

Greenland is the people...
Shaping the axiological system
by the media in the USA and Sweden:
A case study

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Abstract

The subject of this article is the shaping of the axiological system by the media in the United States and Sweden. The medium chosen for this study is television, which, thanks to the specificity of its language, creates not only audiovisual images of reality but also shapes specific types of audience awareness. This is because language is a communication tool that can both convey and influence something. A multi-modal analysis was chosen to examine the values presented in selected fragments of American and Swedish TV programs, as a reliable study of television messages is only possible by considering each of their audiovisual elements and the interrelationships between them. The topic presented and analyzed concerns the offer to purchase Greenland, made by US President Donald Trump during his first and second terms, which (due to the intervening presidency of Joseph Biden) are separated by five years. This topic, raised in 2019, becomes relevant again in 2025. The article highlights the differences visible in this time period, which concern the media presentation of the topic, including the message of values, constructed in the USA and Sweden.

Keywords

multimodality, constructivism, media language, values, Greenland

Grenlandia to ludzie...
Kształtowanie systemu aksjologicznego
przez media w USA i Szwecji:
Studium przypadku

Abstrakt

Tematem artykułu jest kształtowanie systemu aksjologicznego przez media w Stanach Zjednoczonych i Szwecji. Medium, wybranym do badań, jest telewizja, która dzięki specyfice swojego języka, tworzy nie tylko audiowizualne obrazy rzeczywistości, ale także kształtuje określone typy świadomości odbiorców. Dzieje się tak, ponieważ język to narzędzie komunikacji, którym można zarówno coś przekazać, jak i na coś wpłynąć. Do badania wartości prezentowanych w wybranych fragmentach amerykańskich i szwedzkich programów TV, została wybrana analiza multimodalna, ponieważ wiarygodne badanie przekazów telewizyjnych jest możliwe jedynie z uwzględnieniem zarówno każdego z ich audiowizualnych elementów, jak i wzajemnych relacji między nimi. Przedstawiany i analizowany temat dotyczy propozycji kupna Grenlandii, wystosowanej przez prezydenta USA, Donalda Trumpa, w czasie jego pierwszej oraz drugiej kadencji, które (ze względu na mającą miejsce pomiędzy nimi prezydenturę Josepha Bidena) dzieli 5 lat. Temat poruszony w 2019 roku, w 2025 roku znów staje się aktualny. W artykule zaznaczone są widoczne w tym przedziale czasowym różnice, które dotyczą sposobu medialnej prezentacji tematu, w tym przekazu wartości, konstruowanego w USA i Szwecji.

Słowa kluczowe

multimodalność, konstruktywizm, język mediów, wartości, Grenlandia

1. Introduction

On August 16, 2019, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that U.S. President Donald Trump wanted to buy Greenland (Ballhaus et al., <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-eyes-a-new-real-estate-purchase-greenland-11565904223>). Greenland is an island and an autonomous region dependent on Denmark. Although geographically located in North America, it is politically, culturally, socially, and historically European. Initially, the presidential bid was perceived by the media as a joke. However, Donald Trump's offer was entirely serious. The offer was submitted to the government in Copenhagen, after which Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen dismissed it as „absurd”, suggesting she was not interested in discussing the sale of Greenland (“Trump cancels Denmark visit...”, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49416740>).

With Donald J. Trump's victory in the 2024 presidential election, the topic of the U.S. purchase of Greenland returned to the media. In 2025, during Trump's second term, the idea was once again proposed by him, but again gained a negative response from both Greenlanders and Denmark. It is worth considering the selected information on this topic, presented in the American and Swedish media in 2019, and whether the values they conveyed influenced the shaping of the axiological systems in American and Swedish society in subsequent years.

In the United States, breakfast television is not broadcast on the public television station (PBS). Nevertheless, this does not mean that selecting a Swedish public television program for analysis does not create a valuable comparison for the researcher. By adding *Morgonstudion* to the analysis, it is possible to examine not only the differences visible between two different cultures (Swedish and American) but also those emerging within just one of them – the differences between the two Swedish programs are numerous and distinct.

The subject of this article's research is all the linguistic and visual phenomena that can be observed in the morning tele-

vision programs selected for analysis, where they construct a media vision of reality. The societies receiving these messages often shape their consciousness and identity based on them, including their own value hierarchies, which largely translate into their perception of the world, expressed views, and everyday behavior. How, then, does axiology connect with linguistics? This occurs primarily in the world of words and their meanings (Puzynina 2013: 23). The language of television, being a multimodal system of signs, can have a strong and multidimensional impact on the minds and emotions of viewers (Godzic 2002: 20). The premise is therefore that television can both shape and propagate the attitudes and values recognized in a given culture.

The aim of this article is to examine and describe the ways in which media images of the world and the hierarchies of values they portray are constructed in the United States and Sweden. In this paper, I examine American and Swedish media visions of the world, using constructivism as a theory of communication and media, seeking answers to the question of how television broadcasts in the US and Sweden shape the axiological system in the minds of their audiences. I am therefore interested in how television presents social and cultural values promoted in two distinct cultures – American and Swedish. The first mentioned, as a pioneer in television, is often considered a model for presenting topics, while – as I hypothesize and attempt to prove – the latter determines the quality of contemporary television and the evaluative criteria it conveys.

The methodology I employ in this work consists of critical discourse analysis and content analysis. I utilize linguistic methods to examine the values presented in programs, including multimodal analysis, because television messages can only be reliably studied by considering each of their audiovisual elements and the interrelationships between them (Maćkiewicz 2017: 34). This methodology requires interdisciplinarity, as it is inextricably linked to context analysis in a broad, and therefore often non-linguistic, sense. In this work, I choose one of two

options for conducting multimodal research: examining the message sender's perspective (rather than the receiver's perspective), which constructs the meaning of the television message.

2. The case study

Following a public statement by Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, who unequivocally rejected the U.S. President's offer, the President announced on his Twitter account that he was canceling his upcoming visit to Denmark, which was scheduled for early September 2019. Shortly thereafter, the Danish side officially confirmed the news. Donald Trump received an invitation from the then-Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, but after the statement, Prime Minister Frederiksen concluded that the decision to cancel or possibly postpone the visit would save both countries' effort and costs (Figure 1).



Figure 1

Donald Trump's Twitter posts confirming his cancellation of his visit to Denmark due to the Danish lack of interest in selling Greenland (<https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1163961884225277954>, accessed 25.05.2025)

In the *Today* program, the morning program of the American commercial station NBC, the above-mentioned topic was taken up on August 19, 2019, when the host emphasized that for Donald Trump, as he himself says, the offer to buy Greenland is not a joke, but an important and large deal (Figure 2). A short interview with the president was broadcast, where he confirmed that this area is important to him for strategic reasons, and that in the event of refusal, Denmark would lose almost 700 million dollars that it could earn from this investment annually (“President Trump confirms his interest...”, <https://www.today.com/video/president-trump-confirms-his-interest-in-buying-greenland-66468933750>).



Figure 2

A contrasting comparison of the country and its culture and people to real estate for sale, presented in a multimodal message (using the image on the left, words spoken by the US President and on-screen captions) (<https://www.today.com/video/president-trump-confirms-his-interest-in-buying-greenland-66468933750>, accessed 25.05.2025)

The episode also presented the opinion of the Danish Prime Minister, who, while visiting Greenland, reassured local residents and the media by saying that Greenland is not for sale. The Prime Minister emphasized that Greenland belongs to Greenland, not Denmark, and hopes that the U.S. president's offer is not serious (Figure 3) ("President Trump confirms his interest..."). Indirectly, the value of rationality is presented here, which is highlighted by its opposite – the anti-value of lack of rationality.



Figure 3

Statement by Danish Prime Minister rejecting D. Trump's offer to purchase Greenland (<https://www.today.com/video/president-trump-confirms-his-interest-in-buying-greenland-66468933750>, accessed 25.05.2025)

The *Today* show emphasized that the idea of the U.S. purchasing Greenland is not new. This offer had been made twice before – once in 1867 and again in 1946. However, both times, it was rejected. The episode also presented several opinions from Greenlanders, who unanimously considered the American president's idea bizarre ("President Trump confirms his interest..."). Additionally, the host of the program, Andrea Mitchell, noted that Donald Trump is planning to visit Denmark during his visit to Europe at the end of the month and emphasized that after

his offer to buy Greenland, the atmosphere during this visit may be a bit awkward (“President Trump confirms his interest...”).

The social issue addressed in the episode is the disrespectful treatment of the sovereignty of small communities. The episode featured the hosts, but also indirectly Greenlanders, whose statements, alongside those of Donald Trump and Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, were broadcast on the program. The language used on *Today* could be considered neutral, but some statements were emotional, and the information was presented subjectively. An example is the statement of a Greenland woman, broadcast during the episode, when she, addressing the second part of her statement to Donald Trump, emphasized: „He can buy anything I guess, or this is what he thinks he can, but... you can’t. Sorry. I mean, it’s the people, it’s the country, it’s a culture” (“President Trump confirms his interest...”).

The topic was approached universally, as evidenced by its presentation to viewers from both the American, Greenlandic, and Danish perspectives. The episode featured statements from representatives of each of these countries, allowing viewers to analyze the topic across a broader cultural spectrum. The program did not directly identify either values or anti-values, but when analyzing the aforementioned statements by the Greenlanders, one can conclude that the value they speak of, and which was missing not only in their words but also in the U.S. president’s idea itself, is respect for the island’s inhabitants, their country, identity, and culture. Another value implicitly conveyed in the program is rationality, manifested in the Danish Prime Minister’s rejection of the proposal to purchase an island inhabited by Greenlanders. This is contrasted with the lack of rationality, or irrationality, in the very proposal of such a transaction by the U.S., which could be perceived as an anti-value and was also implicitly presented in the program.

How did the Swedish media react to the U.S. president’s offer? On August 20, 2019, *Morgonstudion*, a morning program on Swedish public television, addressed the topic of Donald Trump’s proposed purchase of Greenland. The guest in the

studio was Andreas Utterström, an expert in American politics, who emphasized that Donald Trump is interested in Greenland for several possible reasons (Figure 4). One of them is to draw media attention to a topic other than the economic troubles plaguing the United States. Thanks to the proposal to purchase the world's largest island, the American budget appears not only very strong but also capable of expanding its resources. Furthermore, Donald Trump's purchase of Greenland would mean that he would become one of the few presidents under whose administration the United States has been territorially expanded, this time by the so-called 51st state. This is not without significance for the president, whose ego – according to many – often determines political moves. The expert emphasized that Donald Trump is not a typical politician and often treats the United States as a business rather than a state. Another factor that could make Greenland important to the US is its strategic location and, therefore, its military significance. Furthermore, as the expert emphasized, the U.S. president may also be interested in the natural resources located in Greenland (“Tis 20 aug 6:00”, https://www.svtplay.se/video/23116106/morgonstudio_n/morgonstudion-20-aug-06-00?tab=kommande&sida=2).

During the episode, the studio also connected with Johan Wessman from the Oresund Institute, who emphasized that Greenland is an autonomous geographical region and that Donald Trump should not have presented his interest in it to Denmark in the first place (Fig. 5). The expert noted that Greenland has its own culture, inhabitants, and traditions that are independent of Denmark. He further admitted that the Danish media emphasizes that Greenland is not for sale, and they are entitled to this opinion not because the island is part of Denmark, but for the reason stated above (“Tis 20 aug 6:00”).



Figure 4

Andreas Utterström, journalist and expert in American studies, during a conversation at *Morgonstudion*. The slogans on the news ticker: “To put it mildly, there is little Danish interest in the transaction. The US wants to buy Greenland” (translation mine) (<https://www.svtplay.se/video/23116106/morgonstudion/morgonstudion-20-aug-06-00?tab=kommande&sida=2>, accessed 25.08.2019)



Figure 5

Johan Wessman in an audiovisual conversation with the hosts of *Morgonstudion*. The multimodal message on screen: images (photos and videos of Greenland), the expert’s words, and captions in the news ticker (<https://www.svtplay.se/video/23116106/morgonstudion/morgonstudion-20-aug-06-00?tab=kommande&sida=2>, accessed 25.08.2019).

The social issue addressed in the program is the disrespectful treatment of the sovereignty of small communities. In the *Morgonstudion*'s episode, both presenters and experts commented objectively and unemotionally on the idea of the U.S. purchasing Greenland, using scientific language. Offering several possible explanations for Donald Trump's proposed deal, they explained to viewers the potential reasons for the desire to purchase the island. By listing the political, geographical, and psychological reasons associated with the U.S. president's offer, viewers were able to view the topic from several different perspectives. The topic was approached universally, presented from the American, Danish, and Greenlandic perspectives. No values or anti-values were mentioned during the episode, but considering Johan Wessman's statement, one can see an attempt to indirectly convey the value of respect. As the editor emphasized, Greenland, independent of Denmark, has its own culture, inhabitants, and traditions. Given this, Donald Trump should show respect for the Greenlanders and – if he still considers the idea rational – approach Greenland first, not Denmark, with his proposal. Another value implicitly conveyed here is rationality, which becomes apparent against the backdrop of its anti-value – irrationality.

The imagery used in the studio program was traditionally kept to a minimum, but a fragment of an interview with Johan Wessman displayed a striking multimodal combination of image, text, and sound. During his remarks, a short video of Greenland appeared alongside, accompanied by a ticker informing viewers about the U.S.'s desire to purchase the island and the contrasting lack of interest from Denmark in selling it. The ticker included the statement "The US wants to buy Greenland" and "To put it mildly, there's little Danish interest in the transaction", as well as a photo showing part of one of Greenland's settlements. This is similar to the method used by *Today* and discussed earlier: a juxtaposition that showcased the country's calling card, nature, against the expert's words about Donald Trump treating Greenland like real estate.

Like *Morgonstudion*, the topic of Donald Trump's desire to purchase Greenland was first discussed on *Nyhetsmorgon*, a Swedish commercial television program, on August 20, 2019. Jens B. Nordström, an economist who regularly collaborates with *Nyhetsmorgon*, was invited to the studio as a commentator. Nordström emphasized that Donald Trump's interest in purchasing Greenland could be driven by three factors. First, the U.S. president is interested in its strategic location, which is also related to the U.S. military base at Thule located there. Second, Greenland has natural resources, including oil and gas deposits. Third, the purchase of Greenland could also be an ego-boosting gesture by the current U.S. president ("Trump vill köpa Grönland: 'Vill skapa ett Trumpland'", <https://www.tv4.se/nyhetsmorgon/klipp/trump-vill-ko-pa-gronland-vill-skapa-ett-trumpland-12491030>). Both Nordström and the host expressed amusement during the broadcast, suggesting that while Donald Trump's interest in buying Greenland was genuine, it was perceived by many as absurd. The expert also noted that the official Danish side is completely uninterested in the sale.

During the discussion, the moderator and Jens B. Nordström also recalled the rare, albeit historical, instances of geographical regions being sold. In the early 19th century, the United States purchased Louisiana from France, which later became the site of more than a dozen other states. Just over half a century later, the United States purchased Alaska from the then-Russian Empire, which also significantly expanded the area of the then-thriving country ("Trump vill köpa Grönland..."). The expert also cited several other examples describing failed attempts or other cases of states purchasing portions of foreign territories. The discussion was informative, based on historical facts, but the viewer could easily detect the expert's and the presenters' rather than critical, rather than at times mocking, tone toward the U.S. president's idea.

The topic was revisited on *Nyhetsmorgon*, a morning program on Swedish commercial television, on August 24, 2019, when Marcus Oscarsson was invited to the studio to discuss the

matter once again as a political expert. His footage, similar to that edited on *Today*, included statements from Greenlanders, who emphasized that Donald Trump's behavior was patronizing and that the U.S. president himself seemed to be either incompetent or out of touch with reality ("Marcus: Donald Trump better sig som en jättebebis", <https://www.tv4.se/klipp/va/12494730/marcus-donald-trump-beter-sig-som-en-jattebebis>). In the statements, one could also hear that despite very high monetary offers, not everything is for sale ("Trump vill köpa Grönland..."). All statements were presented in a more joking tone, there was no trace of fear in them.

As in *Today* and *Morgonstudion*, the social issue presented in *Nyhetsmorgon* is the treatment of the sovereignty of small communities. In *Nyhetsmorgon*, both the hosts and the experts invited to the studio speak, using neutral language. Information about the topic was sometimes conveyed in a subjective and emotional manner, as evidenced by the use of the aforementioned mocking tone in the interviewees' statements. The topic was approached universally. The program discussed multiple perspectives and understandings of the issue, from the American, Danish, and Greenlandic perspectives. Other countries that have historically experienced similar proposals to purchase part or all of their territory were also mentioned. Although the episode does not directly name any values or anti-values, the statements of Greenlanders in the program's material, similarly to the *Today* episode, indirectly allude to the value of respect. This is achieved primarily by contrasting the lack of respect, particularly given the objectification of the island and its inhabitants by the U.S. president. Additionally, given the often ironic nature of the statement, the presented topic can be indirectly linked to a lack of rationality. On the one hand, an anti-value is revealed, while on the other, represented, for example, by the words of the Danish politicians mentioned above, the viewer can perceive its opposite, namely the value of rationality.

The visuals used in the program included a combination of words and images using content displayed on a screen behind

the presenters. During the presenters' conversations with Jens B. Nordström and Marcus Oscarsson, images appeared on the screen, serving as a visual commentary on the experts' words. Viewers could see, among other things, a map highlighting countries that have faced similar situations throughout history, a short text commentary (Fig. 6), or posts on social media related to the case (Fig. 7). Word and image therefore, create an inseparable relationship in the program.



Figure 6

Jens B. Nordström in a conversation with the hosts of *Nyhetsmorgon*, against a background of a screen displaying the factors supporting the U.S. purchase of Greenland. The headline on the ticker: "Trump wants to buy Greenland, but it's not for sale" (translation mine)
 (<https://www.tv4.se/nyhetsmorgon/klipp/trump-vill-köpa-grönland-vill-skapa-ett-trumpland-12491030>, accessed 25.02.2020)

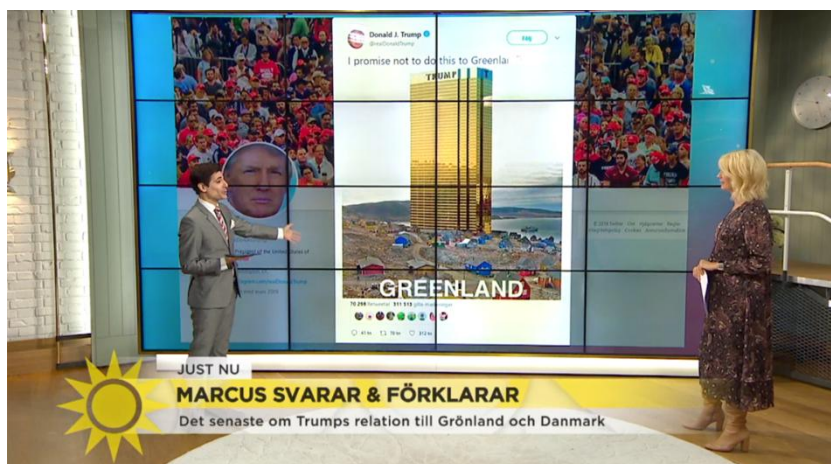


Figure 7

Marcus Oscarsson, in a conversation with the host of *Nyhetsmorgon*, presenting Donald Trump's post showing a skyscraper with the word "Trump" written on it, built in one of the Greenlandic settlements. (<https://www.tv4.se/klipp/va/12494730/marcus-donald-trump-beter-sig-som-en-jattebebis>, accessed 25.02.2020)

The two most crucial values that can be seen in selected episodes are respect and rationality. The value of respect is not explicitly stated and appears indirectly in the programs. First, the need for respect is highlighted through the anti-value of the U.S. president's disrespect for the people of Greenland. This disrespect for the place, its inhabitants, and their culture itself – indirectly – was demonstrated through the mere proposal to purchase the Greenlandic island. Although Greenland is legally an integral part of Denmark, even the Danes, who effectively „own” it, remain silent about this, leaving the island to its autonomy and distinctiveness, thus respecting its culture. Second, the value of respect is also reflected in the respect, or lack thereof, of the Danish authorities' opinions. After receiving a refusal to purchase Greenland from the Danish Prime Minister, the U.S. president withdrew his plan to visit Denmark, also

refusing a planned visit by Queen Margrethe II. In each of the three programs these aspects were highlighted in a similar way. The second value that also appears indirectly but clearly in each program is rationality. In the case of rationality, the very idea of purchasing another country's territory in the 21st century comes to the fore. Consideration should be given to the opportunities offered by geographic location and other factors influencing the attractiveness of such a transaction. However, currently, it might seem that such factors should be first and foremost confronted with others, such as the fact that this is not a desert island, but a country with its own culture and the inhabitants who shape it daily. Although the value of rationality is not mentioned in the program episodes, thanks to the use of both a mocking tone (primarily in Swedish programs) and expressions such as the words of the Danish Prime Minister, quoted in the American *Today* program "[...] I strongly hope that this is not meant seriously" ("President Trump confirms his interest...") or the statements of the Greenlanders about the U.S. president's detachment from reality ("Marcus: Donald Trump beter sig..."), it becomes visible to the viewer.

The social problem addressed in each of the three programs is the treatment of the sovereignty of small communities – in this case, the Greenlanders. The *Today* program did not devote a large portion of the episode to the topic of the U.S.'s desire to purchase Greenland. During the broadcast, it was emphasized that the proposal to buy the island was not a new idea, citing moments in history when similar proposals were made and rejected. The program presented the topic in a universal way. The viewer could hear the opinions of all sides, i.e., the American, Danish, and Greenlandic. The presenters and experts spoke using formal language, however, some of the above-mentioned statements by the Greenlanders broadcast on the program contained information presented in a subjective and emotional manner. Although *Today* does not impose on the viewer a clear, negative view of the presented issue, the editing of the discussed fragment of the episode, which included the subjective

statements of each side were highlighted, suggests looking at the matter more through the eyes of the people of the Nordic countries than through the eyes of Donald Trump.

The Swedish programs devoted slightly more time to presenting the topic than *Today*. Experts spoke, providing viewers with not only the historical background but also the economic and cultural aspects directly related to the case and affecting the countries discussed. Both programs approached the topic universally. *Morgonstudion* used scientific language to convey information to viewers, while *Nyhetsmorgon* used neutral language. However, unlike the American program *Today*, the Swedish programs displayed a noticeable sarcastic and mocking tone in some of their statements. This is not related to the values implicitly presented in the episodes, such as respect and rationality, but rather to their opposites, or rather, anti-values. In the Swedish programs *Morgonstudion* and *Nyhetsmorgon*, both the presenters and most of the invited guests expressed amusement at the mere proposal to purchase the island. This is most likely due to the fact that not only the laws of the Scandinavian countries, but above all the ideas and approaches they espouse, are familiar to almost all their citizens. These are the determinants by which they live their daily lives. They therefore know that not only rationality but above all respect for both native and foreign cultures is one of the most important values by which the Scandinavian countries operate and by which they want to be perceived in their global image of the state. Therefore, when it is not these values, but their opposites, that are associated with such important international movements, it is considered absurd by the inhabitants of the Nordic countries.

What was the reaction of the media and public in the US and Sweden in 2025, when Donald Trump again proposed buying Greenland? American media, including NBC, noted that the US president's idea was ridiculed, including on various American talk shows, immediately after the proposal resurfaced (Fig. 8). The message, composed of edited clips, was therefore subjective and conveyed emotionally. However, the program hosts

themselves used neutral language and attempted to present the topic in a universal way. In the *Today* program, journalists, while maintaining composure both in their choice of words and facial expressions and paying attention to the statements of the island's inhabitants, noted that: "Greenlander showing little interest in joining the US", and also that according to what Danish officials say: "The sale of Greenland is not something that's on the table". The statements were not presented in an emotional tone. The host and correspondent maintained a serious tone while presenting a topic that, rather than being a passing fad, resurfaced after several years, much to the despair of the Greenlanders. Values such as respect and rationality were indirectly emphasized, also by presenting a contrast in the form of a reference to the anti-value of irrationality.



Figure 8

On-screen clips of four American talk shows in which the hosts mocked the idea of Donald J. Trump buying Greenland (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce4gXbRV5OI>, accessed 20.05.2025)

The consistency in opposition to the U.S. purchase of Greenland is also confirmed by the visual side of the information presented on this topic in the American media. In the *Today* program, in addition to clips showing Greenland's landscapes, drawing attention to their extraordinary nature, the people, the Greenlanders, for whom the island is first and foremost a home and inextricably linked to their identity, are also shown. The program's message is characterized by multimodality. The commentary is supplemented with a photo of Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and combined with an on-screen slogan „NOT FOR SALE” in red (Figure 9).



Figure 9

The multimodal message on the screen: the image (Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark) and the inscription “NOT FOR SALE” referring to the desire to buy Greenland
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce4gXbRV5OI>, accessed 20.05.2025)

In the Swedish media, both public and commercial, just like in 2019, the U.S. president's idea was also clearly opposed in 2025 and once again deemed unserious. However, journalists on Swedish public television did not formulate their message in an

emotional manner. The information was presented objectively, and the topic itself was presented universally, showing the opinions of the American, Danish, and Greenlandic sides. By showing a clip from 2019 of Donald Trump's statement, it was recalled that for him, buying Greenland is „a large real estate deal”, and for the Nordic countries, Greenland is not only about its territory, including its numerous mineral deposits, but above all, its inhabitants and their culture. The program also showed an excerpt from Frederiksen's speech from 2025, where she said, using formal language: “From the American side, it has been suggested that a situation may arise where we cooperate less than today in the economic area”¹, which demonstrates the universality of the topic. In Swedish public media, the value of respect was explicitly emphasized, noting that Mette Frederiksen said that: „Greenlanders decide their own future. We have great respect for this from Denmark”². In a video edited by Swedish public television, the Prime Minister was shown speaking with Greenlanders during her visit to their island. She was seen holding flowers received from members of the public and shaking hands with an ordinary resident, greeting him, talking, and showing respect (Figure 10). This value is therefore also visible in a multimodal form – it is conveyed directly in both language and image.

In Swedish commercial media in 2025, the reaction to Trump's renewed offer to buy Greenland also has not changed much since 2019. Foreign policy experts Elisabeth Frerå and Niklas Granholm were invited to the *Nyhetsmorgon* studio. Frerå, expressing her opinion with the hosts, emphasized that Mette Frederiksen cannot sell Greenland because only Greenlanders can decide about their island. Presenting the topic in

¹ Original: “Från amerikansk sida har det antytts att det kan uppstå en situation där vi samarbetar mindre än i dag på det ekonomiska området” (Ekman, <https://www.svt.se/nyheter/utrikes/danmark-trump-tar-inte-tillbaka-hot-om-gronland>, accessed 20.05.2025).

² Original: „Grönländarna får definiera sig egen framtid. Det har vi stor respekt för från dansk sida” (Ekman).

a universal way, the expert explained the economic, political, and even military reasons that make Greenland a desirable target for the U.S. She also added that the Greenlanders clearly emphasize that they do not want to change the “colonizer” from Denmark to the US, but rather want to become independent, as Múte Bourup Egede, Prime Minister of Greenland, says on their behalf (Figure 11) (“Därför vill Trump ha Grönland” | Nyhetsmorgon, TV4 & TV4 Play, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Av52PzCTkk>, accessed 25.06.2025). Mette Frederiksen, in her response, emphasized that she completely agreed with his opinion and encouraged everyone to do the same. She spoke directly about the value of respect (Figures 13 and 14). The screen simultaneously showed clips of Greenlanders walking around the island, which alludes to the fact that Greenland is not an object for sale, but someone’s home (Figure 12).



Figure 10

Mette Frederiksen visits Greenland to support the island’s inhabitants following the U.S. offer
(<https://www.svt.se/nyheter/utrikes/danmark-trump-tar-inte-tillbaka-hot-om-gronland>, accessed 20.05.2025)

**Figure 11**

Múte Bourupa Egede: "We don't want to be Danes or Americans. We definitely want to be Greenlanders." (translation mine) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Av52PzCTkk>, accessed 20.05.2025)

**Figure 12**

Mette Frederiksen's words to Múte Bourup Egede: „Greenland belongs to the Greenlanders and no one else, as you have very clearly stated here.” The statement is broadcast in the background while a film showing the daily lives of Greenlanders appears on the screen. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Av52PzCTkk>, accessed 20.05.2025)



Figures 13 and 14

Mette Frederiksen addressed the following statement to Múte Bourup Egede: „According to your words, the Greenlanders will decide their own future. As the Danish side, we have great respect for this point of view and I encourage everyone to share this view.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Av52PzCTkk>, accessed 20.05.2025)

It is worth noting, however, the change in behavior, including the facial expressions, of the presenters as they discussed the topic. In 2019, mocking smiles were visible on their faces; they did not hide their amusement at Trump’s offer, considering it bizarre. In 2025, although they still consider the idea irrational, the smiles disappeared from their faces (Figure 15). It is clear that they take the topic seriously.



Figure 15

Nyhetsmorgon's hosts

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Av52PzCTkk>,
accessed 20.05.2025)

3. Conclusion

In summary, in 2019, a U.S. television program covering the U.S.'s intention to purchase Greenland used neutral language, and despite the presenters' attempts to maintain a serious tone, the presentation itself was emotionally charged and subjective. The topic was presented in a universal sense, and values such as respect and rationality were conveyed indirectly, only by descriptive references or by pointing them out against the backdrop of anti-values. The message was presented multimodally. Both verbally and in the form of an on-screen image, it was emphasized that Greenland was not for sale because it is not a desolate area, but rather the home and identity of the people who live there.

In 2025, on American television, the same topic was presented slightly differently. Some of the material, which had been previously edited and broadcast, contained emotional and subjective messages, including clips showing talk show hosts

mocking Donald Trump's offer. However, the message presented by the hosts themselves was more subdued. The hosts took the matter more seriously than in 2019, as indicated by their tone of voice and facial expressions. The program used neutral language and presented the topic universally, explaining the American, Greenlandic, and Danish sides of the dispute. Values such as respect and rationality were highlighted indirectly in the program; their names were neither spoken nor displayed on screen. The message was multimodal – the visuals were supplemented by the hosts' commentary and on-screen captions.

In 2025, Swedish public television discussed the topic objectively and unemotionally. The program used formal language and presented the issue universally. The message was presented multimodally. Unlike the 2019 broadcast, in 2015, the value of respect was presented directly, both verbally, in a caption on the screen, and visually in the form of Mette Frederiksen's gesture of respect towards a resident of Greenland. This left the audience in no doubt as to the message's meaning.

On Swedish commercial television, 2025 saw the biggest shift in the way the topic was presented compared to 2019. Experts, including a scientist, joined the discussion, allowing for a more scientific language to be heard throughout the program. The topic was presented objectively and unemotionally. The mocking comments familiar from 2019 disappeared. The hosts' facial expressions indicated seriousness. By approaching the issue from both Nordic and American perspectives, the topic was approached universally. The way values were conveyed shifted from indirect to direct – respect was discussed directly in the studio conversation.

All these changes, both on American and Swedish television, are due to the fact that the proposal, like Donald Trump's presidential election victory itself, turned out not to be a joke or a one-time whim, as initially perceived. Instead, it was made for a second time, and in the first weeks of his new term. This demonstrates the U.S. head of state's nonconformist approach and his disregard for the opinions of others, instead

pursuing his goals at all costs. Despite the many irregularities associated with his previous administration, including those raised during his impeachment, Americans re-elected him, meaning that the majority of the public supports his views, not considering them immoral, irrational, or disrespectful to others.

The analysis of excerpts from American and Swedish television broadcasts conducted in this article aims to demonstrate how the media shape the axiological system in the U.S. and Sweden through the visions of the world they create. *Shaping* an axiological system through the media means *constructing* media visions of the world that contain a hierarchy of values appropriate to a given community. The image of a given community's values is revealed both in the linguistic image of the world – a supra-individual image of socio-cultural reality contained in the structures of linguistic content – and in its media vision, and thus is always a part of both. Thanks to the specificity of its language, television creates not only audiovisual images of reality but also shapes certain types of awareness in its audiences (Bralczyk 1990: 31). This is because language is a communication tool that can be used to convey or perform something, as well as to influence something (Austin 1993: 554).

Although American television, as a pioneer of this medium, is often considered a model for presenting topics, the latter, Swedish television, defines the quality of contemporary television and the criteria of evaluation it conveys. The way broadcasters construct the content they convey to viewers, including how they distinguish values within it, is crucial because it can influence which of them audiences deem legitimate and worthy of espousing. Values – including those conveyed through the media – thus become a factor in shaping the vision of reality of language speakers and, as a result, constitute their socio-cultural identity. They are adopted by members of a given society naturally, unforced, for example, while watching daily television programs, especially morning programs, because their topics primarily focus on people and the phenomena and problems

directly affecting them. Linguistic (and non-linguistic) messages influence the knowledge and actions of individuals and communities. Through communicative exchanges with others, including those that occur after receiving a given media message, people construct and reinterpret their world.

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