

This is an electronic reprint of the original article. This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

From audio broadcasting to video streaming

Brusila, Johannes; Ramstedt, Kim

Published in:
Journal of European Popular Culture

DOI:
[10.1386/jepc_00006_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jepc_00006_1)

Published: 01/10/2019

Document Version
Accepted author manuscript

Document License
Publisher rights policy

[Link to publication](#)

Please cite the original version:
Brusila, J., & Ramstedt, K. (2019). From audio broadcasting to video streaming: The impact of digitalization on music broadcasting among the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland. *Journal of European Popular Culture*, 10(2), 145–159. https://doi.org/10.1386/jepc_00006_1

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Brusila, J. and Ramstedt, K. (2019), 'From audio broadcasting to video streaming: The impact of digitalization on music broadcasting among the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland', *Journal of European Popular Culture*, 10:2, pp. 145–59, doi: 10.1386/jepc_00006_1

From audio broadcasting to video streaming: The impact of digitalization on music broadcasting among the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland

Johannes Brusila and Kim Ramstedt

Åbo Akademi University

Abstract

This paper investigates how digitalization has affected the role that Finland's Public Service Broadcasting Company (YLE) plays for the popular music culture of the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland. Drawing on theories from popular music and cultural industry studies, the study explores to what extent new technology has changed practices, structures and perspectives of minority artists. The paper, which forms a sub-study of a larger research project on the impact of digitalization on minority music, focuses on two case studies, the comic duo Pleppo and comedian/artist Alfred Backa. The analysis illustrates how important the public service broadcasting company still is for minority culture despite the structural changes caused by digitalization. However, the radio's quality norms have led to a paradoxical situation where the digital productions of the musicians need to compete with the technical standards of the international entertainment industry, whereas the channels' own productions can follow DIY norms. As the broadcasting company is increasingly moving its focus towards the web, it must in the future achieve a balance between the different dynamics of commercial interests, controversial creativity and traditional public broadcasting objectives.

Keywords

popular music, minority, Public Service Broadcasting, digitalization, music industry, comedy, participatory culture, media convergence

In many European countries, national public service radio has undeniably had a significant impact on music culture. Following the general aims of public service broadcasting, the radio stations have been expected, among other things, to highlight quality, support national culture, nurture cultural diversity and offer an alternative to commercial music broadcasting (Hellman and Vilkkö 2017). Public service companies have also defended their *raison d'être* by stating that they can counter the homogenizing power of commercial cultural industries by making culture in all its diversity accessible to the public at large and by offering a platform where, for example, minorities can express themselves and their cultural belonging.

However, since the introduction of digital production technology and the Internet, the whole media landscape has changed radically. Because of these conversions, also public service broadcasting has been forced to find ways of reforming itself into what has been termed public service media (Bardoel and Lowe 2007). The juxtaposition of public vs commercial broadcasting still exists, but national public service companies face increasing challenges created by a broad variety of new media. With improved access to new production technology, distribution methods, social networking, etc., alternative spaces for communication have emerged, questioning the idea of a common, national public media sphere. This has led to a growing concern over how the ideas of national culture and cultural diversity can be realized in public service media today (Rydin 2013). The changes have also led to substantial transformations in the production, dissemination and consumption of the cultural contents of media, bringing to the fore issues related to cultural expression, belonging and value.

This article discusses the impact of digitalization on music broadcasting by focusing on the Swedish-language radio channels of Yleisradio (YLE), the state-owned public service

broadcasting company of Finland. We are particularly interested in how digitalization has affected the public service company's role for the music culture of the Swedish-speaking minority of Finland, or 'the Finland-Swedes' as the population group is usually called. This includes asking to what extent new technology, practices, structures and perspectives on music media and culture have changed and with what consequences for the minority artists and the minority music culture in general. It also brings to the fore questions of diversity and quality and how these issues have been interpreted in a fluctuating media environment.

Our approach draws from popular music and cultural industry studies. One starting point for the project has been the fact that the 'music industry' for long was routinely understood to mean the recording industry, and most studies in this field have focused on the functions of commercial record companies (Williamson and Cloonan 2007). However, for many minorities and other small cultural groupings, which in economic terms could be termed niche markets, national public service broadcasting has often been of major importance for the dissemination and even production of music. The Swedish-speaking minority is so small and heterogeneous that it does not form any viable market segment, which means that the Swedish-language radio channels of YLE are of major importance for artists who are trying to create a career by using their mother tongue. Thus, if we want to understand music mediation in a European minority cultural context such as this, we must also understand the mutual dependency of public broadcasting and popular music.

The analysis forms a sub-study of the research project 'The Impact of Digitalisation on Minority Music: Finland-Swedish Music Culture as a Case Study' (funded by the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland). In the research project, the mutual development of digital technology, minority culture, creative practices and structural change is studied with the help

of, among other methods, open question surveys and interviews with musicians, producers and the general public, close reading of cultural products, and triangulation including statistical data. In the present analysis, we will start by positioning Finland-Swedish public service broadcasting and music in the general media development. After that, we will focus on two case studies, the comic duo, Pleppo and Alfred Backa, who have utilized digital means to produce music and material for YLE. We will then move on to describing how YLE itself has started using new technology and media in its own activities. Finally, we discuss the larger impact of the current structural changes.

Finland-Swedish public service broadcasting and popular music

Swedish is the registered mother tongue of around 300,000 people in Finland today, which amounts to about 5 per cent of the population. According to the Constitution, Finnish and Swedish are the national languages of Finland, and formally, the social and cultural needs of both language groups are granted on equal terms. In practice, this is not necessarily always the case and despite its legal position, which in global comparison is exceptionally strong, the language group is usually conceptualized as a minority. Despite its small size, the Swedish-speaking minority forms a very heterogeneous group, with historical, demographic and ideological divides, and polarities between the notions of common folk and elite, rural periphery and urban centre, and between the different regions where the Swedish speakers live (Lönnqvist 2001; Liebkind et al. 2007).

The Swedish-language mediascape in Finland is what Moring (2007; see also Moring and Husband 2007) calls ‘functionally complete’, meaning that there are media institutions in place that enable speakers of the language to live their daily lives in and through the language. The main shortcoming of the Swedish-language mediascape in Finland is the lack of a viable

commercial media market (Moring and Husband 2007). From the perspective of the cultural industries, the small size and large cultural diversity of the minority hinders profitable business. For example, music with Swedish lyrics or with an explicit connection to the language group, tends to flourish mainly in the private sphere, within the third sector or in publicly funded institutions. Artists who are interested in creating a professional career in the popular music industries are forced to either switch to Finnish and perform for majority audiences, or to venture on an international career (Brusila 2015).

The lack of commercial media catering for the Swedish-speaking population emphasizes the importance of the state-owned public service company YLE. The Swedish-language radio services of the company are split into two channels: the youth-oriented Radio X3M (Radio Extrem) and Radio Vega, which focuses on a more adult audience. The channels have traditionally profiled themselves with music policies that distinguish them from both other Finnish stations and from each other. According to the music director of YLE's Swedish-language radio, both channels focus on Finland-Swedish music (Borgar 2019). In practice, this means that they very rarely play music with Finnish lyrics or music that is associated with majority Finnish culture. However, there are no quota guidelines regulating the amount of Finland-Swedish music played in the programmes, nor do the channels compile any statistics to follow the output. As a rule, not many Finland-Swedish artists make it to heavy rotation on the more adult-oriented Radio Vega playlist (Yle Vega 2019), and even less on the youthful Radio X3M playlist (Yle X3M 2019). The majority of the musical output of particularly Radio X3M consists of international popular music with English lyrics. A major problem for Finland-Swedish artists has always been that, when the channels create their playlists, the musicians end up in unfair competition against the greatest international stars and to some extent the most successful artists of Sweden. Already the meagre production resources of the

Finland-Swedish musicians make this comparison inequitable. YLE used to produce music for its own use in order to cater for the smaller music cultures and offer a high-quality alternative to the commercial record industry, but this activity lasted only from the 1960s to the 1990s (Lipponen 1983: 92–95; Vilkkö 2010: 113).

The new opportunities that digital technology has brought about have made it easier for Finland-Swedish artists to produce their own music with domestic studio equipment. Furthermore, it has also had an impact on the production practices of public service broadcasting. However, it has also changed the consumption habits of the audience and the whole media landscape. In other words, it is possible to state that Finland-Swedish music media has gone through what many music industry scholars and business futurists have described as the ‘digital turn’ of music media. According to the more optimistic analyses, the new, lower cost structures created by digitalization should lead to increased financial opportunities and a greater creative freedom for even the smallest cultures and population groups (Anderson 2006; Fox 2005; Frost 2007; Lessig 2008). This also includes new forms of participatory culture (Jenkins 2006), convergence (Jenkins 2008) and parody (Boxman-Shabtai 2019). On the other hand, others have critically questioned the scope of the structural changes in the music industries, emphasizing the re-intermediating forces at play and criticizing unfounded hopes of increasing opportunities for cultural expression (Galuszka 2015; Elberse 2008; Jones 2002; Rogers 2013; Hesmondhalgh 2019). From this perspective, it is interesting to see how the changes within music and broadcasting connect and support or counteract each other. As Moring (2019) has pointed out, public service broadcasting plays a crucial role for language minorities, and the new media environment, which is becoming at the same time both more international and personal, offers many opportunities but also severe threats for minority-language communities and their culture. The new digital media is easily

available but functions according to free market logics, which are often problematic for the minorities.

From student's den to national public radio

In the beginning of the Millennium, a new generation of Finland-Swedish artists started utilizing digital technology to create and distribute their productions. Some of these, such as the pioneering heavy metal band 1G3B, mainly operated within a rock band framework (Brusila 2010). Others, as for example the comic duo Pleppo, entertainment artist Alfred Backa and 'humour ensemble' KAJ, created more of general entertainment and shows, which included musical numbers (Brusila forthcoming). Typical of these performers was that they originated from the countryside of Ostrobothnia, in other words, from the west coast of Finland, which traditionally has been influenced by the media of Sweden. Another common denominator was that they were young men with the required technical interest and expertise in publishing their own material on the Internet. The aforementioned artists all received a large online following and, both because of their own career drive and the need for new talent at the Finnish broadcasting company, some of them started producing shows for the Swedish-language radio channels of YLE.

The first ones to gain the attention of national public radio was the comic duo Pleppo. Both members of the duo, Ted Forsström and Kaj Korkea-aho, were born in 1983, and they attribute their success to knowledge of both the analogue and the digital era, as opposed to the earlier generation who could not keep up with the digital transition and the younger generation that did not know what preceded it (Forsström and Korkea-aho 2019). As schoolchildren, Forsström and Korkea-aho had already produced their own home page with humorous texts, games, and made up interviews and news. When they moved to the city of

Turku to study at the Swedish-language university, Åbo Akademi University, they created a new webpage that included blogs and more advanced audio-visual and animated material. One of Pleppo's productions, a series of controversial, parodic remakes of Moomin children's videos entitled *Mumin visar allt* ('Moomin reveals everything'), became immensely successful, reaching tens of thousands of views in a short period during the winter of 2004–05. The videos were made by editing still shots from the original animated series with the Photoshop image editing software, adding new spoken dialogue and music to the pictures, and finally editing the whole material into a video with the Windows Movie Maker program. In the videos, the characters speak teenage slang and curse, misbehave and are involved in various perverted actions. The production came to an end when the duo received a letter from a lawyer representing Moomin Characters Ltd, which controls the copyright to the Moomins, stating that Pleppo's videos were a copyright infringement and that the company would take legal actions if the videos were not immediately removed from the Internet ('Ted och Kaj' 2007).

The publicity surrounding the Moomin videos made the Swedish youth channel of the Finnish Broadcasting Company, Radio X3M, interested in Pleppo and the channel asked the duo to work for it. Thus, in 2005 the duo started producing a weekly show for X3M entitled *Radio Pleppo*. The programmes consisted mainly of sketches but also plenty of musical elements, such as humoristic cover versions of songs made by other artists, dramaturgical music, theme songs and some of their own songs.

This transfer from the Do-It-Yourself or independent production scene to a major media company could be called a common structural feature of the entertainment industry. For Forsström and Korkea-aho, who had grown up during the analogue era, the national

broadcasting company appeared to be a superior option when enlarging the audience, earning an income, and in general, finding new, bigger and more interesting social circles (Forsström and Korkea-aho 2019). What makes this different from what is typical of the music industry is the minority framework; a step forward to a major company in this case meant a public broadcasting company, as there were no commercial options for Swedish-language entertainment in Finland.

From the perspective of the general debates concerning independent vs major companies in the music industries (see Negus 1995; Hesmondhalgh 1999; Frith 2000; Strachan 2007), Pleppo's work for the broadcasting company proved to be a rather complex negotiation of simplified dualisms surrounding the independent-major divide, such as corporate control vs individual artistry, technological overproduction vs Do-It-Yourself (DIY) roughness, legal control vs anarchistic freedom and sell-out characteristics vs authentic credibility. Despite the new transmission platform, the duo still produced its show in the members' student pad, with a personal desktop computer, two simple microphones, a digital keyboard and at times a guitar, with mattresses leaning against the wall as acoustic boards. Thus, the general sound and attitude was still very much DIY. According to Forsström and Korkea-aho, they were not assigned any producer to oversee their productions and no-one at the broadcasting corporation actually even pre-examined the programmes before they were aired (Forsström and Korkea-aho 2019).

The lack of supervision or assignment of a producer on behalf of Radio X3M seems to be exceptional for public service broadcasting companies that have traditionally been considered hierarchical institutions. As Hendy (2013: 70) notes, since it is impossible for executives in large public service broadcasting companies to manage detailed oversight of day-to-day

activities, programme producers have immense responsibility for determining the quality and tone of what goes out on air. In the case of *Radio Pleppo*, there was no control of what the young duo as newcomers in radio work were creating. This allowed the duo to develop the same absurd and at times controversial humoristic characters and sketches that they had introduced before their career at the broadcasting company. Also in legal terms, Pleppo's shows continued along their earlier path with unauthorized copying and editing of material downloaded from the Internet, parodic cover versions of popular songs and other elements that, in strictly legal terms, were rather problematic in the corporate context. The members explain the fact that they got away with it, by saying that this apparently was in line with the general provocative attitude of the youth channel of that time and no-one cared about these formal details in what they were doing (Forsström and Korkea-aho 2019). In fact, Pleppo also lost a source of income, as the duo never registered ownership of their own music or reported it as broadcast on the radio, thus never receiving any copyright compensation when it was aired.

Radio Pleppo came to an end in 2007, but the duo's career at Radio X3M has continued with podcasts and other programmes (Yle Arenan: *Ted & Kaj; Radio Pleppo*). Gradually the programmes have become a popular part of the standard output of the channel and the productions have developed more in line with the general principles of the company, although, for example the podcasts are still recorded at home. Ted Forsström has also been employed as a producer at the company for many years. Thus, the move to the major media company has proved to be a successful solution for all parties.

Alfred Backa made a career move similar to that of Pleppo. However, as opposed to Pleppo who has throughout their public service broadcasting career worked for the youth-oriented

X3M channel, Backa has produced programmes for both X3M and Radio Vega, which is the Swedish-language channel catering for a more adult audience. Backa, who was born in 1988, started by recording his own sketches in front of a webcam, creating his own web pages and videos, and gradually his own YouTube channel (*TV-apa*) but also performing in and writing for live revues, doing stand-up shows and producing his own records. His interest developed into a professional career, with studies in new media at Luleå University of Technology in Sweden and radio productions for YLE. Also for him, a move from the DIY scene to the major media company, and particularly Radio Vega, was motivated by a desire to be able to reach a larger and faithful audience and work within a professional framework (Backa 2019a).

As in the case of Pleppo, also Backa has negotiated the expectations and opportunities created when finding a balance between DIY and corporate production principles. Backa's two longer radio series, *Sedlighetens vänner* ('Friends of virtue') and *Nittonhundranånting* ('Nineteenhundredsomething'), form the major part of his work for YLE. The series were based on sketches and included humoristic musical numbers such as cover versions, his own songs written in the style of other artists, dramaturgical music and theme songs. The musical excerpts were performed and recorded by Backa, who utilized his home studio, a simple electronic keyboard and guitar, when producing the programmes. Much of this music incorporates copyrighted material by other artists that Backa has used in parodic recreations, largely following the practices that are common in DIY productions on the Internet. As a rule, Backa has not, for example, created mashups, but many of the instrumental parts, for example, of the cover versions are downloaded from YouTube.

After starting to work for YLE, Backa has largely continued to express himself in the same DIY style as before and the corporate control has never been meticulous in artistic, technical

or legal matters. Personally, he has not bothered about copyright problems as he has sold the productions to YLE, who in his opinion has the legal responsibility for its programme contents (Backa 2019a). On the other hand, Backa has used some of the programme material from his YLE production in his own records and in audio-visual versions on YouTube and Facebook pages taking no notice of the complex copyright questions and simply hoping that no-one minds. For his album of comedic music *Komitragik* (Backa 2015), Backa re-recorded a song he had originally performed as part of his radio programme, thus circumventing the idea of using the same material again that YLE technically owned the rights to. Other bits from his radio productions, Backa has posted directly on his Facebook and YouTube pages, maintaining that he will remove the content if YLE demands it. In his own web productions, he has continued to develop his artistry within the DIY framework, continuously copying and editing material in an even more unpolished and legally controversial manner. Backa (2019a) emphasizes that there is no economic incentive to post material on YouTube, for example; he does not get a direct income or monetize his channel in any way – it works mostly as a promotional channel.

The success of Pleppo and Backa relies largely on their capability of combining international elements and features that are strongly anchored in the Finland-Swedish context in a humoristic way. A key feature in many of the sketches and musical numbers of the radio shows is parody. The productions represent a form of mimicry marked by a critical distance from the text they refer to, which is a crucial feature of parody (e.g. Hutcheon 2000; Boxman-Shabtai 2019: 7). The cover versions are based on impersonation and a subversive play with identities created with the help of an incongruent tension between the original professional musical material and the fictitious humorous, often dorky, rural, elderly or student characters presenting the cover version. This creates a self-ironic commentary on the Finland-Swedish

cultural context of the parodies. In many instances the humorous effect is simply based on the pleasure of recognizing the reference to original material, making the cover more a pastiche (Jameson 1990) than a parody. However, at times, it is possible to speak about a parodic subverting of societal and artistic norms (Bakhtin 1982). This can also include disrupting commentary on minority issues.

Radio X3M: ‘The Web First’

Radio X3M did not only sign younger artists with digital know-how to produce radio programmes; its own staff also started using new equipment and methods to create and disseminate its own audio-visual material. As opposed to many minority-language media that, according to Moring (2019), have not been forerunners in the digital field, Radio X3M was after its establishment in the forefront of digital radio development in Finland. The channel was founded in 1997 and already the next year it started streaming its programmes online. Gradually it also invested in Internet activities with, for example web TV and a chat forum that generated a large online community. Consequently the music director of the Swedish radio sector of YLE summarizes the general production idea with the words ‘It is “the web first” in everything we do and with a large emphasis on social media’ (Borgar 2019: n.pag.).

This approach can be seen as further development of public service broadcasters’ earlier digital strategies revolving around a core idea or concept that could be produced in different formats for different platforms (Leurdijk 2007: 72). This process, called ‘360 degree commissioning’ (Leurdijk 2007: 72) by the BBC, was challenging for traditionally trained broadcasters whose expertise was limited to one form of broadcasting and it has perhaps for this reason been difficult to implement. Focusing on the Internet is a more clear strategy built on the idea that although radio might be facing a crisis, the consumption of audio products is

increasing and this growth is a result of on-demand listening. However, as the Internet makes it possible to disseminate also other than purely audio material, a crucial aspect of this development is a shift of focus from purely audio to audio-visual material.

In its most basic form the change meant that the radio started live video streaming, for example interviews and performances of singers who visited the studio, or something that the DJs themselves performed in the studio. After that, the material was also uploaded on YLE's Internet platform for on-demand viewing. In more elaborate productions, Radio X3M also started using professional singers, songwriters and external production houses. For example, the song 'Drottningen av Åland' (X3M 2012a), was composed by artist-producer Jaakko Salovaara (better known as 'JS16'), performed by Swedish eurodance star Pandora, and directed by video producer Tage Rönnqvist. The result is a professional production, based on the pop video format, but thanks to its humorous lyrics and ironic approach it also resembles musical numbers in TV-entertainment shows. In parallel with these professional videos, Radio X3M also started making its own small-scale, fast and cheap audio-visual productions. Both technically and aesthetically, these videos were realized in a DIY style, with simple digital equipment and little experience of using them.

The videos often relate to the lives of the Swedish-speaking youth, which the channel is aimed at. In some cases, topical questions associated with ethnic belonging are dealt with explicitly. For example, 'Drottningen av Åland' ('The Queen of Åland') is an ironic comment on a Finnish nationalist populist politician's public statement about forcing all Swedish-speaking Finns to move to Åland, which is an autonomous island between Finland and Sweden. In other instances, the commentary can be self-ironic. The video *Grani Style* (X3M 2012b) is a cover of Korean artist Psy's viral hit Gangnam Style that makes fun of the posh

Gangnam area in Seoul. By setting the song in the wealthy small town of Grankulla, the cover makes fun of Finland-Swedish snobs and stereotypical ideas of all Swedish-speakers being well off. Cultural belonging can also be referred to indirectly by using ethnically imbued cultural expressions and rural dialects. For example, 'Nu byri vi ta' ('Now let's start drinking') (*Janne-Johnz - Nu byri vi ta!*) is a cover version of a popular regional song Kimitoön from the Swedish southwestern archipelago of Finland, which in X3M's version becomes a youthful praise of drinking.

The humorous effect of the covers is based on a tension between imitation and originality. Elements of the original are borrowed, but simultaneously also inscribed with new meanings when framed in a new context. The tension is reinforced by the fact that the originals are professionally produced, whereas the covers made by the staff of the radio channel both technically and artistically resemble DIY products. Thus, these productions resonate with scholarly discussion about parody moving in between repetition and difference (Boxman-Shabtai 2019; Hariman 2008; Hutcheon 2000). From a legal perspective this leads to complex issues of originality, authorship and copyright. According to the creators of the cover versions, they follow YLE's interpretations of copyright law, which is on the idea that as long as the material is not sampled from the original but recreated by recording a new version of it, and as long as it is not done for commercial ends, it is possible to do a cover of anything. The latter criterion is met by not selling the product and by ensuring that the broadcasting company never earns any income when the material is streamed on the Internet. This has also meant that if the copyright of a song has been registered, it has been done in the name of an external author or personally by the DJs without mentioning YLE.

Radio X3M did not only start using digital technology to produce entertaining musical numbers; the channel also developed ways to disseminate the material. The guideline ‘The web first’ includes a ‘packaging’ of all productions so that they are available on the Internet in various forms, not only as sound recordings but, depending on the product, also as audio-visual recordings, written articles or simply pictures with a few sentences (Borgar 2019). On social media, the audience can then add communication to their experience. X3M has also asked the audience to make their own versions of the channel’s videos, which listeners then have uploaded on the Internet. The structure of Internet sites has made it possible to add more precise audience surveying to the programme planning by inspecting what material the audience has streamed, how many times, for how long, etc. Overall, the scope of these activities has shifted the focus from traditional radio broadcasting to newer media.

The change does not only reflect a transformation in dissemination technology, but also an alteration in the media environment altogether. Traditionally the Swedish channels of YLE have seen other Finnish public and commercial radios and, on the west coast, the media of Sweden as its main competitors. However, with the development of the Internet, the challenges posed by other stations and especially streaming services have grown. For music radio, particularly Spotify and YouTube have offered serious competition. This has also forced the broadcasting company to revise its relationship to the different media sectors. Originally, all publications were simply supposed to be available on YLE’s online service platform Yle Arenan, but it proved to be hard for the broadcasting company to attract listeners to the service. Thus, YLE started using external web services, such as YouTube, to lead the audience to its own online service (Borgar 2019). It remains to be seen how far this development will advance, but already now it is possible to state that what started as

uploading programmes for on-demand listening and using the Internet to attract people to the radio, has developed into giving the Internet at least partial priority in the activities.

Summary and discussion

Digitalization has undoubtedly had a major influence on popular music and public broadcasting. The effects are not only technological, but also structural and sociocultural. Seen from a wider perspective, they are also far more complex than what exclusively optimistic or pessimistic explanation models suggest. Thus, the role of public broadcasting for minority music culture has changed in multiple ways, and the development has involved pro- and retroactive reactions to broader environmental transformations. The development could be summarized as re-intermediation, rather than disintermediation (compare Jones 2002). National public radio still plays a major role in disseminating music and still has its small role in producing music, but these functions are realized and structured in different ways than before.

For the Swedish-speaking population of Finland, YLE is still a key disseminator of popular music and entertainment in general. New software and home studio equipment has enabled low-cost, efficient music production for musicians working in smaller minority niches, but it has not become economically viable for private companies to distribute their music, and the musicians still find it hard to create an audience on international streaming platforms.

Anderson's (2006) prediction that digital technology would turn narrowly targeted goods and services into economically attractive mainstream fare has not been realized. Niche markets are still not viable, and a very small amount of blockbusters account for a disproportionately large share of all revenues (compare Elberse 2008).

Thus, the only media publicity the majority of Finland-Swedish music is likely to gain is that offered by YLE. However, even if the minority's own culture is per definition a focus area for the Swedish channels of YLE, the radio's quality norms still thwart the full potential created by the cheap and efficient new production means. According to the staff, all music played on the channels still needs to meet the same quality requirements, which means that local productions face uneven competition with international hits that set the technical standards.

Because of this quality requirement, the digital productions of the musicians have not had a major impact on music broadcasting. However, digitalization has led to a change when the broadcasting corporation itself has started to utilize new technology and DIY practices in its own productions. This has enabled inexpensive and fast creation of material, including musical numbers for its sketch shows and entertainment programmes, and audio-visual material for the Internet. The dramaturgical and humorous role of music in this context largely follows the traditions of TV and radio entertainment, including parody and satire, but much of the production style and aesthetics resembles that of the DIY productions prevalent on the Internet today. This has led to a paradoxical situation where the music recordings of Finland-Swedish artists are disqualified for not fulfilling the technical production norms of the channels, at the same time as the channels' own productions can follow DIY norms. A similar paradox is born out of the fact that the audio-visual productions, made with a DIY approach by the radio staff for the Internet, would not meet the quality requirements of the broadcasting corporation's TV channels. Yet, they have become important in the output of the radio channels and their public activities in general.

The introduction of digital technology has in some ways increased the amount of music produced by the radio, but unlike during the analogue era, this has not happened with any

explicit higher cultural policy aims in mind. The current musical productions are not primarily supposed to be an alternative to the commercial output of record companies, documentations of unique culture or recordings of high-quality music for music's own aesthetic sake. Instead, the music is most often subordinate to the dramaturgical humorous idea of a programme that it is a part of, or form one part of an audio-visual entirety, which is published on the Internet.

The cultural significance of these productions is a result of their humoristic, parodic character. The jokes often deal with the daily life of the Swedish-speaking population, phenomena relating to cultural belonging, and sometimes in an explicit form with Finland-Swedish identity as such. The material used in the sketches and videos can be borrowed or sampled from international media products, which are recoded in order to create amusing incongruences. Thanks to its ambiguous nature, humour of this kind makes it possible to negotiate minority ethnicity and personal relationships with society (Brusila forthcoming). However, this negotiation also has its limitations. A recoding of material from the international entertainment industry can assign these cultural elements new meanings, but they can also re-disseminate existing meanings and reaffirm their importance (Joo 2011), or simply function as blank postmodern pastiche (Jameson 1990), rather than empowering or confirming a minority identity. The optimistic depictions of a new participatory culture (Jenkins 2006), which would restructure the relationship between the established media corporations and their audiences, have also only partly become true. Only rarely are listeners' own productions included in the activities and output of the broadcasting corporation and for the artists a move to the national public broadcasting corporation is still comparable to a traditional, significant move from an independent scene to a major media conglomerate.

The shift from audio broadcasting to publishing programmes and audio-visual material on the Internet has been driven by an interplay of technological and sociocultural dynamics. The changes have not been drastic or fundamental, but, despite their sidling nature, they reveal crucial issues in the development of public broadcasting. In a situation where the goal of public broadcasting is summarized in the slogan ‘the web first’ it is possible to ask: what is core medium and what is assisting medium now and in the future? Especially for Radio X3M, YouTube was first a platform for promoting programmes, but as YouTube’s importance as the main media of the youth has increased, it has become an important key platform for the youth channel when it publishes its own material. YouTube’s potential in reaching the Swedish-speaking youth of Finland is simply far bigger than that of the public broadcasting corporation’s own platforms. This shift has bigger consequences than the purely technical. YouTube has been described as a media corporation shaped by a continuous tension between commercial new media enterprise logics and the rationalities of vernacular creativity and legal disruption (Burgess and Green 2009). Thus, the public broadcasting corporation is now entering a field where it must achieve a balance between the different dynamics of commercial interests, controversial creativity and traditional public broadcasting objectives. This move from audio broadcasting, to publishing programmes on its own web platform, to publishing on the platform where it is possible to reach the largest audience, reveals how even a relatively small minority media must continuously renegotiate its position in relation to both transnational operators and small-scale actors in order to retain its national cultural significance.

References

Anderson, C. (2006), *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*, New York: Hyperion.

Backa, A. (2015), *Komitragik*, Streaming album, Alfred Backa.

Backa, A. (2011–12). *Sedlighetens vänner*, Podcast (Yle Arenan), <https://arenan.yle.fi/1-1487024>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

____ (2014–16), *Nittonhundraånting*, Podcast (Yle Arenan), <https://arenan.yle.fi/1-2327257>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

____ (2019a), in-person interview, The Swedish Folk Music Institute, Vasa, 17 January.

____ (2019b), ‘*TV-apa*’, YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/tvapa>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1982), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist), Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bardoel, J. and Lowe, G. F. (2007), ‘From public service broadcasting to public service media: The core challenge’, in G. F. Lowe and J. Bardoel (eds), *From Public Service Broadcasting to Public Service Media*, Göteborg: Nordicom, pp. 9–26.

Borgar, A. (2019), in-person interview, YLE, Helsinki, 24 January.

Boxman-Shabtai, L. (2019), 'The practice of parodying: YouTube as a hybrid field of cultural production', *Media, Culture & Society*, 41:1, pp. 3–20.

<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0163443718772180>. Accessed 24 March 2019.

Brusila, J. (2010), 'Maximum output for minimum input: 1G3B and the reterritorialization of a Finland-Swedish metal identity on the Internet', *IASPM@Journal*, 1:2, pp. 1–18.

[http://dx.doi.org/10.5429/2079-3871\(2010\)v1i2.1en](http://dx.doi.org/10.5429/2079-3871(2010)v1i2.1en). Accessed 24 March 2019.

____ (2015), 'Durmusikens förvaltare och mollmurens vältare: Dansbandsmusiken som av- och återterritorialiserare av Svenskfinland', in J. Brusila, P. Moisala and H. Väätäinen (eds), *Modersmålets sånger: Finlands svenskheter framställda genom musik*, Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet, pp. 109–59.

____ (forthcoming), 'Self-ironic playing with minority identity: Humorous web music videos as empowering tool among Swedish-speaking Finns', *Senri Ethnological Studies Series*, Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.

Burgess J. and Green J. (2009), *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Elberse, A. (2008), 'Should you invest in the long tail?', *Harvard Business Review*, 86:7&8, pp. 88–96.

Frith, J. (2000), 'The popular music industry', in S. Frith, W. Straw and J. Street (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 26–52.

Forsström, T. and Korkea-aho, K. (2019), in-person interview, YLE, Helsinki, January 24.

Fox, M. (2005), 'Technological and social drivers of change in the online music industry', *First Monday 1: Music and the Internet*.

<https://uncommonculture.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1453/1368>. Accessed 24 March 2019.

Frost, R. L. (2007), 'Rearchitecting the music business: Mitigating music piracy by cutting out the record companies', *First Monday*, 12:8.

http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue12_8/frost/index.html. Accessed 24 March 2019.

Galuszka, P. (2015), 'Music Aggregators and Intermediation of the Digital Music Market', *International Journal of Communication* 9, pp. 254–273.

Hellman, H. and Vilkkö, A. (2017), 'Public service hit radio? Playlists and product differentiation in the competition for listeners', *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 15:1, pp. 27–45.

Hendy, D. (2013), *Public Service Broadcasting*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hesmondhalgh, D. (1999), 'Indie: The institutional politics and aesthetics of a popular music genre', *Cultural Studies*, 13:1, pp. 34–61.

_____ (2019), *Cultural Industries*, 4th ed., London: Sage.

Hutcheon, L. (2000), *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Jameson, F. (1990), *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

Jenkins, H. (2006), *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*, New York: NYU Press.

_____ (2008), *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York: NYU Press.

Jones, S. (2002), 'Music that moves: Popular music, distribution and network technologies', *Cultural Studies*, 16:2, pp. 213–32.

Joo, T. W. (2011), 'Remix without romance', *Connecticut Law Review*, 44:2, pp. 415–79.

Kemppainen, P. (2010), *Aino soi sävelradio. Radio musiikista musiikkiradioon*, Helsinki: Avain.

Lessig, L. (2008), *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy*, New York: Penguin Press.

Leurdijk, A. (2007), 'Public service media dilemmas and regulation in a converging media landscape', in G. F. Lowe and J. Bardoel (eds), *From Public Service Broadcasting to Public Service Media*, Göteborg: Nordicom, pp. 71–85.

Liebkind, K., Tandefelt, M. and Moring, T. (2007), 'Introduction: Why a special issue on the Swedish-speaking Finns?', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2007:187&188, pp. 1–11.

Lipponen, T. (1983), *Kemut eetterissä – musiikin villitsijät vastaan vallitsijat: Tilastoja ja ajatuksia radiomusiikista*, Jyväskylä: Gummerus.

Lönnqvist, B. (2001), 'Retoriken i den etniska mobiliseringen' in A.-M. Åström, B. Lönnqvist and Y. Lindqvist (eds.), *Gränsfolkets barn. Finlandssvensk marginalitet och självhävande i kulturanalytiskt perspektiv*. Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, pp. 16–25.

Moring, T. (2007), 'Functional completeness in minority language media', in M. Cormack and N. Hourigan (eds), *Minority Language Media: Concepts, Critiques and Case Studies*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, pp. 17–33.

____ (2019), 'Minority language media: Issues of power, finance and organization', in G. Hogan-Brun and B. O'Rourke (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Minority Languages and Communities*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 433–50.

Moring, T. and Husband, C. (2007), 'The contribution of Swedish-language media in Finland to linguistic vitality', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2007:187&188, pp. 75–101.

Negus, K. (1995), 'Where the mystical meets the market: Creativity and commerce in the production of popular music', *The Sociological Review*, 43:2, pp. 317–39.

Pleppo (2015), *Radio Pleppo*, Podcast, Yle Arenan, <https://arenan.yle.fi/1-2891918>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

Polanowska, J. (2015), 'The Swedish-speaking minority in Finland: Identity, ethnolinguistic vitality and upcoming challenges in the preservation of official language status', in K. Cordell and K. Jajecznik (eds), *The Transformation of Nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe Ideas and Structures*, Warsaw: University of Warsaw, pp. 117–35.

Rogers, R. (2013), *Digital Methods*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rydin, I. (2013), 'Discourses on cultural diversity in public service media in the Nordic region: A focus on ethnic minority groups', in U. Carlsson (ed.), *Public Service Media From a Nordic Horizon: Politics, Markets, Programming and Users*, Göteborg: Nordicom, pp. 139–59.

Strachan, R. C. (2007), 'Micro-independent record labels in the UK: Discourse, DIY cultural production and the music industry', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10:2, pp. 245–62.

Ted & Kaj (2015–19), *Ted & Kaj*, Podcast, Yle Arenan, <https://areena.yle.fi/1-3071751>.

Accessed 28 February 2019.

‘Ted och Kaj’ (2007), Eero Wallén (dir.) *Seportaget*, Episode 11 (23 April 2007, Finland: YLE), TV programme, <https://areena.yle.fi/1-50140639>. Accessed 11 September 2019.

Vanhaeght, A.-S. and Donders, K. (2017), ‘Do “we” really matter? An analysis of user motivations for online interaction with public service radio’, *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 15:1, pp. 7–25.

Vilkko, A. (2010) *Soittolistan symbolinen valta ja vallankäytön mekanismit*, Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Williamson, J. and Cloonan, M. (2007), ‘Rethinking the music industry’, *Popular Music*, 26:2, pp. 305–22.

X3M (2012a), ‘X3M feat. Pandora: Drottningen av Åland’, YouTube 6.12.2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XIKJ8DCH6U>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

____ (2012b), ‘X3M presenterar: Grani Style’, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7B-Y2RndZ>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

____ (2013), ‘Janne-Johnz - Nu byri vi ta!’, YouTube 19 June 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7hvpj-em0M>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

Yle Vega (2019), 'Spellistan', Yle Vegas spellista, <https://svenska.yle.fi/sida/yle-vegas-spellista>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

Yle X3M (2019), 'Spellista', Radio X3M:s spellista, <https://svenska.yle.fi/sida/radio-x3ms-spellista>. Accessed 28 February 2019.

Contributor details

Johannes Brusila is professor of musicology at Åbo Akademi University and director of the research project 'The impact of digitalization on minority music: Finland-Swedish music culture as a case study'. He has also worked as freelance journalist and project researcher at YLE and as director of the Sibelius Museum. Among his research interests are the cultural study of music, ethnomusicology and the music industry. During the last fifteen years, one of his primary research subjects has been the music culture of the Swedish-speaking population of Finland, and he has published several articles and co-edited a book on the subject.

Contact: Musicology, Åbo Akademi University, Fabriksgatan 2, FIN-20500 Turku, Finland.

E-mail: jbrusila@abo.fi

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4129-8635>

Kim Ramstedt is a post-doctoral researcher in musicology at Åbo Akademi University working in a research project studying the impact of digitalization on minority music. In his doctoral dissertation, Ramstedt studied DJs as cultural brokers and their agency in the mediation and localization of distant music cultures in Finland. In addition to his academic work, Ramstedt also works as a DJ radio host for the Basso radio station in Helsinki. Contact: Musicology, Åbo Akademi University, Fabriksgatan 2, FIN-20500 Turku, Finland.

E-mail: kim.ramstedt@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8408-9361>