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## **Turn on Diversity.**

### **Finnish Television Programming in the Verge of the Digital Era**

#### Abstract

*In this paper, we describe the findings of the study “Finnish Television Programme Supply 2000”, commissioned by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications. First, we construct program structure profiles for the main national channels, the public service TV1 and TV2 as well as the commercial MTV3 and Nelonen for the years 1997-2000, by examining, e.g., distribution and origin of program types, prime time, seasonal and weekly variation. Second, we measure and describe diversity by channel and broadcaster. Finally, we draw an overview of the recent changes and contrast them to findings of some other European studies. With our empirical evidence, we hope to contribute to the discussion of the role of public broadcasting in the new digital era of increasing competition and convergence.*

As in many European countries, the Finnish media policy landscape changed radically in the 1990s due to the so called deregulation. Regarding broadcasting, the legislation and licensing practices were altered, and in the television sector, this 'managed liberalisation' led to a dual system. Previously, the main principle was that the diversity of television programme supply would be best realised in the programming of the public service Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd (Yleisradio Oy, henceforth YLE), and, under its supervision, in the programming of the commercial MTV3 which operated in YLE's channels. In the new twofold structure, however, the public service and the commercial channels are thought to compete with one another and thereby complement each other. (e.g., Hellman 1999, Sauri 2000).

When the Finnish government proposed the new legislation, it in fact reversed the traditional ideology and argued that the role of the public service would be to fill in the gaps left in the

television supply by the commercial players in the field. Another new principle is that the authority governing the licensing, i.e., the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, should not give specific orders for those operating in the television and radio markets. At the outset, the emphasis should be in the general outlines of programming, not in setting demands for specific content matters. (Government 1998).

Today, the Finnish dual system is governed, on one hand, by the Act on Yleisradio Oy<sup>1</sup>; and, on the other hand, by the law governing commercial radio and television operations. The Act on YLE states, among other things, that “the company shall be responsible for the provision of comprehensive broad-casting services for all citizens under equal conditions”. The latter law legislates that the Ministry must in its policies enhance the freedom of speech as well as ensure diversity in programming and safeguard the needs of special audience groups. This policy on diversity is envisioned to continue also in the era of digital television.

While most European countries today operate by dual systems of various kinds, Finland provides for a particular case study of the changes in television landscape in the 1990s: that of the shift from companions to competitors (see Hellman 1999). The literal ‘companionship’ of commercial broadcasting with public service broadcasting -- in YLE’s channels -- existed almost from the beginning of Finnish TV until the start of the MTV3 channel in 1993. As at summer 1997, another nation-wide commercial channel Nelonen (‘Channel Four’) entered the market. Altogether 13 operating licences for digital channels have been granted. Despite of the relatively slow start after the official beginning of 27 August 2001, the new era has already given birth to three brand new public service channels. Most commercial channels are expected to follow as soon as there are enough audiences to justify their full operations. The question of diversity of programming emerges once again, as many specialised channels are about to enter as novelties in the Finnish television landscape. This article depicts what the Finnish television supply looked like at the turn of the millenium and how the legislative mandate of diversity was realised in the Finnish dual system just before the beginning of digital television broadcasting.

## **Earlier research**

Finnish television programme supply has been researched since the 1960s. It has been predicted for already quite some time that programming will become more entertainment-oriented. Some signs pertaining to prime-time programming could be seen already in the late 1980s (Hellman & Sauri 1988). On the other hand, no overall ‘narrowing’ of programming supply has occurred, at least prior to the channel reform in 1993 when MTV3 started its own channel (Hellman & Sauri 1994).

In his research on the Finnish television supply of the years 1988-96 Hellman (1999) found out that the programming structure remained relatively static. YLE offered a significantly larger share of informative than of entertainment-oriented programming; MTV3’s shares were a mirror image in that entertainment-oriented programs dominated its supply. The only single programme type which clearly increased its share was that of the so called infotainment programmes. On the other hand, the share of certain factual programming, such as reportage programmes and documentaries, decreased. Yet another result was that during this period, the share of domestic programming increased.

During the period of 1988-96, the diversity of programming did not change significantly but decreased only marginally. In particular, the commercial channel MTV3 increased its programme diversity and in this respect, began to resemble its public service competitors. However, prime time programming remained most diverse in YLE’s channels (also, Hellman & Sauri 1996). In sum, the channel reform of 1993 did not increase the overall diversity of Finnish television supply, but it seems to have pushed MTV3 towards a broader programme supply, YLE’s TV2 towards a more entertainment-oriented programming, as well as YLE’s two channels towards a clearer division of labour in their programme profiles.

### **The data**

This article is based on a study ‘Finnish Television Programme Supply 2000’, commissioned by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (2001) and conducted by the authors. Its main goal was to describe the supply in 2000 and to compare it to that of the years 1997-99, thus

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<sup>1</sup> For the English translation, see [www.yle.fi/fbc](http://www.yle.fi/fbc) (read on 22 November 2001)

providing a quantitative longitudinal outlook and continuum for Hellman's (1999) research described above. The channels examined were four nation-wide channels: the two public service channels TV1 and TV2 as well as the two commercial channels MTV3 and Nelonen. The study depicts programme supply as a whole and by channels. In addition to programme types, origin of programmes, serial programming, as well as weekly and seasonal variation, also diversity of programming was studied.

The data for the study was based on the channels' own databases as well as on the People Meter data gathered by the commercial company Finnpanel Oy. A part of the data<sup>2</sup> was received directly from the channels. As there were some inconsistencies in various channels programme classifications, the data was checked based on the TV programme information in the press and was recoded for the validity and reliability.

The data consisted of 28 sample weeks: seven weeks per each year, i.e., the weeks 5-7, 27-28 and 42-43 in years 1997-2000. The sample weeks were selected so that possible 'special events' affecting the television programming could be avoided. However, the Olympic Games in Nagano in 1998 and in Sydney in 2000, seem to have slightly influenced the sample in increasing the sports programming in some weeks. The data contained altogether 19.427 observations, i.e., programmes. The following variables were used in its analysis:

1 Channel (TV1, TV2, MTV3, Nelonen. In addition, the programmes of the Finland's Swedish Television, FST were separately coded<sup>3</sup>.)

2 Date

3 Time

4 Duration (minutes)

5 Programme type: news, current affairs, factual programmes, cultural programmes, service and hobby-oriented programmes (i.e., so called personal interest programmes), sports,

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<sup>2</sup> This mainly concerns the data from the time prior to 2000, i.e. prior to the channels' unified programme classification system for the People Meter.

<sup>3</sup> FST is the Swedish language unit of YLE's television production, and its programmes are broadcasted in TV1 and TV2. Its main purpose is to serve the Swedish-language minority in Finland, approximately 5 percent of the Finnish citizens.

domestic fiction, foreign fiction, movies, children's and youth programmes, educational programmes, entertainment, other programmes.

6 Origin: Finland, Nordic countries, Europe, North America, other.

7 Continuity: single programmes, serial programmes (three or more parts)

8 Reruns: first viewing or rerun.

These variables and categorisations were chosen, on one hand, to correspond to the unified programme classification categories used by Finnpanel and thus by the television companies, and on the other hand, to provide a basis for some longitudinal comparisons to earlier studies. However, some modifications were made in particular to the programme type categories, as the existing categories used by the companies were somewhat broader, and as more detailed information was desired from the study.

### **Finnish television programme supply in 2000**

In 2000, the four nation-wide channels in Finland offered 56 hours of programming per day; or 393 hours of programming per week. The channel with the most programme hours was TV1 (116 hours per week), followed by MTV3, Nelonen and lastly TV2. Foreign fiction dominated with 89 hours per week, followed by current affairs programming (57 hours per week). Foreign fiction was also the largest single programme type in prime time<sup>4</sup> with a share of almost one fourth of all programming, whereas news, current affairs and factual programming together comprised one third of all programming. Overall, the least amount of programme time was granted to domestic fiction, cultural programmes and the service and hobby programmes. The contrast between the television programme supply and the demand, i.e. television viewing, was in 2000 the following: the overall television output in minutes per day was 3.369 minutes, whereas the time used in television viewing on an average day was 168 minutes.

All channels increased their programme output from 1999 to 2000: TV1 and Nelonen both by seven hours per week or an hour per day; TV2 five hours per week, and MTV3 an hour per week. When the supply increased from 1999 to 2000 by some 60 minutes per day, the viewing

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<sup>4</sup> Here: programmes that begun between 18.05 and 22.05 hours.

increased by eight minutes per day. The increase in total viewing time benefited all channels, but was the most significant regarding Nelonen as well as satellite channels. In 2000, the audience share of TV1 was 22.6 percent, TV2 19.7 percent, MTV3 40.4 percent and Nelonen 11.5 percent. Satellite channels reached 3.6 percent and others 1.8 percent of the audiences. (Kytömäki & Ruohomaa 2000, 24-25.) Thereby commercial channels together reached a larger share of audiences than the public service channels; but YLE television as a whole still exceeded the single commercial channels in its audience share.

### *Channel profiles*

The Finnish nation-wide channels seem to position themselves in a clear continuum in the factual – entertainment axis<sup>5</sup> of programming (see Table 1). In 2000, the public service YLE's TV1 was clearly the most information-focused channel. Approximately 40 percent of its programming consisted of news, current affairs and factual programmes and the share of all informative programming amounted to 60 percent. The majority of the channel's programmes originated from Finland, and it showed a great more number of hours of European programming than any other channel. The second public service channel TV2 complemented TV1 by offering more entertainment-oriented programming, in particular during prime time hours.

The programme type profiles of the public service TV2 and the commercial MTV3 were similar, although MTV3 channel's output was more geared towards entertainment: it consisted of one third of information, two thirds of entertainment-oriented programming. Also, differences arose in other characteristics, e.g., TV2 provided for a significantly greater variety regarding the origin of programmes and less serial programming. As for MTV3, a high degree of domestic programming seemed typical to this channel; however, most of the foreign programme originated from North America. Nelonen was clearly characterised by foreign fiction – mainly drama and comedy series – which comprised over 40 percent of its overall and prime time

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<sup>5</sup> We are aware of the challenges of programme categorisation in general, as well as of defining 'informative' and 'entertainment-oriented' programming. Here, 'informative' refers to programme categories of news, current affairs, factual programming, hobby and personal interest programmes, cultural programmes (excluding music) and educational programmes; entertainment-oriented to programme categories of sports, domestic fiction, foreign fiction, movies, entertainment and music programmes. The terms 'entertainment' or 'entertainment programmes', then, refer to the specific single programme category.

programming. Movies and entertainment programmes constituted the majority of the rest of its programme time.

**Table 1. Some features of Finnish television programme supply by channel in 2000 (%)**

	TV1	TV2	MTV3	Nelonen
First viewings	72	71	82	76
Reruns	28	29	18	24
Informative programming	60	42	32	16
Entertainment-oriented programming	32	51	59	77
Serial programming	81	69	89	84
Single	19	31	11	16
Domestic programming	62	53	66	38
European programming (incl. other Nordic countries)	25	25	5	22
North American programming	10	20	28	39

### *Programme types in various channels*

The above described division of labour of these public service and commercial TV channels is further illustrated by comparison of specific programme types (see also Table 2). TV1 offered the largest share of both news and current affairs programmes, followed by MTV3 and TV2, while Nelonen stands out with its very small proportion of current affairs programmes.

A notable difference emerged regarding the traditional factual programming, e.g. reportage and documentaries. Public service channels still appreciate this programme type while it had only a marginal role in the commercial channels' programming. Another clear, and unsurprising, difference between YLE's and the commercial channels' programme output was the share of educational programmes. TV1 clearly fulfilled the educational public service role -- mandated by

the Law on YLE -- with 12 percent of educational programmes. Also, the division of labour between TV1 and TV2 was also clear in this respect in that the latter offered no educational programming. Yet another contrast between the Finnish public service and commercial television could be found in children's programming. TV1 had the largest share of children's programmes in its total supply, followed by TV2, Nelonen and MTV3. Examined from another angle: TV1 offered half of all children's programmes. Predictably commercial channels included a notably greater share of foreign fiction and entertainment in their programming, compared to their public competitors. Another kind of entertainment seemed to suit the public service profile, as YLE's TV2 provided for the larger proportion of sport and movies than the other channels.

**Table 2. Programme types by channel in 2000 (%)**

	TV1	TV2	MTV3	Nelonen
News	9	3	5	4
Current affairs	22	13	19	2
Factual programmes	11	14	2	5
Cultural programmes	4	7	1	1
Hobby and personal interest programmes	2	5	4	1
Sports	7	23	8	11
Domestic fiction	3	2	4	1
Foreign fiction	12	16	23	42
Movies	6	13	8	9
Children's programmes	9	6	2	5
Educational programmes	12	0	1	3
Entertainment programmes	4	7	16	14
Other	0	1	6	2

FST, the Swedish-language service is not a separate channel, but its programmes are part of YLE's programming both in TV1 and TV2. This is in agreement with the Law on YLE which states that YLE should "treat in its broadcasting Finnish and Swedish speaking citizens on equal grounds and to produce services in the Same and Romany languages and in sign language as

well as, where applicable, also for other language groups in the country”. In the Finnish public service television there are some other single programmes that address this part of the Law, for instance the newscasts translated in sign language. In addition, in November 2001 YLE announced that it will start a Same language TV programming jointly with other Nordic countries in the near future. Nevertheless, FST can be seen as a special case in that it forms a separate programme unit and has also started its own digital TV channel. Therefore, the study for the Ministry of Transportation and Communication focused on FST as an example of minority programming in Finnish television.

In 2000, FST broadcasted approximately 19 hours per week, i.e., its programming comprised five percent of the total programme supply, in accordance with the share of the Swedish-language minority. Its overall audience share was seven percent among the Swedish-speaking population; but if its share is calculated relative to its programme hours, the share is almost one third of viewing during that time (Kytömäki & Ruohomaa 2000, 27). If FST were given a ‘channel profile’, it could be said that in 2000 it provided almost a full service: all programme categories except movies were found in the programming hours designated to it. Two thirds of its programming can be classified as informative. FST can be seen as an example of an explicit and ideologically ‘traditional’ public service operation, responding to YLE’s legislative mandate with a variety of programme types.

### **Changes 1997-2000**

In total, Finnish television programme supply increased by 76 hours from 1997 to 2000. This means a growth of 25 percent. Two thirds of the increase is due to channel Nelonen: since its birth in 1997 it had doubled its average weekly programming hours. Also TV1 and TV2 increased their programming hours, and only MTV3’s programme supply remained almost the same in the four years examined. Domestic programming grew notably in all other channels except Nelonen. Predictably, serial programming increased particularly in the commercial channels.

As for programme types, the greatest increase occurred regarding foreign fiction and current affairs programmes. Table 3 depicts the changes in the supply of various programme types in the

four channels in 1997-2000. The changes are given in weekly programming hours -- as opposed to the relative increase of different programme categories in various channels -- in order to simultaneously illustrate the growth of programming time. In sum, the table portrays concretely, how the channels had sharpened their division of labour during the past four years. The already information-oriented TV1 and the more entertainment-oriented TV2 increased their current affairs programming. The same occurred in the previously somewhat entertainment-focused MTV3 that also notably decreased programming hours for foreign fiction and entertainment. Nelonen, in contrast, increased its programme supply specifically with foreign fiction. Another clear indicator is that programming time for sports decreased slightly in the public service channels but increased in the commercial channels.

**Table 3. Changes in programme supply by channel in 1997-2000 (hours/week)**

	<b>INCREASE in programming hours 1997-2000 hours/week</b>	<b>DECREASE in programming hours 1997-2000 hours/week</b>
<b>TV1</b>	News +0.6	Sports -1.8
	Current affairs +8.5	Movies -2.3
	Factual programmes +3.5	
	Cultural programmes +0.2	
	Hobby and personal interest +0.7	
	Domestic fiction +0.7	
	Foreign fiction +3.2	
	Children's programmes +3.1	
	Education +0.7	
	Entertainment +0.9	
<b>TV2</b>	News +0.8	Factual programmes -0.7
	Current affairs +5.6	Sports -0.2
	Cultural programming +4.8	Domestic fiction -0.3
	Movies +0.5	Foreign fiction -1.2
	Children's programmes +0.4	Entertainment -0.6
	Other +0.5	

<b>MTV3</b>	News +0.1	Factual programmes -2.3
	Current affairs +4.4	Hobby and personal interest -1.9
	Cultural programmes +0.7	Foreign fiction -5.2
	Sports +2.8	Movies -0.7
	Domestic fiction +1.7	Children's programmes -1.8
		Education -0.3
		Entertainment -2.4
		Other -0.2
<b>Nelonen</b>	News +1.2	Current affairs -0.2
	Sports +5.6	Factual programmes -1.6
	Domestic fiction +1.2	Cultural programmes -0.1
	Foreign fiction +21.6	Hobby and personal interest -3.2
	Movies +2.5	
	Children's programming +3.7	
	Education +2.2	
	Entertainment +9.6	
	Other +1.9	

### **Programme diversity in 1997-2000**

Diversity is used here in the meaning of the variety and balance of programme output of a single channel as well as of a channel system. The more programme types are represented in programme output, and the more 'evenly' they are distributed, the greater the diversity of programming. By measuring diversity, the goal is here to assess how the Finnish television supply served Finnish audiences in 1997-2000. For this purpose, programme diversity was measured by mathematical formula of the 'Relative Entropy Index', a commonly used method in television diversity studies. (Hellman 1999 & 2001; see also Hilve et al. 1997; Ishikawa et al. 1996.)

The Relative Entropy Index represents the sum of likelihoods for the different genres to be broadcast on television. The basic principle of the index is as follows: the more even the distribution of programme types, the higher the relative entropy score. Relative entropy scores vary between 0 and 1, with "0 expressing minimum diversity (i.e. all content in one category) and 1 expressing maximum diversity (all categories equally large)" (Hellman 2001, 191). Hilve et al. (1997) have suggested a scale for the interpretation of relative entropy scores, used also in the study in question: 0.01-0.34 equals very low diversity; 0.35-0.54 low; 0.55-0.69 medium; 0.70-0.79 high; and 0.80-1.00 very high diversity.

Table 4 depicts the relative entropy index for the years 1997-2000 in overall supply as well as by channel. The figures show that the diversity of Finnish nation-wide channels was in 2000 high or very high, and had remained in approximately same level for the researched four years. The most diverse channels in 2000 were the public service TV1 and the commercial channel MTV3. During the four years, MTV3 was, in fact, able to maintain the diversity of its programming. In contrast, the public service TV1's diversity decreased slightly, mostly due to its concentration in current affairs and factual programming. The index for TV2 was a bit lower, but all these three channels could be considered to show a very high rate of diversity. Nelonen, then, was a more narrow channel than its competitors; yet the diversity of its programming was high.

In addition to examining diversity by each channel, Table 4 compares public service and commercial broadcasting. In 1997-2000, YLE's channels have together offered a slightly more diverse programming than their commercial competitors together. The fact that TV1 and TV2 prove to be more diverse jointly than separately is yet another indicator of the clear division of labour between the channels. On the other hand, the commercial MTV3 is more diverse than the two commercial channels together. This points towards the fact that the commercial channels compete with similar programming.

**Table 4. Diversity of all programming by channel and by the division of public service – commercial broadcasting, in 1997-2000**

	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>TV1</b>	0.87	0.85	0.82	0.84
<b>TV2</b>	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.82
<b>MTV3</b>	0.85	0.83	0.82	0.85
<b>Nelonen</b>	0.77	0.79	0.79	0.78
<b>YLE's channels (public service)</b>	0.88	0.87	0.85	0.86
<b>Commercial channels</b>	0.85	0.83	0.83	0.84
<b>All channels</b>	0.89	0.88	0.87	0.88

A look at prime time programming reveals a greater difference between public service and commercial channels than the look at overall programming. Table 5 depicts that TV1 and TV2 maintain a high diversity rate also during prime time, while MTV3 and Nelonen narrow their output and concentrate on fiction and entertainment. The diversity of the Finnish primetime decreased slightly in 1997-2000. The year 1999 seems to have been the test case for narrowing the prime time hours in TV1, MTV3 and Nelonen, but all in all the 'diversity ranking' of channels remained the same. It seems that the channels compete with similar kind of prime time programming because TV1 and/or YLE's programming as a whole shows greater diversity than all channels together.

**Table 5. Diversity of prime time programming by channel and by the division of public service – commercial broadcasting, in 1997-2000**

	1997	1998	1999	2000
<b>TV1</b>	0.87	0.86	0.79	0.84
<b>TV2</b>	0.80	0.76	0.78	0.80
<b>MTV3</b>	0.71	0.76	0.72	0.73
<b>Nelonen</b>	0.72	0.78	0.70	0.70

<b>YLE's channels (public service)</b>	0.87	0.84	0.81	0.85
<b>Commercial channels</b>	0.78	0.80	0.73	0.74
<b>All channels</b>	0.85	0.85	0.80	0.82

In sum, the four nation-wide channels offer diverse of very diverse programming to the Finnish viewers, both in all programming as well as in prime time. It seems that the dual system of two public service channels and two commercial channels had by 2000 reached a 'consensus' on division of profiles of each channel, while still maintaining the so called full service and accordingly, diverse supply, in every channel.

## **Discussion**

Based on the features of Finnish television output in 2000 and in the comparison years of 1997-99 described in this article, some general remarks can be made regarding recent trends of the Finnish television supply:

### *Differentiation rather than entertainment-orientation*

In Finland, as elsewhere in Europe, the commercialisation of television markets in the 1990s has often provoked public discussion of the growing entertainment orientation of the media, especially of television. Our study shows, however, that the researched four channels engaged in a division of labour rather than in increasing entertainment-orientation in all the channels. The commercial channels could be found in the more entertainment-focused end of the scale, while the public service channels concentrated more on factual programming. If one looks at the development since 1993, when MTV3 became a separate channel (Hellman 1999), it seems that TV2 and MTV3 were from 1993 until 1997 very similar. The start of the second commercial channel Nelonen in 1997 prompted TV2 to shift towards more informative programming, and MTV3 to become more entertainment-oriented. Now it seems, however, that MTV3 no longer wants a similar profile with Nelonen.

### *Polarisation amongst genres*

The above is related to a trend regarding programme types. It seems, namely, that on one hand the so called 'hard' informative programmes such as news and current affairs, and, on the other hand, fiction and entertainment programmes, are increasing their share in programme supply. The proportion of traditional 'softer' informative genres, especially factual programming, is decreasing. Also, the so called service and hobby programmes which emerged in early 1990s and increased their share until mid 1990s (see Hellman 1999), have now lost their appeal in Finnish programming. The growth of current affairs programmes in the Finnish television supply is indisputable. Also, similar signs as for instance in Sweden can be found in Finland regarding the so called "newsation" (*nyhetisering*), i.e., regarding the significant increase of newscasts of various kinds (see Granskningsnämnden 2000). This was not quantitatively as evident in our study as it was in a similar research in Sweden in 2000, but can be seen more clearly with a longitudinal look, and with the recent emerge of numerous new short news flashes, special economic news programmes, and the like in all channels (Lähteenmaa 2000).

### *Relative Americanisation*

A claim that often accompanies the discussion on entertainment orientation is that television programming is increasingly dominated by programmes of North American origin. In the case of Finland, this assumption is only partly accurate. Admittedly, it is clear that American fiction plays an important role in the Finnish television culture already -- or at least -- in quantitative terms. In 2000, almost one fifth of all programming consisted of either American fiction or American movies. From another angle: 80 percent of all North American programming seen on Finnish screens was either drama or movies. The commercial channels offered three times as much American programming than YLE's channels. TV1 and TV2 broadcasted a much more balanced array of drama and movies also from Nordic and European countries as well as from elsewhere in the world.

The Finnish case corresponds to some other European studies (e.g., DeBens & de Smaele 2001): fiction plays an important role in European television programme supply; most fiction is of American origin; and the distribution of European fiction across the borders is highly

dependent on the language and cultural proximity. The differences between commercial and public service broadcasting in this respect seem quite similar in many countries in Europe. The Finnish case resembles other European countries also in another respect. Although American fiction may have a dominant position, domestic fiction is still very important to viewers. It is one of the genres which still can, at least occasionally, reach mass audiences in the present situation of increasingly polarised viewing patterns and fragmented audience segments (e.g., Schulz 2000). In 2000, a Finnish soap opera on MTV3 overshadowed its American competitors; and the only fiction in the year's Top Ten of the most watched programmes was an episode of domestic quality drama on TV1. In general, the Top Ten is year after year dominated by very 'Finnish' programmes – from certain newscasts to sports to some 'ritualistic' programme traditions such as the President's televised Independence Day Ball.

#### *Various forms of infotainment*

Although the increase of entertainment orientation in television is not an overall tendency, the public discussion surrounding it may relate to a trend of infotainment that characterises the 1990s in the Finnish television. Unlike often claimed, infotainment – the mixture of information and entertainment – seems not to be changing the role of those programmes which fit the traditional categories of news and current affairs, at least in quantitative terms. As already stated, the proportion of news and current affairs programmes has been growing in Finland, and the genres have not been replaced by other programme types either in prime time or overall programming. Qualitative research could shed light on if, how and to what extent the contents and style of these traditionally journalistic programmes are becoming more infotainment-oriented, but some European studies indicate that changes are not as significant as often suggested (see, e.g., Brant 1998). However, as mentioned above, Hellman's research (1999) as well as our study support other observations on the emerge of hybrid infotainment subgenres which borrow from various traditional programme types. For the past decade, reality-based entertainment, service and hobby-oriented factual programming and all kinds of human interest programmes have been and still are entering and exiting television markets, while 'hard' factual programmes remain.

In a Swedish research which resembles the study depicted in this article, one of the key findings was the rise of the so called reality television (Granskningsnämnden 2000). In our study,

reality-based, entertainment-oriented programmes were not classified under their own category, but the trend became evident already in the coding of the data. There were some programmes which defied the traditional programme categories, and thus did not correspond, e.g., to the trend of hobby and personal interest programmes which had emerged in Hellman's (1999) study of the years 1988-96. Sweden and many other European countries are ahead of Finland in this development, but the year 2001 has witnessed the transformation of reality TV genres from cable to nation-wide channels, from American imports to Finnish versions. It also seems that audience segmentation has shifted from the trendy youth to include also in some cases the whole family. The trend is not unexpected, given the success (and the predicted rapid failure) of reality TV genres all over the world. Also, the recent past of 'reality based' programmes can be seen in 'traditions' of talk shows and in the so called docudrama and reconstruction programmes. These programme types emerged as imports and domestic productions in a larger scale in the early 1990s in Finland. (Aslama forthcoming; see also Wieten 1998.)

#### *Public service and diversity*

In addition to trends pertaining to programme types, the Finnish situation resembles in a broad scale situations in countries with dual systems. In comparative studies in various countries, public service broadcasting seems to be able to offer more diverse programming than commercial channels (e.g., Hellman 1999, Ishikawa et al. 1996). At least in many countries in Western Europe this is a predictable outcome, due to the legislative mandate of public service television. A comparative look at Sweden as a culturally similar country and television market reveals some Finnish characteristics. The Swedish public service channels SVT1 and SVT2 were in 1999 both more diverse than the commercial channels in their informative as well as in their entertainment-oriented programming. Interestingly, years 1997-2000 of Finnish television supply show that the commercial MTV3 has become slightly more diverse than the public service TV1. However, the prime time hours show a clear difference between public service and commercial broadcasting.

The overall Finnish programme supply has a very high diversity index, although the programme output is a bit more 'narrow' than after the birth of MTV3. Compared to Sweden, public service YLE's TV1 and TV2 are almost as diverse as SVT's channels, but MTV3 and Nelonen are clearly more diverse than their commercial equivalents in Sweden. It could be said that the Finnish prime time has not given in to commercial or competitive pressure. For instance,

the programming supply of prime time in Finland proves to be notably more diverse than the supply in Sweden. (see Granskningsnämnden 1998).

*Turn on digital diversity?*

It seems that when Finland is slowly approaching the end of the analogue television era, the channels have achieved a certain 'ideal positions' and no great adjustment are necessary (see Hellman 2001). It could be said, then, that the Finnish dual system as at 2000 fulfils excellently the mandates and goals set in Finnish media policies regarding diversity. In the future, however, programme output of any single channel -- in particular, the programme diversity of a single channel -- becomes less and less important. For example, in addition to TV1 and TV2 which will eventually become digital after an adjustment period, YLE hosts three new digital channels: the 24-hour news channel YLE24; the culture-education-science channel YLE Teema and FST as its own channel. In this situation, YLE must slowly begin to consider the diversity of the team of five television channels. Today, TV1 is defined as being internationally and factually oriented, TV2 as the channel for experiences and entertainment. Still, although the existing Finnish channels become more diverse, and new channels emerge, Finnish viewers seem to take the transformation into the digital era quite slowly. Therefore, diverse, full service analogue channels will remain important for a few years to come. In addition, it may very well be that while new specialised digital channels find their audience segments, viewers will still appreciate strong main channels that offer them diverse full service television programming.

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