Aspects of Cooperation and Corporate Governance in the Swedish Regional Newspaper Industry

The Swedish newspaper industry was for many years characterized by geographically separated markets. This allowed for open discussions and learning. In addition, economic objectives were often not expressed by the owners of the newspaper companies. This dissertation analyzes two organizations which mirrored these distinctive traits of the industry.

The Lindesberg Group (1956-2008) was a secretive group of CEOs. It is described how this group started in a time of crisis to share experiences, how it developed an intricate system of benchmarking, but later transformed into an exclusive personal network with a reputation of power and influence in the media industry.

Centertidningar AB (1973-2005) was a group of newspapers owned by the Centre Party. The newspapers were originally acquired to promote a political message, but they soon turned into a profit generator. This dissertation shows that the orientation for profit came from the managers rather than from the owner, and how the managers took complete control from the politicians but made the Party rich.

Comparisons to other organizational forms are made, such as the open price associations. Theories of interfirm cooperation and corporate governance are used. An inverse relation between hierarchical integration and open discussions is found. It is shown that many board functions can be replicated by managers. The dissertation is of interest to scholars in business history, media economics, governance, accounting, and organization studies.

Christoffer Rydland

is a researcher at the Department of Marketing and Strategy (MaST) and EHFF at the Stockholm School of Economics. He is also the illustrator of the cover. A seabird, standing on a small stone, represents the leader’s loneliness in the hierarchy. A sea mark on the horizon represents his search for navigation. (Lake Siljan, Midsummer 2009)