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Striving for relevance

SVT Barn online and the production of tween drama Kär

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Abstract

This thesis explores SVT Barn's ongoing digitalization and datafication, using the short-form online tween drama *Kär* (2020) as case study. Interviews were conducted with SVT creatives and executives involved in the production, from commissioning to writing and directing. SVT Barn is currently the name of both broadcast channel and online platform. However, broadcasting was thought of as a bygone era, and their online activity as their main chance to reach the young. This generation was pictured as very different from 'us', partly due to media habits. It was said that we need to understand this difference if 'we' are to reach 'them.' This should be seen in the context of low ratings among youth audiences, who tend to choose YouTube, Netflix, gaming and social media before public service media (PSM). The fear is that if PSM fail to attract the taxpayers of tomorrow, the interest in publicly funding PSM will not last for long. After having implemented an "online first" policy, SVT Barn are doing better in ages up to twelve, whereas after that, there is a sharp drop in reach. *Kär* is aimed at the end of the age range (9-12) in which SVT Barn are still in dialogue with young audiences.

The thesis combines a critical media industry studies (MIS) analysis of *Kär*, with policy and theoretical analysis of SVT Barn in the context of Nordic PSM. The Nordic countries have been characterized by scholars as 'technologically mature' media welfare states, based on e.g. widespread access to broadband and advanced levels of digital literacy. *Kär* is here seen as part of SVT Barn's search for identity in a digitalized world, mirroring the tween characters in *Kär* and their search for identity through mediated and social interaction. The study is cross-disciplinary, using a theoretical framework spanning media policy, cultural studies, media and communication studies and sociology. SVT Barn's level of datafication is assessed using an emerging theory of a PSM 3.0. Various PSM dialogues are identified, internally within SVT Barn as well as externally with tweens and teens, as sites for articulating and performing values that shape media products. Identity search is seen through the prism of symbolic interactionism and processes of becoming, in which identities can only be constructed through interaction with others. It is suggested that an increased focus on interaction and dialogue between PSM and young audiences could potentially result in a clearer PSM identity.

Keywords: media policy, digitalization, datafication, public service media, children's content, preadolescents, tweens, online youth fiction, teen drama, social interactionism, identity

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For my youngest son, who will start school this year.

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Introduction

In an online media environment dominated by a handful of powerful, global tech-giants, in a world that is often described as polarized and fragmented, it has been suggested that public service media (PSM) with its non-commercial values ‘to inform, educate and entertain’ have never been more important. But what about the young? What if they were to disengage with PSM altogether? According to the Swedish government, children and youth 9-19 years old, spent less than 10% of their total viewing time on SVT in 2018, including broadcast and Play (Prop. 2018/19: 136: 15). How do you reach someone who might not know that you exist?

Public service challenges

During the last ten to fifteen years, the media industries have had to adapt to radical transformations, ‘driven by the completion of the switch from analogue to digital broadcasting, the rise of broadband internet as a medium for consuming television and the rapid take-up of connected and mobile devices’ (Ofcom 2014: 2). According to another Ofcom report, the audience group whose consumption habits have changed the least during this period is ‘Gen Z’¹, the first generation to grow up with streaming services, who tend to perceive these as ‘their services’ and of ‘their generation’ (Jigsaw/Ofcom 2020: 5). For those still living at home, it is said that the bedroom is predominantly the place for consuming media, a place ‘where they have total control’ (ibid.: 6; see also Chambers 2016 on ‘bedroom culture’). Broadcast TV continues to diminish in all ages, while the consumption of streamed content continues to grow. In 2019, YouTube reached 45,3% of Swedish citizens, Netflix 25,2% and SVT Play 19,6% (MPRT 2020: 17). While we are all becoming more digital, the generational gap in Swedish media consumption patterns is widening. The youngest watch YouTube the most, the middle-aged Netflix, and the elderly SVT Play (ibid.: 18).

Generation Z does not have the same ‘depth of relationship’ with PSM as older generations (Jigsaw/Ofcom 2020: 9). It has been noted that this generation does not attach much significance to whether if content is public service or non-public service, they only care if it is “good” or “bad” content (Ofcom 2014: 3). We could also call it ‘relevant’ or ‘irrelevant.’ If they find something “good” (relevant) that happens to be public service, they might surf over to a PSM online portal and watch it there. However, this is often not the first place they

¹ “Generation Z” - people born in the US and Western Europe after 2001 (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/generation-z>)

would go to look for exciting, new content (Jigsaw/Ofcom 2020: 8). When it comes to functionalities such as ease of navigation and personalization, not to mention the size of repertoires on offer, the PSM platforms have so far been lagging behind (ibid.). The fear is that public service might not be sustainable in the long run, if the young keep ‘tuning out.’ PSM must find ways of attracting them or they might lose ‘a generation of potential licence-fee payers’ (Ofcom 2019).² It has been said that reaching the young is a matter of survival for PSM (Lowe & Maijanen 2019: 9). Various “online first” policies have been implemented in children’s and youth PSM departments across Europe, in attempts to reach the youngsters.

Democratic governments see PSM as vital for democratic debate, national and social cohesion. In the Swedish government proposition for *A modern public service close to the audience: Conditions 2020-2025*, worries about generational segregation are expressed:

The increased opportunity for individual choice also means greater possibilities for deselecting necessary societal information, which in turn affect the conditions for democratic debate. The development towards a more fragmented use of media can also be seen in the increasing differences in media use of younger and older generations. It is no longer primarily the repertoire and the amount of media consumption that separate these groups, it is that they largely spend their time on completely different platforms.³

(Prop. 2018/19: 136: 9)

For Nordic and other European PSM, online transition has been seen as a necessary move to stay relevant to young audiences (Sundet 2020: 72). It is, however, not only about reacting in panic to prospects of doom and gloom. The ‘youth challenge’ also offers opportunities for ‘new storytelling techniques, production cultures, and publishing models’ (Andersen & Sundet 2019: 2). SKAM (NRK 2015-2017) has been hailed as an example of ‘the Scandinavian approach to public service’, allowing for creativity, innovation, and the creation of world-class drama for modest budgets (Sundet 2020: 71; Duggan 2020: 1005). *SVT Kär*⁴ could be situated within this innovative category (although not a global phenomenon so far) with its microscopic budget of SEK 2.8 million and experimental format: 122 episodes, 2-5 minutes each, 5 hours in total, published daily for an entire semester.⁵ *Kär*, further, was created by a minimal cast and crew, right in the middle of the pandemic, and became quite

² <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/bbc-risking-lost-generation>

³ My translation from Swedish.

⁴ *Kär* means “in love”. I will use the Swedish title throughout the thesis.

⁵ See Appendix 8 for *Kär* stats and ratings.

popular in spite of not receiving the same promotional push as SVT's regular shows. The average online rating per episode was 72 000 during its initial run (Efva interview). For comparison, "Klassen", SVT Barn's flagship 'youth fiction' has 160-170 000 ratings per episode, and "Kokobäng", their humor show has around 600 000 (Petter interview).

SVT Kär

In summary, *Kär* is a short-form online tween drama aimed at 9-12-year-olds, that was published daily on SVT Play and SVT Barn between 19 August to 18 December 2020. It is about Adam and Bianca, two musically gifted soon to be teenagers, who became friends during a music summer camp after sixth grade. When they start lower secondary school⁶ after the summer, they go to different schools, and keep in touch mainly through their smartphones. In addition to everyday "snapchatting" and "facetimeing", they record songs and send to each other. Sometimes they meet 'irl',⁷ record together and publish their music videos online, looking for likes and followers, dreaming of making it big. It is obvious from the start that they like each other. Are they just good friends, or is there something more?

For musical prodigies Eva Jumatate and Oscar Stembridge, known from Swedish talent shows, YouTube and various TV performances, *Kär* was their first assignment as actors in TV drama. Adam and Bianca turn 13 in the story, so did the actors during the course of the production (Efva interview). *Kär* also marked the debut for SVT Malmö producers Hanna Lagerberg and Anna Bylund, as writers and directors of an original drama series. In February 2021, a repackaged version of the series was published called *Kär: Långa avsnitt*,⁸ with the intent of making it more attractive for catch-up viewing. The original series had 122 episodes, the repackaged version had 18, equipped with episode titles and synopses.

Thematically, *Kär* is both timeless and very "now." The "evergreen" themes of love, friendship and growing up, are dealt with in a world of smartphones, social media and digital communication. The target group (9-12) is a special age. No longer children, not yet teenagers, these 'tweens' seem to exist in no man's land, defined by what they are not, where things are not always what they seem. This is a transitional age when old truths start to crumble, when parents will not understand anymore, when peers become more important,

⁶ *Högstadiet* in Swedish.

⁷ In Real Life

⁸ Repackaged/re-edited episodes ca 15 min. in length.

when one might have a romantic awakening, or not. It is also towards the end of this age range that PSM start losing viewers. After 11, there is a sharp drop in reach (Safa interview). Catching people in their tweens, then, could be seen as crucial for the future of PSM, since they are supposed to serve the entire population of a country, not only the older segments (Sundet 2020: 72). Being ‘close to the audience’ is one of the ordained policies to achieve this. The thesis will investigate how SVT Barn implements such policies in practice, through the case study of *Kär*.

Mobile media

One’s first smartphone appears to be a ‘rite of passage’ in contemporary childhood. This event has quickly gone down in ages, which is something that media companies have been quick to pick up on. Danish public service channels for children and youth, Ramasjang and Ultra even redefined their target audiences in 2019 ‘based on many children receiving their first smartphone at the age of eight or nine’ (Christensen & Redvall 2019). Therefore, DR Ramasjang now serves 4-8, whereas Ultra is for 9-14 (ibid.). With its one and only platform, SVT Barn cannot make such differentiations, but smartphones are certainly on their minds when planning and producing programs. Indeed, we will see how a “mobile first” policy was part of *Kär* from its inception. Reaching the young is not only about relevant content, it is also about formats, devices and consumption patterns, which further shape policies for production and distribution.

According to the Swedish Press and broadcasting authority⁹, there are big differences in the media habits of young and old. Children and teens are said to:

... have their own social networks, Snapchat and TikTok, they play online games, listen more to streamed music and watch YouTube a lot... They share and take part of each other’s lives on the internet and live increasingly in their own media world, to which older people do not know the way. They are almost always connected and together online.¹⁰

(MPRT 2020: 3)

Internetstiftelsen’s 2017 report¹¹ showed that slightly more than a third of Swedish 7-8-year-olds had their own mobile phone. Among 9-year-olds it was over two thirds, and among 10-

⁹ ”Myndigheten för press, radio och tv”

¹⁰ My translation from Swedish.

¹¹ The Swedish Internet Foundation

year-olds almost nine out of ten. From the age of eleven, 98% of Swedish children had their own mobile phone.¹² Making a series about 12-year-olds and digital communication, then, is perhaps not such a longshot. *Kär* could be grouped with Nordic PSM siblings SKAM (NRK) and *Anton 90* (DR), ‘short-form, small-budget online fiction series in which social media function as a central part of the narrative with the aim of accommodating a digital native youth audience that was otherwise turning its back on the institutions’ (Andersen & Sundet 2019: 2). However, those series were made for 16-18-year-olds. *Kär* is aimed at 9-12-year-olds, and many viewers are younger still. As SVT Barn often ‘hits below the target group’ (Efva interview), PSM promoting screen culture is not entirely uncontroversial in a country where discourses around “screen time” are often negative. Such considerations will also be taken into account in this investigation of the *Kär* production, as an instance of smartphone culture, innovative drama, and a potential model for getting closer to the digitalized tween.

Aims, objectives and structure

The thesis aims to explore SVT Barn’s ongoing digitalization and datafication, using the production of *Kär* (2020) as case study. Interviews were conducted with SVT creatives and executives involved in the production, from commissioning to writing and directing. The thesis combines a critical media industry studies (MIS) analysis of *Kär*, with policy and theoretical analysis of SVT Barn in the context of Nordic PSM. It is to a large extent an exploratory study, aiming to learn as much as possible about the inner workings of SVT Barn and how a series like *Kär* comes into being. It is a study of ‘production culture’ in the sense that ‘contextual conditions matter because they affect the production culture, which in turn shapes the media product’ (Sundet 2020: 71). The study does not ignore the ‘nuts and bolts’ of media production (Dwyer 2019: 2), on the contrary, the interviews went into quite some detail regarding actual production. However, the aim is more about the overarching policies and strategies that the production is part of, the larger context of SVT Barn striving for relevance to young audiences in a digital media environment.

In *Public service media beyond the digital hype*, Donders wrote that while ‘the focus of today’s management contracts, annual reports and other strategy documents is largely set on what public broadcasters are required to do (in terms of output), there is too little focus on how they do this and with what impact’ (2019: 1025). That ‘how they do this’ is essentially

¹² See Appendix 1 for diagram from Internetstiftelsen’s 2017 report.

what this thesis is about. To operationalize these aims and objectives, and make them researchable, three research questions have been formulated:

- How and why is SVT Barn striving for relevance as an online platform?
- How does SVT Barn produce online content ‘close to the audience’?
- What are the key values in SVT Barn’s digital engagement with young citizens?

In the following literature review, the thesis will be situated within the field of Media Industry Studies, where context is said to be everything. It will then look at dialogue as a site for articulating and performing values. The review continues by zooming in on PSM and the Nordic context. Some digital inequalities and policy responses will be covered, before looking at how the evolution towards a ‘fully datafied’ PSM 3.0 has been conceptualized by scholars. Part two begins with a review of change and continuity in personal communication in the era of social media and smartphones, particularly in relation to young people. The review finishes off with a section on ‘tweens’ as a rather new social category, and the relation between identity construction and mediated and social interaction, as described in the literature.

Methods and methodology cover the qualitative approach to research, as well as a media and communication studies that should matter in the real world. Production interviews as a method will be discussed. The abductive, agile and circular style of this study will be presented, as well as a step-by-step description of the research process.

The interviews are analyzed under six headings: 1) Platforms, formats, and target groups, 2) Data-driven creativity, trust, and glancing at others, 3) Crafting *SVT Kär* close to the audience, 4) The layers of *SVT Kär*, 5) Looking for the i in digital interaction, and 6) SVT Barn values.

The thesis is concluded by a summary of the key findings. It attempts to answer the research questions and looks for ways forward, in research as well as for SVT Barn in their quest for relevance to young audiences in a digitalized society.

Literature review

The SVT Barn interviews were rich in content, spanning a wide field of issues. Accordingly, an interdisciplinary body of literature is reviewed, traversing fields such as media policy, cultural studies, media and communication studies, and sociology. It will go from wide to narrow, or from meso to micro level. The review can be divided into two parts.

Firstly, the thesis will be situated as a production study within the field of Critical Media Industry Studies, followed by a discussion of Hill's analytic dialogue (2019), and multidirectional dialogues as sites for articulating and performing values that shape media products. The review then zooms in on the Nordic region, a group of countries that have been referred to as media welfare states (Syvertsen et al. 2014). More specifically it looks at the digital transition of PSM in this region, some digital inequalities and policy responses (Steemers 2019), and the evolution towards a 'fully datafied' PSM 3.0 (Jackson 2020).

Part two reviews Chambers 'online intimacies' (2013), and how digital communication has altered (or not altered) personal relationships in the age of social media, followed by a discussion on smartphone cultures associated with young people. The final section closes in on 'tweens', a rather new social category, one of those *liminal* states of being 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1967) in which subjects are in transition. It then attempts to unpack the relationship between identity crisis (Frosh 1991) and social interactionism (Goffman 1959), concepts that will be used to point towards similarities between tweens (or *liminars*) and digitally transitioning PSM, both of which are in a 'process of becoming' (Hall 1996).

Media industry studies

The last decades have seen a steady flow of scholarly interest in media production (e.g. Mayer, Banks & Caldwell 2009; Freeman 2016; Herbert, Lotz & Punathambekar 2020). Hesmondhalgh ascribes this 'boom' partly to the continuous growth of the industry, adding that 'media industries are of great interest, not only in academic research, but in the media themselves', pointing to news coverage of the ups and downs of 'old and new' media, and pop-culture representations of media production (Hesmondhalgh, in Curran 2010: 3). Media Industry scholars tend to be interested in 'understanding and examining media industries due to their role in the production and circulation of culture' (Herbert et al. 2020: 14). Culture is a contested area, in society as well as in academia. It has been said that the "cultural studies"

tradition has become ‘so complicated and contested’ that attempting to situate anything in it risks confusing more than clarifying (Havens et al. 2009: 235). A “cultural approach” to media industries would typically focus on ‘the complex interplay of economic and cultural forces, as well as the forms of struggle and compliance that take place throughout society at large and within the media industries in particular’ (ibid.). Hesmondhalgh notes that:

... media producers are not acting as individuals who just happen to feel like making a film, or a book, or a song. They are organized into institutions, with established procedures, hierarchies and values, including in most cases making a profit...

(Hesmondhalgh, in Curran 2010: 4)

These aspects affect the way media products are created, which is why they are worth studying, in order to gain a deeper and broader understanding of them and their place in society.

Media Industry Studies (MIS) as a label can be tracked back to 2009, when Holt & Perren published their book *Media Industries* that tried to define a coherent discipline (Freeman 2016: 4-5). This was also the year when Havens, Lots and Tinic wanted to bring a range of subfields, such as ‘critical production studies’, ‘creative industry studies’, ‘cultural economy’, ‘the circuit of cultural production’, and ‘middle-range theory’ under a common umbrella name (Havens et al. 2009: 236). These authors situated their *Critical Media Industry Studies* ‘at the intersection of cultural studies and media studies’ (ibid.). Other disciplines that have looked at media industries are political economy, sociology, media economics, and organization and business studies (Herbert et al. 2020: 16). Typical methods for this interdisciplinary field are trade paper and social media analysis, interviewing and ethnography (Freeman 2016: 6-7). McDonald (2013) cautions about overusing the label “studies” to describe ‘ever-smaller micro-clusters of thought’, saying that MIS should be seen as a rather loosely kept-together subfield that ‘revels in disciplinary heterogeneity’ (2013: 145). Be that as it may, MIS appears to have grown into an established field by now, with a peer-reviewed journal, interest groups such as the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), and international conferences and university courses being held under its banner (Herbert et al. 2020: 13; Perren, in Freeman 2016: v).

So, what *is* (Critical) Media Industry Studies? Herbert et al. define it as ‘the critical analysis of how individuals, institutions, and industries produce and circulate cultural forms in historically and geographically contextualized ways’ (2020: 17-18). The cultural strand of media studies has historically been more interested in texts and audiences than the industrial context (Havens, Lotz & Tinic 2009). Film studies of the last century tended to downplay industrial and economic factors, instead favouring authorship (auteur theory) and ‘text-centric criticism’ (McDonald 2013: 147). McDonald talks about a ‘revisionist historical turn’ in film studies, in which scholars started to pay more attention to how industrial conditions shape production and consumption (ibid: 147-148). Similar developments have occurred in media and communication studies.

A key thing in MIS is “level” or vantage point. The surface of the earth will look different from space, from a jetplane, a helicopter, a tall building, and from when one is standing on the ground (Herbert et al. 2020: 21). This metaphor was used by Havens et al. when they advocated for a mid-level approach (the helicopter view) to media industry studies as opposed to the jetplane view of political economy (2009: 239). According to Freeman:

... what is meant by media industry studies today is principally *contextualisation*—it aims to trace connections between the micro and the macro, between production and culture, so as to better understand *how* and *why* the media industries ultimately work the way that they do.
(Freeman 2016: 12)

Media production, therefore, is not about policy *or* economy *or* artistry *or* human agency, it is all of these to various degrees. MIS represents a multidisciplinary, ‘multiperspectival’ approach (Freeman 2016: 6-7). Context is everything.

Production studies and the value of dialogue

According to Banks et al. production studies should provide ‘grounded analyses of media makers’ experiences, observations, conversations, and interactions’ (2016: x-xi). Researchers within this field might very well look at official strategy and policy documents but will likely be more interested in ‘the goals of producers, in their own words’ (ibid.). Annette Hill’s ‘analytic dialogue’ (Hill 2019) is a theoretical tool originally developed for assessing the dialogue between producers and audiences. In such an assessment, the researcher takes part in the conversation as a kind of mediator or ‘bridge across the industry-audience divide’ (2019:

16). Dialogue is not always smooth: ‘The flow of dialogue can be understood and shared, or it may become stuck, misunderstood and even ignored by various actors and structures’ (Hill forthcoming: 6-7). An analytic dialogue sees producers and audiences ‘not as separate spheres of study but as a product of exchange, dialogue and collective engagement’ (Hill forthcoming: 2). ‘Engagement’ to Hill is not just about attention and ratings, but also about ‘cultural resonance’ (Hill 2019: 16). Media engagement is relational. It could be e.g. the relation between audiences and producers, media text and audience, or even the relations between media professionals themselves.

In Hill’s forthcoming article, the analytic dialogue is extended to encompass production dialogues within media companies, for example the exchange of ideas amongst creatives, or discussions between creatives and executives (Hill forthcoming: 6). This allows us to look at how multidirectional dialogues, often going on simultaneously, shape media products. Scholars have emphasized the importance of having a people-focused methodology in production research, as ‘it is people that remain the unchanging anchor of the media industries, even amidst the substantial changes to industry brought about by technology and digital platforms’ (Ashton 2015, cited in Freeman 2016: 118). It is about ‘relationships amidst the corporate context’ and ‘seeing people as the agents of power that construct the media industries as an ‘interaction’ via the practices of production’ (ibid.). Production cultures are not fixed, static worlds, determined by master policy documents, but organic, living things under constant negotiation, reinterpretation and reconstruction. Freeman draws from social sciences and the concept of ‘constructivism’ when claiming that ‘power lies with the agency of the media practitioners within the industry’ (ibid.: 111-112). Agency is key here, i.e. to not see media practitioners as completely bound by their organizational structures.

Dialogues are sites for articulating and performing values (Hill forthcoming). Values can mean different things when producers and academics talk about them, a subject discussed in a *dialogue* between Professor Jane Roscoe (with a background in TV production) and Professor John Corner (2016). For someone working in TV, questions of value are ‘embedded within the decision-making process and are less a matter of distanced judgement than a matter of performance indicators across an often tight cost-benefit calculation’ (Roscoe, in Corner & Roscoe 2016: 157). Here, ‘value’ is something clearly defined and of strategic importance, ‘not a subject for abstract debate.’ Academics, on the other hand, are usually more interested in values such as cultural, social and political values, and they often fail to recognize the

central role that money plays in ‘the kind of television that gets made and the kind that doesn’t’ (Corner, in Corner & Roscoe 2016: 161). Dialogue is a key value in itself for public service institutions with their special remit to inform, educate and entertain (Hill, forthcoming). The slogan for Swedish public service 2020-2025 is ‘a modern public service close to the audience’ (Swedish government 2019). Such a goal will require that PSM and citizens are in touch with each other, that there is dialogue between them.

Nordic public service media

Northern Europe has been called the ‘heartland’ of public service (Lowe & Steemers 2012: 9). When profit is taken out of media production, other values take precedence. The BBC is often referred to as the mother of PSB. Indeed, the motto ‘to inform, educate and entertain’, coined by the BBC’s first Director-General John Reith in the early 1920s, has become the leading star for public service organizations worldwide (Bolin 2016: 111). Independence from commercial and political interests is often mentioned as *the* public service ethos. Together with the BBC and some other Northern European institutions, the Scandinavian public broadcasters have been said to ‘represent a bastion of this tradition’ (Sundet 2020: 72). To the informational, educational and entertainment values, we can add public service as a ‘public good’, of value to society in the same way as roads, railroads, sewage, hospitals, schools, and other infrastructural systems are (Syvertsen 1999, cited in Bolin 2016: 112-113). From such a perspective, a citizen *needs* public service, or else functioning in society will be difficult.

We can also add the motto of SVT as a company – to make citizens more inquisitive and involved¹³, values that seem to point towards societal engagement and cohesion. Public service has been expected to be impartial, carry the torch of Enlightenment, be socially responsible, promote democratic values and diversity, be a counterweight to ‘harmful media effects’ and ‘post-truth discourses’ (prop. 2018/19:136: 7; Savage et al. 2020: 13; Lowe & Steemers 2011: 20, Dahlgren & Hill 2020: 13-14). Scholars have put high hopes in PSM to ‘actively, effectively, and rapidly respond to threats posed by the proliferation of false information, siloed information habits, and growing distrust in the media’ (Savage et al. 2020: 21). Finally, since its inception a hundred years ago, PSM have been associated with universality, in one way or the other (ibid.: 11). Fulfilling these hopes and expectations is

¹³ These translations are a matter of interpretation. Compare e.g. SVT’s own words in Swedish: <https://kontakt.svt.se/guide/vad-ar-svt> and in English: <https://omoss.svt.se/about-svt.html>

easier said than done for European PSM, often struggling with budget cuts, staff reductions, and slimmed down organizations (Donders 2019: 1023).

The states of the Nordic region – Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland – are known throughout the world for ‘their peculiar way of organizing their societies’ (Syvertsen et al. 2014: 1). The social and economic systems of these countries are sometimes referred to as the Nordic Model, characterized by ‘a welfare state system that aims at universal rights within societies with comparatively small class, income, and gender differences’ (ibid.). The *Media Welfare State*, introduced by Trine Syvertsen and colleagues in 2014, is said to rest on four pillars: 1) universally available communication systems, 2) institutionalized editorial freedom, 3) extensive cultural policy for the media, and 4) consensual policy-making and compromises between key stakeholders (ibid.: 17-20).

While the Nordic markets are small and peripheral, they are also ‘technologically mature’ and have served as strategic test markets for streaming services and social media providers (Andersen & Sundet 2019: 2). The online transition of Nordic PSBs has been called ‘resourceful, resilient, and adaptive to changing circumstances’ (Syvertsen et al. 2014: 92). Scholars have pointed out that digital platforms can be particularly important for PSM in small nations with small languages, and for preserving minority cultures (McElroy & Noonan 2018). The media welfare theory has produced conceptual siblings, such as ‘A Welfare State of Mind?’ (Ahva et al. 2017) about the mentality and professional identity of Nordic PSM workers, and the ‘digital welfare state’ (Ala-Fosi et al. 2019) about national economic policy decisions vis-à-vis the online communication rights of citizens (Enli & Syvertsen 2020: 40). In a global comparison, the level of access to broadband internet is exceptionally high in the Nordic countries (MPRT 2019: 4). So is access to e.g. VOD and SVOD¹⁴ services and internet use in smartphones (MPRT 2020: 5-6). (Digital) media welfare states seems like an accurate description of Sweden and its Nordic neighbors.

Digital inequalities and concerns

According to media policy scholar Jeanette Steemers, children never had more choices than today regarding media consumption. However, ‘in spite of swathes of free content and numerous paid-for options, the children’s market still exhibits many pre-existing and

¹⁴ VOD - Video On Demand; SVOD – Subscription Video On Demand

emerging challenges that reinforce concerns around economic, social or political inequalities' (Steemers 2019: 179-180). She outlines three 'digital inequalities' from a child audience perspective: 1) children's voices are rarely considered in debates on what is relevant for them, a situation that has not improved with the internet, 2) not all children are 'digital natives', comfortable with both using and creating digital media (e.g. producing one's own content for one's own YouTube channel), and 3) techno-positive accounts of digitalization tend to ignore socio-economic inequalities (ibid.: 180). These 'invisible children' must not be forgotten in discussions on digitalization and modernizing PSM.

Digital technologies have often been celebrated for their democratic potential through a framework of 'consumer choice' and accessibility. Regarding public service, however, there is a sharp contrast 'between PSM as a nationally-regulated service with socio-cultural aims geared to enhancing civil society, and the more laissez-faire philosophy of profit-driven, consolidated global internet corporations that frequently escape national regulatory frameworks' (McElroy & Noonan 2018: 164). Small, local producers now find themselves locked in a David versus Goliath battle against a few but extremely powerful, online players with global reach such as YouTube, Netflix and Disney+. Google-owned YouTube and YouTube Kids in particular are popular among children (Steemers 2019: 183-184). The rules of the game for YouTube and SVT Barn are worlds apart. Steemers mentions 'vlogging' and 'unboxing videos' as examples of how companies exploit seemingly personal content, thereby commercializing children as influencers and consumers (ibid.). PSM and YouTube are essentially competitors on the same market, but on very different terms.

Media flows have traditionally been US dominated, and US content tend to be created primarily with the US market in mind, not its secondary markets. In "Americanized" countries (such as Sweden), the effect can be that non-US children rarely see their own culture being represented on screen (Steemers 2019: 184). Online media, however, can disrupt such patterns. Steemers refers to an Ofcom survey from 2017 in which over a third of UK children aged 8-14 said that there were not enough TV programs that showed children that looked like them (ibid.). On YouTube, on the other hand, they were able to find such people, living in their locality, looking like them, e.g. in short-form music and prank videos (ibid.). The net effect, then, was that a foreign tech company, was considered better at reflecting their lives than their native media. YouTube is something that native, non-commercial PSM are forced to take into account, whether they like it or not.

In Europe, according to Steemers, 'it is primarily European public service broadcasters, many of whom are struggling both financially and politically, who are commissioning limited amounts of home-grown children's content' (Steemers 2019: 184). Public service can in this regard be seen as an intervention, with policy makers promoting the homegrown and locally produced to act as a bulwark against the perceived onslaught of mainly US entertainment (Potter & Steemers 2017: 7). The 'cultural imperialism thesis' of the 70s has long been outdated (Metykova 2016: 87), i.e. that US popular culture would be part of a US quest for world dominance. However, scholars like Ramon Lobato has shown that such thinking has re-emerged in recent years, not least among European regulators, in response to the increasingly popular US streaming services (Lobato 2019: 150). For McElroy & Noonan, with their focus on PSM in small language territories, 'creative' and up-to-date policies and regulations are absolutely necessary for supporting pluralism in an online environment dominated by a few global corporations (McElroy & Noonan 2018: 171).

There is a worry that children and youth are losing interest in 'long formats' such as films and series, which would be bad news for PSM as well as for commercial producers. Collaborative research projects are being set up every now and then to map such developments and try to find solutions. One example is *Reaching Young Audiences: Serial Fiction and Cross-Media Storyworlds for Children and Young Audiences* (RYA), currently running at Copenhagen University. Their front-page states that:

The media use of Danish children and young people has changed dramatically in the past few years. Fictional content and 'media snacks' on Netflix and YouTube are now a major part of their media diet while their encounters with national film, TV and online fiction are declining.

(RYA website)¹⁵

One could ask to what extent these dramatic changes have to do with changing interests, and to what extent they simply represent changing consumption patterns? Audiences have become increasingly 'platform agnostic, accessing content on demand and on the move on mobile devices' (Potter & Steemers 2017: 7). Annette Hill talks about 'roaming audiences' (Hill 2019: 3), a concept that seems appropriate to describe young media consumers. Roamers are

¹⁵ <https://comm.ku.dk/research/film-science-and-creative-media-industries/rya/>

pictured as ‘a fickle audience no longer loyal to broadcasters, channels or time slots’ (ibid.). According to Hill, storytelling is alive and well, it is just that audiences choose new paths and leave new types of trails while looking for it (2019: 1). This is in SVT Barn’s thinking, as we will see in the analysis. They know from experience that young audiences can be reached, especially through the drama genre. Relevance (and being discovered) is partly about content, but also about formats, platforms, devices, and ‘data’ about the audience.

PSM 3.0

Plenty has been written about the “dramatic changes” in media production and consumption related to convergence and digitalization. Whenever touching upon “tectonic shifts” in media, it is worth remembering that ‘cultural industries are always in the midst of some degree of flux’ (Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2011: 12). Change is the only constant, so to speak, and ‘there will never be some fixed point where the cultural industries are stable’ (ibid.: 13). However, digital evolution can be associated with a great deal of uncertainty, not least for ‘legacy organizations’ such as PSM (Lowe & Maijanen 2019: 8-9) who are forced to navigate the difficult waters of staying true to the old, while at the same time keeping up with the new.

How do we assess how far a nation’s PSM have come in its digital transition? Karen Donders suggests the following model: 1) the experimental phase, 2) the panic phase, 3) the expansionist phase, 4) the consolidation phase, and 5) the maturity phase (Donders 2019: 1013-1014). She emphasizes that digital evolution is never complete, therefore, PSM might display various elements of these phases simultaneously (ibid.). There is a certain prestige in the term ‘digital’, by which media companies strive to be perceived as innovative players within the media industries (McElroy & Noonan 2018: 166-167). McElroy & Noonan warn about a ‘tendency towards futurology and technophilia’ in discourses around digitalization and claim that this ‘over-concentration on technology fetishizes the object of scientific innovation and obscures the social world’ (2018: 159).

Andersen & Sundet (2019) summarize the Nordic PSB’s digitalization process from the mid-1990s onwards. The first phase, up until the millennium shift, was characterized by uncertainty regarding strategies for how and *if* PSBs should move online (2019: 3). In the second phase, lasting from 2000-2010, PSBs saw online activities as an important supplement to their regular broadcasting. In the third phase, from 2010 and forward, PSBs tried to integrate online and broadcasting activities, aiming for a ‘cross-media profile.’ In addition,

they created ‘sub-sites’ and online platforms as well as social media profiles on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (ibid.). Andersen & Sundet suggest that Nordic PSM are now in the middle of a fourth phase, ‘in which the youth channels often give higher priority to distribution through online platforms than their linear flow TV channels’ (ibid.). SVT, unlike DR and NRK, has chosen a low-profile presence on external sites (e.g. YouTube), focusing entirely on their own two platforms, SVT Play and SVT Barn.

A decade ago, Karol Jakubowicz imagined a ‘public service 3.0’ (2010). He saw the ‘public service universalist mission’ encompassing two basic time periods: PSB 1.0 that lasted until the deregulations of the 1980s, and PSB 2.0 in which PSB had to compete in a ‘multichannel broadcasting landscape’ (Jackson 2020: 209). A digitalized ‘public service 3.0’ should, according to Jakubowicz, strive to ‘reflect multiculturalism and multimediality, reach a level of universal appeal, be technologically neutral, teach the new digital literacies, and engage a participatory public for the greater good’ (cited in Jackson 2020: 209). Lizzie Jackson (2020) says that the success or failure of digital public service comes down to the level of datafication. This requires ‘creatives, technologists, audience analysts, and data scientists to work collaboratively – an approach not widely found in contemporary PSM’ (2020: 207-208).

Jackson describes how streaming giants Netflix and Amazon Prime have been able to ‘exploit datafication’ e.g. by introducing recombinatory file formats, such as Netflix’s Interoperable Mastering Format (IMF), which enables ‘automatic reassembly of linear content for different platforms’ including ‘associated data’ such as commentary, alternate or additional material, images, music, and text (2020: 208). She points to how registration systems and user profiles can increase the personalization of contents on display, thereby potentially increasing universal appeal on the whole (ibid.). Jackson suggests that PSM should bring in more ‘data-literate’ people into their organizations. She urges PSM to ‘increase the speed of innovation and exploration’ and to be ‘more entrepreneurial’ through ‘increased engagement with local high-technology clusters’ (ibid.: 212).

For PSM to be successful in the digital media environment, they need to be able to ‘operate with sufficient fluidity, to understand data flows and data management, and lastly, to adopt an increased audience-centric orientation’ (Jackson 2020: 218). ‘Full datafication’ to Jackson, is further associated with ‘organisational fluidity’ and ‘agile production methods’ (ibid.: 210-211). Failing to achieve ‘full datafication’ will result in difficulties reaching the young:

The lack of advanced datafication in PSM results in a correspondingly reduced ability to nuance content for delivery to increasingly diverse publics via constantly changing receiving devices. This in turn reduces public access, hence also universal appeal. These deficiencies have very serious implications when considering universal access for – and appeal to – young audiences who preference mobile phones.

(ibid: 218-219)

Other scholars go several centuries back to conceptualize media evolution in phases, or ‘waves of mediatization’ as Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp call them. They talk about 1) the wave of mechanization, 2) the wave of electrification, and 3) the wave of digitalization (2017: 53). According to these authors, we are now living in 4) the wave of datafication, or ‘deep mediatization’, which they describe as ‘a much more intense embedding of media in social processes than ever before’ (ibid.). Couldry & Hepp, further, associates datafication with marketization of online space, increased surveillance and datamining (2017: 71-73). Van Dijck wrote about ‘the ideology of dataism’ (2014), a widespread over-reliance on objective quantification that could possibly lead to alienation (cited in Couldry & Hepp 2017: 251-252).

Digital intimacies

In *Social Media and Personal Relationships: Online Intimacies and Networked Friendship* (2013), media and cultural studies scholar Deborah Chambers investigates if concepts such as ‘friendship’ and ‘intimacy’ have taken on new meanings in the age of social media. Chambers wrote her book in 2013, however, many of her findings still seem valid, in spite of a media environment that keeps changing.

According to Chambers, ‘one of the most striking changes in personal life during late modernity is the use of social media for conducting personal relationships’ (2013: 1). Intimacy has been ‘extended’ beyond its former, narrow focus on family life, she says (ibid.). Online intimacies are about ‘doing’ or ‘performing’ intimate relationships in mediated space, characterized by highly personalized channels of communication, a personalized networked public (friends/followers), specific technological affordances (how various apps influence the performance), a diverse polymedia environment (now fused into one: the smartphone), and a re-socialisation of media (2013: 164). In the age of ‘networked intimacy’:

... love, friendship and moral values have become renewed sites of an engagement with 'the other'. However, importantly, face-to-face and phone interactions are not being replaced by instant messaging and social network site use. Rather, among all social groups and particularly among teenagers, interpersonal communication is stretching outwards...

(ibid.)

In a sense then, digital intimacy is not so different from offline intimacy. For example, she refers to studies showing that we tend to communicate online with 'a remarkably small handful' of people, most of whom we already know well, such as close friends and family (2013: 9), and that online selves are usually constructed to reflect offline selves (ibid.: 62), although these are 'expected to be highly managed' (ibid.). On the other hand, personal relationships online are often performed in public or semi-public (depending on app, friend list, settings etc), which inevitably alters the relation between 'intimacy' and 'privacy':

In this networked public culture, personal culture is now being conducted under a public gaze that can be scrutinising and judgemental as well as convivial and reciprocal.

(Chambers 2013: 86)

Romantic relationships too are often part of this public or semi-public performance, with e.g. the decision about 'going official' and changing the relationship status in one's online personal profile being an important milestone in a relationship (ibid.: 125-126). Things like posting couple pictures on one's social network profile become part of relationship maintenance as well as a joint performance of "image" before a networked public (ibid.). Romantic relationship management is closely connected to performance of self (Goffman 1959). It is not just about managing the relationship, then, but about the online self or 'mask' that is managed by performing the relationship in public. If online romance is conducted publicly, so do break-ups necessarily have to be public, from changing one's online personal profile status back to "single", to rituals such as 'digital housecleaning' when photos and memorabilia associated with the relationship are deleted (ibid: 124).

Chambers refers to Giddens (1991, 1992) and Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (1995) when saying that 'youth embody the late modern emphasis on choice and diversity in intimate relationships' (ibid.: 84). She connects selectivity to individualization, a trend that 'coincides with the emergence of 'young adulthood' as a new distinct life phase in which adolescence shares characteristics with adulthood through increased agency and personal autonomy'

(ibid.). An increased focus on ‘agency and selectivity’ are reflected in personal relationships in which ‘voluntary, freely chosen ties are privileged over ties of duty while simultaneously fostering solidarities within individuals’ micro-social worlds’ (ibid.: 85). Digital media technologies have ‘presented children and teenagers with a focused yet pervasive ‘private sphere’ in which they can communicate mainly with age-related friends and wider contacts beyond the scrutiny of parents or teachers’ (ibid.: 86).

We should see these social patterns as a continuation of trends that existed in society well before the era of social media (2013: 162). It is not the case that social media has made us behave in radically new ways. Chambers writes that ‘friendship’ has become ‘both a potent exemplar of individuality and personal choice and a global marketing tool to influence our personal tastes and patterns of consumption’ (Chambers 2013: 163). Thus, she associates increased agency and selectivity with neoliberalism and the neo-liberal subject ‘who constantly needs to reinvent him- or herself’ (Rose 1999), a subject supposed to choose his or her way to happiness, so to speak (2013: 169). One side-effect of the newly won autonomy seems to be an increased or cemented disconnect between youngsters and adults, as ‘personalised technologies seem to be amplifying the long-term trend of social and cultural segregation from the adult world’ (Chambers 2013: 101). Digital communication, then, seems to increase communication in some instances, e.g. between peers, whereas in others, e.g. between generations, it seems to reinforce difference and segregation.

Smartphone cultures

The smartphone has been called ‘this century’s Swiss Army Knife’ (Goggin & Hjorth 2014: 2) in that it combines all sorts of media and communication tools – new and old – in one device. Researchers have seen mobile phones as intimately connected to youth culture. Mobile media have been thought to offer the young ‘new possibilities for the reconfiguration of relationships with their intimates, friendship groups, peers, and families’ (Goggin 2013: 84). Media scholar Mark Deuze suggested already a decade ago that we are now living *in* media, rather than *with* media (Deuze 2011). Devices such as the smartphone are so ingrained in our everyday lives that they in effect become invisible ‘because they are everywhere’ (Vanden Abeele, De Wolf & Ling 2018). Their ordinariness makes us take their ‘anytime, anyplace connectivity’ for granted (Ling 2012). It has been said that we only notice them when internet access is cut off or when the battery runs out (Westlund, in *Medieutredningen*

2016: 14). It should be said that this view might be applicable in a western (media welfare) context, not universally.

The smartphone has been celebrated for all that it offers young people. Indeed, ‘never before has *anytime, anywhere, always on* connectivity been more apposite for describing the opportunities for staying in touch, finding information, enjoying media and having instant connectivity’ (Vincent & Haddon 2018:5). For tweens, the peer group as a social point of reference is starting to become more important than the family (Adler & Adler 1998: 14). The smartphone has been said to speed up young people’s independence and emancipation from the family sphere ‘by fostering autonomous and continuous access to the peer group’ (Mascheroni, in Vincent & Haddon 2018: 122). Children have been said to develop an emotional attachment to the device and the relationships it mediates, which can be associated with positive feelings such as intimacy, proximity and belonging, but also negative ones such as anxiety and addiction (ibid.). The smartphone, and the practices and meanings developed around it, have become such an integral part of tween and teen identities that their culture has been called a ‘mobile youth culture’ (ibid.: 123).

The flip side to the celebratory accounts of smartphone culture is the ‘child at risk’ discourse (Drotner 1999, cited in Mascheroni 2018). Negative representations emphasize the threats that smartphones pose to the young, such as poor quality of sleep, attention deficit, sight and other physical problems, addiction and breach of face-to-face sociality (ibid.). At the same end of the spectrum we find ‘the fear of missing out’, that is, the urge to always check for likes, posts and messages, which can cause ‘discomfort, annoyance and even anxiety’, and stress associated with expectations of constant reciprocity (Mascheroni 2018: 127). It has been said that ‘waiting for a reply is particularly stressful in the context of romantic relationships’ (ibid.: 128; see also Chambers 2013: 125). Although these concerns cannot be dismissed without firm evidence that the contrary is true, they should be put into historical context with other ‘media panics’ driven by parental concerns, e.g. regarding videogames and the internet (ibid.: 124). The current thesis remains neutral in this debate. However, SVT Barn’s “tech-friendly” and “smartphone positive” position could be seen as a necessity, since the smartphone is the preferred device for media consumption among youngsters.

Tweens, identities and interaction

For cultural theorist Stuart Hall, ‘identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being’ (Hall 1996: 4). Tweens might be thought of as the quintessence of ‘becoming’, busy as they are in their identity construction process, searching for who they want to be. Sociologists Patricia and Peter Adler (1996) point out that preadolescence (“tweenhood”) as a social category is relatively new. Growing up used to be thought of as going through infancy, toddlerhood, childhood, adolescence, and then arriving at the final destination adulthood, whereas now, preadolescence as an age period:

... corresponds to the increasing specialization of society, where members need to acquire ever more sophisticated knowledge and skills, at ever younger ages, to function successfully. Preadolescence represents an important learning period, and its peer culture contains members’ distillations of society’s expectations.
(Adler & Adler 1998: 5)

Expressions like ‘sophisticated knowledge’, ‘skills’ and ‘society’s expectations’ point towards somewhat exaggerated expectations of 9-12-year-olds, almost treating them as “little adults”. Coupled with smartphone use, consider how a marketing agency describes this group:¹⁶

Tweens seemingly grow up at a faster rate than those of generations before based on the fact that they have an infinite amount of information at their fingertips. Tweens need to be marketed to as if they are 2–3 years older than they are with a persona of an experienced teen.

Tweens are essentially defined by what they are not, situated somewhere “in-between.” Anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner would have referred to such an existence as *liminal*, a state of being ‘betwixt and between’ (Turner 1967, cited in Bigger 2009). Cody, Lawlor and Maclaran lay out the theory of liminality:

¹⁶ <https://medium.com/@motivateROI/new-to-tween-marketing-here-are-the-must-knows-of-gen-z-e1d2ff7b15c3>

Defined by Turner & Turner (1978: p.249) as ‘the state and process of mid-transition in a rite of passage’, a ‘moment in and out of time’ (Turner, 1969: p.96), the liminal phase of a transition, represents an instance of incompleteness, when the liminars (the ritual subjects in this phase) ‘elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space’ (Turner, 1969: p.95).

(Cody et al. 2012: 422)

Applied to tweens, ‘incompleteness’ should not be confused with thinking about children as incomplete adults and viewing childhood as ‘a transitional phase from which members graduate into being “real” members of society’ (Adler & Adler 1998: 6-7). The position taken in this thesis is to view childhood and “tweenhood” more as permanent social categories (ibid.: 7), important for their own sake. However, there is always tension between children’s ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ (e.g. James et al. 1998). Children are active agents, but in ‘conditions that are not of their own choosing’ (Block and Buckingham 2007: 26). They are dependent on their parents, they must go to school etc. These liminal beings, then, are free-roaming creatures to a certain extent, but not completely.

Thirty years ago, the psychologist Stephen Frosh (1991) wrote about a ‘crisis of identity’ in late modern, or post-modern society. He described the late modern state of mind as ‘a condition in which the struggle to be a self is nearly impossible’ (1991: 5). In a fluid and contradictory reality, ‘there is no absolute stability, no still point from which bearings can be taken’ (ibid.: 187). This sounds gloomy, but what he is essentially saying is that the crisis is a cultural construct (not a natural law):

...modern individuals are subjects within a culture which is in part constituted by its ability and tendency to produce precisely that experience. It is in the nature of modernity to provoke crises of identity: that is what modernity is about, that is what supplies its immense energy and productiveness.

(Frosh 1991: 191)

Expressions like ‘immense energy’ and ‘productiveness’ certainly sound a bit more positive. What Hall’s ‘becoming’ and Frosh’s ‘crisis’ have in common is that they are processes, always moving, never still. Unlike Turner’s ‘liminal state’ which is temporary, Frosh and Hall’s concepts are permanent processes. Carried over to online performances of self, we see a similar process:

It is an identity that needs to be constantly reinvented to keep up with the times and achieve personal and professional success. The affordances of social network sites fit neatly into these preoccupations of late modernity in which the subject is constantly updating itself.

(Chambers 2013: 80-81)

Constantly updating, redefining, reconstructing. According to Hall, identities can only be constructed ‘through the relation to the Other’ (Hall 1996: 4). He emphasizes difference, that identities can only be imagined in comparison to what they are not (ibid.). For Goffman, there was no true self, only an array of ‘masks’ for various situations (1959):

For Mead and Goffman, the self is not viewed as a bounded, fixed entity. It is a reflexive construction which is constantly being renegotiated through interaction within the social world...

(Chambers 2013: 66)

In such accounts, selves can not exist in a vacuum. According to Hall, identity construction is ‘a process never completed – ‘always ‘in process’. It is not determined in the sense that it can be ‘won’ or ‘lost’, sustained or abandoned’ (Hall 1996: 2). In other words, an ongoing process without end destination. Only through the relation and interaction with others can identities be found, maintained and developed. Tweens and SVT Barn are both in a process of becoming. However, tweens are there temporarily, they will eventually complete the transition and grow out of liminality, whereas SVT Barn’s identity search must continue for as long as there is public service. This process can only be productive (for SVT Barn) in interaction with the liminars.

Positioning the research

Concluding the review, the thesis aims to contribute to Critical Media Industry Studies, as well as to Nordic PSM research, conducted under umbrellas such as the RYA initiative at the University of Copenhagen, or Nordicom at the University of Gothenburg.

In this study, *Kär* will be pictured as part of SVT Barn’s search for its contemporary identity, mirroring the identity search of the liminal tween group. The research is drawing from a cross-disciplinary body of literature, spanning media policy, cultural studies, media and communication studies and sociology. The study will investigate how SVT Barn views its tween audiences, and the policies, creative and innovative decisions taken when striving to be close to them and their world. This, in turn, is part of the larger PSM struggle for relevance in

which relationships between PSM and citizens of all generations cannot be taken for granted anymore. Multidirectional dialogues as sites for articulating and performing values that shape media products will be investigated to assess the progress towards a “fully datafied SVT Barn 3.0”, able to deliver nuanced content with universal appeal and relevance in a digitalized society. The study is conducted in a Nordic PSM context within a MIS framework of constantly switching between the meso and micro level of production and policy.

Before moving into the analysis of the SVT Barn interviews, there will be a chapter on the methods and methodological standpoints of the research, as well as a step-by-step account of the research process.

Methodology and methods

As mentioned, the thesis combines a critical media industry studies (MIS) analysis of *Kär*, with policy and theoretical analysis of SVT Barn in the context of Nordic PSM. It uses a qualitative approach to research, resting on a *phronetic* philosophy of social sciences. These positions will be explained below. The main method for obtaining the empirical material was qualitative, semi-structured production interviews. These were designed, conducted, and analyzed in an abductive, recursive and non-linear process. The chapter attempts to explain the value of such an approach to media and communication studies, as well as providing a step-by-step description of the research process.

Media and communication studies that matter

This research uses a qualitative approach, with language as is its primary scientific instrument. That requires from the researcher a language that is ‘systematic, precise and accurate as it tries to determine validity, reliability, objectivity and truth’ (Brennen 2017: 3). Language could be pictured as a way to break things open, look at its contents and then say something about them. No matter how precise the language, interpretation is an inescapable part of qualitative analysis (Kuckartz 2014: 31). Numbers, the primary tool of quantitative research, are often thought of as ‘more authentic, important and scientific’ (Brennen 2017: 3-4). In a digital age, the same could be said about ‘data’, often seen as matter-of-factly objective information, something that exists ‘independent of observation and outside of human interpretation’ (ibid.: 7). However, numbers and data have to be interpreted too, or else they would not mean anything to us. Therefore, all research methods require some extent of qualitative interpretation (ibid.).

Science is not value-neutral or culture-free. Scientific fields are situated within paradigms that rest on certain assumptions about how the world is constituted (Kuhn 1962). Some scholars say that we should instead be very open about where we stand, laying all the cards on the table, so to speak. Transparency and self-reflexivity should be key components of science in general, even more so in qualitative research. According to Sandra Harding, ‘such contextualization of research strengthens the reliability of its results’ (2008: 220). In an earlier article, she calls this position ‘strong objectivity’ (Harding 1995). For social science in particular, ‘there is no way in which we can escape the social world in order to study it’ (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 15-16). The researcher is always historically, socially and

culturally situated and should not attempt to arrive at a ‘view from nowhere’ (Baert 2005: 35). There is no Truth with a capital T out there, there are only various perspectives (Brennen 2017: 10). The generalizability of this kind of research, then, is limited. Findings will at best be applicable in a certain geographical, historical and cultural context, such as in the 21st century welfare states of the Nordic region.

If universal truths cannot be found, what is the use of a study like this? Bent Flyvbjerg says that social science should be *phronetic* (2001). *Phronesis* goes back to Aristotle’s three intellectual virtues, *episteme*, *techne*, and *phronesis*, of which *phronesis* is the only one that does not exist in modern vocabulary. It means something like ‘prudence’ or ‘practical wisdom’, deemed essential for a healthy society by Aristotle (2001: 2). If *episteme* was about scientific knowledge, and *techne* about technical knowledge (practical know-how), then *phronesis* was seen as vital for developing ‘society’s value-rationality *vis-à-vis* its scientific and technical rationality’ (ibid.: 53). Since the Enlightenment, *phronesis* has gradually been forgotten in a modern society dominated by ‘instrumental rationality’ (ibid.) and should be brought back. Social science should not pretend to be natural science or technical know-how, but instead focus on the things it is good at, such as identifying values, ‘things that are good and bad for man’ (ibid.: 57) and be ‘society’s nose, eyes and ears’ (ibid.: 60). Flyvbjerg further emphasizes the importance of case studies, since ‘social science has in the final instance nothing else to offer than concrete, context-dependent knowledge, and the case study is especially well suited to produce this knowledge’ (ibid.: 72).

Flyvbjerg requests a social science that matters (2001), in which the ultimate question is “How can we do better as a society?”. Transferred to media and communication studies, a researcher would be wise to go a bit easy when interacting with media professionals, often working under tight budgets and time schedules, who might have limited patience with world-improvers. John Corner predicts an increase in a type of production studies that aim for more of an inside perspective, with ‘a stronger pragmatic dimension to the criteria from which criticism is generated’ (Corner & Roscoe 2016: 163-164). For the qualitative, phronetic approach to work in a production study, it must be coupled with a considerable deal of pragmatism. Analyzing and theorizing should not be done up in space, but on the ground, in collaboration with people of flesh and blood, without losing the critical perspective. Such a pragmatic approach fits well within the Critical Media Industry Studies framework.

Corner, further, requests an increased focus on ‘early pre-production and upper-level decision-making, which is often under-documented’ (ibid.). This study attempts to look into such matters, by tracing the origins of *Kär*, from creative decisions on ‘ground level’ to the executives on ‘helicopter level’, the commissioning process and the strategies and policies articulated. The implications of such decisions for the *Kär* production and for PSM and the relationship with young audiences will be investigated.

Production interviews

Six interviews took place between 19 January to 18 March 2021, involving five participants:

Efva Henrysson – Project leader for *Kär* and MAXA Barnplay

Hanna Lagerberg – Producer/Editor, Writer & director of *Kär* (also creator of MAXA)

Anna Bylund – Producer/Editor, Writer & director of *Kär*

Petter Bragée – Head of children’s, comedy & entertainment programming at SVT Malmö

Safa Safiyari – Commissioner of children’s and youth content at SVT, Head of SVT Barn¹⁷

Four interviews were digital video meetings, and two were conducted over the phone. No face-to-face interviews were possible, due to the ongoing pandemic. Each interview lasted between fortyfive minutes to one and a half hours. A written consent form was emailed in advance of the interviews. All respondents agreed to participate.¹⁸ These media professionals are all ‘above the line workers’ at SVT, whose names can easily be found in e.g. end credits and news articles. Therefore, they have not been anonymized. The Project leader was generous enough to share their *Kär* ratings.¹⁹ These were great a great help. In addition, ratings were requested from MMS Mediamätning.²⁰ The SVT Malmö Head of children’s programming requested to read the parts in which he is quoted before publishing. His request was granted. Minor adjustments were made in accordance with his feedback, such as correcting job titles, clarifying authorship, responsibilities and details in repertoire.

Interviews can be seen as a process of ‘data generation’ in which interviewer and interviewees through interaction co-produce the data (Byrne, in Seale 2018: 467). Freeman describes a shift

¹⁷ See Appendix 2 for access to exclusive informants, background.

¹⁸ See Appendix 3 for consent form (production).

¹⁹ See Appendix 8 SVT’s *Kär* ratings.

²⁰ See Appendix 9 and 10. MMS is an organization that measures viewer ratings for programs, clips and advertisements on TV and online. Its four biggest owners are SVT 24%, NENT Group 24%, TV4 24% and Discovery Networks Sweden 24%. <https://mms.se/>

in production research, ‘from seeing interviewing as a process of data transfer exercises from subjects to observers, to instead conceiving of interviewing as sustained dialogues between mutual partners’ (Freeman 2016: 110). The point of such research is not simply to observe, scrutinize and criticize from one’s academic ivory tower, but to approach an insider perspective, identifying problems and looking for solutions in joint efforts. The production interview could in a best-case scenario be regarded as ‘a meeting between professionals’ (Bruun, in Patersen et al. 2016: 142). Reaching such a position requires some professionalism, stamina, and “people skills”: ‘[T]he need to build trust in the researcher’s project, and not least ethos, is crucial’ (Bruun, in Patersen et al. 2016: 140). Equally important in trust-building is that ‘the researcher appears to have background knowledge of the subject in question and a professional understanding of the problems in the informant’s world’ (ibid.: 141). Doing background research and coming well prepared to an interview, then, is very important, as well as being polite and interested and listen carefully.

Media professionals who participate in production research could be thought of as ‘elites’ or ‘exclusive informants’, since they possess in-depth knowledge on the topic that only they can provide (Bruun, in Patersen et al. 2016: 131). Semi-structured production interviews can be composed in a less strict way than audience interviews. Audience members are typically asked more or less the same set of questions, whereas in production interviews, questions will vary depending on who the researcher is talking to. In production interviews, the participant can be allowed to steer more, e.g. if the researcher is dependent on the person for further access to other exclusive informants, or if the researcher simply had no chance of obtaining the information in any other way. This shifts the power dynamics, from being weighted towards the researcher in audience studies to being weighted towards the media professional in a production interview (Ralph, in Freeman 2016: 125).

The way I designed my interview guides was largely based on background research. There was also a good deal of intuition and gut feeling involved. Here, my background in film production was to my advantage, having developed a “sixth sense” for what “moving image” producers might be interested in talking about. However, my knowledge about SVT Barn was limited from the start. Knowledge improved for each interview, so that the next interview was more informed than the previous one, and so on. I always prepared questions on various topics, in order to have a pool to choose from, depending on where the interview was going. I started by conducting two exploratory interviews with tween viewers of *Kär*, to aid the design

of the production interviews. Informed consent was given by the parents, who were also present in the room during the interview.²¹ Learning to see *Kär* from a ‘tween perspective’ rather than from an adult researcher’s perspective was helpful when attempting to craft relevant questions for the production interviews. Drafts of interview guides were discussed with the supervisor and edited before conducting the interviews. In such a way, interview guides were in a constant process of refinement.²²

Theoretically, the interviews were informed by Hill’s analytic dialogue (Hill 2019; Hill forthcoming), looking for how e.g. dialogues between creatives and executives within the company, or dialogues with tween audiences and actors helped shape the media product. Jackson’s PSM 3.0 (2020) and Steemers (2019) media policy writings led the way in discussions about relevance through platforms, formats and strategies online. Syvertsen et al. (2014), Andersen and Sundet (2019) provided material for talking about SVT Barn in the Nordic context. Turner’s liminality (1969), Chambers digital intimacies (2013), and Goffman’s interactionism (1959) constituted the framework for questions of how SVT Barn, Adam and Bianca, as well as tween audiences search for identity through interaction. In the interviews, attention was given to the values articulated regarding SVT Barn’s engagement with digitalized tweens.

Creative professionals are often surprisingly willing to share information, welcoming university-industry collaborations as well as ‘the rare chance to discuss their work in a reflexive way’ (Ralph, in Freeman 2016: 121). Indeed, the SVT Barn personnel were all very generous with their time and open for reflecting on everything from work practices and strategies to values and beliefs. This can present challenges to the researcher who must keep an objective distance ‘in order to draw broader conclusions about the potential shortcomings of the industry and its institutional frameworks’ (ibid.: 122). Hesmondhalgh warns about ‘the menace of instrumentalism’ in MIS research and education (2014), e.g. if the research is commissioned and financed by media companies, or if students use their research as tickets to enter the industry (“vocationalism”). He notes an increase in these types of collaborations and argues strongly for knowledge for knowledge’s sake:

²¹ See Appendix 4 for consent form (underaged participant).

²² See Appendix 18 for interview guide from mid-way through interview process.

Media professionals who have an understanding of the value of autonomous, independent research can be a joy to work with. But collaborative research still needs to be judged by scientific principles of rigor, originality, and significance, rather than on the basis of whether it contributes to economic prosperity within a particular company, country, or region. (Hesmondhalgh 2014)

This study started out as a discussion about an internship. SVT Barn Malmö were interested in a collaboration, especially if there would have been a fresh audience investigation in it for them by the end of it. Corona put a stop to any such plans. Credit to SVT Barn for still agreeing on participating. That says something about them as an open, accessible, knowledge-encouraging, societal institution, situated in a Swedish tradition of transparency. Indeed, Sweden is ranked third (together with Finland, Switzerland and Singapore) in Transparency International's yearly Corruption perceptions index.²³ Nonetheless, I want to emphasize that SVT did not commission the study, nor finance it, they did not interfere in its design, and they did not offer me a job upon completing it. Therefore, the research is independent, striving for knowledge for knowledge's sake. If it can contribute to an improved dialogue between SVT Barn and young people, it would be my pleasure.

Critical reflection

Here, I should establish my position regarding PSM, for reasons of transparency. Basically, I am a friend of public service. Growing up in the 'media scarcity' environment of Sweden in the late 70s and early 80s, I have fond memories of family get-togethers in front of Christmas TV series, Eurovision song contests, British humor, US soap operas, action series, sitcoms, and puppet shows. These programs constituted common topics of conversation in school and at work, as everybody watched more or less the same shows on the two only state-owned public service channels available at that time. Further, I have a professional background working for a Swedish comics and film brand for children, very much in line with the 'inform, educate and entertain' ethos. However, the current study will not be uncritical, nor nostalgic. To put it bluntly, I *wish* that public service would continue to be important in the lives of children and youth, but I am uncertain if it can. What if the train has already left? But these are speculations. John Corner has taught us to 'assume less and investigate more' (2011: 87). That is what this thesis is about, not about dwelling in the past.

²³ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/nzl>

The abductive approach

The *SVT Kär* study was approached through what could be termed an ‘abductive logic’, which according to Pat Bazeley is ‘closely connected with pragmatist philosophy, involves an iterative or dialectical interplay between existing theoretical understanding and empirical data, so that the theory is recontextualised, leading to fresh interpretation and potentially to a modified theoretical framework’ (Bazeley 2013: 336). The implications of such an approach, is that research ‘more often starts with an idea or a general question than with the goal of testing details of an existing theory’ (ibid.: 28). In the current research, it was not the case that all interviews were conducted in one sweep, using the same interview guide for everyone, with a theoretical framework set in stone, then analyzed and coded en masse as a clean-cut step number two. Instead, these overlapped in a rather messy, iterative ‘zig zag’ process in which early analysis would ‘inform further data gathering so that gaps in the data are filled or new and unexpected themes unpacked’ (Rivas, in Seale 2018: 880).

A recursive process developed organically, involving a ‘two-steps-forward, one-step-backward’ way of progressing methodically towards ‘the goal of insightful understanding of your cases and topic of investigation’ (Bazeley 2013: 13). It could perhaps be compared with ‘agile project management’, in which ‘sprints of activity’ are interspersed with rugby-like gatherings²⁴, reviewing what has been done, making adjustments, before going out for the next sprint (Jackson 2020: 211). The process looked something like this:

interview -> listening/analyzing/discussing/reading/writing -> next interview (refined)

In other words, there was no blueprint being followed from start to finish. Instead, interviews, themes and theoretical framework developed in a recursive, agile way.

An abductive approach, further, requires ‘immersion in data as a primary source of understanding’ (Bazeley 2013: 28). All interviews were transcribed manually, without the use of transcribing software, as the careful listening required was seen as the first step of immersion. The interviews, all of them in Swedish, were then summarized in English, to be able to discuss the findings with the English-speaking supervisor.²⁵ Summarizing and

²⁴ Indeed, ‘scrum’ is a term in rugby (gathering in a cluster to restart play), as well as in agile project management.

²⁵ See Appendix 5 for interview summary sample page.

translating necessarily involve interpretation to some extent. While interpretation of meaning is at the heart of qualitative research (Kuckartz 2014: 31), efforts were made to summarize and translate as accurately as possible, without distorting statements or adding things that were not there. For a Swedish-speaking reader, the English summaries can be compared with the Swedish transcripts, in case there would be questions regarding validity.

The interviews were rich in information, and the summaries tended to become quite long, sometimes over ten pages. These were then discussed between researcher and supervisor, and written comments were sent back and forth. Through this process, a number of themes started to emerge. In effect, these summaries with comments and notes scribbled all over them, functioned as coding sheets.²⁶ With such a small sample of interviews, it was decided that no further coding was necessary. ‘Zig zag thematic coding’ ideally ends when no new themes emerge, when ‘saturation’ has been achieved (Rivas, in Seale 2018: 880). With five participants and six interviews, it is uncertain if saturation was indeed reached. It was a risky method in the sense that I did not know from the beginning how many production interviews there would be. I considered myself lucky to get as many as I did, within such a short time frame. Perhaps new themes would have emerged with twice as many interviews. However, it was noted in a master summary, that the themes had become quite clear. The master summary worked as a chapter division plan for the analysis chapter.²⁷ By using the summaries as guides, quotes could be pulled from the Swedish transcripts, translated into English, then brought into the analysis. One full translated interview is included in the appendices.²⁸

Throughout the process, a research diary was kept, in which every step taken was recorded.²⁹ A research diary can be seen as the ‘audit trail’ of a study, a way of keeping the books in order to ensure transparency and confirmability (Miles et al. 2014: PDF 276). Memos and reflections were being recorded in the research diary continuously throughout the project (ibid.: PDF 99-100). These notes assisted the write up phase, and functioned as reminder and safety measure, making sure no important findings or ideas were accidentally left behind.

²⁶ See Appendix 6 for “coding sheet” sample page.

²⁷ See Appendix 7 for master summary.

²⁸ See Appendix 19 for one full transcript in English.

²⁹ See Appendix 11 for research diary sample page.

Concluding this section, this production study is using a qualitative approach resting on a phronetic social science philosophy. Designing, conducting and analyzing the interviews were done in an abductive, recursive, non-linear process, that was very much based on what was learned in the interviews. Listening, analyzing, discussing, reading and writing was the procedure that was repeated in a circular fashion throughout the research. It is the hope of this researcher that the methodological approach chosen will be able to generate original research, of value to Media Industry Studies as well as Nordic PSM research. In the next chapter, the analysis of selected parts of the interviews will be presented.

Analysis

What follows is an analysis of selected parts of the production interviews. In accordance with the MIS methodology, it will shift between meso level (policies and strategies in SVT Barn's digital development) and micro level (the 'nuts and bolts' of the *Kär* production). How SVT Barn works to be close to their tween audiences will be explored in some detail, followed by an analysis of identity search, for Adam and Bianca as well as for SVT Barn. Finally, there will be a summary of sorts of SVT Barn's key values, old and new, 'in their own words' regarding their digital engagement with young citizens, in the quest for relevance in a digitalized society.

Platforms, formats, and target groups

The age range served by SVT Malmö's branch for children and youth is from six and up. Drama series such as *Kär* (twens), "Klassen" (younger teens), and "Festen" (older teens) were all produced by SVT Malmö.³⁰ Programs for 6-12 are also produced in Stockholm (e.g. "Labyrint", "Jobbigt", "Strula") and Umeå (e.g. "Zombie", "Gården", "Så lever jag"), while the programs for younger children (e.g. "Bolibompa") are all produced in Stockholm (Petter interview). Today, 'SVT Barn' is the name of both broadcast channel and online platform.³¹ However, the interviewees all spoke about broadcasting as a bygone era. 'Back in broadcast times' or 'when we were still broadcast heavy' were phrases heard more than once. According to the *Kär* Project leader, it was quite obvious already three years ago that broadcast was not the future, whereas now, it is just an 'ad window' for Play (Efva interview). All new ideas and strategies are focused on Play, she said.

Such an 'online first' approach can be seen in many other children's divisions of European PSM, as a response to changing consumption patterns (Donders 2019: 1020-1021). As developers of digital platforms in general (e.g. BBC iPlayer and SVT Play), PSM have been called 'prime enablers of development in digital infrastructure and the pleasures of creative storytelling' (Sørensen 2014, cited in McElroy & Noonan 2018). Some channels have ceased broadcasting altogether, such as DR3 and DR Ultra (Thurman 2021: 292). However, going online is no guarantee for success. Thurman's research shows that BBC Three, a channel

³⁰ SVT's target groups generally represent school levels. Thus, *Kär* would be for "mellanstadiet" (10–12), *Klassen* for "högstadiet" (13–15), and *Festen* for "gymnasiet" (16–18).

³¹ The broadcast channel used to be called "Barnkanalen".

aimed at 16-34-year-olds, lost 89% of its annual viewing minutes after it ceased being a broadcast channel (ibid.: 309).

The programs for 6-12 produced in Malmö represent slightly less than half of SVT Barn's total 'inhouse' repertoire (Petter interview). SVT Malmö visualizes their children's repertoire as constituting four worlds, said to represent four needs:

- 1) THE SVT BARN WORLD – suspense and imagination for the 7-year-old
- 2) THE CREATIVE WORLD – creativity, DIY and participation for the 9-year-old
- 3) THE ALEX & CARRO WORLD – fun, pranks and your friends for the 9-year-old
- 4) DRAMA TWEENIE – relations, identification & genuine for the 11-year-old³²

The four worlds were developed by the SVT Malmö Head of children's programming and do not represent SVT Barn as a whole (Petter interview). *SVT Kär* eventually ended up in world number four, but as we will see, the road getting there was not straight.

The Malmö creative team – Hanna, Anna and Efva – were at the time of interviewing all part of "MAXA Barnplay", an ongoing project aiming to 'maximize' SVT Barn as an attractive online platform. MAXA content, 'small, hopefully cheap and effective productions', is supposed to 'strengthen profiles and add value to the regular shows' (Efva interview). MAXA is pictured as a fifth world, wedged in-between the four regular ones. According to the Malmö Head of programming:

MAXA has two purposes, one is to be a development hub and come up with the new stuff that can become big formats, and the second is to kind of keep an eye on the audience.

(Petter interview)

MAXA began as creative exploration by one person only: Hanna Lagerberg. As an online editor for "Sommarlov",³³ she started experimenting with shorter, repackaged versions of the show, as well as spin-offs created specifically for the online platform, e.g. one about Sommarskuggan, the mysterious character from "Sommarlov". Another of Hanna's initiatives was called "Gissa Alex" in which the Sommarlov star host Alexander Hermansson performed various tricks, filmed with a smartphone, inviting audience interaction ("Guess what happens

³² See Appendix 12 for image of SVT Barn Malmö's 4 worlds.

³³ Classic, daily, hour-long SVT summer holiday show.

next?”). Formats like these were cheap to produce, and some became very popular. “Gissa Alex” for example has had over 60 million views to date (Petter interview). Hanna’s experiments eventually became MAXA, with a budget of its own, and more people were brought in.³⁴ As a site for exploring new directions, SVT Malmö has attained a strategically important role for SVT Barn as a whole (Safa interview).

What eventually became *SVT Kär* could be situated somewhere in-between Donder’s expansionist phase ‘in which the public broadcasters aim to maximise their presence online’ and her consolidation phase ‘characterised by the offer of quality on-demand services’ (2019: 1013-1014). The starting point was a commission circa two years ago, in which SVT Barn HQ in Stockholm wanted Malmö to come up with concepts for ‘lots of TV for little money’ (Hanna interview). The Commissioner called it an ‘exploratory commission’ (Safa interview). It did not necessarily have to be short-form, it could just as well be longer than regular formats, e.g. live transmissions. Format was more about certain characteristics that make content better suited for online publication than broadcast. Genre was less important, the main ‘tentpoles’ were volume, frequency, stretch over time, and a small budget:

Both in broadcast and also in VOD³⁵ services, there’s always an ambition to build loyalty... and the easiest way to build loyalty... or one of them... is that the program has lots of episodes.
(Safa interview)

SVT Barn was looking for a more continuous presence in the lives of young viewers. Annette Hill refers to this as ‘embedded engagement’ (Hill 2019: 121). If her concept of ‘roaming audiences’ highlights a more fleeting form of engagement, then embedded engagement is about how ‘people form relationships with entertainment over time, in the context of their everyday lives’ (ibid.). Indeed, ratings showed that *Kär* was mainly watched mornings before school, afternoons/evenings after school and then peaked during the weekends (Efva interview). *SVT Kär* had become a ritual, embedded in the everyday lives of these viewers.

According to the Commissioner, who is also Head of channel, SVT Barn online has become a more “YouTube-ish” platform than SVT Play and is therefore a more natural home for short-form content like *Kär* (Safa interview). This was echoed by the Malmö Head of children’s

³⁴ At the time of interviewing, they were four.

³⁵ Video On Demand

programming, who says that SVT Barn might very well become SVT's YouTube, while SVT Play will be SVT's Netflix (Petter interview). The differentiation of their two online platforms is not only about age groups, then, but also about formats and viewing habits, with SVT Barn increasingly pictured as "my TV" (solo viewing), and SVT Play as "our TV" (social viewing). Even though SVT Barn were quick to point out that they on paper have 'no competitors' (Safa interview), since they are commercially independent, comparisons with YouTube and SVOD³⁶ services like Netflix were frequently being made in these interviews. The language used – words like 'consumption' and 'data-driven' – is a testimony to how positioning oneself in a platform society ruled by the Big Five³⁷ (Van Dijck et al. 2018) necessitates playing by those rules to some extent, even for publicly funded PSM.

The 'YouTube-ishness' of SVT Barn is in turn connected to media device. *Kär* was mostly watched on mobile screens (Efva interview). Indeed, a 'mobile first' policy was part of the series from its inception, with visuals and graphics being crafted to look good on the phone (Anna interview). According to the Malmö Head of programming, "mobile TV" and "large screen" are becoming the preferred viewing choices, while computers and tablets ('the hybrids') are decreasing. Further, Petter says that the SVT Barn site was developed for five-year-olds, but that it is now mostly used by nine-year-olds. "Adult" SVT Play has become the main home for toddlers (parents are often unaware that there is a separate app called SVT Barn), while SVT Barn is mainly used by children who are seemingly too old for it. 'It is not super clear', he says. One way of coming to terms with this problem could be if SVT Play was equipped with user profiles. The site is already suggesting titles based on previous viewings, so that 'you get a young SVT Play simply by watching in a young way', but there is plenty of room for improvement, he says. Regarding Barnplay, he would have preferred if it was more 'needs based', a bit like the four worlds, worlds that you could enter, not just lists 'like Netflix.'

We recognize the thinking from Jackson's PSM 3.0 (2020), e.g. how registration systems and user profiles can increase personalization, thereby potentially increasing the universal appeal of PSM, but the SVT Barn (Malmö) worlds are an interesting addition. If the Malmö branch had its way, then, SVT Barn would be a platform that pulls roaming audiences (Hill 2019)

³⁶ Subscription Video On Demand

³⁷ Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft

into the public service portal (away from the ‘non-competitors’), enabling further roaming and exploring while in public service land.

SVT Barn are well aware that many potential *Kär* viewers watch films and TV for older audiences:

We reach some of them, and they love *Kär*, but many of them watch much, much more advanced stuff, like “Riverdale” or “Stranger Things”... content about adults or college or high school students... and so they deselect us... we have to fight for this target group, and be very, very faithful towards them...

(Anna interview)

According to the *Kär* and MAXA Project leader, the ‘childish’ SVT Barn site does not help:

There’s a dilemma of identification there... if you’re on your way to becoming a teenager, would you confess that you watch something that includes the world “child”? I don’t know...

(Efva interview)

According to the Head of SVT Barn, digitalization has led to ‘an increased niche focus on specific target groups, in more genres, and in more contexts.’ For their digital transition they chose to focus on the youngest and the oldest children, he says. That is when they started to churn out drama series such as “Klassen”, “Jobbigt”, “Vi 4ever”, “Snart 13” and now *Kär*. After that age group, or towards the end of it, there is a sharp drop. Among 9-11-year-olds they have a reach around 70-80%, while for 12-14 it is 40% (Safa interview).

Regarding the ‘youth challenge’, the Malmö Head of programming for children (as well as for the entertainment & comedy genres) expresses frustration with the lack of SVT interest in funding teen content. Other Nordic PSM have specialized youth departments, he says, often with roots in youth radio channel P3, ‘with expertise on how the target group works’ (see Andersen & Sundet 2019), whereas SVT does not have such a department. After the successes of “Festen” and “Eagles” (both for older teens, both pitched by Petter), he thought they would be making five to six such drama series a year, but that has not happened. SVT has a problem reaching people ‘from 12 until they are 50’, he says. The current policy is to focus on the upper half of that problem (30-44), hoping that will ‘spill down’ onto younger audiences. In his view, it should be the other way around, i.e. to focus efforts on children and youth and keep them from leaving. The current attitude is that:

‘They will come back after they’ve been out playing’. I don’t understand that thinking. If I’d been CEO, I’d have prioritized differently.

(Petter interview)

The Project leader suggests that there might have been a lack of confidence in SVT, that youth have simply been deemed too difficult (Efva interview). Indeed, in the industry in general, children’s TV has been considered a ‘market failure’ sector, unless global audiences are targeted and revenue from licensed merchandise can be reeled in, and the youth market has traditionally been considered ‘too small’ to be interesting for investors (Steemers 2017: 42). For the Head of SVT Barn, it is not a question of “yes” or “no” anymore, if the young can be reached by public service: SKAM (2015 – 2017), “Festen” (2019 –), “Eagles” (2019 –), and now *Kär*, have proven that they can indeed be reached. The big question to him is instead:

How can we get that job done outside drama as genre? Because we know now that we can reach this group through drama. [...] However, outside that genre, few things work.

(Safa interview)

He emphasizes that variation and genre breadth is also part of SVT’s remit: ‘We can’t spend all our money on drama’ (Safa interview). *Kär*, therefore, is situated right at the end of the age range where SVT Barn still considers themselves relevant. The Malmö Head of programming notes matter-of-factly, but with a hint of frustration, that their mission currently extends only to the *Kär* target group. On paper, they are not expected to attract 13-15-year-olds. How well they manage to be relevant for that group, then, is ‘exactly as well as we invest: nothing’ (Petter interview). Indicated here is that there is a blind spot in SVT policy for viewers above the age of *Kär*. New shows are “in the pipeline.” Hanna Lagerberg’s next project, for example, is a drama aimed at teenage boys (Hanna interview), a project that will not be ‘held back’ by the restrictions of the SVT Barn online platform (Efva interview). However, there is still no specialized youth TV department in sight, as in Danish and Norwegian PSM.

Data-driven creativity, trust, and glancing at others

The SVT Malmö Head of children’s programming says that TV by tradition is a “gut feeling” business, meaning that producers and commissioners base their ideas on what they like themselves. That is how he started out himself, 28 years ago:

It was a kind of mantra: “What *you* think is good is what others will like. You shouldn’t look at what others think, it will make you blind. You should start from yourself, because then it will find an audience, then it will be genuine.” And I really believed that. It was a kind of thinking I thought was cool and a little rebellious. I don’t believe in that anymore, at all.

(Petter interview)

Today, he is instead ‘obsessed with online statistics.’ He says that public service is not when they make programs, but instead ‘it happens when people watch public service.’ If nobody watches, there is no public service. ‘Consumption equals relevance... if we disregard all other values’, says the Head of SVT Barn. Audiences will not choose content they do not want to watch (Safa interview). Indicated here is that SVT Barn has chosen a trends-led or audience-led approach to serving their young viewers. It is not up to SVT to moralize about what children should or should not watch. Audiences decide what is relevant for them.

The Malmö Head of programming praises the creative team behind *Kär* for being ‘data-driven’, meaning that they base their ideas and creative thinking on knowledge and data about the audience. In particular, he praises Hanna Lagerberg, who came into SVT without the pre-conceptions of ‘how it should be’ in TV production, who took a genuine interest in what various target groups really do, partly by studying the digital data:

If you’re not used to it, it’s just a bunch of numbers... To be “data literate” in online statistics, you need to have been doing it for a while, so that it’s in your spine how every show looks and how the curves for those shows look. And she understands how to do that... few producers do.

(Petter interview)

These expressions, ‘data-driven’ and ‘data-literate’, indicate that ‘data’ has become a prestige word for SVT Barn, perhaps used to demonstrate that they are indeed a ‘player’ within the platform society, who understand the rules of the game, signaling the desire to become, or at least be perceived as, being ‘fully datafied’ (Jackson 2020: 208).

Regarding PSM-audience dialogues, current online measuring systems do not provide all the data (Efva interview). Gender for example is invisible. SVT Barn assumes that the majority of *Kär* viewers were girls, however:

...as long as we don't make a more focused investigation, we don't know... we only get viewing time, and devices used.

(Efva interview)

In 'broadcast times', SVT actually had access to more nuanced data thanks to such 'focused investigations', whereas now:

Online statistics don't have the demography [...] Now we only see "OK, Klassen is watched. But how old are they?" We don't know.

(Petter interview)

The Malmö Head of programming downplays the importance of ideas in TV, saying that there are always plenty of them in circulation, many of them similar to each other. What matters to him are the people presenting the ideas, especially if these are 'data-driven':

[Anna & Hanna] could have told me that "We found that 'frogs' is a big thing, so we'd like to make this about frogs", and I would've believed them.

(Petter interview)

Being 'data-driven', according to Jackson, is partly about basing decisions on data, partly about a fluid, agile way of working, an 'approach that is alien to most producers accustomed to working in a linear way within television and radio' (2020: 210). 'Data-driven', to SVT Barn, seems to be more about being audience orientated.

Through the analytic dialogue (Hill forthcoming), we can see how the multidirectional dialogues of SVT Barn shape productions: dialogues between creatives, dialogues between creatives and executives, and dialogues between SVT and audiences. Trust is key in those dialogues. For SVT internally, we might add 'delegation of responsibilities' as a key value. The Commissioner and Head of SVT Barn described his 'exploratory commission' in such a way. His job is not to dictate in detail what people do, but to 'frame creativity':

If I frame them too much in a corner, then I might as well make it myself... I want to use *their* creativity and *their* knowledge about the target group... It is often a bad idea asking someone to produce something that you came up with yourself... because TV is a lot about ownership and the amount of soul you put into it.

(Safa interview)

Trusting the competence of colleagues and believing that media productions will benefit from producers being entrusted with responsibility and ‘ownership’ (market language again) are put forth as key values in SVT Barn production cultures.

Kär was not made in isolation. It was based on knowledge (‘data’) about the audience, conceptualized in multidirectional dialogue within a framework of trust, and born into a family tree of generic relatives. SVT Barn often spoke about repertoire, rather than single shows in isolation. References were frequently made to their other drama series, “Klassen” most prominent among them, but also “Jobbigt” which is similar in format to *Kär* (short clips, published almost daily). New programs are partly planned to differ from or complement existing programs. It is the repertoire as a whole that is supposed to have universal appeal:³⁸

... we don’t make everything for everyone. We make this for you, and this for you, and this for you, and in total we hope that there shall be something for everyone.

(Efva interview)

To stay relevant, PSM must keep an eye on what goes on in other parts of the industry. It has been noted that TV is getting increasingly cheap *and* increasingly expensive, as ‘budgets are gravitating towards either massively high value and production or YouTube do it yourself (DIY)’ (Sørensen 2018: 509-510). The Head of SVT Barn pointed out how YouTube and Netflix are competitors on the same market, in spite of being very different players. He compared influencer Therese Lindgren with Netflix hit series “The Crown”, the former super cheap to produce, the latter astronomically expensive, both with a huge reach in Sweden. For a publicly funded company in a small country who could never afford making “The Crown”, ‘the cheap production’ is where they must explore, according to him. “Malins vlog” and “Alex & Carro” are examples of cheap “public service vlogs” meeting the MAXA criteria. *Kär* ended up outside the MAXA domain but was characterized by the same kind of “YouTube-ish” thinking (volume, frequency, cheap, effective, and so on).

Regarding inspirational sources, Julie Andem’s SKAM (NRK 2015-2017) came up frequently, referred to as a ‘game changer’ in youth fiction. SKAM proved among other things that public service can still be relevant to teens, and that relevance can be achieved through relatively small budgets (Andersen & Sundet 2019: 2). Further, it demonstrated how

³⁸ See the RIPE@2019 reader for various perspectives on universalism in PSM.

an intergenerational audience could be reached through transmedia storytelling and repackaged formats (Duggan 2020: 1005-1006). Hanna & Anna also mentioned Lina Mannheimer's "Parning" (2019), a documentary about two people in their early twenties conducting an off-and-on relationship over distance (living in different countries at times):

I became totally inspired by it, because I think it portrays something I haven't seen portrayed in that way, and that's digital communication. I think it was done in such a cool way there.

(Hanna interview)

A large part of "Parning" consists of chatting, facetimeing, checking each other out on social media, and communicating through various apps. That way of performing personal relationships online (Chambers 2013) was something Hanna & Anna wanted to explore between a younger couple, as young as they come (Hanna interview). The Head of SVT Barn sums up the result of his 'exploratory commission':

... in TV, a lot of factors need to be right, and we never succeed [laughing]... it is not always it works, but with *Kär*, there was so much that was right... it has to do with timing, poster image³⁹, title, relevance of content, lots of different things... it's like a bouquet of things that sometimes are in synch, in a dynamic, harmonic and organic way. In my view, that was the case this time.

(Safa interview)

Crafting *SVT Kär* close to the audience

According to the SVT Malmö Head of children's programming, tweens and teens:

... are difficult to reach *if* we assume that they are like we were when we were kids. Then it goes to hell. That's what everybody else is doing. That's "the simple trick" we came up with at SVT Barn, to not think that they are like us [laughing]. Because they're not.

(Petter interview)

He says that the gap between youth and adults today is bigger than it has been since the 1950s, a time 'when adults wore hats and spoke in a nasal way and did not understand what the youngsters were up to' (Petter interview). This view seems to be in line with Chambers idea about personalized mobile technologies amplifying 'the long-term trend of social and cultural segregation from the adult world' (Chambers 2013: 101). Petter shared a slide presentation from a media habits investigation conducted a few years ago. In one slide, we see

³⁹ See Appendix 13 for *Kär* poster image.

two kinds of lives represented in graphics, one of the parental generation, the other of contemporary youth (12-15).⁴⁰ For the parental generation, ‘media’ floats in a bubble next to ‘family’, ‘friends’, ‘job’, ‘hobby’ and ‘exercise.’ For the 12-15-year-old, ‘media’ *is* the bubble in which all other areas (family, friends, school, hobby, exercise) are embedded. ‘They swim in it, you see, it’s like the bloodstream’, and we need to understand this basic difference, if we want to reach them (Petter interview).

In the above conceptualization of youth, the Malmö Head of programming is basically echoing Deuze’s media life (2011), of people living *in*, rather than *with* media. We see traces of Couldry & Hepp’s deep mediatization (2017) in which ‘the social’ and the mediated social are so intertwined that they can no longer be understood as separate entities. There is, further, the platform society (Van Dijck et al. 2018) in which people ‘swim’ in a media ecology, dominated by a few big players, that penetrates just about every domain of social and economic life. It is all there in SVT Barn’s thinking, presented as a key component of generational difference.

Applying Hill’s analytic dialogue again (2019), how did the SVT creatives reach for an inter-generational dialogue with this group of ‘digital natives’ (another term used by Petter, coined by Prensky 2001), pictured as so different? Step one was audience research. According to Anna, this is debated in the TV industry, an old ‘truth’ being that viewers do not know what they want:

... but I don’t see research like that at all, that you have to go out and ask them what they want. For me it was more about bathing in various experiences about being in a relationship.
(Anna interview)

Here, we see ‘datafication’ in that ‘audience-driven’ sense, that it is not just about graphs and numbers, but about basing creative decisions on knowledge (data), gained through dialogue. Research started as casual chats with children in schools and libraries, and by ‘hanging out where kids hang out’ in social media (Efva interview). Anna & Hanna found that ‘love and smartphones’ were themes that engaged. There was this twelve-year-old boy asking, “What if we could peek inside a girl’s Snapchat?”, and then the idea grew from there (Anna interview).

⁴⁰ See Appendix 12 for image from media habits investigation.

Chats were followed by in-depth interviews, conducted by Anna (who is ‘very, very good at research’ according to Hanna), with ca fifteen people between the age of 12-14 who said they had been in a relationship. The interviewees were asked the same questions that Anna & Hanna asked of their fictitious characters, Adam and Bianca, when crafting them. This was Laurie Hutzler’s “Character Map”⁴¹, a character-driven dramaturgical model that Julie Andem used for SKAM, and that Maria Karlsson Thörnqvist used for “Festen”:

I asked them questions about who they are, what they are afraid of, what they hope for in their lives, this thing about being in a relationship, I asked them to describe it... how it ended... how much you share with your parents, and how much you share with friends.

(Anna interview)

Some audience stories from the interviews were brought into the script, with the consent of the participants. One of the questions was: “What would you say is the greatest misconception about you?” The answer is that character’s mask, ‘which might not be the true me, but it is the first thing that meets the outside world and, you know, how people see you’ (Hanna interview). As an example, Hanna says that Bianca’s mask is ‘Little Ms Perfect.’ That is what people in her surroundings seem to think about her, and perhaps someone she pretends to be at times, but we as viewers learn that there is more to her than that (Hanna interview).

The above is classic Erving Goffman territory, i.e. his concept about juggling front stage and backstage selves (1959). Goffman used the metaphor of theatre to explain human social interaction, such as putting on various masks for various social situations. Indeed, the Swedish translation of his book is called *Jaget och maskerna: en studie i vardagslivets dramatik*⁴² (Bergström 1974). The theory is about performance, strategic impression management and life as social drama, also referred to as dramaturgical sociology or dramaturgical analysis.⁴³ Hutzler’s Character Map was used again when child stars Eva Jumatate and Oscar Stenbridge had been cast. Anna & Hanna would ask their actors the same questions about fears, desires and misconceptions. The characters were then crafted not too far from the actors. ‘When you’re that young and inexperienced, it’s easier to play a character who is close to oneself. Then you can kind of pick from yourself’ (Hanna interview). In

⁴¹ <https://www.etbscreenwriting.com/shop/the-character-map/>

⁴² “The I and the masks. A study of the drama of everyday life”

⁴³ See e.g. <https://sociologydictionary.org/dramaturgical-analysis/>

preproduction, then, the writers/directors approached the younger generation, step by step, through intergenerational dialogue and interaction, setting the stage for relevance.

From the interview sessions, Anna & Hanna picked three talkative girls and formed a reference group that they would consult throughout the production:

When Hanna started editing during the summer, she would send stuff to them all the time, like “OK, if a guy asks if you want to be his girlfriend, how would he write it?” [...] or when it ends, can you write like this? “No, you can’t, that would be really weird”.

(Anna interview)

The writer/director duo enjoyed being ‘nerdy’ with details, asking the reference group about such things as abbreviations used in chats, to names of contacts in their phonebooks, which were often nicknames (Anna interview). ‘Such things are fun, and they contribute to the feeling of authenticity’ (Hanna interview). In a RYA article, using reference groups is referred to as working with ‘junior editors’ (Christensen & Redvall 2019). According to the authors, using junior editors ‘is a way to give the audience agency and get important input on the current lives of children’ (ibid.). The concept could be extended to the actual editor of *Kär*, a young person ‘not too far away from that reality’ (Efva interview). Even though most of the visual design of *Kär*’s digital communication came from Hanna (Anna interview), the editor would insist on keeping misspellings and such things in the Snapchat graphics, to make it look more authentic. Details matter when trying to be close to the audience.

The layers of *SVT Kär*

The Head of SVT Barn says that ‘the digital layer strengthens suspense’, and according to him, ‘text as a layer on top of video has long been underestimated’ (Safa interview). The SVT Malmö Head of programming was very enthusiastic about how Hanna & Anna handled ‘the digital layer’ in *Kär*. He gave the example of ‘the first scrolling episode’ (unclear which one) when all we see is Bianca scrolling on her phone, how we read drama into the pace of scrolling, what images she stops at, the way she scrolls back up, and so on. It is like ‘being inside her brain’, he says, and continues:

A lot of the techniques they use have been used, but *that* I have not seen before. To be part of... to understand how a person thinks during three minutes of silent scrolling, that is something I think we will see in feature films and all sorts of content from now on. [...] When I

tell my colleagues who work with, you know, real programs, they're like "OK, interesting, but that's something for kids, right?", I go "In five years you'll be there. You're just behind!"
(Petter interview)

Marshall McLuhan claimed already in the 1960s that 'all technologies are extensions of our physical and nervous systems' (cited in Moores 2014: 205). Smartphone use in *Kär* is represented as such an extension, so natural and taken for granted (Ling 2012) that we as viewers hardly pay attention to it, instead focusing on facial expressions, body poses, and the texts ('on top of video'). By seeing the character writing, swiping, scrolling, being able to compare physical expressions with what happens on the mobile screen, we are invited as spectators of front and backstage selves at play, like 'being inside her brain.' Being strictly authentic in 'scrolling' or 'snapping' episodes would have entailed showing little or hardly any facial expressions. That simply did not work on screen. Therefore, the directors had to exaggerate reactions, depart from "realism", and it would still feel right (Hanna interview).

According to the Project leader, tweens are super-fast on their smartphones but inexperienced emotionally (Efva interview). This is one reason 'the music layer' was given such a prominent position, to make up for limited ability of expression:

Twelve-year-olds might not... their love relationships might not be on such an advanced level, you know, when it comes to expressions of love. So, how could we maximize love? Well, that could be done through music... or like, they could be much more dramatic both when they are angry and when they are in love, with the help of music.
(Anna interview)

Songs were selected partly based on popularity within the target group, but mostly on what would illustrate the story best. It was important that the majority of songs were in Swedish, so that young viewers could follow the story (Hanna interview). SVT Barn need to always keep in mind that many viewers are younger than the target group (Efva interview). Another criterium for the music was that it should feel 'here and now' (Anna interview).

Kär is an interesting mix of everyday life and 'larger than life', a bit like a musical will switch between spoken parts and musical performances. Anna & Hanna talked about wanting to make *Kär* "goalsy", i.e. something elevated, something to strive for, to dream about. Anna reflects on their "goalsy" characters:

Well, they're kind of "A Kids", aren't they? Super talented singers, really cute, they're like... in that way, maybe we are showing an ideal... It's a balance act, to strengthen kids in various ways without becoming moralistic, or giving them too unattainable ideals... How many twelve-year-old boys would make an "I'm your biggest fan" [music] video to their girlfriends? In a way, that is raising the bar a lot...

(Anna interview)

Regarding glossiness and idealism, the SVT Malmö Head of programming points again to repertoire, saying that *Kär* is not representative of all their programs. Then he counters by asking why this would be an issue in children's content:

It's a dream world. It's an elevated reality, and that is what we want. You know, that's what we get all the time, us adults...

(Petter interview)

However, ratings showed that episodes featuring full music videos had more unfinished views than other episodes (Efva interview). This seems to indicate that music, stardom and glossiness were not the main elements that pulled viewers to *Kär*.

Looking for the i in digital interaction

SVT Kär indeed portrays its main characters as living in a kind of symbiosis with their smartphones, 'extensions of our physical and nervous systems' as McLuhan said. A rough estimate is that 75% of the series consists of digital media use. We see Adam and Bianca "snapping", "facetiming", "stalking", posting updates, recording, self-publishing, checking likes, sending images and videos to each other constantly.⁴⁴ In effect, they are 'swimming' through their mediatized lives (Deuze 2011, Couldry & Hepp 2017). Their digital communication is represented as a prime example of '*anytime, anywhere, always on connectivity*' (Vincent & Haddon 2018:5)

Adam and Bianca's smartphone culture can be situated within that celebratory, perhaps even idealized representation of digitalized youth (Mascheroni 2018). There is no trace of the 'child at risk' here, such as addiction, or breach of face-to-face interaction (Drotner 1999). Adam and Bianca are *more* social through their smartphones, not less. Mobile communication

⁴⁴ See Appendix 14 and 15 for some examples of smartphone use in *Kär*.

technology is here represented as pro-social. Regarding painting a positive picture of smartphones, the Head of SVT Barn says that it has partly to do with striving for relevance, but also with ‘an anti-authoritarian model of thinking’ and ‘a core democratic idea’:

A large part of Scandinavian TV culture for kids... is built on a philosophy of not pointing the finger [...] One should not patronize kids, not be on a mission to raise kids... what is bad for them and what is... you know, but instead having a more affirmative attitude towards life.
(Safa interview)

He points once again to repertoire, saying that they have other shows encouraging off-screen activities e.g. “Lilla Sportspegeln”.⁴⁵ Further, he thinks of screen time as a somewhat ‘unsolvable problem’ for them:

How could we join an ‘anti-screen’ movement? Because we work with screens ourselves. [...] I’m not sure that’s really our responsibility, when we’re in the same business, so to speak.
(Safa interview)

In *Kär*, smartphones are represented as unproblematic devices, even when Adam and Bianca lie in bed, sleepless because the other did not reply.⁴⁶ Difficulty sleeping was otherwise one of the risks outlined, as were expectations of constant availability and reciprocity (Mascheroni 2018: 128; Chambers 2013: 125). Instead, this was put forth as a main attraction:

I think that one of them is recognition... and intimacy... That you’re allowed into someone’s bedroom when that person can’t sleep, because he or she didn’t get a reply on a snap. I don’t think we’ve seen that being portrayed a lot for this target group in Sweden.
(Hanna interview)

Intimacy is probably the most important word above. Interestingly, the series was going to be called “Distance” at first, then “You and I”.⁴⁷ It stayed “You and I” for quite a while, before eventually becoming *Kär*. Already in the evolution of the title, we see a movement from distance to closeness. Originally, the characters were to live far apart. However:

⁴⁵ Classic SVT sports program for children.

⁴⁶ See Appendix 16

⁴⁷ Named after “Du & jag”, a Swedish cover version of Wannadies “You and Me Song” (1994), performed by Eva and Oscar in the series.

We realized that OK, it will be much better drama if they can see each other at least once a week, and we get to see when they are close to each other, and there will be tension in the air, and “will they kiss or not?”, you know... so yeah, that unlocked quite a few keys.

(Hanna interview)

SVT’s ratings showed that episodes featuring e.g. Bianca’s friends, or the episodes where Adam and Bianca meet physically, were more popular than ‘Snapchat episodes’ (Efva interview). Related to the pandemic or not, the core appeal of a ‘high-tech’ drama about digital communication turned out to be ‘old-fashioned’ human contact and social interaction.

In interactionist theory, we have seen that worlds are socially constructed by the people inhabiting them and interacting in them (Adler & Adler 1998: 10). The world that Adam and Bianca co-create through their interaction is very much their own, but not entirely:

Bianca has got one foot in family life and one foot in a world of friends that is starting to exert more pressure, and all the time... even in the relationship with Adam, all the time she gets... exposed to have to make choices about who she is, to kind of try to find that voice, what you want yourself and who you are.

(Anna interview)

Bianca is sensitive to what others think. Ditching Adam the outsider at first, instead choosing Oliver the popular guy, is largely a result of peer pressure led by her tough friend Clara: ‘[Oliver] is funny, good-looking, and throws insanely good parties that we might be invited to, if you get together with him’ (Clara in episode 14, 1 Sept 2020).⁴⁸ By choosing Oliver, Bianca is managing her status within the peer group. How she sees herself is very much shaped by her social choices. Chambers saw an increased focus on agency and selectivity in personal relationships as a sign of the time and the culture we live in (2013: 169). In Goffman’s interactionism, the self is not fixed but fluctuates according to who one is interacting with (1959). Bianca puts on different masks for different others. Who does she want to be? The mask she wears when she is with Adam, or the mask she wears for Oliver (i.e. her friends)? Seen through Frosh’s identity crisis (1991) and Hall’s ‘becoming’ (1996), such a search would potentially go on forever. There is no end, there is only the process.

⁴⁸ See Appendix 17 for peer pressure.

Luckily for Bianca, she lives in a TV drama in which there is a beginning, middle and end. The process must end sometime. At the end of *Kär*, Bianca finally confronts her Mum, portrayed as a strict, demanding, and unforgiving parent throughout the series. Bianca, who had been forced to forsake love for ‘being a good girl’, follows her heart and chooses Adam, the only person who ever asked her what *she* wants. As it turns out, they both want to be the selves they are in *their* social world, that they co-create. Closure is achieved, the process ends. The liminars complete their transition (Turner 1969). They update themselves by choosing each other, by interacting with each other. In a similar way, SVT Barn can only be the SVT Barn they want to be, when they are in touch with their audiences, when there is dialogue and interaction. ‘Public service is when people watch public service’, as the Malmö Head of programming said (Petter interview). The PSM-audience dialogue was started this time. 72 000 average online ratings per episode are good numbers for a small, “experimental” tween drama.⁴⁹ *Kär* is one piece in the larger puzzle of SVT Barn’s identity search in the digital media environment. Unlike the tweens of *Kär*, however, who eventually grow out of liminality, SVT Barn’s identity search will go on forever. For them, there is only the ongoing ‘process of becoming’ (Hall 1996: 4).

SVT Barn values

What are the key values in SVT Barn’s digital engagement with young citizens, in their own words? The Head of channel says that they are basically identical to the ones in their remit, highlighting the democratic and egalitarian values. He adds the slogan for SVT as a company: to make audiences more inquisitive and involved, ‘especially important in pandemic times.’ McElroy & Noonan (2018) highlighted the importance of digital PSM for small nations and small languages. Indeed, the Head of SVT Barn emphasizes Swedish as a language. That is the one value that nobody else in the world cares about, he says, speaking of it as culture, a common set of references, a necessity for social and national cohesion. ‘Everything that’s in Swedish is close to the Swedish audience’ (Safa interview). There was some extent of PSM as intervention in his reasoning, ‘promoting the homegrown and locally produced to act as a bulwark’ against foreign, commercial competition (Potter & Steemers 2017: 7). Further, *Kär* stars Swedish actors, and it portrays Swedish youth culture here and now. In addition, the Head of SVT Barn valued small-scale:

⁴⁹ See Appendix 8 for *Kär* ratings.

I'm of the opinion that... in this big SVT hat... my role is to advance the medium, through small things and not just buy big formats... others can do that.

(Safa interview)

A small-scale production policy is also something born out of necessity, which we remember from Andersen and Sundet's study of SKAM (NRK) and *Anton 90* (DR), in which 'short-form, small-budget online fiction series in which social media function as a central part' was seen as 'accommodating a digital native youth audience that was otherwise turning its back on the institutions' (2019: 2).

For the creative team, being on the children's side was important, as was taking the things they care about seriously, trying to keep a target group perspective throughout the drama:

One might say that we portrayed Adam's Dad as so nice and Bianca's Mum as so mean... when in fact, the things she says also make sense. It's not complete rubbish... but I think that in this age, that's how you would experience it... I think we've been faithful to that.

(Hanna interview)

How do children's lives look in the digital? To take that very seriously, and let it be a part, a big part of the story, not just an extra layer.

(Anna interview)

Here we see the affirmative values come into play, of not patronizing kids, not telling them what's good and bad. Further, there are the values of being audience oriented, 'data driven', making programs for 'them' and not for 'us', in line with the Malmö Head of programming's emphasis on the media life of this generation.

The SVT Barn personnel reflected on "reality" versus idealism. Adam and Bianca are portrayed as well-behaved tweens (most of the time). In their digital communication, there are hardly any swear words, no "inappropriate" pictures, they do not talk behind people's backs, and so on. When asked about the "sweetness", the Malmö Head of programming said that:

...there is so much talk about children's roughness and bullying... but the majority of what goes on online isn't like that. And that's important. If we were to portray everything that goes on online as we usually do in the adult world... that it's hard and raw and problematic, then they wouldn't recognize themselves.

(Petter interview)

The Writer/Director duo, on the other hand, seems to have wished for a bit more leeway:

We felt, both me and Hanna, that we would've liked to turn up the drama some more, that is, in situations when they're angry at each other, we would've enjoyed if they were a bit more challenging in the language, and more like... you know, getting revenge, getting back at each other, do things they know will hurt, that kind of thing.

(Anna interview)

There seems to have been quite some discussion between creatives and executives regarding “forbidden things” in *Kär*. For example, Adam and Bianca have a go at smoking, they break into a restricted area, Bianca tries wine with her friends, and Adam is a shoplifter. As the editor-in-chief⁵⁰, Petter must weigh every such inclusion against the risk of being reported by the Swedish Broadcasting Commission.⁵¹ The paragraph called ‘the special impact of the medium’ in their licence agreement states that they cannot encourage or inspire dangerous or criminal activities (MPRT 2020b: 7). Wine drinking, for example, can be included, but ‘we’re not allowed to portray it as being all pleasant’ (Petter interview). Bianca tries wine (ep. 25, 12 Sept 2020) but says she does not like it. When asked if she wants more towards the end of the episode, she says ‘no, thank you’, while her friend Clara takes another sip.⁵²

While the creatives might have preferred less disclaimers, they expressed an appreciation of these ‘can-cannot’ discussions, as they keep them “on their toes”, having to continuously reflect on what it means to be public service:

... we have to kind of argue for why we think something is credible, it describes something that we think that this target group is interested in, something that they encounter themselves. [...] It's a really interesting balance act. If we get too scared, we'll lose in relevance. But if we're too... if we don't take our public service role seriously, at the other end of the spectrum, then maybe we'll lose in trust, so in a way, that's where we work all the time.

(Anna interview)

Through the analytic dialogue (Hill 2019), we see how internal SVT Barn dialogues become sites for articulating, performing and negotiating values of credibility, relevance and trust.

⁵⁰ “Ansvarig utgivare” in Swedish.

⁵¹ “Granskningsnämnden”, part of MPRT since 2010.

⁵² See Appendix 17 for peer pressure.

These are not just words in a policy document, they must be constantly re-articulated in the dialogues of living, breathing production cultures.

Clearly, SVT Barn takes their social responsibility seriously. They want children to watch their shows, not for ratings, definitely not for profit, but because they believe it is good for them. “Klassen” in particular appears to be such a program:

I think that “Klassen”... is a super important program, because it provides kids with tools to handle everything from... you know, if you watch all episodes of “Klassen” you will have learned everything from handling bullying, unrequited love, a mother who drinks, a friend who has suicidal thoughts, *everything* is there.

(Petter interview)

This is public service as a “public good” (Syvertsen 1999, Bolin 2016), as a public health institution, aiming to provide some sense of what a good life can be. The “goalsy” approach chosen for *Kär* was not intended as an idealized, fantasy-version of tweenhood:

I think it's more about helping... that it isn't about morals at all, but to present various challenges, and show that it is possible that things will feel better, that things will be solved. I remember that myself from childhood... you know... as a child you might think that life is finished... “I can't go back to school after this has happened... if she doesn't want to be with me, everything is destroyed” kind of, “it's a catastrophe”, and you're twelve...

(Anna interview)

In addition to these values of empowerment and comfort, SVT Barn hopes to inspire children to find a passion. If children are allowed to develop their interests, discovering something they love to do outside school, ‘it will be a great protection against all sorts of things’ (Anna interview).

John Corner points out that TV by tradition is a social medium. If film is more associated with aesthetic values, then the social values of television are ‘expected to show across all the genres’ (Corner & Roscoe 2016: 158). Indeed, social values appear to represent a strong motivational force for SVT Barn personnel. The small-budget documentary series “Astrid becomes a big sister” (SVT 2015) was mentioned as an example:

All it's about is a girl who's going to get a sibling, but that's kind of... it has such an important role to play. Families can watch it prior to having another child and prepare. What other company would do that?

(Anna interview)

To the producer, that is the essence of being public service, staying close to the audience through research, being relevant: '[T]here is some kind of spine too, standing up for the small person, and kind of... trying to mirror all of Sweden...' (Anna interview). Such altruistic values and goals, however, require that people actually watch public service. SVT Barn are aware that they cannot take that for granted, not only regarding tween audiences:

I would love to see more youth content... but honestly, I think that some of them, we lose much earlier... like those watching nothing but Netflix from an early age or so... it probably goes for the whole age span... How do we attract people for whom SVT isn't a natural place to search for "What should I watch today?" ... it's a job that needs to be done for everyone.

(Anna interview)

An increased focus on interaction and dialogue could help SVT Barn in their quest for relevance. Interaction as a value in itself comes out clearly in the interviews, as well as in other parts of the SVT repertoire as a whole, e.g. in initiatives such as "Sverige möts" – people with opposing views meet 'irl' to counteract increased polarization, or "fikamedsvt.se" – inviting audiences to 'digital coffee sessions' to discuss how SVT can improve.

The final chapter will summarize the key findings of this analysis. It will then make some suggestions for the future.

Conclusion

Summarizing the key findings of this production study, below is an attempt to answer the research questions in three sections, ending in suggestions for future research as well as future policy for SVT Barn.

How and why is SVT Barn striving for relevance as an online platform?

SVT Barn is searching for ways to define and strengthen its identity as PSM in contemporary, digitalized, Swedish society, aiming to regain the ground it lost or never had, in emerging media landscapes where children and youth audiences roam and decide for themselves what is relevant for them. PSM have a social mission in society and are tasked with serving the entire population of a country (Sundet 2020: 72). To ‘inform, educate and entertain’ in a saturated media environment, SVT Barn have been struggling to reach younger audiences due to heavy competition from YouTube, Netflix, gaming and social media. They are doing better in the tween segment since implementing an ‘online first’ policy. However, towards the end of that age range, there is a sharp drop in engagement. Generational difference was emphasized, partly to do with media habits, and that we need to understand this basic difference if tweens and teens are to be reached. The parental generation was pictured as living *with* media, and the younger generation as living *in* media (Deuze 2011). This view is reflected in *Kär*, as Adam and Bianca are pictured as ‘swimming’ in their mediatized world, with smartphones portrayed as extensions of themselves (McLuhan), as they “snap”, “facetime” and “Instagram” their way through the series, as naturally and ‘taken for granted’ (Ling 2012) as eating or sleeping. To be relevant online was seen as a basic survival feature for SVT Barn. Without a strong online presence, they would be invisible to younger audiences. If PSM were to remain invisible to this group as they mature into adult consumers, it could threaten the very existence of PSM. As the SVT Malmö Head of programming said, if nobody watches, there is no public service (Petter interview), and the *raison d’être* disappears. In other words, they are only “somebody” when they are seen, when there is contact.

In the digital media environment, SVT Barn is striving for relevance through specific online formats, and niche content for more well-defined target groups. SVT Barn is, like many other European PSM divisions for children and youth, focusing their energy on online strategies, seen as *the* way to reach young viewers. This was described by Andersen and Sundet as ‘a fourth phase’ of digitalization, ‘in which the youth channels often give higher priority to

distribution through online platforms than their linear flow TV channels' (2019: 3). The SVT Barn broadcast channel is seen mostly as 'an ad window' for their online initiatives and activities. 'Broadcast is dead' was essentially the message from SVT Barn, at least regarding 'Gen Z.' However, 'broadcasting has some strengths that you can borrow', as the Head of SVT Barn said. Strengths such as flows, content discovery, social viewing, and structuring of time (Safa interview). In addition to their 'online first' policy, SVT Barn used a 'mobile first' policy for *Kär*, with smartphones perceived as the preferred viewing device of the tween group. Conceptualized as a 'typical SVT YouTube title', *Kär* was crafted to look good and work well on mobile screens and fit an embedded engagement (Hill 2019) type of consumption pattern, encouraging daily, ritual engagement with a 'snacking' format, stretched out over time.

The Malmö Head of children's programming was critical of the design and functionalities of the current two platforms, SVT Play and SVT Barn, as they are not used by the intended age groups. The Project leader referred to a 'dilemma of identification' regarding tween viewers accessing content on a platform that graphically is aimed at five-year-olds. Competition (for attention) with online giants in platform society (Van Dijck et al. 2018) was evident in SVT Barn's accounts, e.g. when the Malmö Head of children's programming predicted that SVT Barn might become 'SVT's YouTube' for solo viewing, while Play will be 'SVT's Netflix' for social viewing. His vision was to pull viewers into the PSM portal, enabling continued roaming (Hill 2019) through various needs-based "worlds", while in public service land. Mobile TV was growing, he said. So was large screen, perhaps an indication that social viewing is still "a thing", even for the digitalized tween. The division of the platforms is not only age-related, but also to do with device, consumption patterns and needs. Further personalization of SVT Play through e.g. user profiles and logins could be a way forward, towards more nuanced content and increased universality of services, as suggested by Jackson (2020). The question is, however, with such limited budgets as the PSM of small nations have, how they could ever be able to produce enough content to meet the 'increasingly diverse publics' and diverse tastes (Jackson 2020: 218-219)? Glancing too much at Netflix and YouTube seems to be a bit of a dead end in that regard, for small players.

How does SVT Barn produce online content 'close to the audience'?

SVT Barn is increasingly producing niche content for more clearly specified age groups, such as 0-3 or 9-12. In the case of *Kär*, the creatives were commended by the Malmö Head of

programming for being ‘data-driven’, meaning that they base their creative thinking on target group trends and behavior. ‘Data-literacy’ was put forth as a highly valued capacity, to be able to read charts and numbers, to see the people in graphs and statistics. As noted by McElroy and Noonan, there is a certain prestige in the term ‘digital’, with media companies striving to be perceived as innovative players within the media industries (2018: 166-167). In this case, the word ‘data’ appeared as such a prestige word. However, the way the Malmö Head of programming used it was more about being audience oriented. Audience research for *Kär* included ‘hanging out where kids hang out’ (popular social media apps), casual chats with children in libraries and in school, and in-depth interviews with a small group of 12-14-year-olds who said they had been in a relationship. The core idea for *Kär*, “love & mobile phones”, came out of this research, indicating that they were indeed dealing with a generation characterized by their ‘mobile youth culture’ (Mascheroni, in Vincent & Haddon 2018: 123).

The dramaturgical model used for SKAM and “Festen” was used again in the *Kär* preproduction, asking audiences about fears, hopes and perceived misconceptions about themselves (their ‘masks’), something that appeared similar to Goffman’s juggling of front stage and backstage selves (1959). The same questions were asked of Oscar and Eva, the actors, when crafting the fictitious characters Adam and Bianca. Using ‘junior editors’ (Christensen & Redvall 2019) was another method for approaching the world of the audience, in the form of a reference group of tween girls to consult on behavior and expressions in preadolescent digital communication. The actual editor of *Kär*, further, was ‘not too far from that world’ and contributed in making the smartphone communication authentic looking to young audiences. In such ways, the producers were working “closeness” into the script, step by step, bridging the generational gap (Chambers 2013: 101), striving to mend the inter-generational dialogue (Hill forthcoming) between PSM and young audiences.

Music was chosen partly based on popularity within the age group, but mostly to illustrate story points. Music was given a prominent position to heighten the drama, to make up for the inability to express deeper meanings of love, to be “goalsy”, something to strive for. Dreaming about becoming famous, through self-promotion online and self-publishing music, might have been assumed to be “close” to a tween world of YouTubers and influencers. However, ‘the music layer’ does not seem to have been the main appeal in *Kär*, as seen in the higher ratings for episodes featuring more characters and more ‘irl’ scenes. This rather

suggests that audiences were hungry for more everyday life intimacy and more “real” social interaction, here in the form of mediated drama (Chambers 2013).

The smartphone culture of *Kär* belongs in the positive discourse, as it celebrates increased social autonomy and independence from the parental sphere, highlighting opportunities for performing selves and conducting personal relationships (Chambers 2013). Not to mention opportunities for creative expression and self-publishing. The *anytime, anywhere, always on* connectivity (Vincent & Haddon 2018:5) was put forth by the producers as something that tweens would recognize and gravitate towards, not as something problematic. It was said that it is not up to SVT Barn to moralize about what is good or bad for young people, instead they want to present children and tweens with an affirmative attitude towards life. This affirmative, ‘anti-authoritarian, democratic core idea’ was said to be a tradition in Scandinavian children’s TV. SVT Barn is clearly part of a Nordic media welfare state (Syvertsen et al. 2014), a concept that strongly emphasized the democratic values and functions of PSM.

What are the key values in SVT Barn’s digital engagement with young citizens?

Key values were said to be identical to the classic public service values: inform, educate, entertain, independence from commercial and political interests, and so on. The slogan of SVT as a company was added: to make more inquisitive and involved, said to be even more important in pandemic times (Safa interview). “Swedishness” was emphasized as central to SVT Barn’s mission, meaning that any TV program containing the Swedish language, contemporary youth culture and actors should be considered “close to the audience.” The importance of small-scale, local and homegrown in producing public service TV was emphasized, highlighting the value of inhouse productions from scratch to product as well as ‘ownership.’ These views were in line with McElroy & Noonan’s emphasis on the importance of digital platforms for PSM in small nations with small languages, and for ‘preserving minority cultures’ (2018), as well as with ‘promoting the homegrown and locally produced to act as a bulwark’ against foreign, commercial competition (Potter & Steemers 2017: 7).

For the creatives, being on the children’s side was put forth as one of the most important values. Ambitions of helping, supporting and encouraging children were expressed, saying that e.g. the development of a hobby outside school and the family sphere could offer protection in an age group exposed to all sorts of pressure. We could summarize these as values of empowerment, encouragement and hope.

Regarding ‘forbidden things’ in tween drama, slightly different positions were expressed, although ‘consensual policy-making’ (Syvertsen et al. 2014: 17-20) seemed to be the general model. The creatives would have preferred some more leeway, whereas the editor-in-chief needed to keep an eye on ‘the special impact of the medium’ paragraph in their license agreement and avoid being reported by the Swedish Broadcasting Commission. “Can-cannot” discussions were appreciated by the SVT personnel, as they tend to keep them on their toes, having to reflect on what ‘credibility’, ‘relevance’ and ‘trust’ mean in a public service context. Reflexivity, debate, and the ability to openly express opposing views in discussion emerged as key values in SVT Barn production cultures, giving the impression of an open, accessible, knowledge-encouraging, societal institution, situated in a Swedish public sector culture and tradition of transparency, in accordance with Sweden’s high ranking in Transparency International’s yearly Corruption perceptions index.

Valuing public service television as a ‘public good’ (Syvertsen 1999, Bolin 2016) was clearly expressed, in particular regarding “Klassen”, which was said to provide children with tools to handle all sorts of difficult social situations. Commercial independence was valued in the sense that it can actually offer more creative freedom, especially when crafting programs ‘close to the audience’, intended to help, empower and prepare citizens for various life events and social challenges. Finally, PSM was presented as an important tool for working against polarization, and for bringing people and generations together. Thereby, SVT Barn covered basically all the PSM expectations, such as carrying the torch of Enlightenment, being socially responsible, promoting democratic values and diversity, being a counterweight to ‘harmful media effects’ and ‘post-truth discourses’ (prop. 2018/19:136: 7; Savage et al. 2020: 13; Lowe & Steemers 2011: 20, Dahlgren & Hill 2020: 13-14). These values rest on the assumption that people actually watch public service TV, which cannot be taken for granted anymore, something that SVT Barn personnel are very much aware of. Indeed, meeting these expectations is not a small task for European PSM, often struggling with budget cuts, staff reductions, and slimmed down organizations (Donders 2019: 1023).

Summarizing

Tying the threads together, a sense of mirroring appears. *SVT Kär* is an online drama about digitalized tweens in a process of becoming, performed through digitally mediated friendships, love, music, and ‘irl’ social interaction. SVT Barn, likewise, is in a process of

becoming, searching for *its* identity as PSM 3.0, with relevance for a generation of ‘digital natives.’ Through experimenting with platforms, formats and genres, SVT Barn is basically doing like Bianca and Adam, asking “Who am I?” They look for answers in ‘data’, trends and consumption patterns, and in new and old forms of audience research. Further, SVT Barn wants to help and empower children, to play an important role in their lives, offering them resources (Abercrombie & Longhurst 1998: 107) for *their* process of becoming. In the case of *Kär*, it is done through an affirmative representation of smartphone culture, emphasizing the pro-social values and opportunities in digital communication.

In their ‘high-tech’ and ‘data-driven’ quest for relevance, SVT Barn is looking for contact. In Frosh’s identity crisis (1991), maintaining a self is nearly impossible in contemporary western culture, it can only be negotiated and renegotiated. In Goffman’s interactionism (1959), selves can only be constructed through interaction with others. Just as Adam and Bianca can only be who they want to be in relation to each other, so can SVT Barn only be the SVT Barn they want to be in relation to their audiences. *Kär* is one small piece in the big puzzle of SVT Barn’s identity search in the digital media environment. Closure to identity search can be found in drama with a clear beginning, middle and end. In reality, there is no such thing, at least not if we are to believe these authors. For a modern, up-to-date, perhaps even ‘fully datafied’ SVT Barn 3.0 (Jackson 2020), in touch with contemporary tweens, there can only be an eternal ‘process of becoming’ (Hall 1996: 4), *if* performed in interaction with audiences.

Looking ahead

This project began with the aim of being that ‘bridge across the industry-audience divide’ (Hill 2019: 16) that the analytic dialogue concept was originally developed for. The idea was to listen to both producers and audiences of *Kär* to be able to assess the dialogue between them. It ended up being a production study only, seen through a wide lens certainly, yet it has largely ignored text and audience, the other two major sites of the media and communication process. One way forward would be to complement this study with an audience investigation. Add a close reading of the media text, and there would be three perspectives (triangulation) instead of one, offering a more holistic understanding of *Kär*, as a point in time of SVT Barn’s digital evolution. A media text analysis would benefit from diving deep into the aesthetics, music, narrative styles and dialogues of *Kär*, and in particular, look closely at how the series weaves digital communication into the live action (‘text on top of video’). In an audience study consisting of semi-structured focus group interviews, attention should be

given not only to tween viewers' opinions, but also to their style of dialogue, how they talk and communicate between peers about mediated representations of their generation.

Another way of continuing the research would be to make similar meso-micro level studies of other SVT Barn productions. With a number of such case studies, policies and strategies played out in practice ('how they do this' as Donders wrote) would likely appear more clearly. Comparisons could be made, looking for inconsistencies and ways to improve. More comparative studies of Nordic PSM productions, such as Andersen's & Sundet's study of SKAM and *Anton 90* (2019) would further knowledge and understanding of the Nordic PSM's opportunities and challenges, similarities and differences. It would be a natural next step for a study like this, to link to other Nordic studies and continue collaborative and comparative Nordic PSM research under umbrellas such as Media Industry Studies, RYA of the University of Copenhagen, and Nordicom of the University of Gothenburg.

SVT Barn would benefit from 'more focused' qualitative audience investigations, in particular concerning engagement with, and reception of their programs. As they say themselves, they lack sufficiently nuanced audience data. Current online measuring tools are not sharp enough to provide the data needed to continue growing within the digital ecology, with the goal of being able to deliver nuanced content with universal appeal and relevance. The data of graphs and diagrams need to be supplemented with data from interaction and dialogue. As the conversation between PSM and citizens of all generations cannot be taken for granted anymore, it needs to be actively sought (and budgeted for). Being 'data driven' in SVT Barn's world is really about being 'audience driven', that is indeed one of their most clearly articulated key values. More 'old-school' interaction, then, is needed to provide the data required for the continued journey towards a 'fully datafied' SVT Barn 3.0.

What is the alternative? If the inter-generational dialogue is not maintained and improved, positions will return to 'when adults wore hats and spoke in a nasal way and did not understand what the youngsters were up to' (Petter interview). With *Kär*, SVT Barn has proven (once again) that young audiences can indeed be reached. When there is "good" content for them, they come. More 'human data' in addition to 'digital data' would increase the potential for improved relations, and opportunities for PSM to secure its own survival. Maybe the time has come to update the identity of public service as a whole? Insert a second "i" into that classic trio of values: Inform and *interact*, educate and entertain.

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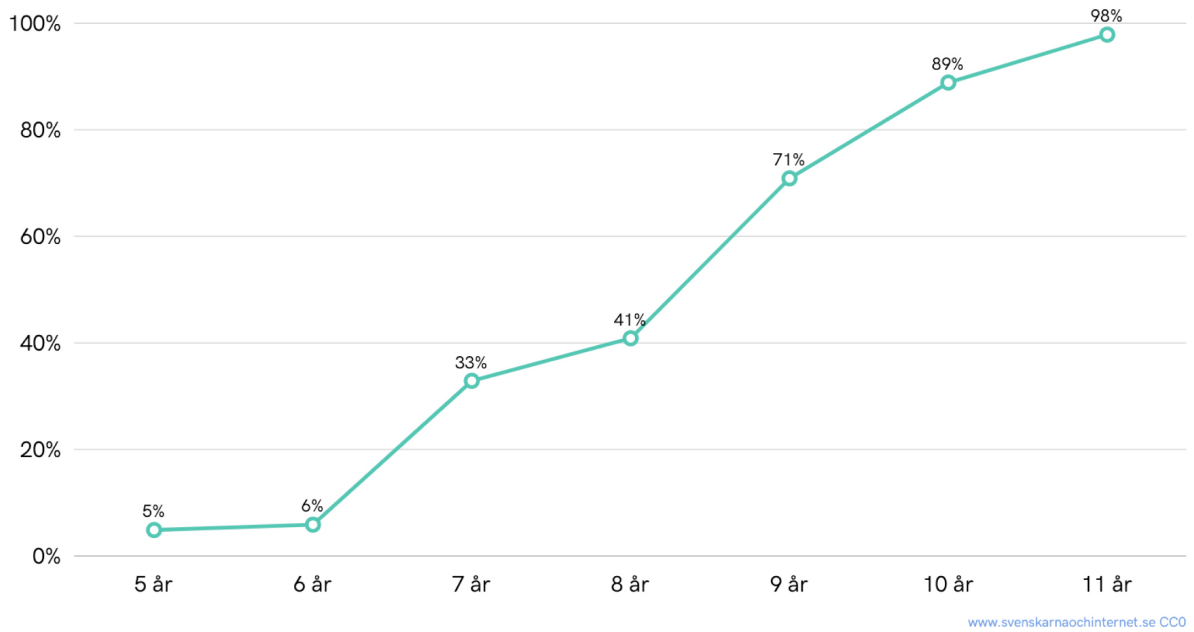
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Appendix 1: Internetstiftelsen's 2017 report

Diagram 2.3. Andel av barnen i olika åldrar som har tillgång till en egen mobiltelefon 2017.



Share of Swedish children with access to their own mobile phones

Appendix 2: Access to exclusive informants, background

This is a project that builds on an internship that never was. Last spring, more than a year ago, I had a meeting with Efva Henrysson and Hanna Lagerberg at SVT Barn Malmö. They were very welcoming, friendly, and open about their work. *Kär* was in preproduction at the time. Things were looking promising, and an internship did not seem out of this world, then Corona happened. SVT had to reschedule basically overnight, and I had to change my plans. However, I kept emailing with the Project leader, to not let go of the contact. She expressed an interest in participating in a study, especially if it would involve an audience study, for them to learn more about their viewers and what they thought of *Kär*. Due to lack of time, I had to drop the audience part of the research. Fortunately, the Project leader was still interested in participating. She was my ‘friendly gatekeeper’, opening doors, enabling me to “work myself upwards”, from the Writers/Directors ‘on the ground’ at SVT Barn Malmö, all the way up to the Commissioner and Head of SVT Barn nationally in Stockholm. This required of course that I “did well” in every interview. These are busy people. If I would’ve made a bad impression in interview one, there would not be an interview two, and so on. Preparation was key, as was trying to create a convivial atmosphere (digitally, in Teams) in which the participants felt comfortable. And to make them believe that I was truly interested in their work (which I was, didn’t have to pretend). Still, it was a risky method. If two or three of my informants would have changed their minds about participating, there would not have been a study. Further, the virus has been looming large over this whole project. One of the interviews had to be divided into two parts due to tight time schedules. After the first part, the participant and her entire family got Covid. It was a mild version, thankfully, and the next part could be completed a month later. In short, I’ve been very lucky with the interviews. I’m grateful to the SVT people for being so accommodating and generous with sharing their time, knowledge and reflections.

Appendix 3: Consent form (production)

Consent Form (production)

This research seeks to explore how SVT Barn is working to reach the next generation of viewers, using the recent SVT Play series *Kär* as case study. As part of this work, a number of interviews will be conducted with viewers and producers. Each interview will last between 30 – 60 minutes. The data will be used within the confinement of my MA thesis at the Media and communication programme at Lund University.

The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The participant is free to say as much or as little as she or he wants. It is OK to refrain from answering questions. The interview can be stopped whenever the participant wants.

If you agree to take part in this study, please reply “I agree” to this email.

MA-student: Andreas Magnusson Qassim

E-post: andreas.qassim@gmail.com

Supervisor: Professor Annette Hill

E-post: annette.hill@kom.lu.se

Samtyckesformulär (produktion)

Den här studien vill undersöka hur SVT Barn arbetar för att nå ut till nästa generation, med den nyligen publicerade SVT Play-serien *Kär* som fallstudie. Som en del i arbetet genomförs ett antal intervjuer med tittare och producenter. Varje intervju varar mellan 30 – 60 minuter. Informationen kommer användas inom ramarna för min masteruppsats på Media och kommunikationsprogrammet vid Lunds universitet.

Intervjun kommer spelas in och transkriberas. Den medverkande är fri att säga så mycket eller lite hen vill. Det är OK att avstå från att besvara frågor. Deltagandet är helt frivilligt, och kan avbrytas när som helst, utan att något skäl anges.

Om du går med på att delta i studien, vänligen svara ”jag godkänner” på det här mailet.

MA-student: Andreas Magnusson Qassim

E-post: andreas.qassim@gmail.com

Handledare: Professor Annette Hill

E-post: annette.hill@kom.lu.se

Appendix 4: Consent form (underage participant)

Consent Form (underage participant)

This research seeks to explore how SVT Barn is working to reach the next generation, with the recently published SVT Play series *Kär* as case study. As a first step, some exploratory interviews with young viewers will be conducted, to get an idea about how the series was received by the target audience. The answers will form the basis for later interviews with the production team behind the series. Since the viewer is underage, the interview requires the consent of a parent or guardian.

The interview will last between 30-60 minutes. The data will be used within the confinement of my MA thesis at the Media and communication programme at Lund University.

The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The participant is free to say as much or as little as she or he wants. It is OK to refrain from answering questions. The interview can be stopped whenever the participant or parent/guardian wants.

Participation is and will remain anonymous.

If you agree to your child taking part in this study, please reply "I agree" to this email.

Samtykke till intervju med minderårig tittare

Den här studien vill undersöka hur SVT Barn arbetar för att nå ut till nästa generation, med den nyligen publicerade SVT Play-serien *Kär* som fallstudie. Som ett första steg genomförs några sonderande intervjuer med unga tittare, för att få en uppfattning om hur serien mottogs av målgruppen. Svaren kommer ligga till grund för senare intervjuer med produktionsteamet bakom serien. Eftersom tittaren är minderårig kräver intervjun en förälders eller målsmans godkännande.

Intervjun varar mellan 30 – 60 minuter. Informationen kommer användas inom ramarna för min masteruppsats på Media och kommunikationsprogrammet vid Lunds universitet.

Intervjun kommer spelas in och transkriberas. Den medverkande är fri att säga så mycket eller lite hen vill. Det är OK att avstå från att besvara frågor. Intervjun kan avslutas när den medverkande eller förälder/målsman så önskar.

Medverkan är och förblir anonym.

Om du godkänner att ditt barn medverkar i den här studien, vänligen svara ”jag godkänner” på det här mailet.

Appendix 5: Interview summary sample page

- Formed a reference group of three girls from the in-depth interviews group, were consulted to get the online behavior right, get the lingo right
- They would ask Eva & Oscar (“would you say it like this?”)
- Used the same dramaturgical model that *SKAM* did (Laurie Hutzler’s “Character Map”), both for script writing and for research, they would ask the kids they met in schools the same six questions that they asked of their fictitious characters in the script writing process, some of the answers/stories they got from the real kids they would bring into the script

Hanna on script writing

- Script built partly on Hutzler’s Character Map method, the assumption being that the greatest motivation for a character is to hide her or his fears
- Model is to ask six questions of a character such as “What is the greatest misconception about you?”, the answer is the character’s mask – what we see initially from the outside that might not match what’s on the inside
- Bianca’s mask for example is “Little Ms Perfect”, (we learn gradually that she’s not/there’ more to her than that)
- Script wasn’t written when Oscar & Eva were hired, the characters “Adam & Bianca” were crafted to be not too far away from the real actors, the rationale being that actors that young can more easily act something that is close to them
- Writing and directing together with Anna was good since it was their first go at writing and directing original drama, Anna more experienced in TV production, Hanna good with the digital, they supported and complemented each other
- Adam & Bianca ended up living closer to each other than they intended originally, but they go to different schools, this is enough to be considered “distance” for kids that age (like living in different worlds), by placing them closer to each other, they could have them meet “once a week”, which would generate better drama, generate tension in the air, “will they kiss or not?”

Hanna on shooting Kär

- Generally, she directed more scenes alone with Oscar, while Anna directed more scenes alone with Eva, splitting the work like this meant they could shoot more material per day
- The challenge with directing young actors: keep the energy, direct the energy, “play” the worlds together, make them think about things they can relate to in order to get the right performance, e.g. when Oscar was supposed to be sad because Bianca broke up he was asked to think about his deceased Grandfather, what you see on-screen is not always what it actually was

Appendix 6: "Coding sheet" sample page

*interview
consultation
research*

- Formed a reference group of three girls from the in-depth interviews group, were consulted to get the online behavior right, get the lingo right
- They would ask Eva & Oscar ("would you say it like this?")
- Used the same dramaturgical model that SKAM did (Laurie Hutzler's "Character Map"), both for script writing and for research, they would ask the kids they met in schools the same six questions that they asked of their fictitious characters in the script writing process, some of the answers/stories they got from the real kids they would bring into the script

*multi-directional
dialogue*

Nice on multi-directional dialogues – the reference group, the writers/producers, the performers, audience... something to build on for SVT and its strategy here.

Hanna on script writing

- Script built partly on Hutzler's Character Map method, the assumption being that the greatest motivation for a character is to hide her or his fears
- Model is to ask six questions of a character such as "What is the greatest misconception about you?", the answer is the character's mask – what we see initially from the outside that might not match what's on the inside
- Bianca's mask for example is "Little Ms Perfect", (we learn gradually that she's not/there's more to her than that)
- Script wasn't written when Oscar & Eva were hired, the characters "Adam & Bianca" were crafted to be not too far away from the real actors, the rationale being that actors that young can more easily act something that is close to them
- Writing and directing together with Anna was good since it was their first go at writing and directing original drama, Anna more experienced in TV production, Hanna good with the digital, they supported and complemented each other

*mask
misconception
fears*

*are close
to reality/
real actors*

Imagine this was a positive production culture, intimate and small scale, and under pressure with the pandemic. Trust each other in the production, having the same vision, crucial.

- Adam & Bianca ended up living closer to each other than they intended originally, but they go to different schools, this is enough to be considered "distance" for kids that age (like living in different worlds), by placing them closer to each other, they could have them meet "once a week", which would generate better drama, generate tension in the air, "will they kiss or not?"

*from distance
to closeness*

Hanna on shooting Kär

- Generally, she directed more scenes alone with Oscar, while Anna directed more scenes alone with Eva, splitting the work like this meant they could shoot more material per day

Appendix 7: Master summary

SVT Kär, Analysis chapter - 5 themes

- Relevance, authenticity, trust (striving to be close to the audience)
 - “They are not like we were” (roaming/swimming, know your audience)
 - “Data-driven” creativity (audience driven)
 - Ratings, metrics & cultural resonance (audience determines relevance)
 - Love & smartphones (relevant for target group)
 - Aim above target (for 9-12 about 13-14-year-olds)
 - Dialogue, trust and relationships (within production + between PSM & public)
 - Talent and cost-efficiency (innovation, budget restrictions, pragmatism)

- Genre, format, platform
 - Volume, frequency (embedded engagement)
 - “Smartphone TV” (snacks/bit-sized content for YouTube generation)
 - Genre and repertoire
 - Inspiration: SKAM, Parning
 - Should complement repertoire (Jobbigt, Klassen, Up4Noise etc)
 - Cheap drama/Online youth fiction/Small scale/Local/In-house
 - Experimental/exploratory for MAXA Barnplay (online only)
 - Pull viewers into the portal (platform exclusivity)
 - “SVT YouTube” & “SVT Netflix” (future vision for platforms/portals)
 - “We used to lose them at 9, now we lose them at 10,5” (ongoing digitalization/datafication/towards a PSM 3.0)


- Crafting *SVT Kär* (close to the audience)
 - Audience stories/Reference group/Junior editors
 - Character driven drama (dramaturgical model of SKAM & Festen)
 - Characters crafted close to main stars (R-TV music prodigies)
 - Music – important but not the most important element
 - Realism vs dreamland (“goalsie”/elevated everyday life)
 - Positive production culture (supportive, intimate, small scale, Corona-safe)
 - Shooting & editing (efficiency, authenticity vs exaggeration/drama)

- Searching for the “i” in digitalized interaction (tweens & smartphones)
 - Mediated intimacy, representation/dramatization of social interaction
 - Symbolic interactionism - Presentation of self (who am I? in relation to others)
 - Digital layer - Affective layer (of smartphone use)
 - From distance to closeness (in fiction + SVT–young audiences)
 - Media engagement as relational (characters + audience–characters)
 - Media literacy & emotional literacy (gap in tweens’ world)

- Inform, educate and entertain (PSM values – old and new)
 - The child’s perspective (as represented by PSM)
 - True vs ideal (not too dark/heavy)
 - Morality & immorality (situated ethical response)
 - Social responsibility/pro-social values
 - Protecting Swedish language and contemporary Swedish culture
 - Laugh, sing and be together (social cohesion and in times of fragmentation, polarization and Corona)
 - Support, encourage, and provide the tools for children (politics of hope)


Appendix 8: SVT's *Kär* stats and ratings

MAXA 2020



KÄR - med stöd av MAXA.
122 ep
2-5 min (totalt ca 5h)
Test följa en relation varje dag hela höstterminen. Kostnad ca 2.8M

KÄR:musik
20 ep
3-5 min
Musiken ur serien som hela musikvideor
Kostnad ca 250tKr



FINAST UTAN FILTER
DU & JAG
WHEN I WAS YOUR MAN

Medelvärde
Onlinering SF: 72.000/ep
Tid: 3.100h/ep = 370.000h

Medelvärde
Onlinering SF: 25.000/ep
Tid: 1.200h/ep = 23.000h

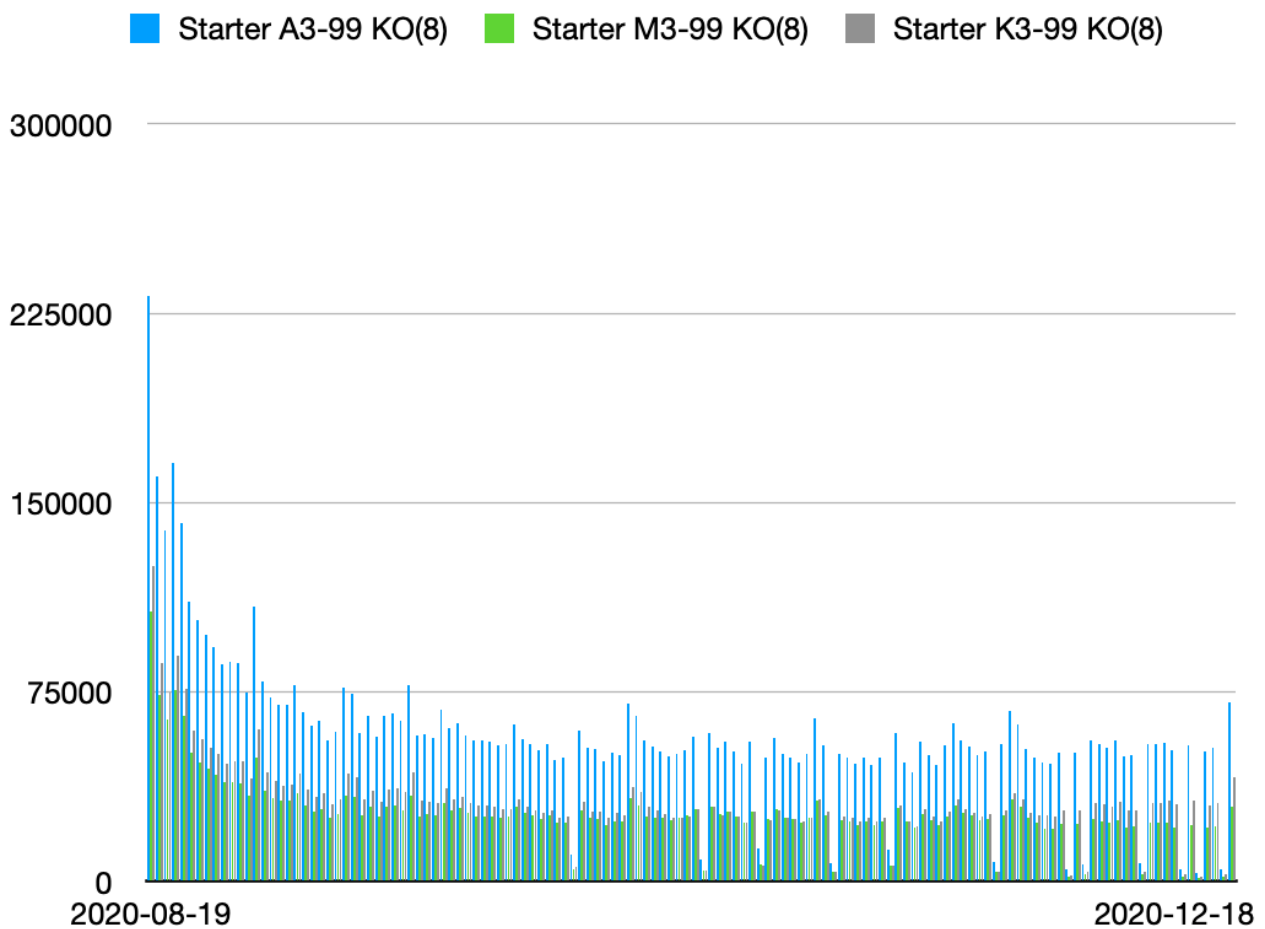
MAXA 2020

Översikt för *Kär*

| Program-ID | Episod | Publicering | Onlinering | Videostarter | Uppspelad tid (h) | Completion rate (85..) |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1397997 | 1 - 19 augusti | ons 19 aug 2020 | 325 169 | 558 251 | 15 987 | 45% |
| 1397997 | 2 - 20 augusti | tors 20 aug 2020 | 239 626 | 298 388 | 8 453 | 72% |
| 1397997 | 3 - 21 augusti | fre 21 aug 2020 | 200 892 | 251 289 | 7 310 | 72% |
| 1397997 | 4 - 22 augusti | lör 22 aug 2020 | 224 344 | 294 767 | 12 650 | 61% |
| 1397997 | 5 - 23 augusti | sön 23 aug 2020 | 176 226 | 244 871 | 11 602 | 57% |
| 1397997 | 6 - 24 augusti | mån 24 aug 2020 | 158 633 | 190 746 | 4 010 | 73% |
| 1397997 | 7 - 25 augusti | tis 25 aug 2020 | 136 350 | 174 553 | 4 431 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 8 - 26 augusti | ons 26 aug 2020 | 122 576 | 164 085 | 8 036 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 9 - 27 augusti | tors 27 aug 2020 | 130 527 | 153 657 | 4 895 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 10 - 28 augusti | fre 28 aug 2020 | 107 491 | 141 181 | 4 897 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 11 - 29 augusti | lör 29 aug 2020 | 113 963 | 137 863 | 3 292 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 12 - 30 augusti | sön 30 aug 2020 | 106 312 | 137 854 | 5 434 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 13 - 31 augusti | mån 31 aug 2020 | 97 290 | 120 093 | 2 567 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 14 - 1 september | tis 1 sep 2020 | 154 935 | 181 786 | 8 521 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 15 - 2 september | ons 2 sep 2020 | 97 391 | 134 446 | 4 464 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 16 - 3 september | tors 3 sep 2020 | 96 228 | 117 324 | 3 715 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 17 - 4 september | fre 4 sep 2020 | 83 441 | 111 831 | 4 381 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 18 - 5 september | lör 5 sep 2020 | 91 220 | 108 518 | 2 027 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 19 - 6 september | sön 6 sep 2020 | 99 012 | 121 825 | 6 298 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 20 - 7 september | mån 7 sep 2020 | 81 413 | 106 207 | 3 596 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 21 - 8 september | tis 8 sep 2020 | 76 846 | 95 965 | 3 117 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 22 - 9 september | ons 9 sep 2020 | 69 964 | 97 787 | 4 645 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 23 - 10 september | tors 10 sep 2020 | 71 116 | 86 815 | 2 133 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 24 - 11 september | fre 11 sep 2020 | 75 199 | 90 693 | 2 904 | 66% |
| 1397997 | 25 - 12 september | lör 12 sep 2020 | 97 559 | 118 462 | 7 181 | 66% |
| Snitt | | | 71 355 | 93 339 | 3 032 | 65% |

Starten och slutet...

SVT's ratings shared by the *Kär* Project leader © SVT Barn Malmö

Appendix 9: MMS's *Kär* ratings diagram of starts

SVT's ratings and MMS's ratings did not quite match. MMS's were lower, but the pattern was the same: strong start, then levelling out on a stable rating that lasted throughout the series. SVT's data was more detailed (including viewing length, completion rate etc). It is unknown to this researcher from where they get their ratings.

Appendix 10: MMS's *Kär* ratings, first page

KÄR_2020-08-01_2020-12-31

| Site | Titel | Avsnitt | Längd | Publicerad | Mättdagar | Starter A3-99 KO(8) | Starter M3-99 KO(8) | Starter K3-99 KO(8) |
|------|-------|---------|-------|------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| SVT | KÄR | 1:1 | 2:57 | 2020-08-19 | 155 | 232003 | 106882 | 125121 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:2 | 2:07 | 2020-08-20 | 154 | 160433 | 73961 | 86472 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:3 | 2:11 | 2020-08-21 | 153 | 138861 | 64277 | 74584 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:4 | 3:23 | 2020-08-22 | 152 | 165583 | 75986 | 89597 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:5 | 3:57 | 2020-08-23 | 151 | 141869 | 65385 | 76484 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:6 | 1:31 | 2020-08-24 | 150 | 110725 | 50960 | 59765 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:7 | 1:57 | 2020-08-25 | 149 | 103446 | 47327 | 56119 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:8 | 3:56 | 2020-08-26 | 148 | 97876 | 44764 | 53112 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:9 | 2:15 | 2020-08-27 | 147 | 92651 | 42258 | 50393 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:10 | 2:44 | 2020-08-28 | 146 | 85934 | 39282 | 46652 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:11 | 1:44 | 2020-08-29 | 145 | 87135 | 39545 | 47590 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:12 | 3:04 | 2020-08-30 | 144 | 86403 | 39004 | 47399 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:13 | 1:35 | 2020-08-31 | 143 | 74768 | 33902 | 40866 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:14 | 3:18 | 2020-09-01 | 142 | 109025 | 48837 | 60188 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:15 | 2:45 | 2020-09-02 | 141 | 79007 | 35849 | 43158 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:16 | 2:19 | 2020-09-03 | 140 | 73092 | 33054 | 40038 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:17 | 3:09 | 2020-09-04 | 139 | 69866 | 31950 | 37916 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:18 | 1:20 | 2020-09-05 | 138 | 70113 | 31904 | 38209 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:19 | 3:49 | 2020-09-06 | 137 | 77629 | 34922 | 42707 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:20 | 2:39 | 2020-09-07 | 136 | 66874 | 30316 | 36558 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:21 | 2:26 | 2020-09-08 | 135 | 61455 | 27902 | 33553 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:22 | 3:59 | 2020-09-09 | 134 | 63440 | 28682 | 34758 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:23 | 1:48 | 2020-09-10 | 133 | 56072 | 25370 | 30702 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:24 | 2:19 | 2020-09-11 | 132 | 59247 | 26635 | 32612 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:25 | 4:36 | 2020-09-12 | 131 | 76547 | 33801 | 42746 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:26 | 3:05 | 2020-09-13 | 130 | 74362 | 33296 | 41066 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:27 | 2:04 | 2020-09-14 | 129 | 58689 | 26212 | 32477 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:28 | 4:47 | 2020-09-15 | 128 | 65653 | 29525 | 36128 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:29 | 2:10 | 2020-09-16 | 127 | 57265 | 25804 | 31461 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:30 | 1:18 | 2020-09-17 | 126 | 65659 | 29437 | 36222 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:31 | 2:33 | 2020-09-18 | 125 | 66760 | 29907 | 36853 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:32 | 2:50 | 2020-09-19 | 124 | 63677 | 28136 | 35541 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:33 | 4:44 | 2020-09-20 | 123 | 77498 | 34109 | 43389 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:34 | 2:05 | 2020-09-21 | 122 | 58002 | 25932 | 32070 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:35 | 3:40 | 2020-09-22 | 121 | 58049 | 26707 | 31342 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:36 | 3:05 | 2020-09-23 | 120 | 57038 | 26123 | 30915 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:37 | 2:30 | 2020-09-24 | 119 | 67969 | 31094 | 36875 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:38 | 2:31 | 2020-09-25 | 118 | 60753 | 28188 | 32565 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:39 | 2:44 | 2020-09-26 | 117 | 62525 | 28975 | 33550 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:40 | 1:54 | 2020-09-27 | 116 | 58003 | 26948 | 31055 |
| SVT | KÄR | 1:41 | 3:13 | 2020-09-28 | 115 | 55656 | 25734 | 29922 |

Appendix 11: Research diary sample page

Read Introduction in Vincent & Haddon (2017) Smartphone cultures. Such a broad field, but I think some of the chapters in this book will be suitable for me. IMPORTANT DISTINCTION: SMARTPHONE not mobile phone (different eras of research).

2021-03-02 Late night after doing everything including washing with Sonja sleeping in Baby Björn...**2021-03-03 09.00-10.05**

Did the interview with Petter. He was great. Very chatty and reflexive like the other SVT people. A bit tough to interview. Often, I had time to read half a question, and then he was off, taking it into directions that he chose, rather than the ones I had planned. Good exercise in listening and not being too attached to your interview guide! Long, extensive answers, talking 200 km/h. Time was ticking. Very interesting stuff, but I managed to get perhaps half or 2/3 of my questions in there. So, we skipped a lot, but on the other hand I got loads of interesting information that might alter slightly the way I've been thinking about things. Two-three days will be required to get all of this transcribed, summarized in English and shared with Annette.

2021-03-03 after lunchPhone call with Annette

Her response based on my quick (and incomplete) summary of the interview with Petter:

Movement – roaming (Petter interested in audiences' movements/roaming across platforms)

“Data driven” (Petter's phrasing) – we (academics) would say audience driven

The young roamers, get them into the portal, make them stay there, hold them
(Me: also important that they watch the other show, public good-thinking from Petter, “our shows are good” – important for society, important for people's well-being)

The gap doesn't start in tween age but after, gap in teen engagement, Annette thought this could be the opening of the thesis: Why isn't it leading to more?
(she's confusing teens and tweens here, Petter said they're doing better with tweens after moving online (before they lost'em at 9), but that the gap starts in tweens, he pitched Festen and Eagles, they were successful, there wasn't any more after that)

Why isn't it leading to more? Why isn't the initiative on teens?
(Effie said the target group is deemed too hard, people at the top do not prioritize them, do not have the confidence – but why? Can there be other explanations)

[I'm not so sure the above is a good opening. Let's think about it...]

According to Annette, the way I work is non-linear, recursive, circling around, circle of knowledge

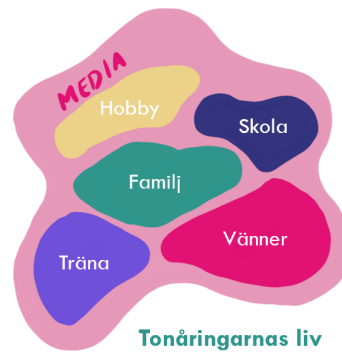
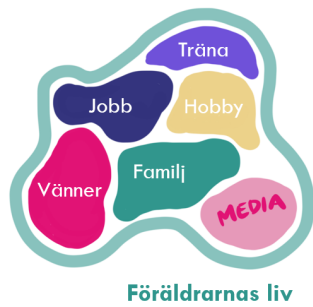
(what is it called? What literature do I reference? 😊)

Appendix 12: SVT Barn Malmö's 4 worlds + Media is the glue



Idea developed by Head of Children's programming Petter Bragée © SVT Barn Malmö

LÄR KÄNNA MÅLGRUPPEN



Media är kittet

Mediakonsumtion är kittet och livet sker i konstant flöde mellan plattformarna och olika typer av innehåll

Konsumtionen pågår konstant, tonåringarna glider sömlöst in och ut ur olika plattformar, innehåll och konversationer.

Det innebär att det är deras liv och livsstil – det är inte begränsat till en typ av aktivitet som sker till och från.

AUGUR — THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE AGENCY

“Media is the glue”, from media habits investigation conducted by Augur: The Human Experience Agency © SVT Barn Malmö

Appendix 13: *Kär* poster image

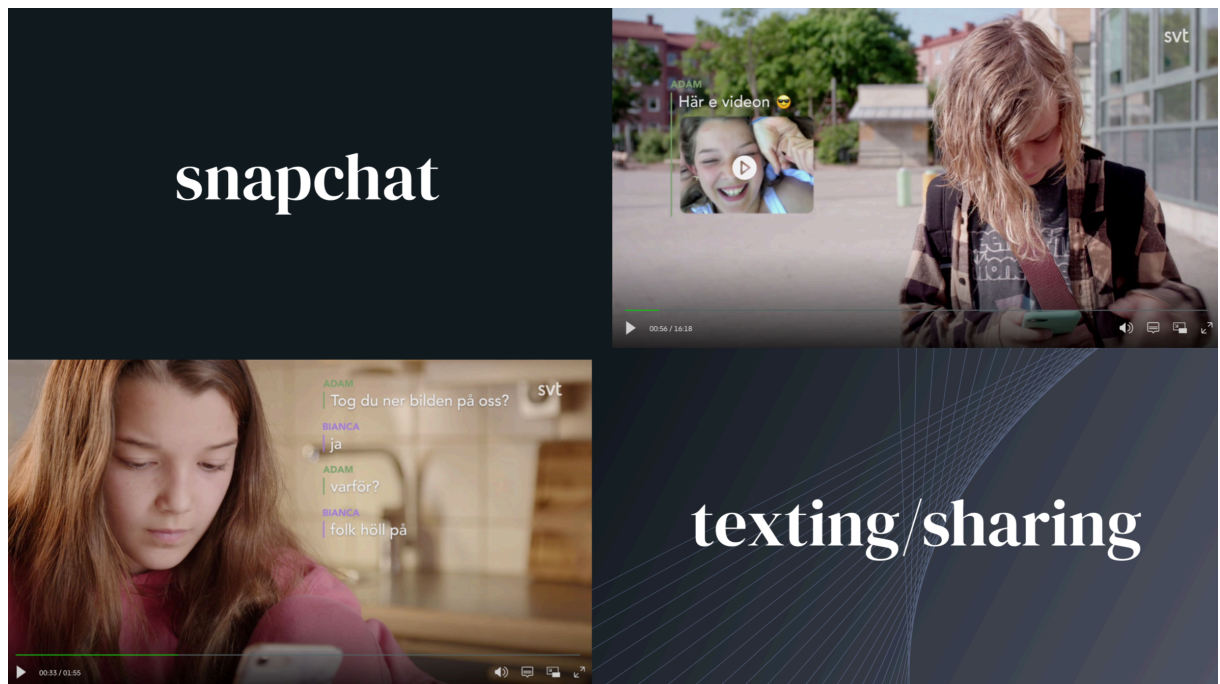


Title image for original version of *Kär*. Photo: Hanna Lagerberg. © SVT Barn Malmö

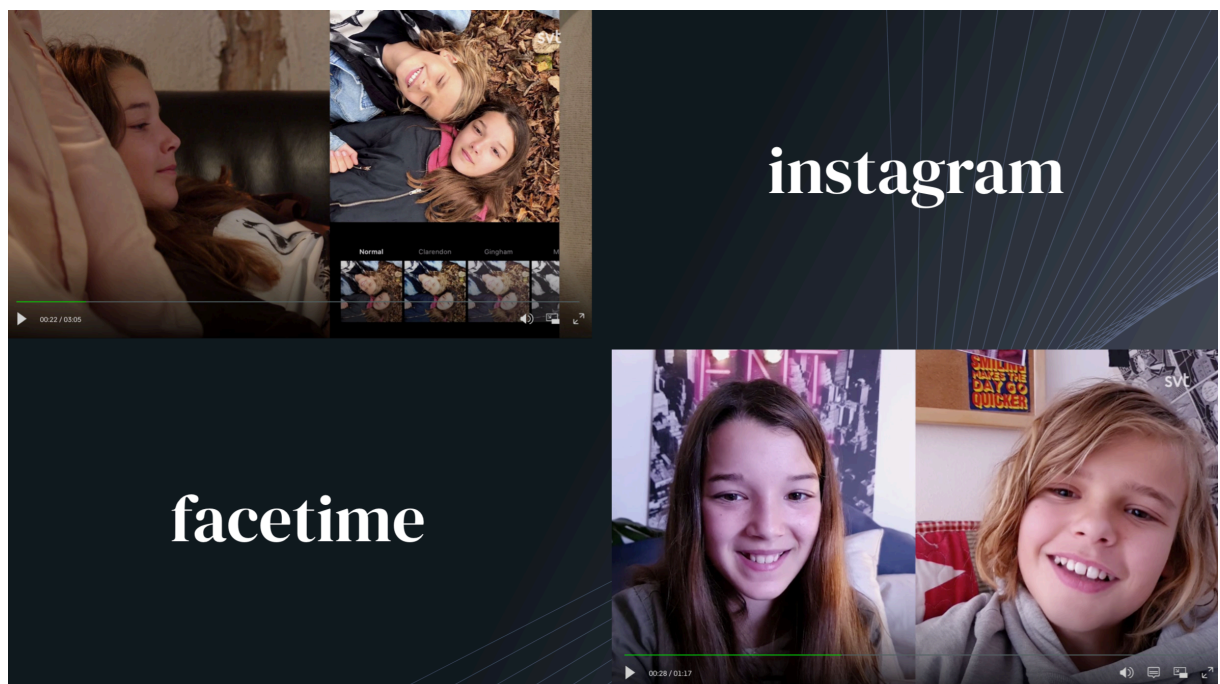


All SVT Barn interviewees emphasized the crucial importance of title and poster image for catching people's attention online. Photo: Hanna Lagerberg. © SVT Barn Malmö

Appendix 14: Smartphone culture and interaction

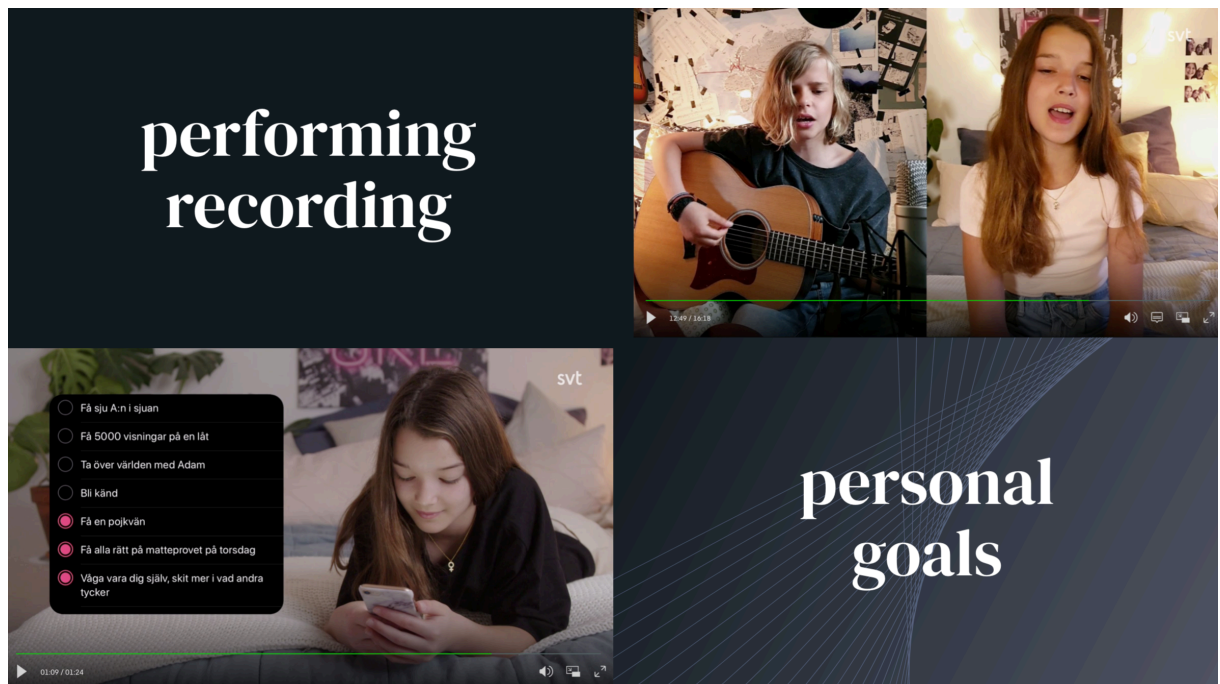


Some examples of smartphone culture and interaction in *Kär*, all images © SVT Barn Malmö



Slides from a university presentation of the research project, all images © SVT Barn Malmö

Appendix 15: More smartphone culture and interaction



Some examples of smartphone culture and interaction in *Kär*, all images © SVT Barn Malmö



Slides from a university presentation of the research project, all images © SVT Barn Malmö

Appendix 16: “Snapping” in bed



Screenshot from episode 103, 29 November 2020 © SVT Barn

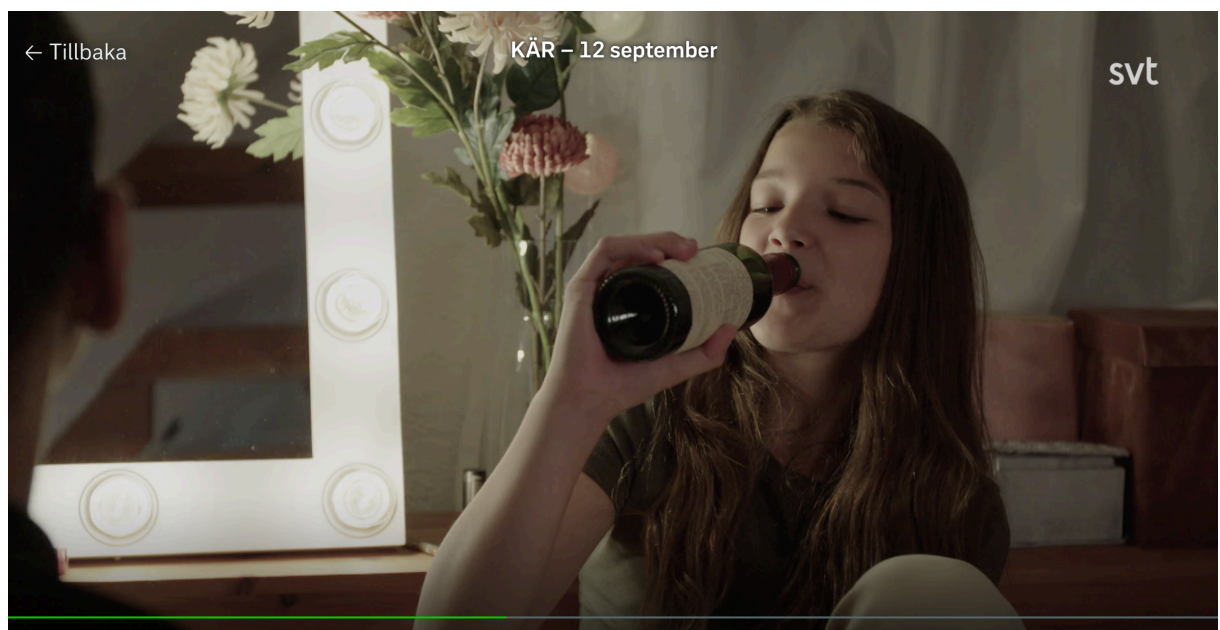


Screenshot from episode 69, 26 October 2020 © SVT Barn

Appendix 17: Peer pressure



Clara says Bianca should choose Oliver instead, episode 14, 1 Sept 2020 © SVT Barn



Bianca and her friends try wine, episode 25, 12 Sept 2020 © SVT Barn

Appendix 18: Interview guide from mid-way through interview process**INTERVIEW GUIDE****Writer/Director Anna Bylund, Interview Part 2 2021-03-04**

[part 1 was conducted 2021-02-04]

Questions for part 2:

EDITING [this is where we left off in part 1]

- From what I understand, editing was a big part of this work. Tell me a bit about that!
 - Make as much as possible out of what you've got? 122 episodes is a lot!
 - "Junior editors" (DR). Effie said that it was good to have an editor/graphics person who were "not so far from the world of the target group". How much of the look/feeling in the mobile phone conversations was worked out here?

PREMIERE/RESPONSE

- From what I understood from Effie, *Kär* had a very strong opening, and then leveled out some (but still decent ratings). What was it like exposing your work to the world?
- Regarding the short-form format, Effie said that one reaction you received was that the episodes were too short. Is that right? The audience would've wanted more?
 - Matches my exploratory audience interviews
 - They requested more characters (not just "sit and snap")
 - One requested more everyday life and less music
- What was it like to plan more episodes, record and edit, at the same time as the series had begun being published?

TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

- You mentioned SKAM as one of the inspirational sources, not least when it comes to format. With a bigger budget, would you have liked to explore transmedia storytelling more?
 - Mimic the online reality of the target group
 - Release material on various platforms
 - Fictitious social media accounts for the characters

MOBILE PHONES

- There's an interesting parallel in that so much of *Kär* consists of mobile phone communication, and that the most common device for watching the series was the

phone. Somewhat “meta”, right? ☺ In general, what do you think about “mobile phone TV”? Is that the future?

- The more I have talked with SVT personnel, the more I find myself returning to smartphones and these devices’ place in the lives of youngsters. Adam & Bianca are very sweet towards each other in their smartphone communication. Last time, we discussed the balance between the everyday and the elevated. Children in this age can be pretty raw. To what extent did you want to mirror a reality and to what extent did you want to present an ideal?
 - How do you convey “good values” through youth drama without patronizing audiences?
 - Note: I don’t mean this in a negative way. Good role models are needed in a cold and rough world!
 - Something about repertoire? *Kär* is “glossy”, other series (Jobbigt, Klassen) are not as glossy. Every single series doesn’t have to represent everything. (see if this fits the conversation)

PERSONAL MOTIVATION

- When I listen to you and Hanna talk about *Kär* and children’s and youth TV in general, I hear two engaged voices. One can tell that you’re passionate about your work. Why is it important to you to reach these children and youngsters with the things that you do?
- Where does this engagement come from, for you? You mentioned inspirational sources like Mannheimer’s “Parning” and Andem’s SKAM. But if we go a bit deeper than that, why do you do what you do? How come you work within public service, and not in a commercial media company?

INITIATIVES AND PLATFORMS

- From what I understood from Petter and Effie, there aren’t many initiatives in “teen TV” within SVT. The focus is rather on children up until circa the target group for *Kär*, and then from something like 30 and up. There’s a drop/gap opening up there somewhere in the teenage years. How do you get these viewers back, you think? What kind of initiatives/investments would you like to see?
- What do you think about your two platforms, SVT Barn and SVT Play? Is there a need for more platforms? DR for example has two children’s sites, Ramasjang for the younger, and Ultra for the older. Is that something that would work for SVT? Is there a need for an SVT Youth [SVT Ungdom]? Or perhaps one single site with user profiles (like Netflix)?

REFLECTIONS

- From what I understand, you were quite happy with the ratings, not least considering that *Kär* was such a small production, online only, not receiving the same marketing priority as regular programs etc.
 - How happy are you with the result, on a scale from 1-10? ☺
 - ~~Mention one highlight!~~
 - ~~What would you have liked to do differently?~~
 - What do you bring to forthcoming projects?
 - Will SVT invest in similar “experiments” from now on, you think? Smart online drama concepts for small budgets?
- There’s a rather alarmistic tone within public service research, particularly outside the Nordic region. Among Nordic researchers, there seems to be a more positive outlook. Would you say that there is confidence in the future within SVT? What’s the general view on “the youth challenge”?

That’s it. Something you’d like to add that I missed?

Questions from part 1 2021-02-04:

[some were picked up for further discussion in part 2]

[edited version of Hanna Lagerberg’s interview 2021-02-03]

OPENING QUESTIONS (ice breakers)

- SHORT: It’s been ca 1,5 months since the last episode of *SVT KÄR* was published. Classic news question: How does it feel? ☺
- SHORT: SVT just started publishing a repackaged version of the series: *Kär: Långa avsnitt*.
 - What is it like to see your work in 15 min installments rather than 2-4 min ones?
- SHORT: How long did you work for SVT?
 - Did you write and direct during that whole time?
- ~~Could you please tell me a bit more about your role in MAXA Barnplay?~~
 - ~~Digital in-between space~~
 - ~~How did it start for you?~~
 - ~~What is it like now?~~
 - ~~Play vs broadcast~~

IDEA

- How was the *Kär* idea born?
 - What did you want to do/achieve?
 - Inspirational sources: teen drama, film, TV, other?
 - Love relationships and mobile phones among the young

- Music

PITCH/GREEN LIGHT/MONEY

- What “sold” the idea you think [why was it greenlighted]?
 - What makes it relevant right now?
 - (How much do you follow what DR, YLE and NRK do?)
 - Did you get the budget you’d hoped for?

TARGET GROUP

- Tell me a bit about the target group (~~10-13~~) (9-12)!
 - In-between childhood and teenage years
 - Why did you want to make something for this particular group (or younger)?
 - When picturing the target group, was it mostly girls or both girls and boys?

RESEARCH

- You’re not 9-12. How did you get to know the target group? Hanna told me you’re an expert on research!
 - Do you use a particular method (like NRK’s *NABC*)?
 - Mobile phones (spying)? *Isn’t that a bit like reading people’s diaries?* ☺
 - Reference group

CASTING/LOCATIONS

- How did you find amazing Eva & Oscar?
 - Why child stars/performing artists from the world of music?
 - Script modeled on/adapted for Eva & Oscar?

SCRIPT

- Tell me about the scriptwriting process!
 - Main ideas/themes you wanted to bring out (love, music, fame)
 - Long and short story arcs
 - “Character diamonds” (motivation, strengths, weaknesses, fears)
[character diamonds are part of Laurie Hutzler’s Character Map]
- From what I understand, there’s a delicate balancing act when one wants to include “immoral” content in a series that must be able to be seen by far younger children. What were the discussions like regarding trying wine, shoplifting, smoking in secret, condoms in birthday present from friends? Swear words?
- Could you tell me something about what it’s like for a public service company to try to create interesting content for young viewers?

- Opportunities? (good channels)
- Challenges? (inform, educate, entertain + diversity, norm criticism, democracy etc)

MUSIC

- The music felt very “fresh”. A bit like “P3 music” perhaps? On the other hand, I’m an old man by now, and it was a long time ago that I listened to P3... From what I understood from Effie, it was you and Hanna who selected most of the music. How did you choose?
 - Based on what you like yourself?
 - Based on what’s popular within the target group?
 - Based on what would fit Eva and Oscar?

RECORDING/FILMING

- Tell me about the shooting!
 - Working with inexperienced child actors but experienced musicians/stars?
 - The “mobile phone scenes” (Facetime, Telephone, Snapchat, Instagram, Stalking). What was it like shooting these? Which ones were easy/hard?
 - Small team – pros/cons?
 - Writing and directing together – pros/cons?

FEELING/AESTHETICS

- I found the mix of everyday life and musical/music video interesting. Sometimes there are, for the teen drama genre, classic awkward scenes featuring embarrassing silence, indecisiveness etc. But then that is interrupted by Adam and Bianca “breaking into song”, in the next scene, or in the next episode, e.g. when they record songs together.
 - Could you please tell me something about the mix of “kitchen sink realism” and “MTV aesthetics”?
 - How “realistic” or “dreamy” did you want to be?

EDITING

- From what I understand, editing was a big part of this work. Tell me a bit about that!
 - Make as much as possible out of what you’ve got? 122 episodes is a lot!
 - “Junior editors” (DR). Effie said that it was good to have an editor/graphics person who were “not so far from the world of the target group”. How much of the look/feeling in the mobile phone conversations was worked out here?

[Had to stop part 1 here since the interviewee was busy; we picked up from here in part 2, please go to the top]

Appendix 19: Full transcript of translated production interview

Interview with *Kär* Writer/Director Anna Bylund, Part 2 2021-03-04

(phone interview, one month after part 1, once again she's out walking with sleeping baby)

Andreas

Eh... let's see where we were... I thought I'd start... we kind of followed [clears throat] the progression of production almost...

Anna

Right.

Andreas

... so, I might start at... when it came to editing what you had recorded...

Anna

Yes, yes.

Andreas

... em... from what I understood, the editing was a very big and central part of working with this series, partly because it was a lot about mobile telephone communication and that there were so many episodes, eh...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... 122 episodes, that's a lot. Could you tell me a bit about the editing work?

Anna

Mm. It was started while I still was... while I was on vacation. So, Hanna... I had time off after the shooting sessions, and Hanna wasn't on holiday during the summer, but... so, she went straight into editing... and eh... and then eh... I came back in August, and then we swapped, and she went on holiday, so that eh... then a lot of... the first part of the job was to establish the form... and she did that with Kevin, the editor, all of it.

Andreas

Yes

Anna

Eh... and kind of find... we had very clear sources of inspiration and ideas and such things regarding the digital layer, but it... things fell into place there, and they kind of experimented with... colors and forms and everything...

Andreas

Right.

Anna

... should kind of... to find how similar it should be, and Hanna said all the time that she kind of wants it to look the way it is experienced, the way it feels you know...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

What is it like to write a caption or see that someone liked something or so, you know... it doesn't have to resemble Instagram, instead it...

Andreas

No.

Anna

... what you see is the experience of it.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

So, that's how we thought about it, eh... and most of all it is Snapchat that we wanted to mimic, so you know, a lot of work went into kind of finding... the way it should be.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And then we had an idea of how long it would take to edit, you know, and... it took some more time than we thought, like it often does. And we kind of had... we... these Facetime conversations we had recorded we thought would be a pain, but they were super quick, while the Snapchat episodes that we thought would be super simple... since the graphics were such a heavy solution, those episodes took a lot longer to edit.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

So that... all of that we kind of found out along the way. They found it first and then I came in and continued working with it.

Andreas

I understand. Eh... I know that em... eh... it's kind of a tactic to use "junior editors", I read in some article, I think it was about DR...

Anna

OK?

Andreas

... that they like to kind of... use... or work together with quite young people who are not so far from the world of the target group. I think it was Effie who said that.

Anna

Yes, right. OK.

Andreas

So, about Kevin then, whom I understand is a quite young editor...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... how much of the feel in... in the mobile conversations especially was established in the collaboration with him? For it to feel authentic, you know?

Anna

Sure, absolutely, but I'd say that... I'd say that most of it came from Hanna actually.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

You know, her sure instinct for how it should feel is kind of very strong...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... but then... I never heard the expression "junior"... that you work like that, but that's... it sounds very, eh... I agree with that, because there's still some... eh, Kevin has some kind of eh... is some kind of "native" since he grew up digitally...

Andreas

Right.

Anna

... so for sure you could... you could tell, and then especially you could tell in that you don't run into problems all the time that I think you would if you'd do it with someone who... you know, "OK, what's this?" or kind of eh... how eh... or that you do something that's just "No, that's just not credible" or so, you know, he kind of has that in his blood.

Andreas

Yes

Anna

What... what is credible.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

So, that's what I think, absolutely, and then... then he's just... he's a very, very talented editor and kind of... he's really fast and super involved and all that, and it's been much, much fun working with him.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

And kind of... we're many... we're many women, so it's good that he's a guy.

Andreas

Yes. Yes, exactly. Right.

Anna

I think.

Andreas

Yes. Eh... what was it like em... to plan more episodes and record more... more material and edit at the same time that the series had begun being published? During the autumn when...

Anna

Yes, but do you know what...

Andreas

... it seems like... a lot of things happened at one...

Anna

Yes. Yes, but both yes and no. It was pretty late that we shot those. It was October, November...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... at that time, we were kind of... in a way... one is... we're kind of project people all of us... so we were kind of on our way to something else.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Hanna had already found out that she would probably get to make her next series, I was in the late stages of pregnancy...

Andreas

Right.

Anna

... and close to going on parental leave.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Eh... so that... in that way it took some effort I think, to switch back. And we weren't as... you know... preproduction had to be squeezed in among everything else, and I think we felt that sometimes, that we had miscalculated some things, you know, forgot to think about... some car or missed the opportunity to be smart, like we managed to do the first time...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... much more. There, we spent more time on preproduction. Eh... so, that's what I think. Or... more time maybe not, but we just... we could work much more focused.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Now, we did all kinds of things at the same time.

Andreas

OK.

Anna

But... but on the other hand, it was great fun to be allowed to go back to filming, when we had learned so much. We knew that the Facetime-calls were easy and fun, and we knew that the other stuff was difficult, so we... we rewrote some things based on that knowledge.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

Eh... and we... we knew also... that would've been really hard to know... how much expression do you want in those Snapchat episodes?

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Because, if I read SMS it's not like I would react much in the face.

Andreas

No, right.

Anna

Eh... but... but we realized that we must still do that, and it wouldn't feel like "bad acting" or "unnatural". It would feel good, you know.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

That was something else we didn't know when we started editing the first time.

Andreas

Right. Someone said, if it was Hanna or Effie, that eh... for the actors too, that they got the chance to kind of see themselves, how it turned out on the screen...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... was a... was an advantage for the second round.

Anna

Sure, sure, sure. And then... then another thing regarding that... is that we work with two 13-year-olds.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

You know, it had been... not quite half a year, but almost half a year in their lives.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And that's a very long time in their lives.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

It's nothing in our lives.

Andreas

No, right.

Anna

But in their lives, it is. And things had happened there. You know, they had become more "teenagy" too.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Eh... and maybe thought... that some things that weren't embarrassing at all during the first round now was a bit more embarrassing, or a bit more self-aware or so.

Andreas

Yes, right.

Anna

So that... and that we hadn't thought about until we went into shooting.

Andreas

No. No, that's really interesting. Eh... I don't know... did we talk anything about "transmedia storytelling" last time?

Anna

I don't know.

Andreas

I don't quite remember, but I do remember that you mentioned SKAM as one of the inspirational sources...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... not least regarding the format. And then I thought about, if you'd had a slightly bigger budget, would you have wanted to go more in a transmedia direction? Like publishing stuff on different platforms, and... and have... have kind of... social media accounts for the fictitious characters... you know, those kinds of strategies?

Anna

Yes, sure. Of course, it would've been fun to make more... because we used... we created a lot of internet accounts and such things that exist in the series, but they're not live for the viewers.

Andreas

No.

Anna

So that... definitely, it would've been super fun if there were loads of layers that... because that's what I thought was so cool about SKAM too, that... eh... you know... it wasn't necessary do all that...

Andreas

No, right.

Anna

... but for the nerds, you know, or if you wanted to go deeper into it, there was layer upon layer upon layer [inaudible] or...

Andreas

There were many ways into it.

Anna

Yes, exactly, and... and kind of references to kind of "THIS is from THIS clip, and here you can see the real THAT, or HERE you can see THIS", kind of, you know...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... it was kind of a treasure. So that... I thought was super cool. And it would've been fun to make more such things, but that... that was never really eh... the space for it wasn't in this budget.

Andreas

No, right.

Anna

Or [inaudible].

Andreas

Mm. Yes. Eh... right, there's a parallel, I think, in that so much of *Kär* is... mobile communication or smartphone communication, and that the most common device the series was watched on was in fact the phone [laughter].

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

That's kind of "meta", isn't it?

Anna

Mm.

Andreas

Eh... what do you think in general about TV on the mobile? You know... watching TV on the mobile?

Anna

No, but that was... that was a precondition in all of this, to kind of... to keep that in mind from the start. I'm thinking that... some things that you've done maybe are... and watched on the mobile, but you didn't think kind of "mobile first", but that's what we did, and that... but then I wasn't there when Hanna did the first... tests with the graphics and all that, but...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... I remember it as there really being a mobile focus, that that was the important thing, "How does this look in a mobile?"

Andreas

Yes, right.

Anna

And also... but with everything, you know, how much you want to use... that you maybe want to use more closeups and fill the screen...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... that big wide shots become pretty small on a mobile screen, you know.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

Eh... so that has definitely followed... and I think that's also what's kind of forgiving for the length of the episodes, because that was part of the feedback we got, that many thought it was so very short.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

Eh... and that eh... that eh... that it kind of, that you just watch... “Jobbigt” has kind of paved the ground there on Barnkanalen, that there’s a short clip coming up every day.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Eh... so that you can introduce such a routine. But I think that if you saw it on TV... if you kind of streamed it to a TV, then you kind of have these expectations that it should be a real episode, or a longer episode, and then one minute feels really little.

Andreas

Right. So, this “media snacks” format, or whatever you’d call it, maybe works better on the mobile phone than on the TV screen then?

Anna

I definitely think so. Definitely. And that if you just go into Play... somewhere in, you know... in the TV or in a computer or so, then you expect more of a real program.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

That’s not really too... but... but that’s... I really don’t have any numbers on how these long episodes have faired.

Andreas

No.

Anna

If they’ve been directed [or “weighted”, hard to hear] or so. But I might think, when I see them, that it’s a very eh... good way to experience *Kär*. That it kind of... that you have the time to feel some more.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And that some episodes gain from kind of... the following episode or the episode before kid of... comes in... that you watch them close to each other.

Andreas

Mm. Right, eh... yes, the more I’ve spoken with you on SVT, the more I come back to this thing about smartphones and these devices place in the lives of youngsters, and eh...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... one thing that I thought about when I watched the series is that Adam and Bianca... they're so nice to each other, in their smartphone communication. Eh... I think that last time, we discussed the balance between being close to everyday life and the elevated, and eh...

Anna

Right.

Andreas

... children this age can be pretty raw [laughing] and Adam and Bianca aren't...

Anna

No.

Andreas

... so that makes me think about how much... how much you want to mirror a reality, regarding how youngsters communicate with their mobiles, and how much do you want to convey an ideal? That "this is how it could be", or "this is the way it should be", or... do you know what I mean?

Anna

Yes. Yes, sure. Eh... [sigh] I don't know, I think it's kind of a coincidence actually...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Eh... we... we felt, both me and Hanna, that we would've loved to turn up the drama some more, you know, in those situations when they're angry at each other, or we would've like to... they were a bit more challenging in the language and more kind of... that they took revenge or got back at each other or...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... did things they knew would hurt, you know.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

Eh... and then you can have a rawer language in general, you know that you... a lot of youngsters do, that you just... that you tease each other in a very tough way or... that you ridicule each other or so. And that's... Adam and Bianca aren't like that, instead they're very... well-behaved in some way, and very cute...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... and that's probably just a bit of a coincidence that the characters ended up there.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

It's actually not an ideal that we want to... tout or so, but rather... and Clara, Bianca's friend, she's a lot tougher...

Andreas

Yes, right.

Anna

... and says what's on her mind, you know, so that's... that's actually more of a coincidence, I think.

Andreas

I understand. But eh... if you still consider that eh... in good public service spirit, that you still want to convey good values somehow, eh...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... how can you do that in youth drama... you know, without patronizing the viewers, so to speak?

Anna

Well...

Andreas

And I don't mean that in a negative way, but rather, I mean that [laughing] good role models are really needed in a pretty cold and hard... you know, neoliberal, commercialistic society, kind of, but... but can you... do you know what I mean? Because it becomes kind of a paradox in a way, you want to... mirror a reality, but in the same time you want to... kind of eh... convey a... a good version [laughing] of that reality. Do you know what I mean?

Anna

Yes. Sure. Yes, but I don't know... I think they're a bit eh... you know, they're... they're kind of "A kids" in a way...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... they're like... they're super talented singers and they're really cute and they're kind of... so in a way you might be showing an ideal.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Eh... and morals to some extent, but... but I still think that... that... well, it's certainly about balancing, that you want eh... you want eh... strengthen children in various ways but not become too moralistic, and not give them an unattainable ideal, we spoke a bit about that last time, that how many twelve-year-old boys would make a "I'm your biggest fan" video...

Andreas

Right.

Anna

... to their girlfriends? You know, that's in a way raising the bar incredibly high...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... but that I can kind of... that like a... like a Hollywood rom-com or so, that would be unfortunate if we... if we... kind of managed to create that. I hope not too much, but...

Andreas

No [laughter].

Anna

... but otherwise I think it's more about helping... and I think that you can... and it's not about morals at all, but to show various challenges...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... and show that... it is possible that things will feel better. It can... things can be solved.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

I remember that myself from when one was little, and eh... from stories one heard where things went really bad, you know, as a child you might think that eh... that life is over, you know... that I can't go back to school after what happened.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

I can't, you know eh... or I don't want... if... if she doesn't want to be with me, then everything's destroyed, you know, it's a catastrophe, and you're twelve and it kind of, it's goddamn certain that things will feel better later.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Eh... but that's how you might experience it in that moment... or my Mum doesn't understand me at all, and everything sucks, or you know...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... that... that I think we've been close to in the series, you know, the trials Bianca ends up in, eh... then... in the end she dares to listen to her voice and stand for it.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Eh... and dares to put her foot down and that, and still dares to find her voice in front of her friends too, and realizes that "well, they only want her to be happy", they actually don't give a damn about who's she's together with.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

But that's how she interpreted it.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

So, I think that's kind of a thing... to... to show that things... things can get better.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

That it's kind of... eh... and I think that... that's kind of a eh... good such policy to have, I think, to...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... to show the tools that might be available...

Andreas

Right.

Anna

... for various challenges that you face.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And then I think something else... not ideals in any way, but a really good thing, I think is if you kind of find an interest in life, or find something that you... that you love to do... then that will be a great protection against different things...

Andreas

Absolutely.

Anna

... because I think that's kind of... that's such a damn good thing, regardless if it's football or music or... whatever it is...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... to just find something that you actually are allowed to eh... allowed to enjoy doing outside of school and maybe... you know.

Andreas

Mm, absolutely. Yes... [clears throat] when I listen to you and Hanna talk about *Kär* and kind of... children's and youth TV in general... I hear two engaged voices...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... and I can tell that you are passionate about your work. And then I wonder about eh... why is it important for you to reach these children and youngsters with the stuff that you do?

Anna

Yes, good question. Eh... I don't really know... I was kind of always interested in children's and youth TV, I'm kind of... that's where I have... from the beginning found my passion and kind of...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... you know also... it can... when you hit your target you can often reach a larger engagement than you might in an adult audience, you know that eh...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... that children and youth kind of get in touch, they're involved, they get mad... "How could they do this? It's totally sick!" Or "This is just..."

Andreas

Right [laughing].

Anna

... you know... I wouldn't... that's not what I do with TV... you know...

Andreas

No.

Anna

... I rarely get upset, I don't get in touch with anybody, I don't write anybody, I... you know... [laughing]

Andreas

No.

Anna

... and that's just... amazing, I think, to be able to work with an audience where your characters or... or "Sommarlov", when I worked on that and kind of, that it... that it gets to play a big role, that it can be... that it gets to be important for real, you know, that it gets to...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... that it can actually affect someone in... that someone gets a piece of the puzzle somewhere that might offer them something in their lives. That's... that's the most beautiful thing you can do, I think.

Andreas

Mm. Yes.

Anna

So, that's how I think, that it's just... it's there that... and then I also think that it's... actually... that it's that time in life that I find most exciting.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

You know, eh... even now that I have children, I just find everything really interesting, I... it kind of... I think it's so exciting to kind of be... to... what it is to become human, and what it is to... to be influenced by those first years and... the teenage years might be the most exciting of all, to...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... to eh... to kind of find "Who am I?"

Andreas

Right.

Anna

Maybe a bit outside my family, and in relation to my friends, and all of that.

Andreas

Mm, yes.

Anna

Then... after that you are who you are, kind of, and then... life goes on.

Andreas

Yes [laughing]. Right.

Anna

Then it's not as exciting anymore, I think! [laughing]

Andreas

No [laughing].

Anna

No [laughs some more]

Andreas

Eh... but eh... this engagement, where does it come from? You have mentioned inspirational sources for this particular series, like Mannheimer's "Parning" for example, or SKAM.

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

But if you go a bit deeper than that, eh... why do you do what you do? You just answered that, but like this... Why don't you work for a commercial media company? Is it a coincidence that you ended up in public service, or are there reasons for that?

Anna

No, I don't think that... you know for me... I have a background in theater...

Andreas

Oh?

Anna

... and I thought I'd become an actress when I was in gymnasiet [upper high school].

Andreas

Mhm?

Anna

And then... then... I've always been kind of interested in film and film festivals that existed in my life when I was little, in different ways.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Eh... and then... then it was kind of that I just... I read about a TV producer who worked with children's TV, who was very engaged.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And then... then I thought that “well, you could be that, then you’ll reach...”, then you won’t make some little thing that might be seen by only a few, you know, but instead it will possible to have a wider reach. I remember actually being motivated by that too, to just... to... to eh... to make things that could... that could be seen by many.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Eh... and then it was always children’s TV, and I think I had already set my aim on SVT because it... it... maybe had to do with my upbringing or something else that there... there was some... some idea about what’s... to... to want something more than just that something should be consumed.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

But... but there are certain things that maybe no one but SVT would do.

Andreas

No.

Anna

You know, like... like certain episodes or series or things that’s just... well, like... there’s this program called “Astrid gets a b... little sister” [Astrid blir storasyster], that has been seen incredibly much.

Andreas

OK?

Anna

All it’s about is a girl that gets a little sister, but that’s kind of... it’s got such an important role to play. Families can watch it prior to getting a sibling and kind of prepare, you know. What other company would do that?

Andreas

No.

Anna

And that I’m kind of proud over, that SVT eh... makes those things and all the time kind of... well... keeps close to the target group and you know, audience investigations and kind of... work for relevance and all that, and that... I’m sure Netflix and other companies do that too, I don’t know...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... but for me I've always been [inaudible] that I've been allowed to do... at SVT I've been allowed to do things that... that eh... want... want something.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And there's some kind of eh... there's a eh... some kind of backbone too in kind of eh... stand up for the small person and kind of make...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... eh... try to mirror... all of Sweden and... to also make fun things. It's not... definitely not... it shouldn't be kind of wholesome either or...

Andreas

No.

Anna

... but just... I think I've been allowed to do incredibly fun things at SVT, I think.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

So that's why I stayed.

Andreas

Yes, I understand. Eh... the way I understood Petter and Effie there aren't many initiatives in teen TV right now in SVT, but the focus is rather on children up to about Kär's target group, and then initiatives are for kind of 30-year-olds and upwards.

Anna

That's right.

Andreas

And that's... and so there's a drop or gap there somewhere in teenhood, eh...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... maybe in part due to there not being any investments then, but... but eh... if you lose viewers there, so to speak, eh... how do you think you could get them back? What kind of investments would you like to see?

Anna

Well, I... I would really like to see that there were more youth eh... things, also for that... the same reason, that SVT do some other things that other players don't.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Eh... but... but I think honestly also that... that some of them we lose a lot earlier.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

So that eh... who... who watch nothing but Netflix from when they are little or so, you know so that... it probably goes for the whole age range so that, you know, how... how do we attract people to come back who doesn't... where SVT isn't the obvious... obvious place to look for "What should I watch today?", or what should I watch, or so.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Eh... so that's a job that has to be done for everyone.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And... and, you know, it's a lot about eh... to both find it... and then like it... to kind of... well, but like "Festen" for example managed to find lots of people who wouldn't go to SVT normally.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

Then it's about that it has to be spread, and it's got to... Hello! [greet someone who passes by] that it must be spread, and that it must... eh... you have to find out about it to... [inaudible]... I kind of think that many who watch series who have found "Festen" and who liked "Festen" so much, they have not gone in and looked for it: "This is probably a series for me", rather they just heard that eh...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... this one rocks.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

And that's the same problem that Maria, who made "Festen", said, that they have repeatedly heard that many Festen-viewers don't know where they've seen "Festen".

Andreas

No?

Anna

They don't know if it's at SVT or Netflix or HBO or somewhere else, or YouTube.

Andreas

Aha.

Anna

That... and that's another issue, you know... how can we watermark our stuff, so they actually know that it's SVT who produced it?

Andreas

Yes. Yes, that's interesting. Eh... what's your view on your two platforms then... online platforms, SVT Barn and SVT Play? Would there perhaps be a need for more platforms? If you take DR as an example, they have... they have two different children's sites, one called Ramasjang or... I don't know if... or how it's pronounced [laughing] but for the younger children...

Anna

Right.

Andreas

... and one called Ultra for the slightly older. Would that be a setup that could work for SVT? Is there a need for an SVT Youth?

Anna

Nah... I don't know if I think that... to split the children's platform... I think it's pretty good. However, we experienced when we wanted to make... to include wine drinking and cigarette smoking and different things, that it was problematic to be on SVT Barn.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

But then I think rather that... that eh... there's still Play.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

To kind of... split it that way.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

I think. But I haven't got any [inaudible] around that. I really don't know.

Andreas

No, I understand. Eh... one final part here, then I thought we'd finish.

Anna

Mm.

Andreas

Em... from what I understood, you were pretty happy about... about the reception, the ratings...

Anna

Yes, super, super happy.

Andreas

... not least considering that *Kär* was such a small production, and that it was...

Anna

Mm.

Andreas

... online only, and then it doesn't get the same promotional priority that regular shows and so on. So... so how pleased... how pleased are you on a scale from one to ten? [laughing] With the...

Anna

Ten.

Andreas

Ten?

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

Yes, fantastic [laughing].

Anna

I think it kind of exceeded all expectations. That eh... you know, it's so hard to introduce something brand new eh... new product and eh...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... a lot of series worked themselves up through several seasons and then you kind of reach a higher... bit I think that *Kär* kind of went in high and then we kind of kept an... an engagement all the way.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And I was really nervous that it would kind of... it's so many episodes, that will they drop off along the way, and then they hardly did, there was a small drop towards the end, but you know... I... and I think that it really engaged. Then we have learned a lot and... if we had turned up the drama more, if we had done it now.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Eh... kind of made the driving force... you know, the "What will happen next? What will happen now?" much stronger...

Andreas

Mhm.

Anna

... and then I think we could've reached even higher. But I'm super happy considering, you know eh... budget and conditions and that it was... we were... there was a lot of new stuff... in kind of doing it this way and all that. So that eh... I think that turned out really well.

Andreas

Yes. What do you bring to coming projects from *Kär*?

Anna

Mm, then I think just that, to turn up the drama even more.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Raise the “What’s at stake?”

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

Eh... and then eh... then I think that this thing with us... that we shot so... you know, smart within one studio, to take that even further. You know, could we think even smarter and kind of get an even greater payoff? To kind of...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... maybe not do so many Snapchat episodes that became kind of... a bit too low-key maybe, but rather... well, if you make a scene with all the girls you make five scenes instead, you know with them at the same time, to just... to... to think smarter.

Andreas

Yes. Do you think that SVT Barn will invest in similar “experiments” within quotation marks ahead? You know, kind of smart original concepts for small budgets?

Anna

Yes, I hope so.

Andreas

Yes [laughter].

Anna

I would’ve loved to have some more budget, but... [laughter] I hope so. And you know, I’m very keen on doing more aimed at guys, and that’s not as... that’s not as much as... these girls in 9-12 they... we’ve done a lot or them and they... they’re used to, I think, that “there’s good stuff for me on SVT”, and the guys in the same age don’t probably feel that at all.

Andreas

No?

Anna

So, if we make series aimed at them, I think we won’t reach the same ratings, but that... that I hope we can get the space to do, that it’s OK to do that.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And I would love to do that.

Andreas

Yes. Interesting. A final question. The overarching thing here has kind of been how... how do you reach youngsters this age, and how do you get... how do you get them to SVT. And eh... well, if you look at research, which I do since I'm studying right now, then... then there's a pretty alarmist tone within public service scholarship, in particular outside the Nordic region.

Anna

Mhm.

Andreas

But within... you know, among Nordic scholars it seems the vibes are somewhat more positive.

Anna

Mm.

Andreas

Eh... how is the future being thought of within SVT, would you say, regarding this "the youth challenge", how... how do we catch the youngsters?

Anna

Eh... what did you call it, "the challenge..."?

Andreas

"The youth challenge" I read somewhere that it's called, you know...

Anna

Yes, yes.

Andreas

... how do we hook the youngsters? How do we get them to our platforms, kind of?

Anna

Mm... em... no but I still think that... I think that it doesn't feel so alarmist... I think that it... that has been a wave here, you know... after... like SKAM was a big reason that, you know...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... where all kinds of players realized that "Wow-wow-wow, this is really... there was such an incredible power here!". When someone makes something really, really good, that plays a role for real and that hooks people...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... eh... like, what an interest there was for youth culture, all of a sudden. Em... and that it has been a kind of way some time after that... where it's been a kind of... you know, just a raise in status?

Andreas

Yes, right.

Anna

That this is kind of nothing that nobody cares about in... in the... you know, the big players and the big dramas, but rather that there was suddenly higher status in youth film and youth drama and youth programs in general, that kind of thing.

Andreas

Right.

Anna

Em... and also maybe the whole influencer thing, where many young people become really big and all that...

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

... because I think that there... there is rather kind of eh... a lot of things to discover there. Then I think we make too little and I wish that we did much, much more.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

So, that is what I hope, that those... those winds start blowing some more... within SVT too.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

And that there... there will be larger investments, because I think that... I think that has been quite proved with "Festen" and "Eagles", that in spite of there being kind of... well, perhaps not so many series...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... so that whenever something is made, and when it's good, and when people like it, they watch! Doesn't matter that it's SVT.

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

There is no more that kind of... that was maybe there ten years ago, that SVT was a bit boring or a bit, you know, "That there..." kind of...

Andreas

Mm.

Anna

... but... but that... doesn't really matter anymore, I think.

Andreas

No.

Anna

I experience that among youngsters. You know, "If something is good, I want to see it". Doesn't matter what it is.

Andreas

Right, yes.

Anna

I don't really know if that was an answer to your question, but...

Andreas

Yes, yes, but it was... it was a good answer, thank you [laughing].

Anna

[inaudible] good. Mm.

Andreas

Em... that was it.

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

Is there something you would like to add that I missed?

Anna

No. No, nothing spontaneously, there isn't...

Andreas

No? Then I want to thank you so much for your time and for getting two long phone calls with you [laughing] during your maternal leave and everything...

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

... I'm really... I'm really grateful for that.

Anna

Yes, yes, it's gone really well.

Andreas

And it was fun hearing you talk about all this.

Anna

Yes, same to you, same to you. It was kind of... it's... well, you're in your own little bubble now, so it isn't... sometimes it's perhaps not so ... easy to remember exactly or so, but I think it still went totally OK.

Andreas

Yes, absolutely. And could you imagine... not only eh... did you manage to go through with this production during the pandemic and kid of... even when I've talked with you caught [laughing] this decease yourself...

Anna

Yes, exactly. Right?

Andreas

... and still we managed to talk, so that's... that's cool.

Anna

Yes.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Well, then, good luck! Will be fun to read!

Andreas

Thanks. I need all the luck I can get... [laughing] to finish this.

Anna

He he, yes.

Andreas

Yes, take care of yourself and...

Anna

Yes, so great that you wanted to write about it, I think.

Andreas

Yes.

Anna

Mm.

Andreas

Take care...

Anna

Take care!

Andreas

... and we'll be in touch!

Anna

Bye-bye!

Andreas

Bye-bye!

Anna

Yes, we will, bye-bye!