

MASSA



COMMUNICATIE '85

MASSAMEDIA: TRENDSETTERS OF TRENDVOLGERS? Themanummer n.a.v. Sommatie '85

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MASSA

COMMUNICATIE '85

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Op 28 en 29 maart van dit jaar vond andermaal het jaarlijkse seminar 'Sommatie', georganiseerd door de Stichting Onderzoek Massacommunicatie, plaats.

Het seminar had als centraal thema "massamedia; trendsetters of trendvolgers?" en was opgebouwd rond de inleidingen van een viertal buitenlandse sprekers. Een vijftal Nederlandse sprekers zorgde voor aanvullend commentaar en kritiek vanuit het Nederlandse media-onderzoek en de Nederlandse media-praktijk.

De redactie van het tijdschrift 'Massacommunicatie' heeft besloten om de inleidingen van de vier buitenlandse sprekers tesamen in een speciaal themanummer van het tijdschrift op te nemen, ten einde een breder publiek dan de bezoekers van Sommatie met de inzichten van deze communicatiewetenschappers kennis te laten maken. Ze worden in een speciaal nummer uitgegeven omdat ze een specifieke thematiek binnen de communicatiewetenschap aansnijden, ze hebben betrekking op de relatie tussen media, cultuur en sociale structuur.

Robert White's artikel heeft het karakter van een overzicht van recente ontwikkelingen in massa-communicatie onderzoek, en vormt een inleiding op het thema.

In de bijdragen van *Karl Erik Rosengren* en *Larry Gross* wordt verslag gedaan van onderzoek vanuit de twee belangrijkste varianten van 'culturele indicatoren' onderzoek.

In *Rosengren's* onderzoek wordt vooral aandacht besteed aan longitudinale ontwikkelingen in de inhoud van massamediale boodschappen in relatie tot ontwikkelingen in de samenleving. *Gross* concentreert zich in de eerste plaats op de werking van het medium televisie op de Amerikaanse samenleving.

De bijdrage van *James Halloran* is enerzijds een commentaar op het gehele seminar en anderzijds een voortbouwen op zijn lezing van Sommatie '80 (Zie: *Halloran, James, Communication needs and communication policies*, Massacommunicatie VIII, 1980, 3-4 pp. 158-164). Toen poneerde *Halloran* een aantal provocerende stellingen met betrekking tot de aard van het media-onderzoek.

De redactie heeft, tegen haar gewoonte in, ervoor gekozen om de inleiding van *Halloran* te publiceren zoals ze werd uitgesproken, omdat dat de zeggingskracht van *Halloran's* argumenten ten goede komt.

De bijdragen van de Nederlandse inleiders op Sommatie hadden meer het karakter van kritische interventies en aanvullingen en minder van afgeronde lezingen. Dat was in de opzet van het seminar ingebouwd. Daarom heeft de redactie besloten de teksten van hun lezingen niet te publiceren. Bovendien hebben meerdere van de Nederlandse inleiders elders reeds over hun onderzoekswerk gepubliceerd.

Jos Becker van het Sociaal Cultureel Planburo, gaf aanvullingen op de inleiding van *Rosengren*. Hij schetste een aantal veranderingen in het culturele klimaat in Nederland op basis van secundaire analyse van opinie-onderzoeken en inhoudsanalyse van troonredes (zie o.m. *Sociaal-Cultureel Rapport, 1984*, Sociaal Cultureel Planburo, Den Haag, 1985, pp. 237-355).

Ook *Herman Franke*, verbonden aan het Criminologisch Instituut van de Universiteit van Amsterdam, gaf aanvullingen op *Rosengren's* onderzoek, vanuit zijn onderzoek naar ontwikkelingen in de aard en de inhoud van overlijdensadvertenties (Zie ook: *Franke, Herman, Het heengaan van de dood, over de veranderende inhoud van overlijdensadvertenties*. Sociologisch Tijdschrift, XI, 2 okt.)

Harry Bouwman, toen nog verbonden aan het Instituut voor Arbeidsvraagstukken van de Katholieke Hogeschool Tilburg, gaf aanvullingen op en maakte kritische opmerkingen bij het onderzoek van *Gross*, dat hij repliceerde in Nederland (Zie ook: *Bouwman, Harry, Cultivation analysis: the Dutch case*, in *Melischek, G.*,

J. Stappers & K.E. Rosengren, *Cultural Indicators: an international symposium*, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, 1984).

Fred Bronner, van het bureau Veldkamp Marktonderzoek, schetste een kwalitatief beeld van mediagebruikers op basis van zogenaamd psychografisch onderzoek, als aanvulling op Gross's opmerkingen over mediagebruikers (Zie ook: *Psyche '82, Resultaten van een onderzoek naar meningen en houdingen, interessen en activiteiten van het Nederlandse publiek anno 1982* (hoofdpublicatie), Admedia, Amsterdam, 1982).

Hanny van der Horst, tenslotte gaf een schets van culturele ontwikkelingen in Nederland gezien vanuit haar vroegere hoofdredacteerschapschap van het vrouwenweekblad 'Margriet'. Daarbij maakte zij onder meer gebruik van het onderzoek van de sociologen Brinkgreve en Korzec naar de rubriek 'Margriet weet Raad' (Brinkgreve, C. & M. Korzec, *'Margriet weet raad', gevoel gedrag en moraal in Nederland, 1938-1978*, het Spectrum, Utrecht, 1978).

Naast de vier inleidingen gehouden op Sommatie '85 is in dit themanummer een uitgebreide bespreking opgenomen van een boek waarvan de inhoud nauw aansluit bij de inhoud van dit thema-nummer.

The Significance of Recent Developments in the Field of Mass Communication*

As the field of mass communication has evolved, its conceptualisation has tended to develop around the paradigm of source, content, channel or medium, audience and effects. For example, the chapter organisation of one of the most popular recent texts on mass communication theory, that of Denis McQuail (1983), follows quite faithfully the elements of this paradigm. After introductions and a review of theories of media-society linkages, he has a chapter on media organisation and the process of media production (the source), followed by chapters on media content, media audiences, and media effects. He could hardly do otherwise if he wishes to report the division of current theoretical approaches and the state of the art of different research perspectives.

However, the implications of this conceptual organisation are much broader than a convenient way to divide theories. Underlying the paradigm is the premise of "the powerful media" and the premise of a line of causality from message source in media organisation through content, channel to audiences and effects. There is often an underlying premise in much mass communication research that, regardless of what part of the paradigm in the research is dealing with, ultimately the objective is to explain effects on individual behaviour.

There is also the tendency for research to seize upon one of the elements in the paradigm and to focus on that element as paramount in the mass communication process. Much research emphasises the role of the media organisation as most important. For

example, research sparked off by public complaints about violence, advertising or lack of minority representation in content sees the media organisation as responsible and sees the solution in changes within the media organisation. A second line of research focuses on content and either takes content as a text reflecting culture or as a base for measuring audience effects. Other theories have seen media technology as of dominant importance, McLuhan being a classical example. Another line of research focuses on audience uses and gratifications and the possibility of active audience influence on media content. One must grant that the range of questions about the process of mass communication is vast, and, for any one research project to be feasible, it is easier to focus on one element in the paradigm. There is also a very natural cumulative historical development in the field, questioning oversimplified interpretations and suggesting further important elements. The introduction of new interdisciplinary perspectives adds to the richness of the field, and the variety of the historical-national contexts of research brings other dimensions.

However, the problem arises in the tendency to isolate the analysis of one dimension of the paradigm as if it were a single explanatory factor. There is lacking development toward a more comprehensive theory which sees the dimensions of this paradigm as interrelated or suggests a completely different and more adequate way to organise the field. It is also questionable whether the continued debate between administrative vs. critical or positivists vs. humanists approaches is carrying the field forward. The isolated comments on the special issue of the *Journal of Communication*, "Fer-

* Paper delivered at "Sommatie 85", the 1985 conference of the Foundation for Mass Communication Research (SOM) in the Netherlands, Veldhoven, March 28-29, 1985.

ment in the Field" (Summer, 1983), dealing with many of these issues, have suggested that these may not be the right questions.

It is extremely difficult to predict where such a heterogeneous field such as mass communications might be going. But, as I review some of the current directions of major research endeavors, I see certain central trends.

There is increasing consensus that we cannot speak of any one factor such as media organisation as predominant in the mass communication process. There are many actors in the process: media administrators, financial sources, the producers, researchers, the critics, audiences as individuals or as organised pressure groups, government regulatory agencies, etc. All of these actors are aggressive, interacting and interdependent. In the long run, models of negotiated power or of public forum may be more adequate, even when the forum is really a field for social class conflict.

Secondly, there is indeed much questioning of the linear source-channel-receiver-effect paradigm and a search for a more adequate model. Mass communication research is not simply about effects on individuals but about a "product" that all actors are helping to bring about in some way, namely, the culture and society in which all of us move and live. The mass media is part of a collective search to make sense out of our social experience and formulate new explanations of our environment. Ultimately, what we are doing in the mass media, as in many other social institutions is creating our own humanity.

The perspective which sees the "product" of the mass media as our socio-cultural reality moves the discussion to the structural, social level of analysis. Thirdly, there is increasing questioning of the dominance of social control models in mass communication theory and empirical research. This is, in part, a questioning of the model of one-way

flow of causality in the source-channel-receiver-effects model. Whether the research perspective is that of positivistic functionalism or the Marxist critical analysis of problems of social equity, we have relatively little theory of how communication systems change and how conscious policy planning can be realised through processes of social change.

There is, then, an interest in locating mass communication theory within a broader theory of social change. This implies a model for the analysis of the interrelationship between changing social structure, changes in culture and changes in communication systems.

I am aware that this definition of the major issues seems to cut across some of the debates such as the question of administrative vs. critical research. Some may think that there should be more direct emphasis on questions of social equity and redistribution of social power. But I think that these issues are included in the way a new definition of the field is taking place. In the following pages, I would like to examine how the three points of consensus listed above seem to be developing in three major research approaches: the tradition of empirical, positivistic, quantitative research; the tradition of Marxist sociopolitical analysis; and that branch of the cultural studies perspective which I would all the anthropological approach to mass communication research.

The Empirical, Quantitative Tradition: Cultural Indicators Research

The different cultural indicators research projects are an example of a perspective that has attempted to move beyond the analysis of effects on individual behaviour and to analyse communication systems at a social, structural level. At the same time cultural indicators research maintains a

continuity with empirical, quantitative research. For example, they find the *verstehen* methods of cultural studies questionable. Cultural indicators research also places a strong emphasis on comparative, cross-cultural research. Although the term, "cultural indicators" was introduced by George Gerbner in the United States, it has gained strong acceptance as a research approach in continental Europe and elsewhere (Rosengren, 1982: 4).

In the early development of the perspective of cultural indicators research, Gerbner clearly rejected the analysis of specific effects on specific groups of individuals as appropriate for the study of the significance of television (1972; 1976). The various cultural indicators projects take as the central object of study culture, the system of ideas, values and beliefs taken as a structural, macro-social phenomenon predicated of national societies. Gerbner et al. refer to the "simultaneous public experience of a common symbolic environment that now binds diverse communities, including large groups of young and old and isolated people who have never before joined any mass public" (1976). Rosengren in Sweden is more cautious in referring to the causal relationship between media and culture, but Gerbner sees the mass media and specifically television as a major factor in the production of national cultures.

Gerbner most clearly contrasts his focus on culture with the tradition of research on media as the cause of specific types of attitude or behaviour change and research on the differential effects of different kinds of media and media content. Television is a single, interrelated system repeating the same values and beliefs in all of its programming. It is therefore difficult or impossible to separate out the effects of a single type of programming. In the view of Gerbner and Gross, experimental designs which attempt to determine specific attitude changes as a result to exposure to certain types

of programming miss the point because television is a common symbolic environment, in America at least, from birth to death. The unity and pervasiveness of television's message is derived from its being the cultural arm of an organic system of political-economic institutions in contemporary industrial societies. Thus Gerbner, as well as other cultural indicator research programmes, ground their analysis of media in the assumption that social structure, culture and communication institutions are organically interrelated.

The study of cultural indicators does not assume that the media have a causal impact on culture, but is primarily concerned to trace the pattern of national cultural change over a longer period of time. The various projects analyse media content as the best indicator reflecting patterns of cultural change. Gerbner et al have focussed on television and specifically the violence content of television programming, while Rosengren and his associates have used content analysis of newspapers as an indicator of patterns of change in eight different institutional areas: religion, politics, the economy, technology, science, scholarship, literature and art (Rosengren: 1982).

Gerbner et al have extended their studies beyond the analysis of media as simply as indicator of cultural change to research on how television enculturates its audience. "Cultivation analysis" thus attempts to link the macro "common symbolic environment" to the micro level, the study of how individuals tend to absorb the world view presented by television according to the degree of use of television. Supposedly, cultivation analysis is not concerned with specific changes in attitude and behaviour, but in tapping into the basic assumptions and perceptions of life. In this part of their research, Gerbner et al. take the content analysis as a base for comparing the television view of the world with measurements of the degree to which

viewers hold this television view as an indicator of the direct causal influence of television on perceptions. In the theoretical explanation of cultivation analysis, Gerbner et al. very explicitly maintain that television is primarily an agent of social control. Although they deny conspiracy theories, they hold that the political-economic system inevitably generates a message and orients media content to conceptions that will maintain the existing power structure (1976). The methodology of cultivation analysis has been heavily criticised, not only because it brings the research back into the very effects tradition Gerbner questions, but because the results are of doubtful validity (Newcomb, 1978; Hirsch, 1980).

Rosengren and his associates have avoided the study of cultural trends at the micro level with all the pitfalls of using aggregate survey data to measure cultural patterns. Instead, they choose to analyse the interrelation of media content, as an indicator of culture as a structural phenomenon, with other macro-social, structural-level indicators. When faced with the question of whether the mass media are agents of social change or are reinforcing the status quo as factors of social control, Rosengren tends to avoid either idealistic or materialistic presuppositions and prefers to look for empirical answers. He expects that well-designed research will show varying forms of interdependence between long-term cultural trends and trends in political-economic structures as well as international relations. Thus, the unit of analysis is really the national system, and we can only expect to determine the interrelation of culture and other social structures by long-term, comparative research on different national systems. The basis for such comparative research will be to establish consensus among researchers regarding the empirical indicators so that the data is truly comparative.

Thus, the cultural indicators research,

especially as this is developing in Europe, is an example of attempt to study the relationship of the media and culture at a systemic, structural level and to study the media as part of a long-term trend of social change.

Development in the Marxist Tradition of Communication Studies

Earlier Marxist models portrayed the media as agents of the dominant class transmitting the ideology of class as a direct manipulation of the working class and as a planned creation of false consciousness. Such models, now termed "vulgar Marxism", are widely dismissed within the Marxist tradition itself, as simplistic and as obviously lacking a fit with the empirical reality. Theories of overt conspiracy by military-industrial coalitions, very much in vogue ten or fifteen years ago, are vehemently rejected by many Marxist analysts. Nicolas Garnham would argue that the vulgar Marxist model in fact is not very much different from the effects paradigm of the positivistic, liberal-empirical tradition (1983: 320). Mattelart observes that the fascination with theories of hegemonic social control has impeded Marxist analysis of processes of popular, class-based struggle to change communication structures (Mattelart: 1979, 58).

As Grossberg points out in his recent article on "Strategies of Marxist Cultural Interpretation", the classical Marxist approach tended to treat culture as a direct reflection or mechanical reproduction of the social relations of power and domination (1984, 399). The ideological intentions of the dominant coalitions are directly evident without examining the intermediate processes of encoding. Likewise the media are assumed to influence audience responses without consideration of social conditions leading to alternative interpretations of media messages. The meanings read off the text of media content are read back into the process of production as intentions

and forward into the lives of the audience. Furthermore, there is no consideration of how the critic is to escape the ideological machinations of the text. Finally, this methodology posed for the Marxist tradition the dilemma of how resistance to domination and the possibility of revolutionary consciousness are ever possible.

One important response to the inconsistencies of an assumed direct ideological effect was to attribute a much more active role to processes of cultural signification in the construction of dependent power relations. A major line of Marxist cultural studies developed in Britain out of the tradition of literary interpretation (Garnham: 1983, 317). Thus, the main methodological approach was that of textual hermeneutics and semiotics, influenced later by Gramsci's concepts of ideological formation in advanced capitalist societies. In this analysis, culture is interpreted as a text, and the relationship between cultural texts and socio-economic power structure is mediated by the rules of signification. One of the founders of this school of thought was Raymond Williams who was, at the time, concerned with explaining the cultural development of Britain in the post-war period. Williams took the institution of television – a complex of technology, types of programming, industrial organisation, etc. – as one key cultural text (1974). However, the forms of television were organised by what Williams called the "structure of feeling", a kind of cultural ethos of "mobile privatisation" which developed in Britain in the late 19th and early 20th century. And this structure of feeling was, in turn, defined by the social experience of people living within a capitalist socio-economic structure. Thus the ideological influence of television was determined not by some conscious design of dominant classes but by the mediating influence of the structure of feeling and social experience.

This more nuanced semiotic analysis of the ideology imbedded in various

forms of media produced a long line of research, some of the best of which has been the analysis of advertising (Williamson, 1978; Ewen, 1976). However, in the view of many Marxist communication researchers, this type of analysis was concerned only with the factors of social control and did not provide an understanding of where the focal points of resistance to domination were occurring. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Britain, under the leadership of Stuart Hall, also took culture as a text to interpret power relations, but they were concerned with the possibility of resistance to capitalist power relations in various forms of working-class subcultures (Hall, Hobson, Lowe, and Willis: 1980, 15-47). In order to explain how an apparently free media still reflects dominant ideologies, they introduced an analysis of the processes of "encoding" through norms of professionalism, etc. And to explain how dissident working class subcultures, especially among youth, resist ideological influence, they developed theories of alternative and oppositional "decoding". This approach produced a series of brilliant studies of youth subcultures in Britain. However, when one of the CCCS group, David Morley, attempted to describe how different groups within the audience of the "Nationwide" television programme actually decoded the text, he found very little relationship between the dominant ideology encoded into the text and the diversity of alternative decodings made by subgroups in the audience. He also found no direct relationship between social position and decodings (Morley: 1980, 148-156; 134-140).

In the view of Grossberg, "the question of encoding and decoding becomes, if not irrelevant, a misleading way of framing relations of cultural power" (1984, 414). One cannot assume that there is a necessary relationship between text and one specific meaning or between a particular social position and a structure of experience. The

ideological significance of a text or practice is generated by the *connotations* of the context in which it is found. For example, the ideological significance of a text in the magazine for adolescent girls, *Jacquie*, can be determined only in terms of the larger cultural and social context of the magazine and adolescent female culture. A second example of this contextualising cultural analysis is the study by Stuart Hall and his associates, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (1978). They show how representations of mugging take on an ideological significance because of its relationship with other socio-cultural events at a particular historical moment in Britain.

An excellent example of this contextualising research is the study of the role of the media in the formation of attitudes toward the poor and welfare aid during the late 1970s carried out by Peter Golding and Sue Middleton (*Images of Welfare: Press and Public Attitudes to Poverty*, 1982). The first stage of the research model assumes that the images and explanations of poverty in the press are not manufactured there, but come out of centuries of English cultural history. The authors show a dominant imagery which explains poverty as a mixture of unavoidable misfortune and a morally culpable attitude with associated vices but also an alternative tradition of the 19th century which rejects paternalistic philanthropy and sees the solution in the collective self-reliance of the poor.

A second stage examines the political and economic forces which caused the disappearance of an alternative, labour-oriented press – a situation which prevented alternative explanations of poverty and welfare.

A third element in the model located the analysis of media content and public opinion within a political-economic crisis that is deeply and widely felt and which demands public interpretation and search for solutions. The context for the media content analysed was

the economic crisis of Britain, when the public was looking for scapegoats such as welfare scroungers.

A fourth stage analyses how the news gathering organisation of the press systematically picks up the dominant cultural explanation of poverty in its regular news beats with welfare bureaucracies, the courts, the police and ultra-conservative MPs. A fifth stage analyses the media content. And a sixth stage surveyed attitudes of media users to discover to what degree the popular interpretation of causes and remedies of the press. Although the press may not have been the only source of attitudes, by far the most common interpretations virtually parroted the image of welfare and poverty presented in the press. This last stage of the research model may have been the weakest because it did not carry out in-depth interviews with a sample of newspaper readers to determine how they used newspapers to build their own interpretations of poverty.

A further step away from the classical Marxist interpretation of the linear effects of hegemonic ideology is the conceptualisation and methodology offered by Foucault (1979). The analytic task, according to Grossberg's interpretation of Foucault, is to trace the origins of practices that apparently have only a remote political significance, map out the conditions which have given them political significance, and describe the process by which these cultural practices have had new and unintended effects. Grossberg's own research on rock and roll attempts to show how youth's straightforward search for pleasurable, expressive experience in popular music created a space for the articulation of cultural resistance with very significant political and social change implications (Grossberg: 1984, 416). The political task of this analysis, suggested by Foucault, is no longer seeking to identify the conspiracy or structure of power behind the surfaces of everyday life, but to locate those voices and

practices which have been excluded by the contemporary technologies of power and to struggle to open a space within which their resistance can be heard.

In Grossberg's view, "It is then the already existing history and context of struggle which needs to be organized, not as the attempt to develop alternative or counter-hegemonic strategies but as the ongoing struggle against all moments of power and domination" (1984, 416). Grossberg, Hebdige and others would argue that the beginnings of political action are often in unexpected areas of popular culture such as youth subcultures, sexuality, fashion and so forth.

Before finishing this analysis of developments in Marxist media studies, at least a brief reference should be made to the influence of practice and research regarding the so-called "alternative communication". In many parts of the world, such as Latin America where there are currents of profound socio-cultural change and important worker-peasant movements, communication theory and method is being profoundly influenced by the alliances of researchers with these movements. Within the movements there are emerging significant forms of dissident communication such as popular radio, *comunicación popular*, group communication, etc. In most cases these experiences are not necessarily revolutionary but patient long-term experiences of negotiating a space for change and a voice for the voiceless within often repressive regimes. The analysis of how popular music has brought profound cultural change in many parts of the world is another example of negotiated change in communication institutions (Wallis and Malm: 1984). These experiences are generating an increasing body of theory and research methods regarding participatory communication and the democratisation of communication. This, too, is part of the shift in research perspectives (White: 1984).

The Anthropological Study of Mass Communication

A third approach to the study of mass communication, less recognised but gaining in importance, might be called "anthropological" because its concepts and methods of analysis are derived from classical cultural anthropology and ethnological studies. It is sometimes referred to as the cultural studies approach, but there are various approaches under the rubric of cultural studies such as the Marxist tradition mentioned above.

The starting point and focus of analysis is a particular culture as a whole way of life, that is, the pattern of meaning, values and beliefs that characterise a particular national or local community. The mass media are thus studied as an institution which serves as the focal point for the ongoing generation of new meaning within a national community. Most important, it gives primacy to the method of *verstehen*, entering into the subjective perception of meaning and the subjective experience of creating meaning on the part of producers, the message and the users. To separate producers and users is perhaps an inaccurate description of this approach because it sees all the actors in a society as participating actively in the production of meaning and interacting around the formation of meaning in the mass media. The mass media are defined as a forum in which new meanings are generated, tested, and negotiated.

Generally, the anthropological approach argues that culture, the generation of meaning, is more fundamental for analysing the role of media than ideology (Silverstone: 1981, 2-3; Newcomb & Alley: 1983, 18-21). Culture precedes work and its attendant social relation as an explanation of symbolic reality. Culture cannot be derived simply from material existence, and cultural logic is not simply a practical utilitarian logic transformed into ideas. The analysis of the ideology of dominant hegemonic

groups may be one appropriate way to understand cultural formations in advanced capitalist societies, but the study of ideology must be grounded in a more general understanding of comparative processes of culture in many different types of societies at different stages of historical development. Thus the concepts that anthropologists have developed in the analysis of smaller, more easily understood primitive societies – myth, ritual, epic narrative, folk tales, etc. – are quite applicable to the study of mass media in advanced or post-industrial societies. Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of this approach is the insistence on entering into the *experience* of media whether that entry point is the creative producer, the audience or the structural experience of the media itself. Its methods are those of participant observation practiced by the ethnographer who understands by reliving the experience of others. The observer tries to enter with few theoretical preconceptions and only listens, observes and participates until it is possible to reconstruct the total experience as the members themselves define and live it.

The Anglo-American line in this more anthropological approach traces its origins back to the thinking of Raymond Williams, and to some extent to Hoggart and Thompson in post war Britain. Williams, in his charting of the line of British cultural development (The Long Revolution), conceived of culture as the active, creative process by which society organises received meanings and discovers possible new meanings. This process depends on the ability to communicate new meaning, to find a language to describe new experiences. Every social individual takes part in this process, but the most intense moments of exploration are the arts, especially literary production. A focal point for the broader popular involvement are the mass media. Thus, Williams and other founders of the British cultural studies tradition framed the study of the mass media

within an ongoing process of national search for meaning (Hall, Hobson, Lowe and Willis: 1980, 231).

The British cultural studies approach was linked to the American by James Carey in a much-cited 1975 article which was a broadside against the American "effects tradition" of communication research. The article was a review of anthropologist, Clifford Geertz' book, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, and Carey specifically suggests that communication research could profit by the methods of Geertz and other anthropologists (Carey: 1975). Carey and others such as Horace Newcomb have argued that the effects research which attempts to interpret cultural, symbolic data by selectively fitting aspects into psychological or sociological models leaves behind the most important dimension of culture, the subjective meaning. In so far as the experience of various actors in the mass media process is defined in terms of these functional frames of reference in the behavioural sciences, it tells us much about the thinking of the behavioural scientist but little of what producers are trying to say or what audiences interpret.

Horace Newcomb questioned the validity of Gerbner's method of cultural indicators and cultivation analysis as a form of cultural interpretation. Newcomb praised the efforts to map the imagery of the mass media, but objected to the use of quantifiable measures of violence in their content analysis of U.S. programming and the use of statistical survey methods as an adequate way to understand audience interpretation of programming (Newcomb: 1978). In Newcomb's view Gerbner's method of content analysis "measures the incidence of violence as they have defined it, imputed aesthetic and behavioural effects to the incidence so measured and then interpret the world of television in light of that effect" (1978, 270). The problem in Newcomb's view, is that the analysis of Gerbner et al. operates with

a monosemic and univocal theory of symbols.

Newcomb suggested that media research which purports to be cultural analysis must use methodologies which interpret subjective meanings.

1. Content analysis must begin with the awareness of the complex history of meanings and the variety of interpretations that violence or other symbols have in the American cultural context.

2. Analysis must also take into consideration the meanings that the creators of programming have in mind, the variation of this meaning in different programming contexts and the change of meaning over time. For example, Newcomb himself has been studying the changing imagery of the American family in television over three decades.

3. Finally, in audience studies, analysis should be open to the variety of meanings that different members of a mass audience can attribute to the same message and the ways that individuals select images from from programming and integrate these into their own organisation of meaning. What is needed is a kind of ethnography of audience interpretation.

In effect, Carey, Newcomb and others have proposed that if we are to enter into the imaginative universe of the producers of culture, then we must take popular television, journalism, art or other cultural institutions as a *text* to be interpreted with the methods of the humanities and the cultural sciences – anthropology, literary criticism, classical hermeneutics, aesthetics and semiotics.

The American line of this anthropological approach bases its method on what Carey has called a "ritual" model of mass communication. All members of the public – no just message senders – are considered to be actors contributing in some way to the pattern of meaning of a nation or region. Carey, Newcomb and others specifically object to the dominance of American communication research by

a "cause-effect", "transportation model" which defines communication as the "transmission of messages for purposes of social control. Public communication such as television is more closely analogous to the moment of ritual in which myths, values and meanings of life are recalled and re-enacted. Communications is thus a process of creation, representation and celebration of shared beliefs. The principal task of communication science is to enter into the subjective meanings that people are creating in popular movements, religion, journalism, everyday speech and mass-mediated events in order to interpret these meanings and bring them into a more systematic picture of the world view and ethos of a society. The purpose is not simply to explain behaviour in terms of the psychological roots of our actions but to become conscious of what we are as a people and the kind of culture we are creating.

Newcomb and Alley, in their recent study of the art and intentions of television producers, elaborate considerably the ritual concept of mass communication. They base their analysis on Victor Turner's extensive anthropological studies of the role of ritual in societies. For Turner, ritual is the moment when we draw ourselves apart from the pragmatic, means-ends concerns of everyday life and enter into the drama of an ideal world. Ritual is the re-enactment of cosmic or national myths, the world of ultimate meanings and perfect community. In ritual we are on the threshold between two worlds, the world of immediate, narrow, pragmatic concerns and a utopian world in which our imagination and emotions are able to range freely. Turner describes the ritual experience of estatic union with a cosmic order a "liminal" experience from *liminus*, the Latin word for threshold. The perennial human urge for liminal experience is based on the human capacity of intentionality, the ability to create symbols and think of a possible world that

could be. Turner's concept of the liminal has been applied quite widely by contemporary cultural analysts. For example, British sociologist, Bernice Martin, interprets the 1960s counter-culture movement as an attempt – like many utopian movements – to live in a world of permanent liminal experience. Most societies, she contends, control the quest for the liminal by framing it within occasional liminal experiences: the experiences of community or religious celebrations, music and drama or other moments that permit a freedom of the imaginative and emotional (Martin: 1981).

Newcomb and Alley suggest that television is today one of the major experiences of the liminal (Bernice Martin makes the same assertion quite independently of Newcomb and Alley) (1983: 23-30). Television, like other popular media, is a leisure-time activity when we leave behind the confining routines of factory and bureaucracy and are free to do and think as we wish. Television is a continuity with traditional leisure-time entertainment of story telling, humor, trading gossip, singing, etc. It is a time when our imaginations can range freely and "entertain" in a world of fictional drama or news as drama, other possible worlds.

The focus of Newcomb and Alley's book is the creative producer of television, following up their earlier suggested methodology of understanding the subjective intentions and creativity of programme producers. Since television is a organisational product, it is the producer, much more than the writer, who creates meaning. If producers are to attract audiences, they must be especially sensitive to popular interests, styles of expression, current issues and the contemporary symbols and "language which will easily communicate with audiences". Newcomb and Alley compare producers to the synapses of the nervous system that collect sensations and by integrating them create a new level of experience. Producers thus draw upon elements of

popular culture, but they also refashion them into a new set of symbols. If producers are to communicate with national audiences, their stories cannot be far from the common denominator of a national culture. Thus, television plays a role in society similar to the chorus of Greek drama, an interlude of commentary on the dramatic action being portrayed and an articulation of the feelings of the audience about the action. Television is a public forum for exploring in drama, news, documentary and other programmes alternative ways of thinking about personal situations, national events or life in general. In this sense it is a ritual for renewing existing beliefs and myths, retelling wellknown stories, but also a time of imaginative freedom for testing new formulations of social experience. Consequently, television is not simply a form of social control, but a space for gradual shifts in national culture.

Analysing Television as Myth and Story Telling

A second approach to an understanding the subjective meaning of the media is the study of television as a contemporary form of myth and folk tale. In this case, the research focuses not on the producer but on the narrative text as a particular "language" which organises and creates cultural meaning by its rules of signification. This approach borrows concepts of myth from structuralist anthropologists such as Levi-Strauss or from the analysis of classical folk tales developed by Vladimir Propp and Greimas. Currently, the most elaborate method for analysing television as myth is being developed by Roger Silverstone in Britain, but Americans such as Farrel Corcoran (1982), Douglas Kellner (1982), Gregor Goethals (1981) and Michael Real (1977) are also following a similar line of research. In Latin America, Jesus Martin Barbero is studying the mythic dimension of television from the perspective of narrative

forms imbedded in popular culture (1983).

A fundamental premise in this research is that national cultures are structured around myths which explain the origins of the particular national grouping, their specific national identities and their concepts of national destiny. Such national mythologies seek a grounding in broader cosmic myths, and thus gain a sacred, timeless character. Myths function more at the intentional, symbol level, defining that which a national society is trying to become. Mythological functions are likely to be especially strong at times of national crisis, rapid change or external threat. The myths recall the national purpose and reinforce solidarity around heroic mythic identities.

Both Silverstone (1981) and Corcoran (1982) state that myth is the mechanism by which new or strange experiences are defined in terms of known cultural categories and are brought into the realm of everyday, common-sense, pragmatic knowledge. The familiar plots of television drama, news and documentary dramatise for audiences that are trying to resolve problems of new experiences, indicating how they might fit them into past experiences. Underlying this concept of television as myth is the ritual model of communication which portrays the members of society as searching for consensual meaning and the formalisation of social experience.

Every national society must find ways of retelling its myths and continually defining new social experiences with the popular culture. For various reasons, television has become one of the most important mythologising institutions of contemporary societies. Firstly, it tends to be a national medium and its audience is potentially every person in the nation. If it is to communicate, it must cast its messages in terms of familiar language, symbols and myths. For example, the myths that underly adventure drama or soap operas are like signals that tell us immediately what the story is about.

Secondly, television is a leisure time activity, an entertainment liminal experience which allows our imagination freedom to identify with great myths and explore the possibility of a new "plot" in our lives. It is the moment in which we can leave behind the private, everyday life in the home or workplace and move to the stage of national drama, engaging in a search for common meanings. Thirdly, television is essentially a narrative medium, framing all events in the problem-solving language of a story. Silverstone, basing his analysis on Metz' semiotics of film, argues that the visual shots and scenes of television are given meaning by their organised sequence within a total narrative. In order to integrate national events and current human or social problems into a narrative structure, television borrows the familiar myths and folktales that are quickly recognised by audiences and are part of the fabric of "reasonableness" of that culture. Fourthly, television brings myths into the events of daily life because, unlike cinema and the book, it is a continuing commentary on everyday news, weather, sports, typical soap-opera families, talk shows and documentary analysis of current national affairs. Silverstone suggests that television is essentially an oral medium and is not very distant from the traditional oral entertainment of friends gathering to tell stories, jokes, neighborhood gossip and political argument. Television is a community parochial medium, but at the level of national parochiality.

Roger Silverstone has provided one of the most elaborate structuralist interpretations of how the language of television organises the experience of all who are involved in television whether as creative producers or as audiences. Television has both a *chronologic* or narrative structure of plot development and problem resolution and a *logic* based on familiar symbols from contemporary culture. In its narrative, chronological structure, television most resembles the classic pat-

tern of folktales – the initial disturbance of ordered life, the emergence of villains and heroes, and a progressive action that restores equilibrium to life. At the level of logic, characters, setting, and geography become symbols of problems and solutions. For example, in the television series that Silverstone analysis, the city is portrayed as the symbol of the economic jungle which causes a heart attack in the hero, brings strains in family and marriage and destroys personal creativity. The natural setting of garden and country becomes the connotative symbol of restoration of health, family unity and personal reintegration. The hero restores equilibrium by rejecting the ratrace of economic competition and retiring into the country. A third level of analysis is the detection of recurring cosmic and national myths. For example, Silverstone sees in the hero of the series he analysis a kind of Christ figure who, by giving up the goals of success that the "city" sees as important, discovers deeper values in life. These myths are the classical ways that a culture solves problems, restores values, builds community identity and discovers meaning in life. Whether the programme is the police show, the western or the daily news, the structure of meaning is built around mythic themes.

The Ethnography of Audience Experience

Most of the research using the anthropological approach has so far focused on ethnographies of the media production organisation, the experience of creative producers or the structuralist analysis of how the language of television organises subjective meaning. I am aware of only a few current studies that are attempting an in-depth, ethnographic description of the audience experience. However, there is considerable interest in this method now, and I expect a development of this approach. To give one example, Stewart Hoover in the United

States is studying how viewers of religious programming select symbols and themes from a given programme and integrate those symbols in their own world of religious meaning. He has selected some thirty families who represent different religious traditions and is conducting in-depth interviews with each of them. Silverstone is also planning an extensive audience ethnography testing his own theories of television as myth.

What can we conclude

In many ways it is fortunate that the field of mass communication and communication in general has evolved in such an interdisciplinary fashion. The field has developed a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives, conceptual approaches and methodologies from the behavioural sciences, literary criticism and philosophy. Research can thus respond to a variety of questions posed from different perspectives. One of the problems, however, is how to combine a variety of methodologies in the same research design that these mutually reinforce and complement each other. More often we find research staking out its claim within a particular methodology and carrying on an offensive against all other methodologies.

Personally, I find research results to be most convincing when there is a *convergence* of similar conclusions from different methodologies. For example, if a particular study of the role of mass communication can build in both structural-level, quantitative measures such as the cultural indicators projects propose and also description of the subjective experience of mass communication, then one can explain the significance of broadcasting or other media from both the "outside", objective perspective and from the subjective "inside" perspective.

My conviction regarding the convergence of methodologies, comes, in part, from my own studies of the role of educational, popular radio in Latin

America. In a particular study in Honduras, I found it helpful, first of all, to use objective "social indicator" measures at the level of international relations, national structural change and change at the local community level over a period of 15 to 20 years. At the same time, I was able to gather data on personal histories and community histories with a great deal of participant observation in the rural communities which were the beneficiaries of the radio programming. Also included were surveys of individual effects based on social-psychological models explaining acceptance of new practices as well as data on uses and gratifications. This was complemented by studies of peasant movements in which the focus of analysis was the generation of new oppositional symbols and new patterns of interpersonal communication or network analysis. With this information, I felt that I had a good picture of the overall process of modernisation and structural change in the country of Honduras, the role of the particular popular promotion movement within that process and the significance of a particular type of broadcasting within the process of social change. This kind of social analysis, I feel, has provided a basis for working closely with the Latin American Educational Radio Association over the last ten years in their struggle for "negotiated" social change in the midst of often oppressive political regimes. It provides a sense of how the various pieces of the process of social change fit together and at what historical moments a particular type of action is most opportune.

With this "convergence model of research in mind, various developments in the field of mass communication reviewed above seem particularly promising:

Firstly, the continued refinement of structural level analysis and methodologies of structural indicators such as the cultural indicators projects is important. This enables us to see

media organisations as part of a larger national or international socio-political-economic system and provides a basis for long-term comparative analysis of change in media systems. For example, it would provide a better understanding of such key questions as the social conditions leading toward greater concentration of power in the media or toward democratisation of communication systems. Thus, the field of mass communication is not defined primarily by a relatively static social-control model.

Especially important in this structural-level analysis is the ability to take into consideration the significance of social movements which generate an alternative symbol system and alternative patterns of communication, expressed finally in different ways of using communication technology. A national society is a continually shifting configuration and mass communication research should tell us more about how this is affecting communication systems.

Secondly, the development of what I have termed anthropological approaches to the mass media experience is important. This will provide much richer data on how individuals or groups selectively use information from a variety of media sources to construct their own worlds of meaning. An interesting model is a current study of Televisa in Mexico which will analyse how the media production organisation first picks up and transforms themes from the popular culture of Mexico and then how these are reinterpreted by audiences and are channeled back into the popular culture.

Thirdly, the models of negotiated influence and participation of a variety of actors in the mass communication process move us away from a too rigid source-effects model. This provides a basis for a better understanding of a long-term negotiated process of change in media systems and in the content of programming. Modern societies are extremely complex and rarely do we find a radical, all-or-

nothing process of change.
Mass communication research does not have a very good record of contribution to the policy-making process. It is possible that these current

developments will provide a basis for contributing to social change in mass communication but within the limits of the "art of the possible".

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Karl Erik Rosengren
Culture, media and society *

The culture of human society is a set of abstract, man-made patterns of and for behavior, action and artefacts (Tylor 1871, Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, Kroeber and Parsons 1958, Vermeersch 1977). Culture is acquired and transmitted by means of symbols. In modern societies culture is to a very large extent stored, disseminated, reproduced and gradually changed in and by the mass media.

Being a system, culture may be conceptualized in terms of structure and process. As ongoing process, culture manifests itself as regularities in behavior and actions of groups and aggregates of individuals. As structure it must be conceptualized as supra-individual, abstract wholes of ideas, beliefs and values.

Both when conceived as structure and when conceived as process, culture is something which belongs to societies rather than to individuals. It is a social phenomenon, even a societal one. As such, it is related to other societal systems (economy, technology, polity etc.). The relations between culture and other societal systems is a classical problem of social science. Within a given society, four types of such relations are possible (Rosengren 1981). Figure 1 orders these four types in a

typology. The figure could be made the starting-point for a treatise or two about the relationships between society and culture, but here a few short remarks will have to suffice.

Figure 1 is a typology of relations between culture and other societal systems, but it is also a typology of theories concerning these relationships. For centuries, heated debates have raged along the axis Materialism/Idealism. Gradually, however, the scientific and scholarly discussions have moved over to the ideologically less inflammable but perhaps more realistic axis Interdependence/Autonomy – even if sometimes the old terminology has been preserved (Bell 1976, Bunge 1981, Harris 1980, Lumsden and Wilson 1981).

In such discussions there has been a tendency to forget the importance of time. The relationships between culture and society take place within a time perspective ranging from weeks and months over years and decades to centuries and millenia. It would be strange indeed if the relationships were to be the same over this huge span of time. It is easily conceivable that in one time perspective we may have, say, interdependence, in another, autonomy (Carlsson et al 1981, Rosengren 1984).

Another complication is that these relationships probably are not the same for different subsystems of society. The relationships of economy to

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Figure 1: Four types of relationships between culture and other societal systems.

		Social structure influences culture	
		Yes	No
Cultural influences social structure	Yes	Interdependence	Idealism
	No	Materialism	Autonomy

culture are probably not the same as those of, say, the polity.

Yet another complication is that the typology of Figure 1 is valid for closed systems. But today, very few – if any – societies are closed systems. Most societies are subject to a host of influences coming from the outside. These influences affect both the single subsystems of society and the relations between these subsystems.

So we see that the intriguing question guiding this symposium – Trendsetters or trend-followers? – is really quite complex. But at this stage we can say at least this much:

The relationship between culture and other societal subsystems is primarily characterized by interdependence. In a modern society of our type, one of culture's main ways of manifesting itself is in the mass media. Regarded in this perspective, the most important question about the media may not be whether they are trend-setters or trend-followers. In the perspective applied in this article, the important thing is that the mass media are the main carriers of our culture – in all senses of the word.

As main carriers of our culture the media must interact with a host of other societal systems (as indeed they must do already as economic and social organizations). Whether in such interactions they should be regarded as trend-setters or trend-followers depends mainly on the time perspective applied, and on the subsystems under study.

There are a number of mutually interacting societal subsystems. The whole of society can be interpreted and explicated in terms of each of the main societal systems – in political, economic, religious, scientific, artistic etc. terms. Yet the system of culture – society's basic ideas, values and beliefs about and for itself and the world at large – is more central to all other societal systems than is any other system. Culture is close to them all, while the 'distance' between the rest of the systems varies from case to case.

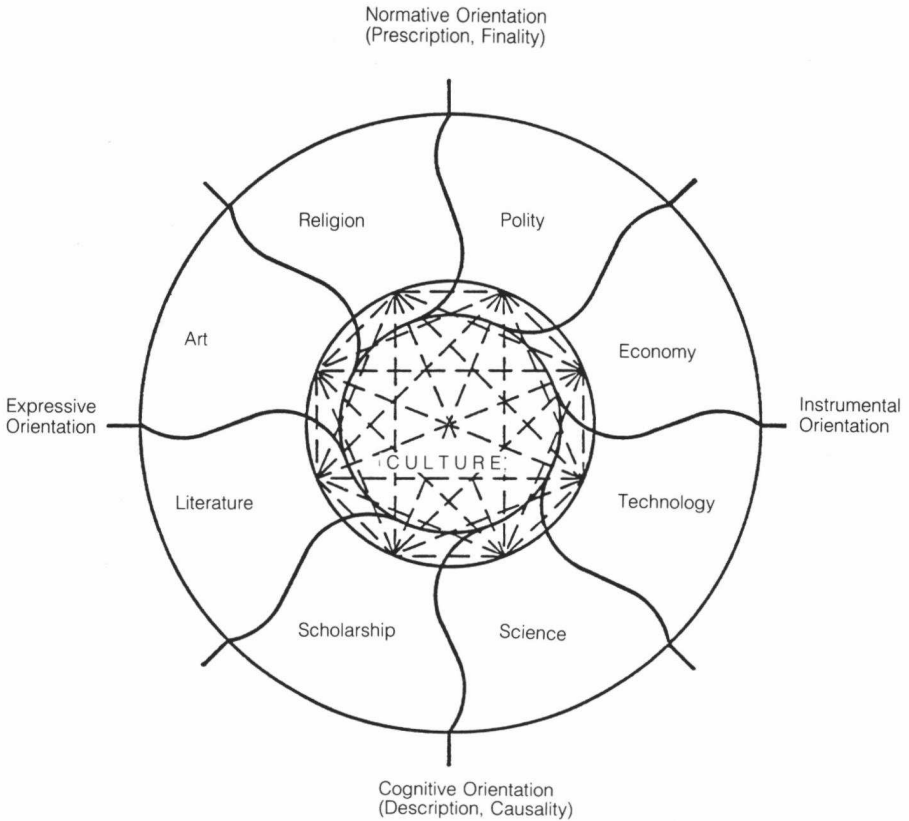
Figure 2 is an attempt to create a typology for societal systems and to visualize their relationships in terms of a so called circumplex (Guttman 1954; cf. Katz et al 1973, Shepard 1978, Lumsden and Wilson 1981). The typology is based on two axes representing two pairs of very basic value orientations: expressive/instrumental value orientation, and cognitive/normative value orientation. The circumplex locates the main societal subsystems in this two-dimensional space in a way which suggests their closest 'neighbours' in society. (The boundary lines between the subsystems – the 'spokes of the wheel' have been made undulating in order to illustrate that the locations of each subsystem is not completely unequivocal in terms of the two main dimensions of the figure.)

The typology of values is similar, of course, to several other, more or less Weberian or Parsonian typologies, but mostly so, perhaps, to the one presented by Namenwirth and Bibbe (1976), which includes also the element of time, however (cf. Namenwirth 1973).

The division into subsystems of society is crude. Within each of the subsystems further subdivisions could be made, and other subsystems could be added. Yet it seems fairly reasonable, for instance, that the neighbouring systems of economy are polity and technology, or that scholarship falls between literature and science, etc. It also seems reasonable that economy and technology have a primarily instrumental orientation, while their neighbours – polity and science – are more normatively and cognitively oriented, respectively, and that art and literature are primarily expressively oriented, while their neighbours – religion and scholarship – are more normatively and cognitively oriented, respectively.

In combination, the two dimensions represent the four ultimate values of truth, utility, beauty, and righteousness/holiness on which are built the

Figure 2: The great wheel of culture in society.



large fundamental institutions of society: economy, polity, religion etc. (The four ultimate values could also be described by four very basic verbs: *sapere, facere, esse, debere.*)

At the centre of the circumplex – the 'hub of the wheel' – we find culture. Culture, then, is both cognitively and normatively oriented, both expressive and instrumental. It unites and relates, one to the other, the basic orientations and various sub-systems. The two boundary circles of the hub illustrate the fact that there are specific cultures – political culture, scientific culture etc – as well as a more general culture,

more or less common to the whole of society. The dashed network relating the various sub-systems to each other tells us something about the complexity of the overall system, and of the immense communicative and co-ordinating functions fulfilled by culture: 28 first order interdependencies, innumerable secondary and tertiary interdependencies and interactions. The two-dimensional descriptive model of culture and society presented in the figure gives us a notion of the complexity of the problem we are dealing with.

Several analogies come to mind when

trying to grasp the various functions of culture as depicted in Figure 2. It could be likened to a huge telephone exchange, connecting a number of extensions – and sometimes disconnecting some of them. It could be seen as the exchange office of a bank, converting values of the most different types into each other: beauty into holiness, utility into truth, political values into economical ones, etc. It has been called the 'cement of society', and it has been suggestively likened to the mind of that Leviathan of a body, society (Andrén 1982, 1984).

Each simile has its own heuristic value as a generator of hypotheses and theories. Common to them all is that culture is seen as a system of symbols standing for ideas, beliefs and values. The study of culture, therefore, must of necessity be the study of symbols and symbol systems, for instance, such as the ones carried by the mass media.

The study of culture cannot, however, neglect culture's other manifestations: social actions and material objects, artefacts. Therefore, a third dimension must be added to the two dimensions of Figure 2, making the wheel into a cylinder or, perhaps, a cone – a three-dimensional descriptive model of culture and society, instead of the two-dimensional one presented in Figure 2. The third dimension provides us with two types of relationships instead of one only: *horizontal linkages*, which we have been discussing up to now, and *vertical linkages*. The nature of the vertical linkages, of course, depends on the nature of the third dimension.

The third dimension has three values, three layers called ideas, actions and artefacts. The boundary areas between the three layers are important both for theoretical and practical reasons. Especially important is the boundary area between the layers of ideas and actions. This is where ideas, beliefs and values are linked to, and transformed into, actions and artefacts. This is where socialization takes place. This is where the agents of socialization operate. In terms of the

three-dimensional figure envisaged here, socialization agents could be conceived of as linkages between the level of ideas and actions.

There are a number of socializing agents linking the levels of ideas and actions. All societies have at least three types of socializing agents: family, peer group and work group. Societies of our kind have also at least five other types of socializing agents: church, school, law agents, various formal organizations, and the mass media.

All this means that just as we have a very large number of horizontal linkages in our model of culture in society, we also have a very large number of vertical linkages. Since today culture to a very large extent is both stored in, and disseminated by, the mass media, these media play an important role in both vertical and horizontal linkages.

How can we scientifically study the two types of linkages implied by our three-dimensional model of culture and society? On the whole, we have four large groups of scientific instruments at our disposal for this task:

- Theories of media, culture and other societal systems
- Various societal indicators
- Socialization theory
- Methodologies for the study of media/individual relationships.

In the remainder of this article, I shall discuss each of these four groups of scientific instruments shortly.

Let's start with theories about the relations between media, culture and society. There is no dearth of such theories (McQuail 1983). They range from *grand theories* such as those of, say, Habermas (1984) or George C. Alexander (1981), over *general but less grand* theories such as Wright's functional theoretical schema (Wright 1975) or the 'integrated model of communication in society' presented by DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982), to *specific* theories of the middle range

such as, say, Blumler and Gurevitch's (1981) theories of political communication and typologies of political roles available for citizens.

Generally it could be said that the grander the theories, the less their contact with empirical research, both as starting-points for the theories themselves, and as outcomes of the theories. I will not enlarge upon any of these theories here, only stress the obvious, namely, that in order to obtain growth in this area of research, it is mandatory that theorizing and empirical research be brought together rather than that they should continue to develop more or less independently of each other. In this perspective, what we need is more theories of the middle range rather than very specific or very general ones.

The main methodological instruments for dealing with the horizontal linkages of our three-dimensional model of culture are three main types of societal indicators existing at present:

Economic indicators, tapping the production and accumulation of goods;

Social indicators, tapping the distribution and consumption of goods (and ills);

Cultural indicators, tapping the maintenance, reproduction and innovation of the central value system of society.

Economic indicators have been around for centuries, social indicators for decades, and cultural indicators for some 10 or 15 years. In this article cultural indicators are in focus.

Cultural Indicators

Theoretically, there are two types of cultural indicators, tapping culture as structure and culture as process.

Culture as structure is culture at the macro level, the level of ideas. Indicators tapping culture at this level must be system-oriented. Culture as process is culture manifesting itself at the micro level, at the level of action.

Indicators tapping culture at this level must be individual-oriented.

Methodologically, there are three main types of cultural indicators, based on

- content analysis of mass media content,
- survey analysis of values held by aggregates of individuals, and
- secondary analysis of statistical data about actions and behavior of aggregates of individuals.

Cultural indicators based on content analysis of mass media content may be exemplified by, say, Gerbner's yearly analysis of American TV content or the Swedish Cultural Indicators Program (cf. below).

Cultural indicators based on survey analysis of values held by aggregates of individuals may be exemplified by Rokeach's and Inglehart's repeated measurements of values held by different populations at different points of time (Rokeach 1979, Inglehart 1984).

Cultural indicators based on secondary analysis of statistical data about behavior and actions by aggregates of individuals may be exemplified by, say, Richard Peterson's measurements of Americans' ways of spending their time and money (Peterson and Hughes 1984).

Cultural indicators based on content analysis tend to be macro and structure-oriented. The other two methodological types of cultural indicators are Janus-faced in that they build on individual data at the same time as they aim at tapping an overarching structure of ideas and values by way of analyzing the individual data at the aggregate level.

The Swedish Cultural Indicators Research Program

As an example of recent cultural indicators research I would like to insert a short presentation of the Swedish Cultural Indicators Research Program. It is an interdisciplinary program which has been running for eight or ten years by now (Rosengren 1981).

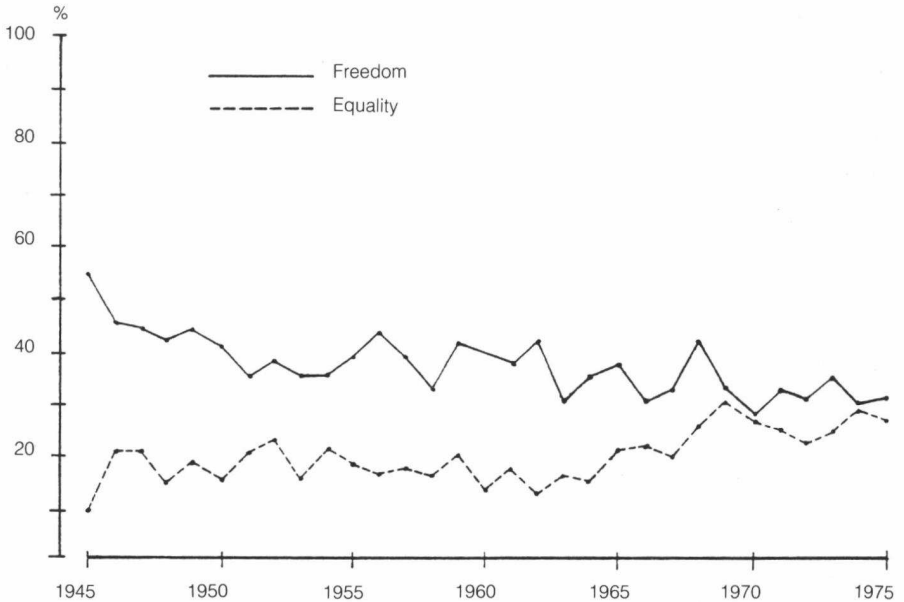
The basis of the program is five independent but co-ordinated research projects, each led by a specialist in the area of the project. The five projects deal with the development of the cultural climate in five different sectors of post-war Sweden: foreign policy, domestic politics, religion, advertising and literature. The main aim of the whole program is to construct and apply cultural indicators, standardized instruments for measuring relevant aspects of the five sectors of Swedish society chosen for study: domestic politics, foreign policy debate, religion, economy, literature. The method of data collection is quantitative content analysis of Swedish dailies and weeklies from the time period under study, 1945-1975.

Up to now the research program has produced five books and a number of articles and reports (for recent pre-

sentations, see E. Block 1984, P. Block 1984, Goldmann 1984, Nowak 1984, Rosengren 1985 b). Within the framework of this article, only some small tidbits of the results may be offered.

In the domestic policy project, lead by Dr. Eva Block at the Swedish Archive for Sound and Pictures, Stockholm, a main interest has been the values of freedom and equality as conceptualized by Rokeach and others working in his tradition (Rokeach 1979, E. Block 1984). A representative sample of editorials in five leading Swedish dailies was made the object of quantitative content analysis with respect to the two concepts. In the time period under study the value of freedom seems to have been on the wane in Sweden; the value of equality, on the increase (cf. Figure 3).

Figure 3: The values of freedom and equality in editorials of five leading Swedish newspapers.

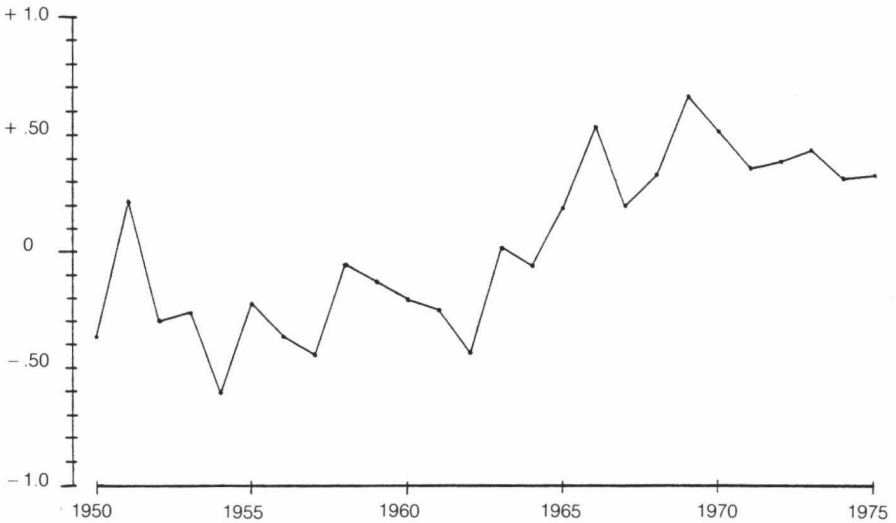


In Rokeachean terms, this development could be described as a development from a liberal political culture towards a socialist one. Toward the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, these tendencies seem to have stagnated. Indeed, in the beginning and middle of the 80's, the cultural climate may well again be characterized as a liberal one – a hypothesis which awaits its future test by means of continued measurements based on the indicators developed by Eva Block.

In the foreign policy debate project, lead by Professor Kjell Goldmann at the University of Stockholm, editorials from six leading dailies representing the five political parties in parliament were content analyzed with respect to the geographical area forming the

main subject matter of the editorial. An index varying between -1 and $+1$ was developed, where -1 stands for minimal, $+1$ for maximal orientation toward remote areas of the world (as seen from the horizon of Stockholm). The average of this index for the six newspapers during the time period under study is given in Figure 4. (cf. Goldmann 1984). It shows a dramatic increase in the 'remote areas orientation' occurring in the early sixties. This development could be described as an important change in the internationalism of Swedish culture. Like other time series produced within the foreign policy project it may be related mainly to data such as those in Figure 3. It will also serve as an important input to other projects within the research program.

Figure 4: Distant areas orientation in editorials of six leading Swedish newspapers.



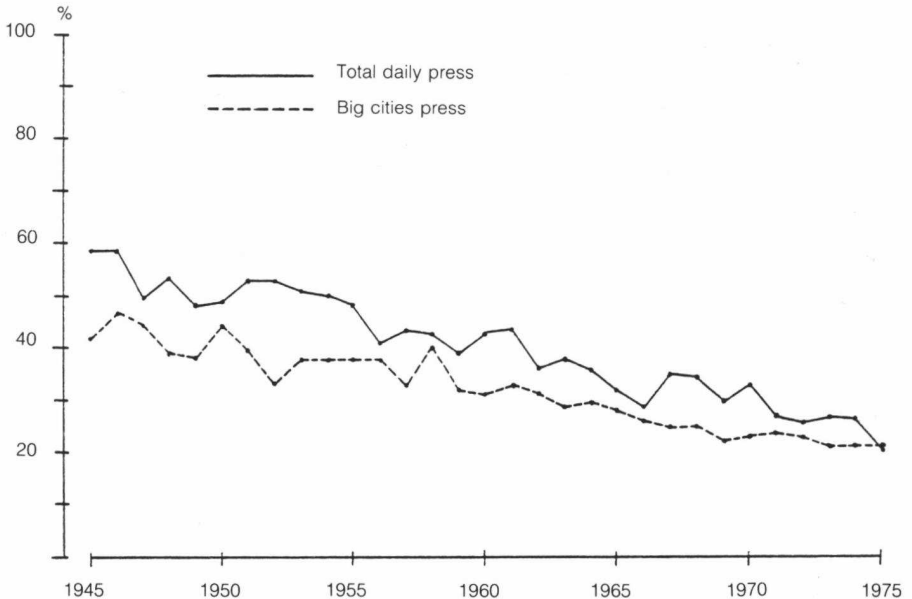
In the project on religion, lead by Dr. Per Block of the Swedish Bible Commission in Uppsala, a quantitative content analysis was done of death announcements in Swedish dailies. (The death of most Swedes are made

publicly known by such paid-for announcements, which often contain a poem or a short religious sentence.) Two samples from the Swedish daily press were drawn: one from five leading Swedish newspapers published in

the three biggest cities of the country, another from the entire daily press in Sweden. In both cases the presence or absence of a religious sentence in the death announcements was noted, on the assumption that the absence or presence of such a sentence could be used as an indicator of religiousness or secularization. Figure 5 offers the

result: a steady downward trend, a picture of increasing secularization. Superimposed on the trend one may find cycles and more or less random oscillations, to be interpreted in generalizing, nomothetic terms, or in more specific, ideographic terms, as the case may be (cf. P. Block 1984).

Figure 5: Swedish secularization: The proportion of death announcements "with sentence" having "religious sentence".



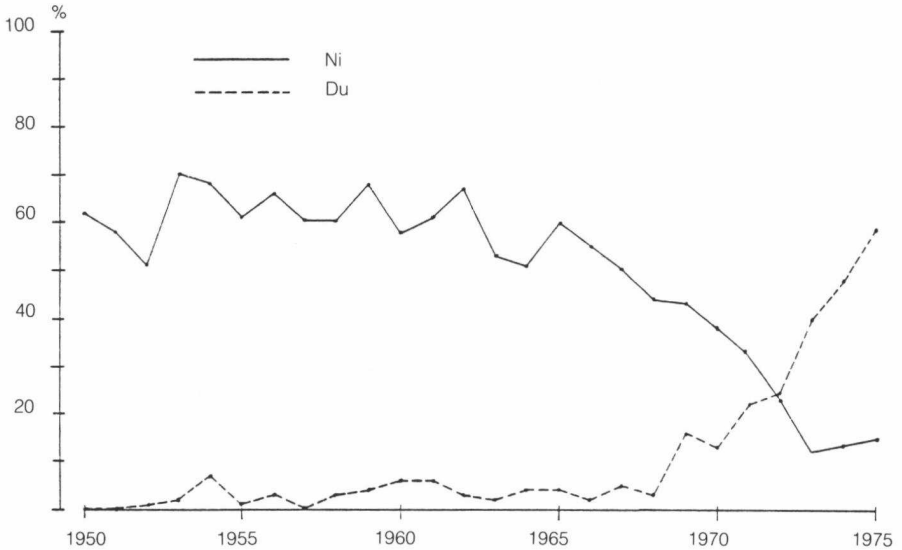
In the economic project, lead by Dr. Kjell Nowak, Director of the Centre for Mass Communication Research at the University of Stockholm, ads in a representative sample of Swedish weeklies were content analyzed along a number of dimensions. One concerned the pronoun of address used in the ad. Swedish has two pronouns of address: "du" and "ni" (roughly comparable to the "du" and "Sie" of German, "tu" and "vous" in French). During the last decades there has been an increased tendency to use the more

egalitarian "du" in cases where formerly one would have used "ni" or some more or less equivalent indirect way of address. Figure 6 shows a dramatic shift from "ni" to "du" in the ads, starting about 1965 and probably leveling out or even being diminished again towards the early 1980's (cf Nowak 1984). A similar shift took place in spoken Swedish, but it does not seem to have been given much attention in research. The shift can be interpreted in terms of increased equality and solidarity, along the lines

drawn up by Roger Brown (1965) in his fascinating chapter on the development of the European pronouns of address. It is interesting to note in passing that similar shifts in the pronouns

of address seem to have been on their way in the other Scandinavian languages, and in French and German as well.

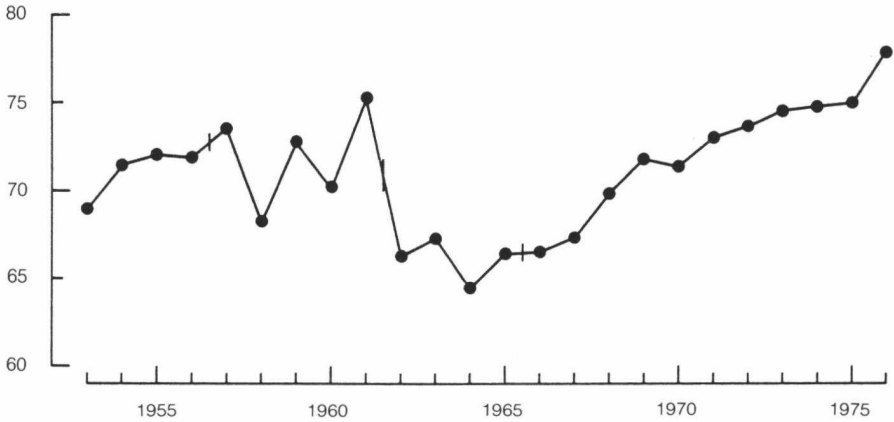
Figure 6: Pronouns of address in ads in Swedish weeklies.



In the literature project, lead by the present writer, book reviews published in the daily press were content analyzed by means of a special technique. Reviewers of literature often mention in their reviews writers other than the one under review, and these mentions may be regarded as expressions of associations on the part of the reviewer. All the mentions in a representative sample of literary reviews in the daily press may therefore be used to characterize the literary frame of reference of the corps of reviewers. Size, age, geographical composition and many other characteristics of this

literary frame of reference may then be quantitatively measured in a precise way (cf Rosengren 1985 a). Figure 7 shows the age of the literary frame of reference as measured by the mean age of the authors mentioned at the time of the mention. It will be seen that there was a drastic rejuvenation in the literary frame of reference of the early sixties, followed by a gradual return to presumably more normal conditions. The Swedish literary culture was younger, then, in the middle of the sixties, than just before and just after that period of change of upheavals.

Figure 7: Age of Swedish literary frame of reference.



The task of putting each of the results presented here in the shortest possible way into the more meaningful whole of a theory by means of which the data may be interpreted and understood cannot be undertaken here. To no small degree it has already been done in each of the reports from the five sub-projects. What still remains largely undone is the formidable task of relating the results from the various projects to each other. This task will hopefully be begun soon. In the terms used in this article, the task amounts to finding a meaningful framework within which to present the many horizontal links between the various societal subsystems studied in the sub-projects of the Swedish Cultural Indicators Program.

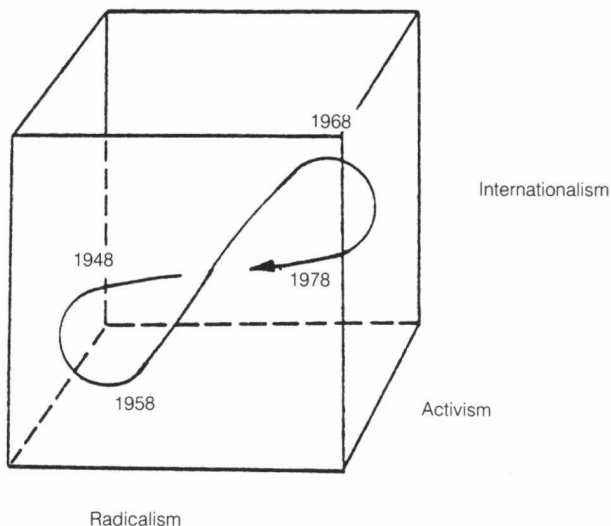
One way of grasping the meaning of the hundreds of time series presented in the program is to reduce them to a small number of basic dimensions. Within the Cultural Indicators Program, Kjell Goldmann suggested three basic dimensions which may go a long way towards being able to integrate the many variables measured in the five sub-projects of the program and presumably tapping important aspects of that complicated web of shared ideas, beliefs and values constituting the cul-

ture of postwar Sweden. The dimensions are related to each other in what in the program we like to call "Goldmann's cube", based on the dimensions of radicalism, activism and internationalism (Goldmann 1984). Into this cube one may inscribe hypothetically the development of the Swedish cultural climate as has been done in Figure 8 (cf Rosengren 1981).

Time series and relations between time series represent very tricky problems indeed. By and large, most of the work with relating to each other to various time series created within the Swedish Cultural Indicators Program remains to be done. A few remarks will have to suffice here. (The argument builds on a typology established by a member of the Swedish Cultural Indicators program, Dr. Per Block, of the Swedish Bible Commission in Uppsala.)

Block suggests that we start by looking for correlations between media based cultural indicators in the same subsystem of society, say, religion. If we find them, possibly after introducing lags, then we may speak of a homogeneous media culture of religion. If we do not find them, we have reasons either to question the validity

Figure 8: Hypothetical development of the Swedish cultural climate during the postwar period, in terms of "Goldmann's space".



of our measures, or to assume heterogeneity in the media culture of religion.

Next step is to look for correlations – again possibly lagged correlations – between other types of cultural indicators in the same sector, say, indicators based on survey analysis or behavioral measures. If we find them, we may speak of a homogeneous sector culture in society. If we do not find them, we have again reasons either to question the validity of our measures, or to speak of a heterogeneous sector culture.

Next step again would be to correlate cultural indicators from different sectors, say literature and religion. If we find our correlations, then we may speak of a homogenous cultural climate. If not, we have again reasons to discuss validity and/or heterogeneity. After that, next step would be to correlate our cultural indicators with relevant economic and social indicators. Finding such correlations – again possibly lagged ones – we

would be in a position to give better answers to the eternal questions about materialism, idealism, interdependence and autonomy.

Yet another step would then be to relate cultural indicators from different countries to each other, giving us a possibility to discuss trans-national, regional culture.

In terms of such a stepwise procedure, the Swedish Cultural Indicators Program has not advanced very far. But when all the sub-projects from the program have been finalized, we should have a fair chance to proceed at least some way down the road pointed out in Per Block's typology.

With this I leave the societal indicators and turn to another type of scientific instruments available when studying horizontal and vertical linkages in the wheel of culture, or rather, in the cone of culture. I turn to theories about vertical linkages, more specifically to theories about the relationships between the layers of ideas and actions in our cone. The reader will

remember that in our terms the boundary area between ideas and actions is where all the socialization agents operate. This is where socialization takes place.

Socialization Theories

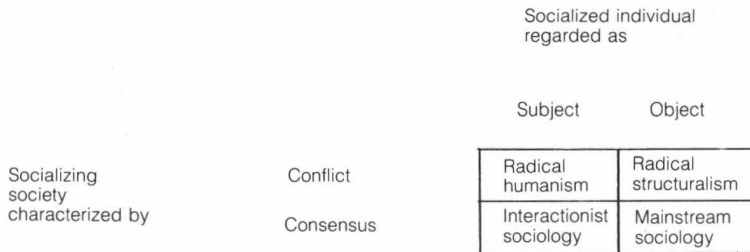
Somewhat surprisingly, the interest of socialization theorists in the role of the mass media in the socialization process actually has been rather small. Witness the various authoritative handbooks and textbooks on social psychology, where as a rule mass media and mass communication are given only scant attention (cf, for instance, Goslin 1968, Albrecht et al 1980). Socialization theory, therefore, should be extended to include in a systematic way the influence exerted by one of the most powerful agents of socialization, namely, the mass media. A valuable platform for such an undertaking is offered by the bibliography compiled by Halloran (1976).

When giving the mass media their due in socialization theory, some consideration should be given to the simple fact that there are two parties to all socialization: the individual being socialized, and the socializing society, represented by one or more specific agents of socialization.

For each of these two parties an important distinction has been made again and again in the research literature. The individual socialized has been characterized as either an active subject or a passive object. The socializing society has been characterized in either terms of conflict or terms of consensus.

The two distinctions have often been discussed, in recent years most perceptibly and forcefully, perhaps, by McCron (1976). But they have never been systematically related to each other. This is done in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Four approaches to socialization research.



The figure is derived from discussions in socialization research, but it coincides very neatly with a general typology for sociological research originally presented by Burrell and Morgan (1979) and related to communication research by Rosengren (1983a; cf Gilljam 1984). The fact that a typology derived from socialization research

coincides with a general typology for sociological research gives strong validity to both typologies.

Most research has been carried out in the lower right hand cell, but in order to make socialization theories really powerful, the four perspectives should be integrated. It is not true that man is either a subject or an object. We are

both subjects and objects, all the time (Thunberg et al 1982). And it is not true that society is characterized by either conflict or consensus. All societies are characterized by both conflict and consensus.

All this should be born in mind when studying vertical linkages of culture and other societal systems. It has a bearing also on the specific study of the relationships between the mass media and the individual. This brings us to the fourth and last type of scientific instruments at our disposal when studying horizontal and vertical linkages between culture and other societal systems: methodologies for the study of the relationships between the mass media and the individual.

Mass media and the Individual

This area, of course, is immense. Indeed, it is what most mass communication research has been about. Two main research traditions may be found in the area: effects research, and uses and gratifications research (Rosengren, Wenner and Palmgreen 1985). In terms of our socialization typology, effects research is related primarily to the individual-as-object perspective, while uses and gratifications research is more related to the individual-as-subject perspective (Levy and Windahl 1985).

In the same area a number of more specific research traditions may also be found, for example,

- News diffusion (Rosengren 1973; Quarles et al 1983);
- Agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw 1972; McCombs and Weaver 1985);
- Spiral and Silence (Noelle-Neumann 1974, 1983; Taylor 1982);
- Cultivation research (Gerbner 1969, 1984).

All four of these traditions are relevant to socialization by means of the mass media. All four are relevant to the study of both horizontal and vertical linkages between culture and other societal systems. The time perspective of

these traditions, however, is very different, ranging from a pronounced short-time perspective, to an equally pronounced long-time perspective:

- Diffusion of news – hours or days
- Agenda setting – weeks or months
- Spiral of silence – months or years
- Cultivation research – years or even longer.

The two broad traditions in the area – effects research and uses-and-gratifications research – as well as the more specific research traditions listed above have gradually turned their attention from rather specific, short term problems to more general, long term problems, something which has made them all the more relevant to socialization research, and to research on enculturation (a somewhat broader concept than socialization; cf Rosengren 1985 a). In short, the long term developments in research on the relationship between the individual and the media has gradually come to favor an interest in the study of mass media as vertical linkages between culture and other societal systems.

Concluding Remarks

Much more could be said, of course about the theoretical, methodological and empirical instruments put at our disposal by earlier research in this area, but space does not permit much more. So I would like to conclude by asking how we can use all this when trying to continue research on the relations between culture, media and society, regarded in the light of the ideas just presented in this article. What strategies of research should we follow?

The basic research strategy, of course, is always to follow up earlier research. In terms of the Swedish Cultural Indicators Program, for instance, the results of the different sub-project should be integrated and related to relevant social and economic indicators in the way suggested above, following Per Block's typology. But no doubt there is a need for more

precise strategies than just following up earlier work.

Such strategies can be formulated in empirical, methodological and theoretical terms. In actual practice, it is often crude empirical facts that decide what strategy one is to follow – more or less accidental circumstances such as the availability of funds and data etc. But the theoretical and methodological terms, of course, are the most important ones.

In the terms used here, the theoretically most important task in this type of research in my opinion lies in the boundary area between ideas and actions. This equals a demand for a confluence between socialization research and cultural indicators research. It calls for a combination similar to the one introduced by the Gerbner group, exemplified by, say, the combination of the Violence profile and corresponding cultivation research (cf. Gerbner 1984, and the article by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli in this issue).

The weak point in the otherwise powerful Annenberg approach in my opinion lies with cultivation research. The cultivation index is a rather crude measure of the influence exerted by the media, a crude measure of the importance of the media as socializing and enculturating agents. Later theoretical and methodological refinements of cultivation research represent important steps forward, but could still be criticized for being somewhat ad-hoc. Yet it remains a fact that Gerbner's approach represents a major, viable innovation in the research on linkages between culture and other societal systems. The unique asset of the research program carried out by the Annenberg group is the systematic juxtaposition of micro, individual-oriented studies (cultivation research) and macro, system-oriented studies (cultural indicators research) within the framework of an emerging theory of culture.

The challenge, then, must be to emulate Gerbner's two-pronged research

program. That challenge equals the task of studying media's role as linkages between culture's two manifestations: culture as structure, and culture as process. The challenge inherent in this problem has been with the social sciences right from the beginning. It is a special case of the more general problem of relating society's macro level to its micro level, and vice versa. Recently this problem has received increased attention from different quarters in sociology and mass communication research (Blalock and Wilken 1979; Nowak 1980; Collins 1981). What we need more specifically, is better measures of culture as process, culture as internalized in individuals – individual-oriented cultural indicators – preferably some indicators parallel to indicators tapping culture as structure. Do we have any such measures available? Yes, we do.

Basic to culture is the notion of value. Thanks to a double breakthrough taking place in the 1970's, there are now two well-known sets of instruments available, measuring values held by individuals: those developed by Inglehart (1971, 1977, 1984) and by Rokeach (1973, 1974, 1979). Rokeach's instruments tap the two main dimensions of the wheel of culture as presented in Figure 2 above, while Inglehart's instruments are mainly oriented towards the instrumental/expressive dimension. Both sets of instruments could to advantage be regarded as individual-oriented cultural indicators, and in my opinion they should be applied both at the individual level and at the macro level.

This presupposes that the scales developed by Inglehart and Rokeach be turned into instruments for content analysis, applicable to media content. As a matter of fact, Rokeach himself has used his instruments both in surveys and in content analyses, and once an instrument has been created it is not too difficult to develop new versions of it.

A more important strategic choice lies

in the question what type of cultural indicators should first be applied in actual research: individual-oriented cultural indicators based on survey technique, or macro-oriented cultural indicators based on content analysis (if it is not possible, that is, to apply both at one and the same time)? The answer to the question lies in the simple fact that content analysis can always be carried out retrospectively, while survey analyses cannot.

Therefore, if we want to carry out parallel cultural indicators research at the macro and the micro levels, and if we cannot do both things at the same time, we should concentrate on individual-oriented cultural indicators based on survey research. Preferably we should create time-series of such measurements, time-series which may later on be related to time-series of macro-oriented cultural indicators based on content analysis.

In Lund and Gothenburg we have decided to opt for this strategy. So we have started adapting Rokeach's and Inglehart's scales to Swedish conditions and apply them in a series of local and national surveys. We hope that somewhat later we will find the opportunity to relate the results of our measurements of values as internalized by individuals to values as expressed by the media, so that we will have parallel time series of the two types of data.

To link the two types of data even closer to each other, we also collect information about the media use of the individuals whose values we are measuring. In this way we will be able to relate to each other not only time series of macro data based on content analysis and micro data based on sur-

vey analysis. We will also be able to see directly how use of the mass media influences the values held by the individual. That is, we will not be limited to building our study on basically ecological correlations only, we will have access also to individual correlations. By later on combining data of this type with available economic and social indicators, we will be in a position to take a close look at both vertical and horizontal linkages between culture and other societal systems.

This is a research program which probably will call for another decade of sustained and systematic research of one or two research groups. What results can we expect from such a research program? What we hope to arrive at is rather simple. It is a better understanding of the questions raised by Figures 1 and 2 above. What are the substantive and causal relations between culture and other societal systems? These are questions which have been with social science and social philosophy for centuries or even millennia. We cannot hope to answer them even within a decade. Indeed, they may never get their final answer. What we can do, perhaps, is just to try and ask better questions. The overriding strategy in all research must be to look more for the questions than for the answers. Take care of the questions. . . The answers will certainly not take care of themselves. But once we have the questions, it will not be too long before we have the answers: a decade or two. This article should be seen as an attempt to articulate some questions about the relationships between culture, media and society.

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E pluribus unum? The "Cultural indicators" approach to the study of media and culture

E Pluribus Unum?

Emblazoned on the great seal of the United States of America is a belief in the possibility of bringing together diverse groups into a political union. Embedded deep in the national mythology of the United States are the somewhat incompatible claims that this country represents a "melting pot" in which the distinct flavors of innumerable contributory cultures combine and, at the same time, that each group can and does retain the peculiar essence of its original identity. What these beliefs reflect, in fact, is even more complex and contradictory.

Underlying these contradictions is the concept of democracy; the idea that citizens can participate in their political governance on a basis of equality. The institutions of political democracy arose, and has been most meaningful in small, face-to-face communities in which mutual knowledge and accountability can be maintained. The Greek city state and the New England Town Meeting are compatible with Aristotle's dictum that the ideal state is one which can be surveyed from a hilltop.

"In small and self-sufficient societies... the integrity of language is safeguarded by the fact that what goes on in the community can easily be ascertained, understood, and evaluated by all. The line between truth and falsehood thus tends to be sharp, and when a person addresses his fellows, they know already what kind of a person he is, whether (as Igbo people would put it) he is one with whose words something can be done; or else who, if he tells you to stand, you know you must immediately flee!

But as society becomes larger and more complex, we find that we can no

longer be in command of all the facts but are obliged to take a good deal of what we hear on trust. We delegate to others the power to take certain decisions on our behalf, and they may not always be people we know or can vouch for." (Achebe, 1976: 43)

The United States represents in an extreme form the contradictions of modern democracies, spread as it is over thousands of miles and including over two hundred million citizens in a common political system. Local communities are relatively powerless to determine the political or economic fates of their members; their destinies depend upon the kindness of strangers. Cities and even states are in the position of colonies, dependent upon the goodwill of multinational corporations who can destroy the economic life of a city or region without fear of reprisal.

The modern industrial nation state arose and grew in concert with the development and growth of the earliest form of industrial production – print – which signalled the birth of mass communications. The exchange of information and instruction which is necessary for political and economic governance now takes place on a world-wide scale, unhampered by barriers of distance, time, or language. But, concomitantly, we must take more and more on trust.

Whereas the 19th century witnessed the flowering of diverse and often antagonistic perspectives disseminated through the media of press and books, the 20th century has become characterized by an increasing concentration of messages produced and broadcast through the electronic media, television in particular.

In 1964, Harold Wilensky analysed a large body of survey data on "life style

and mass culture," and concluded that, Television, the most "massified" of the mass media, the one with the largest and most heterogeneous audience, has become central to the leisure routine of majorities at every level. The usual differences in media exposure and response among age, sex, and class categories – easy to exaggerate in any case – have virtually disappeared in the case of television. (1964: 195)

McLuhan's familiar claim that we live in a "global village" is both insightful and deceptive: he accurately points to the homogenization and sharing of common messages that television has brought about, but he falsely equates the sharing of received messages with the mutual interaction and regulation which is the characteristic of authentic community. Rather than achieving the national goal of creating 'out of the many, one,' we are experiencing the transmission 'to the many, of one.'

Television: The Most Massive Medium

The longer we live with television, the more invisible it becomes. As the number of people who have never lived *without* television continues to grow, the medium is increasingly taken for granted as an appliance, a piece of furniture, a storyteller, a member of the family. Ever fewer parents and even grandparents can explain to children what it was like to grow up before television.

Television is the source of the most broadly-shared images and messages in history. While new technologies transform business and professional communications, the public and much of the research community continue to be concerned with over-the-air television, and for good reasons. The mass ritual that is television shows no signs of weakening its hold over the common symbolic environment into which our children are born and in which we all live out our lives. For most viewers, new types of delivery systems such as

cable, satellite, and cassette signal even further penetration and integration of established viewing patterns into everyday life.

And yet far too little is known and even less agreed about the dynamic role of television in our lives. The reasons for this lack of consensus include institutional resistance (high economic stakes and political interests might be affected), the relative youth of the field, the inherent clumsiness of research methods and measures, and the sporadic funding of those who seek to understand television's overall impact. In contrast, we have been fortunate to obtain research grant support from a variety of public sources over a long period of time. We have thus been able to follow a fairly consistent line of theory and research on the implications of television for over a decade and a half. Our research project, called Cultural Indicators, has accumulated large amounts of data with which to develop and refine our theoretical approach and the research strategy we call Cultivation Analysis (see Gerbner, *et al.*, 1980b).

Television in society

Television is a centralized system of story-telling. Its drama, commercials, news and other programs bring a relatively coherent world of common images and messages into every home. Transcending historic barriers of literacy and mobility, television has become the primary common source of socialization and everyday information (mostly in the form of entertainment) of an otherwise heterogeneous population. The repetitive pattern of television's mass-produced messages and images forms the mainstream of a common symbolic environment.

Many of those who now live with television have never before been part of a shared national culture. Television provides, perhaps for the first time since preindustrial religion, a daily ritual of highly compelling and informative content that forms a strong cultural link

between elites and other publics. The heart of the analogy of television and religion, and the similarity of their social functions, lie in the continual repetition of patterns (myths, ideologies, "facts", relationships, and so on) which serve to define the world and legitimate the social order. The illumination of the invisible relationships of life and society has always been the principal function of story telling. Television today serves that function, telling most of the stories to most of the people most of the time.

We do not deny or minimize the importance of specific programs, selective attention and perception, specifically targeted communications, individual and group differences, and research on effects defined in terms of short-run and individual attitude and behavior change. But exclusive concentration on those aspects and terms of traditional effects research risks losing sight of what is basically new and significant about television as the common story-teller of our age.

Compared to other media, televisions provides a relatively restricted set of choices for a virtually unrestricted variety of interests and publics. Most of its programs are by commercial necessity designed to be watched by nearly everyone in a relatively non-selective fashion. Surveys show that amount of viewing follows the style of life of the viewer and is relatively insensitive to programming. The audience is always the group available at a certain time of the day, the week, and the season, regardless of the programs. Nielsen studies (reported in the trade paper *presstime*, October 1984, p. 11), show that only 3.6 percent of prime time viewers switch channels during programs and 7 percent switch during commercials. The number and variety of choices available to view when most viewers are available to watch is also limited by the fact that many programs designed for the same broad audience tend to be similar in their basic make-up and appeal.

According to the 1984 Nielsen Report,

in the typical home the television set is in use for about seven hours a day, and actual viewing by persons over two years old averages over four hours a day. With that much viewing, there can be little selectivity. And the more people watch the less selective they can and tend to be. Most regular and heavy viewers watch more of everything. "Typically, television is consumed as a medium and the decision to view ordinarily takes precedence over the selection of what to view" (Comstock, 1980: 38).

Therefore, from the point of view of the cultivation of relatively stable and common images, the patterns that counts most may be the total pattern of programming to which total communities are regularly exposed over long periods of time. That is the pattern of settings, casting, social typing, actions, and related outcomes that cuts across most program types and defines the world of television — a world in which many viewers "live" so much of their lives that they cannot readily avoid absorbing its recurrent patterns.

To repeat, the patterns central to cultivation analysis are those central to the world of television. They pervade most if not all programs. What matters most for the study of television is not so much what this or that viewer may prefer as what virtually no regular viewer can escape. Therefore, the focus of cultivation analysis is not on what this or that campaign may achieve but what all campaigns are up against: a widening circle of standardized conceptions superimposed upon a more selectively used print culture and appearing to be increasingly resistant to change.

The Shift from "Effects" to "Cultivation" Research

The vast bulk of empirical research on television's social impact is directly descended from the theoretical models and the methodological procedures of marketing and attitude

change research: attempts to determine how to change people's attitudes or behavior. By and large, however, this conceptualization of effect as immediate change among individuals has not produced research which helps us understand the distinctive features of television: massive, long-term and common exposure of large and heterogeneous publics to centrally-produced, mass-distributed, and repetitive systems of stories.

As members of the academic community, we are all imbued with the perspectives of print culture and its ideals of freedom, diversity and an active electorate. Therefore, many question the emphasis of cultivation analysis upon a supposedly "passive" viewer being "programmed" from birth, and the dissolution of authentic publics that this emphasis implies. Some have argued that other circumstances do intervene and can affect or even neutralize the cultivation process, and that many, even if not most, viewers do watch selectively, and that those program selections do make a difference.

We do not dispute these contentions, and we attempt to account for them in our analytic strategies. But we believe, again, that concentrating on individual differences and immediate change misses the main point of television: the absorption of divergent currents into a stable and common mainstream.

Others, of course, have suggested that mass media may involve functions and processes other than overt change. Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) argued long ago that the primary impact of exposure to mass communication is likely to be not change but maintenance of the status quo.

Communications researchers have often bent over backwards to avoid simplistic, unidirectional ideas about effects, but rarely have concrete alternatives been proposed. As McQuail (1976) noted, television "is said to 'stimulate', 'involve', 'trigger off', 'generate', 'induce', 'suggest', 'structure', 'teach', 'persuade', 'gratify',

'arouse', 'reinforce', 'activate'"; but the variety of terms masks a vagueness in many attempts to characterize media impact. Indeed, the wide variety of terms may stem from the tendency of media research to isolate and dissect pieces from the whole.

Culture cultivates the social relationships of a society. We are postulating that in contemporary America, television embodies the mainstream which defines its dominant current. We focus on the implications of accumulated exposure to the most general system of messages, images and values that underly and cut across the widest variety of programs.

If, as we argue, the messages are so stable, the medium is so ubiquitous, and it is accumulated total exposure that counts, then almost everyone should be affected. Even "light" viewers live in the same cultural environment as most others and what they do not get through the tube they may get from others who do get it from the tube. It is clear, then, that the cards are stacked against finding evidence of effects. Therefore, the discovery of a systematic pattern of even small but pervasive differences between light and heavy viewers may indicate far-reaching consequences.

A slight but pervasive (e.g., generational) shift in the cultivation of common perspectives may alter the cultural climate and may upset the balance of social and political decision-making without necessarily producing dramatic changes in observable behavior. A single percentage point difference in ratings is worth millions of dollars in advertising revenue – as the networks know only too well. It takes but a few degrees shift in the average temperature to have an ice age. A range of 3 to 15 percent margins (typical of our "cultivation differentials") in a large and otherwise stable field often signals an electoral landslide, a market takeover, or an epidemic, and it certainly tips the scale of any closely balanced choice or decision. Cultivation theory is based on the persistent

and pervasive pull of the television mainstream on a great variety of currents and counter-currents.

If that theory is correct, it is the current system of television, and not our methodology, that challenges theories of self-government predicated on print-based assumptions of ideologically diverse, distinct and selective publics conscious of their own divergent interests. So the decision to focus on what most viewers share in common is more than a shift of research emphasis. It is an attempt to develop a methodology appropriate to the distinct and central cultural dynamics of the age of television. That requires a set of theoretical and methodological assumptions and techniques different from those of traditional media effects research. Through the Cultural Indicators project, we have begun to develop such an alternative approach.

Cultural Indicators

The Cultural Indicators approach involves a tri-focal research strategy. The first focus, called institutional process analysis, is designed to investigate the formation of policies directing the massive flow of media messages. Because of its direct policy orientation, this type of research is the most difficult to fund, and for logistical reasons it is the most difficult (at least for Philadelphia-based researchers); consequently it is the least developed. More directly relevant to the present discussion are the other two foci: message system analysis and cultivation analysis.

Since the late 60's, the Cultural Indicators project has recorded week-long samples of network television drama each year and subjected these systems of messages to rigorous and detailed content analysis in order to reliably delineate selected features of the television world. We consider these to be prominent among the potential lessons television cultivates, and use them as a source of questions for cultivation analysis.

Lastly, we examine the responses given to these questions (phrased to refer to the real world) among those with varying amounts of exposure to the world of television. (Non-viewers are too few and demographically too scattered for serious research purposes.) We want to determine whether those who spend more of their time with television are more likely to answer these questions in ways that reflect the potential lessons of the television world than are those who watch less television but are otherwise comparable (in terms of important demographic characteristics) to the heavy viewers. We have used the concept of "cultivation" to describe the contributions television viewing makes to viewer conceptions of social reality. What we call the "Cultivation differential" is the margin of difference in conceptions of reality between light and heavy viewers in the same demographic subgroups.

Cultivation, a Multidirectional Process

Our use of the term "cultivation" for television's contribution to conceptions of social reality, however, is not simply a fancier word for "effects". Nor does it necessarily imply a one-way, monolithic process. The "effects" of a pervasive medium upon the composition and structure of the symbolic environment are subtle, complex, and intermingled with other influences. This perspective, therefore, assumes an interaction between the medium and its publics.

The elements of cultivation do not originate with television or appear out of a void. Layers of demographic, social, personal, and cultural contexts also determine the shape, scope, and degree of the contribution television is likely to make. Yet, the "meanings" of those contexts and factors are in themselves aspects of the cultivation process. That is, while a viewer's sex, or age, or class may make a difference, the mass media help define what it

means, for example, to be an adolescent female member of a given social class. The interaction is a continuous process (as is cultivation) taking place at every stage, from cradle to grave.

Thus, television and other mass media neither simply "create" nor "reflect" images, opinions, and beliefs. Rather, they are integral aspects of a dynamic process. Institutional needs and objectives influence the creation and distribution of mass-produced messages which create, fit into, exploit, and sustain the needs, values and ideologies of mass publics. These publics, in turn, acquire distinct identities as publics partly through exposure to the ongoing flow of messages.

The question of "which comes first" is misleading and irrelevant. People are born into a symbolic environment with television as its mainstream. Children begin viewing several years before they begin reading, and well before they can even talk. Television viewing is both a shaper and a stable part of certain lifestyles and outlooks. It links the individual to a larger if synthetic world, a world of television's own making. Most of those with certain social and psychological characteristics, dispositions, and world views, and fewer alternatives as attractive and compelling as television, use it as their major vehicle of cultural participation. The content shapes and promotes their continued attention. To the extent that television dominates their sources of information, continued exposure to its messages is likely to reiterate, confirm, and nourish — i.e., cultivate — its values and perspectives.

Cultivation should not be confused with "mere" reinforcement (although, to be sure, reaffirmation and stability in the face of pressures for change is not a trivial feat). Nor should it suggest that television viewing is simply symptomatic of other dispositions and outlook systems. Finally, it should not be taken as saying that we do not think *any* change is involved. We have certainly found change with the first "television generation" (Gerbner and Gross,

1976) and with television spreading to various areas of a country (Morgan, 1984) and of life (Morgan and Rothschild, 1983). When we talk about the "independent contribution" of television viewing, we mean quite specifically that the generation (in some) and maintenance (in others) of some set of outlooks or beliefs can be traced to steady, cumulative exposure to the world of television. Our longitudinal studies of adolescents (Gerbner, *et. al.*, 1980b; Morgan, 1982) also show that television viewing does exert an independent influence on attitudes over time, but that belief structures can also influence subsequent viewing.

The point is that cultivation is not conceived as a unidirectional but rather more like a gravitational process. The angle and direction of the "pull" depends on where groups of viewers and their styles of life are with reference to the center of gravity, the "mainstream" of the world of television. Each group may strain in a different direction, but all groups are affected by the same central current. Cultivation is thus part of a continual, dynamic, ongoing process of interaction among messages and contexts. This holds even though (and in a sense especially because) the hallmark of the process is either relative stability or slow change.

As successive generations grow up with television's version of the world, the former and traditional distinctions become blurred. Cultivation thus implies the steady entrenchment of mainstream orientations in most cases and the systematic but almost imperceptible modification of previous orientations in others; in other words, affirmation for the believers *and* indoctrination for deviants. That is the process we call "mainstreaming".

The observable manifestations of the process vary as a function of the environmental context and other attributes of the viewer. In order to explain these variations, however, it is necessary to describe the central components of the symbolic environment

composed by television. I will return to the concept of "mainstreaming" after a brief consideration of the values, ideology, demography, and action structure of the television mainstream itself.

The world of Television

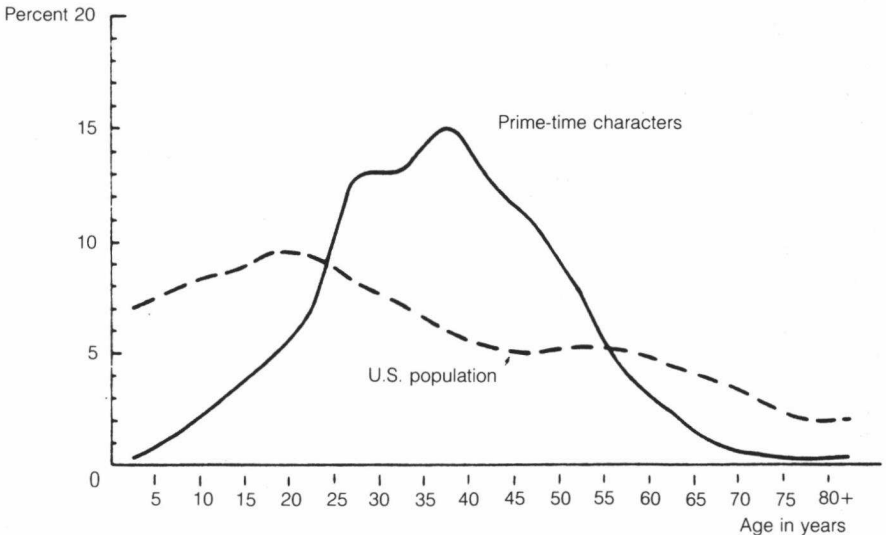
Message system analysis is a tool for making systematic, reliable, and cumulative observations about television content. We use message system analysis not to determine what any individual viewer (or group of viewers) might see, but to assess representative, stable and recurrent aggregate patterns of messages to which total communities are exposed over long periods of time. The analysis is based on the premise that while findings about media content cannot be taken at face value as evidence of "impact", representative and reliable observations of content (rather than selective and idiosyncratic impressions) are requisites to a valid consideration of media influence.

The world of prime time is animated by vivid and intimate portrayals of over 300 major dramatic characters a week, mostly stock types, and their weekly rounds of dramatic activities. Conventional and "normal" though that world may appear, it is in fact far from the reality of anything but consumer values and the ideology of social power.

Men outnumber women at least three to one and women are younger (but age faster) than the men they meet. Young people (under 18) comprise one-third and older people (over 65) one-fifth of their true proportion in the population. Figure 1 shows difference between the age distribution in the television world and reality. Similarly, blacks on television represent three-fourths and Hispanics one-third of their share of the U.S. population, and a disproportionate number are minor rather than major characters.

The point is *not* that culture should duplicate real-life statistics. It is rather that the direction and thrust of cultural

Figure 1: Percentages of U.S. population and all prime-time TV characters by chronological age



amplification or neglect provides a clue to the treatment of social types, groups, and values, and yields suggestions for cultivation analysis. For example, the prominent and stable overrepresentation of well-off white men in the prime of life dominates prime time and indicates a relatively restrictive view of women's and minority opportunities and rights. As Figure 1 suggests, the general demography of the television world bears greater resemblance to the facts of consumer spending than to the U.S. Census.

The myth of the middle class as the all-American norm pervades the world of television. Nearly seven out of 10 television characters appear in the "middle-middle" of a five-way classification system. Most of them are professionals and managers. Blue collar and service work occupies 67 percent of all Americans but only 10 percent of television characters.

In the world of prime time the state acts mostly to fend off threats to law and order in a mean and dangerous world. Enforcing the law of that world takes nearly three times as many characters as the number of all blue collar and service workers. The typical viewer of an average week's prime time programs encounters seemingly realistic and intimate (but usually false) representations of the life and work of 30 police officers, seven lawyers, and three judges, but only one engineer or scientist and very few blue-collar workers. Again, nearly everybody appears to be comfortably managing on an "average" income of the mythical norm of "middle class."

But threats abound. Crime in prime time is at least 10 times as rampant as in the real world. An average of five to six acts of overt physical violence per hour menace over half of all major characters. However, pain, suffering, and medical help rarely follow this mayhem. Symbolic violence demonstrates power, not therapy; it shows who can get away with what against whom. The analysis of content data as a message system rather than as iso-

lated incidents of violence or sex, for example, makes it possible to view these acts in context as representing social relationships and the distribution (as well as symbolic enforcement) of the structure of power according to television.

The stability and consistency of basic patterns over the years is one of their most striking (but not surprising) features. A central cultural arm of society could hardly avoid reflecting (and cultivating) some of its basic structural characteristics, as well as more specific institutional positions and interests. While television has obviously changed on many levels (e.g., there have been ebbs and flows in the popularity and distribution of various genres, new production values, visible but token minority representation, and many short-lived trends and fads), these changes may only be superficial. The underlying values, demography, ideology, and power relationships have manifested only minor fluctuations with virtually no significant deviations since the late 60's, despite the actual social changes which have occurred. The remarkable pattern of uniformity, durability, and resiliency of the aggregate messages of prime time network drama explains its cultivation of both stable concepts and the resistance to change.

The Nature of Cultivation

Since the early 1970's, the range of topics we have subjected to cultivation analysis has greatly expanded. On issue after issue we found that the assumptions, beliefs and values of heavy viewers differ systematically from those of comparable groups of light viewers. The differences tend to reflect both the dominant patterns of life in the television world and the characteristics of different groups of light and heavy viewers.

Sometimes we found that these differences hold across-the-board, meaning that those who watch more television are more likely – in all or most

subgroups – to give what we call "television answers" to our questions. But in most cases the patterns were more complex.

As we looked into the cultivation process in more and more aspects of life and society, from health-related beliefs to political orientations and occupational images (and much more), we found that television viewing usually relates in different but consistent ways to different groups' life situations and world views.

We have found that personal interaction makes a difference. Adolescents whose parents are more involved in their viewing show sharply smaller relationships between amount of viewing and perceiving the world in terms of television's portrayals (Gross and Morgan, 1985). Children who are more integrated into cohesive peer groups are less receptive to cultivation (Rothschild, 1984). In contrast, adolescents who watch cable programming show significantly *stronger* cultivation patterns (Morgan and Rothschild, 1983). The implication is that cultivation is both dependent on and a manifestation of the extent to which mediated imagery dominates the viewers' sources of information. Personal interaction and affiliation reduces cultivation; cable television (presumably by providing even "more of the same") increases it.

Personal, day-to-day, direct experience also plays a role. We have found that the relationship between amount of viewing and fear of crime is strongest among those who have good reason to be afraid. When one's everyday environment is congruent with and reinforces television's messages, the result is a phenomenon we call "resonance". For example, the cultivation of insecurity is most pronounced among those who live in high crime urban areas (Gerbner, *et al.*, 1980b; Doob and Macdonald, 1979). In these cases, everyday reality and television provide a "double dose" of messages which "resonate" and amplify cultivation.

Demographic correspondence between viewers and television characters also predicts the extent and nature of cultivation. Our message system analyses have revealed consistent differences in the relative likelihood of different demographic groups to be portrayed as victims or as perpetrators of violence (known as "risk ratios"). Relationships of amount of viewing and the tendency to hold exaggerated perceptions of violence are much more pronounced within the real-world demographic subgroups whose fictional counterparts are most victimized (Morgan, 1983). The symbolic power hierarchy of relative victimization is thus reflected in differential cultivation patterns.

Mainstreaming

We have seen that a wide variety of factors produce systematic and theoretically meaningful variations in cultivation. We have named the most general and important of these patterns "mainstreaming".

The "mainstream" can be thought of as a relative commonality of outlooks and values that exposure to features and dynamics of the television world tends to cultivate. By mainstreaming we mean the expression of that commonality by heavy viewers in those demographic groups whose light viewers hold divergent views. In other words, differences found in the responses of different groups of viewers, differences that can be associated with other cultural, social and political characteristics of these groups, may be diminished or even absent from the responses of heavy viewers in the same groups.

Mainstreaming represents the theoretical elaboration and empirical verification of our assertion that television "cultivates common perspectives." Mainstreaming means that television viewing may absorb or override differences in perspectives and behavior which stem from other social, cultural, and demographic influences. It repre-

sents a homogenization of divergent views and a convergence of disparate viewers. Mainstreaming makes television the true 20th century melting pot of the American people.

The mainstreaming potential of television stems from the way the institution is organized, the competition to attract audiences from all regions and classes, and the consistency of its messages (see e.g., Seldes, 1957; Hirsch, 1979; Gitlin, 1983; Turow, 1984). In

every area we have examined, mainstreaming is the strongest and most consistent explanation for differences in the strength and direction of television's contributions to viewer conceptions.

Reflecting its tendency to balance divergent views and present a broadly acceptable political orientation, television also blurs traditional political differences. It can be seen on Table 1 and Figure 2 that significantly more

Table 1

Relationship Between Amount of Television Viewing and Political Self-Designation

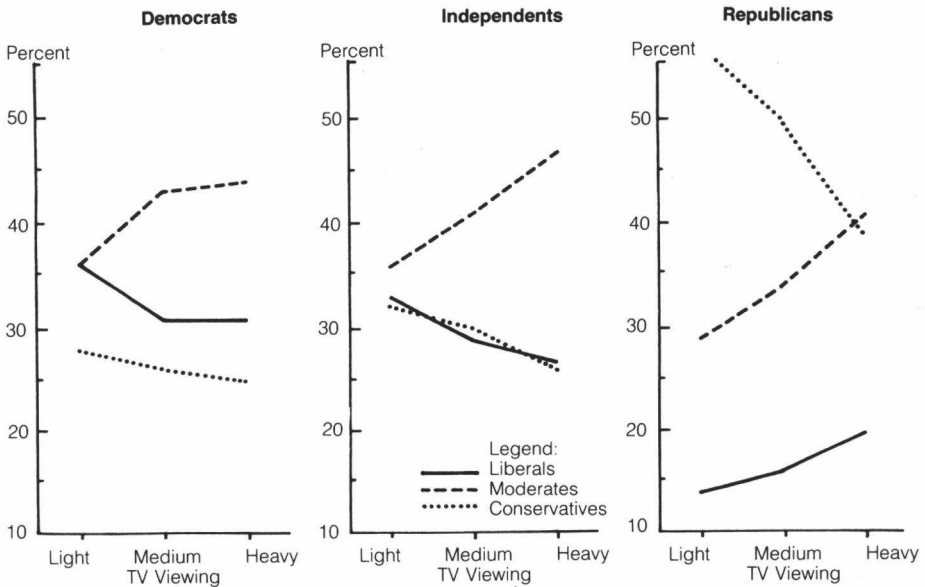
	Percent Who Say They Are								
	Liberal			Moderate			Conservative		
	%L	CD	Gamma	%L	CD	Gamma	%L	CD	Gamma
Overall	29	- 2	-.031	34	+11	.136***	37	- 9	-.120***
Controlling for:									
Sex									
Male	30	0	.001	31	+ 9	.119***	39	- 9	-.121***
Female	29	- 4	-.050	37	+11	.132***	35	- 8	-.107***
Age									
Under 30	39	- 3	-.045	32	+12	.150***	28	- 8	-.136***
30-54	29	- 4	-.074*	32	+12	.160***	39	- 8	-.103***
Over 55	19	+ 3	.065	40	+ 6	.080*	41	- 9	-.126***
Education									
No College	23	+ 2	.040	41	+ 6	.068**	36	- 8	-.117***
Some College	36	- 2	-.034	26	+ 8	.110***	38	- 6	+ .067*
Income									
Low	34	- 5	-.056	36	+ 7	.094**	30	- 2	-.051
Medium	29	- 4	-.062	32	+13	.162***	36	- 9	-.127***
High	28	- 1	-.043	32	+12	.154***	40	-10	-.120***
Race									
White	29	- 5	-.064**	34	+12	.148***	37	- 7	-.105***
Nonwhite	37	+ 4	.076	32	+ 6	.087	32	-11	-.194**
Region									
Urban	35	- 3	-.028	32	+ 9	.115***	33	- 6	-.095**
Non-urban	25	- 1	-.025	35	+12	.147***	40	-11	-.140***
Party									
Democrat	36	- 5	-.063*	36	+ 8	.095**	28	- 3	-.048
Independent	33	- 6	-.093**	36	+11	.146***	32	- 6	-.078*
Republican	14	+ 6	.126*	29	+12	.163***	57	-18	-.216***

* p<.05
 ** p<.01
 *** p<.001

Data Source: NORC General Social Surveys (1975, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1983)

Note: %L (percent light viewers) refers to the percent of light viewers giving the "television answer." CD or Cultivation Differential refers to the percent of heavy viewers minus the percent of light viewers giving the "television answer."

Figure 2: Comparisons of political self-designation by amount of television viewing, within parties



heavy than light viewers of all political affiliations call themselves "moderate". Heavy viewers are less likely to say they are conservative or liberal except among Republicans where, in a typical mainstreaming pattern, there is an extremely low number of liberals among light viewers while among heavy viewers the level approaches that of the "mainstream".

On the surface, mainstreaming appears to be a "centering" of political and other tendencies. However, a look at the actual positions taken in response to questions about a number of political issues shows that the mainstream does not always mean "middle of the road".

When we analyzed responses to questions in the NORC General Social Surveys about attitudes and opinions on such topics as racial segregation, homosexuality, abortion, minority rights, and other issues which have traditionally divided liberals and con-

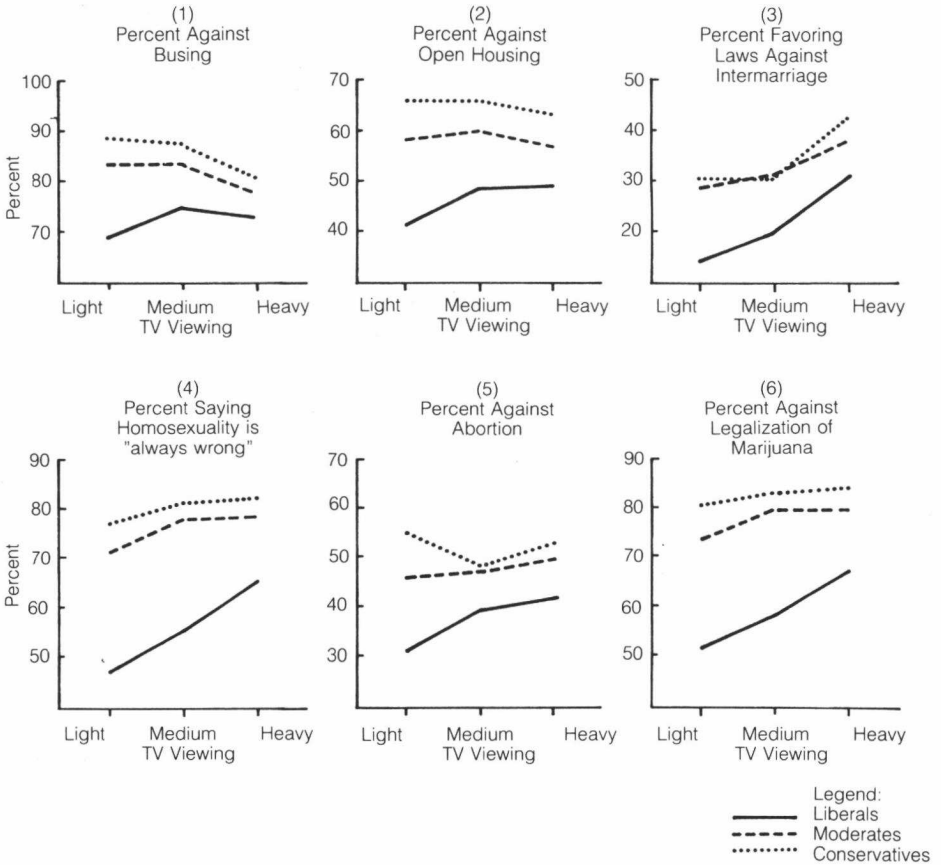
servatives, we found that division most clearly marked among those who watch little television. Overall, self-styled moderates are closer to conservatives than they are to liberals. Among heavy viewers, liberals and conservatives are closer to each other than among light viewers. Figure 3 illustrates these findings.

In regard to opposition to busing, we can see that heavy-viewing conservatives are more "liberal" and heavy-viewing liberals more "conservative" than their respective light-viewing counterparts. In the second example, opposition to open housing laws, viewing is not associated with any differences in the attitudes expressed by conservatives, but among liberals we see that heavy viewing goes with a greater likelihood of such opposition. The third example shows that in response to a question about laws against marriages between blacks

and whites, heavy viewers in all groups are more likely to favor these laws than are light viewers in the same categories, but this is much more pronounced for liberals. Finally, in the case of attitudes on homosexuality, abortion, and marijuana (examples 4, 5 and 6), there is considerable spread between light-viewing liberals and light-viewing conservatives, but, once again, the attitudes of heavy-viewing liberals and conservatives are closer together. This is due primarily to the sharp diminution of the typical liberal opinion among heavy-viewing liberals.

We have also noted (Gerbner *et al.*, 1982, 1984) that while the mainstream runs toward the right on political issues, it leans towards a populist stance on economic issues, setting up potentially volatile conflicts of demands and expectations. Mainstreaming has been found to explain differences in within-group patterns in terms of the cultivation of images of violence (Gerbner, *et al.*, 1980b), conceptions of science and scientists (Gerbner, *et al.*, 1981c), health-related beliefs and practices (Gerbner, *et al.*, 1981b), sex-role

Figure 3: Television viewing and positions on racial and personal rights issues, by political self-designation



stereotypes (Signorielli, 1979; Morgan, 1982), views of racial and sexual minorities (Gross, 1984), as well as the ways in which television relates to academic achievement (Morgan and Gross, 1982), and other issues. Mainstreaming also explains variations in the intersection of patterns reflecting different "modes" of cultivation, such as in the distinction between general assumptions about the prevalence of In summary, our theory of the cultivation process is an attempt to understand and explain the dynamics of television as a distinctive feature of our age. It is not a substitute for but a complement to traditional approaches to media effects research concerned with processes more applicable to other media. Designed primarily for television, and focusing on its pervasive and recurrent patterns of representation and viewing, cultivation analysis concentrates on the enduring

and common consequences of growing up and living with television: the cultivation of stable, resistant, and widely shared assumptions, images, and conceptions reflecting the institutional characteristics and interests of the medium itself. Our explorations of this process in many ways and contexts have been enriched and confirmed by studies of a growing number of independent investigators in the United States and abroad, and have led to the development of some theoretical models for further testing and elaboration. We believe that television has become the common symbolic environment that interacts with most of the things we think and do. Therefore, understanding its dynamics can help develop and maintain a sense of alternatives and independence essential for self-direction and self-government in the television age.

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Trendsetters or trendfollowers*

The contribution of research some concluding comments

Perhaps I should commence this presentation by accusing the organisation of provoking me by saying that my task here today is that of "a chucker out". They wrote that, although I do not exactly know what they meant. They didn't make it clear. But if I am a chucker out, I think I can relate the chucking out in one way or another to the idea of ambulance and firebrigade research.

I am reminded by this task of chucker out, if I understand it correctly, of the old English adage that, after the Lord Mayor's show comes the muck cart. This is a reference to an age before the internal combustion engine, so you can imagine what sort of sweeping up had to be done. Now I don't want to press this point too far. Incidentally, I am referring to the *function* of sweeping up, rather than to the quality of the things I have to sweep up, and that have been presented before me. However, just in case I am misunderstood, I am very fortunate indeed to have such things to sweep up. The quality, I think, has been excellent. But, back to the ambulancemen and the firemen. I will stick with the firemen for the time being. In England the firemen are not just called upon to put out fires; they also have another function, which is perhaps best illustrated when they have to climb up large trees to bring down cats. Now, again, if you would like to link that reference to some of the earlier presentations, I shall try to look at some of those that are out on the limb, or out on the branch, and try to bring them down to

earth. But, in so doing, I hope I don't bring them too far down, and dig my own grave, so to speak, because then I would have to suffer an obituary notice from Carl Erik Rosengren or Herman Franke.

So my down to earth approach has something to do with what Bob White said yesterday. It has to do with my approach to mass communication research in relation to policy and in relation to problems, as I define them. For twenty years now, amongst other things, I have in some way or other performed the role of a research politician, and it's from the standpoint of a research politician that I want to take up one point in Bob's excellent and comprehensive exposition yesterday. The point that I want to take up here is that in presenting the various divisions, the conflicts and the different schools of thought that he did so well, my feeling is that he may have given a too neat and tidy picture. My experience suggests (and this is one of the reasons why, I think) that Bob was correct to say that not very frequently has mass communication research informed policy, although Elihu Katz and George Gerbner, and others, think it has informed policy more in Britain than it has elsewhere in the U.S.A. If that is so, it must be because it has not informed policy at all in the U.S.A. or elsewhere, for we only manage to get through a very little.

But to look at the relationship of research to policy and to the development of mass communication research generally, one characteristic stands out (Larry Gross gave clues to it this morning), and that is "*accident*". There has not been an ordered and planned development. I know it is good from one angle, to talk about the develop-

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ment of a Marxist approach, the development of an ethnographic approach, the development of a positivistic approach, and so on. That is important, but most of the research that has been done in the twenty years that I have been associated with it has come more or less by chance, or even mistakes. There was one time not so very long ago when nearly 70% of all published mass communication research in Britain came from the Leicester Centre. But we need to remember that, in a sense, this institution was founded on an inadequate definition of a problem. We were given a lot of money simply because somebody decided at the time that television was ruining society. Larry Gross may think that was a good position, that it was not the wrong definition of a problem. But my main point is that the funding stemmed more from social-political concern (nothing wrong with that in itself) than from an informed approach to the communication process and the role of media in society. The terms of reference were drafted accordingly.

I wish to draw attention, then, to accidental funding and accidental development. Incidentally, one of the things that I would be really interested in doing when I retire would be to concern myself not so much with the questions that we have asked in research, but the questions that have never been asked in research, because we can't get any money to ask them. I shall come back later to what Bob White was telling us about policy yesterday. But I know that, even today, money is available for certain types of uncritical research, but not for critical enquiries such as those directed at studying the social implications of the development of new communication technology. Social implications are not important – only commercial ones. In a sense, all we can talk about at the research level is what has been done. We can extrapolate from research in various ways, but we can only extrapolate from what has been done. It is very impor-

tant, then, to pay great attention to what has been allowed, to what has been permitted in the field of research. When we do this we will find that there are many of the most vital questions that no one has ever been given the resources to ask.

Referring to Bob White's contribution yesterday, and Karl Erik Rosengren's comments, I agree that it is not very fruitful to pursue the various dichotomies that are frequently used, whether research is conventional or critical, whether it is sociological or psychological, whether it is qualitative or quantitative, whether it is trendsetting or trendfollowing. I don't think we'll get very far following any of these lines. Nevertheless, there is one point I feel I must make about Karl Erik Rosengren's comments when asking us to be aware of the weaknesses in let's say qualitative and quantitative approaches, he then quite softly introduced the idea that the qualitative approach was not really different from anecdotal journalism. I would prefer to refer to what Bob White said earlier, and emphasise the value of the qualitative approach, which ideally would entail systematic observational, ethnographic, participation studies. To reinforce what Larry Gross said this morning, we need multi-methodological mixes, and he gave a good example. Our aim in research, by mixing the methods, is an attempt to put the flesh on the bones. Skeletons are not very attractive, and have limited use. I think all of us appreciate it when they are filled out into a rounder and fuller shape. We might remember that the natural and physical sciences have not been entirely without the benefit of qualitative methods over the years. There is much more to science than quantification. However, I promised not to follow this line too far, and I agree with Karl Erik Rosengren generally about the futility and sterility of pushing these dichotomies and conflicts too far.

If, in the general context of this meeting, I have to find one particular point

that I must stress that marks out what sort of research I would prefer, then it must be the ability to ask the right questions. That comes back to what one of you said yesterday afternoon when referring to Jos Becker's work. It was said that some of this was relatively sterile because there was, in fact, no conceptual or theoretical framework. No one can look at the development of mass communication research over twenty, thirty or forty years without being alarmingly aware of the lack of theory. In this sense we don't want to make some crude distinction between theory and practice. Theory is really the most economical thing we have. It stops us from being over pragmatic, from doing trial and error work every time we go into the field. Unfortunately, so much in mass communication research represents an everyday attempt to reinvent the wheel. Not many people seem to take account of the corpus of knowledge which is there if someone would only try to put it together. This would make our work much more economical and much more fruitful.

Taking this admittedly oversimplified approach about the need to ask the right questions, I emphasise that "right questions" can only spring from appropriate theories, models and conceptual frameworks. We have to think as well as do. We all have our models and favoured approaches. The essence of my model is that it must be holistic, processual and contextual. In other words, we do not look at the media in isolation. The media must be seen together with other institutions and other social processes, and regarded and investigated in the wider social context. If we ask silly questions we are likely to get silly answers, and the fact that we use sophisticated methodology only compounds the problem.

Returning to what Karl Erik Rosengren said yesterday, methods are certainly important, but they are essentially a means to an end, not an end in themselves. I am afraid that I cannot afford

to indulge in Karl's methodological game that will take twenty years to produce the results, and where he may then, as he said, sit under the tree of knowledge with his grandson, having achieved perfection. I have the feeling that by the time twenty years have elapsed there might be no gardens. I feel I must focus *now*, despite our inadequate methods, on the importance of the problem, and the relevance of the question asked, accepting that relevance is decided essentially from a value position.

My approach is also centred more on society than on the media (if I may run the risk of yet another false dichotomy). But even here there are convergencies as well as differences, as we shall see if I compare some of the results from research I have been involved in with some of the material that Larry produced this morning.

Let us take some examples from the much researched area of television/media and violence. I think many people regarded it as a very positive and welcome breakthrough – a turn away from conventional approaches – when George Gerbner, Larry Gross and others began to address the question of media violence not in simple terms of imitation, increased aggression, or something like that, but in terms of the possible repercussions with regard to increased fear and anxiety, and the possible relationships to law and order, and so on. But I would want to go a little further than this. Because of my approach I would want to start with the nature of violence in society – that would be my starting point. I would wish to study the work of criminologists and sociologists and others about the nature, extent, function and causes of violence in society.

If I do this I might even find that there is no need to introduce television into the picture at all. Perhaps it can all be accounted for without the introduction of television. If I look, then, at some of the explanations that have been given by other people for violence in society, by other social scientists, I might come

to the conclusion that violence in society has primarily got something to do with the relationship between goals and means in society, and with overcrowding, relative deprivation, poverty, unemployment, and so on. Following this approach a little further, my first tenable hypothesis about a possible media/violence relationship might not have to do with violence on the screen, but with the degree to which the media – television in particular – is portraying the ostentatious display of conspicuous consumption through both advertising and the display of an affluent lifestyle. Particularly in societies where there is high and ever increasing unemployment, then surely you don't have to be a clairvoyant to look at the possibility of the relationship here between that relative deprivation and frustration and aggression. Now these would be my primary hypotheses.

I am not suggesting that the work done by other people is not valid or useful, but I am suggesting that our main starting point should be with violence in society, and not with violence on the screen. I am concerned with the contribution of the media to this particular situation. I am not going to argue that this is the better approach, but this is an illustration of what I mean by having a model or a theory about society which helps to guide and focus your enquiries.

Let me look at another subject which is central to our concerns here, and on which we have done quite an amount of work over the years. I refer to the relationship between media and racism. We were reminded yesterday by Bob White and others that one needs to locate mass communication research, studies of media, studies of the communication process in an historical setting. This is absolutely essential when you study the development of racism and racial prejudice in Britain, for our starting point here should be that racism and prejudice is endemic in Britain. This is tied to our history, to our colonial past, to our

educational system, and to the development over the years of certain types of economic, cultural and political institutions. It could be that the most interesting thing for a researcher to do in Great Britain is find out the reasons for those few people in Britain who are not prejudiced.

In our study of the media over a long period (and I have to put this in very shorthand terms), we found that the media in Great Britain presented black people – and I use that in the widest collective sense – as a threat and a problem. Therefore, on the whole, the media in Britain tend to exacerbate racial prejudice. This might even be the case with newspapers with liberal editorial policies, for it is the news presentation process over a period of time, governed by the same set of professional news values in all cases that is at the heart of the trouble.

Some of the things mentioned yesterday prompted me to look at what I called the three cornered relationship between mediated experiences on one side, situational, personal or social experiences on the other, and the interaction of these two to produce something that we might crudely call social consciousness. But when we look at this in relation to the research I have just mentioned, we find that the people got their racial labels and stereotypes mainly from the media, so that some people who had no contact with black people at all still had the same stereotypes as those who had contacts, but not necessarily the same degree of prejudice. The emotional, attitudinal level of prejudice came primarily from personal and situational experiences. This may also show that perhaps the situation is somewhat more complex than we are willing to believe.

Still on the same level and the same topic, I have to ask with regard to what has been said over the last day or so, what about behaviour? Larry Gross reminded us this morning that the Americans found themselves talking about "behavioural science" by acci-

dent rather than by rational decision. It is possible though that this might have been a good thing, because I often wonder why social scientists spend so much time studying what people say they do, what they think they do, or what they would like to do, rather than what they actually do. On the occasions when it has been possible to check expressed attitudes against behaviour, there have often been considerable discrepancies.

If we really wish to establish the nature and degree of racial prejudice and discrimination in society, we would be better to examine the practices of housing agents, the rules of working mens clubs, sports clubs, and so on. There you will find out about racial prejudice. Is this not better than asking what would you do in a certain situation and why? There are enough observable, behavioural, structural, organisational indicators all over the place to provide indications of prejudice and discrimination in our society. The main point I am making here – and I hope this will be appreciated – is not to do so much with violence, or race, or discrimination, but has to do really with the need for researchers to adopt a wider approach. It illustrates my holistic or societal approach to the exclusion of other approaches.

Let me give you another illustration of a comparative study that we completed about a year ago on the views of 13-14 year old children in the four countries participating in the study (Canada, Hungary, West Germany and Great Britain), about other countries and people. The essence of this has to do with conceptualization – the giving of meaning – along the lines mentioned this morning. I have only time here to look at the illustrations from the British results. I give you the results only about the four countries the children mentioned most frequently. They happened to be the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., France and West Germany.

The children were asked to evaluate the four countries, positively or negatively; give the reasons for their evalua-

tion, and name the main sources of relevant information. The reasons were classified into "political" and "environmental" (a fun or pleasure orientation), and the sources into media and non-media.

In general, the U.S.A. was positively evaluated – it was seen in environmental, pleasure or non-political terms, and the main sources of the relevant information were the media. The main sources of information about the U.S.S.R. were also the media, but here the evaluation was negative, and the reasons given were political. Information about France was obtained from non-media sources (holidays, schools, etc.), and the evaluation, essentially non-political, was positive.

There were differences amongst the children, of course, but the aforementioned results held for a clear majority in all three cases. But the position with regard to West Germany was different. Here the sample was split. The better educated or upper-class children were favourably disposed, mainly in an environmental or non-political sense, and these children obtained most of their information from personal contacts or experiences, or via the school. On the other hand, the working-class children, not so well educated and without the same degree of contact and personal experience, took a more unfavourable view about West Germany, relying on films and comics for most of their information.

It is not so much the results just mentioned which I wish to stress here, but the research approach which accepts the complexity of the social situation and attempts to analyse, at levels other than the superficial and the obvious. Some of the implications are most interesting. For example, the evaluations, the views and the information obviously do not stem solely from what information is available – there is plenty of political information available about the U.S.A. and France – nor for that matter, as far as we could tell, are they closely related to the *amount* of relevant viewing or reading. It seems,

then, that children come to the viewing situation with a set of predispositions about particular countries and that they attend to, perceive and interpret the information provided by the media in terms of these predispositions and expectations, and within their sets or frameworks. The possible implications of this could be even more interesting. For example, should the media present positive political information about the U.S.S.R. (admittedly unlikely), the children may not register it because they are not appropriately geared for such a positive reaction.

On the whole, most of the children turned out to be ethnocentric – trouble, "bad places", etc., are usually distanced and made remote, although without much respect for political or geographical reality. An additional point of interest when you ask the children about countries which they have never heard of, or are not sure about, they tend to say that if these countries are not seen or heard about on the news, then they must be good.

A piece of research which touches very closely on what Larry Gross was saying this morning has to do with some work that again we have done in four countries (Hungary, Denmark, Australia and Britain) on the media presentation of the family. Larry, in his work, used different conceptual frameworks and different methods, but our results square very much with his. For example, there is the under-representation of the old, the under-representation of ethnic minorities, the under-representation of the poor and the under-representation of the lower working class. The normal media family is made up of generally middle aged, middle class people.

But let us draw attention to another point. At one level the media picture does represent a distortion, but at another level it could be a very accurate representation of the distribution of power in society – a very clear representation of what is actually happen-

ing in society in relation to power.

Also it is worth noting that television has very little to say about problems associated with changes in the family or related institutions, and when problems are highlighted they tend to be interpersonal, individual problems. Solutions are also presented at the same individual personal level. They do not deal with organisational, structural or societal factors. You have here a heavy orientation towards personalising and individualising everything in terms of both the creation of problems and their solution. It is basically our own fault, and if you want to get out of it – get up and go. I would like to continue, really stimulated by what people have been saying here over the past few days, and take advantage of my wide remit and "chucker out" status, to speculate a little further and wider in terms of possible social trends which could provide a context or framework in which we might consider communication development, trend setting or trend following. So let me look at research – not just mass communication research – but other research in sociology in general, and see if I can suggest a set of even wider trends which might possibly provide indications of the parameters or frameworks within which the developments in new communication technology, so frequently referred to here, should be studied.

First, let us consider the movement of work, or certain aspects of it, away from the conventional work place so that it is no longer confined inside specific time/space frameworks, as in the past. With this change, and the development of work in the home, some degree of overlap may occur between compulsory working time and what hitherto has generally been regarded as free time within the same space. In families where this takes place, there would no longer be a clear break between work in the home and outside work. *Of course, there are families and families, and the implica-*

tions will be different in different classes and social groupings. For example, certain groups – usually relatively elite groups – already rely for vital "work" information and communication exchanges on business lunches, cocktail parties, entertainment in the home, weekend social and sporting occasions, and so on.

Secondly, we might ask if there are some indications of the beginning of the end of the school's monopoly of education – a change which might possibly lead to the development of a widespread phenomenon of self-education, and a genuine "continuing education" for which the family (*again, certain types of family*) could assume responsibility.

Signs of the gradual reduction of investment and involvement by the State in the social sector (health, housing, amenities and education), and the end of the conception of public and social services, as some of us have come to know it over the past half century, have been detected. In fact, in some countries, deliberate policies in this connection are being vigorously pursued. Where such trends develop, people might be forced to consider the possibility of finding new ways of managing social relationships, where the emphasis could be on self-organisation, self-supervision and the development of voluntary work and mutual aid systems, based on associative relationships and organisations.

The decline of party politics as we have known it in many countries, and the development of referenda on specific issues and/or in selected areas "community-chest politics", decentralisation and the growth of pressure groups is another trend which could be relevant for our work.

In some places there has been a change in emphasis from productivity to distribution and sales promotion, and this has been accompanied by a change from mass advertising to more specific targeted advertising, and an

increasing diversification of goods corresponding to a fragmentation of the consumer population.

An increasing tendency to question the conventional work/leisure opposition mythologies has been noted. There is some evidence to suggest that a reduction in compulsory working time (this seems inevitable, for one reason or another) has never yet resulted in increased leisure for the groups which are not included in formal work. The lot of some women in Western industrial societies might illustrate this in that non-working women have been said to have no real leisure because leisure cannot exist without work. It has been suggested that the belief that change and freedom can be achieved through leisure, as conventionally defined, *in opposition to work*, is mistaken. Leisure itself can only become an interesting activity, with a creative cultural and social dimension, if it stems from, is an extension of, is complementary to, and is essentially related to the main social activity, which is work.

It has also been suggested that not only is there a decline in the influence of the protestant work ethic, but also in the influence of its successor, the materialistic work ethic. The expressive work ethic, or even the non-work ethic, may have taken over, particularly with younger people who are also said to be more sceptical, questioning of authority, pessimistic, and even despondent as to what the future holds for them. But the evidence is conflicting here, and there are clear differences in attitude, both within and between societies.

It needs to be emphasised that the above points simply refer to some social trends which it has been suggested might possibly apply to a greater or lesser degree in most industrialised societies. They should be seen as examples of some of the things we should consider in what is essentially an holistic approach to research. The

list is certainly not exhaustive, but the development of communication must be examined *in these sort* of terms. I have already referred to the erosion of the public sector. Coupled with this, and motivated and driven by the same sort of forces, is the attack on the public service concept of broadcasting in Britain. This is a very serious attack, and is related to the development of the new technology. We now have an attack from some of those with vast interests in the new communication technology, who are also press magnates and use their papers in an attempt to undermine the whole idea of the BBC public service concept of broadcasting.

It is worth noting in passing that Bob White referred yesterday – quite rightly – to the peculiar situation in Britain where we have never really had a left wing newspaper – the picture is becoming increasingly unbalanced. Larry Gross also referred this morning to the idea of balance and objectivity in the media, and I would like to emphasise again the unwitting bias which is inherent in the system, and which tends to serve the system and maintain the status quo. Additionally, in more recent times there is evidence of more direct and deliberate control and bias of a clear, political nature.

I come back, Mr. Chairman, to my starting point about firebrigades and ambulances. When I was here some years ago I suggested that most of the research that was carried out was of the firebrigade or ambulance nature, and I pressed for a change. There has been a change, but not in the right direction, for even the firebrigade and ambulances are not called out so frequently, and there have been few, if any, suitable replacements. In the "perfect society" in which we live we have market forces that make sure that everything will be all right. Why should we need an ambulance – there are no sick people? Why do you need a firebrigade – there are no accidents?

In view of what I have already said, you will not be surprised to hear that I would wish to carry out research into the social implications of the new communication technologies. In fact, I am currently doing this, having obtained some funds – not adequate for a comprehensive programme by any means – from a variety of sources.

The governments are not interested in "social implications" – they have made that abundantly clear. But it is possible to obtain public funds to do service, administrative or forecasting research which speaks directly to economic and political needs and interests, as defined by the powers that be. So much for the autonomy of research. Quite simply, innovations in communication technology will be regarded as a success if they make a profit for the operators. Research that might further this end will be welcomed and funded – but research which questions and challenges some of the basic assumptions and existing policies is not likely to be favoured.

We were warned this morning by Larry Gross about the dangers which may spring from certain forms of media ownership and control, and I shall conclude by repeating and reinforcing this warning. If the new communication technologies are introduced, developed and operated according to the policies which obtain in so many of our countries, then the social consequences could be disastrous. We are already beginning to see clear evidence of the widening of the gaps, both nationally and internationally, between the information and leisure rich and the information and leisure poor, and there are other dangerous signals as well.

The signs are not very promising, but we must remember that the answers are still not entirely out of our hands. Essentially, we should all be concerned with *the basic information or communication needs of individuals and/or societies*. Neither technology nor commerce should be allowed to

determine needs. Information and communication needs should be identified and evaluated from a specific value position, and then technological development, communication policy, political and economic decisions should be formulated to meet those needs. One of our main tasks is to identify such needs, and then to do all in our power to meet them. This is no easy matter, but it represents an approach to technological development, media provision and the needs of society which is much to be preferred to the approach which stems from

an unholy mixture of technological and market determinism. It is certainly one that must be explored to the full, for there is ample evidence that basic communication needs will never be met by the unrestricted operation of market forces. The concept of "*public service*" is as essential in broadcasting as it is elsewhere. Unfortunately, at present, in most countries the signs are not good. But it is possible for us to work for change – not just change in the media, but all round change – and that is the challenge.

Boekbespreking

Melischek, G., Rosengren, K.E., Stappers, J. (ed.), *Cultural Indicators, an international symposium, Wenen, 1984. I.S.B.N. 3 7001 0589 4.*

Oesterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien.

Hedendaags cultuuronderzoek: een veelbelovend en interessant onderzoeksgebied

De bundel over culturele indicatoren geeft de lezer een goed beeld van de resultaten van recent Europees en Amerikaans cultuuronderzoek. Hij bevat bijdragen van vele onderzoekers en wetenschappers aan het "symposium on cultural indicators", dat in 1982 werd gehouden in Wenen. De nu volgende bespreking zal voornamelijk bestaan uit een samenvattend overzicht van de inhoud met slechts af en toe enig commentaar. Een dergelijke besprekingsvorm biedt de lezer in het algemeen de meeste nuttige informatie. Daar komt in dit geval nog bij, dat een eerste kennismaking met de inhoud mijns inziens zeker zal aanzetten tot verdere lezing. En dat is de bedoeling van deze iets uitvoeriger dan normaal uitgevallen boekbespreking: informatie verschaffen over de inhoud van een reader, die voor communicatiewetenschappers, cultuur- en andere sociologen alleszins de moeite van het lezen waard is.

Wat zijn culturele indicatoren?

Deze vraag komt uitvoerig aan de orde in het eerste deel van de bundel en met name in de openingsbijdrage van K.E. Rosengren. Hij onderscheidt drie soorten indicatoren. ECONOMISCHE INDICATOREN hebben betrekking op samenlevingskenmerken, die te maken hebben met de productie van goederen en diensten. In het geval van SOCIALE INDICATOREN gaat het om samenlevingskenmerken, die verband houden met de verdeling en de consumptie van goederen en diensten (de kwaliteit van het bestaan). CULTURELE INDICATOREN tenslotte hebben te maken met de cultuur van een sa-

menleving, met opvattingen en waarden, die naar voren komen uit bijvoorbeeld de inhoud der massamedia, maar ook zoals ze zich manifesteren in het gedragen en denken van personen en groepen. Dit onderscheid loopt niet parallel met de onderverdeling in maatschappelijke sectoren. Zo zijn er economische indicatoren op het gebied van de wetenschap (waar en met welke kosten wordt wetenschappelijke kennis geproduceerd?), sociale indicatoren op het gebied van de cultuur (door wie worden de theaters en musea bezocht?) en culturele indicatoren op het gebied van de economie (welke waarden beheersen het economisch leven?).

Toch is er minder duidelijkheid over wat culturele indicatoren zijn dan op het eerste gezicht lijkt. Zo zegt P.H. Tannenbaum in zijn bijdrage (onder het motto "If cultural indicators are the answer, what is the question?"), dat het sociale indicatoren onderzoek op hem de indruk maakt van een zeer actief onderzoeksgebied, waar echter een weinig samenhangende serie onderzoeken onder een noemer wordt gebracht. Je vraagt je dan af, zegt hij, wat het etiket culturele indicatoren dan nog betekent. Dit wordt bijvoorbeeld geïllustreerd door de bijdragen van R.A. Peterson c.s. en E. Hankiss c.s. Beiden geven een opsomming van drie soorten culturele indicatoren, waarbij er een is, die volgens Rosengren en de meeste andere auteurs nu net geen culturele, maar sociale indicatoren zijn. Peterson c.s. spreken van "process indicators of culture" en bedoelen daarmee allerlei gegevens over het aanbod en consumptie van culturele producten en diensten. Han-

kiss c.s. hebben het over "measures of the supply and demand of organised culture" en bedoelen daarmee dezelfde statistische gegevens over het aanbod en de distributie van cultuurgoederen. Bovendien is opvallend, dat Peterson c.s. zeer systematisch spreken over "culturele indicators" in plaats van "cultural indicators". Ook uit de bijdrage van J. Stappers (Cultural indicators: a possible source of confusion) komt naar voren, dat de betekenis van het begrip culturele indicatoren niet altijd even helder is en voor de niet-ingewijde lezer verwarrend kan werken. Het zou daarom een duidelijke verbetering zijn geweest, als de redacteurs van de bundel het conceptuele kader rondom de begrippen culturele indicatoren en cultuur apart hadden besproken in een inleiding en als de incidentele en vaak verwarrende terminologische excursies van de andere auteurs hierover zouden zijn weggelaten.

In het eerste deel van de bundel wordt eveneens de vraag aan de orde gesteld waar het cultuuronderzoek zich mee bezig houdt. Binnen de onderzoekstraditie van de sociale indicatoren wordt onderscheid gemaakt tussen de objectieve en subjectieve sociale indicatoren. Daarmee wordt bedoeld, dat naast bijvoorbeeld gegevens over de feitelijke voorzieningen in de gezondheidszorg over de meningen, de tevredenheid of ontevredenheid van mensen over deze voorzieningen van belang zijn. Uit onderzoek blijkt, dat daar vaak een grote discrepantie tussen bestaat. Welvaart, de objectieve kwaliteit van het bestaan wordt lang niet altijd ervaren als welzijn, als subjectieve kwaliteit van het bestaan. Deze opvallende discrepantie kan volgens Rosengren verklaard worden door in het onderzoek naar de kwaliteit van het bestaan culturele indicatoren te betrekken. De perceptie en evaluatie door mensen van objectieve sociale condities wordt bepaald door de cultuur van een samenleving, door de opvattingen en waarden, die mensen er op nahouden. Daarom vormt de studie van culturele indicatoren een

noodzakelijke aanvulling van het onderzoek naar de kwaliteit van het bestaan.

Binnen de cultuur van een samenleving kunnen twee aspecten worden onderscheiden: cultuur als bovenindividueel systeem van opvattingen en waarden en cultuur als de wijze, waarop deze opvattingen en waarden zich manifesteren in het concrete denken en doen van mensen in een samenleving. Hieraan aansluitend worden in het cultuuronderzoek twee invalshoeken onderscheiden, namelijk de sociaal-georiënteerde benadering (message system analysis) en de individueel-georiënteerde benadering. Over de eerstgenoemde invalshoek handelt deel 2 van deze bundel onder de titel "Analysis of culture: messages", terwijl in deel 4 (Analysis of culture: populations) individueel-georiënteerde studies aan bod komen. Dit onderscheid heeft ook een methodische component. Binnen de sociaal-georiënteerde benadering wordt voornamelijk gebruik gemaakt van inhoudsanalyse, terwijl het individueel-georiënteerde cultuuronderzoek merendeels is gebaseerd op gegevens uit grootschalig surveyonderzoek. In deel 3 (Cultivation analysis: effects and consequences) komt de derde invalshoek binnen het cultuuronderzoek aan de orde. De daar besproken studies houden zich bezig met de invloed van de culturele omgeving op de waarden en opvattingen van mensen in die omgeving. Via deze zogenoemde cultivatie-analyse wordt dus gepoogd een brug te slaan tussen de sociaal- en individueel-georiënteerde benadering. Deze drie richtingen binnen het cultuuronderzoek komen zoals gezegd aan de orde in de diverse delen van de bundel en worden in het volgende kort besproken.

De sociaal-georiënteerde benadering

Via de bijdrage van N. Reynders en H. Bouwman worden we erop attent gemaakt, dat er binnen de sociaal-georiënteerde benadering twee ver-

schillende tradities bestaan, namelijk de "mass communication approach" (G. Gerbner e.a.) en de "broad sociological approach" (K.E. Rosengren, J.Z. Namenwirth, R.P. Weber). Gerbner e.a. beschouwen de moderne massamedia als de belangrijkste instituties voor cultuuroverdracht, te vergelijken met de centrale rol, die in een vroegere periode de kerk en het gezin in dit opzicht speelden. De massamedia en met name de televisie zijn volgens deze traditie dan ook de meest kenmerkende instituties van een nieuw cultureel tijdperk. Vandaar dat deze richting zich vooral bezig houdt met de analyse van de inhoud van tv-programma's als voorbereiding voor het onderzoek naar de invloed daarvan op het wereldbeeld van de kijker (cultivatie-analyse). Het onderzoek van Rosengren e.a. (de "broad sociological approach") houdt zich bezig met de bestudering van trends en veranderingen in het algemene culturele klimaat van een samenleving. Men probeert vervolgens deze trends in verband te brengen met sociale en economische veranderingen. Deze laatste richting houdt zich vooral bezig met de inhoudsanalyse van geschreven documenten (kranten, troonredes e.d.), terwijl de "mass communication approach" zich voornamelijk concentreert op het medium televisie.

De meeste studies in dit deel van de bundel stammen uit de bovengenoemde brede sociologische invalshoek. Daartoe behoren vijf bijdragen van onderzoekers uit de Zweedse school rondom Rosengren, die zich in een gezamenlijk onderzoeksproject hebben bezig gehouden met veranderingen in het culturele klimaat van het naoorlogse Zweden. Met cultureel klimaat wordt dan bedoeld de collectieve opvattingen over allerlei zaken zoals die naar voren komen in de kranten van die tijd. Zo proberen E. Block en K. Goldmann op het spoor te komen van de veranderingen in de publieke opinie over respectievelijk de binnenlandse en buitenlandse politiek van Zweden. Block constateert een duidelijke

verschuiving van rechts naar links in het binnenlandse politieke klimaat en een toenemende aandacht voor de milieuproblematiek. Goldmann laat zien, dat de Zweedse publieke opinie over de buitenlandse politiek op het einde van de zestiger jaren drastische veranderingen ondergaat. Met name constateert hij een toename van internationalisme en radicalisme, dat wil zeggen toenemende aandacht voor de noord-zuid problematiek en een groeiende solidariteit met ver verwijderde landen. Deze veranderingen lopen parallel met de in de zestiger jaren plaatsvindende ontspanning tussen Oost en West.

P. Block maakt melding van een seculariseringstrend in het culturele klimaat van Zweden, ook weer in de zestiger jaren. Deze conclusie is gebaseerd op de constatering, dat in de Zweedse kranten steeds minder religieus geladen woorden en symbolen voorkomen. Door vergelijking met de gegevens van zijn collega-onderzoekers komt hij bovendien tot de conclusie, dat deze secularisering samenhangt met een bredere radicalisering van het culturele klimaat en met een stijging van de welvaart en het opleidingsniveau. Vanuit de gedachte, dat advertenties een spiegel zijn van de cultuur van een samenleving probeert K. Nowak via de analyse van advertenties veranderingen in het culturele klimaat op te sporen. Zo constateert hij een egalitaire trend door te laten zien, dat in advertenties steeds minder vaak de sociaal-economische positie van de erin voorkomende personen kan worden vastgesteld, dat de aangeprezen producten steeds minder worden geassocieerd met prestige en dat in advertentieteksten het gebruik van de jij-vorm toeneemt en dat van de u-vorm afneemt. Ook een verandering van geslachtsrollen is duidelijk aanwijsbaar, in zoverre bijvoorbeeld in advertenties vaker buitenshuis werkende vrouwen voorkomen en mannen vaker worden geassocieerd met huishoudelijk werk. Kortom, het culturele klimaat in Zweden is volgens Nowak meer egalitair

en vrouwvriendelijk geworden. K.E. Rosengren tenslotte rapporteert over een onderzoek van de literaire kritieken in de Zweedse kranten. Hij probeert het referentiekader van de literatuurkritiek op te sporen door na te gaan, naar welke schrijvers uit welke literaire periode het meest wordt verwezen.

Naast deze Zweedse studies behoort ook de bijdrage van R.P. Weber tot de brede sociologische benadering. Zijn onderzoek betreft de causale relatie tussen economische conjunctuurschommelingen en de culturele aandacht voor rijkdom en welvaart. Via LISREL brengt hij gegevens over de economische conjunctuur in verband met de aandacht, die in de duitse Kaisertoespraken tussen 1871 en 1912 wordt besteed aan welvaart en rijkdom. Neergaande schommelingen (deceleratie) blijken te leiden tot een sterkere nadruk op rijkdom, terwijl acceleratie een geringere aandacht daarvoor tot gevolg heeft.

De "mass communication approach" binnen de sociaal-georiënteerde benadering is ook vertegenwoordigd, maar minder uitgebreid. Een onderzoekster van de Annenberg School of Communications (N. Signorielli) rapporteert over een onderzoek naar de demografie van de televisiewereld. Zij komt tot de conclusie, dat deze nogal afwijkt van de feitelijke demografische structuur van de Amerikaanse samenleving. De tv-wereld wordt gedomineerd door een relatief groot aantal blanke mannen van middelbare leeftijd, met interessante beroepen en zonder binding aan een gezin of echtgenote. Kortom, de tv-wereld wordt gekenmerkt door patronen van over- en ondervetegenwoordiging, die voornamelijk te maken hebben met geslacht en ras.

In twee bijdragen uit respectievelijk Nederland en Duitsland wordt de vraag aan de orde gesteld, of deze Amerikaanse manier van inhoudsanalyse van tv-programma's kan worden toegepast in andere landen. De Nederlandse studie van H. Bouwman en

J. Stappers gaat over de toepassing van Gerbner's index van geweld in de Nederlandse situatie. Zij komen tot de conclusie, dat de toepassing van deze methode van geweld-analyse nogal problematisch is in een niet-Amerikaanse culturele setting. Dat uit het Nederlandse onderzoek bijvoorbeeld naar voren komt, dat de NOS en de EO de meest gewelddadige programma's uitzenden illustreert dit voldoende. Geen zinnig mens zal een dergelijke uitkomst probleemloos accepteren. De Amerikaanse methode is kennelijk niet geschikt om de ideologische context van het getoonde geweld te achterhalen. Dit is niet zo belangrijk voor de Amerikaanse situatie, waar de programma's van alle tv-stations gedomineerd worden door actie en avontuur. In Nederland is de ideologische context wel belangrijk, omdat in ons gedifferentieerd omroepbestel de programmering veel gevarieerder is.

G. Bock houdt zich in haar bijdrage bezig met de toepasbaarheid van Gerbner's methode van boodschap-analyse op Duitse tv-programma's. Zij plaatst daarbij de kanttekening, dat het uiteindelijk gaat om een Amerikaans meetinstrument. Daarom is het mogelijk, dat de onderzoeksresultaten die ermee worden verkregen, eerder wijzen op de aanwezigheid van Amerikaanse patronen in een niet-Amerikaanse cultuur dan op wat specifiek is voor de Duitse programma's. Zij pleit dan ook voor een soort herijking van het Amerikaanse meetinstrument, voordat het elders wordt toegepast.

De massamedia en het individu

In het derde deel van de bundel gaat het over de vraag, of en op welke manier de waarden en normen zoals die naar voren komen in de massamedia het wereldbeeld van de gebruikers van deze media beïnvloeden. De belangrijkste traditie binnen deze tak van het cultuuronderzoek is die van de Annenberg School of Communications in Philadelphia (G. Gerbner e.a.). De bijdragen in dit deel hebben dan ook alle-

maal direct of indirect te maken met deze onderzoekstraditie. De vier artikelen van de medewerkers aan het zogenaamde "Cultural Indicators Project" van de zojuist genoemde Annenberg School of Communications (G. Gerbner, L. Gross, M. Morgan en N. Rothschild) hebben een gemeenschappelijke uitgangsthese, namelijk dat de inhoud van tv-programma's het wereldbeeld van intensieve kijkers sterk beïnvloedt. Binnen deze zogenaamde cultivatie-hypothese speelt het begrip "cultivation differential" een centrale rol. Hiermee wordt bedoeld het (percentage)verschil tussen regelmatige en onregelmatige kijkers, dat kiest voor of zich conformeert aan de waarden en opvattingen, die in de bekeken tv-programma's een dominerende rol spelen. In de betreffende vier artikelen worden onder andere de volgende specifieke opvattingen besproken: klassebewustzijn, politieke opvattingen (anti-communisme en vrijheid van meningsuiting), opvattingen over minderheidsgroepen en gevoelens van onveiligheid en angst voor geweld. Enkele onderzoeksresultaten zijn de moeite van het vermelden waard.

De invloed van televisie kijken manifesteert zich in die zin, dat zware kijkers vaker "conservatieve" waarden en opvattingen huldigen dan lichte kijkers. De invloed van tv-programma's werkt in het algemeen dus in conservatieve richting. Zo constateert Gross bijvoorbeeld, dat regelmatige kijkers een negatiever beeld van negers en homoseksuelen hebben dan onregelmatige kijkers.

Het verschil tussen zware en lichte kijkers (cultivation differential) is het grootst bij die sociale categorieën, die het sterkst afwijken van het dominante conservatieve patroon. Dat zijn o.a. politiek vooruitstrevende personen (liberals), hoog opgeleiden en jongeren. Als deze groepen vaak tv kijken worden ze als het ware gedreven in de richting van de conservatieve "mainstream". Het gevolg is, dat bij zware

kijkers de verschillen in opvatting op basis van politieke instelling, opleidingsniveau en leeftijd minder worden en vaak zelfs helemaal verdwijnen. Behalve een conservatieve invloed heeft tv kijken dus ook een nivellerende werking ("mainstreaming").

Het regelmatig zien van tv-geweld leidt tot versterking van gevoelens van angst en onveiligheid. Deze samenhang is echter sterker bij groepen, die een lage plaats innemen in de machtsstructuur van de tv-wereld en vaak als slachtoffer worden afgeschilderd (o.a. vrouwen). Bij groepen daarentegen, die worden uitgebeeld als machtig en geweldtoebrengend (o.a. mannen), is dat veel minder het geval. Dit zogenaamde "resonance" of "confirmation"-mechanisme wordt door Morgan treffend geïllustreerd door de uitspraak, dat kennelijk de juiste mensen de juiste lessen leren.

De invloed van tv kijken is afhankelijk van het patroon van sociale relaties van de kijker. In het algemeen zijn sociaal geïsoleerde kijkers meer gevoelig voor deze invloed dan degenen, wier kijkgedrag is ingebed in een of andere groepsrelatie. Zo constateert Rothschild, dat kinderen, die deel uitmaken van vriendengroepjes, minder gevoelig zijn voor de stereotyperende invloed van de televisie op de geslachtsrollen dan sociaal geïsoleerde kinderen.

Deze laatste constatering van Rothschild betekent in feite een relativering van het gegeven "frequentie" van tv kijken. Een dergelijke relativering komt ook naar voren in het artikel van E. Hedinson en S. Windahl, die verslag doen van een cultivatie-studie in Zweden. Volgens hen ligt aan het gebruik van pure kijkfrequentie als onderzoeksgegeven de onjuiste veronderstelling ten grondslag, dat tv kijken een niet-selektieve en passieve bezigheid is. Zij pleiten dan ook voor een aanvulling met gegevens over de mate van betrokkenheid bij de bekeken tv-programma's. Uit hun causale analyse (via LISREL) blijkt bijvoorbeeld, dat kijkfrequentie slechts fungeert als in-

terveniërende variabele tussen achtergrondkenmerken en attitudes, terwijl de mate van betrokkenheid bij programma's een directe invloed heeft op de onderzochte opvattingen. Op basis van deze uitkomst bepleiten ze meer aandacht voor de "actieve" kant van het kijkgedrag.

Ook het verslag van een Nederlands cultivatie-onderzoek (H. Bouwman) is aanleiding om de kijkfrequentie als centraal onderzoeksgegeven sterk te relativiseren. Frekwent tv kijken blijkt in Nederland niet te leiden tot sterkere gevoelens van angst en onveiligheid en tot negatievere opvattingen over de sociale werkelijkheid. De theorie van Gerbner heeft, aldus Bouwman, slechts een beperkte waarde voor de Nederlandse situatie. Waarom? Allereerst is in Nederland de televisie niet de belangrijkste bron van informatie over de sociale realiteit. Het aanbod van programma's is veel geringer, zodat de mogelijkheid om even vaak naar de televisie te kijken als in Amerika eenvoudigweg niet bestaat. Op de tweede plaats zijn er belangrijke verschillen in de wijze van programmering. In het Nederlandse omroepbestel wordt de kijker geconfronteerd met een gevarieerd programma bestaande uit informatie, kunst, drama, amusement en sport. Zware kijkers zien daarom bijvoorbeeld niet alleen meer drama en amusement, maar ook meer informatieve en culturele programma's. Het verschil tussen lichte en zware kijkers betekent in Nederland daarom heel iets anders en waarschijnlijk ook veel minder dan in Amerika. In combinatie met de eerder genoemde bevindingen van Stappers en Bouwman over de inhoudsanalyse van Nederlandse tv-programma's lijkt de conclusie gerechtvaardigd, dat de toepassing van Gerbner's onderzoeksbenadering en meetinstrumenten op de Nederlandse situatie zeer veel vragen en problemen oproept.

De individueel-georiënteerde benadering

De individueel-georiënteerde benadering in het cultuuronderzoek houdt zich, zoals gezegd, bezig met waarden en opvattingen, met cultuur, voorzover die is neergeslagen in het denken en doen van concrete mensen. Stond in de sociaal-georiënteerde benadering de inhoudsanalyse centraal, nu komen we terecht in de sfeer van het grootschalig surveyonderzoek. De belangrijkste bijdragen in dit deel zijn die van E. Hankiss c.s. en R. Inglehart.

De eerstgenoemden rapporteren over een crossculturele vergelijking van Hongarije en de Verenigde Staten. Op basis van twee waardenstudies, met behulp van het meetinstrument van Rokeach, komen ze tot de conclusie, dat in beide landen weliswaar een moderniseringsproces plaats vindt, maar dat dit in Amerika veel langzamer verloopt dan in Hongarije. Dit moderniseringsproces houdt in een verschuiving van traditionele gemeenschapswaarden in de richting van intellectuele, seculiere en pragmatische waarden. In Amerika verloopt dit proces, zoals gezegd, veel langzamer, zodanig zelfs, dat daar bij de jongste leeftijdsgroepen sprake is van een omkering in de richting van traditionele gemeenschapswaarden. Dit wijst volgens de auteurs ofwel op demodernisering ofwel op de overgang naar – wat Inglehart noemt – "post-industriële of post-materialistische waarden.

In Hongarije daarentegen constateren ze een geforceerd "overmoderniseringsproces", dat ze betitelen als negatieve modernisering.

Inglehart begint zijn bijdrage over culturele veranderingen in Japan met een overzicht van zijn onderzoekingen in West-Europa. Daaruit blijkt volgens hem, dat in de huidige West-Europese cultuur zonder enige twijfel de tegenstelling tussen materialistische en postmaterialistische waarden een belangrijke rol speelt en dat de toemende nadruk op postmaterialistische

waarden meer is dan een oppervlakkig modeverschijnsel zoals de Engelse onderzoeker A. Marsh beweert. Ten aanzien van Japan komt hij o.a. tot de conclusie, dat daar zijn meetinstrument niet in dezelfde vorm gebruikt kan worden, omdat sommige postmaterialistische waarden in de Japanse kontekst deel uitmaken van het momenteel langzaam afbrokkelende preïndustriële Japanse waardensysteem. Kennelijk is de inhoudelijke opvulling van Maslow's behoeftentheorie, waarop de theorie van Inglehart is gebaseerd, cultureel bepaald. Groepsbinding en groepssolidariteit refereren in Japan niet aan postmaterialistische, maar aan centrale waarden uit de Japanse preïndustriële samenleving. Daarom betekent de toename van postmaterialisme in de Japanse kontekst inhoudelijk iets anders, namelijk alleen maar een toename van de be-

hoefte aan individuele zelfverwerkelijking zonder een groeiende nadruk op groepsbinding en solidariteit.

De bundel wordt afgesloten met een voor niet-ingewijden moeilijk leesbaar artikel van J. Lohmoller en H. Wold over causale analysemethoden. Daarin wordt LISREL vergeleken met een andere methode, namelijk PLS (partial least square). Deze methodiek wordt door de uitvinders ervan aangeduid als "soft modeling", hetgeen betekent, dat een aantal van de strikte veronderstellingen van LISREL onder andere over de verdeling der variabelen niet wordt gehanteerd. Opvallend is dat toepassing van "soft modeling" op het bovengenoemde onderzoeksmateriaal van Weber leidde tot minder goede resultaten dan de toepassing van LISREL.

Jan Peters

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VSOM – JAARVERGADERING EN DISCUSSIE-MIDDAG OVER JONGEREN EN MEDIA

Op *vrijdag 4 oktober* a.s. houdt de VSOM een bijeenkomst, waarin gesproken en gediscussieerd zal worden over het onderwerp

Wat doen jongeren met media, wat krijgen ze aangeboden en wat kopen ze ervoor?

VOORAFGAAND AAN DEZE BIJEENKOMST ZAL DE JAARVERGADERING VAN DE VERENIGING GEHOUDEN WORDEN

Tijdens de studie-middag komen de volgende inleiders aan het woord:

Drs. Paul Rutten, Instituut voor Massacommunicatie, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, zal het thema kort inleiden, de sprekers introduceren en als voorzitter fungeren.

Dhr. Hans Elzinga, hoofd marktonderzoek van Admedia bv (VNU) zal op basis van het onlangs afgeronde Nationaal Onderzoek Jongerenbladen '85 en soortgelijke onderzoeken uit het verleden een overzicht geven van ontwikkelingen in het media-gebruik door jongeren.

Dr. Peter Ester, hoofd afdeling rapportage en advies van het Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, zal vanuit het onlangs bij het SCP verschenen rapport "Jongeren in de jaren tachtig" ingaan op de positie van jongeren in Nederland en hun verschillende levensstijlen.

Dhr. Boudewijn Klap, hoofd jongeren-programma's van de Interkerkelijke Omroep Nederland, zal een schets geven van het ontstaan en de ontwikkeling van het verschijnsel jongerenprogramma's, uitmondend in een beschrijving van de doelstelling van waaruit en de manier waarop er momenteel bij de IKON jongerenprogramma's worden gemaakt.

Vervolgens zal er in discussie met de zaal verder op het thema in gegaan worden.