs of Praise* was at 6:40 in the evening, again in 7-8 million viewers. There was a morning worship show but also a morning discussion, I think, from time to time. There were several other documentary outputs. There were even contributions to the drama strand, like the first ever *Shadowlands* was made by religious broadcasting. There was a plethora of religious stuff going out on the telly.

(Michael Wakelin, Head of BBC Religion & Ethics 2006-2009, author's interview, 22 October 2010)



Empirical data on UK religious programming detailed in chart 6.1 demonstrate that a change has taken place in the strategies of UK PSBs in the 2000s, which have cut their provisions in the latter part of the decade. In the 1980s, religious content still had a generally accepted place in the British PSB system in spite of the fact that neither the BBC nor the commercial channels had a statutory obligation to broadcast religion. The relatively high volume of religious programming was maintained rather by the public service ethos, which considered it axiomatic that a certain portion of broadcasting time should be devoted to religion (Dean 1997: 92; McDonnell 2009: 151). The ITV quota for religious programming was introduced only in the Broadcasting Act 1990 in response to a fear that religious programming might be seriously diminishing on commercial networks (McDonnell 2009: 151). The Communications Act 2003 and the cancellation of quotas for religious programming have served as a critical juncture in UK religious programming. Subsequently, all channels have made cuts in their religious provisions, and the overall volume of religious programming between 2006 and 2009 represents just 58 per cent of the average output between 1986 and 1990 in spite of expansion in broadcasting hours and increases in the number of channels.

Chart 6.2 represents the output of religious programmes on Finnish channels. In Finland, religious programmes were provided by both Yleisradio and, to a lesser extent, MTV. As the weekly broadcasting time of MTV totalled only about 20 hours per week, MTV's religious output consisted of infrequent one-off programmes and short series: religious programming comprised only 0.1 per cent of the company's output in 1992 (Peräaho 2001: 6). The 1993 Channel Reform initially boosted the output, with both Yleisradio and MTV3 increasing the number of religious programming in their schedules. Table 6.1 demonstrates that the average weekly output of religious programming peaked at the turn of the millennium at 3 hours 38 minutes. However, the introduction of commercial competition in 1997 and the subsequent commercial pressures punctuated MTV3's policy equilibrium, with MTV3 responding by cancelling its religious output in the early 2000s. While Yleisradio has also suffered from a chronic shortage in its resources, there has been a slight decline in output, which stood at an average of 3 hours 19 minutes per week between 2006

and 2009 despite the fact that the provisions of YLE Teema and FST5 have been included in the research data since 2007.

Chart 6.1: Hours of output of religious programmes in the sample weeks in the UK, 1986-2009

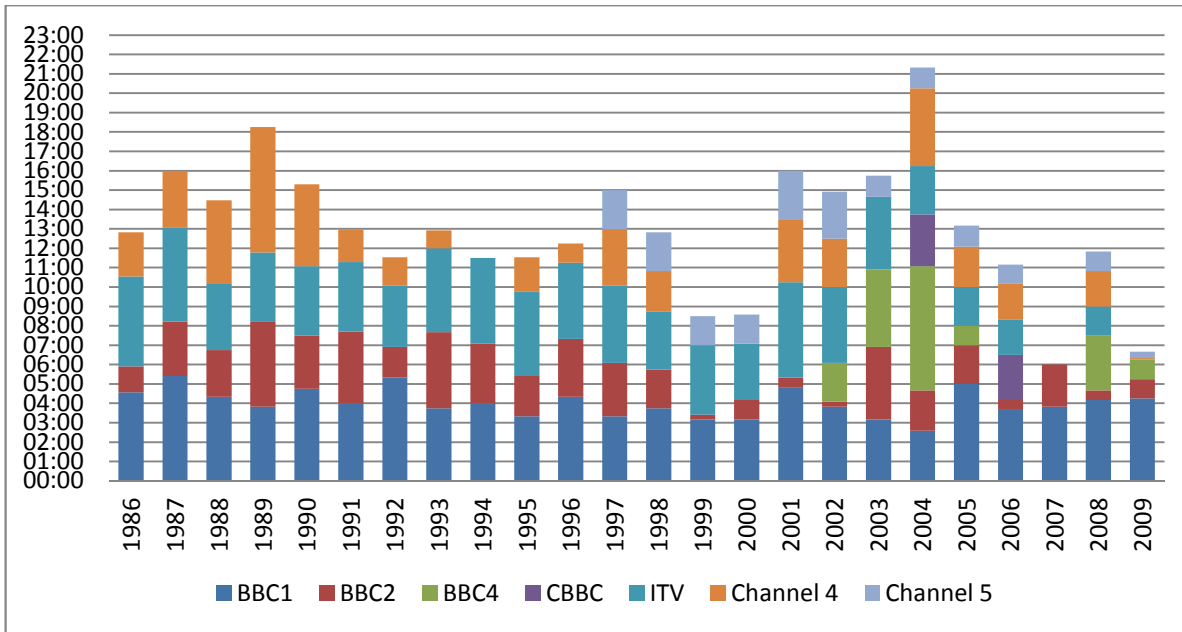


Chart 6.2: Hours of output of religious programmes in the sample weeks in Finland, 1986-2009

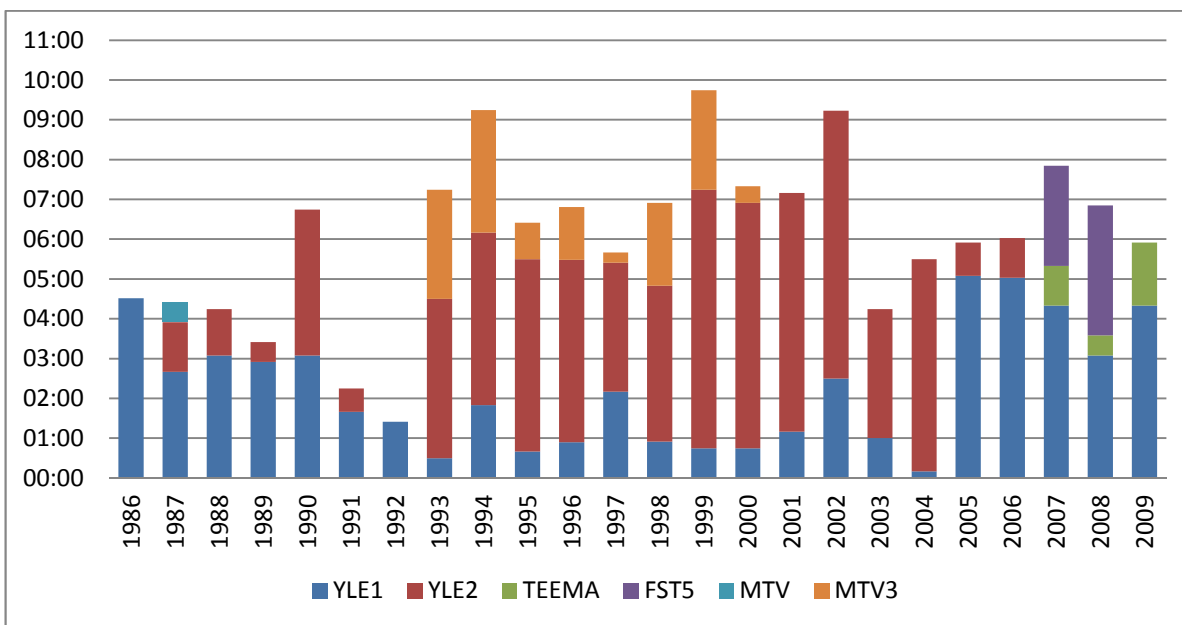
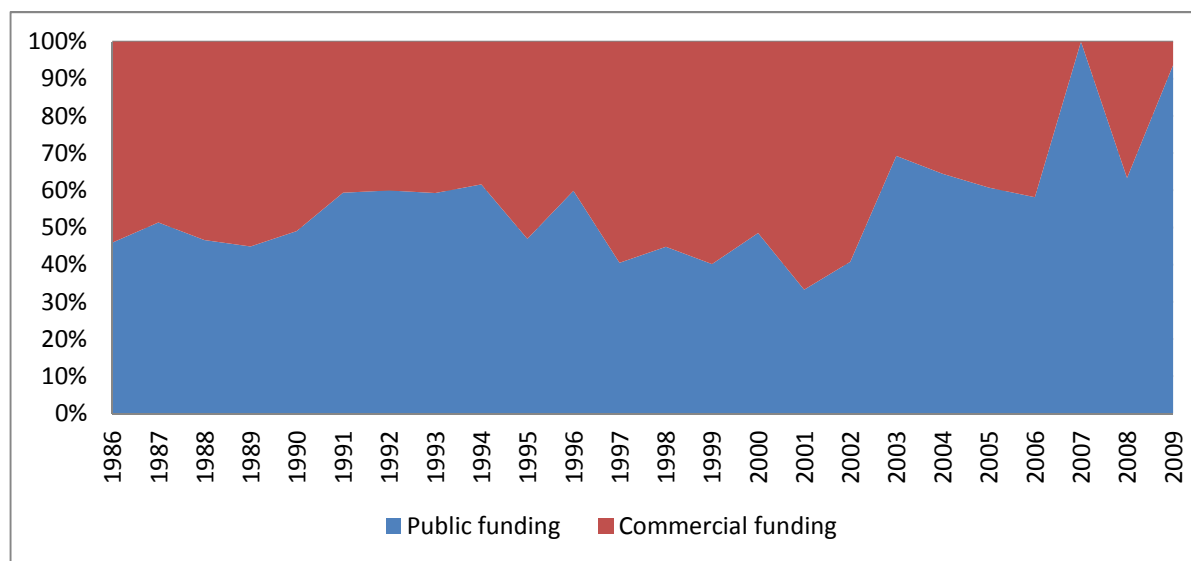


Table 6.1: Average weekly hours of output of religious programmes

	UK	Finland <sup>71</sup>
1986 – 1990	7:41	2:20
1991 – 1995	6:02	2:39
1996 – 2000	5:43	3:38
2001 – 2005	8:07	3:12
2006 – 2009	4:27	3:19

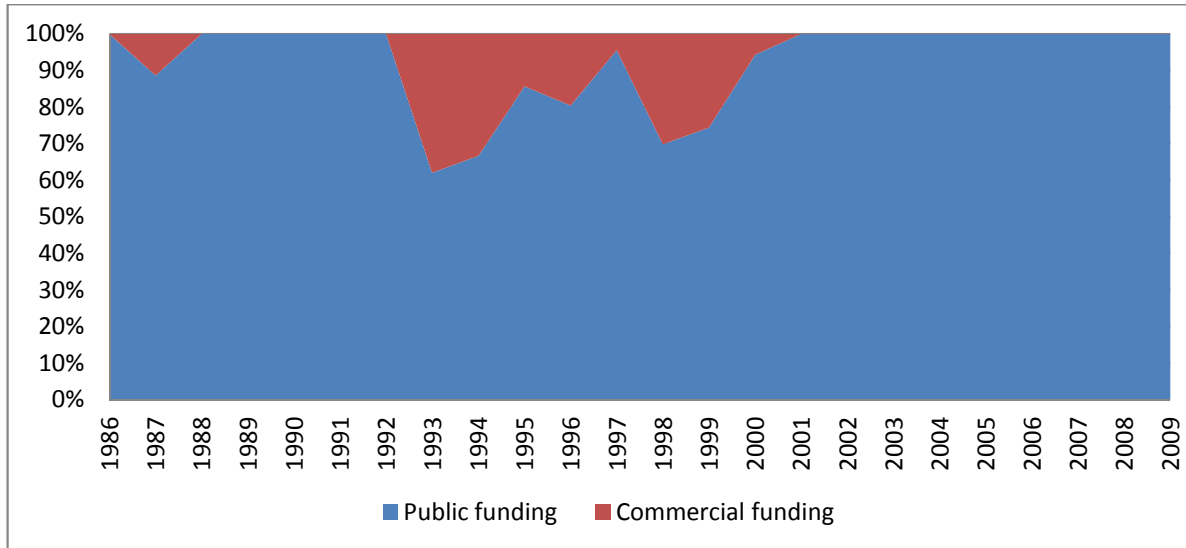
As a result of the aforementioned commercial channels' withdrawal from religious provision in the 2000s, there has also been a notable shift in the provision of religious programmes from commercially funded to publicly funded channels, as charts 6.3 and 6.4 demonstrate. Again, this shift has been particularly radical in the UK, where, until the early 2000s, commercially-funded channels provided on average half of all religious output. In Finland, MTV's share of religious programming was significantly lower, varying between 20-30 per cent between 1993 and 1999. Nevertheless, in both countries, religious programmes are now almost entirely dependent on the activities of publicly funded broadcasters, i.e. the BBC and Yleisradio.

Chart 6.3: Share of total religious output between public funding and commercial channels in the UK



<sup>71</sup> Figures include Swedish-language output.

Chart 6.4: Share of total religious output between public funding and commercial channels in Finland



### 6.2.1. Volume of output on public funding channels

Less dramatic changes have taken place in the volume of religious output on the BBC's and Yleisradio's channels portrayed in charts 6.5 and 6.6. This suggests that the institutional policies of public broadcasters have been slightly more immune to the pressures created by marketisation than those of their commercially funded counterparts. However, unlike children's programmes, whose output has increased significantly, the volume of religious programmes has not grown significantly over the years, and the BBC's output has actually declined since the 1980s. Furthermore, the introduction of the specialist interest digital portfolio channels such as BBC Four and YLE Teema has enabled the public broadcasters to move religious programming from main channels to these niche channels, whose share of viewing is small compared with the main channels.

As testified by Ernie Rea (author's interview, 12 September 2011), former Head of BBC Religion & Ethics, religion was considered an axiomatic part of the BBC's programming in the 1980s. He describes the Corporation's attitude towards the subject as 'almost deferential', which can be traced back to the Reithian origins of the Corporation. Reith, himself a devout Christian, considered religion (namely

Christianity) an essential part of the British society and way of life, which ought to be nurtured and promoted by the BBC (Briggs 1985: 54). The status and resources religious programmes received were reflected in the volume of output, which averaged 3 hours 40 minutes per week in the late 1980s despite the limited broadcasting hours of the two BBC channels. As Ernie Rea recalls, religious broadcasting directors enjoyed a high level of independence and power over channel controllers in terms of programming. He took over as Head of Religious Television in 1991:

I inherited my colleague's [predecessor's] files, and I discovered that when he went in to television offers programmes he was asked to say what were his priorities, and he would say: "this is what I want to do and this is what I want to do, and if there's anything left over, I'd like to do this and this". And – generally speaking – he would get his way. So it was almost as if he had *carte blanche* to take, he was given a certain amount of money and told "that's what you've got, go and do it". That completely and utterly changed in the 1990s.

(Ernie Rea, author's interview, 12 September 2011)

Between the late 1980s and the early 2000s, the volume of the BBC's religious output saw a decrease of one third during a period in which the BBC's total broadcasting hours increased by half (Holmes 2000: xii). Both Ernie Rea (author's interview, 12 September 2011) and Michael Wakelin (author's interview, 22 October 2010) argue that the decline of BBC religion was initiated by the relocation of the BBC Religion department from London to Manchester in 1992 as part of the Corporation's programme of decentralisation (Born 2005: 101). Not only did it hinder religious executives' ability to pitch their programmes to channel controllers, who were based in London, but the BBC also lost most of its talented programme-makers, who moved to other BBC departments:

...there was not big enough factual base in Manchester to attract talent, so the difficulty was that you couldn't get a critical mass of talented programme-makers around the subject. They did in radio, but didn't in television, and [...] that's why the move to Manchester represented part of a decline.

(Andrew Graystone, former producer, *The Heaven and Earth Show* (BBC), author's interview, 7 February 2011)

Moreover, challenges from cable, satellite and DTT platforms brought the protected duopoly to an end, while changes in the regulatory regime stemming from the Broadcasting Act 1990 facilitated commercial broadcasters to adopt more commercially-oriented strategies and introduce populist schedules in peak hours in particular. The logical feedback effect was the intensification of competition for audiences. In the mid-1990s the BBC began to feel increasingly pressurised to respond to these competitive forces and improve its declining share of viewing by adopting a more populist programming strategy in order to maintain the legitimacy of the licence fee (Born 2005: 62-4). Ernie Rea (author's interview, 12 September 2011) and Michael Wakelin (author's interview, 22 October 2010) argue that commercial channels' gradual withdrawal from religious programming had an impact on the programming policy of the BBC as well, as it forced the Corporation to respond to the populist offerings of its commercial competitors by changing its conduct. The legislative reforms of 1990 and 2003 served as major critical junctures in the process, as they allowed commercial channels to adopt more explicitly commercial strategies. While the Broadcasting Act 1990 imposed religious output quotas for ITV companies, its regulatory authority did not extend to scheduling of programmes, and ITV companies unilaterally replaced religious programming in the Sunday evening 'God Slot' with populist output (Bonner and Aston 1998: 130).

The BBC was forced to respond to this competitive challenge, and the Corporation's institutional strategy underwent a gradual change. The Corporation's new strategy was manifested in the 1995 document *People and Programmes*, which criticised the BBC's over-reliance on paternalist programming policies and acknowledged the need to better respond to 'changing tastes', thus placing consumer satisfaction at the centre of the Corporation's focus (Born 2005: 63). Thenceforth, engaging new viewers from audiences then most distant from the BBC – lower socio-economic

groups, young people and female viewers – whilst maintaining ratings became an increasingly important objective in the strategy of the BBC television (Born 2005: 255-9). Ratings gave the channel controllers a simple yardstick for public accountability, and thus increased BBC executives' pressures to attract larger (and younger) audiences. In the Corporation's religious programming department, mass audiences and mass impact became the new strategic objectives that guided its programming strategy:

Under John Birt's Director-Generalship measurement became absolutely vital. He moved to system of performance review. Every January every programme strand across the BBC had to be reviewed in terms of its impact and its audiences [...] The number of people listening and watching became something that had to be measured very carefully. [...] I remember John Birt leaning across the table to me one day and saying: "Ernie, you've got to understand, I crave measurement". Those were his exact words: "I crave measurement." [...] We became very anxious about the number of people who were watching our programmes. [...] I used to get the audience figures on [...] Tuesday morning or Wednesday morning, and I used to pour over them and think "oh my goodness, what's going on". They became something that was terribly important to us.

(Ernie Rea, author's interview, 12 September 2011)

This newly-found 'measurement discourse' demonstrates that mass audiences became to be considered as part of public value delivery: they served as concrete evidence that the Corporation was delivering its public value objectives. In attempting to draft a new universal framework for better performance measurement, the Reithian normative knowledge of public interest and the 'needs' of the audience as citizens was replaced by a system of measuring public value for its services using complex criteria including factors as diverse as audience reach and size, appreciation index, cost per hour and awards won (BBC 2004: 88). Notably, most of these public value objectives were based on how the *mass* audiences received the programmes. As the BBC's 2004 policy document on public value measurement states: 'Pure ratings – audience size – also matters. Everyone pays the licence fee and audiences want the BBC to make popular programmes – there would be no point to a BBC that no one watched or listened to' (BBC 2004: 88).

Another logical consequence of the rise of this ratings discourse in the BBC was that by the mid-1990s it became increasingly focused on mass audience preferences in its corporate strategy. Consequently, between 1996-7, the BBC drafted a new vision for BBC One as an entertainment channel of broad appeal (Born 2005: 259). Such a populist and ratings-obsessed strategy accommodated religious programmes uneasily. As a sign of changing priorities within the Corporation, religious documentary strands *Everyman* and *Heart of the Matter* were shifted to BBC Two – the minority interest channel of the Corporation – in 2003. However, BBC Two was undergoing similar changes under its Controller Jane Root, who repositioned the channel in 2000 to appeal to an older, ‘more mainstream, suburban audience’ with a strategy that centred on a ‘wall of leisure’ and ‘lifestyle programming in mid-evening’ in order to secure ratings success (Born 2005: 473). Michael Wakelin (author’s interview, 22 October 2010) notes that Root wanted to discontinue programme strands, resulting in the cancellation of these long-running series and a drop in the volume of religious documentary output:

...we were promised that we would get a certain number of documentaries a year. That promise was quickly forgotten about when Jane [Root] left, and we were left pretty much with *Songs of Praise* and the Sunday morning strand, and occasional documentaries.

(Michael Wakelin, author’s interview, 22 October 2010)

Ernie Rea (author’s interview, 12 September 2011) argues that the combination of the loss of talent and documentary strands resulted in a vicious circle of compromised production quality and dropping audience figures, which gave the broadcasting executives a suitable excuse to perform cuts in programming:

[W]hen BBC Religion was moved from London to Manchester we had got a very strong team of documentary filmmakers in London who had proper religious expertise. They were people who were really at the top of their game. And when the announcement was made that religion was going to be moved from London to Manchester other departments like documentaries cherry-picked these people, they said: “you don’t want to go to Manchester, go and join our department”. And we were left denuded. All of a sudden this fantastic group of filmmakers had gone and we were told [...] that we weren’t allowed to use London filmmakers to make *Everyman*. And it basically meant that for a very short warning – within six months – we had to find a whole new raft of



very skilled filmmakers to make *Everyman*. Now, I would have to be honest and say I think that for a period of a couple of years – I think – the quality dropped, I think the programmes weren't up to the standard that they had been in the late 1980s. [...] We then regained the ground and we started to do well again but it was a very, very difficult period, and I wonder: did that give channel controllers who didn't really want *Everyman* on their channel an opportunity to say: "well maybe we shouldn't be doing this anymore?"

(Ernie Rea, author's interview, 12 September 2011)

While the BBC's religious output revived to an average of 4 hours 24 minutes in the period 2001-2005 following 9/11 and the launch of the BBC's digital channels, changes in UK commercial PSBs strategies forced the BBC to rethink the position of religion in its internal priorities. The Communications Act 2003 allowed commercial channels to withdraw from religious programming by discontinuing the religious output quotas. Changes in its rivals' programming strategies prompted the BBC to respond to this competitive challenge by cutting its religious programming. In the 2006-2009 period, its average output of religion had contracted to 3 hours 16 minutes per week.

That was another one on my list of things that was a disaster: [...] ITV's decision [to discontinue weekly religious output], because if there's no competition, then the BBC thinks "why should we bother". I think that has had a huge effect. [...] And when there used to be a programme on Sunday evenings called *Highway*, and it was opposite *Songs of Praise*, and they would fight it out. But of course standards were very high at the time and money was given to them and... But ITV do big dramas so the BBC's got to do big dramas; ITV do comedy; BBC's got to do comedy, ITV do the *X-Factor*; the BBC's got to do something big on a Saturday night. So, of course, the competition going was a disaster.

(Michael Wakelin, author's interview, 22 October 2010)

In contrast to the UK, Finland features a unique religious programme production arrangement, in which devotional programmes are produced (and, to large extent, financed) by the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the largest church in Finland. From a historical viewpoint, this can be explained by the close historical ties between the Church and the state, with the Church having a number of responsibilities and privileges, such as the right to collect taxes and administer population registers. The institutional cooperation between Yleisradio's television and the Church concerning

television was formalised in 1964 following Yleisradio's acquisition of TES-TV, after which the Church created the post of television and film secretary, whose duties included producing devotional programmes (Väätäinen 2008).

The relationship between the Church and Yleisradio aggravated during Eino S. Repo's tenure as Yleisradio's Director General. Repo wanted to subject religious programmes under similar pre-broadcast review that Yleisradio's other programmes were subject to (Salokangas 1996: 176-7). This seemingly minor schism – evocatively dubbed the 'sermon censorship dispute' (Salokangas 1996: 220) – escalated and culminated in 1967, when archbishops of both the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church presented an ultimatum to Yleisradio's Administrative Council (AC), threatening to prevent all cooperation between the Church and Yleisradio if the reforms were brought in. A compromise was reached in October 1967, when the AC decided to set up an external committee called *Hartausohjelmien valvontaelin*<sup>72</sup>, which consisted of two representatives from Yleisradio, three from the Evangelical Lutheran Church, one from the Orthodox Church and one representative of 'free' Christian denominations<sup>73</sup> (Castrén 1992: 15; Salokangas 1996: 177). Its primary duties include designating presenters for devotional programmes and sermons, distributing the designated broadcasting hours between different denominations, and ensuring that all devotional programming comply with the terms of Yleisradio's broadcasting licence and the decrees of the AC. Its jurisdiction, however, only covers devotional programmes (e.g. acts of worship and programmes with religious reading), and other types of religious programmes (e.g. religious documentaries, lectures and current affairs programmes) are covered by Yleisradio's rules and regulations. Salokangas (1996: 177) notes that in reality Yleisradio's chances of exercising editorial influence on the content of devotional programmes were marginal, and in that aspect the Church retained its control on religious programmes. The editorial responsibility of devotional programmes was thus retained by the Church. In order to

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<sup>72</sup> In English: "The Monitoring Organ for Devotional Programmes".

<sup>73</sup> The Advent Church, the Baptist community, the Pentecostal Church, the Methodist Church, the Salvation Army and the Free Church.

enhance and optimise its media and communications functions, it set up a central body for media functions, *Kirkon tiedotuskeskus*<sup>74</sup> (KT), in December 1966.

In practice, all Yleisradio's devotional programmes have been produced by KT. Yleisradio's control on religious programming is limited to deciding the volume, broadcasting slots and broadcasting channels for religious programmes. It also provides the technical staff and resources required for the programmes and reimburses costs directly associated with the programmes. However, all editorial work, including the costly pre-production research, is done by KT's staff, who are employed by the Church (Väättäinen 2008). Yleisradio also appoints a producer for religious programmes, but his/her responsibility is limited mostly to overseeing the process from Yleisradio's end and he does not actively participate in the editorial process.

Prior to the 1993 Channel Reform Yleisradio also employed two religious correspondents, whose responsibilities included coordinating KT's devotional programming in Yleisradio's end and producing ecumenical and ethical programming independent from the churches. Elina Paloheimo (formerly Pyökkäinen) and Hannu Kamppila were appointed to these roles in 1979 and 1980 respectively. As Hannu Kamppila (author's interview, 20 June 2011) recalls, Yleisradio's own programmes were less confessional in nature and took a more investigative approach to the questions of religion and ethics. They consisted of a handful of series like *Keskellä kylää*<sup>75</sup> and *Usko ja todellisuus*<sup>76</sup>, most of which were not particularly long-living or frequent, with programmes being broadcast once a month or so. These programmes were first broadcast under Yleisradio's Societal Programme Department, and following an organisational restructuring in 1982, under the Factual Programme Department. Thus, unlike in the BBC, religious programmes have never been produced under their own department in Yleisradio.

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<sup>74</sup> In English: "The Communications Centre of the Church".

<sup>75</sup> In English: "In the Middle of the Village".

<sup>76</sup> In English: "Faith and Reality".

Empirical data demonstrate that this institutional arrangement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church and Yleisradio, which also features a significant contribution of the Church to the production resources to religious programmes, has been a major factor in maintaining and safeguarding the output on Yleisradio's channels. Unlike the output of the BBC, Yleisradio's output has increased slightly since the 1980s when it averaged just 2 hours 17 minutes weekly. Elina Paloheimo (author's interview, 25 May 2011) and Hannu Kamppila (author's interview, 20 June 2011) put this down to the dominant Leftist institutional paradigm that gained foothold in the company in the 1970s, which gave religion a lesser status in the priorities of television executives. The lack of competition between broadcasters and the politicised administration of Yleisradio meant that direct audience feedback and ratings played a lesser role in setting the programming agenda of the company. As Hannu Kamppila (author's interview, 20 June 2011) notes, Yleisradio's administration was considered to be responsible primarily to the politically appointed AC, whose preferences consequently had a major influence on the programming policies.

Elina Paloheimo (author's interview, 25 May 2011) and Hannu Kamppila (author's interview, 20 June 2011) agree that the status of religion saw an improvement in Yleisradio's priorities in the late 1980s and 1990s in that the genre gained a wider acceptance from the company's administration. The Act on Yleisradio Oy 1993 marked a critical juncture in this respect, as it cemented their status by identifying them as part of the company's statutory public service duties. In the aftermath of the 1993 Channel Reform, Yleisradio decided to increase the volume of devotional programmes by 50 per cent as part of measures to fill the gap of approximately 1300 annual broadcasting hours vacated by MTV's former broadcasting slots. Consequently, Yleisradio introduced a weekly Sunday morning 'God Slot' in 1993 for services of worship and other religious programmes. Frequent programming was intended to improve viewing loyalty and strengthen TV 2's new 'family Sunday' brand (Kirkkohallitus 1993: 132).

Notwithstanding the increase in Yleisradio's broadcasting hours, the 1993 Channel Reform also created two dilemmas to Yleisradio. First, it was now compelled to

compete with MTV3, whose entertainment-oriented strategy instantly gave it a 54 per cent share of viewing (Salokangas 1996: 427). Yleisradio, in turn, had failed to meet its target of 50 per cent of viewing, which it considered essential for the future justification of the licence fee (Salokangas 1996: 423). In Yleisradio's administration, the blame for this failure was widely laid to the fact that MTV's programming on TV 1 in particular had been substituted mainly by factual programming (Salokangas 1996: 426-8; Hellman 1999: 102-3). TV 2, in turn, had met its individual target of 20 per cent of viewing mainly because it focused on mass appeal programming, such as domestic fiction and sport. Thus, while the Channel Reform had given Yleisradio more broadcasting hours at peak time, it was under great internal and external pressures to regain its institutional state of equilibrium by changing its conduct. As its previous public service oriented programming strategy involving emphasis on factual output had been largely unsuccessful, the only way to recover its share of viewing was through increases in populist programming.

Moreover, the increase in the output of religious programming occurred at a period when Yleisradio's resources were tied in filling the gap left by MTV's programming. It soon became clear TV 2 was unable to increase its religious programme budget in line with the increase in the volume of religious content (Niinistö 2000: 135). Thus, the volume of devotional programmes had to be cut already in 1994 (Väättäinen 2008). Due to this resource shortage, Yleisradio's own in-house religious production resources were also reduced following the reappointment of its two religious correspondents to other duties within the company in the mid-1990s (Elina Paloheimo, author's interview, 25 May 2011), after which Yleisradio has not had designated religious correspondents. As production resources became increasingly scarce, genres that enjoyed mass appeal; e.g. sport – another forte of TV 2, were able to secure majority resources, while religion was increasingly neglected in this respect. Satu Väättäinen, former producer of KT, argues that the Channel Reform represented an institutional shift in Yleisradio's priorities in terms of resource allocation, with populist types of mass audience programming receiving the bulk of production resources:

...I don't understand how there was so much money [for religious programming] before the Channel Reform, but there was plenty. [...] After the Channel Reform there was a total shift to the other extremity in this respect. Production of devotional programmes was moved to the Vaasa regional production unit, which was completely under-resourced for the purpose. [...] The low regard to religious programming was demonstrated by the fact that sports did get whatever resources it required. From the late 1990s to the late 2000s during which I worked with these programmes; for countless times I noticed that an outside broadcasting unit suitable for my production needs was standing unused, but I had to use some small old van instead. [...] Even if the resources were there, we didn't get them. I think this reflected Yleisradio's low regard to religious programming.

(Satu Väätäinen, author's interview, 22 January 2011)

Empirical data demonstrate that in spite of Yleisradio's financial problems following the gradual depletion in its income from commercial broadcasters, no significant reduction has taken place in the volume of programming. The annual reports of KT confirm that the volume of devotional programming has remained largely unchanged in the 2000s, with around 35-37 televised acts of worship per year. Thus, the decline has been far less dramatic than it has been on the BBC's channels. In the period 2006-2009 the average volume of religious programming on Yleisradio's channels was 3 hours 19 minutes per week. However, considering that the volume of Yleisradio's total annual television output nearly doubled within this period from 10,660 hours in 2000 to 19,825 hours in 2009 (Yleisradio Oy 2001, 2010) the increase can be considered somewhat moderate. Yleisradio also launched its digital channels Teema and FST5, whose output has been added to the data source since 2007. Considering this growth in the volume of output, the provision of religious programming has stagnated to an extent. Satu Väätäinen (author's interview, 22 January 2011) argues that their provision is now 'extremely marginal': in her view, they only serve to fulfil Yleisradio's statutory public service duties in this respect.

Chart 6.5: Hours of output of religious programmes on public funding channels in the sample weeks in the UK, 1986-2009

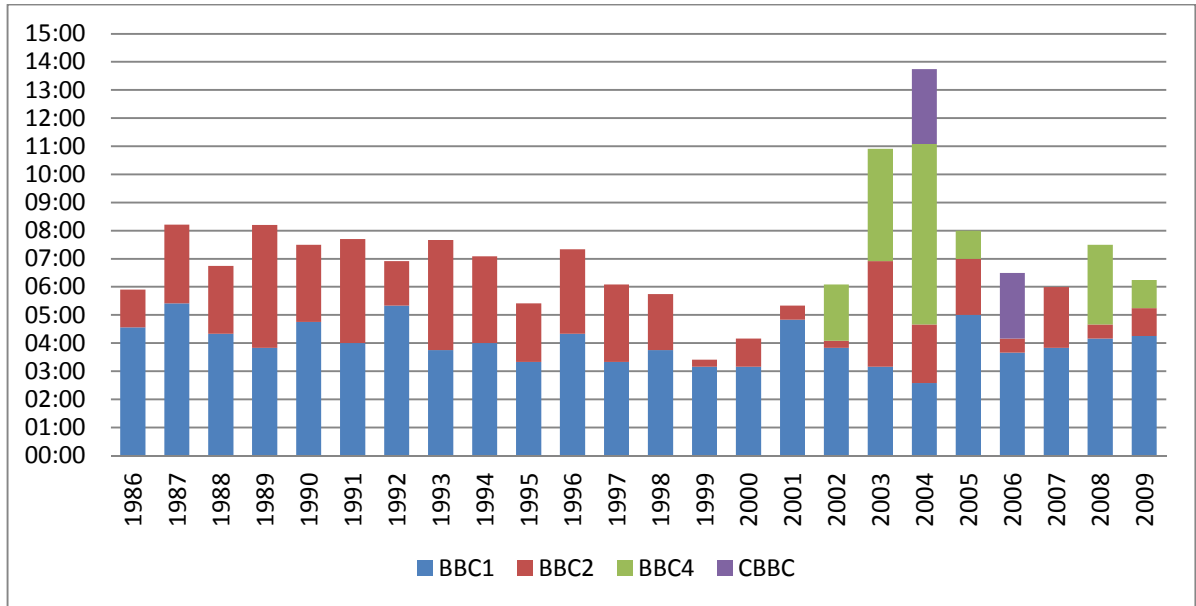
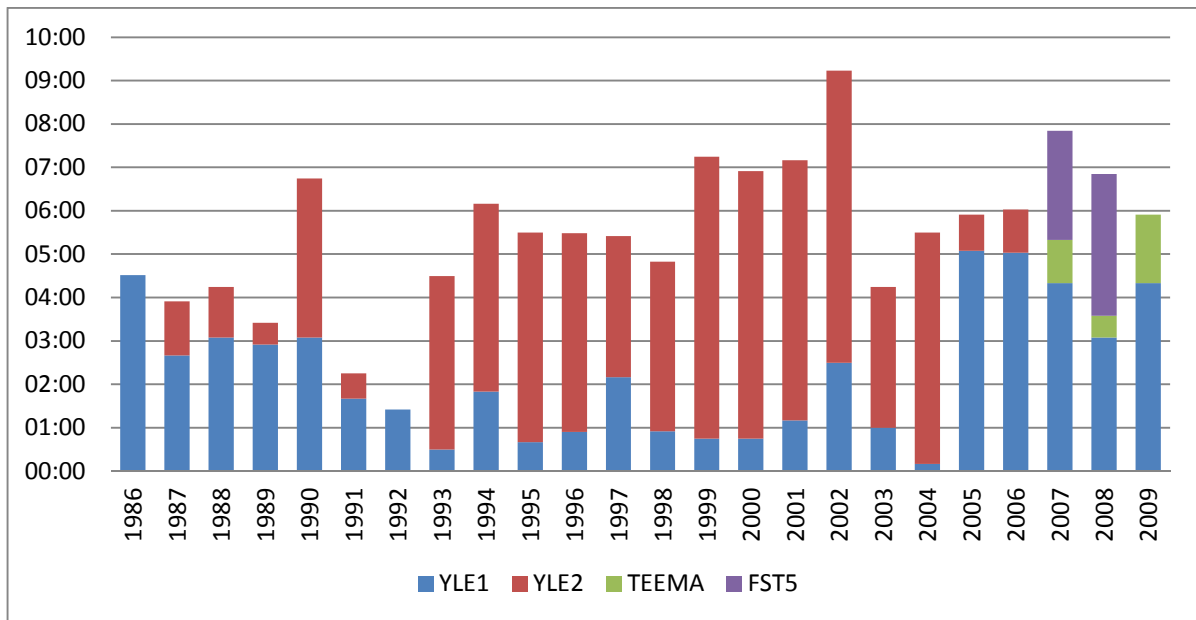


Chart 6.6: Hours of output of religious programmes on public funding channels in the sample weeks in Finland, 1986-2009



**6.2.2. Volume of output on commercial channels**

In the UK, commercial PSB channels historically made a significant contribution in religious programme provision, as chart 6.7 demonstrates. The ITV network had a particular commitment in religious programming, with the structure of its output similar

to that of the BBC. While no formal quotas for religion existed prior to the Broadcasting Act 1990, it was considered an axiomatic part of ITV's public service duties (McDonnell 2009: 151), and the IBA mandated ITV companies to reserve the Sunday evening 'God Slot' for religious programmes (Viney 1999: 16). Notably, most ITV companies provided a short epilogue before the closedown on weekdays until the late 1980s (Sendall 1982: 280).<sup>77</sup> ITV was also the sole provider of regular televised Sunday services: the BBC only provided such services at religious feasts. ITV also broadcast *Highway*, a popular peak time alternative to the BBC's *Songs of Praise*, in the 1980s. Nevertheless, religion was never a profitable genre for ITV companies, not least since advertising was only allowed in programmes more than 30 minutes of length, while services of worship and programmes of devotional nature were still subject to an advertising ban and religious advertising was prohibited altogether (Potter 1989; Bonner and Aston 1998: 278). Religious programmes were also associated with elderly and less affluent viewers (Svennevig et al. 1988: 15), whose purchasing power and consuming habits were not attractive to advertisers. While Viney (1999: 3) argues that religion enjoyed a greater protection on ITV under the IBA oversight when no formal quota existed for religion, the Broadcasting Act 1990 had little effect on the volume of religious programming on ITV. The ITC-imposed quota for two weekly hours of religion served to offset mounting pressures for ITV to adopt a more outright commercial strategy, which, in terms of the Industrial Equilibrium Model, were produced by the intensification of competition in the broadcasting market in the 1990s. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, ITV provided on average two hours of religious programmes weekly, with little variation in this figure.

The provision of Channel 4 was equally extensive and frequent in the 1980s. While there were no broadcasting slots similar to the BBC and ITV's 'God Slots' (since Channel 4's founding Chief Executive Jeremy Isaacs had ruled against Sunday scheduling of religious programmes and slots for 'institutionalised' religious programming (Brown 2007: 102-3)), Channel 4 provided an average of two hours of

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<sup>77</sup> Granada Television was a notable deviate from this habit, in spite of the ITA's numerous caveats (Sendall 1982: 280).



religious programming per week in the sample weeks in the late 1980s. A relatively high proportion of its programming was also scheduled at peak time. The religious output of the channel in the late 1980s reflected its early character as an alternative channel, consisting of documentaries, talk shows, programmes for youth, gospel concerts and religious education programmes. The programming of Channel 4 also led the way in recognising religious diversity in the UK in television programming (McDonnell 2009: 166).

Channel 4's programming strategy changed radically in the 1990s following the appointment of Michael Grade as the Chief Executive of the channel in 1987. Grade wanted to introduce a more mainstream and populist programming strategy in order to increase the channel's share of viewing, ignoring the channel's original experimental, public service character. Grade's re-evaluation of Channel 4's institutional strategy concurred with the sweeping reforms of the Broadcasting Act 1990 that changed the nature of content regulation, granted Channel 4 full institutional independence and introduced competition to commercial broadcasting in 1993. In response to these competitive challenges, Channel 4 increased its share of entertainment and adopted an increasingly 'tabloidised' agenda in factual programming (Brown 2007: 140-177). While the ITC imposed a quota of a minimum of one hour of weekly religious programming on Channel 4 (Brown 2007: 337), empirical data demonstrate that religious programmes began to be sidelined in Channel 4's programming strategy thereafter.

Channel 5's original broadcasting licence also had a one-hour quota for religious provision. Like Channel 4, its programming was less confessional in nature and consisted of religious talk shows and religious music. The channel also had a notable provision of religious programming for children and young people. Programming was concentrated on Sunday mornings. Channel 5's output was less extensive than that of ITV, averaging just about an hour a week in the years preceding the 2003 regulatory reform.

The Communications Act 2003 served as a critical juncture in commercial channels' programming policies, as it allowed commercial broadcasters to reassess the status

of religious programmes in their schedules. The Act removed the ITC-imposed quotas and introduced a system of co-regulation in association with Ofcom for the three commercial channels. In practice, however, Ofcom has made little efforts to maintain religious programming on UK commercial PSB channels as the co-regulatory regime does not grant Ofcom with mandate or the necessary powers to promote religious output on commercial channels' schedules in spite of section 264 of the Act designed to maintain diversity in religious programming. In 2005, Ofcom allowed ITV to cut its commitment to religious output by 50 per cent, justifying this reduction by arguing that it would bring ITV's religious output level with those of Channel 4 and Channel 5 (Timms 2005). As a result, ITV cancelled its regular televised Sunday service, which had been part of the channel's schedules for decades. Channel 5 followed suit the following year by replacing its regular Sunday morning religious programming with output of more populist appeal. Religious programming on these channels has declined even further between 2005 and 2009: ITV's annual religious output declined from 67 to 21 hours, and Channel 5's output from 51 hours to just 12 hours respectively (Ofcom 2010c). In 2009, Channel 4 was the only commercial broadcaster with ongoing commitment to religious programming. However, its output has not been able to offset the significant cuts in the offerings of ITV and Channel 5.

As MTV's former Senior Vice President of Programming Tauno Äijälä (author's interview, 9 December 2012) recalls, religion (as well as drama, documentaries, factual programmes and other types of programming commonly associated with PSB) was considered part of the company's public service duties even before the 1993 Channel Reform. MTV considered the provision of these public service programmes necessary to comply with the public service mission that Yleisradio's broadcasting licence subjected it to, but these programmes also served to further its long-term institutional mission to gain a full institutional independence from Yleisradio's control (see e.g. Hanski 2001). Consequently, during its years under Yleisradio's control, it aimed to operate like a full-scale PSB, with large in-house production resources and an extensive portfolio of programmes.

MTV's religious programming was produced in-house under MTV's Family Programming Unit<sup>78</sup>, and following its closure at the end of 1985, directly under Tauno Äijälä's office (Tauno Äijälä, author's interview, 9 December 2010; personal communication, 19 January 2013). However, the limited broadcasting hours of the company confined the provision of religious content to one-off programmes and short and infrequent series. MTV's low output is illustrated in chart 6.8, with just one programme in the sample weeks of this study. Only after the launch of the MTV3 Channel in 1993 did the company really start investing in religious programming, which was now considered part of the channel's comprehensive service obligation stipulated in its broadcasting licence. Many of the channel's religious documentary series of the 1990s were co-produced with KT. This cooperation pleased MTV3 as it enhanced its institutional status as a 'serious' broadcaster that the Evangelical Lutheran Church – that had previously cooperated exclusively with Yleisradio – considered worth cooperating with. The channel's programming consisted of religious phone-in programmes, talk shows and religious magazines.

MTV3's institutional policy towards religion changed radically in the early 2000s. Religious programming disappeared altogether from the channel's schedules and was replaced with populist types of output. These changes emanated from changes in the structure of the broadcasting industry following the launch of Nelonen in 1997. During MTV3's monopoly on advertising on terrestrial channels, it was able to maintain artificially high advertising rates, which had put off many prospective advertisers. The monopoly was brought to an end in 1997 when the fourth commercial channel Nelonen was launched. It targeted young urban adults; the audiences with the highest purchasing power and thus sought after by advertisers (Kaarlela 2004: 36-7). The new channel eroded MTV3's share of advertising revenue and forced it to adopt several cost-cutting measures in order to recover its profitability. The remaining in-house production departments (apart from news, current affairs and sports) were outsourced in 2001 (Oksanen 2001). The company also changed its

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<sup>78</sup> In Finnish: "Perhetoimitus".

commercial strategy by turning its attention to commercially profitable types of programming instead of aiming for a full portfolio of programmes (Virtanen 2001).

These changes concurred with changes in the management of MTV Oy. Eero Pilkama, the company's CEO since 1984 retired in 1999, and Senior Vice President Tauno Äijälä in 2001. Both Pilkama and Äijälä had worked for the company since the 1960s and their views on programming policy were strongly influenced by the dominant public service paradigm of the era. Tauno Äijälä (author's interview, 9 December 2012) argues that his successor since 2002, Jorma Sairanen, did not share his view on the importance of religious programming, and the company adopted a more populist programming strategy, with a focus on young, urban audiences rather than the provision of a broad-ranging comprehensive service (see e.g. Virtanen 2001). The 2002 annual report of KT contains the last reference to religious programming on MTV3, stating that a seven-part documentary series *Paavalin jalanjäljissä*<sup>79</sup>, produced by KT, was broadcast in spring 2002. In spite of the programme attracting average audiences of 211,000, thus exceeding the targets set by MTV3 (Kirkkohallitus 2003: 64), MTV3 has had practically no programming on religious matters on its schedules thereafter.

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<sup>79</sup> In English: "In the footsteps of Saint Paul".

Chart 6.7: Hours of output of religious programmes on commercial channels in the sample weeks in the UK, 1986-2009

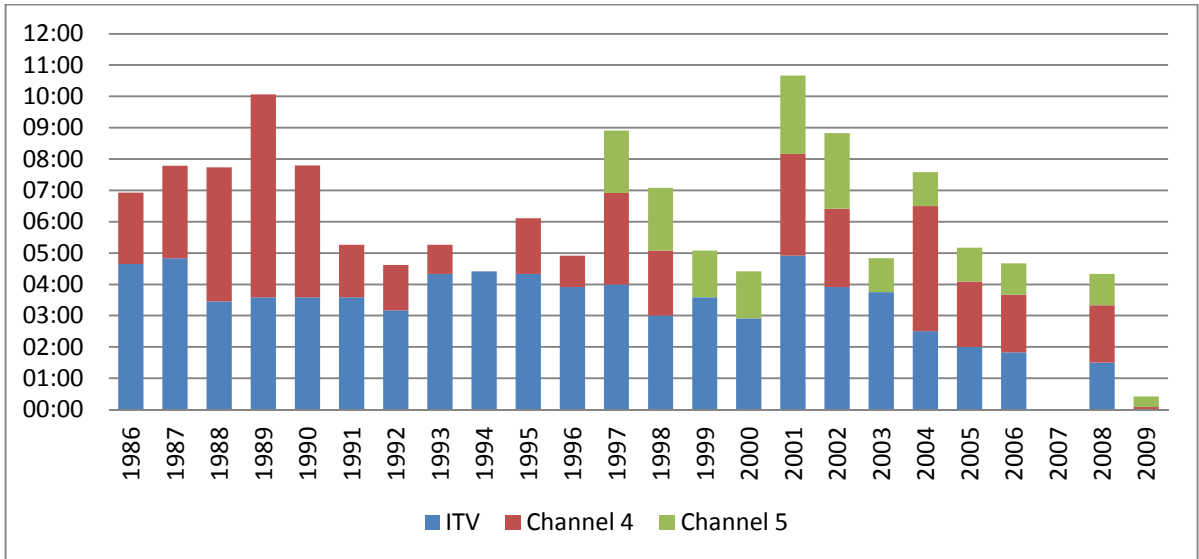
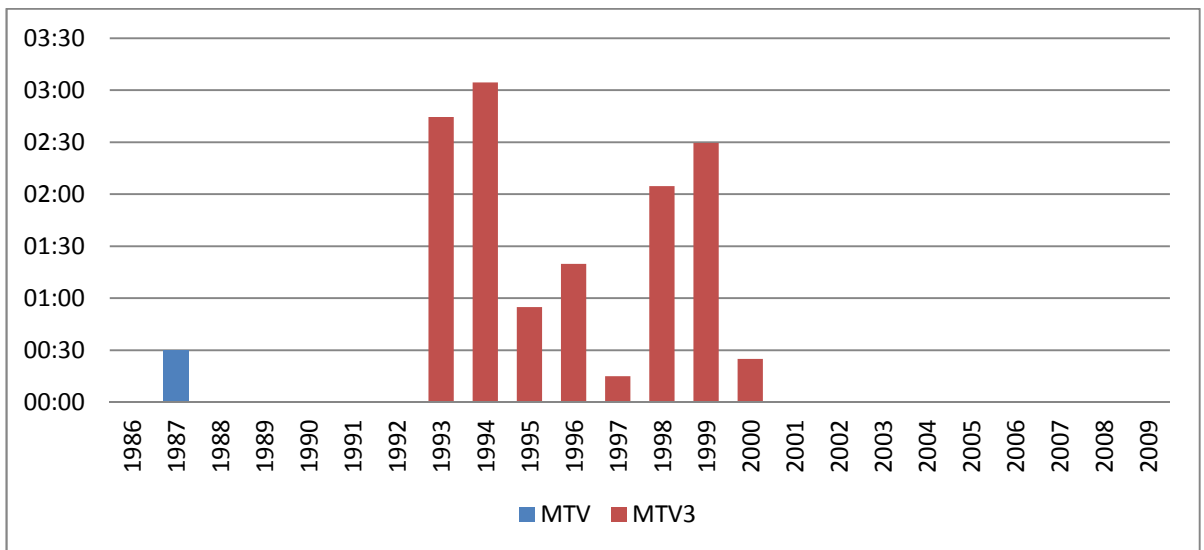


Chart 6.8: Hours of output of religious programmes on commercial channels in the sample weeks in Finland, 1986-2009



**6.2.3. Proportion of religious programmes in the main channels’ output**

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 represent the output of religious programmes as a proportion of all programmes on main terrestrial channels. A clear downwards trend is visible in the proportion of religious programmes in both countries, both in individual channels and

across the system. Not surprisingly, the proportions were at their highest in the late 1980s. Even though the volumes of religious programmes might appear low in Finland, religious programming did nevertheless make up 2.4 per cent of all programmes owing to the limited broadcasting hours. As broadcasting hours continued to rise in the 1990s and 2000s, the proportion of religious programmes declined so that in the period 2006-2009 they made up just 0.4 per cent of programmes in the UK and 0.6 per cent in Finland. It is noteworthy that the total figure for Finland would have been even lower, were the lack of religious output on Nelonen taken into account in these figures.

Table 6.2: Proportion of religious programmes of all programmes in the UK, main channels

Period	BBC1	BBC2	ITV	Channel 4	Channel 5	Total
1986 – 1990	1.9%	1.2%	1.3%	1.8%		<b>1.5%</b>
1991 – 1995	1.6%	1.1%	1.2%	0.4%		<b>1.1%</b>
1996 – 2000	1.1%	0.5%	1.0%	0.4%	0.5%	<b>0.7%</b>
2001 – 2005	1.2%	0.5%	1.0%	0.7%	0.5%	<b>0.8%</b>
2006 – 2009	1.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>

Table 6.3: Proportion of religious programmes of all programmes in Finland, main channels

Period	YLE1 <sup>80</sup>	YLE2 <sup>81</sup>	MTV3	Total
1986 – 1990	3.1%	1.5%		<b>2.4%</b>
1991 – 1995	0.8%	2.4%	1.2% <sup>82</sup>	<b>1.4%</b>
1996 – 2000	0.5%	3.0%	0.5%	<b>1.1%</b>
2001 – 2005	0.8%	2.4%	0.0%	<b>1.0%</b>
2006 – 2009	1.7%	0.1%	0.0%	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>

<sup>80</sup> Figures for 1986-1992 exclude the broadcasting hours of MTV and its religious programming on the channel.

<sup>81</sup> Figures for 1986-1992 exclude the broadcasting hours of MTV and its religious programming on the channel.

<sup>82</sup> 1993-1995.

### 6.3. The structure of output in religious programmes

While the quantitative methods used in this research are not sufficient to provide an exhaustive record of changes in programme content, empirical data demonstrate that the structure of religious programming has changed following the marketisation-driven changes in the institutional strategies of UK broadcasters. These changes have had the strongest effect on devotional programmes, whose share has declined by two thirds from 24 per cent in the late 1980s to just 7 per cent between 2006 and 2009.

Chart 6.9 illustrates the structure of religious output in the UK. The structure of the output in the late 1980s indicated high diversity in religious programming. The four programme sub-categories were almost equally represented in the schedules, with religious magazine and music representing the largest sub-category. It included programmes such as *Praise Be!*, *Songs of Praise* and *Highway*. As per its original minority interest focus, Channel 4's programming targeted non-Christian audiences, while the outputs of the BBC and ITV were more distinctly Christian. The proportion of devotional programmes, including various televised acts of worship and short programmes exploring religious dogmas, was also relatively high, comprising a quarter of religious output. Most programming in this sub-category was provided by ITV, which still had a weekly televised Sunday service in its schedules.

The late 1990s saw a critical juncture emerging in broadcasters' religious programming policies. Examination of the changes against the Industrial Equilibrium Model reveals that this shift was an institutional response to forces originating from the broadcasting market structures: increasing competitive pressures forced broadcasters to shift the focus of their strategy on programming with greater audience potential, while also keeping the production costs proportionate to actual viewing of the programmes. In sum, religious programming strategies began to be increasingly influenced by factors like ratings, reach and cost-per-hour of programming, while less attention was paid on its social and cultural impact. In terms of broadcast output, this shift translated to a decrease in the proportion of confessional programming, which had low audience potential but often high production costs. ITV's previous *Morning Worship* was replaced with a religious magazine *Sunday Morning* in 1999, with a full

televised church service on 15 Sundays per year and only a short act of worship on the remaining Sundays (Viney 1999: 19). As these magazines were largely studio productions, their production costs were significantly lower than those of the live outside broadcasts of *Morning Worship* (Holmes 2000: 27). Andrew Graystone (author's interview, 7 February 2011) names ITV's *My Favourite Hymns* as another example of a programme whose production costs – at around £35,000 per hour (Brown 2005) – were pushed to the minimum at the expense of content quality. ITV axed the programme in 2005 on basis of its low viewing figures, which, at the final days of the show, averaged 400,000 viewers. It was replaced with a light docusoap *Parish in the Sun* that followed the life of an Anglican vicar in Majorca (Brown and Conlan 2005). There has been no regular service of worship on UK terrestrial television thenceforth.

Pressures for audience maximisation began to shift the focus of the BBC's programming in the late 1990s, too. As examined in section 6.2.1, the BBC's strategy underwent a change in the 1990s, and engaging new viewers from audiences then most distant from the BBC – lower socio-economic groups, young people and female viewers – whilst maintaining ratings became an increasingly important objective in the strategy of the BBC television (Born 2005: 255-9). As Ernie Rea (author's interview, 12 September 2011) recalls, obsession with ratings was introduced to the institutional culture of the Corporation under John Birt's term as Director-General, and religious programme producers and executives were under an increasing pressure to introduce programming that was considered to better match popular tastes. Consequently, talk shows on ethical matters such as *The Heaven and Earth Show* replaced the previous strands of confessional programmes (e.g. *First Light*). Ernie Rea (author's interview, 12 September 2011) recalls that the high cost associated with providing live televised acts of worship, together with their relatively low viewing figures, served as the incentives for the BBC Religion and Ethics department to move towards more cost-effective types of studio programming:

In television [...] we moved away from worship. [...] When we looked at the cost of doing a televised outside broadcast from the church on worship and the cost of doing it for radio, there was just no comparison, [...] it was about the



tenth of the cost. And yet, we were getting about twice the audience and sometimes more. And in the BBC we had to ask the question “is that a wise use of resources?” when there are other things that we felt that we should be doing particularly in the multi-faith area [...]. So [...] I became pretty convinced that [...] the case for regular televised worship wasn’t sustainable. Now, by the time I left [in 2001] we were still doing the major Christian festivals and we were doing services of advent, but for the rest of the time we’ve given that up. So I think within the department there was quite a move away from doing worships to doing more cutting-edge stuff.

(Ernie Rea, author’s interview, 12 September 2011)

Andrew Graystone argues that this marketised culture involving the obsession with measurement became an end in itself in the Corporation’s religious programming policy in the 2000s, in an extent that it began to inform the Corporation’s religious programming policies. Meanwhile, the social and cultural impact of religious programming became a lesser issue in the Corporation’s religious programming agenda:

It changed the culture of the BBC and the culture of broadcasting massively. [...] It did change things because it meant that everything was accounted, everything had a number attached to it [...] and religion doesn’t fare well in a culture where everything is measured by economics. [...] When I was a programme-maker at the BBC [...] every week we would count the audience, and if the audience was bigger this week than it was last week, we were happy, and if the audience was smaller than last week, we wanted to know what had gone wrong. [...] But in all those years I never heard a discussion about what we were doing to the audience. What were we feeding them, what was happening to their souls because of the programming, what impact we were having on people’s lives; those were questions that weren’t relevant in the 90s and the 2000s. Now, it seems to me that those are incredibly important questions for broadcasters, but they’re questions that aren’t asked now, and I think they were asked before, in the earliest days of religion... In religious broadcasting, and in the earliest days of broadcasting [...] the core question was: “what are we doing to the audience?”. They may have been right or wrong with some of the things or the conclusions they drew, but it was a question you no longer asked in the 1990s; you just asked: “how big is the audience?” You weighed the audience rather than asked what you’ve done to them.

(Andrew Graystone, author’s interview, 7 February 2011)

An additional evidence of this shift towards populist content is demonstrated through increasing tabloidisation of programme content. Michael Wakelin (author’s interview,

22 October 2010) argues that the treatment of religion has become increasingly sensationalist and seeks to stir controversy in order to drive up audience figures. He argues that programmes like *Jesus Boot Camp* (Channel 4) and the documentaries on Scientology, that focus on religious extremists and extremities, intend to sensationalise matters of religion, thus ‘treating religion like a problem’ and portray people with religious beliefs as being abnormal. He argues that religious debate shows like *Big Questions* regularly focus on creating a conflict of polarising views to create drama and stir audience’s interest, rather than creating a constructive discussion of religious matters that would benefit the viewers in their spiritual needs. Dame Joan Bakewell, former presenter of the BBC’s long-running religious documentary series *Heart of the Matter*, also referred to similar practices in justifying her reasons for leaving the programme in 2000:

During the late Nineties, the [BBC Religion & Ethics] department joined the ratings-chasing fever, coming up with proven audience grabbers – yet another half-baked theory about the Egyptian pyramids, or the latest update on the search for the Holy Grail. On *Heart of the Matter* I found myself debating the moral dilemma of body piercing. In trying to please the ratings tsars, the programme yielded its own high ground.

(Bakewell 2000)

As the Finnish devotional programming arrangement gives KT – itself a department within the Evangelical Lutheran Church – a central role and great institutional autonomy in the production of programmes, it is only logical that devotional programming dominates the schedules, as chart 6.10 demonstrates. Programming in this sub-category made up over half of the output in the late 1980s and 1990s, with its share rising to roughly two thirds of the output in the 2000s as a consequence of commercial broadcasters’ withdrawal from religious programming. There have been only a few attempts to reform the output and introduce new formats, the latest in 1997, when an ecumenical religious magazine *Credo – Minä uskon* was introduced. As there were insufficient resources to maintain the number of televised Sunday services, their number had to be subsequently halved (Väättäinen 2008). The low number of televised services provoked vocal opposition from regular viewers of the

Sunday services, and the issue was also regularly raised in the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The increased pressure from the Church and the audiences prompted Yleisradio and KT to cancel the programme in 2000 and restore the number of Sunday services (Väätäinen 2008). To date no further attempts have been made to reform KT's programming.

Yleisradio's own religious output consisted mainly of religious documentaries, magazines and concerts, as well as low levels of religious programming for schools and colleges. Their combined share has decreased in the recent years, as Yleisradio has been forced to undertake radical cost-cutting measures in the 2000s following the gradual discontinuation of the subsidies it received from commercial broadcasters. These payments were discontinued altogether at the digital switchover in 2007. Due to Yleisradio's financial difficulties and the central role of KT in the production of religious content, the proportion of programmes examining religious matters from a more ethical point of view has been low and declining further in the 2000s. Religious magazines and music have experienced a similar fate.

In spite of the aforementioned role of the Finnish religious production arrangement in protecting the equilibrium in Finnish religious programming from the decline that has taken place in the religious output of the UK channels, it has also prevented the genre from being modernised. Yleisradio has largely abstained from having editorial influence on devotional programming, and considers this provision by the Church to fulfil its statutory public service obligation in this respect. The substantial contribution of the Church to the production resources of devotional programmes<sup>83</sup> keeps Yleisradio satisfied with the status quo, and it sees little need to contribute to the provision of the genre by its own programming. The Evangelical Lutheran Church, in turn, has been unable – or unwilling – to introduce new forms of religious output, as any such attempts have been vetoed by a powerful lobby within the Church. As devotional programmes are produced by the Church, it has sought to preserve its

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<sup>83</sup> The annual budget of KT's television department was 348,914 EUR in 2005; most of this was spent towards religious programming on Yleisradio's channels (Kirkkohallitus 2006: 55).

own institutional interests in its programming, which has also prevented evolution within the genre.

Chart 6.9: Proportions of different sub-categories of religious output in the UK, all channels

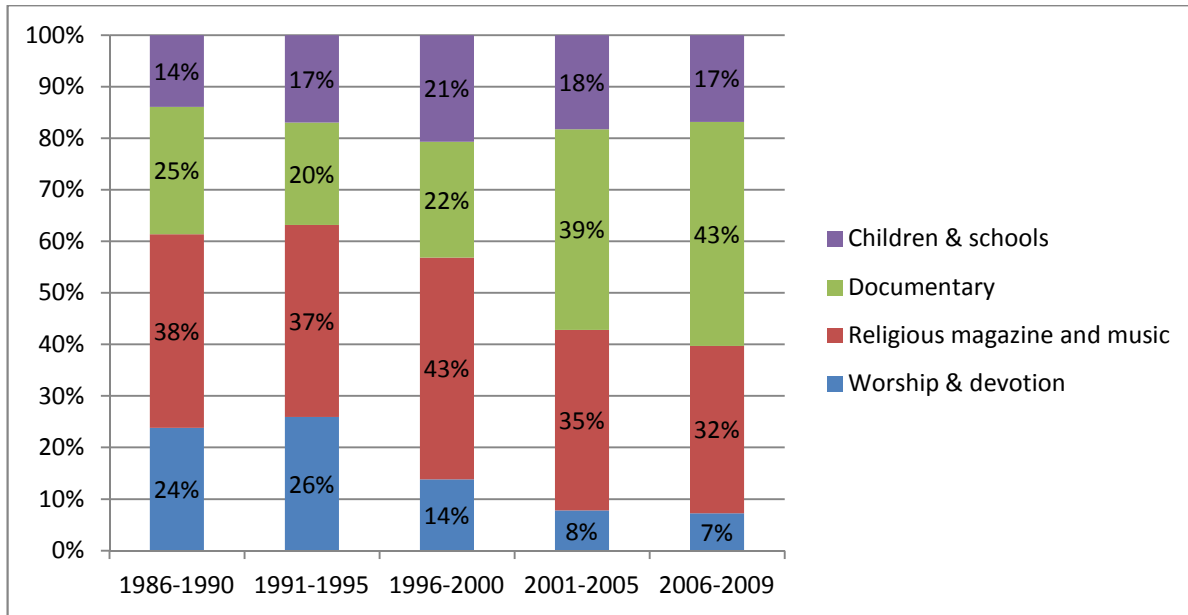
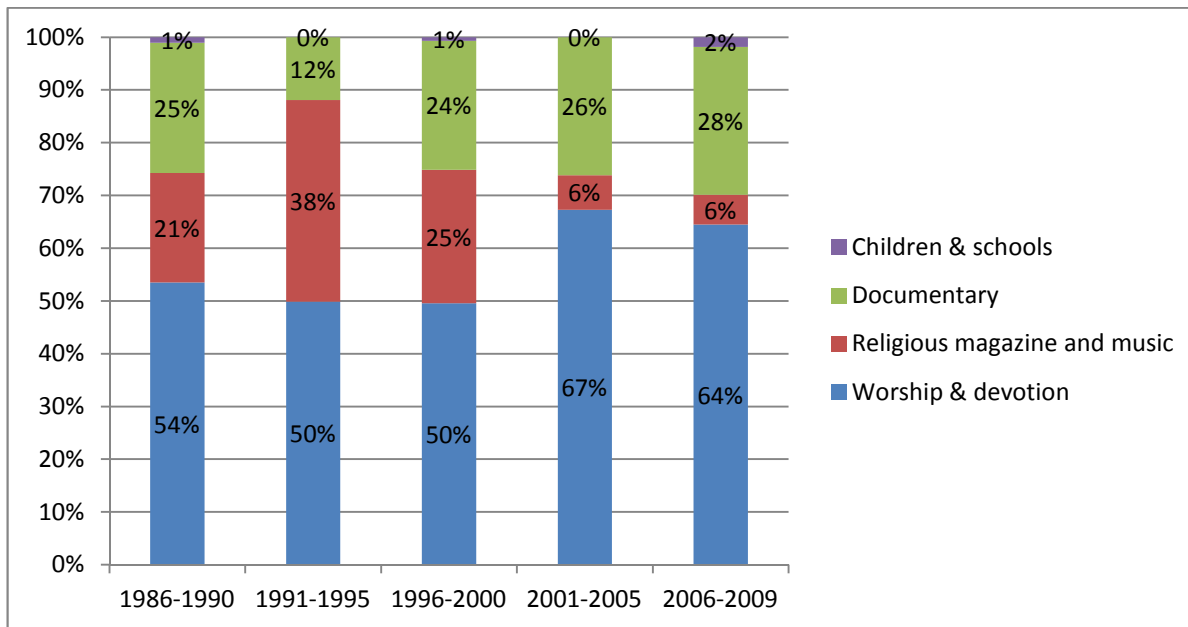


Chart 6.10: Proportions of different sub-categories of religious output in Finland, all channels



#### **6.4. Marginalisation in the scheduling of religious programmes**

Changes in scheduling of religious programmes demonstrate that a shift has taken place in broadcasters' institutional priorities in this respect. Evidence suggests that ratings, rather than social and cultural considerations, increasingly set the scheduling priorities of public and private broadcasters alike. Because of their low audience figures, religious programmes are now increasingly scheduled outside the peak time, which is reserved for populist output of wider appeal. Chart 6.11 illustrates that in the UK in particular an increasing proportion of output is scheduled in the margins of the schedule and in the hours of night (between 23:00 and 07:00), when audience numbers are at their lowest.

Religious programmes were traditionally broadcast mainly in two Sunday broadcasting slots, which were designed to provide a televised alternative to Christian worships. Morning programming was broadcast during the morning worship between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00. It consisted of televised church services, readings of religious texts and Sunday school programmes. The output in Finland was balanced towards the morning slot. The 'God Slot' closed period, coinciding with evensong around 18:40-19:15, was the classic domain for religious programming in the UK, with many long-running BBC and ITV series such as *Songs of Praise* and *Highway* being broadcast in this slot. This closed period was a product of the historical practice of BBC1 and ITV to broadcast only religious programming in this slot in order to protect evensong. Originally a statutory requirement, the closed period was formally withdrawn in 1972, but the slot was maintained by the BBC and ITV under a gentleman's agreement (Potter 1989: 72). While London Weekend Television had campaigned for the move of religious programming to daytime hours throughout the 1980s, the IBA refused to allow ITV companies to withdraw from the closed period (Potter 1989: 72; Bonner and Aston 1998: 125-30; Viney 1999: 16). In addition, the BBC's religious documentary strands *Everyman* and *Heart of the Matter* were broadcast in the late evening; at 22:30 or so. Nevertheless, in the late 1980s, 81 per cent of output in the UK and 97 per cent in Finland was broadcast between 09:00 and 21:00.

The loosening of public service commitments and the reduction of the interventionary powers granted to the regulator, both of which actions were a result of the Broadcasting Act 1990 and its provision to replace the IBA with the ITC, represented a punctuation in ITV's religious programming policy equilibrium in terms of scheduling. ITV companies had for long campaigned against the 'God Slot', as they felt that they were losing potential revenue by being obliged to air religious content that was not of particular interest for advertisers. One of the first actions of the new ITV Network Centre – which took over the duty of commissioning and scheduling of programmes from individual ITV network companies – was to cancel the 'God Slot' and the long-running religious programme *Highway*, and replace it with commercially more lucrative types of content in January 1993 (Wheeler 1997: 154; Bonner and Aston 1998: 130). ITV's religious output was now concentrated on the morning hours and, increasingly, the night-time hours<sup>84</sup>, with no programming at peak time (Ofcom 2004b). Perhaps not surprisingly, audiences for ITV's religious programmes contracted by 62 per cent between 1992 and 1993 (Viney 1999: 16).<sup>85</sup>

ITV's decision to withdraw from peak time religion was advanced by financial factors, which themselves were a by-product of the Broadcasting Act 1990 and its decree to sell ITV licences in an auction. The auction forced several ITV network companies (such as Yorkshire Television and Carlton) to pay excessive sums for their licences, which increased their pressures to maximise commercial profit by maximising audiences through populist programming strategies. As Fitzwalter (2008: 146) notes, the first programmes to be cut back were lower rating religious, arts and educational programmes. Moreover, the 1990s saw changes in the structure of the UK broadcasting market, with cable and satellite broadcasters and Channel 4 breaking

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<sup>84</sup> The proportion of religious programmes broadcast on ITV after 22:30 increased from 19 per cent in 1998 to 52 per cent in 2002 (Ofcom 2004c).

<sup>85</sup> Svennevig et al. (1988) note that in 1988 the combined audiences for these two peak time programmes accounted for nearly three quarters of the audiences for all religious programmes selected for their research. Their combined audience share was 68 per cent of all terrestrial audiences on the 18:45-19:15 Sunday slot.

ITV's advertising monopoly, which increased competition for advertising income. In terms of the Industrial Equilibrium Model, these financial changes punctuated ITV's equilibrium by deteriorating its commercial profitability, while its decision to move its religious programming to the fringes of its schedules was ITV's attempt to recover its profitability and state of equilibrium in this respect.

Due to the popular competition between ITV and BBC One, changes in ITV's conduct in this respect produced a feedback effect that gave its programmes a competitive advantage over the programming of BBC One in terms of viewing figures. The threat of losing viewers to ITV prompted the BBC to respond to the competitive challenge from the industry structure by adopting a similar populist programming strategy in peak time programming in order to maintain a favourable share of viewing (Born 2005: 62-73; Fitzwalter 2008: 148). Ernie Rea (author's interview, 12 September 2011) argues that the 1990s were a particularly difficult period for religion, with the BBC introducing more populist schedules. Getting religious programmes scheduled into peak time slots became increasingly difficult for the BBC Religion & Ethics department because of resistance from channel controllers. *Songs of Praise*, the BBC's only regular peak time religious series, was pushed to a slightly earlier 18:25-19:00 slot in response to the scheduling challenge from ITV already in 1993, and its broadcasting time has been mainly outside the peak time hours in the 2000s. While concerns about this marginalisation have been raised by both the CRAC and the BBC Governance Unit (2005a), which acknowledged that audiences for the programme had been affected as a result of the earlier and irregular scheduling, to date no efforts have been made to reinstate the peak time slot.

Chart 6.11: Proportion of religious programmes scheduled in different dayparts in the UK

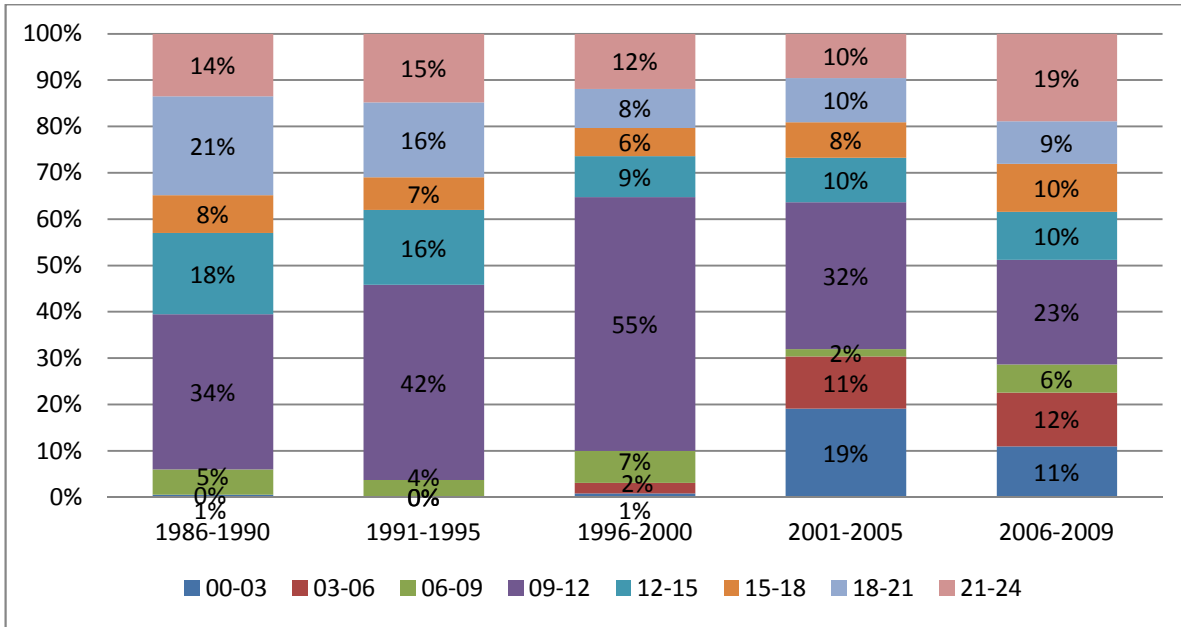
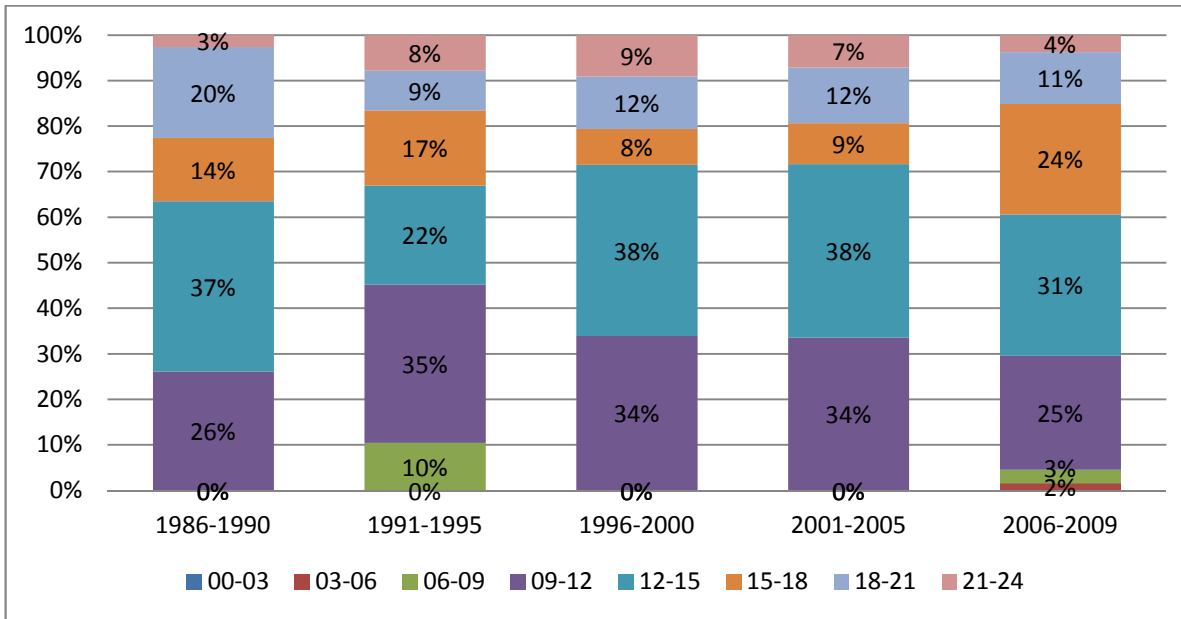


Chart 6.12: Proportion of religious programmes scheduled in different dayparts in Finland





The changing scheduling priorities of UK broadcasters are also manifested in their increasing tendency to schedule religion outside the peak time (18:00-22:30). While the proportion of peak time output accounted for 26 per cent in the late 1980s, its proportion had decreased to 18 per cent between 2006 and 2009, as chart 6.13 demonstrates. Concurrently, a growing proportion of output was scheduled in the so-called 'graveyard slot' (between the midnight and 06:00). While the proportion of output in this slot prior to the 2000s had been negligible, it increased to 20-30 per cent in the 2000s. Given the fact that the volume of religious output decreased by over a third between the late 1980s and late 2000s (see section 6.2), it can be concluded that peak time religious programmes have become a sporadic feature.

Scheduling practices in Finland have been subject to much less radical changes, as chart 6.12 illustrates. Over 90 per cent of programmes are still broadcast between 09:00 and 21:00, with the proportion of night-time output negligible. The dominance of devotional programming in the output, produced in cooperation with KT, provides a viable explanation for this, as it establishes the broadcasting times of devotional programmes to concur with services of worship. Thus, the Finnish devotional programme production arrangement, which gives the churches a high degree of editorial control over Yleisradio's devotional programming, can be considered to have been a major factor in maintaining consistency in the scheduling of these programmes. Religion is a typical daytime genre in Finland, with over half of the output being broadcast between 09:00 and 15:00. Sunday services, in particular, have ring-fenced broadcasting slots at 10:00. However, chart 6.14 demonstrates that the proportion of peak time (18:00-22:00) religious programming has decreased from 20 per cent between 1986 and 1990 to 12 per cent between 2006 and 2009, indicating that similar transformation in peak time programming priorities has taken place in Finnish broadcasting, with the peak time increasingly reserved for mass audience content.

Chart 6.13: Proportion of peak time (18:00-22:30) religious output in the UK

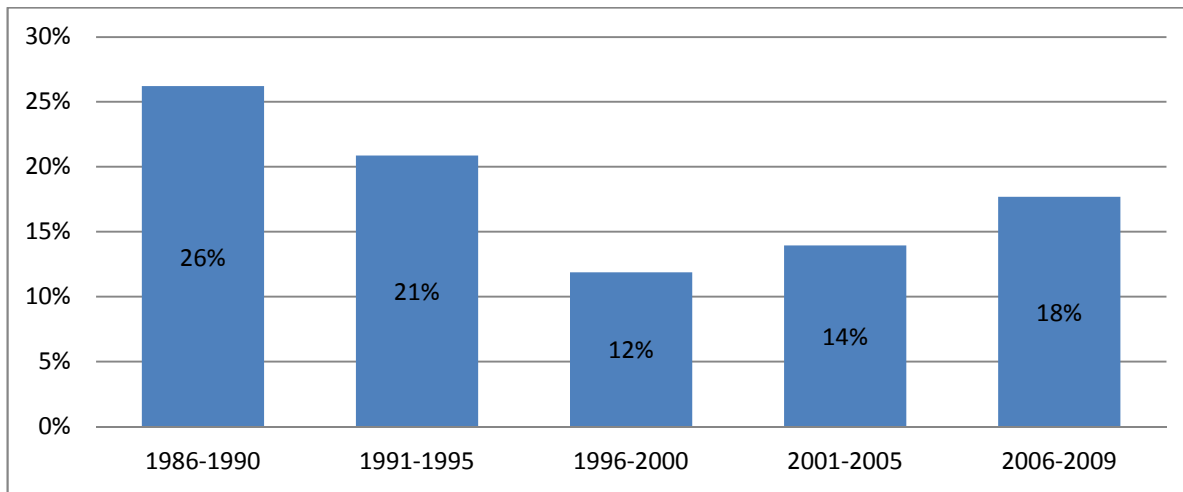
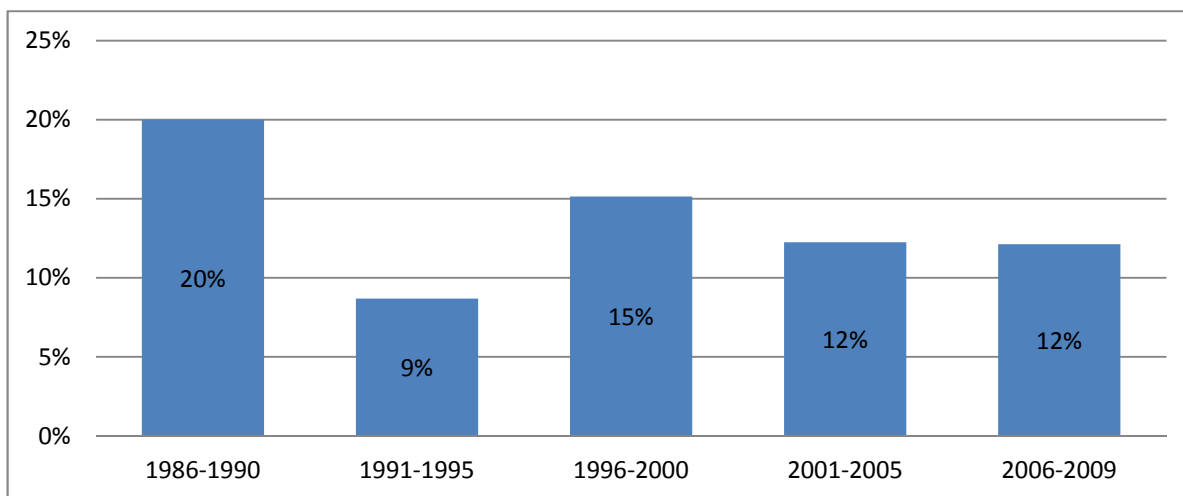


Chart 6.14: Proportion of peak time (18:00-22:00) religious output in Finland



As Svennevig et al. (1988: 9) argue, it cannot be assumed that there is a 'natural' constituency of viewers who both want to and can view religious programmes. Ratings for religious programmes (as is the case for all programmes) depend heavily on scheduling factors: time of transmission, opposing programmes on other channels, preceding and following programmes on the same and other channels, etc. (Svennevig et al. 1988: 9). The survey by Gunter and Viney (1994: 71) supports this argument: it reveals that UK respondents were the least likely to watch religious programmes scheduled before 13:00 or after 22:30 on Sundays, while a considerably higher proportion would be likely to watch religious programming at peak hours.

Andrew Graystone (author's interview, 7 February 2011) and Juha Rajamäki (author's interview, 18 April 2010) argue that the audience for off-peak programmes in particular was not determined mainly by the programme content, but by the inheritance effect of the previous programme; a popular programme scheduled before a religious programme will boost the ratings significantly.

For this reason, even a well-produced, popular type of programme risks attracting only low viewing figures if it is scheduled unfavourably. At an interview, Ernie Rea (author's interview, 12 September 2011) illustrated this by using *Heart and Soul*, an innovative attempt to reform and rejuvenate the religious programme genre to appeal to younger audiences, as an example. While the programme was critically acclaimed, its scheduling at 10:00 on Sunday morning meant that it could not reach young audiences effectively, and channel controllers were unwilling to give it a more favourable slot. Low audience figures eventually led to its cancellation. Rea argues that this was also the case with *Heart of the Matter*, which was losing its audiences as a result of later scheduling:

I quite frequently was faced with the argument that *Heart of the Matter* is losing audiences. And I would say: "well, it's losing audiences because you're scheduling it later and later at night, you know, you're not going to get the same audience at half past eleven at night as you get at half past nine".

(Ernie Rea, author's interview, 12 September 2011)

The combination of unfavourable scheduling and low viewing figures may lead to a 'vicious circle', in which each action is justified by the other, which can eventually lead to the programme being terminated. Evidence from both the UK and Finland suggests that by ill-considered institutionally driven scheduling choices, channel controllers and programming executives have – intentionally or unintentionally – contributed to the decline in the viewing of religious programming.

### 6.5. The origin of religious programming

Religious programmes reflect primarily national and regional religious culture. Therefore, it is not surprising that the vast majority of programming in both locations (97 per cent in the UK; 88 per cent in Finland) is of domestic origin. The proportion of imports detailed in charts 6.15 and 6.16 remained low over the research period, and there is no evidence of a similar marketisation-driven imperative for increased use of imported programming as was manifest in children’s programming. While the number of religious broadcasting networks and production companies producing programmes for international distribution (such as GOD TV) has increased significantly since the 1990s, the research data do not indicate that their multiplication would have been reflected in terrestrial broadcasters’ programming. The substance of imported programming consists of documentaries, while confessional programming is predominantly produced in a national context.

Chart 6.15: Origin of religious programmes in the UK, 1986-2009

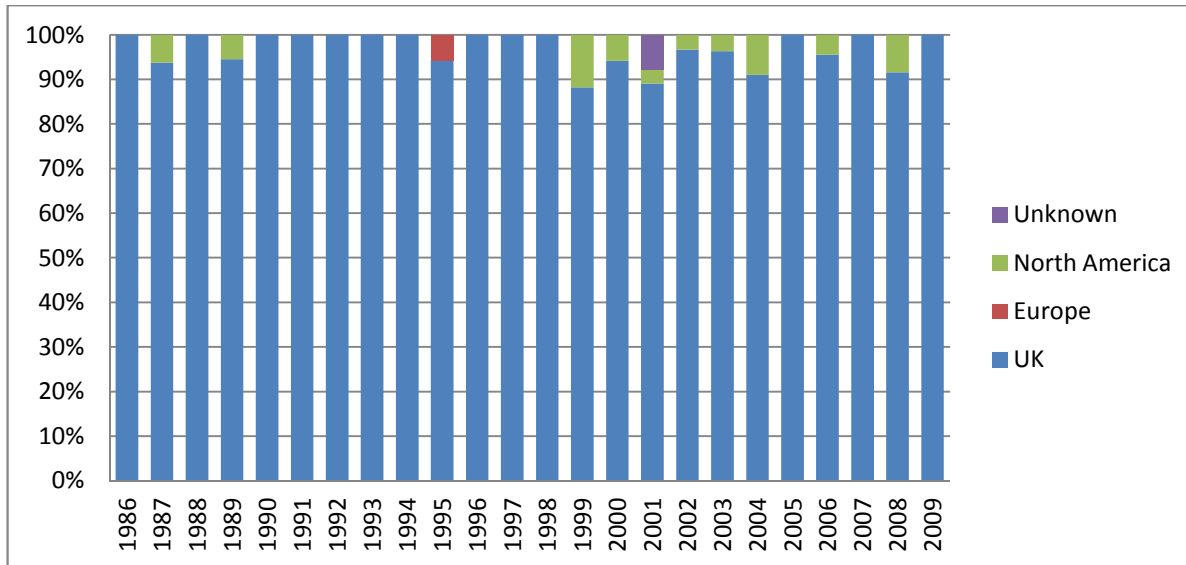
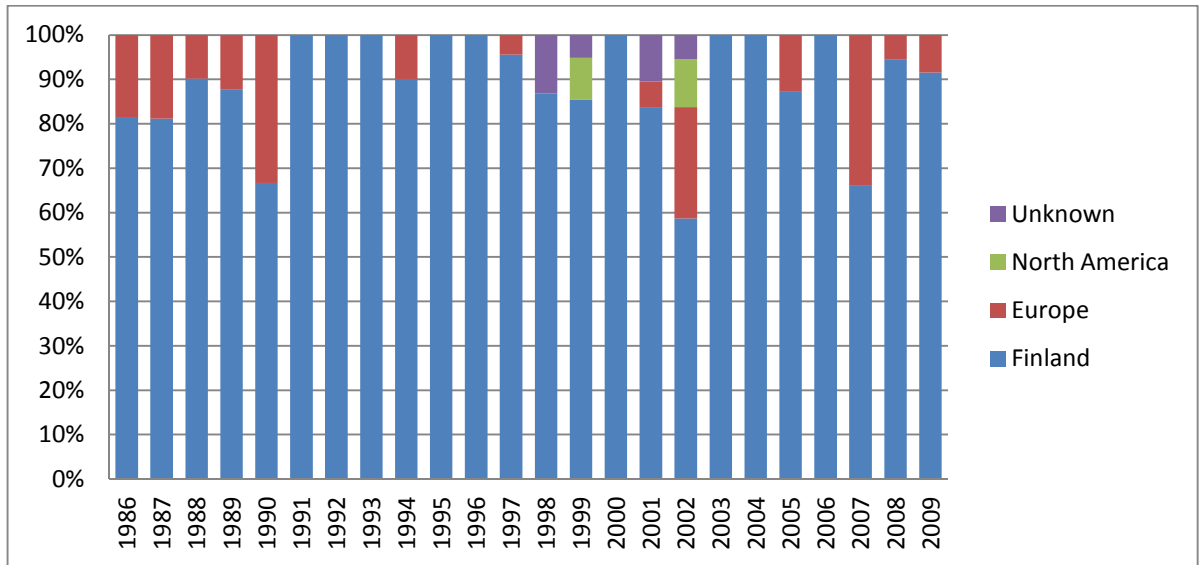


Chart 6.16: Origin of religious programmes in Finland, 1986-2009



### 6.6. Swedish-language religious programming in Finland

As Swedish-language programming constitutes a 'minority within a minority', its provision is even more limited and infrequent than programming in Finnish. As was the case with children's programmes, commercial broadcasters have never catered for the Swedish-speaking minority, as their audiences are too small to attract advertisers. Consequently, all Swedish-language religious content in Finland has been provided by Yleisradio. It provided these programmes on its two main channels until the digital switchover in 2007 (with much of the content being simulcasted on FST5), after which they have been broadcast exclusively on the Swedish-language digital channel FST5. Programming consisted mainly of televised worship services (around 8 hours annually (Klemets 2007: 193-205)), with a low and infrequent provision of documentaries and talk shows on religious matters. The weekly volume of output averaged 39 minutes over the research period.

The figures represented in table 6.4 (which have already been included in the analysis of the output of religious programming in Finland) indicate that the provision has remained relatively unchanged over the years, and demonstrate that Yleisradio has not compromised its statutory duty of providing comprehensive programming for

the Swedish-speaking minority in this respect. While average audiences for the programmes were small (in tens of thousands in the mid-2000s, on a par with other Swedish-language programmes (Klemets 2007: 193-205)), there is no evidence of programming being marginalised in terms of scheduling or resources. Continuity in this respect reflects the fact that service for the Swedish-speaking population enjoys a particular protection from the political elite (Jääsaari 2007: 103); from the Swedish People's Party in particular, which has an influential position in Finnish politics in spite of its small size.

Table 6.4: Average weekly hours of Swedish-language religious programming in Finland

Period	Hours
1986-1990	00:44
1991-1995	00:25
1996-2000	00:57
2001-2005	00:23
2006-2009	00:40

(N.b.: Given the small size of the sample, these figures are only suggestive.)

## 6.7. Conclusion

The study has exposed a number of changes in institutional priorities of both public and private broadcasters, whose effect on religious programmes have been broadly negative. These changes suggest that religious programmes occupy a less central role in the agendas of UK and Finnish broadcasters than was the case prior to the introduction of the neo-liberal policy paradigm. In particular, pluralistic provision of religious programming is considered less important, with the provision on public channels – and even on alternative platforms – deemed to satisfy the social need for such programming. The changes also indicate that the public service broadcasting agenda is increasingly influenced by popular tastes of mass audiences rather than serving social and cultural objectives, as religious programming is increasingly being pushed to the margins because of its presumed low popular demand.

During the PSB orthodoxy until the 1980s, religious programmes were considered an axiomatic part of PSB provision and all UK and Finnish broadcasters provided religious programmes. In the UK, their provision on commercial channels was secured by regulatory measures. MTV in Finland had no obligation for religious programming but it nevertheless considered it necessary in order to demonstrate its commitment to public service values, which was part of its broader strategy to gain a full institutional independence of Yleisradio's control. Broadcasters' commitment to religious output was manifested in the volume and diversity of output, which comprised a variety of programme types and formats. The UK output was particularly high, with all three broadcasters providing programming. The programmes received favourable broadcasting slots, and both the BBC1 and ITV reserved their Sunday evening peak time 'God Slot' for competing strands of religious programming.

Empirical data demonstrate that religious programmes benefited from the closed nature of the broadcasting market, where certain broadcasters were granted national monopolies on terrestrial television advertising, as the fact that advertising time was limited facilitated broadcasters to sell advertising to religious programmes too. While religious programmes were not a genre particularly favoured by commercial channels because of their limited commercial exploitation potential, their provision was nevertheless sustained by regulatory measures and the positive externalities stemming from these programmes for the broadcasters. Income from commercially lucrative types of output could also be used to offset losses in religious programming owing to lesser commercial pressures. In the absence of shocks that would have forced commercial channels to change their conduct, their programming strategies remained in the state of equilibrium, and only minor changes took place in their religious programming.

Transformations in broadcasters' institutional priorities with regards to religious programming began to unearth in the 1990s. Examination of the changes through the analytical lens of the Industrial Equilibrium Model reveals that commercial broadcasters' institutional equilibria was punctuated by competitive pressures emanating from the expansion of the commercial broadcasting sector, facilitated by

the liberalisation of broadcasting in the 1990s and emerging competition from channels on cable, satellite and DTT platforms. Notwithstanding its regulatory measures designed to protect the provision of religious programming, the Broadcasting Act 1990 served as an underlying catalyst in the UK in this process, as the auctioning of ITV licences had seen many companies submitting bids beyond their means, and they were now obliged to compete for advertising revenue with the newly-independent Channel 4. Commercial broadcasters responded to these competitive pressures by beginning to withdraw from their previous public service oriented programming strategy and shifting their focus to programming with higher commercial potential. In Finland, the introduction of Nelonen and commercial competition between commercial broadcasters in 1997 represented the punctuation that forced MTV to reassess its previous programming strategy, which was to a large extent a production of – and facilitated by – MTV's monopolistic status in Finnish commercial television market. As intensifying competition created great financial difficulties to the company, it was forced to adopt a more commercial programming strategy in order to recover its profitability and discontinue its religious provision in the early 2000s.

In the UK, the aforementioned commercial pressures to adopt programming strategies that sidelined religion were largely restrained by regulatory measures. Thus, the Communications Act 2003 represented a critical juncture in UK religious programming, as it removed commercial channels' quotas for religion, thus allowing ITV and Channel 5 to cancel their regular religious provisions to little objection from Ofcom. Ofcom's own method of setting regulatory priorities indicates an increasing focus on consumerist preferences rather than aiming to secure provision for a comprehensive range of audiences and tastes. Ofcom's second PSB review (Ofcom 2008b: 33) concluded that owing to low viewing figures of religious programmes and its presumed low importance for PSB purposes, less public intervention would be needed for this genre despite the fact that 68 per cent of respondents in its PSB survey considered it important to maintain at least the current volume of provision on main channels (Ofcom 2008a: 44). Following the withdrawal of ITV and Channel 5



from religious programming, the BBC and Channel 4 have been left as the only terrestrial broadcasters in the UK with regular religious output in their schedules.

The BBC's religious policies underwent changes in the 1990s and 2000s too. These changes were to extent results of the feedback effects of the commercial channels' decision to focus their peak time programming strategies on populist content, which forced the BBC to respond by changing its conduct and adopting a similar strategy that gave priority to populist types of programming over religious content. However, empirical data demonstrate that the introduction of the Thatcher government's ideologically-driven neo-liberal imperatives, introduced mainly through changes in the Corporation's administration, acted as key catalysts in the process. A new institutional culture was introduced by the Corporation's Director-General John Birt in the early 1990s. Markets, competition, efficiency and the pursuit for commercial activities took a prominent position in the Corporation's institutional culture, which adopted various types of measurements as a yardstick of success in programming. Unlike the old public service paradigm that was based primarily on normative knowledge on the social and cultural needs of the audience as members of the society, this culture of measurement gave high priority to ratings and other types of quantitative information on the relationship between the programmes and their audiences, with 'public accountability' being the key objective of the Corporation. This measurement discourse translated as obsession with ratings and cost-efficiency, as the BBC was anxious to maintain its share of viewing while trying to fight off earlier accusations for inefficiency. Pressures grew within the BBC Religion & Ethics department to make programming mass audience oriented and to reach new audiences that had been considered to be the most distant from the BBC's religious programming, while simultaneously keeping production costs under control. As the BBC's institutional focus shifted towards programmes of mass appeal, the status of religious programmes within the Corporation began to wane and they lost out to populist programming in terms of production resources and scheduling. Empirical data demonstrate the BBC's religious programming has declined since the 1980s, and less programming is scheduled at peak hours.

In terms of the output, the aforementioned institutional shifts are manifested in three major trends in the output. First, in spite of the significant growth in the volume of output, facilitated by the expansion of broadcasting hours and introduction of new PSB channels on DTT platform, the overall volume of religious output has declined since the 1980s, indicating that the broadcasters' current programming strategies accommodate religious programmes uneasily. Private broadcasters; ITV and Channel 5 in the UK and MTV3 and Nelonen in Finland, have all but discontinued their religious provisions. This has also resulted in a regression in the diversity of programming, with certain sub-categories of religious programming (e.g. televised acts of worships and other types of devotional programming in the UK and religious magazines in Finland) becoming extinct. Second, changes have taken place in the structure of output reflecting broadcasters' increasing desire for higher audiences and cost-efficiency. Third, broadcasters' scheduling priorities indicate increasing populist tendencies, with peak hours increasingly reserved for mass-audience programming and religious programmes being pushed to the fringes of the schedule. The aforementioned changes were more pronounced in the UK, where transformations in the industry structures and broadcasting policies have been more penetrating, and have acted as a key catalyst in the process.

Given the pervasive nature of the changes, it is remarkable that there is little evidence of these changes taking place in Yleisradio. While the overall level of output has remained low compared with the provision of the BBC, the provision of religious programmes on Yleisradio's channels, however, has been mainly unaffected, and there is even a slight rise in the volume of provision since the 1980s. The institutional cooperation between Yleisradio and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in production of devotional programmes has clearly maintained the equilibrium in Yleisradio's devotional programming and safeguarded the output from the effects of marketisation. The fact that programming receives a significant part of its production resources from the Evangelical Lutheran Church (which itself collects the funds from its members and businesses through the church tax) has certainly cushioned the programming from the effects of recent cuts in Yleisradio's resources. The Act on Yleisradio 1993, which mandates the company to provide devotional programming,

has also strengthened the institutional status of religious programming within the company. On the other hand, Satu Väätäinen (author's interview, 22 January 2011) argues that devotional programmes in particular are produced with such low production resources that any further cuts in them would simply not be possible without cutting the volume of provision, which would conflict with Yleisradio's statutory duty to provide devotional services.

In spite of the benefits of the active involvement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in programme production, the production arrangement has also held back development within the genre. While the traditional religious programming receives a strong mandate from its audiences (Juha Rajamäki, author's interview, 18 April 2010; Ari Meriläinen, author's interview, 19 October 2011), its forms and modes of address date back to the 1960s and are in urgent need of reform. If no attempts are made to modernise the content and address new audiences, religious programming in Finland risks becoming a relic that fails to engage younger viewers in particular. KT's devotional programmes have not recently attempted to introduce new modes of addressing religious audiences, nor have they attempted to attract new audiences outside the core viewers. The problem here is of institutional nature: due to the fact that programming is produced within the Evangelical Lutheran Church, attempts to modernise programming have been terminated by the powerful lobby within the Church, which considers the provision of traditional devotional programmes as paramount to other forms of religious programming. The central role of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in programme production also raises a question about the editorial impartiality in programming. Satu Väätäinen (author's interview, 22 January 2011) argues that the arrangement allows the Evangelical Lutheran Church to exercise editorial power over the agenda of religious programmes, which puts religious programming at risk of becoming an instrument of the Church in maintaining the status quo rather than dealing with challenging and controversial issues associated with the Church and matters of religion. These problems highlight the need for a more extensive provision of religious programming produced independently from the Church.

## 7. Conclusions

### 7.1. Introduction

This study set out to examine the impact of the neo-liberal policy paradigm on minority interest programming policies of UK and Finnish broadcasting institutions. These changes were addressed under the overarching concept of neo-liberal marketisation (Murdock and Golding 1999, 2001; Murdock 2004). The purpose of this research was twofold. First, the study aimed to provide an enriched empirical and theoretical understanding of the consequence of marketisation for children's and religious programmes in the terrestrial broadcasting networks of the UK and Finland. In addition, the aim of the study was also to contribute to the provision of a revised theoretical and pragmatic model of the relationship between PSB and minority interest programming in the 21<sup>st</sup> century public service media environment. The final chapter of this thesis revisits the research questions raised in chapter 1.

As the analysis by Murdock and Golding (Murdock and Golding 1999, 2001; Murdock 2004) demonstrates, marketisation is a complex process with socio-political, economic, institutional and ideological dimensions. Its impact is also reflected in changes in the objectives, norms and values associated with broadcasting, transforming them to match the needs of the capitalist free market. Thus, its impact extends well beyond the broadcasting policies and formal institutional structures of broadcasting and regulatory organisations. The *culture* of marketisation (including the norms and values associated with it) has produced extensive changes in broadcasting institutions that are not visible in organisational strategies or written policies. As was demonstrated through the evidence of this research in chapters 5 and 6, marketisation has legitimised certain consumerist and corporate values and goals in the institutional cultures of broadcasting organisations, which have also transformed the output of children's and religious programming.

As this final chapter demonstrates, these transformations extend to the very conception of PSB. Marketisation-driven imperatives have widened the gap between the conceptual, ideal model of PSB and its practical application. In particular, they have resulted in a shift in the way priorities are set within the model: while they were

previously based on the views of the political and cultural elite on audience's needs, the consumerist interpretation of PSB purposes draws its substance and priorities from the preferences of the audience. While this is a seemingly democratic method of setting priorities, it leads to a bias towards populist preferences and may discriminate against the preferences of the 'silent minorities', with potentially hazardous social consequences for these groups.

## **7.2. From public service to serving the public: marketisation and institutional transformations in the UK and Finland**

A comparative analysis of changes in broadcasting policies of the UK and Finland reveals that notwithstanding significant national differences in political environments and traditions, marketisation-driven transformations in broadcasting policies and their impact on broadcasting institutions have been broadly similar in both the UK and Finland. Both the UK and Finland historically featured broadcasting policies, whose substance was tailored for national social and cultural interests. As van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003: 191-4) note, this pre-marketised phase of public service media policy was dominated by social and political rather than economic or technological strategic concerns, and aimed primarily to strengthen the democratic structures of the civil society. The central role of PSBs and the limitations placed on the institutional independence of – and on the scope of operational space allowed for – commercial broadcasting was considered necessary to promote these goals. In the UK, the ITV network served as an alternative to the public broadcaster; the BBC. Its public service agenda was maintained by a proactive regulation of the ITA/IBA, whose authority derived from the extensive powers it held to manipulate the schedules of ITV companies, but also from the allocation process of the periodic ITV franchisees through a 'beauty contest' that allowed the ITA/IBA to grant licences only to the candidates that demonstrated commitment to PSB in their programming. The status of MTV in Finland in providing public service was more auxiliary, as the company's ultimate role was to supplement the funding of the PSB, Yleisradio, which had a central role in the Finnish broadcasting system. The fact that the continuation and

independence of commercial broadcasting was still questioned by several politicians and Yleisradio's administration nevertheless acted as an incentive for MTV to adopt a public service oriented programming strategy. In both countries, negative externalities caused by commercial competition were eliminated by granting commercial broadcasters national (Finland) or regional (UK) monopolies on television advertising, thus allowing these broadcasters to gain a maximum advertising income and subsidise the production of minority interest content by income from mass audience programmes. In such a system, the demand for advertising time regularly exceeded the supply, facilitating the commercial broadcasters to maintain artificially high advertising rates.

This public service orthodoxy persisted until the 1980s, when the neo-liberal agenda first entered the broadcasting policy discourse. Terrestrial broadcasting in both countries was gradually opened up for commercial competition and significant deregulatory changes were made in regulatory policies in the 1990s. The period featured a significant increase in the independence of the commercial broadcasting sector, whose expansion and rising influence prompted politicians to introduce more articulated guidelines to avoid accusations of arbitrariness in regulatory decisions. In the UK, the Broadcasting Act 1990 acted as a critical juncture in this respect, as it opened up the commercial broadcasting sector to competition and introduced a regulatory reform that significantly reduced the ITC's interventionist powers in television content regulation. In Finland, commercial competition commenced only when Nelonen was launched in 1997. However, MTV3 had already been granted institutional independence from Yleisradio's control in the 1993 Channel Reform, which granted the company a greater degree of freedom in programming that was allowed to the ITV network broadcasters in the UK. Minority interest provision was secured in both countries by introducing programming obligations in the broadcasting licences of commercial broadcasters. These consisted of detailed quotas in the UK, while in Finland they were articulated in more vague terms, reflecting path dependence in the historical light-touch regulatory approach.

The neo-liberal policy position was advanced further in the mid-1990s by the then-incumbent political administrations' desire to foster economic growth through creating commercial opportunities for new entrants in the telecommunications sector. By then, the neo-liberal discourse had practically penetrated the political spectrum, and the leading parties of the political Left in both Finland and the UK had accepted and adopted the neo-liberal policy position that economic growth in the audiovisual and telecommunications sectors can be best fostered through greater commercial competition and lesser public intervention. Broadcasting policies introduced in this period were nominally designed to meet the challenges set by the looming digitalisation and emerging convergence in broadcasting technologies, but their seemingly neutral, technological framing provided an apt vehicle for the polity to promote the neo-liberal agenda in communication policy considerations. Policy focus shifted towards promoting economic growth, consumer welfare replaced the previous social and cultural considerations, while traditional approaches to content regulation began to be increasingly considered hindering growth in the commercial broadcasting market. Meanwhile, the principles of public service, 'culture' and equality between regions and social groups were discreetly faded into the background in broadcasting policy considerations.

The aforementioned shift in the policy focus has led to a gradual relaxation of programming obligations from commercial broadcasters and an increasing ideological polarisation between public and commercial PSBs. The enactment of the Communications Act 2003 represented a key branching point in the continuity of UK commercial broadcasting policies. It replaced the ITC with a convergence regulator Ofcom, which was no longer mandated to promote the provision of most types of minority interest content, but introduced a system of co-regulation that allowed commercial broadcasters to steer themselves further away from the public service paradigm. In Finland, where commercial broadcasters were allowed much greater independence to set their programming strategies, changes have been more incremental-evolutionary. Nevertheless, the digital broadcasting licences granted to commercial broadcasters in the late 1990s and 2000s contained less public service obligations than was required from these companies during the analogue era,

sending a signal to these companies that they were permitted to set their programming strategies with a lesser public intervention.

The key legacy of this liberalisation has undoubtedly been the unprecedented growth in the number of commercial broadcasters, with evident repercussions on the industry structure. The increasing number of channels and the following abundance in available viewing options has led to an inevitable fragmentation of audiences, while the new entrants have attracted viewing from the 'old' public service channels. This has posed a great challenge for commercial PSBs in particular, as their previously secure commercial revenues have seen significant reductions following the introduction of competition in the television advertising markets.

As the analysis utilising the Industrial Equilibrium Model demonstrated, these changes in the industry structure – the competitive challenge – punctuated the equilibria of PSBs by rendering their conduct (i.e. their institutional strategies) impracticable for the emerging competitive market. Faced with the threat of potentially declining viewing figures and revenues, they responded by gradually departing from the public service paradigm in their programming and adopting increasingly similar populist programming strategies that targeted the majority's preferences, as suggested in the theory of 'ruinous competition' by van der Wurff and van Cuilenburg (2001). The gradual deregulation in programming obligations acted as a key catalyst in the process, as it has removed the regulatory obligations that previously served to counterbalance such commercial tendencies in programming, thus facilitating the implementation of programming strategies that prioritise commercial goals over public service. As more broadcasters aimed at the lowest common denominator in their programming, both popular and commercial competitive pressures have only grown further.

This process has had the strongest impact on commercial ('hybrid') PSBs, which featured a provision of a wide range of socially valuable but commercially unprofitable types of programming maintained by various regulatory measures. The gradual relaxation of these measures, together with the intensification of competition in the broadcasting sector, has prompted these broadcasters to adopt a more commercial



agenda. Empirical data demonstrate that these broadcasters are increasingly unwilling to contribute to minority programme provision. This indicates that the time is running out for this model of PSB, at least in its past scope. The reluctance of policy-makers to impose further public service obligations on commercial broadcasters indicates that there is a mutual understanding on this matter. While it could be argued that the Finnish public service arrangement has always been based on a monocentric model, in which Yleisradio had a central role in providing PSB programming, the formal and informal public service obligations imposed on MTV/MTV3 – and its active role in provision of public service content on the other hand – suggest that MTV had an important role in public service provision. However, MTV's public service obligations have been cut further in the 2000s, notwithstanding the fact that it is no longer obliged to subsidise Yleisradio for not having to contribute to the delivery of certain types of public service programming. As Jääsaari (2007: 174) notes, such public service duties became increasingly to be seen as Yleisradio's sole responsibility in the course of the digitalisation process, which saw commercial broadcasters' public service obligations being reduced further.

The UK policy has taken similar course in this regard, although changes in the UK are more radical owing to the past significance of commercial broadcasters in public service provision. The decline in the minority programming obligations of UK commercial PSBs indicates that the UK PSB model is shifting from the ideal of pluralistic to a dualistic model, in which the public PSBs (the BBC and Channel 4) are considered to have the main duty to provide public service programming, while private broadcasters are allowed to devise their programming policies with lesser public intervention. While Ofcom's first PSB review (Ofcom 2005a) made a radical proposal for public service provision through a Public Service Publisher; a commissioning and publishing body for the digital world to maintain plurality in provision, the second review (Ofcom 2008b) adopts a more conservative approach by acknowledging that the BBC and Channel 4 will be the primary providers of public service content, while ITV and Channel 5 play gradually lesser roles in this respect. Thus, the past UK 'idealism' in the regulatory approach, reflected by a diverse range of programming obligations, is being replaced by a 'pragmatist' policy paradigm, in

which regulatory obligations with regards to content regulation focuses on safeguarding certain programming categories, whose pluralistic provision is considered important (e.g. news). The political administration and Ofcom increasingly acknowledge – following an extensive lobbying by commercial PSBs – that an extensive provision of public service programming is unfeasible in the current competitive business environment, and that ITV in particular has been only willing to invest the cash value equivalent of the analogue spectrum it was allocated in public service programming (Conlan and Sweney 2008; Fitzsimmons 2009). In so doing, the gap between the cultural forms of commercial and public service television is being broadened further.

On an ideological level, marketisation has facilitated the rise of populist and consumerist emphases in broadcasters programming policy discourses. Such emphases are closely associated with the reorientation of the public service concept, which has introduced a new layer to the previous interpretation of PSB, with the concept increasingly associated with a duty to fulfil the ‘wants’ of the audiences (Syvertsen 1999: 6-7). While certain latent populist tendencies could be identified in the programming policies even prior to this shift, the politically reinforced hegemony of the public service paradigm effectively suppressed the most blatant commercial excesses. The neo-liberal shift in the media policy focus examined in chapter 2, which saw the rise of economic and consumerist goals in media policy considerations, legitimised the populist audience-as-consumers agenda in broadcasting. As was examined in chapter 4, economic and technological objectives, i.e. national governments’ desire to promote growth in the telecommunications sector, served as primary stimuli for this shift in both the UK and Finland. National governments of the UK and Finland began to consider content regulation as something hindering economic growth, and priority was given to economic welfare over social-cultural and political welfare where priorities had to be set (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 198-9). The liberalisation of the terrestrial broadcasting sectors of the UK and Finland, the consequent abundance in viewing options and the intensification in commercial and popular competition have acted as key catalysts in this process that has facilitated the rise in the ideological preference to address the audience as a

collective of consumer groups whose individual preferences broadcasters cater for, thus rendering the past paternalist practices in programming mostly impracticable.

This has resulted in a shift in the balance of public and private interests towards private interests, which has aided to uplift the commercial paradigm to an equal, if not superior, status vis-à-vis the public service paradigm. As Mäntymäki (2006: 30) argues, the preconditions of the commercial business environment; competition, commercialism and consumerism, are considered to apply to public service institutions too. They also provide a fertile ground for consumerist and neo-liberal arguments that consumers are the only relevant arbiters of taste. Such a position dismisses the traditional value hierarchies that favoured certain forms of content over others, but suggests that viewers should be able to make their viewing decisions based on their individual preferences; 'to be free to watch what they want' (Syvertsen 2003: 163-4). Consequently, the demarcation line between public service and commercial forms of television (i.e. the dual standard of television examined in chapter 2) has faded, and public service increasingly lends from the cultural standards of commercial television.

The neo-liberal shift in the broadcasting policy focus that altered the equilibrium from social and cultural considerations towards economic and commercial interests has also seen an increase in the preference to measure the operation of broadcasting institutions – and to define the norms and virtues of an 'ideal' organisation in particular – using a commercial and economic discourse. Analysis of this shift through the Industrial Equilibrium Model demonstrates that such discourse was installed in public service broadcasting institutions in particular through government's policy measures, while changes in the industry structure were influential in this process too. Public broadcasters' finances have been taken under a greater scrutiny. They have been encouraged or compelled to adopt administrative structures typical for commercial companies and curb their spending in the name of efficiency, while simultaneously subsidising their income through commercial ventures. The attempts of the Thatcher government to change the BBC's administration in the late 1980s and early 1990s; the appointment of the Corporation's pro-marketisation Director-

Generals Michael Checkland and John Birt, serve as examples of such a direct political influence. As examined in the empirical chapters, Birt's *Producer Choice* project, together with his preoccupation with measuring the output using various economic yardsticks, greatly changed the Corporation's institutional culture. Changes made in Yleisradio's administration in 1993-1994 in order to introduce more business-like institutional structures and management culture for the company serve as an example of parallel changes in Finland. Economic incentives – some created by the government through cuts in public broadcasters' core funding – served as additional incentives in the process.

Both private and public broadcasters have responded to these challenges by adopting certain institutional values and practices previously associated exclusively with the culture of commercial television. Their conduct is influenced by economic concerns like efficiency, value for money, audit and accountability, which increasingly set the frames for programme production and provision. While economic constraints have always influenced programme production, empirical data demonstrate that these considerations have since risen in prominence to the previous social and cultural considerations in programming. This has resulted in a rise in the preference for a discourse of measurement within broadcasting companies: programming is measured in various quantitative and qualitative terms, but the discourse is less concerned with the social and cultural externalities the programming produces to the audiences. While there has been no outright shift to the ratings discourse in that ratings would be used as the sole measure to set broadcasters' programming priorities, they nevertheless have recently gained an increasing influence in informing schedules, and in setting the priorities of broadcasters in terms of resource allocation and scheduling. As was evident with the cases of Yleisradio's children's programmes and the BBC's religious programmes, while these broadcasters showed little interest in ratings in the 1980s, they have since demonstrated an increasing awareness in this respect, with evidence of attempts to accommodate populist tendencies in their programming to improve ratings. Audience figures – whether simply anticipated or real – are increasingly used to justify production resource allocation, even though audience figures per se do not give much indication about the ability of the

programme to meet PSB objectives. As demonstrated by the BBC's model for public value assessment (BBC 2004: 87), cost-per-viewer is now considered as a key component of what the Corporation considers to constitute public value.<sup>86</sup>

### **7.3. Marketisation and its impact on minority interest programming: summary of empirical findings**

In terms of children's and religious programmes, the shifts in institutional policies and strategies outlined in the previous section are manifested in changes in the volume, content, origin and scheduling of the programming. It is noteworthy, however, that while a number of aforementioned changes were observable in children's and religious programming in both the UK and Finland, they did not form a linear pattern, but significant disparities between the countries, channels and programme types were found. This indicates that there is no universal trend applicable for all types of minority interest content on all channels even in national contexts where marketisation has produced parallel institutional changes. Programme type (children's vs. religious) and method of funding (public vs. commercial) turned out to be the differentiating factors, in addition to the predictable national differences stemming from different institutional traditions and environments surrounding these programmes. Religious programmes were more vulnerable to these changes, as was programming on commercial channels. One important finding was that the public service status itself did not nurture minority interest content, as was demonstrated by Channel 5's ongoing commitment to children's programming in contrast to Channel 4's practical withdrawal from the genre in the 2000s.<sup>87</sup> This section summarises the common patterns in marketisation-driven changes in programming observed in this study.

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<sup>86</sup> In Finland, popular criticism about Yleisradio's spending on its Swedish programming – disproportionate to the proportion of Swedish-speaking population – reveals a similar discourse.

<sup>87</sup> Similarly, children's programming has maintained its presence on Finnish commercial channels' daily schedules, while ITV1 – which still has more extensive and articulated public service obligations than its Finnish counterparts – has practically withdrawn from the genre.

The most evident – but perhaps not unexpected – of these patterns is that more radical changes had taken place in commercial broadcasters' programming policies than in the programming policies of publicly funded broadcasters. While some of the changes in the patterns of children's and religious programming examined in chapters 5 and 6 were observed in publicly funded broadcasters' schedules, their extent was significantly more limited than was observed on broadcasters with commercial funding even in the UK, where commercial terrestrial channels are still formally considered an extension of PSB. This demonstrates that the argument of most public broadcasters adopting the compensation strategy, put forward by Siune and Hultén (1998) and Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008: 340-44), applies to minority interest programming as well. This discursive convergence has enabled PSBs to defend their position in both fronts, but has also introduced certain marketised imperatives in broadcasters' policies, resulting in changes in institutional priorities in public service broadcasting, as will be examined below. On commercial channels, on the other hand, the overall volume of children's and religious programmes has declined, the diversity of the output has dropped and the remaining output has been marginalised to the fringes of the schedules in the 2000s. This manifests the impact of the aforementioned policy changes that saw the broadcasting market being liberalised and commercial PSBs' broadcasting obligations gradually lifted, with the resulting intensification of competition for commercial income punctuating the equilibria of these broadcasters by rendering their past public service strategies impracticable. Faced with the threat of potentially declining viewing figures and revenues, commercial PSBs' responded by adopting commercial strategies that focused more explicitly on populist programming.

Consequently, the ratings discourse now occupies a bigger role in the programming strategies of these channels, with much of minority interest content being replaced with content of higher commercial potential, and the remaining output marginalised in terms of scheduling and production resources. This shift has been more radical in the UK, where commercial channels historically had an important role in the provision of minority interest content. Finnish commercial channels, in turn, have always had a lesser role in the provision of minority interest content owing to the historical role of

commercial television as a complementary service, upon which Yleisradio exerted negative regulation rather than encouraging it to provide a comprehensive service. This allowed MTV3 and later Nelonen to adopt a more outright commercial corporate strategy following the 1993 Channel Reform than was permitted for UK commercial channels. Thus, while the provision of children's and religious programming has experienced similar decline in volume, loss in diversity and marginalisation in scheduling as has taken place on UK commercial channels, the extent of the changes has been less radical owing to the lesser historical role of these channels in providing these programmes.

In terms of the volume of programmes, diverging trends emerge between children's and religious programmes. The volume of children's programmes has generally benefited from the expansion of broadcasting hours and a rise in the number of channels, and the output on main channels has grown four-fold in Finland and more than doubled in the UK. If the specialist children's channels are taken in account, the increase is even more significant. Despite the fact that the more competitive broadcasting market of the 2000s has forced many channels to adjust their programme policies, all terrestrial channels sustained children's programmes in their schedules over the research period, which signifies the importance of this genre for broadcasters. This importance does not necessarily stem from commercial profitability, as several other types of programmes (e.g. lifestyle programmes) are more attractive to advertisers. As examined in chapter 5, children's programmes have potential to produce several externalities to broadcasters in e.g. expanding the potential range of viewers of the channel and increasing viewing loyalty amongst commercially attractive audience groups. Thus, their presence in schedules may produce long-term commercial benefits, even if their instant profit would be limited. Children's programmes also benefit publicly funded broadcasters, which, in a competitive multi-platform broadcasting environment, are more obliged to highlight the public value they deliver to viewers and the polity in order to maintain justification for the public funding. As the provision of children's programmes is regularly ranked high in surveys on the public service priorities of the audiences – while that of religious programmes is considered a significantly lower priority (see e.g. Yleisradio

Oy 2007: 15; Hall et al. 2008: 48; Yleisradio Oy 2009a: 9), children's programmes are an apt vehicle for public broadcasters to highlight their role in public value delivery.

In contrast, the volume of religious output has declined on all channels in the 2000s. The Communications Act 2003 served as a critical juncture here, as it allowed commercial broadcasters to adopt a more pronounced commercial strategy and axe commercially unprofitable types of output by cancelling the previous ITC-imposed quotas for religious output. Consequently, UK provision has been in steep decline, with the average output between 2006 and 2009 representing just 58 per cent of the output between 1986 and 1990. A similar, although far less dramatic, pattern has taken place in Finnish religious output, which peaked in the late 1990s following the introduction of the Act on Yleisradio Oy 1993, which defined devotional programmes as part of Yleisradio's statutory duties. MTV3's contribution to the genre was important too, and its discontinuation of the genre in the 2000s following the competitive entry of Nelonen and changes in the administration of the company has served to reduce the volume of the genre. However, the overall reduction in Finnish religious programming has been far less critical owing to the Finnish devotional programming arrangement, which features significant contribution from the Evangelical Lutheran Church towards the production resources of these programmes.

This diverging trend between children's and religious programming signifies shifts in broadcasters' institutional agendas. Both were considered to be important during the public service orthodoxy and their provision was considered an axiomatic part of PSB missions. Although the concept had not yet entered the public discourse, their 'public value' was defined in terms of their social and cultural externalities, based on normative knowledge on audience's 'needs' of politicians and broadcasting executives. Because of these externalities, they were considered as merit goods, whose extensive provision was justified even beyond their actual consumption (i.e. viewing). However, as was examined in the previous section, the neo-liberal discourse introduced a more consumerist and ratings-oriented agenda, which included a consumerist interpretation of PSB missions. Competitive pressures produced by the liberalisation of broadcasting rendered the past paternalism in



programming policy considerations impracticable, with deregulatory changes in content regulation acting as a powerful catalyst in this process. This competitive challenge was accompanied by a shift in the media policy paradigm examined in chapter 2 that saw the rise of economic and consumerist goals in broadcasting policy considerations. This neo-liberal policy paradigm accepted the argument that consumers are the only relevant arbiters of taste, while mass audience preferences – manifested in ratings – are increasingly seen as the indicators of ‘quality’ in programming (Ruoho 2007: 133). Consequently, broadcasters have concentrated their resources on programming that enjoys a larger popular appeal or acceptance amongst the audiences, and religious programmes, whose popular appeal amongst the mass audiences is relatively low (see e.g. Yleisradio Oy 2007: 15; Ofcom 2008a: 34), have lost out in the process.

Along with this focus on serving audiences in their highest possible numbers has flourished another marketised imperative examined in the previous section: the rise of economic and commercial objectives and their increasing influence on programming policies and production resource allocation. This is manifested in an increasing preference for cost-effective programming (e.g. acquired animation and studio-based religious programming) and content with commercial exploitation potential (e.g. co-produced preschool and animation programmes) over more expensive and less popular/lucrative types of productions (e.g. first run drama and televised church services). Changes in the origin of children’s programming; rise in the use of imported content in children’s programming also serve as an indicator of such a trend. Empirical data demonstrate that children’s programmes were produced primarily within broadcasting companies, i.e. in a predominantly domestic context, still in the 1980s. This practice reflected the formative idea of PSB representing and reproducing national culture and identity, and can be traced back to the Reithian ideals of the broadcasting as a tool for producing national unity. In Finland in particular, cultural protectionism was a particularly important principle of broadcasting policy, which, until the 2000s, served as a major policy mission in institutional policies and licensing practices (Jääsaari 2007: 70-1 & 174; Hellman 2010: 195-210). Domestic content was favoured on cultural grounds in spite of the high production

costs associated with it, and certain types of content (e.g. US cartoons) were all but absent from Yleisradio's schedules.

The rapid expansion of public broadcasters' broadcasting hours in the late 1980s and 1990s, necessitated by increasing competition from commercial channels on terrestrial, cable and satellite platforms, forced public broadcasters to give in to the terms of competition and increasingly use imported material in order to keep the costs at bay. As governments have simultaneously subjected broadcasting companies to a tighter budgetary discipline, while relaxing the regulatory obligations with regards to original programming, broadcasters have been forced to seek external funding outside the companies or cut production costs by looking for cheaper forms of productions, or increasing the proportion of acquisitions. As these (often US-originated) series were well-known global brands, they widened the popular appeal of children's programmes on these channels, thus serving to increase public broadcasters' share of viewing. This indicates that marketisation-driven focus on cost-efficiency and populism challenged the previous discourse of cultural protectionism in national media policies that featured suspicion over certain types of content; e.g. animation and US imports (see e.g. Buckingham et al. 1999: 99), and foreign content became a more accepted part of schedules.

Empirical data demonstrate that the BBC's children's programming has benefited from the Corporation's increasing commercial activities in terms of the volume and diversity of output. In contrast with the increases in Yleisradio's share of imported programming, the fact that the BBC has been able to utilise various co-production, licensing and secondary sales deals to substitute the expansion of its children's schedules has facilitated it to produce several expensive and creatively ambitious preschool shows that could not be financed by the Corporation alone (Steemers 2009: 54).<sup>88</sup> The Corporation has used its commercial arm, BBC Worldwide, in distributing its children's programmes, and these revenues have been channelled

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<sup>88</sup> For example, CBeebies fully funds only about 50 per cent of its in-house productions (Steemers 2010: 44).

back to children's programme production. In 2006/7, children's content generated £69.4m, and accounted for about 8.5 per cent of the company's total sales (Steemers 2010: 87). This demonstrates that commercial activities per se do not necessarily lead to an outright loss in diversity of programming, but can be used to support public service provision.

It is noteworthy, however, that there was a difference between the BBC and Yleisradio with this regard. While the BBC was subjected by various political measures to look for commercial activities, partnerships and secondary markets to supplement its licence fee income (Steemers 1999: 47-8), little pressure has been exerted on Yleisradio to subsidise its income through commercial activities. This can be considered to be a result of differences between the basic conditions of the broadcasting markets of the two countries (with Finland having a relatively small and culturally isolated broadcasting market, with few opportunities for cultural exports), but also reflects the historical cross-party consensus on the special role of Yleisradio as an important national cultural institution, whose public service values need to be protected by preventing its involvement in commercial ventures. Thus, while Yleisradio's administration and institutional practices have been remodelled to an extent to reflect those of a commercial corporation, it has engaged itself into commercial ventures only to a limited extent.

The increasing preference for utilising ratings to justify production resource allocation and scheduling is also demonstrated in the marginalisation of children's and religious content. The proportion of religious content broadcast at peak hours has decreased in both Finland and the UK, with peak hours increasingly reserved for content with more populist appeal. Religious programmes increasingly occupy the 'graveyard slots' of early morning and late night, when viewing is at its lowest. Likewise, on commercial channels in particular, children's programmes have now been completely shifted to the early fringe of the schedule, while public channels have increased their children's provisions in the hours of morning only. This suggests that while these programmes were never equal to other types of populist content, marketisation has only served to widen this inequality gap. It also demonstrates that while the scheduling of minority

interest programmes was based on their social and cultural merits and conventions (demonstrated by e.g. the BBC-ITV counter-scheduling of religious programming on the Sunday evening 'God Slot'), commercial considerations and ratings play an increasing role in setting the scheduling priorities of public and commercial broadcasters alike. While scheduling data demonstrates that an outright marginalisation to the graveyard slots has been a lesser issue in publicly funded broadcasters' schedules, the overall output has been marginalised since most commercial channels have recently cut their outputs of children's and religious programmes.

Finnish devotional programming is a notable exemption of this marginalisation, with little changes having taken place in scheduling of these programmes. The Finnish devotional programme production arrangement itself represents an institutional settlement that has acted to prevent the religious output from similar decline and marginalisation that has taken place in the religious output of the UK channels. Satu Väättäinen (author's interview, 22 January 2011) argues that since the arrangement is built on the 'power equilibrium' between two powerful institutions; Yleisradio and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, neither is willing to sway the delicate balance of power because of the trauma of the historical 'sermon censorship dispute' and its long-term hindrance on their relationship. The comparatively low level of religious output in Yleisradio's channels – consisting mainly of televised acts of worships – is another explaining factor, as the broadcasting times of these televised church services are set to concur with the morning worship.

#### **7.4. Catering for minority interests in a marketised broadcasting environment: considerations for the conceptual model of public service broadcasting**

While PSB organisations analysed in this study have maintained, rhetorically at least, their commitment to a comprehensive provision of public service programming, the extensive changes in PSBs' conduct examined in the previous sections suggest that past, normative definitions of the conceptual model of PSB devised in the era of

public service orthodoxy are no longer entirely valid. Some of their features have been rendered unfeasible by the marketisation-driven changes in the broadcasting environment, while the neo-liberal policy paradigm has introduced its own conditions to the public service paradigm as well.

As the analysis utilising the Industrial Equilibrium Model demonstrated in the previous sections of this chapter, the marketisation-driven changes in the industry structure, i.e. intensification of popular and commercial competition between broadcasters following the liberalisation of broadcasting in the 1990s, together with the accompanying changes in the regulatory frameworks that saw a reduction in the interventionist powers allocated to regulatory authorities for content regulation, punctuated the strategy equilibria of commercial broadcasters. They responded to this competitive challenge by adopting a populist strategy that sought to maximise commercial returns. Public broadcasters – anxious to maintain their share of viewing to uphold their case for public funding – have been forced to respond by broadly similar strategies.

On an ideological level, marketisation has facilitated the rise of populist and consumerist emphases in broadcasters programming policy discourses. Such emphases are closely associated with the reorientation of the public service concept, which has introduced a new layer to the previous interpretation of PSB, with the concept increasingly associated with a duty to fulfil the ‘wants’ of the audiences (Syvertsen 1999: 6-7). While certain latent populist tendencies could be identified in the programming policies even prior to this shift, the politically reinforced hegemony of the public service paradigm effectively suppressed the most blatant commercial excesses. The neo-liberal shift in the media policy focus examined in chapter 2, which saw the rise of economic and consumerist goals in media policy considerations, legitimised the populist audience-as-consumers agenda in broadcasting. As was examined in chapter 4, economic and technological objectives, i.e. national governments’ desire to promote growth in the telecommunications sector, served as primary stimuli for this shift in both the UK and Finland. National governments of the UK and Finland began to consider content regulation as something hindering

economic growth, and priority was given to economic welfare over social-cultural and political welfare where priorities had to be set (van Cuilenburg and McQuail 2003: 198-9). The liberalisation of the terrestrial broadcasting sectors of the UK and Finland, the consequent abundance in viewing options and the intensification in commercial and popular competition have acted as key catalysts in this process that has facilitated the rise in the ideological preference to address the audience as a collective of consumer groups whose individual preferences broadcasters cater for, thus rendering the past paternalist practices in programming mostly impracticable.

As was examined in section 7.2, these changes in the industry structure were accompanied by the rise of populist and consumerist emphases in the programming policies and institutional strategies of broadcasters. Changes in the structures of both children's and religious programmes demonstrated that normative knowledge of the 'needs' of the audience were replaced with the preferences of the mass audiences in broadcasters' programming policy considerations, while the audience is increasingly seen as a collective of consumers (Ang 1991: 165-6; Syvertsen 2003: 163-4). Empirical evidence examined in chapters 5 and 6 suggests that this preoccupation with mass audience preferences extends to setting broadcasters' programming priorities, with content viewed by mass audiences increasingly receiving priority over minority interest programming in production resource allocation and scheduling. The rise in the political preference for utilising various quantitative measurements of economic efficiency in measuring the performance of public broadcasters has also encouraged broadcasters to concentrate their resources so that they can reach the highest number of viewers.

The impact of these changes on the conceptual model of PSB deserves a closer scrutiny. The 1985 analysis of the PSB characteristics provided by the Broadcasting Research Unit (BRU) (1985) is used here as a point of comparison. It provides the most articulated model of traditional PSB characteristics used in this study, which includes an appropriate level of detail for comparison. While the BRU model specifically deals with the UK PSB model, its characteristics essentially applied to the Finnish model as well.

In the light of the results of this study, it can be concluded that marketisation has altered two key elements of the model. First, the shift in PSBs' programming strategies towards populist content examined in the previous sections demonstrates that the BRU's guideline that PSB should 'compete in good programming rather than for numbers' is clearly not viable in a competitive multi-channel broadcasting environment. Although the BRU assumed that competition for audiences is not necessary since the system is funded directly by its users, it did not anticipate the consumerist shift in the political and public discourse, with audience preferences increasingly seen as indicators of 'quality' in programming (Ruoho 2007: 133). Nor did the model foresee the challenge that PSBs' declining share of viewing would pose for the political and popular justification of the licence fee. Corporate yardsticks have been introduced as measures of quality, with ratings being one indicator of how well the system delivers 'value for money', as examined in the BBC's case in chapter 2. The prevalence of private broadcasters allows them to set the agenda in broadcasting and makes it difficult for PSBs to adopt a strategy of winning repute by the range and quality of programming, as suggested by the BRU, as such an approach to programming risks them becoming elitist organisations watched by the few and without popular support.

Thus, PSBs can no longer ignore the popular competition from the increasing number of commercial broadcasters. This balancing between popular preferences and cultural externalities, or between ratings and quality, is an age-old unresolved dilemma of publicly funded broadcasters that marketisation has only aggravated, as it has served to increase the contrast between the standards of public service and commercial television (Costera Meijer 2005). As Collins et al. (2001: 7-8) point out: '[t]here is little point to public funding of merit goods if they are consumed by few. Public service broadcasting cannot succeed unless it is popular. It cannot therefore be consigned to a ghetto at the margins of the market, filling the gaps disdained by profit-maximizing broadcasters.' As the number of broadcasters on different platforms continues to increase and the audiences will fragment further, this competition is only set to become fiercer, and PSBs will be under even higher pressure to scoop the latest popular US network imports and come up with ratings-topping soaps and light drama.

Unfortunately, this also means that these programmes will continue to be favoured in terms of production resources and scheduling priorities.

In addition to this populist shift in the programming policy focus of PSBs, the previous section demonstrated that PSBs have adopted an increasingly consumerist interpretation of their function. Empirical data demonstrate that popular preferences increasingly inform programming policies even in terms of minority interest provision: PSBs and regulators have increasingly adopted practices to measure the viewing preferences of their audiences, which they use to set their programming strategies. As a consequence, the ability and willingness of PSBs to cater for interests of disadvantaged minorities, whose provision the BRU considered particularly important, has also been compromised to an extent. While PSBs still cater for a number of minority interests and tastes, it is debatable whether the disadvantaged minorities receive an equal treatment, and how well the smallest and least vocal minorities are catered for. Great differences have emerged in the provisions of different programme types, as the diverging trends in children's and religious programme provision demonstrate. While the range of minority interest programmes provided by PSBs has by and large remained unchanged since the 1980s, the provision of certain types of minority interest content (e.g. religion) has declined, and their provision is increasingly becoming a rhetorical part of PSB: rather than serving the public service objectives *per se*, empirical data suggests that these programmes increasingly act to fulfil public broadcasters' statutory PSB obligations.

The consumerist interpretation of PSB agenda has placed minority interest provision into a paradoxical situation within the PSB paradigm. While the theoretical conceptions of PSB that were formulated in a pre-marketised broadcasting environment considered a diverse provision for different minority groups valuable for social and cultural reasons, the marketised PSB paradigm appears to rate these groups according to the tastes and preferences of the audience *majority*. Thus, while minority interests are still catered for, only those with the most substantial audiences or vocal support are favoured in resource allocation and scheduling, while provisions for *minority* interests are declining.



This approach, while representing a seemingly democratic method of allocating limited production resources according to the preferences of the majority, is not without serious hazards for diversity in PSB provision. The most important shortcoming of this method is that while certain programmes have smaller audiences and lower overall support, the positive externalities they produce may be significant and extend beyond boundaries of the audience group. A number of programmes are regularly viewed only by a fraction of the audience, but their importance for their audiences and communities may be high. The quantitative measurement methods based on viewing figures are largely unable to measure the impact and the externalities these programmes will produce on their audiences and the society in general. Services in minority languages provide an example of such programmes, as these programmes serve to strengthen the identity of the group, while also making them visible for the majority. The worst-case scenario for a type of programmes with low audience support is that its production resources will be cut and its presence in the schedules will be marginalised. After its provision has become marginal and irregular, it will ultimately cease to be considered as a legitimate part of PSB provision, and it will be removed from PSBs' statutory public service programming duties as 'obsolete'. Religious programmes are certainly at risk of such a fate.

#### **7.4.1. Minority interest content: future directions**

The diverging trends in the provisions of minority interest content between private and public channels indicate that the future provision of such content is increasingly concentrating on publicly funded PSB channels. While commercial channels still provide certain types of minority interest programmes (e.g. children's programmes), there has been an evident change in the programming priorities of these channels. Few effective minority content provision obligations exist for commercial channels and the trend has been deregulatory in this respect. The fact that policy changes have facilitated a more outspokenly commercial agenda on these channels predicts that these channels will only be prepared to provide minority interest programmes with potential for significant commercial return or other externalities for these channels.

This includes programmes that can be targeted to certain audience groups that are favoured by advertisers because of their purchasing power. However, as examined in chapters 5 and 6, direct commercial revenues from advertising sales are not the only criteria for providing minority interest content. Minority interest content has potential to produce certain political and commercial externalities that may support the provision of certain programmes, even if they are not commercially profitable. Children's programmes, for example, are still provided widely by commercial broadcasters as they attract young families to channels and build up their viewing loyalty. The disparity of the potential of different types of minority interest content to deliver these externalities indicates that the provision of certain types of minority interest content will disappear from commercial channels altogether. Moreover, unless the audience associated with a particular minority interest programming type has an exceptionally significant potential to deliver commercial return and/or the aforementioned externalities, empirical data suggests that commercial channels' investment in original content in minority interest provision will be marginal in the future. Their provision will consist of mainly low-cost imported or acquired content, and repeats.

As the case of religious programmes demonstrated, changes in commercial channels' programming policies have repercussions on public broadcasters' agendas as well. Certain marginalisation in scheduling has been evident in religious programmes in particular. The increasingly consumerist interpretation of public service has also prompted public broadcasters to concentrate their resources on programmes that are most commonly considered to produce positive externalities. However, the forecast for minority interest content on publicly funded channels is generally more optimistic than that of commercial channels. The 1990s and 2000s have seen the introduction of more articulated statutory public service remits (detailed in service licences and national broadcasting legislation) that guarantee a greater security to the output. In addition, a greater proportion of output is broadcast on digital portfolio channels. The main general interest channels are rapidly changing their focus on content with the lowest common denominator and are increasingly avoiding minority interest content that may alienate mass audiences (Österlund-Karinkanta and Moring 2007: 114). While this may be a 'logical' development with children's programmes, whose

provision on BBC One past the digital switchover<sup>89</sup> served political goals rather than public service objectives, this migration to low-reach specialist interest channels may have serious ramifications for social groups who benefit from contact with the public sphere.

In spite of the indisputable changes in the minority interest provision, there are no indicators that provision for minority interests and tastes would diminish – or even decline – in the 21<sup>st</sup> century multi-platform broadcasting environment. The expansion of private channels on digital and online platforms has benefited minority interest programmes too; both the UK and Finland feature a number of specialist interest channels that cater for minority interests and tastes. The number of such channels has only increased over the last ten years following the emergence of digital platforms and online delivery of programmes.

The increasing demand for cost-effectiveness in the policy agenda makes the delivery of minority interest programmes via pay channels and online platforms a legitimate alternative to terrestrial PSB delivery. Policy-makers and regulatory organisations have gradually grown supportive to the idea that these platforms may supplement or even substitute PSB in minority interest provision. Ofcom's first (2004a: 12) and second (2008b: 33) PSB reviews contained clear recommendations that alternative platforms should be considered for the delivery of minority interest content. In Finland, Yleisradio has utilised online children's services extensively in the absence of designated children's channels. In addition, subscription channels are increasingly considered to substitute PSB delivery of programmes despite the fact that they do not provide universal service, nor does their content serve the interests of the national public sphere (e.g. in that it portrays or reflects national cultures and identities). As BSkyB pointed out in its response to Ofcom's second PSB review:

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<sup>89</sup> Children's programmes on BBC One were discontinued on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012, while the CBeebies morning slots on BBC Two were discontinued on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

On the Sky platform alone, there are 14 dedicated news channels, over 50 channels catering to foreign language or ethnic audiences, 15 channels dedicated to religion and faith, and 29 channels for children. Devotees of wildlife documentaries, gardening, history programmes, the arts and many other interest areas are similarly well-catered for.

(Ofcom 2008b: 17)

While there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that increasing availability and political support to the use of alternative platforms in minority interest delivery in short and medium term would result in a complete migration of minority interest content away from terrestrial PSB channels, it will undoubtedly mean that less minority interest content is visible to the mass audiences (Österlund-Karinkanta and Moring 2007: 114).

While regulators and politicians have demonstrated increasing willingness to accept the output of these private channels as a legitimate substitute to public service provision, such position is problematic from the public service perspective. Much of the content on these platforms is provided by international operators, and thus has only a limited potential to serve the interests of a national public sphere. As Price (1995: 25) notes, a medium cannot be considered truly a participant in the public sphere if those who habitually use it do not, in their speech, abide by a high standard of truth, comprehensibility, appropriateness, and sincerity. The output of most children's channels, for instance, does not provide the balanced diet of PSB programming: the substance of their output is usually imported material, with few references to national cultural spheres; it is cartoon-dominated; and contains little or no factual content (Ofcom 2007). The benefits of PSB provision are even more evident with religious programming, with much of its cable and satellite content provided by religious sects and televangelists. Public service religious programming is typically non-sectarian in allowing different faiths and sects to be presented. It is non-proselytising, at least in the sense that televangelists would like it to proselytise. It does not allow fundraising by religious groups. It provides an ecumenical forum for inter-faith discussion, and it can develop people's understanding of different religions, including that of their own (Dean 1997: 92-4). By contrast, as religious channels are

usually provided by a certain religious group or sect, their purpose is to proselytise rather than to raise religious or ethical debate.

Perhaps the most important shortcoming of the alternative platforms is that since these platforms have potential to reach only limited audiences, and do not have the mass audience potential of the main general interest terrestrial channels, they do little to serve the interests citizens as members of the national public sphere, which is an important duty of public service. Accessibility is an important prerequisite for a functional public sphere: as Price (1995: 26) notes, a system in which costs to participate are bid way up and entry is scarce and difficult will be a poor version of the public sphere. Since many cable and satellite platforms are available on subscription only, they cannot be considered to provide a universal service, but serve to further the social exclusion of the groups with the lowest incomes, and increase their 'information poverty'. Thus, their potential to provide a forum for public discourse that serves to improve social coherence and makes them visible to the general population is insufficient to maintain a healthy public sphere that is essential for a democratic society (Dahlgren 1995: 2-8). Religious niche channels, for example, are only likely to appeal to the most devoted believers, and have only a limited impact on mass audiences or members of other religious groups. Thus, they are unable to raise inter-faith discussion that would benefit people's understanding of other faiths. Michael Wakelin (author's interview, 22 October 2010) argues that religion provides an important function as a cohesive ligament that links people together, with their past and the world around us. Thus, the public sphere is essential for these programmes to perform their social functions successfully.

The case of Swedish-language programmes in Finland provides another example of the hazards stemming from marginalisation of minority interest programming. While Swedish-language programmes in Finland were historically broadcast as part of Yleisradio's main channels' schedules, the 2007 digital switchover shifted them to the FST5 channel. This also marked the end of the long-standing practice of broadcasting these programmes as part of Finnish schedules that acted to maintain social coherence between these two groups. Consequently, their viewing collapsed, as

Finnish-speaking viewers did not switch to the channel (Hellman 2007). Yleisradio's former Managing Director Arne Wessberg has warned about the dangers of such segregation: it offers few opportunities for dialogue between the Finnish and Swedish-speaking population. He considers it important that programmes in Swedish would be broadcast on Yleisradio's main Finnish channels (Moring and Wiik 2007: 443-4).

This considered, two recommendations can be made. First, minority interest provision by private channels should not be considered as a substitute, or even a supplement, to PSB delivery. The duty to cater for minority interests and tastes needs to be kept at the heart of the public service mission, while the provision of minority interest content needs to be safeguarded by undertaking regular reviews on the delivery of such programming. These reviews can be carried out either by regulatory organisations, or broadcasters themselves. In this respect, the reports on the state of religious programming compiled by the BBC Board of Governors/Trust (e.g. BBC Governance Unit 2005a, 2005b) and the ITC/Ofcom (Independent Television Commission 2003; Ofcom 2004b, 2005b, 2007) are promising, although more mixed-method research on output, production resources and content is required in order to gain a more holistic picture of the provision. This is particularly important for Finland, where only cursory reports on output are produced on a regular basis. This highlights the importance of establishing a more coordinated professional research tradition on television output, as reports produced by separate actors at different times produce results that are not necessarily intercomparable.

Second, minority interest provision should not be marginalised by shifting it fully to niche channels or non-terrestrial platforms. Changes in the way broadcasters are defining their programming priorities; the shift from social and cultural considerations to the consumerist focus on ratings in production resource allocation and scheduling considerations poses a potential hazard for minority interest programming and the groups these programmes are serving. Empirical data demonstrate that this shift has led to an escalating trend of scheduling minority interest content to the margins of the schedule, with religious programming at particular risk. Excessive marginalisation of minority interest content does not only jeopardise service to minority audience, with

potential social and political repercussions, but may lead to a vicious circle in which declining audience figures are used to justify further cuts in production resources and marginalisation in scheduling. Thus, while the current regulatory frameworks neither in the UK nor in Finland facilitate regulatory intervention on commercial broadcasters' scheduling practices, it is important to secure a sufficient proportion of minority interest content at peak hours. Internal quotas for peak time minority interest content set in public service channels' service licences may be a useful method to increase the visibility of minority interest content, as empirical data demonstrate that such quotas were effective in promoting peak time religious content on UK commercial channels.

The interests of the public sphere can only be served by making the groups visible in the society. It is important that regulatory organisations such as Ofcom accept these ideas as a foundation for their policies, too, as the aforementioned examples demonstrate that it is important to make a distinction between the public service and commercial provisions.

### **7.5. Limitations of this study and further research in this field**

While there has been a growing research interest on neo-liberal marketisation in broadcasting, prior studies have mainly focused on the institutional and media policy impact. Little research has been conducted on the impact of marketisation on television content. While this study has, in its part, attempted to make a contribution to the knowledge on the subject, the breadth and complexity of the phenomenon necessitate further research in this field.

The key limitation of this study is that its methods are not sufficient to examine whether the marketisation-driven changes in the structure of the output extend to the actual content itself, i.e. whether, to what extent, and in which ways the neo-liberal discourse is reflected in programming content. A common claim by critics of increased commercialism in television content has led to 'erosion in standards' and 'dumbing down' of programming (Buckingham et al. 1999: 7; Oswell 2002: 153).

Television content, it is claimed, has been subjected to a certain 'tabloidisation' and 'entertainmentisation' in broadcasters' quest to maximise their audiences. Other attributes associated with commercialism in cultural forms of television include escapist, more superficial, undemanding and conformist, more derivative and standardised content (McQuail 2000: 105). While evidence from interviews suggests that certain marketisation-driven changes had indeed taken place in children's and religious content, and some conclusions can be made from changes in the structure of programming, such arguments were mainly based on subjective views rather than empirical evidence. In order to validate such claims, a more comprehensive qualitative content analysis on individual programmes is required.

Changes in the cultural forms of television also support the use of more elaborate forms of qualitative content analysis, especially if the analysis will be extended to other forms of programming too. Borders between different genres of television content have become obscure, and thus accurate and unambiguous grouping of programming to separate categories has become increasingly difficult. There has been a general trend to make news (and factual content in general) entertaining before it is informative; 'infotainment' in other words, that is said to promote ignorance and detach people from political participation (McQuail 2000). This has rendered a strict division of programmes to Type A (information and education, favoured by public service television) and Type B (entertainment, favoured by commercial television), introduced by Raymond Williams in 1974 (Williams 2003), impractical. In her mixed method study on changes in Finnish television contents, Aslama (2008) found no significant evidence of such 'tabloidisation' in news and current affairs content. However, such approach would have been impractical in a comparative longitudinal study that aims to form a more holistic picture of changes in terrestrial television content. The problem with such case studies employing qualitative content analysis methods also relates to the fact that they facilitate only a limited perspective on each type of programming; children's programmes, for example, represent a programming genre within which great differences exist between different broadcasters, channels and even production teams within a channel. Successful utilisation of qualitative analysis would therefore require relatively large samples that



provide a comprehensive picture of each type of minority interest content under observation. Given the boundaries with time and resources, this study has been unable to employ such qualitative content analysis methods.

The study has also uncovered evidence of transformations in the role and value of minority interest programmes for broadcasters, which call for additional research on the subject. Empirical evidence suggests that the provision of certain minority interest programme types (e.g. children's programmes) may produce externalities that may justify their provision even though it would not be commercially profitable. In the public service arena, political externalities may arise from the provision of a genre. Closer scrutiny of such externalities and their significance for broadcasters would not only uncover broadcasters' motives for providing certain types of programming more extensively than others, thereby improving our understanding of their programming strategies, but would also improve our ability to speculate about future trends in such content on general interest channels.

## **7.6. The contribution of this study**

The key scientific contribution of this study can be broken down to its empirical contribution and methodological contribution. This concluding section sums up the contribution of this study.

As outlined in chapter 1, while the neo-liberal impact on national broadcasting policies of the UK and Finland is a phenomenon that is relatively, though not exhaustively, well documented, little research has been made on its impact on the provision of specific programmes. Until now, few studies have attempted to analyse marketisation-driven changes in an institutional setting, and their impact on programming strategies of the UK and Finnish broadcasters, despite the fact that neo-liberal marketisation is a contemporary, complex and, above all, controversial phenomenon, with all-encompassing effects. Marketisation-driven changes in minority interest television content have not been subject to prior comparative research, at least in this national context.

This study has provided new empirical evidence of the influence of this reasonably well-studied phenomenon on television programming. It has revealed a number of transformations in the institutional agendas of broadcasting companies that stem from neo-liberal policies and marketisation-driven changes in the industry structure. These changes indicate that economic and commercial considerations have a greater influence on the programming content than during the public service orthodoxy, when programming promoted social and cultural objectives more explicitly. It has demonstrated that broadcasters increasingly use populist preferences of the majority audiences to set their programming strategies, while their minority interest strategies increasingly target *larger* minorities. In so doing, this study has also revealed transformations in the public service priorities (in particular how these priorities are set) that, if applicable to other programme types too, may indicate a greater shift in the public service paradigm that necessitates a thorough re-evaluation of the theoretical conception of modern PSB. All of these changes have potentially hazardous effects on certain types for minority interest content, while different minority audience groups are facing increasing inequality in terms of the level of provision. The study has also made policy recommendations in order to maintain the diversity and plurality in the provision of children's and religious programmes in the UK and Finland.

In addition to these empirical findings, the research has also made a key methodological contribution. While historical institutionalism is primarily a descriptive model (Peters 2005: 85), and previous historical institutionalist studies have somewhat lacked focus in explaining institutional change, the study has addressed this key deficiency of historical institutionalism by employing elements of the Structure-Conduct-Performance Paradigm (SCPP) in devising a new explanatory model – the Industrial Equilibrium Model – for the study. This Industrial Equilibrium Model is able to benefit from the key advantages of the two models, which has produced significant synergy benefits. It provides an apt explanatory model for analysing the behaviour of large industrial corporations operating in an oligopolistic market under an extensive regulatory framework.

The key benefit of historical institutionalism lies in its ability to examine structures, rules and conventions that constrain and shape behaviour, in a cross-national comparative context. It has been an apt tool in examining periods of consistency and change in institutional environment, while simultaneously identifying key branching points in institutional continuity. In particular, it has highlighted the national differences in an institutional setting, which explains certain differences in the provisions of children's and religious programmes between the UK and Finland. The SCPP, in turn, allows for more elaborate analysis of forces contributing to institutional change within an industrial organisation, and their mutual dynamics. Thus, it is better suited for analysing changes within industrial organisations such as broadcasting companies, which need to keep their institutional structures and practices adjusted to the political and economic conditions of the broadcasting environment. In establishing a bilateral relationship between institutional changes and the institutional environment, the Industrial Equilibrium Model has added a dynamic element into the otherwise static analytical framework of historical institutionalism. By acknowledging the influence of the feedback effects on the industry structure, the model accepts that the behaviour of broadcasting institutions also shapes the environment in which they operate.

In facilitating the examination of the impact of macro-level policy and structural changes on micro-level institutional procedures of broadcasting organisations, the Industrial Equilibrium Model has greatly sharpened the resolution of the lens of historical institutionalism by upgrading its scientific utility from a descriptive model to an explanatory one. The model does not only identify and describe the punctuations, but facilitates a closer analysis of the forces that caused them. By treating institutional changes as institutional responses to forces that punctuate (or pose as potential threat to) the institutional equilibrium, the model accepts that institutions are active and strategic actors, rather than just passive subjects to exogenous forces. Moreover, whereas the degree of resolution of the analytical lens of historical institutionalism is largely unable to identify and analyse the impact of lesser forces that cause punctuations in the institutional equilibria, the Industrial Equilibrium Model is better able to examine more subtle incremental-evolutionary changes.

An additional contribution of the Industrial Equilibrium Model can be associated with its capacity to use quantitative data on television programming as empirical evidence of institutional changes in broadcasting organisations. As historical institutionalism has been developed primarily in the context of political science, it lacks an explanatory element that would facilitate analysis of institutional changes utilising industrial output as evidence of such changes. Such data have served as concrete evidence of marketisation-driven changes in broadcasting institutions in this study, and provides an empirical and objective account of institutional changes to support the evidence gained through interviews. Given that this quantitative programming data can be accurately measured, it gives a better indication of the extent of changes than could be achieved through qualitative data gathering methods only. Through the analysis of programming data, the study has exposed several transformations in institutional strategies and procedures that would be difficult to document using other methods, e.g. through interviews. The Industrial Equilibrium Model has also facilitated the examination of micro-level changes in industrial conduct through the analysis of programming data as reflections of superordinate changes in formative norms and values, which may indicate a paradigmatic shift in broadcasting.

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## Appendix A: List of interviewees

Pirjo Airaksinen, Senior Vice President, Content, Nelonen Media, interview 8 December 2010

Anne Brogan, Director, Kindle Entertainment; controller, Granada Kids (2004-2006), telephone interview 25 May 2011

Joe Godwin, Director of BBC Children's, interview 3 November 2010

Andrew Graystone, Director, The Church and Media Network (formerly the Churches' Media Council); producer, *The Heaven and Earth Show* (BBC), interview 7 February 2011

Jani Hartikainen, Head of Acquisitions, MTV Media, interview 10 December 2010

Anna Home, Head of BBC Children's Programmes (1986-1997), interview 2 November 2010

Hanna Kallankari, Acquisitions Executive, MTV Media, telephone interview 8 March 2011

Hannu Kamppila, editor and producer, Yleisradio, Factual Programmes Department (1981-), telephone interview 20 June 2011

Anna-Liisa Kirsi, producer, editor, children's programmes, Yleisradio TV 2, interview 17 December 2010

Ismo Kosonen, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland, interview 1 December 2010

Jim McDonnell, religious television specialist, interview 2 November 2010

Ari Meriläinen, producer, Yleisradio's religious programmes, telephone interview 19 October 2011

Pertti Nätilä, Head of Children's and Youths' Department, Yleisradio TV 2 (1975-1993), interview 17 December 2010

Elina Paloheimo, editor and producer, Yleisradio, Factual Programmes Department (1979-1994), telephone interview 25 May 2011

Juha Rajamäki, Vice Director, Kirkon Tiedotuskeskus (The Communications Centre of the Church), interview 18 April 2010

Teija Rantala, Head of Children's Programmes, Yleisradio, interview 17 December 2010

Ernie Rea, Head of BBC Religion & Ethics (formerly Religious Broadcasting) (1989-2001), interview 12 September 2011

Virve Schroderus, Acquisitions Executive, children's programmes, Yleisradio, interview 17 December 2010

Heikki Takkinen, editor and producer, children's programmes, Yleisradio TV 1, interview 29 April 2010

Satu Väätäinen, producer, Kirkon Tiedotuskeskus (The Communications Centre of the Church) (1983-2008), telephone interview 22 January 2011

Michael Wakelin, Head of BBC Religion & Ethics (2006-2009), interview 22 October 2010

Nick Wilson, Head of Children's Programmes, Channel 5, telephone interview 7 October 2010

Tauno Äijälä, Senior Vice President; Programme Controller, MTV Oy (1967-2003), interview 9 December 2010; personal communication (email) 2 October 2011; personal communication (email) 19 January 2013

## **Appendix B: Television output sampling periods used in this research**

- 6 - 12 May and 1 - 7 November 1986;
- 5 - 11 May and 1 - 7 November 1987;
- 3 - 9 May and 1 - 7 November 1988;
- 2 - 8 May and 1 - 7 November 1989;
- 8 - 14 May and 1 - 7 November 1990;
- 7 - 13 May and 1 - 7 November 1991;
- 5 - 11 May and 1 - 7 November 1992;
- 4 - 10 May and 1 - 7 November 1993;
- 3 - 9 May and 1 - 7 November 1994;
- 9 - 15 May and 1 - 7 November 1995;
- 7 - 13 May and 1 - 7 November 1996;
- 6 - 12 May and 1 - 7 November 1997;
- 5 - 11 May and 1 - 7 November 1998;
- 4 - 10 May and 1 - 7 November 1999;
- 2 - 8 May and 1 - 7 November 2000;
- 8 - 14 May and 1 - 7 November 2001;
- 7 - 13 May and 1 - 7 November 2002;
- 6 - 12 May and 1 - 7 November 2003;
- 4 - 10 May and 1 - 7 November 2004;
- 3 - 9 May and 1 - 7 November 2005;
- 2 - 8 May and 1 - 7 November 2006;
- 8 - 14 May and 1 - 7 November 2007;
- 6 - 12 May and 1 - 7 November 2008;
- 5 - 11 May and 1 - 7 November 2009.