

Förord

Den 17:e Nordiska Konferensen för Medie- och Kommunikationsforskning ägde rum i Aalborg, den 11-14 augusti 2005. Vård för konferensen var den danska forskarföreningen *Sammenslutningen af Medieforskere i Danmark* (SMID) och Institut for Kommunikation vid det Humanistiske Fakultet vid Aalborg Universitet. Drygt 320 forskare från Danmark (66), Finland (22), Island (2), Norge (77) och Sverige (65) samlades för att diskutera pågående forskning och forskningsresultat. I konferensen deltog även forskare från länder utanför Norden, t ex från de baltiska länderna, Tyskland, Österrike, Storbritannien, Etiopien, Kanada och USA.

Konferensen innefattade möten i arbetsgrupper, plenarsessioner och en rad sociala och kulturella programpunkter. De nordiska konferenserna är av mycket stort värde för utvecklingen av medie- och kommunikationsforskningen i de enskilda nordiska länderna.

Medier og global kultur	Sprog og retorik i medierne
Mediernes struktur og økonomi	Mediernes konstruktion av køn
Medialisering af religion og kultur	Public relation/planlagt kommunikation
Mediehistorie	Medieret risiko-, krise- og krigskommunikation
Filmhistorie	Digital tekst: genre, form og proces
TV: Institution, produktion og tekst	Digital kultur: nye samværs- og kommunikationsformer
Radio og andre lydmedier	Medier og etniske minoriteter
Politisk kommunikation	Medie- og kommunikationsteori: forskning og discipliner
Journalistikforskning	Intimideringskommunikation
Nyhedsformidlingens sosiologi og æstetik	Markedskommunikation og æstetik
Mediebrug: perspektiv, metode og teori	Medieudvikling
Børn, unge og medier	Computerspil
Mediepædagogik	Interaktivt TV
Film- og TV-fiktion	
Visuel kultur	

Konferensens *arbetsgrupper* är i detta avseende särskilt viktiga. Närmare 240 papers presenterades och diskuterades denna gång i 28 olika arbetsgrupper:

Detta nummer av *Nordicom-Information* innehåller konferensens plenaranföranden samt redovisning av presenterade papers. I skriften ingår också en deltagarlista. På grundval av konferensen har ett antal papers omarbetats till artiklar för publicering på engelska i en särskild antologi utgiven av Nordicom (*Nordicom Review* 2/2004, special issue) i syfte att visa på den nordiska medieforskningens bredd och fördjupning.

Ansaret för genomförandet av de nordiska konferenserna är tvådelat. Övergripande frågor som konferenstema, talare i plenum, arbetsgrupper samt deltagaravgift behandlas av

en nordisk planeringskommitté, som inför konferensen i Aalborg bestod av Anne Jerslev, SMID (ordförande), Leif-Ove Larsen, NML; Thorbjörn Broddason, Islands universitet; Inka Salovaara-Moring, TOY; Mats Ekström, FSMK och Ulla Carlsson, Nordicom. Det är de nationella forskarföreningarna som utser representanterna i denna grupp.

För arrangemang och genomförande av konferensen svarade en lokal planeringskommitté bestående av Gunhild Agger (ordförande), Peter Allingham, Janne Bang, Christian Jantzen, Ole Prehn, Tove Arendt-Rasmussen, Henrik Sand och Jørgen Stigel från Universitetet i Aalborg. Henrik Sand fungerade som koordinator för konferensens alla delar.

Nästa nordiska konferens äger rum i Finland 16-19 augusti 2007.

Göteborg i maj 2006

Ulla Carlsson
Nordicom

Challenges of the New Symbolic Order

The 17th Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research

GUNHILD AGGER

Good afternoon. On behalf of SMID, the Danish Association of Media Researchers, I'd like to welcome you all to Aalborg University. The occasion is pleasant. The conference of media researchers from the Nordic countries has become a meeting place we would have to invent, if we didn't have it. Generally, media research in our countries is carried out on a high level. Media research as well as the societies and cultures it refers to have a lot in common. But it also implies a sufficient number of striking and eye opening dissimilarities. This is why comparison between the Nordic countries is always an inspiring undertaking.

The list of participants displays a lot of veterans – and quite a few newcomers. Welcome to both categories. Fortunately, it is not so simple, that the vets only serve the noble purpose of continuity and the newcomers the purpose of renewal. If I can rely on the clues in the abstracts, tradition and innovation are mixed among the participants and cross the generations.

What a summer! Suicide bombers in London in July, reminding us of Madrid last year in March. Thanks to surveillance cameras, the bombers didn't remain anonymous, but the first team remained dead – just as the team in Madrid killed themselves before they were arrested. An efficient way of stopping dialogue. Unwilling to state their aim, reluctant to claim any kind of responsibility for their actions, death becomes the only message. This message was repeated in Sharm-el-Sheik. And indeed in Musayyib, Iraq. Only, the last mentioned attack didn't receive much attention in the media. What's new? This suicide bombing resembled so many others in Iraq, only it was worse.

Following the line from 9/11, action has replaced reasoning, violence has substituted arguments. Suddenly, we are forced to acknowledge that the days when hi-jacking and threats were accompanied by messages in words are over. Words are not met with appreciation by these groups. How very odd! However savage and inexcusable the actions of the Baader-Meinhof-group were during the 1970es, they were easier to understand than this language of sudden violence in the tube, a railway station, a holiday resort or a market place. The message, of course, is clear – even if it is not expressed in words: the war in Afghanistan or Iraq will spread to the rest of the world. Destruction, consequently, will be conducted anywhere. Don't feel safe – ever! The new symbolic order of sudden death-bringing action is both cruel and real.

In this situation, it is a challenge to keep up circumstantial, scientific analysis – of the news, of the images and representations of events, the rhetoric, the victims, of the criminals and their possible motives, backgrounds and contexts. This challenge has been met

by participants of the conference, e.g. in research on 'War and consequence' (in connection with the war in Iraq), 'the Politics of fear', 'Reporting the Crusade' and the representation of ethnical otherness in the media.

Does this mean that priority should be given to analysis of facts? Of course not. Shortly, even the events of 9/11 will be represented on film. It will be split up in hundreds of dramas, and it will influence people's perception of 9/11 and its context worldwide. Negotiations will be carried out, introducing various perspectives and alternative interpretations.

Besides, everyday life continues as it always did, and so do all the genres connected to it – from *Extreme Makeover* to *Changing Rooms*, *The Weakest Link* and all sorts of drama and reality shows conveyed on television, discussed in everyday conversation and a major source of comments in the printed media. Such genres even seem to thrive. What does this express about the popular culture and the divides in our societies? Which limits between public and private life are still to be respected? The ethical questions arising from all sorts of reality programmes are evident.

Another recent object of research is the experience economy, a much hyped phenomenon that may have positive effects on the economy of the humanities. To know more about the consequences, we direct our attention to this phenomenon. Obviously, this demands an interdisciplinary approach.

This leads me to a few comments on the theoretical context of this conference and its connections to the last conference. According to Arild Fetweit, one of the key concepts behind the conference programme in Kristiansand two years ago aimed at 'rectifying' some of the 'in-balances' between scholars from the humanities and the sociologists. This ambition, one could argue, had already begun in Reykjavik. In the reflections on both media history and the media of the future, a combination of research traditions played a dominant part. The Kristiansand conference however, succeeded in drawing more attention to research areas essential to the humanities such as rhetorics in media studies, the globalisation of language, and the questions of digital aesthetics.

This left the planning committee in Aalborg with a problem. Which challenges should we build into the conference programme? On one hand, we wanted to continue what had begun in Kristiansand. On the other hand, we would also like to contribute to the further development of common critical reflection. The result was the theme *Media Research – Demarcations and Interfaces*. We have often disagreed on the relevance of themes, theories and methods. We have even disagreed on the subject whether such a thing as *media research* existed, whether it contained a common kernel, or whether the concept of media research just should be understood as an umbrella! Instead of focusing on the disagreements, we invite you to discuss all the options inherent in the concepts of demarcations and interfaces.

The programme aims at highlighting some of these demarcations and interfaces, such as the role of information in contemporary society, questions of method in constructing the digital object, design as an approach to media research, the impact of sound and silence in the media, the new conditions of public service and TV entertainment – and the reality of media research.

We have provided a frame. It is up to you to fill it in. You are the conference.

Socio-Digital Formations

Constructing an Object of Study

SASKIA SASSEN

One of the distinctive capabilities of computer-centered technologies is the rescaling of social relations and domains. What has tended to operate or be nested at local scales can now move to global scales, and global relations and domains can now, in turn, become directly articulated with local settings. As a result of the growing presence and use of these technologies, an increasing range of social relations and domains have become, *de facto*, transboundary. Understanding the place of these new computer-centered technologies and the ways in which they are transforming social relationships is the focus of an initiative launched by the Social Science Research Council in 2000 to contribute to the development of a social science of information technology (IT). The SSRC initiative aims at a specific component of this broad agenda for research on and conceptualization of IT, one that focuses on the work of constructing the object of research that speaks to social scientists as opposed to, for instance, computer engineers.¹

This task presents several challenges for social scientists. We – SSRC’s Committee on Information Technology and International Cooperation – decided to address two of these. One involves avoiding technological determinism or limiting research to the “impacts” of information technology on existing social arrangements. In a nutshell our concern with respect to this issue was to recognize that these technologies have contributed to construct whole new domains of interaction. To gain some closure on the effort, we confined our focus to computer-centered interactive technology and to interactive electronic information and communication structures. A second challenge is to go beyond what is one of the most evident and powerful capabilities that these technologies bring to interactive domains: decentralized access. In practical terms this has meant the possibility of reaching far more people – as consumers, as students, as activists – and firms and institutions. But these technologies evince at least two other basic capabilities that we need to factor into social science research. One is interconnectivity (i.e., each point of access can interact directly with all other such points) and the other, simultaneity (same-time transacting). In combination with the first, these two capabilities have it in them to produce significant qualitative transformations in communication and information structures.

Qualitative Transformations: Two Examples

In my own research, I find electronic financial markets to be a good illustration of such a qualitative transformation that comes about when all three capabilities – decentralized access, interconnectivity, and simultaneity – are in play. One of the key and most significant outcomes of digital technology in finance has been the jump in orders of magnitude and the extent of worldwide interconnectedness. There are basically three ways in which digitization has contributed to this outcome. One is the use of sophisticated software, a key feature of the global financial markets today and a condition that in turn has made possible an enormous amount of innovation. Second, the distinctive features of digital networks can maximize the implications of global market integration by producing the possibility of simultaneous interconnected flows and transactions, as well as decentralized access for investors and for exchanges in a growing number of countries. The key background factor here is that since the late 1980s, the trend has been for more and more countries to de- and re-regulate their economies according to a particular set of criteria that has ensured cross-border convergence, the linking of different markets, and the global integration of their financial centers. Third, because finance is particularly about transactions rather than simple flows of money, the technical properties of digital networks assume added meaning. Interconnectivity, simultaneity, decentralized access, and software instruments all contribute to multiply the number of transactions, the length of transaction chains (i.e., distance between instrument and underlying asset), and thereby the number of participants. The overall outcome is a complex architecture of transactions. These three features of today's global market for capital are inextricably related to the new technologies.

As this example makes clear, new technologies are partly embedded in institutional environments that have the power to inscribe such technology. As a result the outcome does not reflect exclusively the features of the particular technology at work. One focus of the work of the SSRC's efforts to develop a social science of information technology (IT) has been to capture the interactions between the technical and social logics at work in producing distinctive outcomes across different social contexts in which information technologies are used. These new technologies have had a deeply transformative effect but they do not dislodge the fact that a substantive agenda organizes market actors. Today's global capital market is a complex formation markedly different from earlier global financial markets partly because of its extensive digitization. But digitization does not replace the financial, as different from digitization, logic driving actors even as it changes the composition of their options. Finance remains embedded in a larger set of economic institutions. The global capital market is a particularly helpful case for examining these dynamics of transformation and embeddedness.

Electronic activist networks provide a contrasting example of the transformative potential of information technologies, illustrating how the local can become embedded in the non-local, specifically global networks and global agendas. Through their practices, these local but globally connected activists are developing a particular type of global politics, one that runs through localities and is not predicated on the existence of global institutions. Simultaneous decentralized access can help local actors have a sense of participation in struggles that are not necessarily global, but are globally distributed in that they occur in locality after locality. Computer-centered interactive technologies facilitate multi-scalar transactions and simultaneous interconnectivity among those confined largely to a locality.²

Both of these instances are examples of scaling that incorporate all three capabilities of computer interactive technologies. They suggest that the scale-up of such technologies is not simply a matter of reaching larger numbers of people, but has the potential to transform social structures and relationships. The SSRC's effort to construct a different type of object for research from those that are typical in the social sciences might also be of interest to researchers in other fields pursuing innovative ways of using these technologies. For example, "grid technology" that makes possible scientific collaboration discussed by Foster and Kesselman would seem to factor in all three capabilities of IT.

The SSRC Project: Specifying the Problem

SSRC's project on information technology is designed to capture the distinctiveness and variable weight of computer-centered interactive technologies in a broad range of electronic communication and information structures.³ A key objective is the development of analytic categories that would allow the researcher to factor in this variability.⁴ Models centered on technology as the explanatory variable – a common choice – can capture intensity of impact (weak, strong) but cannot adequately capture other features of this variability (e.g., the formation of new interactive domains). Understanding the place of these new computer-centered technologies and their capabilities from a social science perspective requires avoiding a purely technological interpretation and recognizing the embeddedness and the variable outcomes of these technologies for different economic, political, and social orders. They can indeed be constitutive of new social dynamics, but they can also be derivative or merely reproduce older conditions. Further, while some of their capabilities are distinct and exclusive to these technologies, others simply amplify the effects of older technologies.

Methodologically, this concern required us to go beyond the notion that understanding these technologies can be reduced to the question of impacts. There is a growing literature that examines the impacts of these technologies on specific domains long constructed as objects of study by the various social sciences.⁵ But impacts are only one of several forms of intersection of society and technology. Others have to do with the constitution of whole new socio-technical interactive domains – what we call digital formations – which in turn need to be constructed as objects of study. This means examining the specific ways in which these technologies are embedded in (often very specialized) distinct contexts. And it requires examining the mediating cultures that organize the relation between these technologies and users – among which we might include matters as diverse as gendering or the utility logics that organize use. These mediating cultures can be quite diverse and particular; for example, when the objective is control and surveillance, the practices and dispositions involved are likely to be different from those involved in using electronic markets or engaging in large-scale computer based conversations.

If these technologies can transform existing, and even constitute whole new interactive domains, we cannot confine the analytic development of this field of inquiry to framing analyses in terms of independent and dependent variables, by far the most common approach in the social sciences. We also need to develop analytic categories able to capture formations that incorporate into one entity what would be conceived of as mutually exclusive conditions or attributes in the independent-dependent variable framing, a subject I return to later.

How We Went about Specifying Computer-Centered Interactive Settings

We established what we might call disciplining conditions for executing the second step of our project: specifying the properties of actual interactive settings. First, we confined our project to electronically structured interactive domains.⁶ Second, we selected actually operating domains, rather than simulated environments, since we were not interested in game-theoretic models but wanted to understand the properties of actual interactive settings, including their possibly erratic character. Finally, we narrowed the choice of researchers and foci for analysis to a specific substantive field: interactive domains that are or are becoming part of the world of transnational and international relations.

Proceeding inductively seemed the most effective option given our aim of understanding key features of actual working domains in order to develop an analytic category or model that could then be used for examining other such electronic interactive domains. Since one of our key concerns is to get at the properties of new interactive domains made possible by these technologies, we decided to focus on multiple and very diverse empirical instances of such interactive domains. To that end we selected researchers (both social scientists and computer scientists) working on, among other topics, large-scale Internet-based conversations; global communication systems of major multinational corporations; early conflict warning systems; electronic financial markets; electronic activist networks; knowledge spaces; and open source software development communities. These are all interactive domains structured electronically, and they are all actual empirical cases.

One way of addressing our concerns in the project was to emphasize the variable interaction between the diverse capabilities (technical and social) involved. First, we defined as technical capabilities those endogenous to electronic information and communication structures. Insofar as these interactive electronic structures involve people (there are those that do not), we defined them as containing endogenized social logics directly affecting the transactions – for example, rationales and utility functions of users, whether traders, open source software developers, or the other actors the project focuses on. Each of the domains we selected contains a specific type of interaction between endogenous technical capabilities and endogenized social logics. Second, we recognized that the weight of each the technical or the social will vary according to the domain and according to the cumulative causation or path dependence (i.e., closing out the full range of possibilities that may have existed at time one) set in motion with each of these combinations.⁷ The particular techniques and methods to be deployed to capture this variability will depend partly on the particular digital formation under study. The key is that they should accommodate variability of interaction between technical and social factors (as defined in our project), and tendencies towards path dependence in the development of these interactions.

Let me elaborate briefly on the above. An important issue for us was, as I indicated earlier, to avoid technological determinism yet at the same time to recognize the specific capabilities of computer-centered interactive technologies. One reason for this was, again, that these technologies can constitute whole new domains for social interaction and cannot be confined to the status of an independent variable as is so often the case. In their digitized form, these domains exhibit properties of their own that derive from technical capabilities enabling specific patterns of interaction. These properties are then endogenous to these digitized structures rather than the product of an exogenous con-

text – i.e., financial system, educational system, the interstate system – even though the technologies themselves tend to result from nontechnical rationales (e.g., much of the development in electronic interactive domains has been driven by finance and its objectives). Among these endogenous properties are the simultaneity of information exchange, distributive outcomes, capacity for electronic storage and memory, in combination with the new possibilities for access and dissemination that characterize the Internet and other computer-centered information systems.

But insofar as these are interactive social domains they are also characterized by an endogenizing of social logics. By social logics we intend to refer to a broad range of conditions, actors, and projects, including specific utility logics of users as well as the substantive rationalities of institutional and ideational orders. These endogenized social logics will (a) vary from one domain to another (e.g., electronic financial markets and electronic activist networks both use the three technical capabilities described earlier, but they do so for very different purposes), and (b) will variously alter the straightforward technical effect – that is, they may reduce, enhance, or distort the technical capabilities.⁸ Further, social logics can also produce whole new possibilities and push technical advances, as has clearly been the case in electronic financial markets, for example.

This way of approaching our problem allows us to conceive of these electronic information and communication structures as resulting from various mixes of computer-centered technical capabilities and the broad range of social contexts that provide the utility logics, substantive rationalities, and cultural meanings for the particular types of digital interaction involved. In this regard then the digital spaces that concern us in this project are socio-digital.

Digital formation is the construct we settled on in the project to designate these specific types of information and communication structures. Digital formations are then to be distinguished from digital technology *tout court*. Further, not all digital networks are digital formations. The latter are mixed outcomes in that they result from endogenous technical properties and endogenized social logics. They are digitized structures but are partly shaped and given meaning by social, political, economic, ideational, and often visual, conditions that exist typically outside of or, at the minimum, transcend the technology as such.

Digital formations can assume a variety of forms. Among those familiar to the social sciences are networks, markets, and communities. But there are other ways of typifying these formations both within and outside the conceptual framing of the social sciences. We can also expect new types of forms to emerge as the use of these technologies widens. The multiplication of digital formations over the last decade means that these can in turn begin to function as social, albeit digitized, conditionings for new technical developments. From a social science perspective, as compared to a purely engineering one, such digitized information and communication structures and dynamics are mixed domains in that they filter, and are given meaning by, social logics.

The presence of social logics in the structuring of these formations means, from a social science perspective, that the technical capabilities of these new technologies are characterized by both variability and specificity. Technical capabilities are deployed or used in ways that are uneven and contradictory within diverse digital formations. They unfold in particular contexts – that is, they do not exist as purely technological events. This in turn makes it difficult to generalize their transformative effects. Variability and specificity are crucial dimensions emerging from the diverse foci of analysis in our pro-

ject. The choice of researchers in the project sought to address this as each focuses in great detail on a different subject. While variability and specificity make generalization difficult, detailed study can illuminate patterns and structures helpful in hypothesizing future trends and in developing agendas for research as IT continues to evolve.⁹

Beginning the Work of Locating Digital Formations

A key issue in the project is the construction of digital formations as an object for study. There are several analytic vocabularies that can be used to do this. Identifying and also developing such vocabularies is part of the conceptual mapping of this field of inquiry and the effort to generate research agendas on the subject. Each of the researchers in the project worked in a specialized discipline and hence used a distinct analytic vocabulary and focused on a distinct puzzle or theme.¹⁰ Here I will simply discuss some strategies for beginning the work of locating a digital formation in a conceptual field that allows us to capture both endogenous technical properties and “external” social logics. Which ones of these external social logics become endogenized will depend on the particular domain under study.

We identify analytic operations that allow us to factor in the intersection of technologies and social logics. These analytic operations should hold whether these technologies are derivative, transformative, or constitutive. And they should hold for a broad range of specific types of digital formations. Such analytic operations can assume multiple forms. We have opted for three such operations, sufficiently complex as to accommodate a broad range of outcomes. We specify these as a first approximation for locating digital formations by understanding the broader field within which they emerge and eventually get constituted as electronic information and communication structures.

At the most general level we want to emphasize the importance of analytic categories and frames that allow us to capture the complex imbrications between the computer capabilities that concern us here and the contexts within which they are deployed or used. A second set of analytic operations concerns the mediating practices and cultures that organize the relation between these technologies and users in order to understand more precisely the social logics at work. (This would seem to be a crucial issue for the implementation of computer-centered interactive initiatives in the educational system.) Until quite recently there was no critical elaboration of these mediations because it was assumed that questions of access, competence, and interface design fully captured mediating experience. A third set of analytic operations is aimed at recognizing questions of scaling, an area where these particular technologies have evinced enormous transformative and constitutive capabilities. In the social sciences, scale (not to be confused with scale-up) has largely been conceived of as a given or as context and has, in that regard, not been a critical category. The new technologies have brought scale to the fore precisely through their destabilizing of existing hierarchies of scale and notions of nested hierarchies. Thereby they have contributed to launch a whole new heuristic, which, interestingly, also resonates with developments in the natural sciences where questions of scaling have surfaced in novel ways. The next three sections develop these issues very briefly.

Digital/Social Imbrications

Using the term imbrication is a way of specifying an interaction that is not characterized by hybridity or blurring: the technical and the social can shape and condition each other but each is and remains specific and distinct.¹¹ And such interactions can occur in often short or long chains, where one outcome (social) contributes to a new technical element which can contribute to a new social condition that in turn behaves like a conditioning for the technical. Throughout these interactions the specificity is maintained even as each is transformed, and in that sense this process can be described as one of imbrications.

As a first approximation we can identify three features of this process of imbrication. To illustrate, we can use one of the key capabilities of these technologies, that of raising the mobility of capital and thereby changing the relationship between mobile firms and territorial nation-states. This is further accentuated by the “de-materialization” brought about by the digitization of much economic activity. Digitization raises the mobility of what we have customarily thought of as not mobile, or barely mobile. Once digitized, an economic activity or good gains hypermobility – instantaneous circulation through digital networks with global span. Both mobility and digitization are usually seen as mere effects or at best functions of the new technologies. Such conceptions erase the fact that achieving this outcome requires multiple conditions, including such diverse ones as infrastructure and legal changes.

The first feature, then, is that the production of both capital mobility and dematerialization takes capital fixity – state of the art built-environments, a talented professional workforce on the ground at least some of the time, legal systems, and conventional infrastructure from highways to airports and railways. These are all partly place-bound conditions. Once we recognize that the hypermobility of the instrument had to be *produced*, we introduce non-digital variables in our analysis of the digital. Such an interpretation carries implications for theory and practice. For instance, simply having access to these technologies does not necessarily alter the position of resource-poor countries or organizations in an international system with enormous inequality in resources.¹²

A second feature that needs to be recovered here is that the capital fixity needed for hypermobility and dematerialization is itself transformed in this process. The real estate industry illustrates some of these issues. Financial services firms have invented instruments that liquefy real estate, thereby facilitating investment and circulation of these instruments in global markets. Yet, part of what constitutes real estate remains very physical. At the same time, however, that which remains physical has been transformed by the fact that it is represented by highly liquid instruments that can circulate in global markets. One way of capturing the difference would be to call it a form of extreme landlord absenteeism. It may look the same, it may involve the same bricks and mortar, it may be new or old, but it is a transformed entity.

The nature of place-boundedness here differs from what it may have been one hundred years ago when it was far more likely to be a form of immobility. Today it is a place-boundedness that is in turn inflected or inscribed by the hypermobility of some of its components, products, and outcomes. Both capital fixity and mobility are located in a temporal frame where speed is ascendant and consequential. This type of capital fixity cannot be fully captured through a description confined to its material and locational features.

A third feature in this process of imbrication can be captured through the notion of the social logics organizing the process. Many of the digital components of financial markets are inflected by the agendas that drive global finance, and these are not technological per se. The same technical properties can produce outcomes that differ from those of electronic financial markets. Much of our interacting in digital space would lack any meaning or referents if we were to exclude the non-digital world. It is deeply inflected by the cultures, the material practices, the legal systems, the imaginaries, that take place outside digital space. It is necessary then to distinguish between the technologies and the digital formations they contribute to make possible. The types of digital spaces of concern to our project are not exclusively technical conditions that stand outside the social. They are embedded in the larger societal, cultural, subjective, economic, imaginary structurations of lived experience and the systems within which we exist and operate.

In this regard then digitization is multivalent. It brings with it an amplification of both mobile and fixed capacities. It inscribes the non-digital but is itself also inscribed by the non-digital. The specific content, implications, and consequences of each of these variants are empirical questions – objects for study. So what is conditioning the outcome when digital technologies are at work and what is conditioned by the outcome? We have difficulty capturing this multi-valence through our conventional categories which tend to dualize and posit mutual exclusivity: if it is immobile, it *is* immobile, and if it is mobile, it *is* mobile (a type of endogeneity problem). Using the example of real estate signals that the partial representation of real estate through liquid financial instruments produces a complex imbrication of the material and the de-materialized moments of that which we continue to call real estate. And so does the partial endogeneity of physical infrastructure in electronic financial markets.

Mediating Practices and Cultures

One consequence of the above is that the articulations between digital space and users – whether social, political, or economic actors – are constituted in terms of mediating cultures and/or practices. They result partly from the values, cultures, power systems, and institutional orders within which users are embedded. Use is not simply a question of access and understanding how to use the hardware and the software.

There is a strong tendency in the literature to assume use to be an unmediated event and hence to make it unproblematic (once access and competence are given). There is in fact much more of a critical literature when it comes to questions of access. At best, recognition of a mediating culture has been confined to that of the “techie”, one that has become naturalized rather than recognized as one particular type of mediating culture. Beyond this thick computer-centered use culture, there is a tendency to flatten the practices of users to questions of competence and utility.

From the perspective of the social sciences, use of the technology should be problematized rather than simply seen as shaped by technical requirements and the necessary knowledge, even though this might be the perspective of the computer scientist and engineer who designed it. For instance, in his research on use of the Internet by different types of Arab groups, Jon Anderson (2003) found that the young “westernized” Arabs in his study made the same use as many youths in our societies: cruising, chat

clubs, shopping. In contrast, scholars of the Koran, the most traditional group in his study, made a far more sophisticated use of the technology as they hyperlinked their way through the text and prior text annotations. Being scholars of the text, they had a complex mediating culture that allowed them to use the technology (no matter how “traditional” the activity) far more intensely and to derive a far greater utility. These mediating cultures also can produce a subject and a subjectivity that become part of the mediation. For instance, in open source networks much meaning is derived from the fact that these practitioners contest a dominant economic-legal system centered in private property protections; participants become active subjects in a process that extends beyond their individual work and produces a culture. There are multiple ways of examining the mediating cultures organizing use. Among others, these can conceivably range from small-scale ethnographies to macro-level surveys, from descriptive to highly theorized accounts, from a focus on ideational forms to one on structural conditions.

Scaling: The Transformative and Constitutive Capabilities of New Digital Technologies

Narrowing the discussion of scaling to the formation of transboundary domains (e.g., transnational civil society, transnational corporate networks, regional integration) – the overall focus in our project – we can identify four types of scaling dynamics in the constitution of global digital formations. These four dynamics are not mutually exclusive, as becomes clear when we use the example of what is probably one of the most globalized and advanced instances of a digital formation, electronic financial markets. A first type of scaling dynamic is the formation of global domains that function at the self-evident global scale, for example, some types of very large scale conversations (see, e.g., the chapter by Sack in Latham and Sassen, eds., 2005).

A second type of scaling can be identified in the local practices and conditions that become directly articulated with global dynamics, not having to move through the traditional hierarchy of jurisdictions. Electronic financial markets also can be used as an illustration here. The starting point is floor- or screen-based trading in exchanges and firms that are part of a worldwide network of financial centers. These localized transactions link up directly to a global electronic market. What begins as local gets rescaled at the global level.

A third type of scaling dynamic results from the fact that interconnectivity and decentralized simultaneous access multiplies the cross-border connections among various localities. This produces a very particular type of global formation, one which is a kind of distributed outcome: it resides in the multiplication of lateral and horizontal transactions, or in the recurrence of a process in a network of local sites, without the aggregation that leads to an actual globally scaled digital formation as is the case with electronic markets. Instances are open source software development, certain types of early conflict-warning systems, and worldwide activist networks (see, e.g., chapters by Weber, Alker, and Sassen in Latham and Sassen, eds., 2005).

A fourth type of scaling dynamic results from the fact that global formations can actually be partly embedded in sub-national sites and move between these differently scaled practices and organizational forms in a continuous two-way flow. For instance, the global electronic financial market is constituted both through electronic markets with global span, and through locally embedded conditions – that is, financial centers and all

they entail, from infrastructure to systems of trust. So are the global communication flagships of multinational corporations (see chapter by Ernst in Latham and Sassen, eds. 2005).

The new digital technologies have not caused these developments, but they have in variable yet specific ways facilitated them and shaped them. The overall effect is to reposition the meaning of local and global (when internetworked) in that each of these will tend to be multi-scalar. For example, much of what we might still experience as the “local” (an office building or a house or an institution right there in our neighborhood or downtown) actually is a microenvironment with global span insofar as it is internetworked. Such a microenvironment is in many senses a localized entity, but it is also part of global digital networks which give it immediate far-flung span. To continue to think of this as simply local is not very useful. It is a multiscalar condition. Part of the work of constructing electronic information and communication structures as an object for socio-scientific study entails locating these structures against the scalar complexity that the new technologies have made possible rather than taking scales as givens and self-contained.

Notes

1. The results of this initiative can be found in Latham and Sassen (eds.), *Digital Formations: Information Technologies and New Architectures in the Global Realm* (Princeton University Press 2005). Details about the various components of the initiative can be found on the Committee on Information Technology and International Cooperation’s website at ssrc.org. See also *Items* (the official publication of the SSRC), Spring 2004. We thank The Ford Foundation for its generous support.
2. Both of these examples are developed in detail in my chapter “Electronic Markets and Activist Networks: The Weight of Social Logics in Digital Formations”, in Latham and Sassen (eds.), *Digital Formations: Information Technologies and New Architectures in the Global Realm* (Princeton University Press 2005).
3. We do not assume that technology and society are actually separate entities, and accept many of the propositions in the critical social science literature that posit technology is one particular instantiation of society – society frozen; that is to say, one moment in a trajectory that once might have been experienced as simply social. Without losing this critical stance we want, nonetheless, to isolate the variable we will refer to as technology.
4. We are, to some extent, working against a profuse scholarship centered on the technical properties of the new interactive computer technologies and their capacities for producing change. These technologies increasingly dominate explanations of contemporary change and development, with technology seen as the impetus for the most fundamental social trends and transformations. Such explanations also tend to understand these technologies exclusively in terms of their technical properties and to construct the relation to the social world as one of applications and impacts.
5. For critical examinations that reveal particular shortcomings of technology-driven explanations, see, e.g., Wajcman 2002; Loader 1998; Nettime 1997; Hargittai 1998; and more generally Latour 1991; Munker and Roesler 1997; MacKenzie 1999; MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999; and World Information Order 2002.
6. There are important types of capabilities inherent to these technologies that fall outside the focus of this project, notably robotics, data processing, and the design of virtual environments.
7. Just to recapitulate, by the technical we mean here the digital technologies in play, and by the social, the logics or utility functions that drive users – whether individuals or organizations.
8. Factoring in endogenized social logics and capturing their effect on technical properties is a crucial methodological element in the project. I have examined some of these issues in “Electronic Markets and Activist Networks: The Weight of Social Logics” referred to in note 2. This type of understanding also would contest the still common assumption that a new technology will *ipso facto* replace all older technologies that are less efficient, or slower at executing the tasks the new technology is best at.

9. The uneven and often contradictory character of these technologies and their associated information and communication structures also leads us to posit that these technologies should not be viewed simply as factor endowments. This type of view is present in much of the literature, often implicitly, and represents these technologies as a function of the attributes of a region or an actor – ranging from regions and actors fully endowed, or with full access, to those without access.
10. It is clearly impossible to summarize this material here, and summaries would be of little use. We can only refer the interested reader to the forthcoming volume (see note 1). Each chapter in the volume that resulted from the project is concerned with a distinct digital formation and illustrates a particular research strategy and theoretico-empirical specification.
11. Please refer to the qualifications in note 4.
12. Much of my work on global cities has been an effort to conceptualize and document the fact that the global digital economy requires massive concentrations of material and social resources in order to be what it is (see e.g., Sassen 2001). Finance is an important intermediary in this regard: it represents a capability for liquefying various forms of non-liquid wealth and for raising the mobility (i.e., hypermobility) of that which is already liquid. But to do so, even finance needs significant concentrations of material resources.

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Designing Sound and Silence

ARNT MAASØ

Designing sound for various aesthetic or experiential purposes is not a new idea in architecture, acoustics, or various forms of mediated art. Since Walter Murch coined the term ‘sound designer’ to describe his work on *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola, 1979), it has also become more common to think of sound as designed in fiction film as well as in television drama. To consider mediated sound in non-fictional genres (such as news, sports, reality television etc.) as results of intentional design processes is less common. One may argue that the same applies to ‘live’ television in general, where one may not expect sounds to be ‘produced’ and designed as in post-produced fiction film. Thinking about *silence* as designed seems perhaps even less intuitive. This article will discuss how sound and silence is indeed designed in ‘live’, non-fictional genres too, using sound in sports as the main case in point.¹ The mediated character of sound and silence will furthermore be interpreted as signs of important changes in the communicative functions of sound and silence in broadcast media.

Taming ‘Wild Sound’

Large-scale sporting events, such as The Olympics, or world championships in various sports, appear on regular basis. Viewers are thus likely to be familiar with the spectacular camera work and imagery of recent major sports events. It seems that such events showcase an ever-increasing number of cameras give us multiple views and shots, instant replays and highlights in ‘super-slow-mo’. Such obvious signs of mediation bring Gary Whannel (1992) to claim that the audience watching televised sport is well aware of fact of the *mediated* character of such events, where the production team clearly makes aesthetic choices concerning the visual representation of events.

Elsewhere I have argued that diegetic sound in factual genres in film and television often appear less susceptible to sound design than the diegetic sounds in fictional genres (Maasø 1995). Furthermore, compared to a voice addressing us as listeners, or a musical sound being composed, performed and edited to a sequence of moving images, other ‘natural’ location sounds, such as of an audience cheering, an athlete panting, or the crisp sound of skis running down a slope, seem less obviously the results of a design process. This is, as mentioned, especially true for ‘live’ television, where one does

not expect designers to have the same control over the sound scape as in a movie sound track more or less built up from scratch in the post-production process.

Danish media scholars Raunsbjerg and Sand (1998) are among those who claim that diegetic sounds² are not only less designed than other sounds or images; they even assert that this sound lacks an intentional mediation, and functions as a ‘stamp of authenticity’ or as ‘fingerprints’ of the event we are witnessing. They maintain that:

[...] wild sound [...] is the sound of the event itself. [...] [T]he sound viewers hear sounds like the sound which spectators who are physically present in the room are experiencing [...]. The ambient, spatial and, in some sense, less-than-perfect wild sound is a sign that the sender/producer level does not control the actor level. Consequently, viewers experience the televised events as an event that has a life of its own, above and beyond the intervention of the medium. One might say that wild sound is the fingerprint of the event on the media event, or a stamp of authenticity. (Raunsbjerg & Sand, 1998:168)

If one wants to challenge the claims of Raunsbjerg and Sand on the basis of concrete practices and examples – as I do – one is faced with certain challenges, as examples of ‘live’ sports are not readily available for readers to compare with a written account. Trying to represent and translate dynamic and shifting aural phenomena, into fixed, visual words on a page is hence no simple task. Somehow it seems easier describing the shape, texture and color of visual objects in writing, than the shifting shapes and textures of sound. And while one might insert a still image as an illustration in a paper based journal, this cannot be done with sound.

Elvis Costello partly addressed this problem in an amusing way in the much-cited phrase: “Writing about music is like dancing about architecture”.³ While this is certainly a challenge when addressing popular music, it is even *more* difficult when writing about other sounds from genres, where a writer cannot rely on the reader being able to consult a common available aural source, such as a recorded popular song. In order to address these basic problems I will follow two strategies below. First, I will provide a ‘general’ description of the aural examples. Secondly, I will refer the reader to four short sound samples available online.⁴

Samples of Sport Sounds

The first two examples are recorded from a cross-country and biathlon competition broadcasted on the NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Company) in 1983.⁵ The first clip is dominated by the voice-over commentary of two sports anchors, speaking in a relaxed voice with moderate loudness, nevertheless drowning out most of the other sounds, which are much weaker in volume. In the background one can hear the muffled and reverberant sound of an emcee over a speaker system at the sports arena where the shooting range for the biathlon competitors is located. The distance one may also hear soft ‘ticking’ sounds that a television viewer understands is the sound of rifles being fired.

The second clip is from a cross-country competition, showing a skier passing two camera positions in the woods nearby the stadium area. The commentators’ voices sound roughly the same as in the first clip, as does the muffled emcee on the PA-system in the distance. In addition far away cheering can be heard from a few spectators, as well as the soft, yet characteristic, sharp sound of skis gliding over snow (roughly 4-8 and 14-18 seconds into the clip).



Biathlon skier in example 1 at the shooting range (NRK)

While the images accompanying these clips show the skiers in close-up and medium close-up perspectives shooting (in example 1) or skiing (in example 2), the main visual events in these clips are not central aurally at all. Instead, the sound track is almost totally dominated by the voice-over of the two sports reporters. From listening alone, one cannot guess that the first example is showing an athlete firing his rifle, as the shots fired in the background are very tinny sounding and low in volume.

In example 2 one can (with previous knowledge of how cross-country skis may sound) hear the skier as he passes close by the two camera positions following him (cf. 4-8 and 14-18 seconds into the clip). Apart from the few off-screen sounds mentioned here, no other sounds are audible from the location of the recording, as was typically the case before the early 1990s.

If one considers similar examples from the mid and late 1990s, the sound track sounds very different, as can be heard in examples 3 and 4. While the voice-over commentary is still central, the on-screen visual events have become equally important aurally, such as the clearly defined, medium loud shots fired in the biathlon case (example 3). Both the rifle shot and the immediately following hit on target are represented aurally – even with a stereo effect separating the two sound events in space.



Biathlon skier in example 3 at the shooting range (NRK1 1994).

Also, a wealth of other off-screen sounds within the diegesis – such as the audience cheering – is very clearly audible in the cross-country example from 1997 (cf. example 4). Put shortly, there are more and louder ‘wild sounds’ in sport events in the 1990s than before. The diegetic soundscape is also vastly expanded, as it condenses many ‘spaces’ into one rich and multi-layered soundscape spread out in two-channel stereo, compared to the mono track in 1980s television.⁶ Importantly, the condensed sound space of 1990s television also manages to represent soft close-up sounds (such as the athlete coughing, roughly 5 seconds into example 4) simultaneously with the loud ‘deep space’ sounds of the audience in the same example. Through the use of multi-microphone technique and multi-track mixing, the sound track of large sporting events in Nordic television thus changed within a few years during the late 1980s and early 1990s, into a rich, spatially expanded and condensed sound track, where both close-up and far-away events, on-screen as well as off-screen, were given equal aural presence.

Intentionality of Design

Interviews with sound technicians and producers in television show that these changes did not happen by mere chance, or simply as a result of the implementation of new technology, but rather were a result of institutional strategies and intentional acts of design concerning both sports and other TV genres. Veteran producer Trygve Sollien, responsible for many of the main productions during the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics, comments on some of these changes, saying:

I believe we have developed the sound track in sports a great deal. Earlier on, you might say that we ‘registered’ a sports event from afar, but today we try to come much closer on the athletes. The images are closer, and the same goes for the sound. So we try to come up close and, for instance, catch the athletes breathing and panting, or a coach giving instructions, and – of course – try to give a close up view of the audience itself. (Sollien, cited in Maasø 2002a, my translation)

The head of the sound unit for multi-camera and OB productions at the NRK comments the change in sound design in a similar way:

We try to create an *experience* for the audience, as we also do in other types of entertainment shows. We present a sense of ‘being there’; in some sense we want you to feel that you are present at the event, even though you’re sitting in your arm chair. [...] This means much more weight on the sound effects today than previously, both the artificial and natural ones. (Straumsheim, cited in Maasø 2002a, my translation)

The statement ‘artificial and natural ones’ may need a further explanation. Here Straumsheim is alluding to the practice of *sampling* introduced in sports in the early 1990s, i.e., playing back a previously digitized recording – a sample – as part of the sound scape the TV viewer is hearing as a ‘live’ representation of the sounds scape at the location of the event. This was first used in sports production by two sound technicians from Finnish television (YLE) responsible for producing some of the ski events at the 1992 Olympics in Albertville. As producer Sollien explains:

In Les Saiesies [at the 92 Olympics] we were producing biathlon for the French, while the Finns were doing cross-country. I think this was the first time I heard sampling done really well. The Finns had a sound guy who was devilishly skillful at sampling, and they used it for all it was worth. Everybody was complementing them for the great sounds of skis and ski poles and so on – everything sounded really nice. (Sollien, cited in Maasø 2002a, my translation)

The practice of sampling made it possible to design a sound track with close-up sounds of far-away events that were difficult or even impossible to catch by a microphone (as there is no equivalent in sound to the visual zoom lens, and because loud sounds of an audience would typically mask out the softer sounds made by the athletes). Many sound technicians after 1992 hence started using samples of a variety of typical sporting sounds, such as the sound of skis and ski sticks, shots fired in biathlon, the hit of a ball, the skis leaving the jump and the rush of air following a skier mid-air during a ski jump, the thump of the landing etc.⁷ Sampling thus provided sounds to on-screen events where silence was the alternative in earlier broadcasting. Furthermore, sampling was often faded in other situations when location recording became impossible during live location recording, such as when sounds of an aircraft or traffic suddenly ‘polluted’ the soundscape. A veteran sound technician in the NRK explains:

I remember an instance in the Albertville Olympics when Vegard Ulvang – I believe – was crossing the goal line at the same time as a big truck with snowbelts came driving in. I could hear how Jukka, who was doing the sound for YLE, pulled down the mikes from the arena while fading in sampled audience sounds masking the engine noise, and though that *that* was clever. (Henningesen, cited in Maasø 2002a, my translation)

A variety of sampled audience sounds were also often mixed in together with the ‘live’ audience sound to create a more exciting soundscape, or to achieve what Straumshiem described as a sense of ‘*being there*’. Thus, during the mid 1990s, sampling became a common way of controlling the uncontrollable aspects of the sound events in ‘live’ sports in Nordic television; in other words taming ‘wild sound’.

This highly designed soundscape is certainly far from the naïve indexical ‘fingerprint’ of sound claimed by Raunsbjerg and Sand above. Quite contrary, sound in sports, as in many other genres, became increasingly pre-planned and designed during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The *sound* of sports sounds can therefore be no positive proof of the authenticity of the events we experience, since deciphering which sounds are the result of sampling or live recording can rather be quite difficult, often impossible. Had I not witnessed the practice of sampling during TV production myself, I would, for instance, not have believed it possible to achieve the minute timing needed to perform the shots fired during a ‘live’ production of biathlon, such as in the example from the Lillehammer Olympics discussed above (cf. example 3).

The radical change from a ‘passive registration’ of aural events to an ‘active design’ of sound in sports, were intended to produce a spectacular, visceral or almost tactile viewing experience – letting viewers and listeners ‘touch at a distance’, to paraphrase Murray Schafer (1980). In my view these changes may be related to general aesthetic and cultural trends, such as the spectacular aesthetics of the neo-classical Hollywood cinema, the visual collage in television after MTV, as well as the multi-track aesthetics of popular music production after *Sgt. Pepper*. These changes are also clearly related to

general changes in televisual mode of address sparked by the deregulation of broadcasting monopoly during the 1980s and the increased weight on competition for viewers' attention, as many have addressed in previous research on public service broadcasting. Similar views are also stated clearly in interviews by key people involved in the changes in design, such as the following statement by Straumsheim:

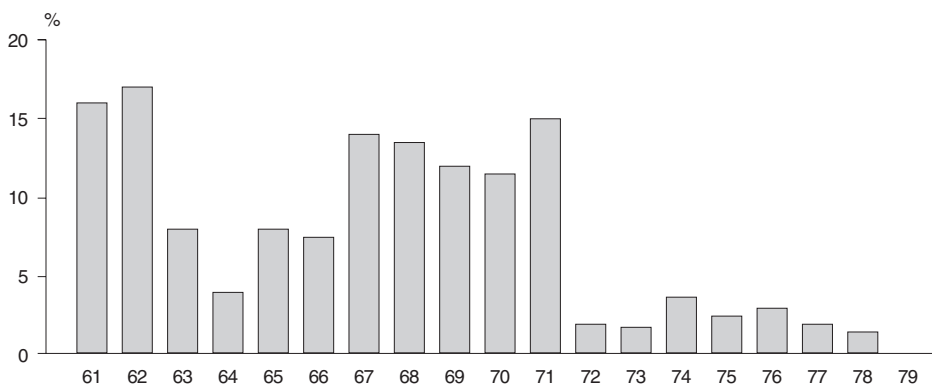
I believe the future lies in becoming even better at illuding *presence*. I do not mean that you actually *are* present, of course, but that you get a sensation of what it is like being there. At the same time this means designing a soundscape that is not always real. As TV becomes more like radio is today, a medium you go to and from, we need ways of catching viewers' attention, providing engagement and experience – not only registering an event. And this is, of course, nothing less than the general trend of our time. (Straumsheim, cited in Maasø 2002a, my translation)

Silencing Silence

As I hope to have showed so far, sound in television is as much a result of a designed mediation as the television image – even in genres with 'live', 'wild sounds', which some have taken as indexical traces of an uncontrollable acoustic event. Furthermore, the way sounds are designed may be used in attempting to read general cultural and aesthetic trends of our time. So may silence. In a similar way as sound, silence (here simply taken as the absence of sound) may be telling. In the following I will therefore first look at broad changes in silence on a 'macro level', showing to analyses of prime time schedules in Norwegian TV-schedules from the 1960s to the late 1980s. Then, I will analyze silence on a 'micro-level', looking at what silence in a popular song may say about design and mediation itself.

Although there are no continuous schedules preserved from Norwegian television broadcasts before 1983, there are other clear indications that silence was abundant the first couple of decades after television was introduced in Norway in 1960. A look at the schedules published in the TV times and newspapers, shows a large amount of planned intervals and pauses throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as may be seen in figure 1.

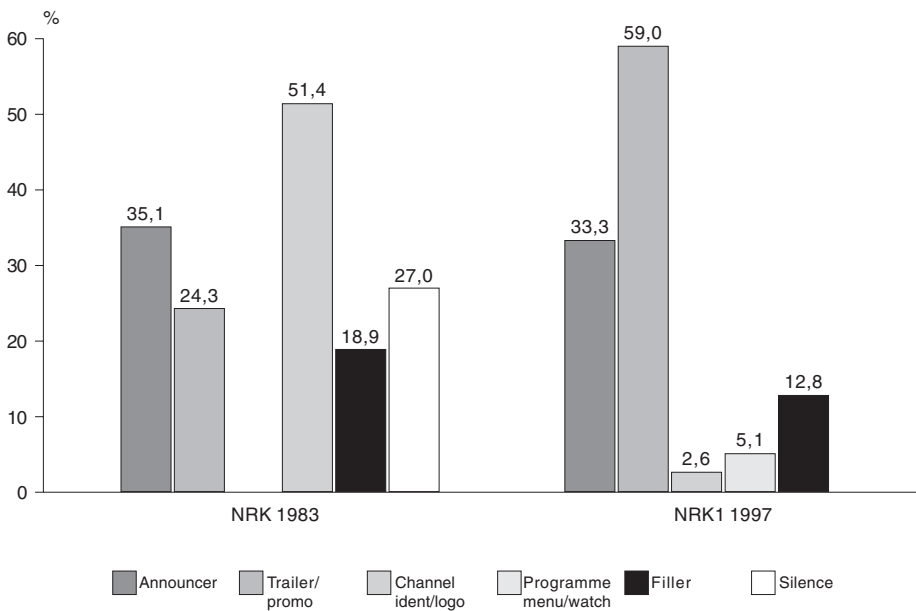
Figure 1. *Planned Pauses, NRK, 6-10 pm, week 11, 1961-1979 (percent of prime time)*



Source: *Programbladet* week 11 (March) from 1961- 1979

Some of these pauses were, however, not silent, as gramophone music to some degree was played. However, both interviews and the statistics on music use published in the NRK yearbooks, indicate that many, perhaps most, pauses were silent (cf. Maasø 2002a). Since whole schedules are only available in archives from 1983 on, one is nevertheless left with speculations here. Analysis of prime time schedules from March 1983 and later during the 1980s, at least establishes beyond doubt that silence was indeed very much present in the prime time schedules in Norwegian TV throughout most of the 1980s, although no *announced* pauses can be found after 1979.

Figure 2. *Silence in Prime Time (percent of 'between programming')*



Between programming totals 3,7% (1983) and 3,9% (1997) of the evening schedules during one week between 6-10 PM, week 11 (March). Cf. Maasø (2002a) for a fuller account of the different types of 'between programming'.

As figure 2 shows, 27% of all 'between programming' during prime time were completely silent in 1983, while there was no silence whatsoever in 1997 schedules analyzed (with the exception of a few 2-3 second long silent intervals between scenes and segments). A handful of instances of up to 10-12 seconds of very *weak* sound may be found (cf. Maasø 2002a: 318), but the overall impression is nevertheless that the schedules here have the character of a seamless sonic flow. In my ears, the single most noticeable change in the sound of television from the early and mid 1980s and to post-1988 television is hence the large amounts of silent intervals in the prior case, and the complete absence of silence in contemporary television.⁸

This change is even more interesting when taking into account that silence has been a taboo for sound designers in TV since the beginning of broadcasting in Norway, as well as in other TV cultures, because it makes images seem 'dead', 'slows down time', and so on, as Mary Ann Doane (1985) and others have discussed more fully (cf. Maasø

2002a for a comprehensive account). With this in mind, the explanation for this radical change in the presence of silence is *not* that the conventions and role of silence changed. Rather, I would argue that this is related to a change in the hierarchy of textual units in television in Norway in the late 1980s, mainly due to changes in competitive environment, with the introduction of commercial competitors. In 1983 the intervals between programs were simply not considered part of television proper, but simply taken as intervals between the real programs; hence the usual conventions and rules of sound design did not apply. After 1987/88 the televisual text was not simply individual programs in succession, but the whole and continuous schedule. Hence, silence changed from having a role similar to in pantomime – a normal condition without any communicative importance – to a situation like in the theater, where silence is telling. Silence in the latter case is clearly a communicative activity to be interpreted in relation to what precedes and follows the silent pauses (cf. Jaworski 1993, Maasø 2002a). When the main unit of television became the ‘evening schedule’, silence thus became ‘dead air’ to be avoided in order not to loose viewers to the other channels.

As we have seen, the shift from marked presence to absence of silence on a ‘macro level’ may be interpreted as a meaningful sign of more general changes in television. Similarly, silence on a ‘micro level’ – small burst of silence, so to speak – may also be *designed* to create meaning in juxtaposition to events or discourse preceding and following. To illustrate this, I will in the following explore an example from a popular music song, where a few very small silent pauses are extremely important, and very well designed in relation to the music preceding and following. As I hope to show, silence here is pivotal for the understanding of this particular work as well as the act of *mediation* and *design* of this work. But in order to make this argument, I will have to take a short detour around some recent claims relating to mediation and materiality in the age of digital design.

Materiality in a Digital Age

In this age of digitization, one increasingly hears claims of *convergence* along talk of a ‘*post-medium*’ condition, reducing the role of individual media. In the following I will take as point of departure claims of convergence – more particularly assumptions that digitization erases ‘material aspects’ of sound recording.⁹

Writing in the mid 1980s, Friedrich Kittler is one of many contemporary scholars forecasting convergence. His claim is straightforward, and related to digitization:

The general digitization of channels and information erases the differences among individual media. Sound and image, voice and text are reduced to surface effects, known to consumers as interface. [...] Inside the computers themselves everything becomes a number: quantity without image, sound or voice. And once optical fiber networks turn formerly distinct data flows into a standardized series of digitized numbers, any medium can be translated into any other. (Kittler, 1999: 1-2)

Thus, not only will media converge, but also the very concept of a medium will disappear, according to Kittler and fellow critics. An assertion related to such claims, is that digitized media loose the ‘material qualities’ associated with the process of mediation in analog media. In their eulogy to phonography, Eric Rothenbuhler and John Durham Pe-

ters are among those who draw a sharp distinction between analog and digital media, raising interesting claims about the semiotic status of analog and digital sound:

In terms of the logic of the sign-referent relation, the difference between analog recording and digital recording is the difference between indexes and symbols in Peirce's scheme. The analog recording is an index of music because it is physically caused by it. The digital recording is a symbol of music because the relation is one of convention. (Rothenbuhler & Peters, 1997: 249).

Digital recording not only lacks an indexical relation to a physical aural event, in Rothenbuhler's and Peters' view, but the digital *record* – the CD in this case – bears no indexical trace of use. Digital sound can be reproduced without any generation loss and played back without any signs of time passed, hence digital sound shows no indexical signs of wear and tear of use. In contrast to digital sound, the playback of analog records:

[...] audibilizes two histories: one of the recording and one of the record. [...] The data encoded on the CD do not mix with the history of the disk; they can be obscured by dirt and scratches, but dirt and scratches cannot sound from a CD player. As the history of records speaks while they are being played, they thus invite us to think about the passage of time; by contrast, CDs obscure it. (Rothenbuhler & Peters, 1997: 255).

In order to discuss the assertions of convergence and loss of materiality of mediation in digitized recordings, I would like to use an example from Madonna's album *Music* (2000) as point of departure, before coming back to some general points at the end of the article.

Mediating *Music*

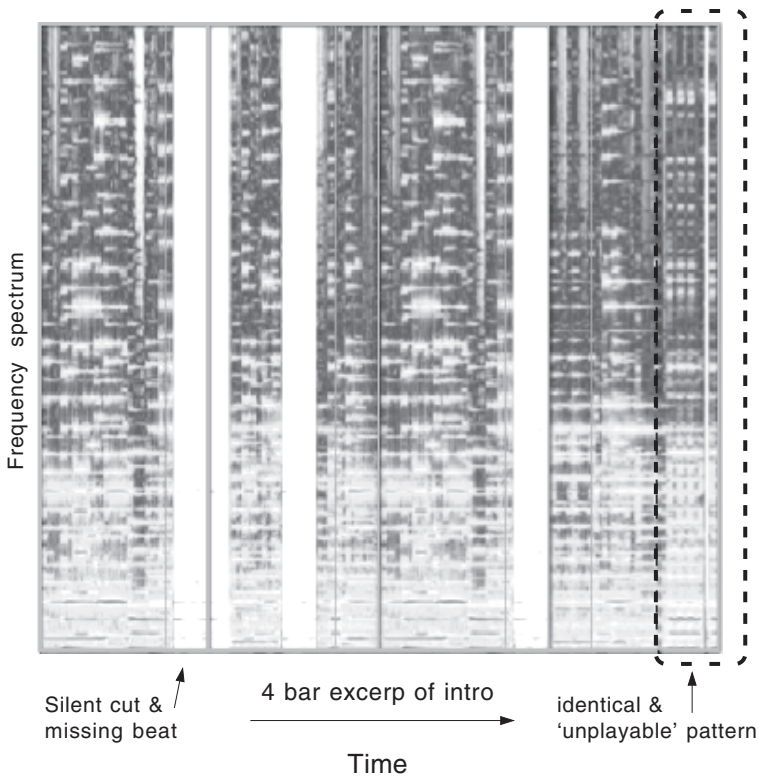
Madonna's *Don't tell me* from the album *Music* (2000)¹⁰ makes use of a format well known to a pop and rock audience. The instrumentation is in one sense modeled over the traditional lead vocal with band; the form of the song is binary with verse and chorus, etc. Along these lines, one might argue that contrary to the sound and texture of much contemporary dance music, which is almost unthinkable apart from recent technological developments, *Don't tell me* could in fact have been realized by means of analog tape recording techniques or in a live performance.

Even though the song begins with a familiar sounding acoustic guitar riff, the sense of familiarity soon ends when short bursts of silence and very short excerpts of the music are repeated out of synch with any familiar rhythmical pattern, creating the effect of what one may call a *digital 'jump-cut'*. The effect resembles a CD player having problems in reading the information on the disc. As we know this might happen when a record has become dirty. It may also be a sign of a 'worn-out' laser. In both cases, the effect is caused by various forms of wear and tear, and the sound may, thus, be understood as an index of use – in the sense that Rothenbuhler & Peters discussed analog playback above.

While it is reported that this effect caused confusion among many listeners who returned the CD¹¹, I would argue that most listeners would probably understand after but a few seconds of the first run-through of the tune, that the presence of digital jump-cuts here is not a sign of poor mediation. Rather, the effect is used as an artistic means. The following sonogram gives a visual representation of the digital jump-cut introduced in

the first few bars of the song, showing how the silent cuts (represented as white fields in the flow of the sound in figure 3) makes the music skip the first beat of the second bar, and how the last beat of the fourth bar has a very small sound bite repeated in a way which is impossible to achieve by a musician in live performances (both regarding the rhythm and identical sound), but which is easy to create with the practice of copy & paste.

Figure 3. Sonogram of the first four bars of Madonna's "Don't Tell Me" (Music 2000) analyzed by the Amadeus II software (www.hairersoft.com). Grids for bars and 4/4 beats are added by the author



Silence may – as mentioned – serve different functions in different media and communicative situations, such as in pantomime vs. the theater. One may, perhaps, even talk about a 'medium silence', such as the digital jump-cuts on a CD-player or 'dead air' in radio and television when the medium seizes to function. As shown in the sonogram, an extreme kind of such medium silence is what is generally known as 'digital silence' or 'digital black' – where all signals drop out, not even leaving the slightest hint of sound from the record itself, as would be the case with a cassette or LP. In the case of *Don't tell me*, the generic expectations raised by the acoustic riff during the first bar, drive us to expect a repeated – or developed – rhythmical figure in the following bar. When *silence* is introduced during the fourth beat, one may on the one side interpret this as an 'active' silence – in the sense as in theater above – raising tension and expectations for a return-

ing phrase or riff. On the other side, if heard as a complete silence (depending somewhat on the listening conditions and noise of the reproduction apparatus), this is clearly *not* part of such generic conventions, and thus appear strange, if not inappropriate altogether. When the riff then re-appears ‘mid air’— so to speak – after the first beat of the second bar, it confirms this silent pause is as a missed downbeat and a cut-off phrase. One may therefore argue that the silence here is clearly marked as a ‘medium silence’, or digital ‘drop out’, and hence *not* part of the text or of the communication. Silence is in other words marked as a technical error, which drains the pause of the potential communicative force that might still have been there if the riff reappeared *on* the downbeat. Only when the *subsequent* silent pauses form a rhythmical pattern, does the frame change (yet again?), and we hear the seemingly random digital dropouts as highly meaningful, both rhythmically and otherwise.

As mentioned, it soon becomes clear that the presence of digital jump-cuts on this track is not a sign of a worn-out medium. In the beginning of the song, however, the effect still plays on the indexical meaning outlined above, signifying a form of digital ‘weariness’. Put differently, the presence of digital jump-cuts displays, by way of imitating a common malfunction of a certain medium, the function and presence of the very same medium, and – importantly – the presence of a digital medium, since such an effect could not have been realized in the same way, at least not to such an extent, by way of analog media.

If produced differently, for example in accordance with an ideal of reproducing a live performance, *Don’t tell me* could perhaps have been used to support the claim that medium in the age of digital reproduction leaves no mark on the content. In this track, however, it becomes obvious that what could have been left to transparency is rather made audible. And more than this, it forms a crucial part of the overall artistic outcome. Not only may the use of the jump-cut effect on Madonna’s *Don’t tell me*, be interpreted as a play on the presence of a certain medium. It may in fact be argued that it has become an indispensable part of the song, since the audible interplay between the traditional format of a song and the new means of production comes forward as a crucial aspect of the meaning of the song, as regards both the domains of aesthetics and semantics.

In fact the dialogue between tradition and contemporary music technology links up with what might be understood as an overarching theme of the album *Music*, and, one might say, of Madonna’s oeuvre in general, namely the play, re-invention and co-optation of stereotypical identities and forms. Much in parallel to how Sean Albiez (2004) describes her visual image as “a hyperreal urban/rural cowgirl ... a club version of the Western look”, the musical solutions of *Don’t tell me* point toward a similar artistic strategy in the field of music: *Don’t tell me* is the club version of country-pop.

The traces of the process of mediation, whether that be the play on the presence of a digital medium or the iconography of Western values, transforms country & western – a style connoting authenticity and traditional American values – into its own hyper real travesty.

Media Matters

Convergence is often used as a ‘totalizing term’, covering everything from black (or white) boxes to markets, networks and rhetorics. The fact that music is *distributed* digitally, and that this form of distribution is shared with other digitized types of informa-

tion – pictures, text whatever – does *not* mean that music is no longer different from graphics, or that radio listening is no longer different from using the iPod.

The first time I heard *Don't tell me* was on the radio, and for the first couple of seconds I was convinced that the silent pauses – appearing 'out-of-time' with the strong, driving rhythmical guitar figure – was a sure sign of a 'bad disc'. Soon, however, I burst out laughing at yet another of Madonna's clever tricks. For fellow radio listeners, there was no way of knowing for sure *listening* to the musical text alone if the song was played back from an LP, CD, or a hard disc, for that matter. This points to the well-known problem of making judgments about the material traces of technology and mediation solely from listening. As Umberto Eco wrote three decades ago, it is a fundamental characteristic of *any* sign that it can be used to tell a lie (1976: 58f). Any act of mediation thus introduces something 'between' the original sound (if such exists) and the listening to this sound. The hiss of history often heard on CDs, may thus be a sign of a digitized version of a vintage recording – as well as a post-80s pop-production parasitically sucking authenticity, grandeur, and historicity from the scratches of an old record.

Moreover, when it comes to TV or radio listening, whether or not *Don't tell me* is produced and transmitted by analog or digital means, is in some ways subordinate to the role of television and radio *as media* for the shaping of the sound of the song. For example, institutional and economic factors such as casting and signing of artists to fit TV and radio play, as well as generic constraints of radio formatting (cf. Maasø 2002b), have no doubt played pivotal roles in the shaping of popular music sound in the past, and there is little evidence to suggest that such structural and economic factors in the cultural industries will cease in importance in a digital future.¹²

Mediation and Communication

The analysis of sound and silence in this article tells but a small part of the story of mediated sound design, heard from a small corner of the world. Other television cultures and genres sound and design sound differently. Yet, at least one point is common to all: all mediated sound is just that – mediated – and therefore in some sense always designed. Sound and silence in the media therefore have no direct, indexical relation to an acoustic event, but always involve the possibility of elaborate design, and lies; digital or not. The use of sampled shots in sports and Madonna's clever silences thus highlight the need for close textual analysis, as well as bring out the potential problems of taking texts at face value. In both cases we may be (or have been?) tricked by our ears – as we in other cases may have been by our eyes. Interviewing and observing sound designers at work, is therefore an important source for triangulation, and should, I believe, be used more often in tandem with other forms of analysis.

As this article has showed, much have changed in the way sounds are mediated. In the 1980s sports was mainly a visual genre. Sound technicians put up a couple of mikes (a handful at the most), and did relatively little to design sounds for particular purposes, save 'registering' the event. Since the early 1990s, much more effort is put into the design process, from days of preplanning where to put up scores of mikes – to pre-producing sounds used in live broadcasts through sampling. Sound design in sports is hence an excellent sign of our times. For during the last couple of decades, sound design in television, film, computer games etc. has clearly taken on a more *tactile* role, standing in for the lack of touch, letting listeners and viewers have an increased sense of 'touching

at a distance' – or being *there, here*. More than before, sound design is also designed to be *heard as* designed. Even *silence* is meant to be heard as designed, i.e., as part of the overall sound design. Sound design has thus perhaps increasingly become a sign of an *act of communication*; of being wanted to be heard, to be recognized. Perhaps both designers, musicians and scholars, then, are basically alike: In the end, we just want to be loved.

Notes

1. With the exception of the Madonna example analyzed later in the article, this article is based on the material gathered for a larger study on sound in television (cf. Maasø 2002a). This study analyzed programs broadcasted during one week in March in 1983 and 1997, with some supplementary material between 1983 and 1997 (totaling 80 program hours). Furthermore, 24 interviews with program makers, producers and sound designers were performed, as well as analyses of internal documents in the two main Norwegian broadcasters NRK and TV 2.
2. Diegetic sounds refers sounds which can be heard on the location where a television program is shot, such as a sports stadium, or by other characters within a fiction film's story world. In television, diegetic sound is often called 'location sound' or 'wild sound'.
3. Cf. "A Man out of Time Beats the Clock" in *Musician magazine* no. 60 (October 1983: 52).
4. The first sound clips are also available on the CD-ROM accompanying Maasø 2002a, and may be ordered by contacting the author at arnt@maaso.no.
5. The programs analyzed here are selected from sports broadcasts during week 11 in 1983 and 1997, and the 1994 Olympics at Lillehammer. The excerpts are available as audio files at www.maaso.no/biathlon83.mp3 (clip 1), www.maaso.no/crosscountry83.mp3 (clip 2), www.maaso.no/biathlon94.mp3 (clip 3), www.maaso.no/crosscountry97.mp3 (clip 4).
6. NICAM stereo was introduced in Nordic television around 1990.
7. Sampling was sometimes also used to *save time* setting up the (often) hundreds of mikes needed to fit the new ideals of sound design (cf. interview with Straumsheim in Maasø 2002a).
8. The change around 1987-1988 is discussed more fully in Maasø 2002a, and related to general changes the competitive situation as well as concrete executive decisions by the new director of the NRK television, Tor Strand, who announced as his first main program mission to 'get rid of the TV clock' (Maasø 2002a: 92); in other words the silent intervals which stopped the 'flow'.
9. The following section on Madonna's *Don't tell me* is part of research performed by Anne Danielsen and Arnt Maasø in cooperation, first presented as a paper at the IASPM conference in Rome, July 2005 (cf. Danielsen & Maasø 2005).
10. Mirwais Ahmadzaï and Madonna are credited with the song, though the song was originally written by Joe Henry, Madonna's brother-in-law. Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t_Tell_Me_%28Madonna_song%29
11. Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t_Tell_Me_%28Madonna_song%29
12. Also important in considering claims of convergence, listening practices will likely not converge, but rather diverge, as we are provided with even more possibilities for mobile and private listening on a presumably increasing number of different listening devices.

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Two Solitudes

*Design as an Approach to Media Research**

ILPO KOSKINEN

In this speech, my aim is to explore how design and media research relate and to point out ways in which these disciplines could benefit from closer contact than what they seem to have today. The paper is primarily written for researchers in communication by a sociologist who has grown increasingly familiar with design over the past decade through his work at a design school.

Whenever we discuss design, it is a good idea to start with a few conceptual remarks. “Design,” of course, is an ambiguous word. Its meaning in German, as well as in the Nordic languages (and Finnish), is far more restricted than in English. The German word *Formgebung* (in East Germany, of course, the semantics were different: they spoke about *Formgestaltung*) refers to giving form to something, as is the case with the Swedish *formgivning* and its counterparts in Norwegian and Danish. The Finnish word *muotoilu* follows the Scandinavian practice. In contrast to German and Nordic usage, the English term “design” is ambiguous, referring to what others call “planning” rather than “form giving.” Thus, when one reads English-language literature on, say, industrial design, one usually encounters stories of engineers (for example, Hargadon and Sutton 1997; Henderson 1999) rather than of people who have training in the arts. It goes without saying that the English usage has crept into other languages, which usually not only borrow the English term, but also follow the English practice when using older, often more accurate terms. The advertising industry in particular is turning the term into a sign – usually a sign of sophistication, as in “hair design,” the high end of hairdressing or barbering, but often also into something ironic, as in a Finnish ad that sold rye bread as “Finnish design.”

The shift in meaning of the term is not just semantic, but is rooted in social change. In its present form, design is a 20th Century creation, though its roots go back several centuries in architecture, crafts, and luxury goods production. However, in the modern sense in which “design” denotes the application of artistic skills in industry, the term primarily refers to glass and ceramics, furniture, interior design (previously called interior decoration or architecture), textiles and fashion design, and graphic design. More hi-tech areas of design are even more recent creations, including industrial design immediately after the war, and new media design, which is the creation of the PC, multimedia, and the

Web. The origins of the marriage of industry and art lie in Germany and the US. Perhaps the best-known early industrial designer was the architect and artist Peter Behrens, who was hired by AEG in Berlin in 1907 to give a face-lift to its products, production facilities, and the private homes of its management (Rogge 1984). With international exhibitions like World's Fairs and the Milan Art Biennale, artist-designers increasingly captured the public and, later, the industrial imagination after the war. (See Woodham 1997; Julier 2000).

Industrial design, in turn, has its origins in the United States, where designers were anonymous, building on technical training, leaving their mark on cars and other types of consumer goods from the 1930s onwards (Heskett 1997). However, similar developments were taking place in Europe as well. In many ways, Italian industrial design has its origins in Adriano Olivetti's staunch belief that it pays to invest in architecture and design (Kicherer 1990). Wally Olins, the grand old man of design management, even compares him to Lorenzo di Medici in terms of his patronage to the design culture of Italy (Olins 1978: 153). Meanwhile, Philips had built a flourishing design culture in the Netherlands well before the war (Heskett 1989), and Nordic design grew in prominence, first through architecture with names like Arne Jacobsen, Finn Juhl, Alvar Aalto, and Eliel Saarinen. Later, Nordic design continued to enjoy international success mainly with the Italians through glass, ceramics, textile design, furniture, and interiors, while French, Italian and, to a degree, British and American design dominated fashion.

Through these developments, industry has changed our material world, giving, metaphorically speaking, designers a canvas on which they have been able to paint their visions of a *vackrare vardagsvaror* [more beautiful ordinary goods], as Swedish industry put the matter in the 1930s (Kalin 1992). The terminology reflects the multitude of these industrial and design orientations; if one finds the terminology confusing, the problem lies in a lack of historical perspective rather than in the concepts as such. Unlike law or medicine, the design professions have never been strong enough to impose their conceptual schemes on society.

In addition to understanding these terminological and conceptual issues, it is also important to realize that "media" has several meanings for designers. When one talks about media research with designers, they spontaneously get images of interactive media consisting of the personal computer, the Web, mobile phones, digital TV, and computer games, and design professions based on these technologies, including new media design and interaction design. Although they are becoming more mature, these fields are still searching for an identity between technology, art and business. Mainly through these disciplines, cultural studies have gained a degree of theoretical presence in design. However, cultural studies ought to be taken in its American rather than European meaning: it is mainly theories of literary studies that have been applied to new media rather than sociology and anthropology, not to mention critical studies. In consequence, these theories have gained far less prominence in design disciplines that work on material realities. In these disciplines, professional practice is still based on materials and on industrial and artistic processes rather than on, say, semiotics. As this sketch suggests, key things in communication research, including journalism, mass media, and organizational communication, have had a small presence in the design world.

Two Solitudes

As I showed above, for a variety of reasons, design and media have lived parallel lives rather than mingled seriously. Explicit links between these disciplines are primarily based on some theoretical strains in new media (interactive media), which have had far less success in traditional design disciplines and industrial design. In universities, there are a few attempts to create overlaps, such as the Scandinavian attempt to build the discipline of *humanistisk informatik*, which combines some technology (mostly in new media) and design with a strong theoretical background in the humanities. Also, there are a very few programs in interaction design. Examples can be found from the University of Limerick in Ireland, and The Royal College of Art in London (previously termed Computer Related Design, RCA, n.d.).

Most design schools have literary scholars, philosophers, and art historians on the payroll, and they have increasingly hired a few drifters from the social sciences, mainly sociology and anthropology. Typically, these staff act as teachers and, sometimes, as researchers, but training is nevertheless in the designers' hands. A similar movement is taking place in industrial research, with major corporations such as Nokia and Intel building user research units in which the social sciences have gained a footing. Together, these small groups are pushing their own vision of science onto the design fields, from which this vision is slowly filtering into design training. No doubt there are people with a background in communication working in design, but with the major exception of Klaus Krippendorff, who was trained in design in Ulm, few have become prominent. To my knowledge the only theory from communication research that has been brought forcefully to design is product semantics, propounded mainly by Krippendorff with his designer colleague Reinhardt Butter. This tradition takes as an axiom that all design communicates, and accordingly can be studied as communication (see Vihma 1995).

With these exceptions, the relationship of the two disciplines can be formulated metaphorically as "two solitudes," borrowing the name of Canadian writer Hugh McLennan's book that described how the French- and the English-speaking Canadians related to each other in the middle of the 20th Century. Like French- and English-speaking Canadians in the 1950s, these two disciplines are aware of each other, sometimes working well together and sometimes competing. However, in general, they maintain enough barriers to keep them separate. It goes without saying that, in this metaphor, the role of the dominant majority clearly belongs to the communication disciplines.

If this state of affairs is the *explicandum*, what, then, are the reasons behind it?

Some reasons are obvious. The job markets for designers and media scholars are separate, almost regardless of the particular persuasions of the latter. Designers typically work in technological environments dominated by technical and commercial interests, while graduates from media disciplines work in a whole gamut of communications, including mass media, teaching, consulting, organizational communication, and advertising. They also have a far easier path to management than do designers, who tend to either work as independent consultants or serve as, in Andrew Abbott's (1988) telling term, a subordinate profession to engineering.

This division starts already in education. The design disciplines are a fairly recent addition to the university structure, in which their position is weak compared to more established sciences, including communications and media. While in traditional university systems, media and communication disciplines have a secure position among the social sciences, always close to business, administrative, and political elites, design is

typically located in art and design schools, schools of architecture, and sometimes in technical universities away from the mainstream university system. This divide makes it easy for the design disciplines to maintain their autonomy in the face of more theoretically versatile disciplines, but it also has several negative effects on design.

For example, theory has a different status in these disciplines. Of course, there are always students in the social sciences who loathe theory – just as there are trial lawyers who, after 20 years of practice, say that they can learn nothing from research. However, the very basis of the social sciences is typically found in theoretical debate, or at least in awareness of such debate. Anyone who studies communication learns something about how the mass media work, what information is and how one can think about it, and how power relationships are seamlessly interwoven with communication. With few exceptions, such as Krippendorff's product semantics, the design disciplines work with technology and materials rather than with words, ideas, concepts, and theories. In fact, a common complaint among engineers, managers, and other academics is that designers lack a "language" through which they can explain their intentions, work methods, and skills (Korvenmaa 1998). In consequence, trust in the abilities of designers remains low in wider academia, and at the top echelons of business and government.

I take this state as evidence of designers' reluctance to learn the theoretical basis and thus the syntax of academic language. The design world largely remains "silent": its workings can be learned by participating in it, by observing it, and by getting into its gossip, but not by reading about it. Non-theoretical disciplines do not do well in the university system – in Abbott's (1988) terms, their claim to jurisdiction remains weak, making design a less attractive partner in universities. It may also be that the "linguistic turn" that has taken place in the social and human sciences over the past four decades has made the gap even more difficult to close. The theoretical basis of much of media research has drifted away from the interests of designers, as the metaphors of language and text have gained prominence. The main exceptions are new media and, to a degree, graphic design. These two disciplines by and large work on two-dimensional surfaces (or metaphors that are two-dimensional), and benefit from theory developed in disciplines like semiotics, movie studies, and narratology. However, it is far harder to apply these theories to three-dimensional objects, machinery, services, or other objects of interest to the traditional design disciplines and to industrial design.

Of course, although it is certainly a legitimate question whether chairs can be understood merely as expressions in language – there are many other useful and perfectly justifiable ways to make sense of chairs – understanding design might not require going beyond the linguistic turn's key metaphors of "text" and "language." However, designers have opted to do otherwise. Designers' symbolic claim to respectability is based not on theory, but on art, which, again, keeps them marginal in universities in which notions like "intuition" and "gut feeling" do not fare well. Thus, it may even be that while the linguistic turn has made social scientists far more sensitive to what Clifford Geertz has called the webs of meaning (Geertz 1973), this turn has had an adverse effect on design and its position in the university system.

Evolving Boundary Objects

Of course, this is not the whole story. Several developments are constantly creating new boundary objects – in the sense proposed by Star (1995) – that bring media and design into contact. For example, at the very least, the following are constantly creating new boundary objects between design and media: technology, the economy, changes in cityscapes, the increased role of design in media, and design research. Obviously, this list is not exhaustive. Rather, I just aim to show that the same forces driving design and media and communication research not only keep them separate, but also create common areas of interest and perhaps even possibilities for cooperation.

Technology. Perhaps the most obvious thing to start with is communications technology, which has changed over the past 20 years, reshaping both fields in many ways. Beginning with the introduction of personal computers in the early 1980s, the Internet and later the Web about ten years later, and interactive – or “smart” – products, epitomized by the mobile phone, later in the 1990s, these technologies have changed our minds and societies (Katz and Aakhus 2002), prompting an area of research in which communications researchers and designers have been able to publish together (Katz and Aakhus 2002; Koskinen et al. 2002; Harper et al. 2005). Another perhaps more significant development has been the birth of a new design specialty, interaction design, which may be evolving into a new design profession. Apparently coined in the mid-1980s by Bill Moggridge of the design agency IDEO in Palo Alto, this term denotes design that combines skills in software design, electronic engineering, industrial design, and the human sciences (typically, cognitive psychology, but the disciplinary basis has been expanding into sociology and anthropology). The first academic programs in this area were developed in the 1990s, and although only a few programs exist, there are already globally used textbooks in this area (by Jenny Preece and Ben Schneiderman). Whether they are successful and stabilize a new discipline remains to be seen; in many ways, these books have reintroduced old cognitive psychology under a new name, which probably leads to similar fallacies as the early efforts to apply cognitive psychology to human-computer interaction.

The third technological development undeniably of interest to media researchers and designers alike is electronic entertainment, a roughly 7 billion USD industry worldwide. As the numbers show, its significance for the future of the economy is typically overestimated in the press, which hails game design as a major new design industry. However, for a communications scholar and someone well versed in literature, a world largely based on simple adventure narratives dramatized to an extreme (anyone who plays a computer game saves *the* world every 15 minutes or so, or is slain) provides an intriguing window on the commercial significance of mythology, not just design.

What more futuristic developments in technology – like the notions of virtual reality, and ubiquitous, ambient, embodied, and proactive technologies – will do for the relationship remains to be seen. They may pose intriguing theoretical challenges not just for designers, but also for people in communications and media. However, it is far from clear whether these technologies will ever become significant in society. It may well be that they only find relevance in research laboratories and universities.

Economy. Another area that may create boundary objects for these disciplines relates to several developments in the economy. How design works in the economy is a colossal question, well beyond the scope of this essay. However, for the sake of example, I

will analyze two developments. The first relates to what one can call the “semiotization of the economy,” more commonly known as “branding.” As the sociologist Harvey Molotch has noted in *Where Stuff Comes From* (2003), a study of industrial designers, as business leaders have learned to “outsource” production, often to the same few manufacturers typically located in the third world, this has led to a necessity to create brands that people can use to make distinctions between things and products. While twenty years ago in most industries, it was possible to make distinguishable products with signs, logos, and packaging, today branding is taken further into the very products and their functions as well. The “look and feel” of products provides “semiotic handles” with which consumers and other people can make sense of products and thus make decisions on consumption. As Molotch maintains, it is sometimes more important to think about the value of a company in terms of brand value rather than stocks, not to mention tangible resources such as factories or workforce.

This line of reasoning has convinced even *Business Week*, a major business weekly, which recently published a special edition on design. Of course, *Business Week* tells a story that is only partially true, but many people buy it, including the journalists and the editorial staff who put together this highly respected weekly:

Design is fast becoming a must-have competency for corporations. It has evolved from a simple way of giving form and color to products into a powerful tool... Design methods get managers close to their customers, design research helps top execs visualize the future, and design strategies help companies innovate. (*Business Week*, July 4, 05, p. 54).

In response to the branding challenge, designers have created new design practices and forms of organization, whether internal design organization as in Philips (Heskett 1989), or on a consultant basis, which is the more typical model (Kristensen and Lojonoco 2002).

Of interest to people in communications is that new economic challenges make communication increasingly important for design. The largest design agencies are bigger and more complex in form than 30 years ago. As the design historian Anna Valtonen writes in her upcoming doctoral thesis in University of Arts and Design, the question of how to organize design has become an issue in corporations. As design practice has increasingly come into contact with management, designers face in their work many problems communication researchers have been studying in other contexts for decades. How do formal organizations – such as government and corporations – function? How do organizations communicate? How is communication organized in formal organizations? How do people in different (organizational) cultures make sense of objects, things, ideas, and concepts?

These questions are the bread and butter of many researchers in organizational communication, but designers are learning them the hard way.

In turn, designers face these problems on a practical level, which is something most students of communications can only dream of. There are certainly opportunities for theoretical elaboration, practical cooperation, and perhaps even cross-fertilization of ideas and practices.

Design and Urban Experience. Some ways in which design provides boundary objects for media and communications is through its important role in the creation of “signed” goodscapes and places we face in cities today. Designers create spaces not only through their plans and interiors, but also indirectly. A good example is Helsinki, which provides a suitable laboratory case of how design is transforming cities today.

Because Helsinki has never had a court or significant nobility (which historically lived in Stockholm or St. Petersburg), its present cultural production scene reflects the changing tastes of just those people who buy design anyway: wealthy city dwellers from students to the upper middle classes. In 2000, I calculated that, in some parts of South Helsinki, one encounters an art or design-related shop every 75 meters, and would encounter some kind of cultural business every 15 meters, if not just shops but also producers were counted (Koskinen 2005).

Several towns have noticed the existence of similar districts. For example, Helsinki advertises a “Design District,” while in Stockholm, an area in Söder, “SoFo” (South of Folkungagatan), functions similarly. World cities have had similar neighborhoods for a longer time; in fact, people who only occasionally visit Manhattan may get the feeling that they encounter a new neighborhood somewhere on that island every time they go there. In terms of its size, “the Chelsea art district” must be unique globally. The astonishing concentration of art galleries in that neighborhood colors the way in which it appears in a by-passer’s experience. The largest area of this kind probably exists in Tokyo’s southwestern Yamanote line, extending from Ebisu in the south to Shinjuku in the north. Even when design is understood narrowly, it has become a part of urban experience, creating specific “semiotic neighborhoods” in central areas of cities. As the design historian Viviana Narotzky has noted, these areas teach people about good design and taste (Narotzky 2000), attracting sophisticated urban people to stroll around them and spend time in them (Picture 1).



Picture 1. From the Danish Design Centre in Copenhagen. This picture shows just how skilled designers are in creating objects and spaces for certain kinds of people. It is easy to do a small thought experiment to see these skills. Imagine the response of a middle-aged car mechanic to this place to see how clearly it is designed for an urban, highly educated elite. *Picture:* Ilpo Koskinen, February 2002.

Design in Media. Design is big not just in cities, but also *in* media, as anyone can notice by simply visiting any kiosk. There are about as many design weeklies and monthlies on their shelves as there are comics and women's magazines. During the past few years, there has been an increasing number of interior decoration programs on television, and stories of design appear regularly in newspapers, sometimes even in separate, periodically appearing sections. Designers have long been celebrities (Kalha 2000), but this is true today more than ever, as the following excerpt, taken from an upscale Finnish interior magazine, witnesses. The story is about design objects in the home of a designer couple. The tone of the story, extreme as it is, conceptualizes the home primarily in terms of designers, rather than in terms of functions, price, availability, or aesthetic judgments, which have traditionally dominated writing in this vein.

When a constantly moving pair of architects set up a home in Milan, THE MAIN ROLE WENT TO DESIGN. In the apartment, there is not a single piece of furniture whose designer is unknown. The Hanahana-flowerholder is designed by Kazuyo Sejima for Driade. The blue-toned carpet is from the hands of Linda Burkhardt. The flexible Boalum-lamp was designed by Livio Castiglioni and Gianfranco Frattini in 1970. The lamp is manufactured by Artemide. Jasper Morrison's blue sofa is manufactured by Cappellini. The chair made of grass is by... (*Glorian koti*, January 2004, p. 43, capitals in original).

In brief, design and designers have become signs themselves. These signs are largely visual, and based on a cult of the creative artist. It is banal when compared to the complexities of design in the economy and culture, not to mention modern production technology, but it is alive and well in the press and electronic media.

Designers and design promotion organizations, for their part, eagerly play this game. For example, "Design Weeks" seem to pop up everywhere. Just in the fall of 2005, I learned about five such weeks without any attempt to look for them. I saw a design week in Helsinki, Copenhagen, Eindhoven, Tokyo, and heard about one in Paris. I did not bother to go to London or to New York to see their weeks, and did not even think about going to fashion weeks in Paris, Milan, London, New York, among other cities.

However, although the world of design writing may be based on romantic notions of creativity, this culture is not banal in its consequences. For one, as I pointed out above, the media are constantly shaping the design world by giving people and businesses convenient "semiotic handles," as Molotch (2003) calls them, for making sense of stuff (also Molotch), as well as for making purchasing decisions. Also, such celebrity culture works against the self-image of the profession, pushing it into a conservative, artistic direction at the expense of technology and social concerns. For example, "design for all" (or "universal design," as Americans call it) almost never enters this picture, and ecological design becomes an artistic exercise instead of becoming the joint effort of designers, ecologists and engineers.

Research in Design. Pushed by the pressures described above, the design community in some countries has started to turn to research in order to understand where the profession is going, and how to respond to changes in society. Of the Nordic countries, Denmark and Finland have been particularly in the forefront. An ability to synthesize what is going on in technology and actual design work requires higher-level conceptual thinking than what the traditional Bauhaus training model has been able to provide. To give just one example of this research, an extensive research field has developed around



Picture 2. Design districts and design weeks are changing the face of several cities.

the notion of “user research.” The first attempts in this area took place in the 1980s under the heading of “human-computer interaction,” a field led by cognitive psychologists like Don Norman (1988), but soon after, the field took a more industrial turn, as industry became disappointed in the promises made by psychologists. Following Jacob Nielsen’s influential book *Usability Engineering* (1993), “usability” became the new buzzword, giving rise to a widespread industrial practice, and later attempts to introduce usability methods into idea creation, not just into testing products and user interfaces. However, studying people in situ has been the traditional lot of the social sciences rather than psychology, which is increasingly reflected in the choices made not just in the academic design community, but also in the world’s most advanced companies, which have begun to hire social scientists to work in their user research departments.

I have little doubts about the future of this effort in the Nordic countries. Powerful forces are at work, pushing the top end of design schools into research. For instance, all Nordic countries – save Iceland – had a design policy at work in the early years of the

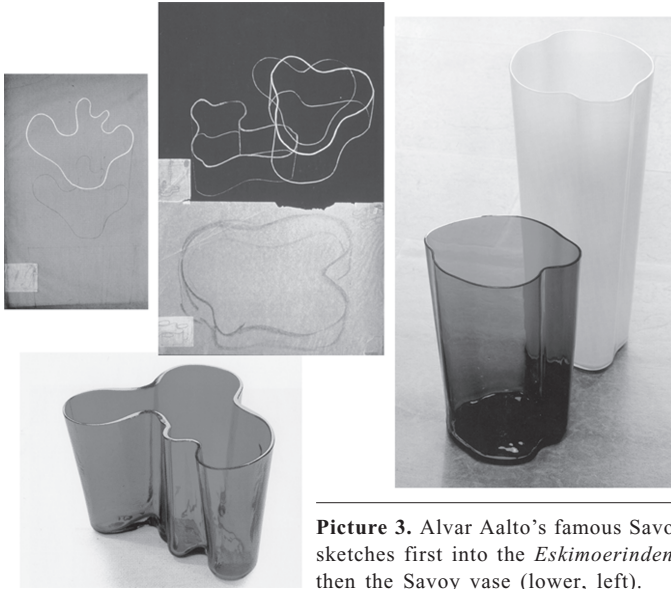
millennium (see Korvenmaa 2001). Also, all four major countries had a design year in 2005. A key component in these efforts was to strengthen research particularly in industrial design. Similar programs exist, or are being created, in several countries, including the United Kingdom, most small English-speaking nations, and the Baltic countries in Europe, and countries like Korea in Asia. Chinese efforts are regional.

Design as Agency

Above, I have tried to outline how media and design relate today, and presented some reasons for that relationship. The main argument has been that, although powerful institutional forces keep these disciplines largely separate, there are things in society that are constantly creating boundary objects, common areas of interest, for these disciplines. Now I want to argue that design is not just an innocent party in changing good-scapes (this notion is taken from an ongoing doctoral study at UIAH by Paula Bello, who builds on Arjun Appadurai's anthropology in an attempt to study crafts in Mexico's countryside). Designers participate actively in society, and bring about changes in our environment through their work. They make interpretations of not only objects and technology, but also of human beings and society, and fuse these interpretations in their work. However, unlike people trained in the social sciences, their statements do not usually appear in books and articles, but in shops, exhibitions, and interiors. The point is that for someone interested in how the material world is shaped in modern societies, design provides a perspicuous, observable setting for trying to understand just how human ideas – sometimes artistic, often plainly commercial – find an expression in physical things. What happens when design is understood as reflexive agency, a part of Lash and Urry's (1994) "economy of signs" rather than just something that is driven by economic, technological or social forces?

Picture 1 visualizes the story of one of the great design icons of the 20th Century, Alvar Aalto's Savoy vase (see Alvar Aalto Foundation and Alvar Aalto Museum 2002: 145-150). The Finnish organizers for the Paris World Fair in 1937 invited a submission from the glass company Karhula-Iittala. The company sponsored a competition for tableware and glass, and invited a number of well-known young architects to participate in the competition. The first sketches by Aalto were submitted to the competition with the (admittedly odd) name of *Eskimoerindens skinnbuxa* (The Eskimo Woman's Leather Breeches). Four sketches by Aalto survive, showing that Aalto's design was heavily influenced by Jean Arp, the French artist. The final vases were exhibited at the Paris World Fair in 1937. When Aalto designed the interior for the upscale Savoy Restaurant in Helsinki, his vases were also placed there. One version of these vases had a curvier, more dramatic shape than the original series; it became particularly popular, and came to be known as the Savoy vase, which still finds its way surprisingly often onto the covers of books exhibiting the best of 20th Century design.

What this snapshot shows is that designers' work is embedded in society in many ways. Aalto created an idea for a vase, finding the original form from modern art. As his work progressed, he took this idea and sketched several variants of it, until he found a form that rung true for him. Next this form was realized by master glass-blowers in Karhula-Iittala's studios and factory. However, this was just the beginning. When the vase was taken to the Savoy restaurant, one variant was singled out, and renamed with a catchy, sophisticated name that stuck and that has dominated the perception of the vase



Picture 3. Alvar Aalto's famous Savoy vase developed out of early sketches first into the *Eskimoerindens skinnbuxa* vase (right), and then the Savoy vase (lower, left).

Source: Alvar Aalto Foundation and Alvar Aalto Museum 2002.

ever since. Few people today know the history of the Savoy vase, which has become a major classic of modern glass design. As it has this classic status, it shapes the design community's understanding of glass vases. Through museums and art history, it also shapes the public's understanding of glass as applied art. For Iittala, the vase is still a major seller.

When one thinks about design in reflexive rather than causal terms, one begins to understand how the design world could be used as a window for studying how physical things are made meaningful. Things around us are interpretations and statements made by humans, rather than just technical creations. Of course, there are many types of reflexive processes in design. The Savoy vase represents the high end, while toy design represents the most market-driven design in which producing more variation is the key business driver. Similarly, designers work differently. Aalto's inspiration was artistic; indeed, many designers do follow the art world closely, and think of their work as art. However, many designers distance themselves from art and artistic imagery, and consciously orient to technology or the market instead.

Of course, there is nothing specific in these processes. Technology works like this. The sciences work like this. Society works like this. What is specific to design is the playful combination of art and culture and technology, and the way in which designers' self-understanding works. They see themselves typically as mediators between technology and people, engineering and taste, science and art. In this, they differ significantly from engineering, which, as Louis Bucciarrelli (1994), an engineer-turned-ethnographer notes, tends to have a mathematical cosmology in that when engineers account for their activities, they rely on the natural sciences and mathematics instead of art and the social sciences. For anyone interested in how these artistic and "soft" values get built into objects, things, and events (the face of the Olympics in Beijing is being designed by a professor who was trained in Helsinki), design provides an interesting site. For a media

and communications researcher, it gives an opportunity to study the material world as a meaningful activity.

Naturally, if a communications scholar follows my point, and starts to study design, she may have to develop research skills that are somewhat outside the ordinary baggage of a social scientist. One has to be able to pay due attention to visual thinking, materials, and to how the human body interacts with materials. Also, it might be useful to think in terms of creation of meaning instead of seeing design as “information transfer,” even though designing information flows is undeniably a part of design, and media design in particular. Furthermore, it pays to develop skills in observation. It takes time and patience to see how society evolves materially. Design has proved to be a difficult thing to study ethnographically from the designers’ “emic” perspective rather than using the researchers’ “etic” concepts and theories.

Design as an Approach to Media Research

The section on design as agency, of course, presented some theoretical intricacies that, if followed, would take research beyond causal thinking. I believe that it is productive to understand design in agentic terms, as an activity that participates in modern world-making. Designers are active people, who scan their environment to discover potential design problems. When they spot one, they construe a design that tries to provide a solution to it. In this work, they use professional methods of design, but also imagination. As I tried to argue in the final section of this paper, designers do not use their imaginations in a void: rather, they are in dialogue with art, technology, culture and – naturally enough – previous designs. Still, design is not a purely self-reflexive process. The solution produced by a designer is typically a mixture of not just design concerns, but also business planning, analysis of technological opportunities and constraints, and a host of other things too many to be listed here. It is for these reasons that I suggest that it might be better to talk about design in terms of reflexivity and agency rather than in terms of causality.

If one accepts the notion of “two solitudes” as a description of the current relationship between design and media research, this paper can in the final instance be thought of as a call for bilingualism. For media researchers, design illuminates many theoretical issues like *semiosis*, myth, metaphor, and aesthetics, providing an observable site for studying these processes in action. At a slightly more complex level, design may provide an opportunity for studying material objects and space as communication processes. The reason why these objects are more complex to study is conceptual and theoretical: few vocabularies exist that can help us to understand three-dimensional objects. For example, semiotics provides good tools for studying narrative, language, and visual objects like packages and textiles, but it fares far worse when it comes to the semiotics of space or chairs. At an even more complex level, design provides people in communications with an opportunity to “denaturalize” technology and the material world in concrete terms. In the human world, precious few natural things exist. Herbert Simon (1980) once observed that most of our environment is artificial, and that in consequence, we need a science of the artificial. For designers, a bilingual relationship might provide the promise of a more up-to-date theory and better tools for understanding communication, which is a key aspect of designers’ work. It would also provide the understanding and vocabularies needed to develop professional practice. Moreover, it would provide new areas for research, and perhaps even lead to new kinds of design practice.

For me, bilingualism refers to a deeper coexistence than two solitudes, but still shows that the two worlds can maintain their separate identities. Living bilingualism would be beneficial for both disciplines. Is it time to start learning new languages?

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Public service-medierne i politisk modvind

HENRIK SØNDERGAARD

I de seneste år har diskussionen om public service-medierne i Danmark ændret karakter, og meget tyder på, at nye måder at forstå public service-mediernes opgave på er under udvikling. Hvor det i 1990'erne blev set som en hovedopgave at bevare og styrke public service-medierne, dvs. DR og TV 2, i konkurrencen med kommercielt fjernsyn, sigter medietpolitikken i dag på at begrænse deres virksomhed. Tidligere var det en udbredt opfattelse, at public service-medierne udgjorde en vigtig, men samtidig meget skrøbelig medietype, som vanskeligt ville kunne overleve, når den blev udsat for konkurrence, og som måtte beskyttes for at undgå, at den blev marginaliseret. I dag, hvor DR og TV 2 står så stærkt på markedet, at det er helt meningsløst at tale om marginalisering, opfattes public service-medierne ganske vist stadig som en vigtig del af mediesystemet, men der er til gengæld voksende bekymring for, at DR og TV 2 har opnået en for dominerende stilling. Da der ikke er noget, der tyder på, at markedsudviklingen i sig selv vil ændre på dette forhold, kan balancen mellem offentligt og privat fjernsyn kun påvirkes ad politisk vej, nemlig ved at ændre betingelserne for public service-mediernes virksomhed.

Spørgsmålet vedrørende public service-mediernes opgave, deres indretning og funktion har under alle omstændigheder fået en mere direkte *politisk* karakter, og det er i den sammenhæng, at man må konstatere, at den politiske støtte, som de offentlige medier hidtil har nydt godt af, er blevet kølnet. I Danmark falder dette sammen med, hvad der er beskrevet som et politisk systemskifte, hvor en socialdemokratisk ledet regering er blevet afløst af et borgerligt styre, som har haft medietpolitiske forandringer som en af sine mærkesager. Det vigtigste mål på dette område har været at privatisere TV 2, og dermed har spørgsmålet public service-mediernes indretning allerede fra begyndelsen stået centralt på den medietpolitiske dagsorden.

Som det vil fremgå, er det fornyede politiske pres på public service-medierne ikke kun et resultat af regeringsskiftet, og det er heller ikke uden videre et udtryk for neoliberal skepsis over for offentlig medievirksomhed, selvom det klart nok spiller en rolle. Det har ligeså meget baggrund i nogle mere grundlæggende problemstillinger vedrørende public service-mediernes rolle i et stadigt mere sammensat mediesystem, hvor markeds-mæssige forhold efterhånden har fået større betydning, og hvor de overvejende kulturpolitiske motiver, som historisk set har begrundet denne medieform, over alt er blevet trængt i baggrunden (Syv-

erten 2004). I Danmark er kommercielt tv stadig forholdsvis nyt, men efterhånden er det blevet påkrævet at udvikle reguleringsformer, som tager højde for, at public service-medierne indvirker på markedsforholdene. Denne udvikling har i de seneste år især vist sig i europæisk sammenhæng som et angreb på public service-medierne, hvor stærke kommercielle medieselskaber gennem en lang række sager ved EU-kommissionen alvorligt har anfægtet legaliteten af de nuværende public service-institutioners virksomhed (Jacubowicz 2004). Som en konsekvens af EU's politik på dette område er medlemsstaterne tvunget til at definere public service-opgaven mere præcist, end det tidligere har været anset for påkrævet, hvilket fører til mere omfattende og detaljeret regulering. Uanset de politiske magtforhold i de enkelte medlemslande har det betydet, at det politiske system har fået større og mere direkte indflydelse på public service-medierne (Bardoel 2005). I Danmark er denne udvikling imidlertid så meget mere foruroligende, som den falder sammen med et stærkt ideologisk præget opgør med 1990'ernes socialdemokratiske medie- og kulturpolitik og et politisk ønske om at styrke den kommercielle mediesektor.

Med udgangspunkt i danske medieforhold skal jeg forsøge at forklare, hvad der ligger bag de ændrede politiske konjunkturer for public service-medierne, og diskutere nogle af de vigtigste strategiske udfordringer, det stiller disse medier over for i en situation, hvor den teknologiske udvikling (digitalisering, mediekonvergens mv.) i forvejen har sat det nuværende system under pres. Min tese er, at public service-medierne har udviklet en ny form for *politisk sårbarhed*, som paradoksalt nok har baggrund i disse mediers nuværende markedsmæssige styrkeposition.

Mediepolitik i forandring

Den mediepolitiske udvikling, der har fundet sted i Danmark siden regeringsskiftet i 2001, har først og fremmest drejet sig om DR og TV 2, som begge har været genstand for betydelige kontroverser. Kort efter at den borgerlige regering var tiltrådt, offentliggjorde den sit mediepolitiske reformprogram *Kvalitet, klarhed og konkurrence* (Kulturministeriet 2002a), som indeholder en lang række forslag rettet mod en ændring af balancen eller styrkeforholdet mellem offentlige og private medier. En af de centrale pointer er, at der ikke blot lægges vægt på øget konkurrence som kongevejen til kvalitet, men at der først og fremmest skal skabes gunstigere rammer for kommercielt tv ved at afskaffe hidtidige, kulturpolitisk motiverede begrænsninger. Det er sket ved at liberalisere lovgivningen vedrørende tv-reklamer (ophævelse af forbud mod reklamer for alkohol og håndkøbsmedicin, ophævelse af aftale om reklamer rettet mod børn), afskaffelse af koncessionsafgift for network-tv (TvDanmark) og halvering af krav om omfang af lokale nyheds- og aktualitetsprogrammer (fra 1 til ½ time dagligt). Hertil kommer, at gennemførelsen af et krav om, at DR skal udlægge 20% af sin produktion til uafhængige producenter, i sig selv udgør en væsentlig støtte til den private mediesektor (170 mio. kr. i 2006), og at en planlagt licensstigning på ca. 100 millioner kr. blev aflyst. Det vigtigste, men indtil videre ufuldførte skridt er omdannelsen af TV 2 til et privatejet selskab, hvorved balancen mellem offentlige og private medier på meget afgørende måde vil ændres.

Den anden side af regeringens mediepolitik vedrører mere umiddelbart public service-mediernes rolle i mediesystemet og tager sigte på at afgrænse og præcisere, hvori DR og TV 2's programvirksomhed består. Som det fremgår af mediaaftalen, "skal DR's og TV 2's public service-forpligtelser forenkles, men til gengæld gøres mere præcise, så seere og lyttere bedre kan se, hvad de kan forvente for licenspengene" (Kulturministeriet 2002b, s. 1).

Denne målsætning er blevet gennemført ved at indføre kontraktstyring af DR og TV 2 gennem såkaldte ”public service-kontrakter”, der relativt detaljeret bestemmer, hvilke krav institutionerne skal opfylde. I forhold til den tidligere praksis, hvor DR og TV 2’s opfyldelse af public service-forpligtelser var reguleret i brede vendinger i lov og vedtægter, har kontraktstyringen, som vi senere skal se, en mere forpligtende karakter, ligesom den indebærer, at de politiske opdragsgivere (staten) har fået større indflydelse. Som led i reformen af public service-medierne blev sammensætningen af DR’s bestyrelse ændret, så de politiske partiers indflydelse blev reduceret, samtidig med at dens beføjelser på det programpolitiske område blev indskærpet, idet det nu fremgår, at ”bestyrelsen har det overordnede programansvar” (Lov om radio- og fjernsynsvirksomhed 2002).

Samlet set kan disse reformer vanskeligt opfattes som andet end et anslag på public service-medierne, da det som konsekvens begrænser deres programpolitiske muligheder, giver anledning til tættere politisk styring og mere direkte kontrol, samtidig med at det øger den konkurrence, de er udsat for. Ikke desto mindre er det værd at understrege, at lovændringerne ikke i sig selv udgør noget angreb på public service-ideen, men derimod sigter mod at redefinere public service-virksomhed i en ny kontekst, hvor hensyn til fri og fair konkurrence er lige så vigtigt som traditionelle kulturpolitiske målsætninger.

Ser vi på nogle af de kontroverser, som i de seneste år har udspillet sig omkring DR og TV 2, bliver det tydeligt, at spørgsmålet om public service-mediernes stilling udgør andet end blot et reguleringsmæssigt anliggende, men også indgår i et ideologisk opgør om de offentlige mediers programvirksomhed og selvstændighed. Dette viser sig ikke mindst i de ledelsesmæssige konflikter, som har fundet sted i både TV 2 og DR, og som begge steder har ført til, at topledere er blevet afskediget. TV 2’s administrerende direktør Cristina Lage blev afskediget i 2003, fordi hun offentligt havde ytret modstand mod at privatisere TV 2, og for godt et år siden blev DR’s generaldirektør Christian Nissen afskediget officielt som følge af samarbejdsvanskeligheder med bestyrelsen, hvis formand i øvrigt måtte træde tilbage som en direkte følge af opgøret med generaldirektøren. En mere principiel strid om public service-mediernes autonomi opstod, da lovgrundlaget for DR i 2001 blev ændret, således at det eksplicit fremgår, at DR’s bestyrelse har det overordnede programansvar. Derved fik den nyindsatte bestyrelse mulighed for at gribe direkte ind i programvirksomheden, hvilket blev udnyttet til at rette kraftige angreb mod bl.a. DR’s nyhedsdækning af Irak-krigen og af navngivne journalister. Tilsvarende fandt der i 2003 et voldsomt opgør sted mellem DR’s ledelse og bestyrelsen med hensyn til organiseringen af DR’s nyhedsafdeling. Som led i udviklingen af tværmedial produktion havde DR samlet sine nyhedsredaktioner for radio, tv og internet, men bestyrelsen fandt, at det begrænsede mangfoldigheden og gennemtvang en delvis ophævelse af integrationen.

Det konkrete indhold i den redaktionelle indblanding, der har fundet sted, er ikke så afgørende. Det vigtige er derimod, at indgrebene har vist, hvor sårbare public service-institutionerne er over for politisk indflydelse, som er direkte skadelig for disse mediers muligheder for at opretholde redaktionel integritet og troværdighed. Samtidig er det en demonstration af, at der tilsyneladende eksisterer et temmelig stærkt ønske hos en del af politikerne om at øve direkte indflydelse på de offentlige medier ud fra den forestilling, at offentlig finansiering berettiger detaljeret politisk kontrol. I den sammenhæng spiller det formentlig en rolle, at de mere uformelle indflydelseskanaler, som politikere tidligere har benyttet, er tydet ud, efterhånden som den professionelle ledelse af de offentlige medier i stadig større grad – bl.a. af konkurrencemæssige årsager – følger rent professionelle mål, som ikke tillader politiske hensyn.

Markedstilpasningens dilemma

Det mediepolitiske kursskifte i retning af en mere kritisk og restriktiv indstilling til public service-medierne i Danmark har, som det er blevet antydnet, baggrund i en politisk magtkamp, men det hænger også sammen med karakteren af public service-mediernes egen udvikling i et konkurrencebaseret mediesystem. DR's udvikling siden midten af 1990'erne kan tjene som eksempel på nogle af de problemer, som den voksende markedstilpasning har givet anledning til. Problemerne har først og fremmest med DR's legitimering at gøre og afspejler, at behovet for at kunne forsvare public service-medier er vokset, efterhånden som de udsættes for større politisk pres og derfor må kunne begrunde deres fortsatte eksistens.

Mens DR endnu havde monopol, var den politiske legitimering overladt til det politiske system, som så havde til opgave at forsvare institutionen over for befolkningen. Med udviklingen af et konkurrencebaseret tv-system ændres dette forhold, fordi DR har været tvunget til at legitimere sig mere direkte i forhold til mediebrugerne, hvis tilfredshed med programudbudet har fået afgørende betydning, mens derimod den politiske legitimering er kommet i anden række. Samtidig er legitimeringsbehovet blevet udvidet, fordi det nu også er blevet nødvendigt at kunne legitimere public service-medierne over for konkurrerende kommercielle medier, altså en form for økonomisk legitimering, hvor det skal godtgøres, at den samfundsmæssige værdi af offentlige medier er større end de markedsmæssige ulemper, det fører med sig.

DR har på flere forskellige områder gradvist tilpasset sig til de vilkår, som udspringer af den skærpede konkurrencesituation, først og fremmest ved i 1996 at omlægge programpolitikken og etablere et to-kanalsystem (DR1 og DR 2), og dernæst gennem organisatoriske forandringer, hvor programproduktion og udsendelse er blevet adskilt, og hvor der er indført et internt ressourceallokeringsystem, som bygger på kunde-leverandørforhold. På den ene side har dette skabt en mere effektiv ressourceanvendelse, som har muliggjort en betydelig forøgelse af produktiviteten, og på den anden side er der blevet udviklet procedurer for en både omfattende og detaljeret programfladestyring, som har gjort det muligt i langt højere grad end tidligere at opnå på forhånd definerede strategiske målsætninger (Søndergaard, 2003, s. 7ff).

Denne udvikling må ses på baggrund af, at DR i årene efter monopolbruddet i 1988 oplevede en ganske voldsom tilbagegang hos seerne, så DR's markedsandel midt i 1990'erne efterhånden var reduceret i et sådant omfang, at DR's funktion som public service-institution for hele befolkningen var truet. Det afgørende problem var ikke så meget, at seerne i stadig mindre grad udnyttede DR's programudbud, men at DR var i færd med at mindste kontakten med en del af befolkningen og dermed ufrivilligt ville ende som en nichekanal uden nogen større samfundsmæssig betydning. Den centrale udfordring for DR var at genskabe kontakten til publikum, hvilket i teknisk forstand indelbar målrettet indsats for at opretholde og udvide den ugentlige dækning (reach), hvor dækningen er et udtryk for hvor stor en del af befolkningen der i løbet af en uge anvender DR's programmer. Når dækning gøres til det centrale strategiske mål bliver det programpolitiske fokus flyttet fra programudbudets sammensætning til seernes *brug* af det, hvilket på sin side betyder, at der bliver lagt større vægt på afsætnings- og distributionsleddet i programvirksomheden.

Målsætningen om at bevare en høj dækning er i sig selv næppe kontroversiel, da det er helt afgørende, at en public service-kanals programmer faktisk anvendes af befolkningen, men i praksis kan en høj dækning ikke opnås, med mindre man er i stand til at fast-

holde en stor markedsandel (share), hvilket set i et public service-perspektiv er noget vanskeligere at legitimere. Det har vist sig, at der eksisterer en tæt sammenhæng mellem en tv-kanals markedsandel og dens dækning: Hvis markedsandelen er på omkring 25%, er dækningen nogenlunde konstant, nemlig omkring 80%, og den øges kun svagt ved højere markedsandel. Falder markedsandelen derimod under ca. 20%, reduceres den ugentlige dækning til gengæld ganske markant (til ca. 50%). Hvis en tv-kanal vil fastholde en høj dækning, er der altså grænser for hvor lille markedsandelen kan være. I praksis er det imidlertid ikke muligt at operationalisere dækning i programstyringen, og derfor bliver rent markeds-mæssige målsætninger de centrale styringsparametre for program-virkomheden. Selv om der indgår præcise mål for dækning i DR's strategiplaner, er det konkrete styringsparameter rent markeds-mæssige målsætninger. Det er samtidig en programpolitisk strategi, som forudsætter, at sendefladen rummer et betydeligt antal populære programmer (såkaldte "fyrtårne"), som kan trække seertallet op. Denne strategi betyder ganske vist ikke, at "smalle" programmer forsvinder fra sendefladen, men den indebærer, at de "brede", masseappellerende programmer får en nøglerolle i bestræbelsen på at indløse de overordnede strategiske målsætninger vedrørende dækning.

Det, der for DR har været opskriften på succes, har imidlertid skabt politiske legitimeringsproblemer. DR er blevet kritiseret for at anlægge en for "kommerciel" programprofil, og især er de mest populære underholdningsprogrammer blevet gjort til genstand for kritik. Kritikken afspejler, at det i et tv-system med mange indbyrdes konkurrerende kanaler umiddelbart bliver vanskeligere at forsvare, at licensfinansieret fjernsyn overhovedet skal sende populære programmer af den type, man finder på kommercielt tv. I den medie-politiske aftale, der blev indgået i 2002, fremgår det klart, at forligspartierne bag den sigter mod, at public service-mediernes programudbud skal være mere distinkt, idet der fremhæves en række programområde, hvor public service-medierne skal være førende: "Målet er, at public service-stationer skal være de bedste inden for nyhedsdækning, oplysning, undervisning og dansk kunst og kultur, herunder skuespil og film" (Kulturministeriet, 2002). I den regeringsvenlige del af pressen er den politisk hensigt mere utvetydig, som når *Berlingske Tidendes* på lederplads skriver, at "Folketinget må samle mod til at gøre op med den udgave af public service-begrebet, som indbefatter tvangsbetaling for alle de sange fra de varme lande, som Danmarks Radio kan komme i tanke om" (*Berlingske Tidende*, 8.9.2004).

Det dilemma, som DR sættes i, når der rejses kritik mod omfanget af underholdende programtyper, er, at den nuværende programpolitik i stort omfang imødekommer seernes ønsker, og at en ændring i udbudets sammensætning, hvor der lægges større vægt på oplysende programmer, derfor vil skabe utilfredshed blandt seerne. I en analyse af befolkningens holdninger til DR og TV 2's public service-virkomhed fra 1999 konkluderes, at "befolkningen ønsker at blive oplyst og mener også, at public service-kanalerne i stor udstrækning lever op til dette", men at "specielt DR1 og DR2 bør være mere underholdende, end de er i dag" (ACNielsen-AIM 2000, s. 17). Skønt analysen ikke er helt ny, er der intet, der indikerer, at seernes præferencer har forandret sig, og derfor står DR i et reelt skisma mellem at tilgodese seernes efterspørgsel og at imødekomme de politiske ønsker om en mere distinkt programprofil.

Ganske vist drejer DR's programpolitik sig ikke kun om forholdet mellem oplysning og underholdning, men i mediedebatten udgør det ikke desto mindre et hovedtema og er meget direkte er koblet til kvalitetsvurderinger og til spørgsmålet om, hvordan public service skal defineres. Som bl.a. Meijer har påpeget (Meijer 2004), er det på mange måder

ufrugtbart og misvisende at modstille kvalitet og markedsmæssig succes, men i mediepolitisk sammenhæng har det ikke desto mindre været ganske sædvanligt, og derfor er det i praksis vanskeligt at undgå, at public service-diskussionen præges af denne polarisering, hvor graden af public service i realiteten gøres til et spørgsmål om programportefølje.

I Danmark har den politiske debat om DR's programvirksomhed derfor i høj grad drejet sig om, hvorvidt DR fortsat skal sende inden for alle programområder, den såkaldte *fuldskala-model*, eller i højere grad koncentrere sig om den slags programmer, som kommercielt tv ikke kan levere, dvs. en *komplementær* model. Diskussionen om disse forskellige versioner af public service er imidlertid præget af, at den som regel alene drejer sig om programudbudet og om karakteren af de krav, der stilles til public service-medierne, mens de samfundsmæssige virkninger af public service-medierne sjældent drages frem. I de nuværende bestræbelser i dansk medieregulering på at sondre klarere mellem public service-virksomhed og kommercielt tv lægges der primært vægt på, at public service-medierne skal være mere *distinkte*, og at dette først og fremmest beror på omfanget og karakteren af de programmæssige forpligtelser. Set i et reguleringsperspektiv giver dette god mening, da det på den måde vil være muligt at definere public service mere præcist, men det vil til gengæld skabe problemer for nogle af de andre målsætninger, som gælder for public service, især målet om at være i regelmæssig kontakt med det samlede publikum, fordi et programudbud, der er markant forskelligt fra det markedsbaserede, ganske enkelt ikke kan sikre tilstrækkelig dækning.

Dækningens centrale betydning i DR's programstrategi har ikke kun at gøre med tv-udbudets sammensætning, men indgår også som del af forklaringen på DR's initiativer inden for multimedieområdet, fordi nye medieplatforme bidrager til at øge institutionens samlede dækning. Det har især betydning, når de drejer sig om de målgrupper, som DR i voksende omfang har haft svært ved at nå med sine to tv-kanaler. Især unge, hvis tv-forbrug generelt har været vigende i de seneste år, udgør et problem for DR, og til denne målgruppe er der udviklet ganske omfattende on-line-services med henblik på at fastholde kontakten.

For samfundets skyld

Spørgsmålet om, hvor distinkt DR's profil bør være, har imidlertid betydning, som ligger ud over de markedsmæssige hensyn, da det meget direkte har at gøre med DR's politiske legitimitet, og DR's ledelse har i de sidste par år udtrykt voksende bekymring for, at det institutionelle fokus på konkurrencen skulle udviske DR's public service-profil. Bestyrelsen iværksatte i 2004 et såkaldt "public service-eftersyn", der sigtede mod at skærpe DR's kulturpolitiske mission, bl.a. under indtryk af en forventning om kommende EU-krav om mere præcise public service-definitioner, men også fordi DR's egne image-undersøgelser havde vist, at seerne i stadig mindre grad opleverede, at DR 1 skilte sig ud fra de øvrige kanaler. I et interview (*Berlingske Tidende* 11.5.2005) udtaler konstitueret generaldirektør Lars Vesterløkke: "Hvor vi i de sidste ti år har arbejdet på at blive meget medievirksomhedsorienteret – dvs. meget kundeorienteret, så flytter vi nu vægten fra kun at stå på det ene ben til også at stå på det andet ben, nemlig at vi er til for samfundets skyld".

Den programpolitiske justering indebærer bl.a. en mere sammensat kvalitetsvurdering, som ud over at lægge vægt på, at programmerne skal have professionel kvalitet og kvalitet for den enkelte bruger også skal have værdi for samfundet.

Det er værd at bemærke, at DR's besindelse på public service som et samfundsmæssigt anliggende, der ikke meningsfuld kan omsættes i markedsmæssige termer, kommer på et tidspunkt, hvor institutionen står meget stærkt på markedet, men samtidig oplever vigende politisk opbakning. Om ikke andet afspejler udspillet en erkendelse af, at public service-medierne er et politisk projekt, som nødvendigvis må kunne legitimeres ud fra andre principper end dem, der gælder på et marked, og at DR's status som kulturinstitution må gøres mere synlig for mediebrugerne. Det sidste har givet anledning til en omfattende pr-kampagne, som udspringer af det tidligere omtalte "public service-eftersyn" og i øvrigt fungerer som en slags expositon til de forestående politiske forhandlinger om en ny mediaftale (der skal gælde fra 2007 og fire år frem). Kampagnens centrale slogan "DR ikke som de andre" sigter eksplicit mod at synliggøre, hvad public service indebærer, og hvorfor det har en særlig samfundsmæssig betydning. Som det fremgår af DR's pjece *DR ikke som de andre* (2005b), vil DR "skabe værdi for samfundet, kulturen og den enkelte", og i en mere omfattende, debatpræget publikation *DR for alle. Et magasin om public service* (2005a) udbygges denne argumentation.

DR lægger sig i denne bestræbelse tæt op ad BBC, som i forbindelse med charterfornyelsesprocessen har udarbejdet en omfattende strategiplan, *Building Public Value: Renewing the BBC for a digital world* (2004), som meget direkte fokuserer på institutionens samfundsmæssige værdi. Dette er også for BBC's vedkommende sket i en erkendelse af, at public service ikke udelukkende kan forstås som et bestemt udbud af programmer, som kan supplere det markedsmæssige udbud, men snarere udgør en samlet struktur, som er defineret ved en bestemt samfundsmæssig mission. Hvor BBC tidligere har lagt vægt på, at opgaven bestod i at præsentere et mere alsidigt programudbud, end det markedet kan levere, således som det bl.a. fremgår af BBC's *Extending Choice in the Digital Age* fra 1996, baseres den nuværende strategi på en anden legitimering. I et fuldt udbygget digitalt mediesystem, som "contains the potential for limitless individual consumer choice" (BBC 2004, s. 3), vil hovedopgaven ikke bestå i at kompensere for mangler i det markedsbaserede udbud, men snarere i at opretholde en samfundsmæssig funktion, som det kommercielle medier ikke eller kun i ringe grad tager vare på. Disse funktioner, som bl.a. drejer sig om at bidrage til et velinformeret, veluddannet og tolerant samfund, kommer til udtryk i form af "public value", dvs. værdier, som samfundet som helhed har gavn af: "While commercial broadcasters aim to return value to their shareholders or owners, the BBC exists to create *public value*. In other words, it aims to serve its audience not just as consumers, but as members of a wider society" (op.cit., s. 7). Det interessante i vores sammenhæng er ikke så meget den nærmere bestemmelse af, hvordan BBC vil skabe samfundsmæssig værdi, men at legitimeringen af institutionen sker med henvisning til samfundsmæssige funktioner.

Både DR og BBC's programerklæringer kan ses som forsøg på at flytte fokus fra markedsmæssige forhold, som i mediedebatten har givet anledning til kritik, til samfundsmæssige og kulturelle forpligtelser, som har en mindre kontroversiel karakter. I hvilket omfang programerklæringerne får reel betydning for programvirksomheden, altså om de fører til programpolitiske omlægninger, er endnu for tidligt at sige.

Til gengæld er det vanskeligt at se det som andet end politisk opportunisme, og der er ingen tvivl om, at det kan få ganske store konsekvenser, hvis public service-medierne af politiske legitimeringsgrunde presses til at justere deres programudbud i en retning, som strider mod seernes ønsker. Det, der i programerklæringerne fremstår som tilbagevenden til gamle dyder – mere "public" og mindre "service" – kan nemlig let føre til mar-

kedsmæssig marginalisering, som er uheldig på et tidspunkt, hvor public service-medierne står over for at skulle redefinere deres rolle i et digitalt mangekanal-system.

Kontraktstyring af public service

Når der er grund til at bekymre sig for, hvilken form for public service der udvikles på baggrund af de ændrede mediepolitiske vilkår, hænger det ikke mindst sammen med, at den politiske indflydelse på public service-mediernes programvirksomhed i realiteten er blevet udvidet ganske betragteligt i de senere år. Den direkte indflydelse, som politikerne gennem Radorådet øvede over DR i monopoltiden, er ganske vist afskaffet, da Radorådet blev nedlagt og erstattet af en bestyrelse, men til gengæld er der i 2001 indført et kontraktstyringssystem, som ad bagvejen har skabt nye påvirkningsmuligheder.

Den nye styringsform består i, at der mellem Kulturministeriet på den ene side og public service-medierne på den anden indgås kontraktlige aftaler, hvori det nærmere bestemmes, hvilke opgaver de pågældende medier over en vis periode skal varetage. Indførelse af public service-kontrakterne er en udbygning af en generel tendens til en *mere detaljeret regulering af public service-medierne*, hvor man først i 1990'erne fastsatte udfyldende bestemmelser om public service-forpligtelserne i DR og TV 2's vedtægter, i 1996 pålagde begge institutioner at udarbejde årlige regnskaber for public service-forpligtelserne, og i 2000 blev de tillige pålagt at udarbejde public service-budgetter som udgangspunkt for regnskabsaflæggelsen. I forhold til den tidligere reguleringsmodel, hvor udvidede vedtægter blev suppleret af public service-budgetter og regnskaber, indebærer kontraktstyringen i sig selv ikke nogen stor forandring, og principielt har den ikke større indvirkning på programvirksomheden end den tidligere reguleringsmåde. I praksis er sagen dog en anden, men det skyldes ikke så meget kontrakterne som den nye form for kontrol, som samtidig er indført. Det nye er, at der nu er indført en mere omfattende *kontrol* med kontraktens overholdelse¹, i første omgang i regi af Public Service Rådet, som blev nedlagt i 2001, og i dag i Radio- og tv-nævnet, som udgør den centrale reguleringsmyndighed (Banke 2004, s. 141ff).

Udviklingen i retning af mere detaljeret styring af public service-medierne hænger til dels sammen med såkaldt "new public management", hvor offentlige institutioner reguleres gennem flerårige resultatkontrakter, som det bl.a. kendes fra universiteterne, men det afspejler også de ændrede konjunkturer for public service-medierne i et markedsbaseret mediesystem, hvor behovet for at dokumentere værdien public service bliver vigtig. Det sidste er ikke mindst et resultat af den voksende betydning af EU's konkurrenceregulering, herunder navnlig Kommissionens håndtering af statsstøttere reglerne. Public service-kontrakterne og det tilsyn, der føres med hensyn til overholdelse af dem, gør det muligt at leve op til de krav, EU-kommissionen stiller for, at der er tale om lovlig statsstøtte, nemlig at statsstøtten er proportional med public service-forpligtelsernes omfang, og at forpligtelserne derfor er så klart definerede, at deres opfyldelse kan kontrolleres af et organ, der er uafhængigt af public service-medierne (jf. EU-kommissionens meddelelse om statsstøtte til public service, EU-kommissionen 2001).

Den nye reguleringsform kan altså ses som en "beskyttelse" af public service-medierne, ikke blot i forhold til EU-kommissionens mulige intervention, men også i forhold til eventuel kritik mod de offentlige mediers virksomhed. I den forstand tjener kontraktstyringen til at højne public service-mediernes legitimitet på samme måde, som det er tilfældet med andre offentlige institutioner, der er underlagt denne form for styring. På den

anden side indebærer den mere detaljerede fastlæggelse af public service-forpligtelserne, at public service-mediernes autonomi underlægges begrænsninger², som ikke blot beror på kontraktens detaljeringsgrad, men også på forpligtelsernes omfang og på karakteren af den kontrol, der udøves. Omfattende og detaljerede krav vil begrænse public service-mediernes handlefrihed og vil i sidste ende kunne føre til, at programvirksomheden alene sigter på at opfylde de formelle fordringer, som kontrakterne opstiller.

Hvad angår kontrollen, er et af de vigtige spørgsmål, hvilke "performance indicators" der lægges til grund for evalueringen af public service-mediernes, og om der kan udvikles måleinstrumenter, som gør det muligt at kontrollere andet end rent kvantitative aspekter. I de nuværende kontrakter indgår en lang række kvalitative dimensioner, som er vanskelige at "måle", men det er ikke svært at forestille sig, at der i stadigt større omfang vil blive lagt vægt på mere objektive og målbare dimensioner, efterhånden som legitimationspresset på public service-mediernes vokser. Risikoen er, at kontrakterne vil udvikles til rigide kvotebestemmelser, som vil undergrave public service-ideen og i øvrigt anbringe institutionerne i en programpolitisk spændetrøje, som hæmmer deres udvikling. Den engelske reguleringsmyndighed Ofcom synes at være opmærksom på denne problemstilling, når den advarer mod programkvotebestemmelser og i stedet foreslår, at reguleringen sker på baggrund af public service-mediernes formål: "PSB should in future be defined in terms of its purposes and its characteristics rather than by specific genres (programme types). ... It must be free to respond to the challenge of providing accessible and popular programming. This suggests that regulation should break away from narrow obligations specifying hours of certain types of programming across the schedule" (Ofcom 2004, s. 10).

Som Ofcoms analyse påpeger, har public service-medier til formål at give adgang til et programudbud, som markedet ikke af sig selv kan levere, men bag det ligger en langt større ambition, som drejer sig om at *styre befolkningens medieforbrug*³ i en retning, som tjener samfundsmæssige formål, altså et mål for "impact". I den sammenhæng vil et selv nok så detaljeret kvotesystem komme til kort, og der er derfor grund til arbejde videre med, hvordan nogle af de overordnede samfundsmæssige målsætning kan omsættes i kontraktlige termer. Det er imidlertid ikke nogen helt enkelt opgave, da udbudskrav og krav om "impact" omsat i konkret programvirksomhed i realiteten indfører samme skisma i mediereguleringen, som i dag ligger i DR's programstrategi, nemlig at en distinkt profil vanskeligt kan forenes med stort "impact". Problemet løses ikke ved at indføre "public value" som et kriterium, bl.a. fordi den offentlige eller samfundsmæssige værdi af et givet programudbud beror på, at det har et stort publikum, hvilket gælder så meget mere som i hvert fald en del af public service-mediernes samfundsmæssige nytte iflg. BBC's definitioner ligger i at skabe "shared experiences", altså levere programmer, som er i stand til at samle et stort publikum (BBC 2004). Det kan imidlertid være en fordel, hvis public service-kontrakterne udvikles, så flere forskellige af disse parametre inddrages, da det vil kunne tjene til i højere grad, end det er tilfældet i dag, at synliggøre nogle af de indbyrdes modstridende krav og forventninger, som public service-mediernes stilles over for. I bedste fald vil det kunne bidrage til at højne forståelsen for, hvad public service-virksomhed går ud på.

Et risikomoment, som bør nævnes, er den politiske indflydelse, som gør sig gældende, når kontrakterne skal indgås og fornyes. Det siger sig selv, at det er en politisk opgave at udstikke de overordnede rammer for public service-virksomheden, men ofte vil de politikere, der skal udforme disse kontrakter, være fristet til også at fastlægge mere detaljerede retningslinjer, som ikke nødvendigvis er til fordel hverken for public service eller de en-

kelte institutioner. Denne tendens har i flere år været tydelig i Danmark, hvor politikerne har øremærket en del af licensmidlerne til specifikke formål, først og fremmest til filmstøtte, hvorved man, de gode hensigter til trods, griber ganske omfattende ind i public service-mediernes mulighed for at løse deres opgave. Det samme er tilfældet, når det kontraktligt pålægges DR at udlicitere en betydelig del af egenproduktionen for på den måde at støtte den private produktionssektor. Bliver kontraktstyring i realiteten et skalleskjul for industristøtteordninger, som ikke har nogen direkte relevans for løsning af public service-opgaven, er der god grund til bekymring.

Der kan ikke gives noget entydigt svar på, om kontraktstyring af public service-mediernes gør dem mere politisk sårbare, end det har været tilfældet under de tidligere reguleringsformer, da det helt afhænger af, hvordan kontrakterne udformes⁴, men det er til gengæld klart, at den skærpede kontrol, som kontraktstyringen har medført, vil betyde, at *konsekvenserne* af u hensigtsmæssige kontrakter bliver langt større, end de ville have været uden denne kontrol. Sagt på en anden måde, er den skade, som politikerne kan forvolde på public service-mediernes, vokset betydeligt, og det burde få mediepolitikere til at udvise det største mål af varsomhed. En afgørende forudsætning for, at dette vil ske, er, at der i det politiske system er ikke blot en generel velvilje over for medier i samfundets tjeneste, men også en forståelse af, hvor grænsen går mellem politisk indflydelse og redaktionel integritet.

Den reguleringsmæssige logik, som den nuværende kontraktstyring af DR er udtryk for, og som håndhævelsen af EU's konkurrenceregler blot forstærker, peger ret entydigt på politikernes centrale rolle i fastlæggelsen af, hvilken form for public service der skal udvikles. I Danmark som i andre europæiske lande er politikerne under pres for at definere public service-forpligtelserne så snævert, at den kommercielle mediesektor kan få mere plads, og der er derfor en reel risiko for, at dette hensyn vil gå forud for hensynet til public service-mediernes udviklingsmuligheder. Som Jakubowicz pointerer, er der flere tegn på, at det allerede er tilfældet: "Just at the time, when public broadcasting needs to redefine its mission, it may be forced into a Procrustean bed of an ideologically-motivated concept of public service broadcasting that has the major virtue of not competing with commercial broadcasters, but does nothing to help public broadcasters adjust to new realities" (Jakubowicz 2003, s. 59).

Mediepolitiske udfordringer

Den danske debat om public service, herunder debatten om regulering af de offentlige medier, har kun i beskedent omfang bidraget til løsning af de problemer, som disse medier står over for ved overgangen fra et forholdsvis overskueligt analogt tv-system til et omfattende digitalt multimediesystem. I nogen grad hænger det sammen med, at diskussionen formentlig af ideologiske grunde har været meget snæversynet og har fokuseret på spørgsmål om politiske tendenser i DR's nyhedsprogrammer, om omfanget af fredagsunderholdningen og om hvordan de offentlige mediers bestyrelser skal sammensættes. Sammen med den mere forbeholdne, hvis ikke ligefrem kritiske indstilling til public service-mediernes, som præger den nuværende regering, har det stået i vejen for den nytænkning, som er nødvendig, hvis public service fortsat skal spille en rolle i det danske mediebillede.

DR's for nyligt fremlagte ønsker om en licensforhøjelse og om at etablere nye digitale tema-kanaler blev afvist allerede ved præsentationen, og indtil videre er der ikke meget,

som tyder på, at DR får mulighed for at ekspandere, skønt det udgør en helt elementær forudsætning for, at DR skal kunne fastholde sin position i et digitalt mediesystem. Det er svært at se andre forklaringer til denne holdning end rent ideologisk modvilje mod DR.

Skønt vilkårene for DR spiller en vigtig rolle, er det imidlertid næppe den største udfordring, som dansk mediepolitik står over for. Det mest afgørende spørgsmål bliver nemlig, hvordan man kan fastholde omfanget og kvaliteten af det public service-udbud, som TV 2 i dag leverer. Ganske vist er TV 2 endnu ikke privatiseret, men når det sker, vil man stå i en situation, hvor en væsentlig del af public service-udbudet tilvejebringes på markeds-mæssige betingelser. Kvaliteten og omfanget af denne "public service for private money" bliver helt afhængig af, at staten kan tilbyde TV 2 så attraktive vilkår, at det forretningsmæssigt kan betale sig. I det analoge tv-system, hvor TV 2 har privilegeret ret til at sende landsdækkende reklamer, kan der stilles forholdsvis omfattende krav til programvirksomheden, men i et digitalt system, hvor TV 2 ikke længere vil have dette fortrin, bliver det tvivlsomt, om staten kan stille samme krav. Risikoen er, at TV 2's bidrag til public service-udbudet vil udtyndes og måske helt falde bort, og dermed vil DR i realiteten være alene om at løfte public service-opgaven. Det er et scenario, som helt svarer til de prognoser, som Ofcom har opstillet for det engelske public service-system, hvor der advares mod, at det ikke blot vil føre til marginalisering af public service-udbudet, men også fjerne den nuværende konkurrence på området til skade for programkvaliteten. Ofcoms idé om at etablere en Public Service Publisher som erstatning for nedgangen i public service-udbudet kan være relevant også i Danmark, og under alle omstændigheder er det på tide at begynde at overveje, hvad der kan gøres.

Noter

1. Kun DR og TV 2's regionale stationer er i dag kontraktstyrede, da TV 2 ved omdannelsen til aktieselskab i 2003 reguleres på baggrund af en sendetilladelse, hvis overholdelse ligeledes kontrolleres af Radio- og tv-nævnet.
2. Georgina Born (2004) belyser, hvordan den voksende grad af præstationsmålinger og regnskabs-aflæggelse i BBC i 1990'erne har skabt interne problemer, bl.a. ved at de kreative dele af programproduktionen forsvandt fra det ledelsesmæssige fokus.
3. Mediesekretariatet har i 2005 som tillæg til sin udtalelse vedr. DR og TV 2's public service-rederegølelser foretaget en kvantitativ analyse, som tydeligt dokumenterer den indvirkning, som de to public service-stationer har på danskerne tv-forbrug (jf. www.mediesekretariatet.dk).
4. Pladsen tillader ikke nogen behandling af baggrunden for kontraktstyringen, og også i forskningslitteraturen er der forskellige opfattelser af fordele og ulemper (jf. Jakubowicz 2005, Svendsen 2004, Bardoeel 2005).

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Nya förhållanden

Om den svenska public service-televisionens relation till publik och allmänhet

ANNA EDIN

En gång i tiden gav frekvensknappheten public service-medierna ett slags naturligt monopol inom nationsstatens gränser, även om det inte skedde utan politiska maktkamper. De europeiska, offentligägda etermediemonopolen var vid inrättandet inte enbart motive-
rade av samhällspolitiska ideal, utan också resultatet av vad som har kallats för ”ett teknologiskt misslyckande” (Collins & Murroni 1997: 7). Samtidigt var det monopolet som ur ett institutionellt och kommunikativt perspektiv gjorde det logiskt, och rimligt, att betrakta publiken som en allmänhet, och följaktligen varje tv-tittare som medborgare. Samma etermedieupplevelser delades av flertalet, verksamheten och programmen diskuterades flitigt. Public service-televisionen hade bokstavligen allas ögon på sig.

De teknologiska förändringar som har skett sedan slutet på 1980-talet innebär inte bara att public service-televisionen tvingas konkurrera om tittartid med privatägda medier i ett framväxande multikanalsystem, utan också att den rumsliga kategori som det tidigare systemet bidrog till att konstruera, och som är djupt förankrad i själva public service-modellen, i allt högre grad utmanas – dvs föreställningen om publiken som en nationell allmänhet. Dessutom har den allmänna politiska och kulturella utvecklingen under en längre tid problematiserat föreställningen om allmänheten som en homogen och rationell kategori. Det public service-begrepp som under lång tid har definierat de offentligägda etermedieinstitutionerna är visserligen mångtydigt och anpassningsbart, men i en grundläggande mening bygger begreppet på, och förutsätter, att det finns en (nationell) allmänhet som kan – och vill – betjänas.

Publiken och institutionen

Relationen mellan tv-institutionen och tv-publiken kan betraktas som ett diskursivt system, som består av olika men sammankopplade nivåer. Dels den nivå där institutionella föreställningar om publiken och själva kommunikationsförhållandet produceras och reproduceras, vilket inkluderar den officiella retoriken och det som har kallats för tv-institutionens ”osynliga fiktioner” (Hartley 1987: 127). Dels den nivå som består av de kon-

kreta uttryck och tilltalsformer som präglar det faktiska programutbudet, och som i sin tur sträcker sig från en övergripande och seriell nivå, ned till utbudets segmentnivå. Till stor del spelar publiken sina roller inom kommunikationsprocessen genom diskursiva konstruktioner som härstammar från andra delar av mediasystemet. Dessa konstruktioner bidrar till att föra samman ”publiken”, mediasystemet och dess främsta aktörer, men överensstämmer inte nödvändigtvis med de faktiska tv-tittarnas önskemål eller intentioner, även om de naturligtvis kan sammanfalla (se t ex Ang 1991, Blumler 1997). Samtidigt är det alltid mediernas kommunikativa uppgift att finna uttryckssätt och tilltalsformer som når fram till publiken – annars är ju verksamheten bokstavligen meningslös.

Det har hävdats att avståndet mellan publiken och institutionen är så avgrundsdybt, att en historik över de europeiska public service-medierna bäst beskrivs som en makt-kamp där utvecklingen drivs framåt av publikens motstånd mot att objektifieras i namn av ädla nationella och kulturella idéer (se t ex Ang 1991). Andra menar att historien snarare bör beskrivas som en anpassningsprocess, där föreställningarna om och sätten att adressera publiken gradvis har närmat sig den kommunikativa kontexten – något som har tillskrivits en avgörande, positiv betydelse för samhällets kulturella och politiska offentlighet (se t ex Scannell 1989).

Oavsett vilken tolkning man föredrar, kan man konstatera att det inte är självklart att de institutionella kraven och den kommunikativa praktiken överensstämmer, och att detta inte bara är ett teoretiskt problem utan historiskt sett har varit ett återkommande dilemma framför allt för public service-medierna.

Public service-uppdraget

Hur ser då den officiella motiveringen till svensk public service-verksamhet ut i dagsläget? Detta visar sig faktiskt vara ganska svårt att entydigt och definitivt besvara, eftersom en mängd olika saker framhålls som lika viktigt, angeläget och grundläggande – inte ens statsmakterna, från vilka uppdraget ytterst utgår, kan på något entydigt sätt definiera ett överordnat syfte med public service, utan uppdraget är så vittomfattande att public service-televisionen tillskrivs ett demokratiskt ansvar för praktiskt taget alla områden i samhället, från den nivå som handlar om demokratins utveckling och överlevnad, till den nivå som handlar om den enskilda människans personliga utveckling och tillfredsställelse. Rör man sig sedan till de krav som ställs på den faktiska programverksamheten visar det sig att komplexitetsgraden knappast sjunker. Kraven på programverksamheten är många, vaga och ofta motsägelsefulla. Programverksamheten ska vara så sammansatt och varierad att den rör sig från det breda anslaget till det särpräglade, den ska både ge publiken det den vill ha och samtidigt ge medborgarna nya, oväntade upplevelser. Mångfald, bredd, självständighet, samhällsförståelse, hög kvalitet, mångkultur, delaktighet, integritet, hänsyn, allmänintresse, kunskap, delaktighet, nyskapande, experimentalitet, är några av de värden som återkommer frekvent. Här ryms ”det svenska” och ”det främmande”, ”nya svenskar” och ”urbefolkningen”, ”majoriteten” och ”minoriteter”, ”förströelse” och ”bildning”, ”tv-publik” och ”medborgare”, osv.

Det är alltså tal om en närmast gränslöst inkluderande programpolitik. Om vartannat hänvisas till allmänintresse och särintresse, det smala och det breda, till människors olikhet och likhet, osv. Vid en första läsning tycks alla dessa värden referera till en empirisk verklighet, men vid en närmare anblick visar det sig att de snarare definierar varandra i

vad som bäst beskrivs som ett intertextuellt system, där ett värde ofta förklaras med ett annat i en enda lång kedja av definitioner (Edin & Widestedt 2002: 32).

Bäst?

Detta komplicerade och komplexa uppdrag uppfylls emellertid, om man studerar de offentliga utvärderingar som årligen görs av den svenska public service-verksamheten, närmast prickfritt. I de officiella programpolitiska dokumenten uppvisas alltså bilden av ett så gott som perfekt public service-företag.

Det är uppenbart att den svenska public service-televisionen är ett bra tv-företag, som producerar och sänder många bra program. Varje år vinner SVT flera internationella festivalpriser och nomineringar för hög kvalitet. Av de 100 mest sedda enskilda programmen år 2004 sändes 87 i SVT:s kanaler. Enligt de attitydundersökningar och utbudsanalyser som regelbundet görs har allmänheten stort förtroende för public service-televisionen, och enligt gängse mätmetoder har utbudet större mångfald och bredd än konkurrenterna (se SVT:s public service-uppföljningar 2001-2004). ”Oavsett vilken mätmetod som tillämpas”, skriver SVT själva, ”placerar sig SVT på en topplats bland internationellt jämförbara ps-företag” (SVT:s public service-uppföljning 2001: 8).

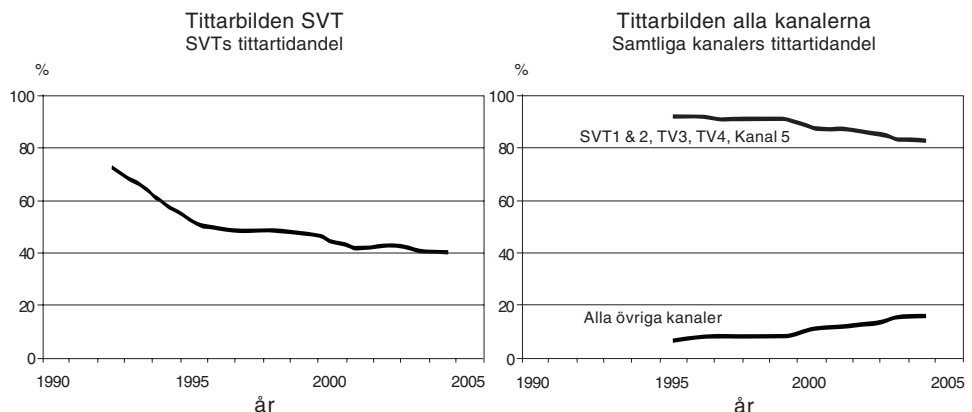
Detta, och det faktum att public service sällan står på den offentliga dagordningen, skulle kunna tolkas som att den svenska public service-televisionen – nu äntligen efter 50 år – har funnit sin rätta och oproblematiske plats i samhället.

En mer kritisk tolkning är att public service numera ger uttryck för något som börjar likna ideologisk hegemoni, dvs att det råder i det närmaste total enighet bland dominerande politiska och kulturella aktörer (inklusive SVT själva) om att de svenska public service-medierna inte bara är bäst i Sverige utan kanske i hela världen?

Tittarbilden

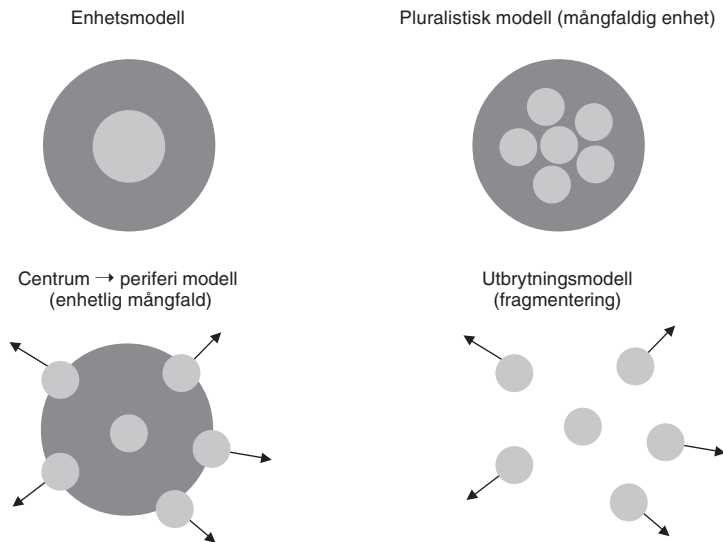
Sedan monopollet bröts har den totala tittartiden ökat sakta men säkert, och SVT:s andel av tittartiden minskat visserligen sakta men lika säkert. Den totala tittartiden är på senare år relativt stabil och förändringar sker framför allt i fördelningen mellan kanalerna.

Idag befinner vi oss i en period som utmärks av ökade valmöjligheter och interaktivitet för tv-tittarna. Tv-miljön börjar bli alltmer differentierad, tv-upplevelsen börjar bli mindre



social och mer individuell. Det sker för det första en segmentering, där publikerna blir mindre och mer homogena genom medieutbudets ökade specialisering och valmöjligheter, alltmer baserat på smak och livsstil. Denna segmenteringsprocess är till stor del pådriven av medierna själva för att skapa nya marknader och leverera attraktiva målgrupper till annonsörerna. För det andra sker en fragmentering, där en relativt stabil mängd publikuppmärksamhet gradvis sprids över alltfler medier – något som idag framför allt drivs fram av den pågående digitaliseringen. Segmenterings- och fragmenteringsprocessen kan på ett enkelt sätt åskådliggöras i fyra stadier, som också beskriver en historisk utveckling.

Fyra stadier av publikfragmentering



(Efter en modell av McQuail 1997)

1. *Enhetsmodellen*. Denna modell är, i ett svenskt tv-sammanhang, typisk för 1950- och 1960-talet och präglas av begränsade valmöjligheter inom monopolets ramar. Etermedierna stod i samhällets och publikens tjänst, men i den mån dessa intressen inte sammanföll var hierarkin given och samhällets intressen överordnade publikens preferenser. Televisionens främsta uppgifter var att klargöra och ”i bästa mening popularisera” de politiska tvistefrågorna, samt att se till att konstens skapelser – av tradition betraktade som ”överklassens njutningsmedel” – nådde ut över hela landet, in i alla hem (Edin 2000: 62f). I en grundläggande mening implicerar den enhetliga modellen att det finns en enda homogen publik, som är mer eller mindre densamma som den nationella allmänheten.
2. *Den pluralistiska modellen* – en modell som präglas av ett slags mångfaldig enhet. I Sverige får den sitt kanske mest typiska uttryck genom det tvåkanalsystem som infördes i slutet av 1960-talet inom ramen för monopolkonstruktionen. Intern konkurrens etablerades mellan två tv-kanaler, enligt en kontrastprincip som sa att publiken vid varje given tidpunkt skulle kunna välja mellan olika programkategorier. Men samtidigt

dominerade en starkt normativ programpolitik, där tv-tittarnas valmöjlighet i praktiken underordnades de pedagogiska och kulturpolitiska målen med tv. Det överordnade syftet med tvåkanalsystemet var, trots den officiella retoriken, inte publikens valfrihet, utan att odla fram selektiva och seriösa tittare som tittade relativt sparsmakat och bara på det på förhand definierat bästa och viktigaste i tv: en så kallad ”skyddsfilosofi” utvecklades inom SR för att se till att särskilt prioriterade program som t ex nyheter och faktaprogram inte ”hotades” av publikstarka program i grannkanalen (Edin 2000: 102). En typisk konkurrenssituation mellan de två kanalerna kunde vara att ena kanalen erbjöd en norsk dokumentär om polska folkdanser, och den andra ett italienskt tv-spel (SR:s tablå för tv den 17 januari 1973). Som ett resultat av såväl den samhällsmässiga och kulturella som den mediemässiga utvecklingen blir emellertid den strikt normativa programpolitiken gradvis alltmer problematisk, redan inom monopolsystemets ramar.

3. *Centrum → periferi modellen.* Detta är en modell som utmärks av ett slags enhetlig mångfald. Tidsmässigt infaller den när monoopolet bryts och extern konkurrens mellan ett flertal tv-kanaler etableras. I ett första skede präglas den av etableringen av hybridkanaler som svenska TV4. Den normativa tv-politiken blir nu allt svårare att upprätthålla, och för publiken blir det möjligt att sätta samman en tv-meny som skiljer sig från majoriteten. Samtidigt finns det fortfarande en tydligt identifierbar publikmajoritet och ett slags mainstream-tittande. Detta är också målgrupps-televisionens tidsålder: nu gäller det att identifiera mindre och homogena tittargrupper inom publikmajoriteten. Centrum-periferi modellen utvecklas gradvis fr o m 1990-talet och dominerar fortfarande idag, även om trenden går mot en gradvis uttunning av tv-områdets centrum, ”the Big five” (SVT1+2, TV3, TV4, Kanal 5).

4. *Utbrytningsmodellen.* Den sista modellen representerar extrem fragmentering. Det finns inte längre något centrum, utan publiken sprids över en mångfald olika kanaler och kan inte längre sammanfattas i bestämda tittarmönster i vare sig tid eller rum. Som tv-tittare delar man bara sin tv-upplevelse med andra högst sporadiskt. Detta är en modell över det fullt utvecklade – och använda – digitala multikanalsystemet, där det inte längre går att identifiera en publikmajoritet. Det är fortfarande endast en framtidsvision, även om tv-utvecklingen sakta men säkert går mot ökad fragmentering.

Public service-televisionens respons

I public service-sammanhang går dessa utvecklingstendenser att relatera till en ökad publikorientering, vilket har belysts i en rad studier inte minst av nordiska medieforskare (se t ex Syvertsen 1992, Søndergaard 1994). Denna publikorientering kan i sin tur relateras till ett ökat fokus på smakdifferentiering, ”personlighet” och individualitet. När SVT gjorde om sitt kanalsystem år 2000 var ett uttalat mål att ge de två kanalerna olika ”personligheter”, ”identiteter” och ”attityder”, som skulle synas tvärs igenom kanalerna, både i enskilda program och i hur man tilltalade och adresserade publiken på en mer övergripande nivå. Den ena kanalen skulle vara ”för alla alltid”, och ha det bredare anslaget, medan den andra skulle vara ”för dig ibland”, och adressera individer (Edin 2002: 53).

Unga vuxna, individer... och traditionella ideal

När det gäller målgruppstänkandet, typiskt för det tredje stadiet av publikfragmentering, kan man konstatera att vid sidan av vissa särskilt gynnade minoriteter, barn och unga är det förutom den breda publiken huvudsakligen en målgrupp som SVT explicit talar om och siktar in sig på, nämligen ”de unga vuxna”. En av de mest uttalade ambitionerna hos SVT, enligt offentliga dokument, de senaste åren har varit att ”nå fler tittare och producera fler program som upplevs som attraktiva för gruppen unga vuxna (25-39 år)” (SVT public service-uppföljning 2001: 96).

När det gäller den digitala utvecklingen och webbtjänsterna, som på sikt innebär multipla valmöjligheter och infallsvinklar för publiken, framhålls detta som positivt i public service-sammanhang: det är den ökade valfriheten som ur ett publikperspektiv ytterst motiverar den pågående digitaliseringen av SVT. Digital-tv ska ”ge publiken mer public service” genom ökad valfrihet och service åt den enskilde tittaren. För fjärde året i rad har SVT:s högsta ledning vid årsskiftet 2004/2005 avgivit företagets nyårslöften till sina tittare, och även här är det är uppenbart att man i allt högre grad orienterar sig mot publiken som individer och tittarnas privata, personliga intressen. Detta är några av de senaste löfterna:

SVT kommer närmare dig: vi lovar att bli bättre på att spegla den del av landet där du bor.

SVT ger dig vägledning i vardagen: vi lovar att ge dig personlig service på webben och hjälpa just dig att komma i toppform.

SVT berättar din historia: hos oss är tittaren kung.

SVT gör dina ben fulla av spring: vi lovar nya program som ska inspirera framför allt barnen att röra sig mer.

Man kan alltså konstatera att SVT i det framväxande multikanalsystemet håller fast vid traditionella folkbildningsideal och uppfostringsambitioner, samtidigt som man satsar på att dels bättre nå de breda målgrupperna, dels adressera tittarna som individer. Å ena sidan är detta logiskt mot bakgrund av tv-området utveckling. Den mest attraktiva gruppen för de kommersiella kanalerna är de ”unga vuxna”, och kanalerna skräddarsyr sina tablåer för att nå dem. För SVT har det inneburit att man tappat tittare inom denna målgrupp, och följaktligen har det varit ett prioriterat mål att ta upp kampen om dem. För som SVT själva uttrycker saken: alla ska hitta något hos SVT, gammal som ung. Men denna målsättning är inte oproblematiserad. Dels därför att en fokusering på denna målgrupp utgör själva grundbulten i ett kommersiellt övervägande, och således är något som SVT egentligen inte i första hand borde ägna sig åt. Dels därför att om de kommersiella kanalerna framgångsrikt når denna grupp, finns det ingen självklar anledning att SVT måste göra samma sak. Och att göra nästan samma sak som de kommersiella kanalerna, fast lite sämre, är ju på sikt rena självmordet. Även om man kan hävda att public service-televisionen måste ha breda publikgrupper som bas för att kunna göra anspråk på att stå i allmänhetens tjänst, och att det är den stora publiken som garanterar de mindre publikerna, finns det trots allt också en risk att denna strävan implicerar inkonsekvens i ett public service-sammanhang.

Vad innebär hyper-public service?

Även när det gäller att ställa den enskilda tittaren i fokus kan detta sägas ha både för- och nackdelar i ett public service-sammanhang, ur såväl ett programpolitiskt som teore-

tiskt perspektiv. Man kan hävda att digital-tv och webb-satsningar leder både till ökad tillgänglighet och till det slags småskalighet som gör att det går att, som SVT själva uttrycker saken, ”komma människor närmare”. Den icke-kommersiella satsningen på nyheter och målet att den digitala kanalen 24an ska bli den största nyhetskanalen för svensk publik kan ses som en förstärkning av medborgaridentiteten. Överhuvudtaget kan hela den hyper-public service-idé – eller ”public service-service-tanke” – som genomsyrar de digitala visionerna innebära att public service-mediernas utbud och tillgänglighet ökar. Logiken är att mer av allt är också mer public service (se Severson 2004: 129).

Men en fokusering på den enskilda tittaren och personliga valfriheten kan också innebära en paradox i public service-sammanhang. Åtminstone rent teoretiskt kan den individuella medieanvändningen i ett digitalt multikanalsystem leda till en så hög grad av differentiering och individualisering, att publiken som socialt kollektiv upphör att existera – om alla val blir personliga och från varandra fristående i tid och rum, finns det heller inte någon grund för gemensamma erfarenheter eller den delaktighet som samtidigt framhålls som fundamental i public service-sammanhang. Som publik har man inte mer gemensamt än som konsument av andra produkter. Det oproblematiska sätt på vilket man både från politiskt håll och från företagshåll hävdar att SVT:s digitalsatsningar helt enkelt ger publiken mer public service, ligger ur detta perspektiv alltså inte bara farligt nära den cirkeldefinition av public service som säger att eftersom det är SVT som är public service-television, så är det SVT:s programutgivning som definierar public service. Det innebär också en risk att public service-televisionen undergräver sitt existensberättigande.

Ett annorlunda perspektiv ger vid handen att det digitala multikanalsystemets potentiella upplösning av publikmajoriteten och den centralt definierade föreställningen om allmänheten, möjliggör framväxten av en mer autentisk tv-allmänhet: ur fragmenteringen formeras denna genom olika del- eller suboffentligheter, som kan existera både på mikro- och makroplan. John Keane, en av dem som har kritiserat public service-mediernas representationsanspråk i dagens senmoderna, multimediala samhälle, hävdar att public service-medierna har spelat ut sin roll som offentlighetens fundament och numera representerar en fiktiv helhet där publiken korsetteras i en förlegad föreställning om allmänheten (Keane 1995: 6ff). Kanske är det när den i public service-sammanhang så djupt rotade, traditionella idén om tv-publiken som en sammanhållen nationell allmänhet slutligen blir omöjlig att upprätthålla, som anspråk på public service kan uppstå i ny form?

Eller blir resultatet av den digitala utvecklingen att informationsklyftorna i samhället ökar, där de sociala grupper som redan är välbeställda blir ännu mer kvalificerade och resten fördrivs allt längre bort från mediernas kritiska och fördjupande analyser? Är det nu som masskommunikation på allvar kommer att bli klasskommunikation?

Diskursiv konstruktion av allmänheten

Exakt vad den digitala utvecklingen innebär i public service-sammanhang är med andra ord svårt att förutspå. Frågorna är fortfarande fler än svaren, även om den officiella programpolitiken framställer utvecklingen som självklar och oproblematis. Men hur ser då den diskursiva konstruktionen av allmänheten ut idag? Kan man överhuvudtaget säga att public service-televisionen förenar sin tittarorientering med föreställningen om publiken som en allmänhet?

”Alla”?

I statsmakternas formuleringar kan man konstatera att tv-publiken, allmänheten och de folkvalda på ett oproblematiskt framställs som logiskt sammanbundna, trots att de i själva verket inte har något självklart inbördes sammanhang. Här blir allmänheten som grupp kort och gott ”alla”, samtidigt som det finns en underförstådd rangordning som dels sätter gränser för vilka som kan anses ingå i kategorin ”alla”, dels konstituerar den implicita norm som ligger till grund för definitionerna av det svenska allmänintresset. Ett sätt att betrakta denna problematik är genom det minoritetsansvar som är och alltid har varit centralt i public service-sammanhang. Statsmakterna definierar detta minoritetsansvar med utgångspunkt framför allt i språkliga och etniska minoriteter (samer, torne-dalingar, de jiddisch- romani chib- samt finsktalande befolkningsgrupperna), och i funktionshindrade minoriteter (syn- och hörselskadade) enligt vissa kriterier, och fastslår vilka grupper som faller inom eller utanför SVT: s ansvar, samt vilka som särskilt ska gynnas och tilldelas en ”särställning” (se regeringens proposition 2000/01:94: 43ff). Men om man istället ser denna lista som en de missgynnandes ordning, kan man konstatera att längst ned hamnar det odefinierat mångkulturella Sverige, dvs icke-omnämnda eller särskilda språkliga och etniska invandrargrupper, som placeras under de explicit omnämnda grupperna och identiteterna, och som därmed blir ett slags icke urskiljbara bitar i den mångkulturella mosaik som antas bidra positivt till dagens svenska samhälle. Utanför (och nedanför?) denna rangordning hamnar sedan alla andra tänkbara minoriteter.

Socialt och moraliskt ansvar

SVT å sin sida talar inte explicit om allmänheten och undslipper härmed dessa tvetydigheter. Ansvaret för de språkliga och etniska minoriteterna berörs, men förhållandevis sparsamt – kanske för att SVT är mer inriktade på att prioritera den stora publiken än de politiskt omhuldade minoriteterna? Den enda minoritetsgrupp som, enligt SVT, kan vara av potentiellt intresse för den stora svenska publiken är samerna – ”vår ursprungs-befolkning” (SVT:s public service-uppföljning 2001: 36).

I samband med den ökade konkurrensen kan man emellertid finna en nygammal betoning av socialt ansvarstagande, parallellt med fokuseringen på smakdifferentiering och individuell tittarorientering. Numera har den sociala ansvarsideologin dock en mindre politisk betydelse. Som följd av den ökade kommersiella konkurrensen på medieområdet tycks den sociala ansvarsideologin idag framför allt fungera som en form av implicit mediekritik, och handlar då mest om moral – dvs det är public service-mediernas moraliska halt som antas placera dem överst i mediehierarkin. På ett medieområde präglad av starka kommersiella intressen tillskrivs public service-televisionen rollen som det programföretag som tittaren alltid kan lita på. Ju större och mer integrerad plats som medierna får i den nutida människans liv, desto viktigare med pålitliga medier, som tar ett socialt – men inte politiskt – ansvar och som bokstavligen *på allvar* står i publikens tjänst.

En central fråga inom public service-forskningen har handlat om möjligheterna för public service-medierna att kombinera en ökad tittarorientering med föreställningen om publiken som en allmänhet, och många har betonat att det inte räcker med en programpolitik som stannar vid en retorisk ansats. På vilket sätt kan public service-medierna omformulera gamla auktoritetsanspråk till nya inom den faktiska programverksamheten (se t ex Ytreberg 1999)?

Ur det perspektiv som betraktar relationen till publiken som ett diskursivt system bestående av olika utsägelseinstanser, kan man hävda att det är just genom den nygamla sociala ansvarsideologin som publik- och allmänhetsparadigmet förenas. Den sociala ansvarsideologin ger numera public service-medierna en konkurrensfördel på tv-området, och gör dem till ett slags krävda fönster mot världen. Endast här förmedlas i stor skala föreställningen om den transparenta, verklighetstroga kommunikationen med seriösa avsikter. Detta gäller inte bara nyhets- och samhällsprogram utan också nyare programtyper som t ex dokusåpor. Medan kommersiella kanalers yttersta motiv för reality-programmen är att de ska ge god avkastning på ekonomiska investeringar, investerar public service-televisionen istället sin auktoritet och trovärdighet i sina motsvarigheter. När SVT sände sitt *Expedition: Robinson* var programmets mervärde en lektion i egenskaper som lojalitet, ärlighet och uthållighet, i ett av deras senaste reality-program, *Riket*, var det historie- och klassmedvetenhet och i barnvarianten *Wild kids* var mervärdet antimobbing och kompissskap.

Är inte just detta kommunikativa anslag, detta kommunikativa mervärde typiskt för dagens public service-television? Som flera redan påvisat har de kommunikativa villkoren historiskt sett givit upphov till olika definitioner av public service-funktionen (se t ex Syvertsen 1990, Söndergaard 1995). Dessa har emellertid inte avlöst varandra utan snarare lagrats på varandra, och därför består public service-begreppet inte bara av ett i det närmaste förvirrande stort antal principer, utan också av en rad betydelseförskjutningar. Kanske utgör denna nygamla betoning på socialt ansvar, och dess kommunikativa mervärde i förhållande till andra medier, det senaste betydelselagret i public service-begreppets utveckling? På samtliga adresseringsnivåer, från programutbudets minsta beståndsdelar till den övergripande officiella retoriken, tycks verksamheten genomsyras av en sorts hygglighet: det om binder samman en komplex och ganska osammanhängande programpolitik är upplevelsen av ansvarstagande, trygghet, pålitlighet och stabilitet. Detta är tv-företaget som du kan lita på (underförstått: till skillnad från de kommersiella medierna). Som håller sina löften. Detta är samhällets ständiga sanningsvittne, fullständigt oberoende av partipolitiska och ekonomiska intressen – eller fört till sin spets: public service-televisionen kan helt enkelt inte ljuga. Allt vi ser i rutan är sant, förutsatt att inga misstag begås. Dessa kan i sådana fall anmälas till Granskningsnämnden, varpå public service-televisionen biktat sig offentligt för tittarna och får såväl statens som publikens absolution (Edin & Widestedt 2002).

Genom att lansera denna speciella sociala och moraliska ansvarsideologi vinner man inte bara allmänhetens förtroende, utan också folkets kärlek – man får alltså inte bara tittare, utan i bästa fall det svåraste av allt: lojala tittare. Ur en kritisk synvinkel kan man emellertid fråga sig om inte denna strävan efter hela tv-publikens lojalitet också riskerar att åsidosätta provokation och leda till en opportunistisk representation av det stora flertalets förmodade meningar och hållningar? Riskerar inte jakten på tittarlojalitet att leda till en sorts ideologisk populism?

”Fri television”

Det finns knappast någon offentlig diskussion om public service – dvs om uppdraget, principerna, praktiken, programmen – i Sverige, men våren 2005 utbröt debatt efter de reklamfilmer som SVT låtit producera och sända om sig själva. Debatten drog igång efter det att Italiens premiärminister Silvio Berlusconi uttryckt att han inte tyckte om hur han

framställdes i en av SVT:s reklamfilmer – en film där en text, utlagd likt remsor, bildsattes så att den italienska premiärministern framstod som otvetydigt manipulativ och maktfullkomlig:

Silvio Berlusconi kontrollerar 90 procent av de nationella tv-kanalerna i Italien. 2001 blev han premiärminister efter en massiv tv-kampanj, strax därefter krävde en domstol att han skulle sälja en av sina kanaler. Då ändrades lagen.

Den svenska ambassadören i Rom kallades till det italienska utrikesdepartementet, och Berlusconi ville få filmen stoppad. Även den italienska oppositionen kritiserade SVT för direkt inblandning i främmande stats inre angelägenheter. Härefter utbröt en intensiv debatt på hemmaplan om SVT.

Med vad som bara kan beskrivas som djävulsk tajming sammanföll kampanjen ”Fri television” i tiden med utnämningen av ny styrelseordförande för SVT. Just som debattens vågor gick höga om SVT:s oberoende valdes en nära vän till statsminister Göran Persson till ordförandeposten på SVT: f d socialministern och vice statsministern Lars Engqvist, vilket utlöste en rad kritiska kommentarer i medierna. Även SVT:s medarbetare menade att det var ”rena hånet” mot företagets ambitioner att hävda sin självständighet att utse en f d vice statsminister och socialminister till styrelseordförande för ett företag som ska vara oberoende av statsmakterna, bara ett halvår sedan han lämnat regeringen.

Så småningom tystnade debatten i tidningarna, men talet om statstelevision fick alltså nytt liv. Och debatten fortsatte på SVT:s hemsida. Kampanjen engagerade uppenbarligen många – inte bara journalister och politiker utan också tv-publiken.

På sätt och vis kan man se debatten som en motbild till den statistik som framhålls i officiella programpolitiska dokument, och som på ett övertygande men abstrakt sätt visar att 87 procent av allmänheten har förtroende för public service-medierna. Fri television-debatten var livlig, kritisk och många menade att public service-medierna borde kunna ifrågasättas mer ingående och öppet. ”Det är nog tur” skrev en av debattörerna ”att den fria televisionen är tvångsfinansierad. Den skulle aldrig överleva i fri konkurrens, för dess självbild stämmer illa med hur svenska folket verkligen uppfattar den” (www.svt.se/fri-television 2005 05 16).

Kritisk slutreflektion

Begreppet statstelevision brukar avfärdas som ett vardagligt glåpord eller som borgerlig vulgärpropaganda i public service-sammanhang, men frågan är om inte talet om statstelevision egentligen förtjänar att tas på lite större allvar än så. Ur ett makroperspektiv, som fokuserar public service som demokratisk instans, finns det starka statliga och institutionella intressen investerade i SVT, samtidigt som verksamheten har en hög grad av programpolitisk och ekonomisk frihet och avreglering har skett på en rad olika, centrala områden de senaste decennierna. Ingen politiker vill idag toppstyra eller lägga ned de svenska public service-medierna – en demokratisk stat med självaktning och historisk tradition gynnas av en stark public service-television, eftersom detta, framför allt i Europa, har kommit att bli en symbol för en levande demokrati och stabil nation. Det är inte på denna makronivå som diskussionen om statstelevision utgör en meningsfull kritik.

Det är snarare ur ett mikroperspektiv, som fokuserar den kommunikativa relationen till publiken, som denna styrka blir tvetydig, just därför att den samtidigt ger public service-institutionen så pass stor makt, självständighet och utrymme för auktoritetsutövning. Är

det inte en förutsättning för att den sociala ansvarsideologins pålitlighet, trygghet, stabilitet och trovärdighet – dvs public service-mediernas mervärde på dagens medieområde – uppfattas på ”rätt” sätt, att SVT *själv*mant placerar sig i ett slags position som stats-television – eller åtminstone som nationaltelevision? Något som förmodligen inte skulle vara möjligt utan en omfattande konsensus, dels kring de värden som public service-televisionen förknippas med, dels kring dess förmåga att på ett oproblematiskt sätt förvalta dessa värden, både gentemot publiken som tv-tittare och som allmänhet. Denna konsensus, eller tro om man så vill, är i sin tur oupplösligt sammanbunden med en misstro mot den kommersiella televisionen, som alltid måste ikläda sig rollen som motbild, som tv-systemets mörka sida – som utpräglare av dålig och skadlig tv, endast styrd av krassa vinstintressen. Kommersiell tv som motbild har visserligen alltid funnits i public service-sammanhang, men frågan är om inte denna schablonbild numera är det absolut viktigaste redskapet för upprätthållandet av public service-ideologin: utan den skulle public service-televisionens fördelar förmodligen inte framstå som lika odiskutabla.

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TV Entertainment

What It Is that Unites and Standardises Society?

Media – Communication – Culture

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Of all the different types of media, it is television that is able to create a kind of community. The German TV preacher Jürgen Fliege puts it in a fairly blunt way: if he wants to be amongst the people and form a community, the best opportunity for this is on television, not in a church. Television has therefore the power to unite the nation in front of the screen and to create a standardised audience. It also has the ability to split the audience into target groups, playing the old off against the young, women against men, people with jobs against the unemployed, the rich against the poor and so on. Television creates an interplay between many variables – division and unity, separation and reintegration, the catering for special interests and the creation of a television nation. It doesn't actually create these variables, but rather reflects, strengthens or redirects them. Through this interplay, the medium is thus able to show society its structure, its social strata and its dynamics. Television also reveals the great changes that have taken place in society – whether concerning its system of values, its conflicting sense of self-image or its morals and goals.

By examining various innovations in television entertainment, I would like to show what sort of new TV trends have emerged and how these enable us to view our society from a new point of view.

Firstly, the individual has been rediscovered by television in a completely new way. The importance of taking responsibility for yourself is currently being emphasised in the economic sector, where, under the influence of neo-liberalism, both waning solidarity and various types individual employment and freelance work (that represent a completely individual struggle) are making a comeback. It is thus no surprise that television has also focused its attentions on the individual.

Only twenty years ago, the relationship between television and the individual was associated with a well-behaved viewer, who would politely choose a particular TV programme, switch (somewhat less politely) from one channel to another to find another programme and then watch it politely to the end. A dividing line existed between the medium and the user, the broadcaster and the recipient, as it were. This boundary was respected and accepted in its entirety by mainstream producers and viewers. It was only the avant-garde and experimental artists who dared to challenge its authority. On one side of this boundary were the professionals, who knew how to produce television and simply delivered what they had produced; on the other side were the viewers, who simply wanted to be shown something or be told a story. Over the last two decades, there is one particular change in the relationship between the medium and the user that has aroused great interest: the challenging of this boundary. It is no longer so clearly defined and no longer separates the television people from the people on the couch in such a straightforward manner. Although the boundary is still very much present, it has become porous – especially in one particular direction. The individual, who used to be satisfied with simply switching the TV on and off, is quite willing to cross the boundary and jump into the TV set. “The medium is the message” has thus been replaced with “the user is the medium”. How did this change come about and what does it mean – both for television and for a society where television is the dominant media form?

The rise of the Internet as a new type of medium played a role in this process, making heads of programming and TV producers nervous due to the similar nature of its user interface. This was something new – created for clicking and surfing, but also utilising a screen as its central means of communication. This wasn’t just something that promised interactivity – it actually made it reality. It didn’t seem to make any difference that media experts were warning against exaggerating the comparison between TV and the Internet, to say nothing of the reports forecasting a merger of the two: the heads of programming and producers became more and more nervous anyway. As TV was at a distinct disadvantage concerning its structural potential for interactivity, many feared that it would be ousted from its position. This in turn provided food for thought for all those wanting to add an interactive modem to the box.

The observation that the border between producer and user has become porous represents only one side of this development – the technical/practical communication based side of things. Another aspect concerns the ability of television as a medium to both gather users into a group and to disperse any such groups. Commercial television (i.e. television that is not state funded) was able to split the previously compact audience into so-called *target groups*, which were still heterogeneous in nature. That is, every member of a target group was supposed to feel as if they were being addressed as an individual. It was all about the *advertisers* who had to produce spots on commercial television – in general, the language used in advertising makes a lot of effort to address its customers in a very personal way. This language was supposed to have the effect of making the individual go on to prove his/her participation in the *consumer community* by the act of buying something the very next day. This type of “individualisation” on television – the private wooing of the individual viewer, so to speak – was supposed to prime them to receive an advertising message and opened up a new avenue in the previously restrictive landscape of TV communication. Although this avenue wasn’t necessarily something new, having always been present as a small loophole, it was now to be

expanded and fully exploited. A flood of shows followed: from afternoon talk shows to reality shows, from casting shows to a whole plethora of game shows. The most infamous of these was *Big Brother*, a show where the professionals (excluding the technical staff) had been completely removed from the equation, with only members of the public actually playing the game. If the expansion of the advertising blocks in the whole programming schedule hadn't occurred, it is likely that the trend for participation TV would not have progressed so smoothly and with such great speed. It is, of course, no coincidence that the vast majority of these "participation" shows are found on the commercial TV channels.

The motto that springs to mind in connection with this theme is a saying attributed to Andy Warhol: in this media age, everybody can have their 15 minutes of fame. In our epoch, everyone is actually now asserting their entitlement to a scrap of fame. Since we've just described the general framework that has accompanied this development, we can now discuss what the implications of all this have been – for the everyday TV viewer, for society and for television as a medium. While considering the consequences of this development, it is likely that additional factors that have contributed to it that will also become apparent.

Let's begin with the medium itself. When Tom, Dick and Harry suddenly appear on television trying to out do each other with their vocal talents, the element of "professionalism" has been completely removed from the situation. Although such an approach is, of course, questionable, for the producers it means a large amount of money can be saved – stars are expensive but no-names come for free. This type of saving measure has also accompanied the rise of the talk show since the beginning. Although such shows were (and are) cheap to produce, they would never have made an impact in the schedules if they hadn't received such an enthusiastic response from audiences. As our Western secular society moves further and further towards that what we today call the "media society" (which can be seen as a consequence of the breakdown of traditional social connections), the more necessary it becomes for the members of this media society to see their reflections on the screen and to become part of the schedules themselves. The afternoon talk shows and their frank content, which caused a real shock when they appeared a decade ago, are a product of this movement towards a media society. They can also be seen as a functionalisation of the media for local communication, self-portrayal and discussion of personal issues in society. In the 1990s, the screen was made accessible to a kind of *local neighbourhood viewer*, much to the indignation of the older critics and television observers. They had hoped to remove the "irrelevant" material from the schedules such as bickering couples or hopeful singles, but their attempts now came to nothing. This type of everyman television is self referential if the medium and the audience are considered to be one system – not just a system formed by accident, but rather an intentionally created and programmatic one. The masses had now conquered television with their everyday worries. They wanted to watch themselves and their closest friends attacking each other in the studio, or making up with each other or simply airing their dirty washing. This development has not only been irreversible, it has also robbed the medium of a certain amount of status, dignity and respect in the course of its stealthy reduction in professionalism and trivialisation. However, there are also several ways in which the negative effects of this trend have been counteracted. Firstly, newly specialised jobs have been created, such as presenting these popular shows. Secondly, the increased dramaturgic or thematic complexity of some formats (such as counselling shows)

has also worked against this trend. Besides this, we also can observe a gradual differentiation process. Although the *local neighbourhood viewers* are a force are developing further, the *national viewers* of television certainly aren't in decline, even though the decline and/or cancellation of classic formats such as the political magazine is hardly something to be welcomed. While the crisis in political journalism isn't our focus here, is nevertheless closely linked to everyman television and its tendency to personalise.

The developments concerning the *local neighbourhood viewers*, television for the layman and the break down of the schedule into special interest formats (from the weather channel to fishing TV) are not without their supporters. They see the popularisation of the medium and its increased accessibility as a form of democratisation. According to them, "TV you can touch" is a good thing, serving equality and promoting a close relationship with the general public. Arguments such as these naturally come from the side of the producers, who have to justify their strategies and usually refer to viewing figures in order to do this. Although they are not entirely wrong, the dissent voiced by media critics (who have positioned themselves against the producers) must also be taken seriously. The idea that you can have fifteen minutes of fame doesn't, of course, work in reality. The concept of fame is, by definition, a scarce resource that loses its very character as soon as you attempt to turn it something universal. The concept of fame for all exists only in the form of a caricature, a joke, an allusion or a game. As long as the players are aware of this and are content to go home with their 15 minutes of fame, this is not a problem. I would say that the majority of participants, whether on afternoon talk shows, docu-soaps about the lives of driving instructors, police officers on the beat or midwives or on quiz shows like "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" seem to be aware of this: and are playing the game just for the sake of it. The short period of fame is taken on and is quickly forgotten again according to the motto "Sic transit gloria mundi". In this respect, any damage caused by this process is kept to a minimum, despite what alarmist reports might have us believe. Any potential damage is certainly offset by the gain in experience, social contact and fun that this sort of participation television bestows on its protagonists.

So what do these new show formats tell us about the state of society? They tell us that the both consumer willingness, narcissism and the desire for to profile oneself (two areas that are connected anyway) are all things that are taken seriously and served by television. The man who goes to the market not only looks at what's being sold there, but also puts himself up for sale and hopes to be looked at in the same way, flirting with the idea of being for sale and having a price. Television entertainment is very good at satisfying such desires and provides a platform for this process at the same time. The discovery of the individual by the medium in the form of participation/non-professional television can be seen as the equivalent to television advertising within the actual TV programmes. Both of these phenomena are born out of neo-liberalism and the worldwide reorganisation of the capitalist economy that we have all witnessed. Due to the "user is the medium" tendency and the fact that television makes the recipient part of the (broadcasting) medium itself, the medium is able to offer the viewer three things: appropriation, categorisation and the chance to be on to an equal footing with the participants on TV. As consumers and TV viewers we're all the same – we're all characters in the same show. Or, in other words, television is there for everyone and everyone is there for tele-

vision. Television also functions simply as a market place – as an American journalist once said, television is a “machine for selling things”. This machine can also present talents, types and taboos and sell them at the same time. However, the viewers are certainly able to detect the note of contempt in all this. Although they will watch the more extreme forms of participation television (such as the *Jungle Show*, a adventure game show where the contestants have to complete tasks in the middle of the jungle, often involving the more unpleasant forms of wildlife there), they show disgust at the same time. Despite this, it has to be said that while such ego trips on television sometimes damage the reputation of television, the egos themselves seldom sustain any damage.

It’s a different story with the casting shows, a form of participation television tailor-made for young people. On such shows, the fact that fame is a scarce resource is ignored. Everyone (including the candidates) acts as if fame can be achieved through effort alone, just because the attempts to attain it are being shown on television. The rare case of a natural talent without training and experience achieving superstardom and going on to delight the world, are simply presented as normality. In addition to this, ranking fever suddenly grips the nation. Such ranking crazes, which are by no means restricted to television, are one of the most unpleasant phenomena of our media world and are diametrically opposed to the trend towards individualisation in our society (if this trend is indeed something positive). In fact, these casting shows contain a perfidious mechanism which propels unsuspecting young members of the public into a glittering new world and then makes fools of them. Thus it becomes clear that they are simply being exploited by the television folk. This is an accusation that has also been levelled at other television formats. For example, the opponents of talk shows have tried to prove that television producers are responsible for taking advantage of the psychological problems of their fellow citizens and that guests drawn from the general public suffer life-long psychological damage as a result of this. Such charges are exaggerated – there are even studies which directly refute them. However, the 17-year-old singer who sings as a hobby and gives it her best shot in front of an audience of millions is another matter. She is closely related to the inhabitants of another TV format – the nation’s “problem children”, who show us just how badly brought up they are under the watchful eye of the super nanny. Thus we learn that our favourite medium, far from spoiling and dumbing down both children and adults, is actually able to make a valuable contribution to family harmony. It isn’t just that these problem kids have temper tantrums; their tantrums are also presented on television. The fact that this isn’t really in their best interests tends not to be addressed. It makes a huge difference though, whether these non-professionals who appear on television are actually content doing so and are capable of accepting the consequences, or whether they are being forced into the whole thing and are unaware of what lies in store for them. It is obvious that the TV producers are continually trying to redraw this boundary and push it further out. This is not a problem, provided the participants are able to learn something along the way about how to deal with the media. Although this isn’t so much of a problem for adults, it is different matter as far as children and adolescents are concerned, where a certain amount of care needs to be exercised. In the many talks I have given about the media at conferences, I have repeatedly called for the introduction of media studies as a school subject as a way of taking action.

A media studies lesson wouldn’t just teach children how to make films and how to entertain an audience. It would also address the fact that the many of tricks used by the media world are subtly affected or even formed by the demands and necessities of the

world outside it, regardless of any good or bad intentions. There is a tendency in current television entertainment that, as I see it, can be traced back directly from neo-liberal dynamics to the universalisation of the competition principle and which directly shapes the television society. This is something I have mentioned already – ranking fever.

It's like this: normally participation television doesn't just present people plucked from the street who then sing for us or try to guess the right answer – the audience is also very much included in the process. The viewers must rate what they have been shown and are then supposed to rank the performances (which, of course, have been put on by members of the general public) on a scale that not only covers good, very good and excellent but also includes poor and unsatisfactory. The criteria by which they are judged are also vague. This ranking fever could be interpreted as revenge on the part of the viewer, who is seeking revenge on the non-professionalism trend on TV. Moreover, the rating scale is kept continually in flux, so that the participants understand that it isn't about being themselves, but rather about letting themselves be judged by the public. And once the public has realised how much fun it is to rank amateurs, they are quite willing to throw themselves enthusiastically into ranking their celebrities, both past and present. This is how the ranking fever has already spread to Germany's "big names". This development can be illustrated nicely by a rather bizarre show called "Germany's Best", which actually made it possible to compare Goethe, Adenauer and Thomas Gottschalk. In this variation on a British format, the object of the show was to find the most exceptional German of all time. After the viewers were asked to suggest candidates for this title, their lengthy list of suggestions was then reduced to several hundred people, which then formed the basis of many long evenings of TV entertainment. Gutenberg, Beethoven, Luther and Thomas Mann were all on the list, as were colourful showbiz personalities and celebrities from the world of sport and politics. But what is it about casting shows that makes them both so problematic and yet so typical of the current time?

No educated person would relish the prospect of having to compare Beethoven with Thomas Gottschalk and then to have to rank them against each other according to some contrived and highly general set of criteria. Ultimately, it only makes sense to use a common benchmark (according to which different numbers of points would then be awarded) to assess a particular quality if the quality in question has been made clear from the start. However, it soon becomes apparent that this is simply not possible in the case of Beethoven and Gottschalk. Adding Bach, Adenauer and Dieter Bohlen to the equation doesn't make it any easier either. All in all, it would seem as if the only option is to dismiss the whole thing as nonsense. But it is not so easy to adopt this standpoint given the success of such programmes, their broad acceptance and the fact that they are bound to be continued in various different permutations – only recently, a new ranking of the greatest inventions was put together. Instead of shaking our heads in an intellectual, middle class way, we should be considering why this sort of TV silliness is so fascinating and to what extent this fascination both unites and standardises society.

I would say that the crucial element of fun here is ranking in itself. It doesn't matter to either the producers or the viewers that apples are now being compared with oranges. The most important thing is that they can put together a hit list, give points and watch how their favourites move up or down the list. Although such a system is entirely appropriate for football league tables (where the same field of reference is being considered), it becomes completely absurd when used for "Germany's Best". This doesn't seem

to bother most people though – they seem perfectly willing to ignore any such absurdity. They are convinced that it is definitely worth creating a list in which Luther and Rudi Völler compete for the accolade of being the “best” or “greatest” German.

It’s all a very emotional process. It’s just as easy to create feelings of *schadenfreude* as it is to have viewers identify with the winners or feel admiration for them. Simply by calling up and voting, the viewers are able to exert complete control over what happens. We all know the formula, whether from political elections, sport or the stock exchange. Although the rules may differ slightly from setting to setting, the unifying principle remains the same – ranking. The concepts related to it also remain the same: hit lists and charts, bottom, top and middle, winners and losers, competition. The general principle of ranking has even developed an increasing ability to subjugate the people who are involved in it. The word “globalisation”, a term frequently used to describe the current age, refers to nothing more than the universalisation of competition and the worldwide comparison of costs, profits and productivity. When politicians are asked to explain why the gross national product here is barely showing signs of growth, they always bring up the allegedly cheaper locations and cost structures in the Czech Republic or China. Thus, society is expected to accept the fact that it is subject to international competition, in which the usual national standards as well as other external conditions, which we have no control over, come into play. The stock market game also follows the up and down rules, where the investors are actually able to go one step further and influence the trends themselves by anticipating future business developments. The Germans discovered this game fairly late, with many people left less than pleased following the last market crash. In the world of sport however, the viewer is only involved indirectly. The viewer can exert his influence by shouting encouragement or send the market value of particular sporting events up or down simply by choosing to tune in or not, both of which represent a form of power nonetheless. However, all these examples of competitive behaviour and ranking events have a common element which the up and down game is based on – sometimes its called money, sometimes percentage points, sometimes goals. But on the show “Germany’s Best“, it wasn’t just a case of apples being compared with oranges – a veritable basket of fruit was being compared using the same yardstick. The comparison of vocal and dance talents in the casting shows is also something that is problematic and somehow always unjust. As I’ve already said, the audience doesn’t seem to care in the slightest about this and creates ranking after ranking list with a great deal of enthusiasm. Time and time again, they are captivated by the prospect of being able to winnow out the losers, celebrate the winners and see how the national ego is reflected in the winner.

The side of the television ego trip that seeks to unify and create uniformity can therefore be called competition. The individual isn’t just the centre of attention, but rather the focus of a form of attention that measures, rates and in doing so, strives for quantification, ignoring any individual idiosyncrasies in the process. This is the reason why the trend towards a more personal approach in television or the idea that individual should form the focus of interests are both higher contradictory matters. The individual is only put on stage so that he can be purged of everything that is unique about him. I would now like to bring up another current buzzword that didn’t emerge from the world of television, but that is certainly linked to it via the ranking craze: the PISA study. I am convinced that the whole endeavour is flawed to say the least, if not completely pointless. Firstly, the ability to actually compare schools has been greatly overestimated, while the

fact that the determining factors for the study vary widely has been underestimated in a similar way. Secondly, the results actually tell us very little. What do I mean by this? Now, schooling and education actually depend on developing a series of skills such as imagination, creativity, a feeling for connections, intuition, team spirit and resourcefulness. These are all qualities which not easy to measure and very difficult to compare with one another. The recent developments in our education system – from PISA to university and student rankings– remind me of a statement reputedly made by Jack Welch, former chief of the US conglomerate General Electric, “Saying that there are things you can’t compare is just an excuse. You can measure anything”. This statement describes the recent developments in television equally well. And, of course, if you can measure something, then you can compare it. This sort of attitude has been criticised in a particularly interesting way by Reinhard K. Sprenger, the successful author and business consultant. “For many managers, the only things that count are the things that can be counted. With this attitude, they are ignoring that fact that the numbers didn’t just appear at random – someone was responsible for compiling them” He is also highly critical of companies and, at the same time, our culture (including television). I would like to quote him again with respect to this:

Counting and measuring form the basis for the most original, most rigorous and most exact scientific methods wrote Hermann von Helmholtz in 1879. He couldn’t have known back then the great significance this assumption would end up having. Today measurement is a cultural technique of the first degree. The motto is measure it or forget it. The idea that you can only work with something that can be measured has been taken on nowhere else more than in Germany. We measure everything that can be measured, and even try to measure things that are inherently unmeasurable. Sometimes, it seems that in companies, measurement is a synonym for the general company philosophy.

The all-embracing trend for measuring things is articulating a yearning for trust, objectivity and indisputable authority. Numbers feed into a post-idealistic mood that only wants hard facts. In the meantime, people reach for numbers in order to avoid complexity – anyone who works with numbers doesn’t want to describe things in a differentiated way. The numbers should suffice.

But is this really true?

The problem with this measuring craze cannot be explained simply by considering measurement itself, but rather by looking at how the things being measured are actually dealt with. The theory behind measurement assumes that numbers are neutral. But the very fact that a number with lots of zero can have such an impact shows us that these seemingly neutral symbols also have a normative charge.

There is also the problem that numbers do not reveal the assumptions that have been made about them. The best example of this can be seen in the attempts to measure human intelligence. The pinnacle of absurdity that has been reached with such methods can be summarised in a simple bon mot: intelligence is whatever the respective questionnaire has been drawn up to measure. Economic data provides another good example: a graph showing that consumer confidence is on the wane does not show the questionable assumptions that had to be made in order to plot it. It is obvious that the average person is not in a position to see this. Graphs and diagrams contain a great deal of implicit theory, making it perfectly possible to conjure up causality from errors in measurement, unsuitable models, superficial analogies and false correlations. Does anyone really notice that it’s all just a series of crooked suppositions, a nebula of numbers surrounded by a

torrent of possible meanings? There is always some sort of significance attached to numbers, regardless of the situation they are being used in.”

That’s what Reinhard K. Sprenger has to say on the matter. Albert Einstein, another great thinker who is celebrating his centenary this year, had this to say about the numbers craze, “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted”. I am convinced that the counting and ranking mania in the field of television entertainment can be seen as a direct consequence of the counting and measurement fever in our “post-idealistic” economy. In both sectors, a new ideology is spreading that revolves around the seeming objectivity of numbers. This is, in turn, a reflection of the universalisation of competition – a trend that seems inescapable. Education, sport, science, politics and (obviously) the commercial economy, are all increasingly subject to it, as is therefore television entertainment.

There’s another show format also worth mentioning, that has also been propelled by ranking fever, a connection that may not be clear at first glance. I’m talking about the so-called “under the knife” shows such as “Beauty Queen”, “The Swan” or “The First Cosmetic Surgery Shown Live on German Television”. I don’t know whether this type of format has hit Denmark yet, but I certainly imagine so. Although these fusions of the current beauty obsession with the world of television have not been particularly successful with German audiences, they have certainly been subject to lively discussions, whether by critics, television observers or audiences. Such shows generate concern, represent an unpleasant trend, create tension in the society, as well as raising a whole series of moral questions. Are we allowed to alter noses, enlarge breasts or reduce the size of thighs? Should we be doing this? Should be inviting an audience of millions to watch these procedures being carried out? Are we actually able to cheat nature? Or wouldn’t it just be better to act as if it were? Surely any individual who receives such voyeuristic attention is being robbed of his or her dignity? Or are we all just hopelessly superficial and addicted to a beauty that may be only skin-deep? Despite the fact that many of these questions are similar to those raised by the jungle show, the viewing figures for these beauty shows were not so great. Maybe tropical vegetation is more visually enticing than the inside of an operating theatre. Aside from all this, where is the element of ranking here? It’s certainly present in these shows, but in an indirect way. This stems from the fact that one particular attribute is being ignored here, if not being completely destroyed – the uniqueness of an individual face. In its place, a mask is produced, which is then supposed to receive the highest possible mark on a scale entirely based on conventional ideas of attractiveness. I don’t think it’s necessary to go into any more detail here. The face that a person has been given by God or nature is no longer of any importance – instead, a ranking list is once again inserted between the person (mainly women in this case) and their self-esteem. They are willing to bleed for nothing more than a better ranking and fifteen minutes of fame.

I’ve mentioned these beauty shows relatively late on because they provide a useful link to a question that is probably long overdue. We’ve already seen that ranking shows represent an abstraction of particular qualities. We’ve also recognized that audiences often disregard the very different nature of the qualities involved in the selection process– the apples and oranges idea. But despite these observations, some sort of common quality still has to be established in order to enable a (quantitative) comparison to be made. What is it that connects Goethe and Alice Schwarzer? And the eleven contestants on a casting show

and the contestants in the Big Brother house? That's right; they've all been on television. It is this very fact that turns them into stars, which then means it is legitimate to compare them. The ability to appear on television either as a "great German" or simply as a celebrity is the common quality that the entire contents of the "fruit basket" mentioned above shares. This is what unites "Germany's Best" and the inhabitants of the Big Brother house and encourages the audience to set up rankings. In the world of sport, this collective quality, as already talked about, is established in advance (the number of goals and the related points). Ranking is entirely appropriate here – it's the whole point. However, the actual achievements of Schiller or Gottschalk are completely unconnected to a list of the greatest Germans shown on television, only having become subject to the requirements of this list subsequently. The TV produces are proud of this for a number of reasons: their attempt at subjugation has been successful; the ability to appear on television (that it is possible become a television celebrity even if you've been dead for decades or even centuries) has attained an inherent value; that television are particular good at helping people and their problems to receive attention. It is this celebrity status, which television confers on even the worst of the Big Brother contestants, that makes casting shows possible. It also explains that when you now ask a five year-old what they want to be when they grow up, the answer is always the same: a pop star.

"I've been on TV, therefore I am." is a message that carries certain implications. As I've already said, the self-referencing reality of television doesn't usually cause any damage, whether to the people who appear on it or the professionals who produce it. But it does damage the medium itself and thus the viewer as well. There is every chance that television will continue to celebrate its own achievements more and more extravagantly and give increasing credence to its own self-referential messages. But this would mean it would be in danger of both losing the power it once had and neglecting its original assignment. Its original power was fuelled by a curiosity for the unknown, the remote or the concealed, which the medium allowed us to witness. Its job was to bring the viewers closer to such new, unknown or distant things, to present them to us and to make them accessible. But the longer the medium persists in navel gazing, the weaker this connection to the outside world will become. For example, when the death of an actress from a long-running TV series is reported on in the news, it is something that should make us sit up and take notice. While it goes without saying that the actress was most likely a lovable and interesting personality (who will undoubtedly be missed by the viewers of that programme), does this justify using the scarce seconds allocated to news to inform the nation of her death? In this case, television has quite clearly confused the nation with the television nation. Cases such as these crop up again and again, particularly, of course, in the entertainment sector. If you are a member of the television family, whether as an actor or presenter, it would seem that you are guaranteed a certain entertainment value. It is a well-known fact that, during the evening peak viewing time, the same TV faces are always being recycled on the various talk shows. The medium seems to have forgotten that it used to have the task of looking for interesting subjects to cover outside of the world of television. But venturing into the unknown and finding entertaining material there is difficult and expensive, and also requires a more traditional artistic and journalistic curiosity. It is, of course, much easier to just get a colleague or a media-savvy politician into the studio and ask them about their childhood. Professionals such as these know how to make the right impression – they don't stammer, they aren't nervous, they know the routine and how it works. Thus, any element of risk is removed from

the proceedings. The viewers are used to the fact that television (particular in the entertainment sector) is now staging a production with itself in the leading role and has apparently learnt to live with this. But caution is advised here – the viewers are always looking for the next surprise. In wanting the familiar and the new at the same time, they make clear how demanding they actually are.

This combination of familiarity and surprise is very much indicative of the current age. Television has to fight on two fronts at the same time, supporting the dominant trends while encouraging the opposing ones. By encouraging the measuring obsession (something that was described by Reinhard Sprenger so aptly as a new ideology of pure facts and figures), television as a medium is contributing to the universalisation of the competition principle. As television seeks (or should seek) to reflect the entire world and accepts (and actually needs) highly individual creative impulses, this is a trend that the medium should really be trying to work against

The medium could use its ability to create a community feeling in order to offer resistance to the omnipresent compulsion for quantification and competition. Although this sort of resistance is already present in dramatic productions, in the field of entertainment, which is my topic here, it is far harder to find. Although competition is a powerful mechanism for both socialisation and qualification, it is not the only one. Recognising and respecting the distinctiveness of a particular quality, the unrepeatable nature of a particular feature or someone's individual character and the need to protect the essence of uniqueness in the individual can have the same effect. That television has discovered the individual only means that the individual is allowed to parade himself on television. It is thus the consumer who is offering himself to the "machine for selling things" as fodder. This is simply not enough. The porous boundary between the producers and the viewers has brought us television based on "the user is the medium" that seemed to be close to the people and to offer interactivity. But this form of television hasn't kept its promise to enhance the status of the individual. These celebrities from the general public (who certainly get their fifteen minutes of "fame") do not need to be individuals, as they are simply to be sacrificed as part of the viewers' ranking games. There is only one single quality that is important here – their status as a camera object, a quality that everyone who has appeared on television demonstrates. In this way, the medium has overreached itself, acting as if it's doing us a favour just by existing. This is clearly ridiculous! If television wants to keep its viewers, to inform them and to shake them, it has to take risks and challenge the zeitgeist. Although this may be difficult in the field of entertainment, it would certainly be worth the effort.

The Reality of Media Research

GUIDO ZURSTIEGE

I The Reality of Media Research

Of course, the title of my speech is ambiguous: On the one hand the reality of media research that is the reality of academic and non-academic institutions which engage in this field of research, the reality of their staffs and students, researchers and scientific communities, their routines, topics, methods – and, sometimes, their ambitions and obsessions. In short, from this perspective we are talking about the status, the current situation of and the challenges for media research. And then, on the other side, the reality of media research that is all that which is produced within this framework. In short, from this perspective we are talking about the sense-making, all that which appears to be real, factual, provisionally true (at least not false) with reference to the media.

Obviously these two realities are closely connected – for the observed reality depends on the reality of the observer. This, of course, is not the exclusive fate of researchers only but of every observer in general. Though it might help, one does not necessarily have to be a constructivist devotee to acknowledge that at least here media research is on common ground with the object of its observations. As Hans Mathias Kepplinger (2001) – who, for sure, is no constructivist proselyte – has recently stated: The represented world in the media is an effect of the representation of the world by the media. Accordingly, I argue, the reality of media research, understood as all that which appears to be real and factual concerning the media is an effect of the current situation of media research. In this speech I will focus on three major “arenas” of the contemporary debate – namely on topics, theories and empirical experience of media research. I will enter into this discussion from the perspective of one major academic discipline in the field of media research: *communication science*.

II Additional Topics and Disintegrated Theories

As Martin Löffelholz and Thorsten Quandt (2003) have pointed out, the situation of communication science in Germany may best be characterized by two complementary developments: Expansion and differentiation. The discipline has grown continuously ever since the tradition was established in the first decade of the 20th century in Leipzig (1916) and in Münster (1919) and then, a couple of years later, in Munich (1924) and in

Berlin (1925). Of course, this early tradition is characterised by a strong focus on newspapers and journalism. Meanwhile media research in general is being offered under many different labels at more than 50 academic institutions in Germany. Growing media markets, especially induced by the commercial television and radio in the 1980s and new information and communication technologies in the 1990s, of course, fostered this development as well as the fact that ‘media’ and ‘communication’ still are buzzwords that fire desires. Irene Neverla (2003: 59) has recently speculated kindly that despite of this breathless dynamic communication science frequently demonstrates its affectionate inclination for self-reflection. After all, she assumes, that’s what makes this discipline so warm and human. “What do we do? “Who are we?” “Where do we go?” “where do we come from?” – questions like these are somewhat notorious, the answers, however, are changing.

Round about four years ago the German Communication Association (DGPK) (2001) presented a declaration in which it outlined its self-conception. This declaration, the so called “Identity-Paper”, was published under the ambitious title “Media Society and its Science”. I will recurrently return to this paper in order to use it as a reference to mark differences. I would like to put emphasis on the fact, however, that this paper was elaborated by two members of the scientific community (Anna M. Theis-Berglmair and Günter Bentele) collectively and it was published for many, indeed: over 700, members of this scientific community. It is meant as the least common denominator of an expanding discipline, and therefore, you will hardly find any institute in Germany, any approach or school, that can fully subscribe to it.

Almost all areas of social life are penetrated by the media and – thus the declaration goes – communication science has assigned itself to describe and to explore this complex and certainly ongoing process. Obviously, this declaration is ambitious because media research thus assumes responsibility for almost all areas of social life, which triggers a massive proliferation of psychological, sociological, political, economical and many other problems with regard to media and communication. The scope of this challenging engagement is mirrored reliably by the many different labels and makes under which media research is conducted. And, of course, these divergent labels and makes also mirror the fact that the wide range of problems calls for specialisation. Professionals and of media research are highly specialised experts and this, of course, also explains why identity papers and identity commissions are necessary at all. Given the ambitious call for responsibility, of course, a wide variety of new research topics and new problems pour into the field of media research. Digital and interactive media, of course, pose new problems; popular-culture is a challenge to the discipline, just alike youth culture and subculture, fictional media products call for recognition; visual communication, of course, is up-and-coming, organisational communication just alike, research in public relations is doing fine, yet we have to intensify our efforts, and son on – this, indeed, can be called a breathless dynamic!

The argument usually goes thus: Research in the fields of A, B or C is up-and-coming because the discipline cannot credibly assume responsibility for the so called media society and at the same time fail to deal with one of its most present, influential, relevant, compromising, promising symptoms as A, B or C. Without any doubt one of these research fields which are up and coming, yet widely neglected by communication science is advertising research. To illustrate the argument let us have a closer look at this field of research and the respective discussion within the scientific community.

In General the German Communication Association states: “Through the dynamic expansion of the media system a range of additional areas of relevance to society have developed, for which the subject offers a practically orientated competence: for example, problematic media content (e.g. advertisement, or the portrayal of violence in video films or on television)”. This notion precisely mirrors the stand of advertising as a research object within communication science in Germany. Advertising is a *new, additional and problematic* form of media product that, above all, poses *practical* problems – all four notions, of course, are off the mark.

Promotional media offers are at least as old as editorial media offers, they are neither produced nor distributed or received additionally because they are an integral part of the media system, and they are not problematic by themselves. Finally advertising does not pose only practical but also hard theoretical problems. Yet, in the light of communication science advertising belongs to the, so to say, *noisy interferences* which contaminate the premium messages exchanged between transmitters and receivers. No wonder, that we dispose of a wide variety of concepts that explicate why and how people manage to get around advertising: *Switching, Flipping, Channel Hopping, Grazing, Jumping, Arrowing, Leaving* und certainly *Zapping*. Yet there seems to be ample evidence for the fact that advertising serves a *function* within the program: As well as media offers in general structure daily routines; advertising in particular structures reception routines. Advertising invites for comments on the media-program and offers visual distraction. Focussing on radio advertisements Ernest Dichter, one of the most prominent, yet controversial protagonists of the early advertising research who, by the way, collaborated with Paul F. Lazarsfeld in Vienna, coined the term ‘rhythmical complementation’, which is to say, that advertising plays a vital role within the flow of broadcasting. Media research as it is conducted under the roof of communication science has widely neglected these functions of advertising, however, we would be able to acquire a much deeper understanding of how the media work for us, if we accounted for these widely neglected, yet vital functions of supposedly noisy interferences.

To sum up the argument once again: Despite of an ambitious call for responsibility neither all relevant aspects of the media, nor all relevant forms of media products are sufficiently covered by media research as it is conducted under the roof of communication science. This, of course, is due to the fact, that the call for responsibility may rather be understood as a *prospective* call. If, however, we take a closer look at the logic of this prospective call for responsibility, I propose, the word ‘additional’ hits the mark of the problem.

One of the core problems within the discipline, to me, seems to be that, for obvious reasons, the discipline is expanding, yet it proliferates by adding new research fields, whereas, the practice we are concerned with, works on a completely different logic of proliferation. If one considers the topics media research has to deal with this becomes very obvious: Wherever media researches come together the integration of TV, radio, the press, the internet, online, landline and mobile phones is on the agenda. Of course, media research is concerned with international networks and global players within the media industry, with multimedia and cross-media. Wherever media researchers come together they talk and write about these phenomena on the basis of the assumption that no new medium simply adds up to any given media system, nor simply replaces older media but leads to a structural and functional redefinition of the media system (cf unavoidably Riepl 1913). The underlying logic of these processes, of course, is not an additive but an

integrative logic, this is what we are concerned with: integration by difference management. Yet, which efforts do we take in the practice of media research to cope with an integrative media practice? The ambitious call for responsibility, I propose, will avail only if we dispose of theoretical tools that enable us to integrate the proliferating perspectives within our expanding field of research. The Constructivist approach to media research, I propose, has offered some of the respective theoretical tools.

III Reflexivity

On the timeline the point of origin to this approach to media and communication research lies at the end of the 1980s. In that time Klaus Merten, Siegfried J. Schmidt and Siegfried Weischenberg edited a wide variety of contributions to media research in the “Funkkolleg Medien und Kommunikation” which were later published in the anthology *Die Wirklichkeit der Medien (The reality of the media)* (1994). Let us skip through the table of contents: “The reality of the Observer”; “The social Construction of Reality”, “The evolution of communication Media”; “The cultural History of the Media”; “The Effects of Communication”, “Journalism as a social system” and so on – what unites the wide variety of contributions to this anthology comes to a head in a profound doubt towards the traditional stocks of the discipline, and this doubt roots in a more general epistemic doubt concerning our capability of perceiving *the* reality as such.

Let us take a closer look at the roots of these doubts and begin with one of the central concepts of our discipline: communication. Here the German Communication Association, as one of major institutional players within the field of media research states: “Central focus of the subject is the indirect public communication transmitted via mass media. The associated production, distribution and reception processes constitute the key area of interest of the subject. [...] Purely interpersonal communication is only of interest as far as it constitutes a basis for processes of public communication. That means, for example, that no linguistic analys[e]s are produced and no individual talks are being analyzed. Yet, the role of interpersonal communication while watching a television show or during online-communication is definitely of interest and thus being analyzed.” (DGPUK 2001). Even though it appears to be rather difficult to handle all problems of the discipline on the basis of this definition, the production, distribution and reception of mass media offers are for sure core topics of the Constructivist approach to media research, and thus, from this perspective, we could subscribe to the first part of this notion.

However, on the basis of a Constructivist approach to media research we would definitely insist on a more decisive second part of the notion. In short: purely interpersonal communication, is of interest *not only* as far as it *accompanies* mass communication, it serves as a general model, and thus, both modes of communication are based on the same principles. The outset of all communication processes, Klaus Merten (1977) has maintained repeatedly with reference to Erving Goffman and Niklas Luhmann, is the fact that we are observed observers. This notion, of course, has been worked out repeatedly by many scholars, just as an early example I would like to name Georg Simmel’s (1908) well known approach to a sociology of the senses. By first sight it is not that easy to apply these premises on processes of mass communication because one of the points of general agreement in the German community of media research is the way Gerhard Maletzke (1963) has modelled the audience of the mass media: As we all know, the con-

cept of the “mass” is for many reasons fairly problematic. Focusing on mass communication, Maletzke has argued, the term ‘mass’ is problematic because it suggests strong, linear, irrational, however, predictable media-effects. It furthermore suggests the simultaneous presence of one mass, watching, reading, receiving one media offer which is a delicate assumption since we observe a progressive proliferation of media offers as well as a progressive proliferation of audiences. Readers, watchers, listeners, recipients of the mass media in general, dissolve into disperse, broken up, separated, divided clutters of audiences, if not into inorganic moods of reception. Whoever speaks of *the* audience therefore implicitly employs an “operative fiction”. This is to say: *The* audience does not exist, but we need it in order to know, what we are talking and what we are acting about. Given these assumptions: If processes of mass communication are social processes then how do we, in this case, model the observed observer? Klaus Merten’s answer to this question is thus: Whereas interactive communication episodes rely on the reflexivity of perception, mass communication relies on the reflexivity of knowledge. This means: In mass communication we usually do not perceive that others perceive that we perceive, but we know that others know that we know that we and they perceive. This social fiction serves as the basis for all communication processes mediated by the mass media. It is highly virtual, but nonetheless leads to highly relevant and factual results.

Let us behold: one of the crucial concepts in approaching communication processes is the concept of *reflexivity*. Whoever deals with reflexive processes, however, has to be aware of the fact that the object of his observations is constantly changing, because the effects of these processes are fed back into these very processes. On this background Klaus Merten has drawn the conclusion that many treasured stocks of our discipline, especially those in the field of media effects research, are fundamentally doomed to expire, because effects change effects. Closely connected to the above mentioned concept of reflexivity is another crucial concept we have to take into account when we approach communication processes: the concept of *embeddedness*, or *epistemic involvement*. The substance of this crucial concept can be explained on the background of a short, yet decisive anecdote in the evolution of a new Medium: the motion picture.

IV Embeddedness

When the Brothers Max and Emil Skladanowsky patented their film projector in Berlin in 1895, they emphasized that the specific feature of their device is that it would not be heard by the audience. This means: At the outset of the motion picture stands the motion picture that wants to disappear in order to accomplish the illusion. Round about one hundred years later Sybille Krämer (1998) has pointed out that the media are the blind spot in every process of media use. The premises we make in order to use the media *have to be* the blind spot in processes of media use because otherwise the media would not work for us the way they do. The consequences of this notion obviously depend on what one calls the media. Most definitions of the term ‘medium’ have in common that they emphasize the aspects of the linking, joining and connecting function of the media. Following Siegfried J. Schmidt’s (2000) approach to media theory we can put this initial assessment in more concrete terms: All media are used to link and connect different cognitive and/or social systems. This connection, however, does not evolve randomly but is oriented towards the production of system-specific meaning. In other words: We use media in order to generate meaning – whatsoever. The production of system-specific

meaning, however, does not evolve out of the blue but is based on the specific potentials of specific media. These general features are frequently applied to a wide variety of different media. We can distinguish systemically four interrelated levels of those media: On the first and most complex level we analyze media products, articles, spots, advertisements and so on. These media products, of course, result from the specific formation of the respective communication-instruments (for examples: natural languages or pictures), all respective technologies needed to produce, distribute and receive these media products, and finally the social-systemic organization of the production, distribution and reception of media products.

Of course, every observation has its specific blind spot, yet, on the basis of these medium-theoretical premises, the specific problem of media research is, that the blind spot of its observation is the *object* of its observation. Most media researchers “live” in one or two language worlds, most of them produce texts and usually publish them in magazines, books, sometimes in newspapers and thus address a scientific community. No doubt: Through the practice of observing media research is embedded in the practice it observes. On a more abstract level, this of course, is one of the core problems of constructivist research as it has been conducted by Siegfried J. Schmidt in the last years. The autological problems of media research, one can say with reference to Siegfried J. Schmidt (2003), are just but one version of the more general problem that we are always already involved. Every judgement, every estimation, every opinion on the nature or quality of something – Schmidt prefers to say with reference to Hegel: every *positing* – of an observer unavoidably requires an antecedent in logic and fact as a presupposition. If we say *young* we thus presuppose the semantic differentiation between young and old; accordingly if we say *cold* we thus presuppose the multivalent differentiation between ice-cold/cold/luke warm/warm/hot and so on. This, of course, resembles logical figures that have been extensively discussed within the theory of logic, cognitive science or Gestaltpsychology. Yet, the point Schmidt wants to emphasise is quite another. The theoretical operation had become necessary, because even though constructivist thinkers have *tried* to get away from it they have implicitly fostered a dualistic world view: the world of thought, language, description or the media on the one hand, and the real, yet, unreachable world on the other. As it was said above: What united the wide variety of contributions to constructivist media research since the end of the 1980s was a profound epistemic doubt concerning our capability of perceiving the reality *as such*. The problem behind the “as such”, of course, has troubled generations of scholars, for it evokes questions concerning the origin, nature, and limits of human knowledge. Siegfried J. Schmidt, therefore, does not assume the overambitious task to solve this problem, yet he tries to *dissolve* it, and he does so by the help of the cultural adjustment of his constructivist argument. With every judgement, every estimation, every opinion on the nature or quality of something we never begin, as Niklas Luhmann and, of course, George Spencer Brown have maintained, in an “unmarked space” because with our observations we are always already involved in stories and discourses. This is to say: on the basis of the mechanism of positing and presupposing we unavoidably revert to antecedents in logic, *communications* which have been integrated in so called *discourses*, and we unavoidably revert to antecedents in fact, *actions* which have been integrated in so called *stories* (the latter term according to Wilhelm Schapp).

Schmidt refers to the semantic system of the possibilities that, as it were, “nurture” stories and discourses and reversely is nurtured by them as the *reality model* of a soci-

ety. The semantic differentiation between “Realität“ and “Wirklichkeit“, for example, is possible in the German language and in the Danish language (*Realitet / Virkelighed*), though it is not possible in English. The Reality model of a society can be described as the collective knowledge every individual member of a society disposes of and which emerges from acting and communicating with other members of the society. This semantic system of possibilities, of course, needs a practical program that regulates possible relations of categories and differentiations, their relevance in practical life, affective content and moral significance in a socially binding manner – and this program Schmidt refers to as *culture*. The differentiation between good and bad, certainly, belongs to the reality model of almost all societies, however, it is the object of constant cultural negotiations within any given society as well as between different societies.

V Consequences

The short example of the previous paragraph shows two aspects. *First*: Culture, as conceptualized by Schmidt, is stable, while being referred to, yet it learns, develops and evolves with every application. *Second*: Due to this fact, culture is presupposed in every communication process, *and* at the same time every culture fundamentally depends on communication. On the basis of these theoretical manoeuvres, I would finally like to propose, we obtain a tool with which we can work on some of the urging problems of contemporary media research.

Whereas in the constructivist *and* realistic epistemology the reality “as such” is presupposed, even though we might not reach it by the help of our routines and practices, in the light of a non-dualistic approach we presuppose many other routines and practices, which might be just as limited and restricted as the ones at hand, but nonetheless construe a reality “as such”. As to the *subject matters* we are concerned with: operating without an ontological starting point means that we can observe the selectivity of specific communication-processes only in relation to the selectivity of other communication processes. This drives us to acknowledge the fact that the respective media products we focus on make sense only in a competing yet complementary relation to other media products. Practically speaking this means that there is no theory of mass-communication without an embedded theory of face-to-face-communication; there is no theory of journalism without embedded theories of Advertising, Public Relations or literature. There is no theory of the television without an embedded theory of the letterpress, no theory of email without an embedded theory of snail mail and so on. In the practice of our research this change of perspective, of course, drives us to assume the logic of the practice we conduct research on, and this logic spells out: integration by difference management. Finally, as to the *empirical* practice of media research one of the crucial challenges is this: We can – and we have to! – reflect about the experiences we make using the media only to the price of new experiences with other media. Therefore we need to intensify our efforts to improve empirical tools that account for us – unavoidably involved observers in the field of media research. The more earnestly we consider the consequences that follow when we reflect our own practices that virtually go without saying, the better we can live up to the challenges posed by the expanding field of media research.

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Fra Helsingør til Aalborg
Lille medieforskerkonference-historie
Mel. Those Were The Days

FRA FESTMIDDAGEN

1.

Dagene er ikke helt så lange.
Nætterne lidt mindre lyse nu.
Frier får ende, også denne,
som blev brugt til skrivningen, da du
var konference-frisk,
og sikker som en fisk
du styred' lige ind mod Aalborg C,
med paper og bærbar,
beredt på kommentar,
klar til at lytte, til at ses – og se.

2.

Sidst vi sås i Danmark, var i Helsing-
ør. Og smukt var Sundets gyldne vand.
Ikke mindre kønt var øllets blinken
på en udflugt i det grønne land.
Så kom Jyväskylä
i skov og badstu-læ,
hvor Ullamaija gav en barsk kritik
af teoriens svar
på spørgsmål, som vi har.
Og vi af Aalto kunne ta' bestik.

3.

Kungälv nittenhundred ni og nitti.
Sol og charme. Og så var der jagt.
Forskningsfronten væk – og avantgarden
vidste ikke, hvor den nu var lagt?
I USA, kanske?
På Bohus Fæstning? – det
var ganske vist en rigtig dejlig nat.
Med fronten gik det skidt,
Den gemmer sig jo tit.
Vi fandt den. – Hvor? – Den var på Farsans
Hatt...

4.

Reykjavik, nu frem med paraplyen!
Her er bræ'r og næsten ingen træer.
Vandet springer op fra undergrunden.
Medieforskerne har bare tæer.
De nye medier – hør,
de banker på vor dør
- det siger Drotner, Smaragdi og Stald.
Og Dahl og Bondebjerg
var både her og der,
for medi-e-historie er et kald.

5.

Kristiansand – det gælder æstetikken!
Film og underholdning, retorik.
Sobchack, Widding, Gunning – hele
banden
hopper på den – er det slået klik?
Vi balancerer her
på teoriens skær.
Vi ta'r Manhattan, og vi ta'r Berlin.
Vi suser rundt i båd,
opsporer fortids død.
En kok stand-up – vi falder om af grin.

6.

Somme tider sker det, når vi taler
sammen hver på vores modersmål,
at forståelsen bli'r problematisk,
når et ord er sværere end 'skål'...
'Vad det var roligt, nu!'
'Ja, rart, det var det, du!'
Komm – vissla, plystre, fløjte melodi'n.
Engelsk med finsk diktation,
norsk dialektversion,
de danske tal – fortolkningen er din!

7.

Dagene er ikke helt så lange.
Nætterne lidt mindre lyse nu.
Sange får en ende, også denne
om at mindes konference-clou:
Ja, det var då, min vän,
en gång för länge sen.
En härlig tid som verkade stå still.
Ja, vi var unga då,
vi ville sjunga då,
vi ville dansa, höra livet till.

Those were the days, my friend,
We thought they'd never end,
We'd sing and dance forever and a day.
We'd live the life we choose,
We'd fight and never lose,
For we were young and sure to have our way.

10.08.2005

Gunhild Agger

NORDICOM 30 ÅR

ULLA CARLSSON

Förra året blev jag uppringd av ett av världens största bokförlag som frågade om jag var intresserad av en diskussion rörande en försäljning av bokförlaget Nordicom. Vid en genomgång av den nordiska marknaden för vetenskapliga tidskrifter på engelska hade man funnit en tidskrift som avvek från övriga både vad gällde spridning och utgivning. Det var Nordicoms engelsk-språkiga tidskrift *Nordicom Review* med 2000 prenumeranter varav 1500 i 125 länder utanför Norden – andra vetenskapliga tidskrifter på engelska utgivna i Norden – oavsett vetenskaplig disciplin – låg kring max 300 prenumeranter och hade begränsad spridning. Detta globala bokförlags intresse gällde som man sade både varumärket Nordicom, som man menade kännetecknades av kontinuitet i utgivningen och hög vetenskaplig kvalitet. Genom Nordicom Reviews omfattande spridning gavs också en ingång till såväl en bred internationell som nordisk brukarkrets – marknader som man inte självklart har. Som ni vet så har de kommersiella bokförlagen snart köpt upp hela den vetenskapliga tidskriftssektorn – *Nordicom Review* är dock fortfarande i forskarnas ägo. (och vi på Nordicom missade en chans i livet att bli rika)

Nordicom utger översikter över medieägandet i de nordiska länderna. Norden som mediemarknad kanske är det mest nordiska vi ser idag. Efterfrågan på sådan kunskap är därför mycket stor både bland privata och offentliga aktörer såväl inom som utom Norden. Köparna kommer från EU, Europarådet, internationella organisationer och stora världsomspännande medie- och konsultföretag vid sidan av forskarsamhället. Genom Nordicoms arbete redovisas grundläggande kunskap på kontinuerlig basis, en kunskap som annars inte skulle finnas tillgänglig – vi skulle vara utlämnade till olika aktörer på den kommersiella marknaden. Via Nordicoms dokumentation av medieutvecklingen blir de nordiska länderna representerade i olika europeiska och internationella samarbetsprojekt som rör mediemarknaden.

För ett tiotal år sedan initierade UNESCO och UNICEF ett antal världskonferenser om barn och medievåld. Konferenserna resulterade i en idé om ett internationellt clearinghouse – ett clearinghouse som skulle medverka till att stimulera forskningen genom nätverksarbete och genom kunskapsförmedling bidra till bättre underlag för beslut på området och en mer fruktbar samhälldebatt. Hela världen skulle innefattas i arbetet – inte minst viktigt var södra halvklotet. Många institutioner arbetade hårt för att få uppdraget – institutioner i Canada, USA, England och Tyskland konkurrerade. Men det var till Nordicom som UNESCO vände sig med sin förfrågan och skälet man angav var att Nordicom var känd som en 'doer'-organisation med mångårig erfarenhet av arbete på den internationella arenan. Idag finns i det närmaste alla världens länder med i det globala nätverk Nordicom byggt för området barn, unga och medier. I Clearinghusets publika-

tioner samlas världens ledande forskare kring olika specialområden som rör unga människor och medier.

Detta är tre exempel som illustrerar Nordicoms arbete – ett arbete som resulterar i böcker, tidskrifter, rapporter, nyhetsbrev, statistiska översikter, forskningsöversikter, databaser, d v s spridning av kunskap både i tryckt och elektronisk form. Vi utger ca 20-talet skrifter om året. *Och* vi har en ny hemsida som vi hoppas ni alla kan ha nytta av.

För allt vårt arbete är *dokumentation av forskningen av grundläggande betydelse*. Ni tycker säkert att vi är tjatiga och besvärliga många gånger när vi hör av oss om pågående forskning, forskningsresultat och mediestatistik. Men det är förankringen i forskarsamhället som möjliggör Nordicoms aktiviteter. För oss som arbetar vid Nordicom är ni forskare själva fundamentet. Och vi kommer fortsatt att vilja veta om aktuell forskning och nya publikationer.

Det är i år 30 år sedan Nordicoms arbete började bedrivas på en mer kontinuerlig basis – 1975 formaliserades verksamheten – en nordisk dokumentationscentral för masskommunikationsforskning som fick namnet Nordicom inrättades. Viss försöksverksamhet startade 1973, samma år som den första nordiska konferensen arrangerades, men det är 1975 den första bibliografin utges. Att detta hände på 1970-talet var ingen tillfällighet.

Genom televisionens genomslag på 1960-talet var mediernas roll och villkor ett högaktuellt ämnesområde. Samtidigt förändrades universitetens roll – forskningen skulle vara i samhällets tjänst och nu handlade det om att sprida forskningens resultat till de s k avnämarna. Och med datorernas intåg gavs nya möjligheter att samla information i databaser.

Det var forskare och företrädare för pressen och radio-tv-företagen i de nordiska länderna som tillsammans agerade för inrättandet av Nordicom. Från forskningens sida var det Kaarle Nordenstreng från Finland, Kjell Nowak och Olof Hultén från Sverige, Per Torsvik från Norge och HP Clausen från Danmark som drev frågan – flera av dem hade varit i USA och funnit sina förebilder i den nya informationsteknologin. *Men den övergripande tanken var att genom nordiskt samarbete få en bättre belysning av aktuella frågor i samhället än vad som skulle vara möjligt i respektive land*. Nordicom blev och är fortfarande en institution inom Nordiska Ministerrådets ram.

Nordicom startade som en renodlad dokumentationscentral för forskningslitteratur men med tiden har kompetensområdena blivit flera som svar på nya behov i samhället, vilket har gjort Nordicom till dagens *kunskapscenter* – ett kunskapscenter som idag är väl etablerat i hela världen och som för många blivit en förebild. Idag söker t ex medieforskare inom det tyska språkområdet och forskare runt Medelhavet att bygga regionala samarbeten med Nordicom som modell.

För det är tveklöst så att det nordiska samarbetet har varit och är en avgörande förutsättning för Nordicoms verksamhet – de nordiska länderna ger en bas att arbeta utifrån som är långt mer fruktbar än vad varje enskilt land kan erbjuda.

NORDICOM är de nordiska medieforskarnas egen kanal för kunskapsförmedling. I en tid när de globala förlagen tagit över huvuddelen av den vetenskapliga publiceringen förfogar de nordiska forskarna över två tidskrifter – en med stort genomslag i Norden, *Nordicom-Information*, och en med osedvanligt god internationell spridning – *Nordicom Review*, som numera är en refereed tidskrift. Utnyttja möjligheten till publicering – skriv artiklar. Glöm inte heller att titta på det som redan ligger i skrivbordslådan – kanske kan det med lite omarbetning bli en bra artikel. Om kvaliteten är god kan artikeln dess-

utom återpubliceras på annat språk i utländska skrifter eller öppna för samarbete med forskare i andra länder. Hos Nordicom finns också möjligheter att utge böcker/antologier med bred internationell marknadsföring. Ytterst handlar det dock om att det som utges måste finna sina brukare – att nå önskade brukargrupper. Det blir varken kunskapsutveckling, forskningskommunikation eller samverkan om intressenter och brukare saknas. Och den bistra verkligheten är att utan försäljningsintäkter inget Nordicom. En prenumeration på *Nordicoms skrifter* är alltså en garanti för verksamhetens fortlevnad.

Vi lever i en tid då vi ser stora förändringar i såväl *medielandskapet* som *mediekulturen*. Med dagens komplexa samhälle ställs mer mångfacetterade frågor än någonsin tidigare. Medie- och kommunikationsforskningen står inför reella utmaningar. Hur ska medie- och kommunikationsvetenskapen möta dessa utmaningar?

Årets nordiska konferens uppvisar ett stort antal papers som rymmer många olika frågeställningar inom skilda teman. Medie- och kommunikationsforskningen har många gånger fler forskare idag än för bara tio år sedan. Expansionen har varit snabb och excel-lenta miljöer har utvecklats men det finns även en annan sida som leder till mer kritiska reflektioner. Reflektioner som handlar om i vilken utsträckning vi ställer frågor om relevansen i de frågeställningar som formuleras, om nya fruktbara teoretiska perspektiv, om metodmedvetenhet, och om resultats och slutsatserns giltighet.

Den övergripande målsättningen måste vara att medie- och kommunikationsvetenskapen skall kunna ge svar på frågor om såväl mediernas betydelse för hur makt och inflytande fördelas i samhället som frågor som rör mediernas innehåll och mediernas roll i vardagslivet. Men det handlar inte bara om att lära mera utan också om *våga mera* så att medie- och kommunikationsforskningens blir än mer fruktbar och även avsätter klara spår inom andra forskningsfält. Det handlar om att i en tid då medierna är en av vår tids mäktigaste samhällskrafter inte överlämna den vetenskapligt baserade mediekritiken och mediefilosofin till andra.

Därför – bidra både unga och seniora forskare till den för forskningsområdet nödvändiga dialogen mellan traditioner, discipliner och länder. Skriv artiklar och varför inte några uppstudsiga debattinlägg. Utnyttja Nordicom – mötesplatsen för de nordiska forskarna. Värna det nordiska samarbetet – och vad vore livet utan dessa nordiska konferenser?

Hvis ryggraden brakk

KNUT LUNDBY

Jeg gjør meg til talsmann for folket som bruker Nordicom. Dere, medieforskerne i Norden, er folket.

Sammen med de nordiske konferansene annethvert år, utgjør Nordicom selve ryggraden i det felles nordiske medieforskermiljøet. Hvor viktig Nordicom er for å holde vårt faglige fellesskap oppreist og samlet, vil vi kanskje først oppdage hvis Nordicom må gi opp og forsvinner.

For det er ingen selvfølge at vi har Nordicom. Denne lille organisasjonen utsettes for stadige krav til omstilling. Jeg har sett hvor offensivt Ulla Carlsson og hennes stab har møtt disse utfordringene. De har lyktes å bevare og videreutvikle Nordicom, slik at den er en tidsmessig tjeneste både for oss medieforskere og for brukere som søker kunnskap og informasjon om det vi gjør.

Under konferansen her i Aalborg har mange av oss vært på utflukt til Skagen. På Skagens museum fikk vi se P. S. Krøyers berømte maleri ”hip, hip, hurra!”, som ellers henger i Göteborg, der Nordicom har sitt hovedkvarter. Når vi er samlet så mange her i Aalborg, vi medieforskere i Norden, er det grunn til å si si ”hip, hip, hurra!” til Nordicom.

Takk, og gratulerer med de 30 år!

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• ARCHIVES

Grupp 6. TV: Institution, produktion og tekst

Ordförande: Henrik Søndergaard (D)

Vice ordförande: Tanja Storsul (N)

Bruun, Hanne: *Politisk og social selvrefleksion i dansk tv-satire*. Århus, Århus Universitet, Institut for Informations- og Medievidenskab, 2005, 19 p.

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• DENMARK

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• INTERACTIVE MEDIA • MEDIA POLICY • DENMARK

Grupp 7. Radio og andre lydmedier

Ordförande: Lars Nyre (N)

Vice ordförande: Carin Åberg (S)

Bruhn Jensen, Klaus: *Sounds of three degrees: the interdisciplinary sources of sound studies*. København, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Medier, Erkendelse og Formidling, Afdeling for Film- og Medievidenskab, 2005, 26 p.

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• AUDIENCES

Grupp 8. Politisk kommunikation

Ordförande: *Jesper Strömbäck* (S)

Vice ordförande: *Mark Ørsten*

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Grupp 9. Journalistikforskning

Ordförande: *Elisabeth Eide* (N)

Vice ordförande: *Inger Orre* (S)

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Grupp 10. Nyhedsformidlingens sosiologi og æstetik

Ordförande: *Ester Pollack (S)*

Vice ordförande: *Sigurd Allern (N)*

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• COMPETITION • COMMERCIALIZATION • MARKET
• POLITICS

Grupp 11. Mediebrug: perspektiv, metode og teori

Ordförande: *Barbara Gentikow (N)*

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• EVERYDAY LIFE • SCHOOLS

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Grupp 12. Barn, unge og medier

Ordförande: Sirkku Kotilainen (F)

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• FOREIGN NEWS

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Ordförande: Bo Fibiger (D)
Vice Ordförande: Lasse Högberg (S)

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Grupp 15. Film- og TV-fiktion

Ordförande: Gunhild Agger (D)

Vice ordförande: Ingrid Lindell (S)

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• EDUCATION • LEARNING • HISTORY • NORWAY
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Grupp 16. Visuel kultur

Ordförande: Arild Fetveit (N)

Vice ordförande: Sigrid Lien (N)

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Ordförande: Søren Frimann (D)

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Ordförande: Karin Ljuslinder (S)

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• INTERNET

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Ordförande: Magnus Fredrikson (S)

Vice ordförande: Charlotte Albrechtsen (D)

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• ORGANIZATIONS

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• COMMUNICATION PLANNING
• WORKING CONDITIONS • ORGANIZATIONS

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• DENMARK

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COMMUNICATION PLANNING • PUBLIC RELATIONS
• ORGANIZATIONS • POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Grupp 20. Medieret risiko-, krise- og krigskommunikation

Ordförande: Rune Ottosen (N)

Vice ordförande: Britt-Marie Leivik Knowles (S)

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• ORGANIZATIONS • COOPERATION • AUTHORITIES
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• DENMARK

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• NEWSPAPERS

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MEDIA • COMMUNICATION • ORGANIZATIONS
• EVERYDAY LIFE • MANAGEMENT • RISKS

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Ordförande: *Terje Hillesund* (N)

Vice ordförande: *Astrid Haugland* (N)

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• NARRATOLOGY

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PRESS • ETHICS • INTERNET • DEBATES
• DEMOCRACY • INTERACTIVITY

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Ordförande: *Gitte Bang Stald* (D)

Vice ordförande: *Ulrika Sjöberg* (S)

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• EVERYDAY LIFE

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• LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES • PORNOGRAPHY

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Ordförande: Karina Horsti (F)

Vice ordförande: Mustafa Hussein (D)

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JOURNALISM • NEWSPAPERS • ETHNIC MINORITIES • MINORITY GROUPS

Grupp 25. Medie- og kommunikations-teori: forskning og disipliner

Ordförande: Niels Brügger (D)

Vice ordförande: Kaarle Nordenstreng (F)

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MEDIA • COMMUNICATION • DIGITAL MEDIA • TEXT

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Ordförande: Thomas Borchmann (D)

Vice ordförande: Søren Gunge (D)

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• ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION • DENMARK

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• VERBAL COMMUNICATION
• NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Grupp 27. Markedskommunikation og æstetik

Ordförande: Peter Allingham (D)

Allingham, Peter: *"Artifice" og tredimensionelle markedskommunikative artefakter*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 16 p.

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• RECEPTION • COGNITION • UNITED KINGDOM

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Jantzen, Christian: *Mellem nydelse og skuffelse: et neurofysiologisk perspektiv på oplevelser*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 17 p.

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Graakjær, Nicolai Jørgensgaard: *Branding med et bip*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 23 p.

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• MARKETING • COMMUNICATION • BRANDING
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Skretting, Kathrine: *Humor i reklame*. Trondheim, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet/NTNU, Institutt for kunst- og medievitenskap, 2005, 11 p.

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Stigel, Jørgen; Frimann, Søren: *Bybranding: brænder byer igennem?*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 23 p.

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Grupp 28. Medieudvikling

Ordförande: *Håkan Hvitfelt* (S)

Vice ordförande: *Lowe Hedman* (S)

Alström, Börje: *Faktorer som påverkar produktutvecklingen inom några tidningsföretag*. Sundsvall, Mittuniversitetet, Demokratiinstitutet, 2005, 21 p.

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Nygren, Gunnar: *Journalistiskt arbete och journalistiska värderingar*. Stockholms universitet, Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation/JMK, 2005, 13 p.
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• MEDIA PERSONNEL • JOURNALISTS • FINLAND

Grupp 29. Computerspil

Ordförande: *Lars Konzack* (D)

Vice ordförande: *Ole Ertløv Hansen* (D)

Ertløv Hansen, Ole: *Shoot-'em-up spil: en kognitiv og neo-formalistisk analyse*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 12 p.

COMPUTER GAMES • FILM THEORY • COGNITION
• NARRATOLOGY

Hyldig, Nikolaj: *Design af følelsesmæssige oplevelser i interaktiv digital underholdning*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 13 p.

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• DIGITALIZATION • ENTERTAINMENT • EMOTIONS
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Jørgensen, Kristine: *Game sound functionalities: results of a qualitative study*. København, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Medier, Erkendelse og Formidling, Afdeling for Film- og Medievidenskab, 2005, 18 p.

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• NARRATOLOGY

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COMPUTER GAMES • INTERACTIVE MEDIA
• CULTURAL POLICY • FINANCING • DENMARK
• EUROPEAN UNION

Grupp 30. Interaktivt TV

Ordförande: *Jens F. Jensen* (D)

Vice ordförande: *Roel Puijk* (N)

Arendt Rasmussen, Tove; Holmgaard Christensen, Lars: *Mediebrug og design af digitalt interaktivt tv*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 24 p.

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• DIGITALIZATION • DESIGN • MEDIA USE
• RESEARCH METHODS • RECEPTION • DENMARK

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• INTERACTIVE MEDIA • MEDIA USE • RECEPTION
• REGIONS • DENMARK

Jensen, Jens F.: *Digitalt og interaktivt tv: en status og fremtidsfremskrivning*. Aalborg, Aalborg Universitet, Institut for Kommunikation, 2005, 19 p.

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MEDIA • MEDIA USE

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YOUTH • TELEVISION • PARTICIPATION
• AUDIENCES • DIGITAL MEDIA • INTERACTIVITY
• CHILDREN

Den 17. Nordiske medieforskerkonference 11.-14. august 2005, Aalborg, Danmark

Program

Torsdag 11. august

- 13.00-15.00 Registrering
- 30.30-30.30 *Velkomst*
Sven Caspersen, bestyrelseformand, Aalborg Universitet
Gunhild Agger, næstformand, SMID
Ole Prehn, dekan, Det humanistiske fakultet, Aalborg Universitet
Musik ved Aalborg Universitets Big Band
- 15.30-17.30
KEYNOTE *The Role of Information in Flexible Capitalism*
Richard Sennett, London School of Economics
Constructing the Digital Object of Study. Questions of Method and Research
Saskia Sassen, University of Chicago
Ordstyrer: Thomas Borchmann, Aalborg Universitet
- 18.00-19.00 Reception
Aalborg Kommune byder velkommen til byen

Fredag 12. august

- 09.00-12.30 Grupper
- 13.30-15.00 Grupper
- 15.00 Afgang til udflugter: Sightseeing i Aalborg, Sightseeing i Skagen

Lørdag 13. august

- 9.00-11.30
PLENUM I *ÆSTETIK OG DESIGN*
Sound and Silence in the Media. On a Listening Mode of Research
Arnt Maasø, Universitetet i Oslo
Two Solitudes. Design as an Approach to Media Research
Ilpo Koskinen, The University of Art and Design – Helsinki
Ordstyrer: Peter Allingham, Aalborg Universitet
- PLENUM II PUBLIC SERVICE
Kampen om public service. Fra marked til politik
Henrik Søndergaard, Københavns Universitet
Nya förhållanden. Om public service-televisionens förändrade relation till publiken
Anna Edin, Högskolan i Gävle
Ordstyrer: Gunhild Agger, Aalborg universitet
- 19.00 Festmiddag

Søndag 14. august

- 10.00-12.00
KEYNOTE *Tv-Entertainment. What it is that Unites and Unifies Society*
Barbara Sichtermann
The Reality of Media Research
Guido Zurstiege
Ordstyrer: Christian Jantzen, Aalborg Universitet
- 13.00-14.00 Møde: Gruppeledere, Nordisk komite og den lokale programkomite

Den 17. Nordiske medieforskerkonference
11.-14. august 2005, Aalborg, Danmark

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