# *The* MOST COMMON *of* PRACTICES

ON MASS MEDIA USE IN LATE MODERNITY

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Almqvist & Wiksell International

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# The Most Common of Practices On Mass Media Use in Late Modernity

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Stockholm, Sweden

Ph. D. dissertation,
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Göteborg University, Sweden

Gothenburg Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication
Editors: Kent Asp and Lennart Weibull

1. Burnett, Robert: *Concentration and Diversity in the International Phonogram Industry.* Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet 1990

2. Wallis, Roger: *Internationalisation, Localisation & Integration.* Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet 1991

3. Severinsson, Ronny: *Tidningar i konkurrens.* Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet 1994

4. Reimer, Bo: *The Most Common of Practices. On Mass Media Use in Late Modernity.* Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation, Göteborgs universitet 1994

ISSN 1101-4652
ISBN 91-22-01622-8

Cover Design: *Roger Palmqvist*
Lay Out: *Per Nilsson*
Printing: *Grafikerna i Kungälv 1994*

# Contents

# Acknowledgments

There are many people who have helped me think this dissertation through, and I am immensely grateful for their help. I would like to thank Karl Erik Rosengren and Lennart Weibull for their constructive advices and for what I believe their genuine interest in my work. I would like to thank Kent Asp, Robert Burnett, John Gibbins, Charlotta Kratz and Keith Roe for stimulating and pleasurable conversations on a number of difficult but important topics. During the time of writing, I have been involved in two research groups. I would like to thank the members of the Internalized Culture/Lifestyle and Mass Media Culture Group – beside Karl Erik Rosengren Magnus Anshelm, Fredrik Miegel and Thomas Johansson – and the Youth Culture in Sweden Group – Ulf Boëthius, Johan Fornäs, Michael Forsman and Hillevi Ganetz – for often intense but always thoughtprovoking discussions. I would like to thank Ulla Carlsson and her colleagues at Nordicom for always providing an excellent and professional service. I would also like to thank Roger Palmqvist for cover design, Per Nilsson for lay out and Gulli Reimer for proof reading. Finally, I would like to thank fellow researchers, teachers and students in Media and Communications at Göteborg University for giving me the opportunity to discuss the topics of this dissertation almost daily. I am indebted to you all.

Bo Reimer

ONE

# Introduction

In everyday life, we increasingly surround ourselves with the mass media. From morning until night, we turn to them for a variety of reasons: We seek pleasure, information, and relaxation. Or we seek company.

Mass media use is the most common of practices, and this in more ways than one. First, media use is a practice carried out regularly by in principle everyone in contemporary Western societies; it is a practice commonly carried out. Second, by being carried out so regularly by so many people, it is a practice that unites us. It is something we all have in common. But third, it is not a practice highly valued. It is a common, ordinary practice; a practice without higher merits.[1]

All three connotations of the word common are no doubt valid when it comes to discussing the mass media, and taken together they indicate something of the ambiguity and ambivalence surrounding the views on, and the uses to be made of, the mass media. Apparently the media attract us, but we are not supposed to fall for them completely.

In this dissertation, I will take these statements concerning our most common practice as a point of departure. They highlight the problematic nature of media use in contemporary society. The objective of the dissertation is to analyse why people choose to turn to the media in the way they do. People use the media in different ways. Why do some media practices become "natural" components in everyday life for some people, but not for others? How are we to understand these choices?[2]

In order to answer these questions, it is obviously necessary to work both theoretically and empirically. It is necessary to discuss and problematize what we at this stage take for the "state of the art" of mass media use research. But it is equally necessary to analyse mass media use in a concrete historical setting.

The analysis concerns the uses of the mass media in Sweden in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. This is the time period and the geographical location that the analysis tries to cover; this is as far as it will be possible to generalize. However, by making as clear as possible the specificity of the analysis – by making clear in

which relevant ways Sweden differs from other Western cultures at this specific point in time – it will also be possible to draw some more general conclusions.

In the analysis, the focus will be on the mass media. But the mass media do not function in isolation from the rest of society. The growth of the mass media in contemporary Western societies must be seen in the light of a more general modernization process, and in order to understand the role of the media, it will be necessary *both* to hold on to the specificity of the media – to their characteristics and to the specific ways in which they are used – *and* to integrate the media with other processes in everyday life.

This means that I will conduct the analysis through the theoretical framework of *modernity*. I will start by outlining the general processes of modernity, and I will then locate the mass media and mass media use within this general pattern.

Every chosen perspective puts some aspects more in focus than others. By using this perspective, the question of *individualization* will be central. Are traditional constraints loosening, and are we increasingly acting out our everyday lives in individual, specific ways? The notion of individuality will in itself be problematized, however. A key aspect of the theoretical framework of modernity is the questioning of essential and fixed identities. Therefore, in analysing the process of individualization, this will be carried out with a view of human identity as basically contradictory and transitory.

Another aspect that will be highlighted is the *context* within mass media practices are carried out. Mass media practices are normal, everyday life practices, carried out regularly. They differ from other everyday life practices precisely by being mediated, but they belong within the same context. People's mass media practices will here be conceived of as natural components in everyday life; as natural components in any person's *lifestyle*.

In order to understand why people generally choose one way of living instead of another, I will distinguish between three types of factors that together shape a person's subjectivity, and consequently his or her actions in everyday life. I will distinguish between structural, positional and individual factors.

With *structural* factors I mean those characteristics of each environment that shape everyday life; characteristics that individuals themselves cannot change. These characteristics give people living in different environments different opportunities. The choices between leisure practices differ markedly between a metropolitan and a rural area, for instance.

Within the same environment, people have different *positional* characteristics. People come from different classes, they have different levels of education, etc. These positional factors structure human action; people with similar positional characteristics tend to choose similar activities in everyday life.

Positional characteristics are thus important for the choice of practices. But of course all people with similar positional characteristics do not act identically. These positional characteristics interact with *individual* characteristics, and these characteristics are the ones that most concretely guide people towards specific practices. I will here focus on people's *values* as those individual characteristics that shape action.

In the analysis, I will discuss the characteristics of the mass media with the help of the concepts of *cultural form* and *genre*. These concepts will be used in order to highlight the dynamics of the mass media. Each medium has an historically specific form, and within this form, the medium presents a number of genres that generate certain expectations from the audience. Both of these characteristics are necessary to take into account in order to understand why and how people choose practices the way they do.

The empirical material consists of a series of surveys conducted in Sweden between 1986 and 1992: the Society Opinion Media surveys. The material makes it possible to discuss the general patterns of – and the reasons behind – Swedish people's mass media use in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The material furthermore makes it possible to study possible changes in these patterns during a period in which the Swedish mass media system to a certain extent is changing.

The dissertation consists of two parts. In part one, I will outline a theoretical perspective on mass media use. I will start with a discussion of the theoretical framework of modernity (chapter two), and I will then discuss current views of mass media use; views coming both from the humanities and the social sciences (chapter three). In chapter four, I will introduce the concept of values, and in chapter five, the concept of lifestyle. The concepts of cultural form and genre will be discussed in chapter six, and in chapter seven, I will sum up the theoretical discussions and present a general model of mass media use. The objective of this first part of the dissertation is to try to make a contribution to the theory of mass media use, on the one hand by locating it within the framework of modernity, and on the other hand by explicitly confronting social science theories with theories originating within the humanities.

In the second part of the dissertation, I will apply my perspective on mass media use on a concrete empirical material. I will first give a background to the Swedish mass media environment (chapter eight). Following this, I will present a research model for the specific study of Swedish mass media use, including a number of concrete research questions. In chapter ten, I will present the empirical material. Then follows seven empirical chapters. In chapters eleven through fourteen, I will analyse the relationship between people's positional characteristics and the uses of a number of media in both the private and the public sphere. In chapter fifteen, I will add structural factors to the analysis, and in chapter sixteen individual factors. In chapter seventeen, I will relate the different media practices to each other, and I will conceive of mass media use within the context of people's

lifestyles. The objective of this second part of the book is thus to give a detailed, theoretically informed account of the uses of the mass media in Sweden in the late 1980s/early 1990s.

## Notes

1. In the Concise Oxford Dictionary, practice is defined as "habitual action". It is an activity that is carried out regularly, but not necessarily in a conscious and deliberate way. It is to a certain extent a ritualized habit.

2. By mass media I mean such media that are involved in mass communication processes, in processes where the sender is physically removed from the receiver, and where the relationship is one-directional and involves simultaneous contact between one sender and many receivers. Cf. McQuail 1987:31-32; Hadenius and Weibull 1993:14.

# PART ONE

# A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MASS MEDIA USE

TWO

# The Theoretical Framework of Modernity

For this dissertation I have chosen the theoretical framework of modernity. In this chapter I will first outline why I have chosen this framework, and what the key features of this framework are. Through the use of the notion of late modernity, I will then make the discussion historically specific. Finally I will discuss how one may understand social behaviour within the framework of modernity – and in a period of late modernity.

## Why Modernity?

Contemporary social analysis is in many ways occupied by the problematics of modernity and postmodernity. That is, in order to understand the goings on in contemporary Western societies, analysts are at the moment placing themselves within the frameworks of modernity and postmodernity rather than within other, possible frameworks.[1]

One may – and should – be suspicious of a framework that suddenly seems to crop up everywhere. The logic of academia is such that when this happen, it is not always due to the meaningfulness of the framework, but to reasons having to do with strategic decisions of researchers, of a certain "trendiness", of publishers cashing in on what is commercially viable, etc.

However, the recent popularity of the framework of modernity should be seen in the light of perceived changes in contemporary societies, both on macro levels (relationships between nation-states, etc) and on micro levels (happenings in every-day life); changes that the frameworks of modernity and postmodernity seem able to deal with better than other frameworks.[2]

Why is it so? I believe this is due to the fact that one with the help of these frameworks tries – more or less successfully – to overcome three extremely difficult oppositions in social analysis. First, one tries to overcome the opposition between

constancy and change; one tries to deal with the question of how to explain why some things change when others stay the same. Second, one tries to deal with the opposition between generality and specificity; one tries to deal with the question of how to understand processes that on the one hand are unique but on the other hand are related to, or dependent upon, other processes. And third, one tries to find a solution to the problematic of structure and agency; one tries to find a way of combining the notion of the acting subject with the insistence on structural determinants.

The way these problematics are dealt with within these two frameworks is basically to see contemporary societies as continually changing in an interplay between a number of key macro processes and people's actions and reactions on these processes. The macro processes have been described in the following way by Habermas:

> The concept of modernization refers to a bundle of processes that are cumulative and mutually reinforcing; to the formation of capital and the mobilization of resources; to the development of the forces of production and the increase in the productivity of labor; to the establishment of centralized political power and the formation of national identities; to the proliferation of rights of political participation, of urban forms of life, and of formal schooling; to the secularization of values and norms; and so on (1990:2).

Together the forces of modernization shape modernity.[3] Some of them have been under way for a long period of time, among these industrialization, secularization, democratization and urbanization. Even though they have changed fundamentally over the years, they still exist. Other processes have increasingly come into focus. Two such processes are the processes of globalisation and mediazation.[4]

All of these processes are constantly at work on a structure that, due to the processes, more or less rapidly change. The processes are different. Some are economic, others are political, social or cultural, and they all have their own, internal logics. But, as Habermas writes, they are cumulative and mutually reinforcing. That is, they cannot only be grasped one by one. They need to be related to each other. Seeing them within the frameworks of modernity or postmodernity means trying to find an underlying logic to these processes without falling back on a simple base-superstructure model. It is crucial to emphasize the heterogeneity in these processes, however. Even if they together may be seen as the forces of modernization, the effects of these forces are not unambigious. The processes of modernity are highly *ambivalent* (Habermas 1990:338; cf. Bauman 1991).[5]

## A Period of Late Modernity

I use the concept of modernity rather broadly. I see it as a framework for understanding social processes; as a perspective on things. This is a common usage,

but it is not the only possible one. It must be distinguished from a more narrow usage. There is also an *epochal* meaning to the concept. That is, modernity may be said to stand for a certain period that may be delineated from other periods (cf. Featherstone 1988:197).

In this viewpoint, the modern period as a whole is characterized by such similarities that it is meaningful to distinguish it from a pre-modern period. A heated debate has been carried out concerning the beginnings of the modern period, but we are on all accounts speaking of a long period in time, of maybe as much as four hundred years (Berman 1985:16).[6]

Across this whole period of modernity, one may find similarities and continuities, but of course also differences and discontinuities. And in the context of this dissertation, in which I am interested in actions in contemporary societies, it is more reasonable to use the concept of modernity as a framework than as an historical period, and then more narrowly specify the period which interests me.

I will focus on the characteristics that are typical for a more limited part of modernity, namely the part originating roughly after the second world war in Western societies. The exact delienation is not relevant, and it varies between countries, but it is this post world war two period that is of interest here. Following Fornäs (1987,1990) and Giddens (1991), I will call this period *late modernity*. That is, I will conceive of modernity as a framework and of late modernity as an historically and geographically specific period.[7]

By using the concept of late modernity, I emphasize that the period is sufficiently different from earlier periods to name it late modernity rather than just modernity. It is a *radicalised modernity* (Giddens 1990:3). Late modernity must, however, be distinguished from postmodernity. By putting forward the notion of postmodernity, one posits a rather sharp break with earlier periods. Crook et al write that:

> the conclusion that radical change is occurring is inescapable. This is because change is now so widespread in its penetration of various social and cultural realms and because it reverses so many of the normal patterns of modernity (1992:1).

It certainly is true that social and cultural change is occurring. However, it seems premature to make these changes into something as fundamental as the earlier transformation from premodern to modern society. Kellner seems more reasonable in writing that:

> while postmodern theory is articulating real problems and posing important challenges to radical social theory and politics today, it is exaggerating the break, rupture and alleged novelty in the contemporary socio-historical epoch and is downplaying, and even occluding, the continuities (1988:267).

Thus, by wanting to emphasize the continuities as well as the breaks, I will use the notion of late modernity, not the notion of postmodernity.[8]

What characterizes late modernity? Two processes are central: First, an increasing *globalisation*. This is "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distinct localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens 1990:64). We live in a world in which spatial distances are becoming less and less important. In a negative sense, we live in a "risk society"; a society in which distances no longer may protect us from accidents or disasters (Beck 1992). But in a positive sense, it means that one's contacts and affiliations less and less are constrained by boundaries.

Second, late modernity is characterized by an increasing *mediazation*. This is obviously related to the process of globalisation. The development of mass communications is a pre-condition for an increasing globalisation. It is with the help of mass communications that we may uphold intimate relationships with people far removed in space. Our "sense of place" (Meyrowitz 1985) is changing through the development of mass communications. But mediazation is more than "just" a pre-condition for globalisation. Mediazation also means that we increasingly live in a world based on representations. What we experience is less and less an unmediated reality, and more and more representations of this reality (cf. Lash 1990: ch.1).[9]

## The Individual in Late Modernity

Thus far, I have restricted the descriptions of modernity and late modernity to macro processes and forces. But late modernity is also shaped by people's actions, and it is these actions, primarily in relation to the mass media, that are in focus in this dissertation. That is, given the processes occurring, and the opportunities available, why do people act the way they do?

### *Individualization*

Living in late modernity is different from living in earlier periods, it is argued in these contexts. In relation to people's everyday lives, the main characteristic of late modernity is an increasing *individualization*. According to this hypothesis, people's lives are becoming less and less constrained by traditional bonds. Ulrich Beck, the most forceful proponent of the hypothesis, writes:

> we are eye witness to a social transformation within modernity, in the course of which people will be *set free* from the social forms of industrial society – class, stratification, family, gender status of men and women – just as during the course of the Reformation people were "released" from the secular rule of the Church into society (1992:87).

In relation to earlier periods, people have greater possibilites to decide for themselves how they want to live their lives, it is argued. People's lives are becoming

less structured. The reasons behind this increasing individualization have to do with social and cultural changes. For instance:

1 The nuclear family is no longer the "natural" type of family. An increasing number of people live their lives in single households, and more and more children are being raised by just one parent.

2 Class mobility is more common today than before. Young people no longer take up the same occupations as their parents had.

3 People increasingly move away from their birthplaces to other places, or even to other countries (cf. Beck 1992).[10]

These points are leading to an increase in *reflexivity*. People are aware of more alternatives than ever before. They can therefore question the situations facing them. They know that things may be different, and they do not accept arguments of the kind that things just are the way they are (cf. Ziehe 1993).

All of these changes may of course be seen in a positive light. If one does not like the way one's life is turning out, one may change directions, and try something else. But there is also a negative side to the changes. It is not only the case that one no longer has to follow older traditions. There *are* no longer any traditions to follow. One must take responsibility for oneself, and that may not always be easy. People are "culturally released" (Ziehe 1986). They can to a certain extent do what they want, but they have to know what they want to do.

The individualization hypothesis, it must be made clear, is precisely an hypothesis. It is not based on systematic, comparative research. The fact that people nowadays more often than before grow up in broken homes, and that people travel extensively, can hardly be questioned. But people undoubtedly moved to a great extent also at the end of the 19th century, both from the countryside to cities and from Europe to the United States. And the class structure may be as strong today as before. The individualization hypothesis must therefore be treated as an hypothesis, as something necessary to analyse rather than something to base analyses on.

## *Individual Action: The Relationship between Structural, Positional and Individual Factors*

Treating the individualization hypothesis this way, and put in more formal terms, what the hypothesis posits is that people's actions increasingly are based on *individual* factors rather than on factors having to do with one's *position* in society. That is, according to the hypothesis, people's actions are less and less based on traditional, positional factors such as class belonging, level of education and gender, and more and more on factors such as values and interests.

The individualization hypothesis deals with the relationship between two types of factors, positional and individual factors. But social analysis often makes a tripartite

distinction that could be applied also here. Apart from positional and individual factors, people's actions are also determined by *structural* factors, factors having with to do with the total structure within which these actions are carried out. This structure could be seen as the structure of a given nation in relation to another nation, but it could also be seen as the difference between living in different environments within the same nation.[11]

This third type of factors is also relevant in this context. If it is the case that people increasingly move from one environment to another, then the outcome should be more similar environments. Also, through the wide spread availability of different types of mass media, the information that each person obtains is no longer as constrained by his or her living environment as before. Taken together, this should mean that not only positional but also structural factors should lose their importance in late modernity.

**Figure 2.1:** The Individualization Process

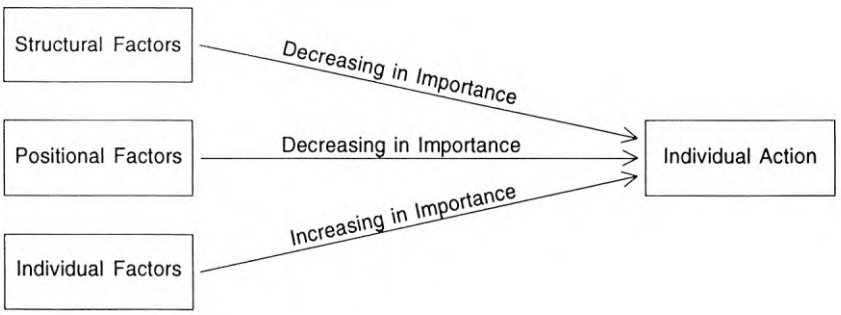



Figure 2.1 illustrates the roles of the three types of determining factors in late modernity according to the individualization hypothesis. According to the hypothesis, structural and positional factors are decreasing in importance, whereas individual factors are increasing in importance.

## *Subjectivity*

Thus far, I have used the notions of individuals and individualization. But the whole notion of biologically grounded individuals, making rational decisions in everyday life, has become more and more questioned within social analysis. It seems more reasonable to conceive of "the self" as inherently contradictory, made up of a number of competing identities. Stuart Hall writes:

> We can no longer conceive of "the individual" in terms of a whole, centrered, stable and complete Ego or autonomous, rational "self". The "self" is conceptualized as

> more fragmented and incomplete, composed of multiple "selves" or identities in relation to the different social worlds we inhabit, something with a history, "produced" in process. The "subject" is differently placed or *positioned* by different discourses (1989a:120).

We are never "only" males or females, we are also single or married, young or old, white or black, etc, and the question of which part of one's identity that is most relevant at a specific occasion depends on the situation. This has always been the case, but the further into the period of late modernity that we move, and the more culturally released we become, the more relevant it becomes to think in terms of contradictory, socially produced subjects; subjects produced in the interaction between structural, positional and individual factors. This is a key notion within modernity theory, and one of the notions with the greatest relevance for this dissertation. I will return to the notion in the final chapter of part one.

## *Changing Relationships in Everyday Life*

How may one characterize everyday life in late modernity?[12] One may argue about the validity of the individualization hypothesis, but what seems reasonable is at least to state that living in late modernity means living in an environment that is changing rapidly, and in which there are few certainties. It means having to get used to the notion of *contingency*. As Smart argues: "Modernity requires us to live with contingency" (1993:97; cf. Rorty 1989; Bauman 1992).

Within this climate of contingency, one may outline a number of changes taking place. First, it is argued that we are experiencing a changing relationship between *time and space*. According to David Harvey, late modernity may be characterized by the phenomenon of "time-space compression". With an increasing speed-up of the pace of life, the world seems to collapse inwards upon us (1989: ch.15; cf. Giddens 1990). Distances in space are no longer any obstacles for upholding social relationships, and thus social place increasingly becomes separated from physical place (Meyrowitz 1985: ch.7).

The changing relationship between time and space is intimately related to the processes of globalisation and mediazation outlined earlier. Another changing relationship is also intimately related to the process of mediazation. This is the relationship between *the public and the private.*

Historical research has shown that, in Western societies, leisure activities have increasingly been located in the interior spaces of the home, as opposed to the exterior spaces of the street and other public spaces (Donzelot 1980; Morley and Silverstone 1990).

This "withdrawal to interior space" (Donzelot 1980:93) has meant that public spaces to great extents have been left for on the one hand specific activities like shopping, and on the other hand for specific groups of people, e.g. youth. But the

relationship between the private and the public is not as clearcut as it used to be. Public life is entering into the private sphere through television, radio and the press, and by using electronic mail or data bases on computers, it is possible to open up one's living room – or one's bedroom – for public communication (Reimer forthcoming a). The distinction between the public and the private is becoming increasingly blurred.[13]

Finally, in late modernity the relationship between *high culture and popular culture* is changing. Ever since the early phases of industrialism and the advent of the notion of "mass society", debates have raged around the demerits of popular or mass culture (Swingewood 1977: ch.1). These products have, somewhat ambiguously, been seen as leading passive consumers both towards unrest and apathy, with conservative commentators stressing unrest and radical commentators stressing apathy. The negative "effects" of popular culture stand in great contrast to the positive "effects" associated with the uses of high culture; "effects" such as the cultivation of one's soul.[14]

Today, this old hierarchy is being questioned by generations having grown up with both types of culture; generations who do not feel they have to sacrifice one type of culture in order to use the other. This changing relationship may in a more narrow sense concern the mass media output, in a wider sense all possible parts of everyday life (Chambers 1986; Lash and Urry 1987: ch.9).

## Summing Up

In this chapter I have briefly outlined the framework within which this dissertation has been written. In so doing, I have concentrated on presenting a rather broad picture of what this framework may mean, but I have also showed how this framework touches upon the specific topic of the dissertation, mass media use in everyday life.

Some of the things that I have brought up in this chapter are rather unquestionable, others are highly questionable. A main critique that can be raised against the framework of modernity is that it is so broad and general that it actually cannot do very much. In a sense the critique is reasonable. The framework *is* broad and abstract. But if one is to overcome the oppositions between constancy and change, between generality and specificity, and between structure and agency, this is necessary. The true test of the framework's usefulness arrives later, in the actual analysis performed within the framework.

Another critique may be directed towards the statements about contemporary society as a late modern society as such; about the individualization process and about the changing relationships in everyday life. Such statements are widely spread, and one can at times be frustrated by the ease with which analysts without any questioning seem to take other analysts' statements for facts. The individu-

alization hypothesis is an extremely challenging hypothesis, one which one cannot avoid dealing with in this context, but one should do so critically. When is it applicable, under which circumstances, and for whom? Etc. And are really the relationships between time and space, between the public and the private, and between high and low, changing as distinctly as is argued?[15]

In the forthcoming chapters I will conduct a concrete analysis of mass media use in late modernity. I will then return to those discussions taken up here. This means that I will there take up the question of the – possibly – changing relationships in everyday life specifically in relation to media use.

## Notes

1. For recent writings on modernity and postmodernity, cf. Harvey 1989; Boyne and Rattansi 1990; Giddens 1990,1991; Habermas 1990; Lash 1990; Turner 1990; Bauman 1991,1992; Featherstone 1991; Jameson 1991; Crook et al 1992; Fornäs and Bolin 1992; Smart 1992,1993; Gibbins and Reimer forthcoming a. For more general overviews, cf. Allen et al 1992; Bocock and Thompson 1992; Hall and Gieben 1992; Hall et al 1992.

2. It seems as if at least in Western Europe, the frameworks of modernity and postmodernity very rapidly have replaced the framework of culture as *the* frameworks within which to perform social analysis. For discussions within the framework of culture, cf. Peterson 1979; Swidler 1986; Yengoyan 1987; Robertson 1988; Wuthnow and Witten 1988.

3. The concept of modernization has often been used in relation mainly to economic development (Robertson and Lechner 1985:107; cf. Eisenstadt 1987), but as can be seen here, this is not necessary.

4. Thompson defines mediazation as "the general process by which the transmission of symbolic forms becomes increasingly mediated by the technical and institutional apparatuses of the media industries" (1990:4). It is in this rather general way that I use the concept. The concept should be distinguished from medialization, coined by Asp. The latter concept is used in order to show how in contemporary Western societies actors struggling for power (politicians and others) increasingly have to adapt to the logic of the mass media in order to attract the public's attention (Asp 1986:359,1990:49).

5. The concepts of modernity and modernization may of course also be related to other similar concepts, concepts such as modernism and modernité. Modernism, in this conceptualization, stands for an artistic movement, and modernité for the experience of modernity, as used during a special period in time – the late 19th Century (Featherstone 1988; cf. Frisby 1985). In the context of this dissertation, these concepts are obviously less relevant than the concepts of modernity and modernization.

6. The modern period, as we tend to characterize it, may be up to four hundred years old, but people have been calling themselves modern even longer. The term has its origins in the late fifth century (Calinescu 1987:14).

7. Concepts often have intriguing histories. The concept of late modernity was originally coined by Fornäs in Swedish in 1987. In English, the concept was "invented" first in 1991 (according to my

knowledge). The concept has frequently been applied to analyses of Swedish youth cultures, and especially so within the framework of the research project Youth Culture in Sweden (Fornäs et al 1994; Fornäs and Bolin forthcoming).

8. The question of whether we live in late modernity or postmodernity depends obviously on the definitions of the two concepts. However, I believe that the most meaningful distinction concerns whether one emphasizes a break or a continuity. Smart (1993:16) for instance distinguishes between three versions of postmodernity, but the "softer" versions of postmodernity in his division I would not call postmodernity according to the criterium above. In my view he uses the same term for two different concepts.

   It should be noted that there are other alternative concepts that could have been used instead of late modernity in this context. Post-Industrial Society (Bell 1973) is one such concept, Disorganized Capitalism is another (Offe 1985; Lash and Urry 1987,1994). One may also speak of Post-Fordism (Harvey 1989; Murray 1989) or simply of New Times (Hall and Jacques 1989; McRobbie 1991). However, with the exception of New Times, all these concepts one way or another privilege economical factors in the development of modern societies. Such an a priori determination of the relationship between different spheres does not seem to be an attractive solution.

9. The main characteristics of late modernity, as outlined here, are possible to locate also on other levels altoghether. Crook et al, for instance, argue that the dynamic principles of what they name postmodernization are differentiation, commodification and rationalization (1992: ch.1-2). Hall and Jacques see contemporary societies as increasingly characterized by diversity, differentiation and fragmentation (1989:11).

   These characterizations are not incompatible with the ones described before, however. One may for instance see differentiation and fragmentation – or pluralization, for that matter – as outcomes of the main macro processes of late modernity. That is, it is the forces of globalisation, mediazation, etc that cause a situation that may be characterized as fragmentary and pluralized.

10. Individualization must be distinguished from the psychoanalytic concept of *individuation*. Whereas individualization refers to cultural and social changes in late modern societies, the latter concept refers to the processes of identity formation that in principle all individuals undergo; the "coming to selfhood" (Jung 1935/1977:173; cf. Blos 1962,1967).

11. Heller 1970/1984:31. Cf. Thunberg et al 1982; Johansson and Miegel 1992.

12. I use the term "everyday life" loosely in this dissertation. It stands for the kind of life that people ordinarily live; for people's activities and relationships in both the spheres of work and leisure. Cf. Lefebvre 1958/1991; Heller 1970/1984; de Certeau 1974/1988; Cohen and Taylor 1992.

13. With public spaces and the public sphere I here mean such arenas that in principle are open to anyone, including such arenas one may have to pay for in order to enter. Libraries, shopping malls and cinemas are in this viewpoint public spaces (cf. Scannell 1989:140). This should be distinguished from Habermas' more specific usage of the concept of the public sphere (1962/1989).

14. Cf. Horkheimer and Adorno 1944/1979; Rosenberg and White 1957; Lazere 1987. For overviews, cf. Swingewood 1977; Reimer 1987; Boëthius forthcoming a.

15. Cf. for instance Massey's (1992,1993) critiques of changing relationships between time and space as being a typically white, male middle class experience.

THREE

# Analysing Mass Media Use

The purpose of this chapter is to outline how one should understand the uses that people make of the mass media. I will give an historical background to the field of mass media use research, and I will discuss the current state of the field. I will argue that the field up until recently has consisted of two main, opposing traditions, but that at the moment, there are signs of a breakdown of this opposition.

In the first two sections of the chapter I will discuss the two main traditions one by one. In the third section of this chapter I will relate the traditions to each other and discuss the current movements within the field. Finally, I will discuss what I see as the key problematics within media use research, and I will relate them to the modernity perspective outlined in chapter two.[1]

## Analysing Mass Media Use 1: Uses and Gratifications

According to the commonly accepted picture of the history of mass media research, studies of short term mass media effects dominated the media research agenda until at least the 1940s, when researchers started to show an interest in what gratifications the media could provide for people. That is, researchers began studying what people actually got out of the media. What gratifications do women get out of radio daytime serials? What functions do newspaper reading serve? Why do children read comic books? Etc. Studies were carried out both in the form of large-scale surveys and in the form of open-ended interviews.[2]

The gratifications studies of the 1940s in no way comprised a major part of the field of media research, but it was a starting point for a turning of a perspective around; from studying "what the media do to people" to studying "what people do with the media". The notion of *the active audience* was explicitly put forward.

During the 1950s and 1960s, studies of media use were overshadowed by an interest in empirical analyses of media effects and the focus on the limited effects model. Those few media use studies carried out during this period focused primarily on children and the mass media, and especially on the role of television

(Himmelweit et al 1958; Schramm et al 1961). Also in these studies, questions of media effects were central; they were the reasons to conduct the studies. But what the studies showed was that the relationship between children and television was not as simple and straightforward as initially believed. As Schramm et al wrote:

> In a sense the term "effect" is misleading because it suggests that television "does something" to children. The connotation is that television is the actor; the children are acted upon. Children are thus made to seem relatively inert; television, relatively active. Children are sitting victims; television bites them. Nothing can be further from the fact. It is the children who are most active in this relationship (1961:1).

The real renaissance of the uses and gratifications perspective occurred in the 1970s. By this time, the dominance of the media effects tradition within the field of media and communications had been questioned, and through the publication of "The Uses of Mass Communications" (Blumler and Katz, eds.) in 1974, the uses and gratifications approach moved towards the centre of the field.

In the foreword to "The Uses of Mass Communications", Blumler and Katz (1974:13-16) wrote that the 1970s constituted the third major phase of development within gratifications research. They argued that in the first phase, in the "childhood" of the 1940s and 1950s, the emphasis of research was on descriptions of the uses of the media by different subgroups of audiences. In the "adolescence" of the late 1960s, the emphasis was on operationalization of those key sociological and psychological variables that were presumed to give rise to different patterns of media use. Finally, in the 1970s, the emphasis was on explanations of patterns of media use and of gratifications obtained by said use.

Systematizing the work carried out within the tradition, the uses and gratifications approach was, according to Katz et al, concerned with:

> (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones (1974:20).

As may be seen in this often quoted summary, the uses and gratifications approach, as defined by Katz et al, is very broad. It includes practically everything having to do with a traditional communication process, starting with the origins of people's needs and finishing with unintended consequences of mass media use.

This broad approach was clearly visible in "The Uses of Mass Communications". The book consisted of one section of analytical perspectives, and one section of empirical studies. In the section on analytical perspectives, somewhat puzzlingly placed after the section on empirical studies, the uses and gratifications approach was related to other possible approaches to media use. In the empirical section, studies conducted in the United States, Europe and Israel between the late 1950s and the early 1970s were presented. These studies were all of a quantitative

nature, based on surveys, and with the clear objective of facilitating generalizable results.

Any tradition that sets itself out to be a tradition is bound to meet with criticisms. Early critiques concerned mainly three aspects. First, the concept of need was criticized. On the one hand, it was criticized for having functionalistic overtones. And on the other hand, its explanatory force was questioned. Are people really aware of their needs, and doesn't the concept of need just lead to circular argumentation (Elliott 1974; Anderson and Meyer 1975)?[3]

Second, the tradition was criticized for being too individualistic and instrumental. By taking the individual and his or her needs as point of departure – and using mainly psychological variables – one tended to forget that people are both social and cultural beings, belonging to social/cultural contexts where their actions may be more ritualistic than instrumental (Carey and Kreiling 1974; Elliott 1974).

And third, the question of the role of theory in uses and gratifications research was raised. Did theory matter altogether? It seemed as if any research trying to explain people's use of the media could be placed within the tradition. Katz et al themselves noted this, and they argued that in order to develop a theory of media gratifications, it was necessary to clarify its relationship to the theoretical traditions it so obviously drew upon (1974:22).

Eleven years later, a follow up to "The Uses of Mass Communications" was published. "Media Gratifications Research" (Rosengren et al, eds.) was an altogether more theoretically oriented book, and it presented a picture of a tradition still evolving.[4] In the introductory chapter, Palmgreen et al wrote:

> Over the past ten years, there has been a change from isolated ad hoc studies that attempted explanations to sustained efforts within explicit theoretical and methodological frameworks. We believe this signals a fourth phase of development in media gratifications research; one that is concerned explicitly with formal *theory* building and testing (1985:16).

The step had been taken from ad hoc explanations to formal theory testing, it was argued, and the theory to build upon was imported from social psychology: expectancy-value theory. It was hypothesized that the gratifications people seek from the mass media are a function of both the beliefs, or expectations, that people hold about the media sources and the affective evaluations they attach to media attributes (Palmgreen and Rayburn 1985:63).

It would be an exaggeration to state that expectancy-value theory was *the* theory of uses and gratifications research, however. Only in some chapters of the book was the theory actually dicussed. Instead, it could be argued that the tradition moved in a number of different directions simultaneously. The general model of media gratifications presented in the introductory chapter was if anything even more encompassing than the ones presented in 1974. It was argued that in order

to fully understand the gratifications obtained by media use, it was now also necessary to take into account factors such as societal structure, media structure, technology, media content and non-media activities (Palmgreen et al 1985:17).

Two deliberate attempts to take into account the criticisms raised against the tradition were presented in the book. Blumler argued that the uses and gratifications tradition had neglected the *social* processes that shape media expectations. The necessarily social identity of any individual had been submerged within a notion of personal identity (1985:49-52). And Weibull argued that *structural factors* must be taken seriously in order to understand and explain audience behaviour; both societal structures and mass media structures (1985:128-133). These two critiques were thus not critiques of the approach as such. They were attempts to move on; to learn from previous experiences and show a way ahead.

The work within the uses and gratifications tradition has continued. In a recent summary, Swanson argues that the scope of the tradition is yet widening. He argues that studies increasingly:

> devote attention not only to gratifications sought and obtained from media content but also to various types of attitudes audience members hold about the medium and the content, patterns of content selection and exposure, cognitive and affective engagement in content during exposure, social and psychological precursors and companions of exposure, medium reliance or dependency, and effects of exposure (1992:318-319).

In the foreword to "The Uses of Mass Communication", Blumler and Katz (1974) argued that the uses and gratifications approach was a research strategy that could provide a testing ground for propositions about audience orientations stemming from many different kinds of theories. Research carried out since then seem to support that statement. That is, instead of an agreement on one, common theory, and of an agreement on a small number of key components to be analysed, the approach continues to be eclectic. It continues to expand.[5]

## Analysing Mass Media Use 2: Reception Analysis and Media Ethnography

Mass media use research was heavily dominated by the uses and gratifications tradition until the early 1980s. Since then, challenges to this tradition have been raised. These challenges came initially from the British cultural studies tradition. David Morley wrote in 1980:

> We need to break fundamentally with the "uses and gratifications" approach, its psychologistic problematic and its emphasis on individual differences of interpretation...What is needed is an approach which links differential interpretations back to the socio-economic structure of society, showing how members of different groups

and classes, sharing different "culture codes", will interpret a message differently (1980:14-15).

Morley criticized the uses and gratifications tradition for not taking into account the societal structures that shape the different cultures that individuals belong to. In his view, cultural belonging and class position make certain interpretations of a given media output more probable than others. In order to understand media use, it is therefore necessary to have a sociological rather than a psychological point of departure.

Replacing psychological variables with sociological variables is not enough, however. It is also necessary to take the actual media output more seriously. In the article "Encoding/Decoding" Stuart Hall had tried to reformulate the relationship between a sender and a receiver as an "articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction" (1980a:128). The idea was here to build on the notion of the active audience as found in the uses and gratifications tradition but to also insist on the view that reception is heavily structured. Texts are polysemic. They can be interpreted differently. But it is not the case that "anything goes", that any message can be made into anything by anyone. Mass communication is a discursive practice, consisting of signs and symbols. And messages (about social life) are mapped out into "preferred readings"; readings that are more probable than others. Everybody does not take up this preferred reading, however. Building on Parkin (1972), Hall distinguished between three possible ways of decoding an earlier encoded message. One may totally share the code (the preferred reading), partly share it or oppose it.

In "The 'Nationwide' Audience", Morley (1980) used Hall's tripartite distinction. The objective of the study was to analyse how structured by class position the decodings of a BBC TV program were. He therefore conducted group interviews with people positioned differently in social space: students, trade union officials and managers from banking institutions. But in order to understand the interpretations the group made of the programs, this was not enough. In a first step, the programs themselves were analysed (Brunsdon and Morley 1978). The results of the studies showed no direct correlation between decoding and class position, but they made clear that class position did structure the interpretations, and that the "preferred readings" were more probable among groups positioned high in social space than by other groups.

The encoding/decoding model has subsequently been criticized. Morley himself (1989:18) argues that the notion of message is problematical. Is it something inherent in the text, is it the intention of the sender, or is it the most probable decoding? Secondly, and more importantly, the encoding/decoding model is limited in the sense that it is too specific. It may be useful in circumstances where there exists messages to be encoded and decoded, such as in news broadcasts. It is much less useful when it comes to fiction, and it is of course difficult to apply to

the consumption of not only specific programs, but of people's total viewing patterns (cf. Wren-Lewis 1983; Pillai 1992).

Disregarding for the moment the merits or demerits of the encoding/decoding model, the description of the "Nationwide" studies should have made clear how Morley explicitly positioned himself in relation to the uses and gratifications tradition. Building on the notion of an active audience, he tried to make clear, first, that people are active within the framework of certain structures, and, second, that the texts as such also structure the decodings. In other words, he tried to connect to the notion of the active audience a theory of how and in which contexts people made sense of the mass media output; a kind of theory that had not been put to use within the uses and gratifications tradition at that point in time.

The work by Morley was not only directed towards, and based upon, the uses and gratifications tradition, however. The notion of the possibility of the text to make certain viewing positions more probable than others was taken from film theory, and Morley's objective was to combine the strengths of these two traditions:

> At one moment the field is dominated by a theory (such as "uses and gratifications" in recent years) which holds the media to have little or no direct "effect" on its audiences, and at the next moment the pendulum swings towards the dominance of a theory (such as that developed in "Screen" more recently) of the near total effectivity ot the text, in their terms, in the "positioning of the subject". In order to escape from this oscillation we need to develop a theory which gives due weight to both the "text" and "audience" halves of the equation (1980:148).

Within Morley's context, broadly speaking the context of British cultural studies, "Screen theory" at that point in time was dominant. Outside of his context, within mainstream media research, this was not the case. The mass media output had of course always been of interest within media research, as in the whole media effects tradition. But the output had been treated in a rather simplistic manner. The questions concerning how the texts positioned their audiences were relatively new to, and undertheorized within, media research.[6]

Put simply, through work such as the ones by Morley and colleagues, both *texts* and *contexts* were put more firmly onto the research agenda of media use. The uses and gratifications tradition had been highly successful in showing systematically how socio-economic characteristics such as age, level of education and gender structured people's choices of media practices. It had been less successful in analysing what people actually got out of a media practice, and it had not been able to handle very well the role played by the context within which the media activities take place. These were the two weaknesses that the type of work described here tried to solve.

I have here used Morley as an example of work carried out in opposition to the uses and gratifications tradition. This is of course not a random choice. His work is one of the most referred to in the last decade of media use research. But in

order to make the picture somewhat more nuanced, it is necessary to differentiate somewhat within this opposing tradition.

First of all, I have not tried to put *one* name to this media use tradition. Distinctions have been made between a social sciences and a humanities tradition (Jensen and Rosengren 1990), between a quantitative and a qualitative tradition (Lull 1990), between mainstream and interpretive media research (Carragee 1990; Evans 1990) and between sociological and critical research (Schrøder 1987). These distinctions make clear that there is more than one dimension involved in the oppositions between the different traditions.

As I have already spelled out, the uses and gratifications approach – nowadays – belongs to the social sciences. It may also be argued that it is based on a consensual view of society. The challenges to this approach have come on the one hand from humanistic reseachers opposing the social science approach of uses and gratifications. On the other hand, the challenges have come from researchers with a more conflictual view of society than what uses and gratifications' researchers normally have. And in some occasions, the opposition has come from researchers attacking both the social science approach and the consensual view of society.

Most of the work carried out has been humanistic and either conflictual or consensual. But seeing how these two dimensions overlap, I do not believe it to be especially useful to privilege one dimension over the other. However, it is possible to make a more substantial distinction within this opposing tradition. It is possible – and meaningful – to distinguish between *reception analysis* and *mass media ethnography*.[7]

Research focusing on texts normally go under the name of reception analysis. This type of research has its roots in literary criticism.[8] Within media studies, research has focused primarily on genres that would seem to make possible differences in interpretations; "open" rather than "closed" genres. Fiction has therefore been chosen more often than factual programs. Important studies have been carried out on, for instance, the reading of romance books and on the viewing of soap operas. These genres are suited for reception analysis in the sense that their structures are highly open. Normally, the texts in these genres describe actions of a number of different people, making it possible for different readers or viewers to identify with different people. It is also possible for a reader or viewer to identify with different people at different times. Soap operas have the added advantage of continuing for longer periods of time, making it possible to "get to know" the characters involved, and making it possible for the characters to evolve (Newcomb 1976:281).[9]

In conducting reception analyses, normally through in-depth interviews, the social and cultural context of reading or viewing may more or less be included in the analysis. It is not the main reason for conducting the analysis, however. This is arguably the case within media ethnography. In these studies, the starting point is taken in the view that media use, of whatever kind, is grounded in everyday

life, and if one is to understand the uses of the media, one needs to start with the everyday life context.

It is not possible to make a complete distinction between reception analysis and media ethnography. First, it seems as if there has been a change from using the term reception analysis for the whole tradition towards using the term media ethnography instead.[10] Second, one may define the concepts differently. And thirdly, even if one would agree upon definitions, some studies try to do both things (for instance Radway 1987).

I believe, however, that it is useful for analytical reasons to keep the distinction, and define reception analysis as focused mainly, but not exclusively, on texts (mainly through in-depth interviews) and media ethnography as focused mainly, but not exclusively on contexts (through in-depth interviews and participant observations).

The arguably most influential study within media ethnography, as it has been defined here, is Morley's "Family Television" (1986). The study tries to deal with television as a natural component in everyday life. Television belongs to the private sphere, within the family, and television viewing is structured by the relationships existing within any given family. The natural unit of analysis for Morley therefore is the family, not the individual, and the study consists of interviews with family members conducted in the homes of the respective families.[11]

More recently, researchers working within media ethnography have recognized the need for expanding the focus of the studies beyond the concrete goings on in the domestic sphere around the television set. As Silverstone (1990:174) has argued, the audience is embedded not only in the micro-world of the domestic, but also in the macro-environment of political economy, and these two spheres must be related to each other.

This relationship is necessary to take into account in order to understand the uses people make of the media, but it is also a case of putting the question of the role of the media as such in relation to the whole regulation of the private and public. It is furthermore a case of trying to understand the role of the media in constructing social and cultural identities; in creating "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991). Here lie the tasks ahead for media ethnography.[12]

## Movements Within the Field of Mass Media Use Research

Thus far, I have tried to keep the two traditions of media use research separate. Obviously, it is neither possible nor meaningful to do that completely. There are connections between the two traditions now, and there always have been. This can be shown quite easily by looking at some of the key scholars involved in the

field. Morley, who I have used quite extensively as a proponent of reception theory and media ethnography, was initially trained as a traditional sociologist, and has according to himself always felt like an outsider within cultural studies (Morley 1992:5). James Lull, another noted media ethnographer, considers himself to be "positioned somewhere between communication studies and cultural studies" (1990:20). Another sign of the connections is that in both major uses and gratifications books, "The Uses of Mass Communications" (1974) and "Media Gratifications" (1985), cultural studies scholars have participated (Carey and Kreiling in the 1974 volume, Lull in the 1985 volume). It should also be remembered that some of the criticism raised against the uses and gratifications approach by Morley and others (the focus on the individual, the neglect of treating surrounding structures, etc) had actually been treated by researchers coming from the uses and gratifications tradition (cf. Blumler 1975; Weibull 1975). The question may then be put where the demarcation line between the two traditions actually may be drawn, and furthermore, whether that line recently has been moved.

The uses and gratifications tradition has to certain extents changed during the last thirty years, as I have tried to show. The main substantial change seems to be that functionalism appears to be gone.[13] Otherwise the pattern possible to deduce seems to be one of uses and gratifications expanding in all possible directions. This "liberalist pluralist tradition" (Curran 1990:135) is open to different, opposing views, and these views do not necessarily have to lead to heated discussions – as long as there is an agreement upon scientific rigour. Differences in views on society are much easier to accept than differences in views on how to obtain knowledge (cf. Burrell and Morgan 1979).[14] The scope has thus expanded when it comes to the introduction of new variables, etc, but it has not expanded in the same manner when it comes to the choice of research methods – despite the tradition's background in qualitative research (cf. Lull 1985:223).[15]

Within the opposing tradition, there has been a much more heated debate over "the audience". One may roughly distinguish between two camps. There is one group of researchers working primarily but not exclusively theoretically, and who is emphasising the possibilities of what has been called the "nomadic subject" to create his or her own meanings out of the media (Fiske 1987,1992; Grossberg 1987). And there is one group of researchers that is more empirically based, and more structurally grounded (Lull 1990; Morley 1992).

The question of how to conduct empirical work marks a crucial dividing line. Fiske argues that empirical work is a matter of significance, not of representativity. He argues that "the significance of a sentence does not depend on how many people speak it. It is significant because it reproduces other practices" (1992:356). Lull, on the other hand, is highly skeptical of much work carried out by critical/ cultural studies writers. He writes that "The logic of the theoretical argument and style of presentation are given more weight than descriptions and grounded interpretations of what audiences really think and do" (1988:240).

To this one may add an old debate within the opposing tradition, namely the question of power. The "new" audience research has been accused of leaving questions of power outside the analyses. Modleski has argued that scholars within the critical and cultural studies tradition have difficulties in keeping a critical distance to their objects of analysis, and wind up writing apologies for mass culture (1986:xi), whereas Corner (1991:269) has argued that an emphasis on the micro-process of viewing relations has displaced an engagement with the macro-structures of media and society. More generally, Barker and Beezer (1992:16) have argued that the concept of class has disappeared altogether in critical writings, as it has been replaced by notions of subjectivity and identity.[16]

But it is not only within each of the traditions that discussions have been carried out. It has also occurred *between* the traditions. During the 1980s, the two traditions gradually started to move closer to each other. Morley had discussed the uses and gratifications tradition extensively already in "The 'Nationwide' Audience" (1980), and Blumler et al, in one of the concluding chapters of "Media Gratifications Research", argued that uses and gratifications researchers could learn from studying media ethnography and reception analysis (1985:260).[17] This dialogue between the traditions continued, and in 1987, Schrøder was able to write that:

> the work of prominant scholars in the sociological and critical paradigm appears indeed to be converging – even to the point where some of the projects become indistinguishable with respect to underlying theories and hypothesis, research design, analytical method, and (in general terms) substantial results (1987:26).

Similarly, Curran argued that:

> The split between theorized and relatively untheorized research, between a holistic and discrete approach, between concern for macro- and micro-issues, that once characterized the radical and liberal research traditions has largely disappeared (1990:141).

Although the quotations above are similar, the history writing of Schrøder and Curran differs. In Schrøder's view, the possible convergence between traditions was due to what he saw as an uncharacteristically undogmatic openness in two traditionally antagonistic camps; to a willingness to learn from each other. Curran's account, on the other hand, was more negative. He saw the changes within the critical tradition not as a result of an openness towards what he termed the liberal tradition, but as precisely the opposite. In Curran's view, the changes taking place within the critical tradition was the result of an internal debate within this tradition. By taking "Screen theory" of the 1970s as starting point for communication research, and by refusing to take notice of movements within the liberal pluralist tradition, the "new revisionist movement" of the critical tradition was busy "rediscovering the wheel" (1990:146).

What is the current relationship between the two traditions? Jensen and Rosengren have conducted a systematic comparison of five traditions "in search of the audience". The aspects they focus upon are types of theory, focuses of theory, types of methodology, approaches, techniques of analysis and modes of presentation (1990:224).

In their comparison, there are marked differences between uses and gratifications and reception analysis (which here will have to stand for the whole of the opposing tradition). According to them, uses and gratifications is based on semi-formalized theories, whereas reception analysis is based on verbal theories. The message is less central in uses and gratifications research than in reception analysis, whereas the opposite is true of the social system. Furthermore, uses and gratifications research is based on surveys with statistical analyses being the rule, whereas reception analysis is based on in-depth interviews and message analyses with interpretive rather than statistical analyses being the rule.

Beside the in itself useful point of systematically relating these traditions to each other, the objective of the article is to argue for the need for cross-cultural, multi-method research. The article tries to show how the different traditions may complement each other, and how comparative research eventually may lead to theoretical, methodological and empirical development (cf. Vorderer and Groeben 1992).

Those points can hardly be argued. However, I believe that in giving the characteristics of the different traditions, Jensen and Rosengren do not emphasise the heterogeneity of each tradition as much as could have been done. That is, in their scheme, they do acknowledge that uses and gratifications research sometimes are based on in-depth interviews and that reception analyses sometimes are based on surveys. They furthermore acknowledge that uses and gratifications research sometimes are interpretive and that reception analyses sometimes are statistical. But they do not see this as a sign of a possible disintegration, or re-ordering, of the field of audience research. They focus on the main characteristics of the five traditions as such.

I believe that on the basis of the characterizations carried out by Jensen and Rosengren, it would be possible to re-think the field of media use research. A major characteristic of the field at the moment is that it is *unstable*. The connections between the different traditions are many, and to certain extents contradictory. It is questionable whether it is meaningful to think in terms of old traditions at the moment; if that does not restrict our views of what is presently going on.

I would argue that at the moment there is a fairly large group of researchers who are interested in how media are used in everyday life;

who are interested in analysing this empirically and systematically;

who believe in the notion of the acting subject;

who believe that the social and cultural contexts of any individual are necessary to take into account in order to understand media use;

who think that the cultural forms of each medium and the properties of different texts must be analysed properly;

who believe that the public/private and the local/global distinctions are important within this problematic;

who see the micro-processes of the domestic as parts of a larger macro-structure;

and who think that different methodological approaches may complement each other.

All in all, the field of mass media use research is at the moment a specific example of the kind of refiguration of social thought that Geertz (1983) has discussed through the notion of "blurred genres". The dividing line between researchers coming from the social sciences and the humanities has been transcended – maybe for good (cf. Livingstone 1993:6-7; Cruz and Lewis 1994:1).

## Key Problematics Within Mass Media Use Research

It is quite likely that many researchers working within the field of media use research would agree upon the summary statements at the end of the last section. That is, they would agree on the importance of all of the aspects there outlined. That does not mean that media use research will have an "easy ride" from now on, however.

*First*, even with this delimiting of the field, it is actually not easy to estimate what we know about media use at the moment. Lots of quantitative work have been carried out, but research designs and approaches have varied to the extent that it is very difficult to systematize it. This may be seen by looking at reference lists of uses and gratifications work. Beside standard references to the introductory chapters in the main anthologies of 1974 and 1985, there does not seem to be any standard references to *empirical* works that researchers try to build on. The cumulativity that is so important is at the moment more of an illusion than an empirical fact.

Within the qualitative camp, the situation is more of the opposite. Here the studies of Morley and colleagues seem to have reached the position where not only the theoretical points of view but also the empirical results always get discussed. However, from there on discussions rather than replications seem to be the normal way to proceed. There seems to be more scholars writing about the need for empirical studies than scholars actually conducting such work.

*Second*, due to the Anglo-American dominance within the field, an overwhelming proportion of the research having been carried out concerns television. Obviously it is very difficult to draw inferences from studies on television to other mass media. And even though television takes up a large proportion of the time spent with the media, and especially in the United States, it is still the case that newspapers, radio and phonograms are extremely important media for large groups of people. We know much less about those experiences.

*Third*, in much of the work conducted in the 1960s and the 1970s, the emphasis was put on "serious" programs, such as news and documentaries; programs dealing with life's "important matters", and therefore worthy the attention of the analysts. Now, the emphasis is put on fiction. The old models, culminating with the encoding/decoding model, were not suitable for this genre. With the new models, the question is how suitable they are for *other* genres than fiction.

*Fourth*, in broadening the scope from an emphasis on media use in itself to media's role in everyday life, research on audiences has focused on the family or the household as the most reasonable unit of analysis. However, this focus on the family may seem somewhat paradoxical, considering the tendencies towards the breakup of the nuclear family and towards the increasing number of single households in contemporary societies.

The aspects pointed out here are typical for the field at the moment. They are not problematical in the sense that they cannot be solved. It is possible to conduct more studies on other media than television, it is possible to focus on single households, etc. A more difficult problem altogether concerns how to conceive of a framework that would make it possible to systematically and logically relate different types of research to each other in a theoretically meaningful way.

A prerequisite for such a framework is some kind of agreement on a common language; on the use of a number of strategically chosen concepts, crucial for the understanding of mass media use. Different approaches will lead to different types of knowledge, but it is necessary to try to find the common ground on which to discuss these different approaches.

It is furthermore necessary on the one hand to hold on to the specificity of the mass media, and on the other hand to acknowledge the fact that mass media practices are embedded within larger structures that also have to be taken into account.

And it is finally necessary to acknowledge the fact that the field of media and communication research is a regional field. It belongs to the larger field of social analysis and it is necessary to approach the field with the help of theories imported from general social theory (cf. Hall 1989b).

How may one then proceed? The first aspect concerns the specificity of the mass media. Reception analysis and media ethnography have put texts firmly on the agenda. Different texts have different properties. This must be taken into account

in any analysis. Likewise, each specific medium has its characteristics that must be treated. I would argue that the concepts of *genre* and *cultural form* are useful in this context. With the help of these two concepts, it is possible to discuss different properties of both medium and text, and to discuss the relationship between these properties.

Second, in order to relate the specific characteristics of the mass media to the uses made of the media, it is necessary to discuss different people's different characteristics. This may be carried out with the help of the tripartite distinction between *structural*, *positional* and *individual* characteristics. Both structural and positional characteristics are necessary to take into account in order not to forget that the choices made in everyday life to a certain extent always are socially grounded and structurally constrained. But people positioned similarly in social space obviously do not act in identical ways, and this means that also individual characteristics must be taken into account. I believe that the concept of *values* may be appropriate in order to capture these characteristics.

How are the characteristics of the mass media related to people's characteristics? In order to grasp these relationships, it is necessary to turn to theories of human behaviour and to theories of what may be called the logic of media use; to theories dealing with the processes in which one individual chooses to carry out one particular practice, and another individual chooses to carry out another practice. Media use research has expanded its focus to the whole of everyday life. This seems to be a reasonable move. But media use research has not expanded its theoretical scope in a similar manner. Uses and gratifications is more of an approach than it is a coherent theory. With such a broad approach, it probably cannot be anything else. But what the uses and gratifications approach as well as reception theory and media ethnography are trying to do is to understand aspects of human behaviour. It comes down to the question of why we do the things we do, or to the relationship between individual action and surrounding structures. What we have is a special case of the general processes of *modernity*; a case that in certain ways differs from other cases, but that still is related to, and is similar to, other cases (cf. chapter two).

What this implies is that as important as it is to expand the empirical studies to include all everyday life practices (and their surrounding structures), as important is it to expand the views on the media by taking into account theories originating outside the media field. The discussions on modernity that are taking place within other disciplines have on the whole had little bearing on mass communication research.[18] But they may be made highly relevant.

I will suggest that three concepts involved in the discussions on modernity are specially relevant in order to connect media practices to the rest of everyday life. The first concept I have already touched upon briefly. This is the concept of *subjectivity*. This concept is used to indicate that we as human beings always are made up of a number of different identities. The question of how these identities

are resolved into something coherent I will discuss with the help of the concept of *articulation*. Finally, mass media practices differ from other everyday life practices precisely by being mediated. But they belong to a larger context. They are but one type of component in a person's whole *lifestyle*. By using this concept, it becomes possible to systematically analyse how the specific mass media practices are related to the rest of everyday life.

## Summing Up

In this chapter I have discussed the field of mass media use research. I have dealt both with its history and its current standing. A crucial point that I have tried to make is that at the moment there are common research interests that transgress old oppositions. This makes the current research situation both intriguing and promising.

What I also have tried to make clear is that some of the problems facing media use research currently may be dealt with by broadening the view on media use not only empirically, as has started to happened, but also theoretically; by turning to the discussions that are taking place on everyday life in late modernity within other disciplines. It is through the combination of the general notions of modernity with the specificity of the mass media that media use best may be illuminated.

I have suggested that a number of concepts are relevant in this context: the concepts of cultural form, genre, subjectivity, articulation, values and lifestyles. I believe that by using concepts such as these, one may be able to speak a similar language, even though the specific perspective put on the media problematic may differ.

In the following chapters I will discuss one way of using these concepts. It should be noted that this is a way of using them that is more social science based than humanities based. It is also more quantitatively than qualitatively oriented. It does not mean that these distinctions are absolutely clearcut, or that my usage is not applicable with another approach. A key point in this chapter has been to propose a framework that may be used in different contexts.[19] But it is important to point out where my approach comes from, and what the implications of this may be.

In the next two chapters I will discuss the concepts of values and lifestyles. I will then turn to a discussion of the specificity of the mass media. This I will do with the help of the concepts of cultural form and genre. Finally, in the last chapter of the theoretical part of this dissertation, I will discuss the concepts of subjectivity and articulation, and I will outline my perspective on media use in late modernity.

## Notes

1. The focus in this chapter is on theories and analyses dealing with mass media *use*. This must be distinguished from studies of mass media *effects*. For overviews of the mass media effects tradition, cf. Asp 1986: ch.2; Bryant and Zillman 1986.

2. Cf. Herzog 1944; Berelson 1949/1979; Wolf and Fiske 1949/1979.

3. The tradition has altogether been regarded as a specific version of functionalist sociology. Cf. Burrell and Morgan (1979: ch.2) for a discussion of different traditions within sociological research. For a discussion of different traditions within media research, cf. Rosengren 1983, 1989,1993; McQuail 1985.

4. The book consisted of one section on theoretical issues and one section on key research areas. None of the fifteen chapters were exclusively empirically oriented.

5. For recent studies, cf. Swanson and Bobrow 1989; McDonald 1990; Conway and Rubin 1991; Finn 1992; Furno-Lamude and Anderson 1992; Lin 1993. In Sweden, uses and gratifications research has been an important component in the field of media research for at least 25 years. Cf. Lundberg and Hultén 1968; Windahl 1981; Weibull 1985; Rosengren and Windahl 1989.

6. For overviews of the relationship between "Screen theory" and media use research, cf. Morley 1980: ch.7; Moores 1990.

7. My distinction is of course not the only possible one. Allor (1988) argues that there are not two but five different traditions dealing with the notion of the audience: political economy, post-structuralist film theory, feminist criticism, cultural studies and postmodernism. Jensen and Rosengren (1990) also argue for five traditions "in search of the audience", albeit not the same five ones as Allor outlines. They distinguish between effects research, uses and gratifications, literary criticism, cultural studies and reception analysis. These two quite different lists make clear not only that the audience as such may be viewed differently, but also that the views on the viewers of the audience may differ. However, most of the traditions outlined above are not specifically concerned with the *uses* that people make of the media and are therefore not included in my analysis.

8. There are two traditions within literary criticism of relevance: On the one hand, the more theoretical German tradition of reception aesthetics (Iser 1989), and on the other hand the more empirically oriented American tradition of reader response theory (Fish 1980).

9. For reception analyses of soap operas and romance books, cf. Hobson 1982; Ang 1985; Radway 1987; Schrøder 1988; Gripsrud 1990; Liebes and Katz 1990; Lövgren 1991. Modleski 1984 is an influential textual analysis of soap operas. For reception analysis of non-fiction, cf. Jensen 1986; Dahlgren 1988. Reception analyses have also been carried out within the framework of cognitive psychology with the help of schema theory. Cf. Livingstone 1990:84-87; Höijer 1993.

10. Most radical researchers seem to want to call their work media ethnography. It has "come close to being viewed as the only (politically correct) method for the (post?) modern media researcher" (Morley 1992:13).

11. This is not to argue that "Family Television" is the first study of its kind. Media ethnography had by then been part of the cultural studies work in Birmingham for a long period of time, and similar work had been carried out both in the United States and in Western Germany. Cf. Hobson 1980; Lull 1980; Bausinger 1984. For recent media ethnography, cf. Bryce 1987; Fornäs et al 1988; Drotner 1989; Seiter et al 1989; Lee and Cho 1990; Leal 1990; Fiske 1991. Kratz forthcoming is an attempt to grasp the role of the media in everyday life through analyses of people's diaries.

12. Cf. Morley and Robins 1989; Morley and Silverstone 1990; Silverstone 1990,1991; Morley 1992: ch.12-13.

13. In the 1974 volume on uses and gratifications, Blumler and Katz expressed hopes that functionalism would disappear. In the 1985 volume, Palmgreen et al argued that it had happened. In the 1992 overview by Swanson, functionalism no longer seemed to be a topic worth discussing. However, opposing views on the role of functionalism in uses and gratifications research may also be found. Rothenbuhler, in an article on neofunctionalism and mass communications, argues that: "the weaknesses of uses and gratifications theory could be more readily rectified by disciplined attention to its functionalism than by denying it – that is, after all, its conceptual system and some rational attention would probably be a good thing" (1987:74).

14. A prime example is the way that the researchers of the Media Panel group in Sweden in the final book on the basis of a uses and gratifications model applies three different theoretical perspectives: development, socialization and class (Rosengren and Windahl 1989:9).

15. The qualitative background of uses and gratifications research has recently been heralded as a strength; as a sign of a tradition who can perform most things. This is to a certain extent a rewriting of history, however. In the introduction to "The Uses of Mass Communications", Katz et al (1974:20) see this aspect of the early studies more as a problem than as a merit.

16. For further discussions within the critical tradition, cf. Allor 1988; Grossberg 1989; O'Connor 1989; Budd et al 1990; Evans 1990; Carragee 1990; Lembo and Tucker 1990.

17. Everyone within the uses and gratifications camp was not as impressed, however. Rosengren argued that Radway with her work on romance reading merely was reinventing uses and gratifications, and on the way, validating "the general soundness of the basic ideas of uses and gratifications research" (1985:278).

18. It seems as if researchers from the Scandinavian countries have been more open to such a broadening of perspective than researchers from Britain or the U.S. Cf. Fornäs 1990; Drotner 1991; Lundby and Rønning 1991; Reimer forthcoming a. For a British example, cf. Murdock 1991.

19. Jensen has argued that "genre may be the analytical level where social-scientific and humanistic modes of inquiry can be said to converge" (1991:37). I agree with that statement.

FOUR

# Understanding Action in Everyday Life: Values

In the previous chapter, I argued that the concept of values may be used in order to understand why people decide to act the way they do in everyday life. This is obviously an enormous subject, and I will only touch upon those aspects of this subject that are relevant in relation to my subject matter.

First I will discuss how values may be conceptualized. This is a topic that has been treated differently within different disciplines, and I will outline how the concept of values will be used in this context. In the second section I will discuss the notion of value change. One reason for the academic interest shown in the concept of values currently is due to the beliefs that people's values are changing, and that this value change has an impact on many important areas of life. I will discuss different kinds of value change and I will relate them to the modernity perspective that I introduced in chapter two. In section three I will discuss how values have been used within empirical research, and in section four I will take up the question of how values are being measured. In section five I will relate values to mass media use. I will discuss how that relationship may be looked upon, and I will discuss those value conceptualizations that may be especially relevant in relation to mass media use.

## The Concept of Values

At one point in time, the meaning of the term value was relatively clear. "'Value' meant the worth of a thing, and 'valuation' meant an estimate of its worth" (Frankena 1965:229). Today, it is not that simple. Two fairly recent studies of the concept of values each found more than 200 definitions of the concept (Harding et al 1986:1; Pettersson 1988:9), and in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Albert wrote that "For the foreseeable future, it is doubtful whether a definition of values can be produced that embraces all the meanings assigned the term and its cognates or that would be acceptable to all investigators"

(1968:288). In the words of Miceli and Castelfranchi (1989:169): "Value is among the most fuzzy concepts of the social sciences".

The reason behind this situation is not difficult to understand. The concept of values is a *multi-discursive concept* (O'Sullivan et al 1983). Over the years it has been used in a number of different disciplines, and no discipline has managed to make the concept its own. The concept has been used more or less consistently in, for instance, psychology, social psychology, sociology, philosophy, theology, anthropology, political science and economics. During the last five year period, roughly 300 articles each year figure in the Social Sciences Citation Index.[1]

The concept of values is thus an important concept. It seems to be a concept worth fighting over. A situation such as this causes certain problems. Multi-discursive concepts are vulnerable for misunderstandings. One is often unsure of what exactly is meant by the concept. But such concepts may be extremely useful in the sense that the possibilities of finding a usage that fits one's specific objective is practically limitless. One can do many things with multidiscursive concepts, so to speak.

The first thing to note about the concept of values is that its "fuzziness" may be somewhat exaggerated, however. It is necessary to distinguish between the values of *people* and the values of *objects* (Rokeach 1973:4-5). These two usages clearly belong in different discourses, and they are on the whole incompatible. It is the *term* values that is used for two different concepts.

As should be clear by now, it is as a concept standing for individual characteristics that the concept of values interests me here, and it is the way that the concept has been used within the social sciences that I will focus upon.

What may then be said about the concept? First, I have already made the point that values belong to people. This implies that values are *latent*, as opposed to manifest objects. They belong inside a person, and they cannot be seen, they can only be inferred. This fact can be treated quite differently, and it has certain implications that I will return to, but the fact as such is seldom questioned (cf. Kluckhohn 1951:395; Catton 1959:311).

Second, a value consists of a number of *components*. Williams writes that "It seems that all values contain some cognitive elements..., that they have a selective or directional quality, and that they involve some affective component" (1968: 283). According to Rokeach, all values have cognitive, affective and behavioural components (1973:7). Meddin uses the terms cognition, affect and conation as general terms and restricts the terms beliefs, sentiments and tendency to act for specifically human outlooks (1975:892-895). Thus, it seems that, disregarding the choice of exact terms, a tripartite division is commonly accepted.

Third, people are guided by *more than one value*. The different values together make up a system, that may be termed in a number of ways. One may, for instance, speak of a value formation (Allardt 1981:31), of a value system (Rokeach

1973:28), of a value-space (Catton 1959:310), or, more commonly, of a value-orientation (Kluckhohn 1951:411).

Fourth, values are related to *other mental objects*. Meddin (1975) constructs an hierarchy of human ideas and outlooks, going from the most abstract and stable to the most specific and topical. The most abstract of all units of human outlook he denotes value-orientations. Each value-orientation serves as a principle for a number of values. These are directed towards relatively abstract referents whereas the more specific expressions are called attitudes. Attitudes deal with broad, empirical referents and serve as a guiding principle for the more numerous opinions.[2]

And fifth, people's values *guide behaviour in everyday life*. We may not always have the specific knowledge, or the specific opinions, that would be useful in a concrete, everyday situation. What we do have are our values, and on the basis of these values, we make choices and take stands. This is a point that in some senses are the starting point for the whole notion of values, and one which most people would agree upon. It is in a sense the main reason for using the concept.[3]

These five points are not the only ones possible to discuss in relation to the concept of values, but they hold logically together, and by conceiving of values in this way, the concept can be made useful.

Thus, as social beings we live in an environment in which we constantly must make decisions. We are obviously products of our environment in the sense that we are influenced by the way we have been brought up, and by the way we live today, but we still make choices that are our own. People with similar socio-economic backgrounds living in similar environments still act differently in everyday life. This they do partly on the basis of their values.

This is not to say that the relationship between values and action is a simple and straightforward one. Values are often conceived of as necessarily relational and conflictual. We are guided by a number of different values, and it is not always self-evident how these value conflicts are solved.

Inglehart argues that the question of values is intimately linked to *priorities*. In Western societies "Almost everyone is in favour of free speech – but *not* everyone is willing to give it priority over maintaining order" (1989:256).

With this hierarchical view on values, people constantly make either/or-decisions on which values to invoke and prioritize. Another view is put forward by Simpson, who writes:

> In many decisions...value conflicts are reconciled in such a way that no one value is either complete winner or complete loser and most competitors get a share of the prize (quoted in Knutsen 1981:13).

But it could also be argued that our lives are divided into a number of distinct segments with different values guiding us in the different realms. Thus the values invoked in one segment may have very little to do with the values invoked in another segment. The difference between public and private values may be great. As Marsh writes: "we should not be too surprised if people should demand freedom and participation for the nation and cash and security for themselves" (1975: 28-29). But the values may also clash; just like the experiences gathered from the different life segments may clash (van Deth and Scarbrough forthcoming; cf. MacIntyre 1985).

This point leads over to the final matter I will bring up in this section, and that concerns what values actually are directed towards. In the famous definition by Kluckhohn, the social anthropologist who collaborated with Parsons, a value is a "conception...of the desirable" (1951:395).

In defining values as conceptions of the desirable, values are directed towards what any individual *ought* to do rather than towards what he *wants* to do. This distinction between conceptions of the desirable and conceptions of the desired seems to stand absolutely central in value theory (Levitin 1970:412; Harding et al 1986:3). Kluckhohn insisted on treating only the aspect of the desirable, whereas other researchers, for instance Dodd (1951:646), have insisted on treating only the aspect of the desired.

The desirable – or the normative – is often treated as identical with morality (O'Sullivan et al 1983:247; Harding et al 1986:5). But, as Meddin points out:

> "Normative" refers to imperatives derived from *any* system of rules and regulations and while morality may refer to the single most important case of normative regulation, it certainly is not the only one. The normative imperative is present in art, science, technology, and other areas of social organization as well (1975:897).

It is obviously important not to equate the normative – or the desirable – with morality. There is a normative aspect of any outlook. But it seems equally important to insist on the dual nature of the value concept in that it must treat both the desirable and the desired.

In restricting values to the desirable, Kluckhohn gives an oversocialized view of values which threatens to rule out purely hedonistic values, for instance (Williams 1968:283). But if we accept that the will of the individual sometimes clashes with the normative imperatives of society, then it is in the articulation of these two aspects that values most constructively may be conceptualized; in the articulation of what Durkheim called "the Dualism of Human Nature" (1914/1960). This is how the value concept will be treated here.

## Value Change

The concept of values has had a rather chequered career. For a period of time (circa 1950-1965) the concept of values was absolutely central to social theory and social analysis. This position was due to the work of Parsons and his associates on the role that values played within functionalist theory.[4]

Over the years functionalist theory lost its central position, however, and in line with the general critique of the theory, the role of values was called into question. The empirical evidence was lacking, and the level of abstraction in which the ideas were presented made them difficult to apply in concrete settings (Spates 1983:33-36).[5] Recently, functionalism has been enjoying a revival, but the normative role assigned to values in the Parsonian scheme has seldom been highlighted in contemporary analyses.[6]

The decline of the Parsonian ideas of values has not meant the end of value theory, however. In contemporary social science, the concepts of value and values are once again frequently employed. But if value theory during the 1950s and the 1960s focused on the role of values in the maintenance and integration of society, today values, somewhat ironically, are in focus because of theories of value change.

As I see it there are two main reasons for the renewed interest in value analyses. First, it is argued that values are changing faster than before, and that we are witnessing the emergence of new values or at least new combinations of old values. This is the reason that is traditionally put forward.

But second, the last twenty year period has seen the emergence of new systematic, comparative empirical studies that in themselves have created an interest in value change. This factor should not be underestimated, and I will return to it in the next section.

I will now turn to a discussion of the different kinds of value changes that are currently being analysed. These include changes from religious to secular values, from authoritarian to libertarian values, from materialist to postmaterialist values, from industrial to green values and the emergence of postmodern values.

### *Religious and Secular Values*

The notion of value change is of course old, and it is originally tied to the process of secularization (Dobbelaere 1981). That is, in line with the modernization of societies, with industrialization, urbanisation and with the rise of science, religion loses its ability to provide a shared meaning system for people. The sense of community once felt through this meaning system is gradually being eroded. Wilson argues:

> Culture, in advanced societies, ceases to be integrative: it becomes a super-numerary item, as society shifts from being a moral to a technical system. Permissiveness and

> pluralism indicate the social insignificance and the systemic insulation of culture – and of religion, which was the chief carrier of the cultural inheritance (1974:113).

Religion plays on the whole a less important role in everyday life today in most Western European countries than it used to do. People are in a sense becoming less guided by religious values. But this does not mean that religion has lost its everyday life role.

First, the rate of the secularization process is quite different in catholic and protestant countries. And second, it may also be the case that religion is changing rather than disappearing; religion "evolves and changes its form" (Thompson 1992:331). Religious values are becoming less church-oriented and more individually oriented. The conception of religion seems to be changing from a belief in a personal God toward a more spiritual understanding of religion.[7] Thus, analyses of the secularization process is important in two senses: on the one hand in the traditional sense of the disappearence of religion, but on the other hand in the sense of the transformation of religion.

## *Authoritarian and Libertarian Values*

The one process beside the secularization process that has been under way the longest time concerns the change from authoritarian to libertarian values. This change is noticeable in many areas of life.

Gundelach (1992) uses Weber's distinction between charismatic, traditional and structural authority, and argues that both traditional and structural authority is increasingly being questioned. Traditional authority is the type of authority characteristic of the father's role in the family. Today this role has changed towards a negotiating role, in which both wife and children may contest the father's will and opinions. Obedience is being replaced by values such as independence within the family (Meulemann 1983:785).

The structural authority is based on different positions in a system where people positioned higher in the system by virtue simply of their position have power. The structural authority is being questioned in the political system, where people turn to extra-parliamentary activities when felt necessary (Offe 1987), and it is being questioned in schools, where the teacher no longer can be expected to be listened to and believed without arguments supporting his or her statements (Ziehe 1993).

The differences between libertarian and authoritarian values are often seen as class based. When it comes to family patterns, Kohn (1969; Kohn and Slomczyski 1990) distinguishes between conformity and self-direction, and argues that middle-class parents value self-direction more than working-class parents do.[8] "The authoritarian personality", a popular object of study within political science during the 1950s, was more likely to be found within the working classes than the middle

classes (Adorno et al 1950/1982; Lipset 1959), and more recent analyses also note class based differences in libertarian and authoritarian values.[9]

## *Materialist and Postmaterialist Values*

The change from materialist and postmaterialist values is intimately related to the work of Ronald Inglehart (1977,1990). His work focuses on the hypothesis of the Western world undergoing a change from a concern over material/economic issues to a concern over ecological/humanitarian issues. This he calls a change from materialist to postmaterialist values.

The theoretical basis for this hypothesis is a combination of socialization theory and a Maslovian needs hierarchy theory. Basic values – by definition abstract, few in number and related to attitudes and behaviour – are internalized at an early age and change very slowly. Furthermore, high priority is put on values located towards the top of a value hierarchy. When physiological needs have been taken care of, other needs (intellectual, aesthetic, etc) become more important. In the same way, people tend to attach more importance to postmaterialist values than to materialist values, once the objective conditions for doing so occur. Thus, in comparison with older generations, post world war two generations that have never felt material insecurity put higher priorities on postmaterialist values, such as freedom of speech, than on traditional materialist values, such as economic growth. And, as long as prosperity continues, each new generation will be more postmaterialistic than the generation preceding it. By 2010, postmaterialists are likely to outnumber materialists in Western Europe (Abramson and Inglehart 1992:227; cf. Inglehart 1977,1990).

## *Industrial and Green Values*

More and more people feel that environmental and ecological factors are becoming important. Polluted waters, holes in ozone layers and nuclear power plant catastrophes are parts of the environment we all share. We live in a "Risk Society" (Beck 1992); a society with definite limitations.

This situation has led to the emergence of what may be called green values. Cotgrove and Duff (1980:341) argue that the dominant values of Western societies have been industrial values, but that they now are being challenged by green values. These values are non-material and egalitarian. They are furthermore concerned with a more decentralized society than the one we live in today (cf. Herrera 1992). An obvious indicator of the importance of green values is the emergence of green parties in Western Europe during the last twenty year period (Bennulf and Holmberg 1990; Finger and Hug 1992).

## *Postmodern Values*

The most recent discussion of value change concerns the emergence of post-modern values (cf. chapter two). The argument is that in contemporary Western societies, a growing proportion of the public is guided by a set of values that consists on the one hand of expressivist values, and on the other hand of either humanist or materialist values.

First of all, there is a common core of expressivist values that are becoming more and more important. People feel the need to express themselves, to be whatever they want to be. But people may want to express themselves in two radically different directions. On the one hand, expressivist values may be combined with humanist values. This would be the case for people wanting to combine personal satisfaction with the belief in collective solutions. On the other hand, expressivist values may be combined with instrumentalist values. Instead of wanting to express oneself socially or culturally, this would be the case for people expressing themselves through consumption and the acquisition of goods.[10]

## *Values in Late Modernity*

All of these different kinds of value changes are being discussed and analysed within the social sciences today, albeit with different levels of intensity. They are in one sense dealing with different matters. But the value types are obviously not independent of each other, and the different paradigms thus compete with each other.

Flanagan (1987) has argued that people with postmaterialist values may be divided into one libertarian and one authoritarian group. Without this distinction, Flanagan argues, it becomes quite difficult to explain the rise of the New Right. These people, with their interests in moral/religious issues, are not materialists, but they are certainly not postmaterialists in the Inglehartian sense (cf. Knutsen 1989:229; Anshelm 1990:26-27).

The difference between the materialist/postmaterialist distinction and the industrial/green distinction is not totally clearcut either. Inglehart conceives of green values as components in a more overarching postmaterialist value orientation. Gundelach (1992:307), on the other hand, sees the industrial/green distinction as wider than Inglehart's classification.

The point to make here is first that it is not possible to reduce the value changes discussed into one dimension. Each of the value types covers some aspects of human thinking that other value types do not cover. But one should also be aware of their interconnections.

All of the value changes discussed here are involved in the processes of modernization. The changes would not have occurred without these processes, but the changes are not automatic, or uni-directional. Value change may be regarded as responses

to changes in one's environment, but these responses in turn have an impact on the environment. Thus, the change in religious values, rather than the disappearence of them, may be seen as a response towards a society that has lost its meaning, and this response has in itself been important for the evolution of contemporary societies. Furthermore, the sign of expressivist values being articulated both with humanist and with materialist values shows the need for a conjectural view on values. There are no necessary relationships between the different kinds of values, and there is no necessary direction that these value changes will take. These, it would seem, are typical features of late modernity (cf. chapter two).

How shall one treat the relationship between values? According to Inglehart (1990), human values in contemporary Western societies may be conceptualized in *one* dimension. People are materialists, postmaterialists or somewhere inbetween. Flanagan (1987) insists on making the postmaterialist sphere more differentiated. Beside value priorities (the change from materialist to non-materialist priorities), we must also take into consideration the difference in value preferences, he argues (the difference between libertarian and authoritarian preferences).

But although facilitating a greater complexity in the conceptualization of values, Flanagan accepts Inglehart's viewpoint that values may be grasped in either/or-dimensions, where materialist values stand in a necessary relationship to post-materialist values, and where libertarian values stand in a necessary relationship to authoritarian values.

I want to argue, however, that it is precisely such *a priori* "closures" that one should avoid when analysing values. There is no logical contradiction in being both materialist and postmaterialist. And when given the chance in surveys to combine these values, many people (primarily young people) do so (Reimer 1989a, 1989b; cf. Inglehart 1989)

This suggests that a one-dimensional conceptualization may miss values and value-orientations with relevance for larger groups of people. It seems unwarranted to lock different values into either/or- dimensions. Instead, a more flexible way of handling values is to conceive of them as constituting a *value formation*; a formation in which all values are interrelated and possible to combine (Reimer 1989b:258).[11]

## The Concept of Values and Empirical Research

In the previous section I argued that one reason for the renewed interest in value change had to do with the appearence of a number of studies on value change. These studies were quantitative, and they were comparative and longitudinal in nature. This meant that not only was it possible to generalize from the studies, it was also possible to replicate them in other contexts, and the studies were often available for re-analyses.

The two researchers that unquestionably have been most important for quantitative value research are Rokeach and Inglehart. They have both constructed value sets that have been used extensively both comparatively and longitudinally.

The Rokeach Value Survey consists of one set of 18 instrumental values and one set of 18 terminal values which respondents in large scale surveys rank order separately. Studies using the Rokeach Value Survey have been conducted mainly in Western countries, but to some extent also in Eastern Europe and Asia.[12]

**Table 4.1** Human Values in the Rokeach Value Survey. SOM 1986-1992 (Per Cent)

| | 1986 | 1988 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health* | – | 92 | 92 | 91 | 91 |
| A World of Peace | 91 | 89 | 90 | 87 | 90 |
| Honesty* | – | – | – | – | 89 |
| Freedom | 77 | 84 | 89 | 87 | 86 |
| Justice* | – | 78 | 83 | 80 | 84 |
| Family Security | 76 | 81 | 84 | 78 | 82 |
| True Friendship | 78 | – | 80 | 78 | 80 |
| Inner Harmony | 51 ** | 77 | 78 | 77 | 78 |
| Love | 72 | 76 | 76 | 77 | 77 |
| A Clean World* | – | 81 | 79 | 72 | 76 |
| National Security | 71 | 69 | 75 | 71 | 71 |
| Happiness | 67 | 70 | 70 | 71 | 71 |
| A Comfortable Life | 56 | 54 | 55 | 54 | 58 |
| A World of Beauty | 48 | 59 | 58 | 56 | 57 |
| Equality | 40 | 49 | 54 | 49 | 54 |
| Self-Respect | 51 | 44 | 45 | 44 | 45 |
| Wisdom | 47 ** | 31 | 37 | 37 | 39 |
| A Sense of Accomplishment | 34 | 28 | 34 | 29 | 32 |
| Technological Development* | – | 22 | 34 | 23 | 27 |
| Pleasure | 45 ** | 23 | 26 | 27 | 26 |
| An Exciting Life | 22 | 22 | 26 | 22 | 25 |
| Social Recognition | 19 | 15 | 18 | 18 | 19 |
| Wealth* | – | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| Salvation | 8 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Power* | – | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 |

*Question: How important are the following things for you?*

Percentage of respondents claiming each value to be "very important" (five point scale)

* Not Part of the Original Rokeach Survey

** Wording changed in 1988

In the Society Opinion Media surveys, conducted at the University of Göteborg, the 18 terminal Rokeach values have been used almost yearly since 1986. In addition to these values, a number of other central human values were added in 1988 and in 1992. Table 4.1 presents how these values have been rated by the Swedish people in the surveys (on a five point scale), and as the table makes

clear, the different values are evaluated quite differently.[13] Values such as "health" and "a world of peace" are regarded as very important for roughly 90 per cent of the Swedish population, whereas values such as "wealth", "salvation" and "power" are regarded as very important only by a minority of the population.

Human values by definition change slowly, and it thus comes as no surprise that the patterns for the different years are very similar. The main change seems to be that equality has become more important during the time period.

I have already discussed the theory behind the materialist/postmaterialist value hypothesis. The empirical material used to support this hypothesis is, like the Rokeach Value Survey, collected in surveys. Respondents are asked to rank order societal goals for the following ten years, six materialist and six postmaterialist goals. The Inglehart items have been used regularly in the USA and in Western Europe, and they are included in the so called World Values Survey.[14]

**Table 4.2** Materialism and Postmaterialism. SOM 1986-1991 (Per Cent and Means).

| | 1986 | 1987 | 1989 | 1991 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The fight against crime | 77 | 77 | 80 | 78 |
| Maintaining order in the nation | 63 | 64 | 69 | 66 |
| Fighting rising prices | 58 | 58 | 54 | 64 |
| A stable economy | 61 | 60 | 55 | 61 |
| Maintaining a high level of economic growth | 27 | 26 | 25 | 39 |
| Making sure that this country has strong defense forces | 16 | 16 | 10 | 8 |
| Protecting freedom of speech | 65 | 66 | 64 | 68 |
| Progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society | 64 | 65 | 61 | 58 |
| Trying to make our cities and countryside more beautiful | 54 | 55 | 46 | 44 |
| Progress toward a society in which ideas count more than money | 47 | 50 | 45 | 43 |
| Give the people more say in important governmental decisions | 33 | 41 | 36 | 39 |
| Seeing that people have more say about how things are done at their jobs and in their communities | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Materialism | 5.8 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 5.8 |
| Postmaterialism | 6.0 | 6.1 | 6.0 | 6.0 |

*Question: How important do you consider the following societal goals to be for the next ten years?*
Percentage of respondents claiming each value to be "very important" (seven point scale)

In Table 4.2, the six materialist value items are presented first, then the six postmaterialist value items. The items are all rated on a seven point scale. Some of the materialist value items are deemed very important by a large proportion of

the population, but some are not. About 80 per cent of the population think that "the fight against crime" is very important, whereas only about ten per cent of the respondents think that "making sure this country has strong defense forces" is very important. The postmaterialist values are more evenly rated, even though none of the items are as important as the materialist item "the fight against crime".

Also here, changes over the time period are minor, the main changes being that "maintaining a high level of economic growth" and "fighting rising prices" are becoming more important. By taking the means for the two respective value batteries, one can see that the two value batteries are equally important, and that this has been the case for the whole period under study.

It is impossible to ignore the works by Rokeach and Inglehart when studying empirical analyses of value change. Both authors are cited in roughly 100 academic articles each year (Social Sciences Citation Index), and this means that they totally dominate the field. However, their value conceptualizations differ quite markedly, and that has had an impact on how they have been used.

Rokeach's 18 items are intended to measure 18 separate values. They may be used in many different situations, and for many different reasons. His items have consequently been used within many different disciplines, including psychology, sociology, political science, media and communications, and economics. The twelve items in the Inglehart value battery are indicators of two underlying dimensions, and are relatively difficult to use for other purposes than the original one. Therefore, it has been used mainly within political science, but it has on the other hand been used regularly within this discipline.

The central position that these two value conceptualizations have had within empirical value studies cannot be over-estimated. The European Science Foundation has financed a research project, Beliefs in Government, whose subproject "The Impact of Values" attempts to systematically analyse all existing data on values and value change in Western Europe in the post world war two period. What this subproject has made clear is how easy it is to study the change from materialist to postmaterialist values in Western Europe in comparison to, for instance, the change from authoritarian to libertarian values. There are quite simply no time series of the kind for authoritarian and libertarian values that one may obtain from practically every country for materialist and postmaterialist values (van Deth forthcoming).

The situation is thus somewhat intricate. Researchers may not think that the materialist/postmaterialist value conceptualization is the theoretically most satisfying one. But if they want to conduct comparative, quantitative research that is the conceptualization they will have to use.[15]

## The Measurement of Values

It is not self-evident that it is possible to measure people's values in the way carried out in these surveys. Are people aware of their values, and it is possible to rank order them? From a strict behavioural point of view, values, as latent objects, are inaccessible to science altogether (Adler 1956). However, the tradition of measuring values is old, and the viewpoint that people are able to express their values in valid ways seems to be accepted. Robin Williams writes:

> Observations of processes of evaluation make it quite clear that some values are, indeed, highly explicit, and appear to the social actor as phenomenal entities; the person can state the value, illustrate its application in making judgements, identify its boundaries and the like (1979:17).[16]

The question of whether values should be ranked or rated is not easily answered, but it seems as if the choice of a ranking procedure is unfortunate. One may object to the decision on purely statistical grounds: A ranking procedure cannot be used if one is interested in comparing the values of different people, since one's response to one value depends on the response to the other values. This is a point that seems commonly accepted within statistical litterature.[17]

But one may also object to the decision on theoretical grounds: If one has reasons to believe that values are relational and conflictual, then one should acknowledge this matter and make such patterns visible rather than trying to "solve" or "hide" them through ranking procedures (Reimer 1989b).[18]

In my opinion the rating of values is the preferred procedure, and as has already been made clear, in the SOM surveys the rating procedure has been used. I will return to my treatment of these items in chapter ten.[19]

## Values and Mass Media Use

The final topic for this chapter concerns how one should conceive of the relationship between values and mass media use. This is a relationship that surprisingly few empirical studies have dealt with. Studies of values *in* the mass media have been carried out through content analyses. This procedure is useful when it comes to grasping dominant values in a society, and it is useful for comparisons over time, but it is obviously not intended to grasp individually held values.[20]

Within media and communications, the concept of values has never been central. Within the media effects tradition, it has been taken for granted that people's values are affected by media use, just as attitudes are, but there are hardly any systematic studies of these relationships (cf. Rosengren and Reimer 1990).

As already outlined, the concept of values has been important within political science and sociology during the last twenty year period. But the role of the mass

media in relation to value change has seldom been analysed within these disciplines. The role has been discussed in broad terms as one of the sources behind value change. Inglehart, for instance, conceives of the expansion of mass communications as one of the main system level changes that causes individual-level change. But he argues that it is difficult to analyse how the influence process actually works (1977:6-18), and most studies have been content with stating their importance. There are furthermore no detailed questions on mass media use included in the main comparative surveys (the European Values Surveys and the Eurobarometers) making it impossible for other researchers to conduct reanalyses. Thus, both in the disciplines dealing specifically with mass media use, and in the disciplines dealing specifically with value change, the mass media are seen as participants in the process leading towards value change, but the studies one would expect to find of this process are missing.

What may then be said about the relationship? I have already argued that values guide behaviour in everyday life. People choose leisure practices that they feel they get something out of, and such practices correspond to people's values. This is not an automatic process and it is not a general one, but in specific, historical contexts, values that are felt to be relevant are invoked and this leads to a certain behaviour.

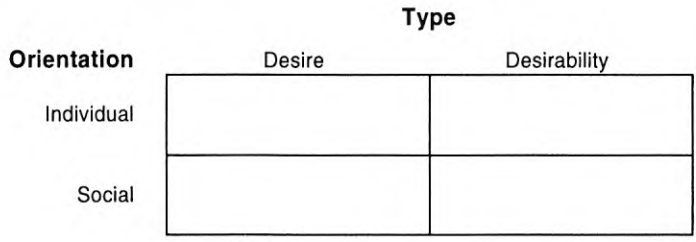
It is in precisely this manner that we should conceive of the relationship between values and mass media use. People use the mass media in everyday life. It is an alternative to doing other things. Just as values are invoked in relation to non-media leisure practices, so are they invoked in relation to the media.

Reimer and Rosengren have argued that people may use the mass media consciously in order to strengthen their beliefs and their values. People guided by such values as "a comfortable life" turn to high culture on television in order to strengthen those values (1990:202). Johansson and Miegel have shown that among Swedish youth, music and film patterns are dependent on individually held values. Young people's values serve both security and developmental functions, and young people consequently turn to such material that will satisfy their needs (1992:305).

Both these studies indicate the link between values and mass media use. On the basis of one's set of values, one turns towards some activities in everyday life rather than other activities. In order to understand such processes, it is necessary both to analyse values with different properties and to relate these values to media activities in a meaningful way.

The second question I will return to in the final chapter of the theoretical part of this book. When it comes to the first question, I believe, first, that it is necessary to distinguish between values that are connected to *desires* and to *desirabilities*, and to use both kinds of values in an analysis. But, second, I believe that it is also necessary to distinguish between values that are *individually oriented*, and values that are *socially oriented*.

**Figure 4.1** Values in Everyday Life




People may be guided more or less by desires, and more or less by desirabilities. People may furthermore be guided more or less by individually, and more or less by socially, oriented values. These distinctions are typical characteristics of and in late modernity. By taking into account these distinctions, we have something to base our analyses of values and media practices on.

## Summing Up

In this chapter I have discussed the value concept in relation to activities in everyday life. The point in using the concept is that it helps us to understand why people choose to do some things and not others. People act, it may be argued, on the basis of individually held, but socially grounded, values.

It is important to point out that this is not always a simple and uncomplicated relationship. People's values may at times clash with each other. On a general level, it may be difficult to reconcile equality with freedom. And on more specific occasions, there may be a conflict between, for instance, pleasure and a feeling of duty.

Value research has tended to focus increasingly on these value conflicts. By so doing, the concept has become more useful. If one conceives of people's values as components of a value formation, where different values may be invoked at different times, it is possible to move away from notions of necessary relationships to questions concerning the circumstances under which one value may be invoked instead of another. In concrete studies it is possible to analyse how values, depending on the situation, may be articulated differently with different everyday life practices. It is this dynamic aspect of the value concept that makes it especially relevant in relation to mass media use.

## Notes

1. For overviews of the value concept within different disciplines, cf. Dukes 1955; Rose 1956; Catton 1959; Adler 1956; Blake and Kingsley 1964; Frankena 1965; Albert 1968; Williams 1968; Levitin 1970; Hutcheon 1972; Meddin 1975; Spates 1983; Munson 1984; Harding et al 1986; Miceli and Castelfranchi 1989; Johansson and Miegel 1992.

2. I have here focused on how the concept of values may be related to some other concepts standing for mental characteristics. I have not tried to incorporate all such possible concepts, however. Concepts such as ideas, meanings, beliefs and world-views could also have been discussed, for instance. But there is no "true" relationship between all of these concepts, and the only reasonable way to act is to use a classification that in a logical way sets out a set of relationships, and then proceed from there. For other possible classifications, cf. Blake and Davis 1964; Williams 1968; Rokeach 1973; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Löfgren 1981. For the relationship between values and attitudes, cf. Olson 1993.

3. This does not mean that behaviour does not influence values. Obviously this is a complex, and multidirectional process. However, my interest is directed towards understanding behaviour, and therefore my focus will be on the ways that values may guide behaviour rather than the opposite.

4. Cf. Parsons 1959/1989; Parsons et al 1951; Kluckhohn 1951.

5. For general critiques of functionalism, cf. Lockwood 1956; Mills 1959: ch.2; Homans 1964.

6. Cf. Alexander 1985; Sciulli and Gerstein 1985; Habermas 1987: ch.7; Lidz 1989; Robertson and Turner 1989.

7. Gundelach 1992:315; cf. Harding et al 1986; Pettersson 1992.

8. Cf. McLeod and Chaffee 1972; Lesthaeghe and Meekers 1986; Tims 1986; Jarlbro 1988a.

9. Cf. Lockwood 1966; Flanagan 1987; Middendorp 1991; Crompton 1992.

10. Gibbins and Reimer forthcoming a; cf. Wood and Zurcher, Jr. 1988; Taylor 1989: ch.21; Connolly 1991; von Beyme 1993; Lash and Urry 1994: ch.3.

11. Cf. Rosengren's Great Wheel of Culture on how basic social institutions group around two pairs of basic value orientations, expressive vs. instrumental and cognitive vs. normative (1984:22, forthcoming).

12. For studies using the Rokeach Value Survey, cf. Rokeach 1973,1974,1979; Penner and Anh 1977; Cochrane et al 1979; Searing 1979; E. Block 1984; Hankiss et al 1984; Munson 1984; Ness and Smith 1984; Powell and Valencia 1984; Suhonen 1985; Kahle et al 1986; Schwartz and Bilsky 1987,1990; Reimer 1988; Johansson and Miegel 1992; Kamakura and Novak 1992; Schwartz 1992.

13. Cf. chapter ten for a description of the Society Opinion Media surveys.

14. For studies using the Inglehart value item battery, cf. Inglehart 1971,1977,1990; Marsh 1975; van Deth 1983a; Böltken and Jagodzinski 1985; Savage 1985; Flanagan 1987; Jensen and Listhaug 1988; Pettersson 1988,1992; de Graf et al 1989; Reimer 1988,1989a; Steger et al 1989; Knutsen 1990; Janssen 1991; Katz 1991; Abramson and Inglehart 1992; Johansson and Miegel 1992. For the European part of the World Values Sureys, cf. Harding et al 1986; Listhaug 1990; Gundelach 1992; Gundelach and Riis 1992; Pettersson 1992; Hellevik 1993.

15. Originally, Inglehart used the terms "acquisitive" and "post-bourgeois" values instead of materialist and postmaterialist values (Inglehart 1971). It is doubtful whether Inglehart's work had had the same impact if he had kept the original terms.

16. For different approaches to the measurement of values, cf. Dodd 1951; Scott 1959; Allport et al 1960; Fallding 1965; Feather 1973; Krus and Krus 1978; Miethe 1985; Suhonen 1985.

17. Cattell 1944; Knapp 1964; Hicks 1970; cf. Reimer 1985.

18. For discussions of the rating and ranking of values, cf. Feather 1973; Rankin and Grube 1980; van Deth 1983b; Alwin and Krosnick 1985.

19. A problem for comparative value studies that has gained surprisingly little attention concerns the translation of value items from one language to another. In which ways do the connotations surrounding "equality" differ from the connotations surrounding the Swedish term "jämlikhet", for instance? In this context the problem is minor, since I only use surveys from one country, but in general, the problem should not be under-estimated.

20. Content analyses of values in the mass media have been carried out mainly but not exclusively within the so called cultural indicators tradition. Cf. McClelland 1961; Krus and Krus 1978; Namenwirth and Weber 1987; E. Block 1984; P. Block 1984; Rosengren 1984; Schrag and Rosenfeld 1987; Frith and Wesson 1991.

FIVE

# The Context of Action in Everyday Life: Lifestyles

I will now turn to the question of how mass media practices may be viewed as natural components in people's lifestyles. The disposition of the chapter corresponds to the disposition of the preceding chapter on values. In the first section I will give a historical overview over the use of the concept of lifestyle, and I will discuss the concept's current popularity. In the second section I will relate different uses of the concept to each other. This will be followed by a section on how lifestyles have been analysed empirically, and on the relationship between theoretical and empirical work based on the concept of lifestyle. In section four I will outline my use of the concept; a use that is based on characteristics in and of everyday life in late modernity. Finally I will discuss the relationship between mass media use and lifestyle.

## The Concept of Lifestyle

The origin of the concept of lifestyle may be traced to the beginning of this century. At that point in time, when through urbanisation and industrialisation Western societies were rapidly changing, questions concerning people's responses to changing material conditions were central within social analysis.

One way of grasping people's actions was through the use of the lifestyle concept. Weber used the concept in "Economy and Society" (1919/1978). In opposition to the Marxist insistence on economic relations constituting divisions in society, Weber focused on a multidimensional model of social stratification, a model including not only economic but also political and cultural dimensions. In this model, the concept of lifestyle is central. Belonging in the cultural dimension, the concept is intended to capture the specific cultural practices of each status group; those practices that distinguish one status group from any other status group (Turner 1988:27; cf. Wiley 1987).

In his "The Theory of the Leisure Class" (1899/1949), Veblen discussed what he called "conspicuous consumption". Consumption, and in principle all human action, served according to Veblen always multiple purposes. Beside the more obvious reasons that people may have for carrying out a practice in everyday life, people also through their actions more or less consciously expressed their social positions.

Also Simmel and Tarde, two of the other main classical sociologists, were preoccupied with aspects having to do with people's lifestyles. Simmel discussed the experiences of living in the metropolis; experiences leading to a blasé outlook on life but also to an overstimulation of the senses (1903/1950; cf. Frisby 1992). And Tarde discussed clearer than anyone else how people could use their leisure time to express their identities and make something meaningful of their lives (Hughes 1961; cf. Sellerberg 1977,1987).

After this period, the concept of lifestyle more or less disappeared from social analysis. The reasons behind this are not totally clear, but one reason may have to do with the commercial appropriation of the concept. The concept of lifestyle is often used in order to predict consumer behaviour. For example, one of the best known lifestyle construction, Mitchell's Values and Life Style typology (1983), is used by companies such as AT&T, American Motors, New York Times and Penthouse (cf. Veltri and Schiffman 1984; Kahle et al 1986). It is possible that the commercial connotations have made the concept seem "stained", at least among academic purists.

But it is also the case that the concept has been used in a confusing way within academia. In a review of the use of the lifestyle concept within American sociology, Sobel argued that "Unless present utilization of the word is dramatically improved, sociologists would be well advised not to use it in a serious fashion" (1981:7).

Sobel's assumption that conceptual closure is the primary goal of any scientific undertaking may be questioned but it does not demerit his conclusions on "the state of the art". All in all, whereas the concept of values may be characterized as multi-discursive (containing several distinct usages in different discourses), at the beginning of the 1980s, the lifestyle concept was almost *nondiscursive*, without any secure discursive position anywhere. It turned up here and there, but it was not central in any discourse. Indicators of this discursive "unbelonging" is that, in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (Sills, 1968), in Raymond Williams' "Keywords" (1981) and in O'Sullivan et al's "Key Concepts in Communication" (1983), the term "lifestyle" is not included as a separate entry, and in Zablocki and Kanter's review of the concept (1976), out of 150 references, only three contained the actual word lifestyle in their titles.[1]

Ten years later, the situation has changed. The concept of lifestyle is currently "in vogue", as Featherstone (1987:55) has argued (cf. Horley et al 1988; Johansson and Miegel 1992). Lifestyle analyses are currently carried out in a number of different disciplines. They are carried out within ethnology, sociology, social

work, psychology, philosophy, political science and media and communications. And to these disciplines may be added subdisciplines such as leisure research and the sociology of consumerism.[2]

At least three reasons may be given for this renewed interest in lifestyle analyses: First, it is connected to the individualization hypothesis presented in chapter two. The hypothesis concerns many areas of life, but it is especially relevant in relation to lifestyle analyses. According to the argument, it has become easier to adopt the lifestyle of one's choice, as well as changing lifestyle when one so wishes (cf. Ziehe 1986; Beck 1992). And the more uncoupled from traditional constraints lifestyles become, the more relevant it is to study them.

Second, the relevance of the concept of lifestyle has been linked to the trajectory of the new petite bourgeoisie in the social space. This grouping is characterized by a rather high level of education, and the individuals in this grouping may be found primarily within the service sector and within advertising and the mass media. They are often regarded as being consumption oriented and typically "urban" (Featherstone 1987; Lash and Urry 1987).

Thus, on the one hand, we have a weakening of the bond between social structure and lifestyle. The probability of working class youth adopting middle class lifestyles – and vice versa – is greater than ever before, it is argued. And on the other hand, we have a new group, who is neither proper middle class nor proper working class, creating new lifestyles. Between them, these factors may explain the concept's success.

But there is yet one factor to be mentioned when trying to explain the current popularity of the concept of lifestyle. The first two aspects concerned the concept's increasing relevance in understanding societal and cultural processes in contemporary societies. The problem with those two aspects, as they are presented here, is that it paints a picture of something first happening in the real world and then of an academic community quickly – and almost identically – responding to this something. That is seldom the case, however. Quite often, it is only when someone within the academic community one way or another manages to make a topic seem relevant that more researchers move to that area.

When it comes to the concept of lifestyle, this is precisely what has happened. In order to understand the revival of the concept of lifestyle, it is necessary to add the role played by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in making the concept fashionable again, and then especially the role played by the arrival in 1984 of the English translation of his book "Distinction".

## *Pierre Bourdieu*

"Distinction" is a thesis on *taste* and *distaste*. In the book Bourdieu breaks with two key notions in social life. First, he argues that taste is far from being a natural and personal gift; something standing above discussion. Taste is socially construc-

ted, and something one acquires, mainly through the educational system. Secondly, he argues that taste is far from being innocent or unimportant. One's taste – and equally important, one's distaste – reveals one's position in the social space. And the logic behind the social hierarchy is that in order to succeed, one needs to know how to act, and what to say, or not to say, in different situations. It is a game one has to learn – but not everybody is given the rules of this game.

In an empirical analysis of French society Bourdieu relates the positions of individuals in social space (as measured mainly by occupation) to their positions in a field of lifestyles (as measured mainly by leisure activities).

Social space is an hierarchical space constructed on the basis of three dimensions. The first dimension concerns the volume of capital (material, mental and symbolic) of any individual, dividing the population into one dominating and one dominated class.

The second dimension concerns the composition of capital. Here Bourdieu distinguishes between economic and cultural capital. Economic capital consists mainly of material assets, such as money, expensive goods, etc, but also of non-material assets, such as contacts in the financial sphere. Cultural capital, on the other hand, is mainly but not exclusively non-material (a distinguished education, competence in high culture, but also the ownership of valuable art, etc). People possessing high amounts of economic capital (commercial employers, industrialists, etc) belong to the dominating fraction of the dominating class, whereas people possessing high amounts of cultural capital (artistic producers, higher education teachers, etc) belong to the dominated fraction.

The third dimension concerns the changes in these properties over time. Individuals, as well as groups of individuals (with similar occupations), move along different, more or less probable trajectories. Movements may be both vertical and transversal, although vertical movements are more probable.

A key empirical result in Bourdieu's analysis is the homology between individuals' positions in social space and their positions in the field of lifestyles. Through one's system of dispositions, through what Bourdieu calls habitus, one chooses to live one's life in a manner that feels natural, and that more or less fits one's position in social space. Thus, although one should never make simple analyses between singular positions in social space and the field of lifestyles (thereby forgetting the whole structure of relationships), with high amounts of economic capital follows a taste for extravagant pleasures, such as expensive cars and champagne, whereas with high amounts of cultural capital follows a taste for highbrow pleasures, such as avantgarde art and philosophical essays. And with low amounts of culture altogether follows robust pleasures, such as going to football matches. In other words, even if both the social space and the field of lifestyles are open systems, with some exceptions individuals are, given their class background and type of education, positioned where they would be most likely to be positioned. And even if movements are possible in any direction, most individuals move

along highly probable trajectories, eventually winding up in positions similar to positions formerly held by their parents.

It is highly unlikely to find a discussion on lifestyles in contemporary society today that does not treat Bourdieu in one way or another. There are many reasons for this. First of all, in assigning to lifestyles the role of upholding distinctions in social life, he makes lifestyle studies into a crucial academic subject. Second, in focusing partly on the new petit bourgeoisie, connections can be made to consumerism and postmodernism. And third, his way of combining theory with an empirical analysis makes it possible to approach his work from more than one direction.[3]

His work has not been received uncritically, however. First, the usefulness of his concept of habitus, a concept constructed to overcome the dichotomy between subjectivism and objectivism (cf. Bourdieu 1977: ch.2) has been questioned. DiMaggio, in an otherwise appreciate review, calls it a "kind of theoretical deus ex machina" (1979:1464; cf. Ostrow 1981).

Second, even if his concept of capital has become widely used, there may be problems both with the concept as such and with his specific economic/cultural distinction. Using the concept of capital means seeing different assets as not only additive but also as exchangeable. But is it really meaningful to compare a certain amount of economic capital with a certain amount of cultural capital? (Honneth 1986; cf. Rosengren 1991).

The specific distinction between economic and cultural capital has normally been questioned on the grounds that it is too tied to the French situation. Culture, as in high culture, is not as important in other societies, it has been argued (Broady 1990:302-307). But also the role of economic capital may be questioned. It may be argued that economic capital does not play as important part in the formation of social space as it used to do. In countries such as Sweden, income is increasingly becoming uncoupled from levels of education. This means that people with similar amounts of economic capital no longer constitute homogeneous groups, and this in turn means that the field of lifestyles are less and less structured by economic capital (Reimer forthcoming b).

Third, the relevance of the actual empirical analysis in "Distinction" may be rather low for contemporary Western societies. On the one hand, there is a question of how relevant the material is for contemporary France, given the fact that the data are almost thirty years old (Reimer 1989a:118). And on the other hand, there is a question of how relevant the material is for other Western societies. In a recent American study, for instance, Peterson (1992) has argued that in the United States, the difference would seem to be one between "omnivores" in the top of the social hierarchy and "univores" in the bottom. That is, in Peterson's analysis, there are no signs of distaste in the top of the social hierarchy. Higher status groups not only participate in elite activities more than low status groups, they also participate frequently in non-elite activities.

And fourth, the work has been criticized for being deterministic. Frow (1987:62) has argued that Bourdieu's theory of the aesthetic assigns a single and static function to cultural practices and therefore cannot account for disruptive uses of high or popular culture. It is this aspect of Bourdieu's work that seems to be the most foreign to those, mainly Anglo-American, researchers that are analysing lifestyles today. With a background in cultural studies, they share Bourdieu's conflict model of society, but they highlight the possibility of resistance and struggle more than Bourdieu does (Mander 1987; Featherstone 1991).

However, despite the criticisms, it is possible to replicate Bourdieu's work in other historically specific settings. Some of the problems may then be left to the empirical analysis. One problem in this area, actually, is that very few articles and books appearing in the wake of Bourdieu are based on new, empirical research. I will return to this matter in section three of this chapter.

## Making Sense of the Lifestyle Concept

Thus far, I have discussed the history of the concept of lifestyle and its current status. But what is a lifestyle? First of all, all concepts are theoretical constructs, but they may more or less correspond to phenomena in the real world. The concept of lifestyle is used, very roughly, to grasp patterns of activities in everyday life. In that sense, it tries to capture what people actually do. But no researchers would put forward the proposition that his or her lifestyle conceptualization is anything else than a construction. It is a way of looking at people's practices from a specific perspective. One can be more or less successful in so doing, but one can never empirically find The Lifestyles of a given nation, for instance.[4]

This implies that lifestyles may be conceptualized, or constructed, in rather different ways. The one common ground on which to conceptualize lifestyles is that one tries to grasp people's practices with the concept. But from there on, the disagreements start. I will here focus on five topics: Are lifestyles properties of individuals or of collectivities? Do lifestyles belong only in the sphere of leisure or also in the work sphere? On which level should one conceptualize lifestyles? Which are the criteria that lifestyle conceptualizations are based on? How is the concept of lifestyle related to other concepts?

The first question (are lifestyles properties of individuals or collectivities) is seldom addressed explicitly in the relevant literature. Exceptions are Turner (1988:5), who in his work on status sees lifestyles as a group property, and Lööv and Miegel (1990:23), who differentiate Ideal Type Lifestyles (a group property) from Individual Lifestyles (a property of the individual).

The question as such concerns a classical problem for the social sciences. How shall one treat properties that on the one hand obviously are personal, but on the other hand are more or less socially oriented? It is the same problematic that

exists for the concept of values. However, if people's values are seen more as personal than group properties, lifestyles are treated more as properties of collectivities. They are normally at least implicitly treated as something that a person shares with other persons. It does not have to be a group property, however. It may equally well be regarded as a property of a category, of a number of persons who does not know each other, but shares a number of socio-economic or cultural characteristics.

The second question concerns the location of lifestyles. Are lifestyles located only in the sphere of leisure, in connection with consumption, or are they located also at work? In Weber's work, the focus is on consumption. Following this line of thinking, Zablocki and Kanter define lifestyles as "shared values or tastes as reflected primarily in consumption patterns but applicable also to the evaluation of intangible and/or public goods" (1976:270). On the other hand, in Zetterberg's (1977) conceptualization, work is one of the possible lifestyles, and for Mitchell (1983), work is more or less important in all lifestyles.

This question concerns whether one wishes to focus on how all aspects of human life are seen as a totality, or if one wishes to focus on the relationship and possible uncoupling between two spheres of human life. The latter position is the one taken up here. It is the relationship between social structure (as shown in the relations of production) and the less constrained aspects of human life that is of interest.

The third question concerns the level of conceptualization. How many lifestyles are there in a given country at a given point in time? Judging by the literature, the number of lifestyles may vary rather substantially. Some conceptualizations focus on few, broad lifestyles, maybe as few as three, whereas others focus on a larger number of more specific lifestyles.[5] Other researchers refrain altogether from so doing, and instead analyse similarities and differences between the activities of different groups of people. This is the way that Bourdieu (1984) works, for instance.

I have already argued that lifestyles can only be seen as constructs, so obviously this is a question of finding a level that makes analyses as meaningful as possible. Basically, the level one works on may be decided either by a choice made on theoretical grounds, or on the grounds of empirical results. But if lifestyles are constructs, then there is no necessary correspondence between the lifestyles and empirical data.

The question of which level to work on is intimately tied to the question concerning the criteria that lie behind each construction. That is where one has to start. However, this is the most problematic part of all lifestyle work. The problem is that it is very difficult to find criteria, or generative principles, that do not tie people's lifestyles directly to their positions in social space. This is the criticism directed towards Bourdieu. But the normal alternative seems to be not trying to use criteria at all, instead letting the often arbitrarily gathered data do the work (cf. Fornäs 1992:88-90). It is a difficult problem, and one without a satisfying

solution as of now. I will return to my treatment of this problematic in the fourth section of this chapter, after having discussed the relationship between lifestyles and empirical research.

The final question to be raised concerns the relationship between lifestyles and other concepts standing for human activities. Schemes of the type worked out by Meddin (1975) on the relationship between mental practices do not exist for material practices. The normal procedure seems to be to choose one concept standing for material practices and then use that concept in isolation.[6]

Those schemes of relationships between material practices that do exist treat different levels of determination. A distinction has been made between Life-Mode and Lifestyle, with Life-Mode being more structurally determined than Lifestyle (Roos 1986:16; cf. Højrup 1983). The most elaborate scheme worked out in this vein is by Johansson and Miegel (1992). They distinguish between three levels of determination on which it is possible to study material practices. On the structural level (the level of countries or cultures) one may study differences in Ways of Living. On the positional level (the level of classes and status group) one may study differences in Forms of Life. And on the individual level one may study differences in Lifestyles.[7]

Schemes such as these are more or less useful depending on the objective behind one's lifestyle analysis. I am interested in using the lifestyle concept in relation to mass media practices and in relation to people's values, and I will use the tripartite distinction that Johansson and Miegel (1992) have introduced to the study of lifestyles, but I will use it somewhat differently. They see the three levels of determination – the structural, the positional and the individual – as connected to three different levels of analysis. I will instead see the three levels as different types of factors that concretely structure everyday life practices. A person's lifestyle is dependent on all three types of factors; it is, so to speak, the outcome of the interaction between these factors. As described in chapter two, the individualization hypothesis states that individual factors are becoming more important in late modernity. By conceiving of lifestyles in the way outlined here, such a hypothesis may be treated empirically.

## Lifestyles and Empirical Research

Lifestyle discussions are very common within social analysis today, as I have outlined earlier. But with few exceptions, little new empirical research is carried out. There is a gap between the theoretical work carried out and the empirical analyses that should follow it.

The empirical analyses that have been carried out during the last twenty years within disciplines such as leisure research often consist of secondary analyses of data originally collected for other purposes. A standard procedure in handling

this material has been to factor analyse a large collection of items on consumption and/or activities, and then from the data output interpret the different factors as lifestyles.[8]

There are three main problems with such a procedure. First, if there is no thought behind the choice of items, and no logical relationships between them, then the factor structure will be equally arbitrary. One obtains a number of factors, but had one excluded one or more items, or added one or more items, one would have obtained other factors.

Second, with factor analyses being a form of data reduction, what one obtains are factors that are characterized by being distinct. This means that very specific activities probably will produce factors of their own. But this does not necessarily mean that these factors should be interpreted as important lifestyles.

And third, in conducting factor analyses, what one obtains is in the normal case factors consisting of activities. One does not obtain groups of people.[9] It is quite probable that the same individuals are included in the descriptions of more than one lifestyle. The factors should not be treated as lifestyles unless one would make the argument that people do have more than one lifestyle at the time, making lifestyles similar to roles. But that type of argument is not put forward in these contexts.

These are not arguments against factor analysis as such. Conducting a factor analysis as a first step in structuring a material is in itself not problematic, and there are examples of analyses where use is subsequently made of cluster analyses or similar analyses, which group people together rather than variables.[10] And using confirmatory factor analysis is of course another matter altogether.

However, the point is that even though the concept of lifestyle has regained its status within social analysis, and even though the theoretical arguments for using the concept are reasonable, the link between the theoretical and the empirical work on lifestyles is almost missing. This work remains to be done.

## A Lifestyle Conceptualization for Late Modernity

What should a reasonable lifestyle conceptualization look like? I believe that one should not try to come up with a specific number of lifestyles that people may belong to. There are occasions when classifications and typologies serve their purposes, but I do not believe that people empirically can be placed in one out of a number of lifestyles in a meaningful way.

Earlier quantitative lifestyle research has been successful in identifying relatively distinct types of leisure practices; practices centrered around, for instance, sports or cooking. The mistake has been to conceive of these patterns as specific lifestyles.

It is both possible and reasonable to group hockey and football playing within a larger sports pattern. On a higher level of abstraction, these activities undoubtedly share a number of characteristics. Through such a way of proceeding, it is possible to come up with a number of different types of practices. However, these practices can never be conceived of as specific lifestyles. Some people may feel that sports are extremely fascinating, and they may spend a lot of their leisure time visiting different sports arenas, but they also do other things. Sports can only be a *component* in a person's lifestyle; for some people, an important component, but a component just the same.

It must be remembered that a focus on sports or cooking is not a self-evident or "natural" focus. It is based on a number of assumptions concerning how to view human practices, no matter whether the assumptions are made explicit or not. And to use these components in order to construct a number of concrete lifestyles – a number of distinct clusters of people – is problematic. It means forcing people into too rigid constructions considering what one is trying to accomplish. The different lifestyle components can capture parts of a lifestyle, and that is fine. But one should acknowledge the limitations of the procedure.[11]

This point would probably be valid for any period in time, but it is especially valid in late modernity. If people's lives are becoming more and more pluralized, then it is necessary to use a research strategy that may capture such a pluralization process. That is, it is necessary to use a research strategy that is as dynamic as possible.

My way of proceeding will be to conceive of people's leisure practices as belonging within different *everyday life segments*. These segments together *constitute* a main part of everyday life. They are more less attractive for different individuals, and each person pieces together his or her lifestyle by combining these segments in a way that is specific for him or her, but in a way that is more similar to some people than to other people. The segments are historically specific, but relevant segments in late modern socities centre on distinctions such as private/public, high culture/low culture, nature/culture, etc (cf. chapter two).

This is obviously a construction just like all other constructions discussed. However, the point about this specific construction is that it accepts that people's activities are too diverse to be contained within fixed lifestyles – but without giving up the idea of trying to relate them systematically to each other.

Another important point to make is that even though these activities are related to, and structured by, a person's position in social space, the activities cannot in any way be read straight off a person's social space position. That is, the relationship between social space and these activities is a matter for empirical investigation, it is not decided *a priori* (cf. Reimer forthcoming b).

## Lifestyles and Mass Media Use

In contemporary discussions on lifestyles in late modernity, the mass media figure heavily. The media are said to have an influence on people's lifestyles, and they may even create new lifestyles. But one may also turn the picture around, and study how a person's lifestyle may direct him or her toward specific media activities. A person's lifestyle is thus used to explain mass media behaviour (Eastman 1979; Frank and Greenberg 1980).

Disentangling mass media use from the rest of a person's leisure practices that way may be done for analytical reasons. But at a time when so much of people's leisure time is taken up by the media, it does not seem to be an attractive solution. Mass media use in late modernity should be seen as a natural component in a person's lifestyle, not as something determined by, or determining, lifestyle.

In chapter three I described how media use research is broadening its scope to all everyday life activities, not only to media use. In order, then, to grasp these activities in their totalities, the concept of lifestyle may be used.

The question that I will address in the empirical analysis concerns how embedded within other everyday life practices mass media practices are. That is, can we understand the media practices better if we take the lifestyle context into account?

In order to answer this question, I will use the lifestyle conceptualization outlined in the previous section, and I will relate it to mass media use. The operationalization of the different everyday life segments will be outlined in chapter ten.

## Summing Up

Mass media use research has increasingly turned to the social context of media use in order better to understand the goings on in relation to the media. A problem with such research has been that is has lacked a suitable concept for grasping the totality of people's everyday life practices. Lately, however, the concept of lifestyle has been applied in order to solve this problem.

In this chapter I have discussed the properties of the lifestyle concept in order to make it usable in concrete empirical studies of media use. I have emphasised the need for coming up with a dynamic lifestyle conceptualization; a conceptualization that may grasp the complexities of late modernity lifestyles as reasonable as possible. The solution chosen was to work with a number of everyday life segments that individuals may feel more or less attached to. An individual's lifestyle, then, may be seen as his or her specific combination of the different everyday life segments. The lifestyle conceptualization will be put into use in the empirical analysis.

## Notes

1. The discussion of the lifestyle concept concerns the use of the concept within the social sciences. Within medicine, the concept has a much more secure position. About 70 items each year turn up in Sociofile and in the Social Sciences Citation Index, and the overwhelming majority of these items concern this discipline.

2. Analyses carried out during the 1980s and 1990s include: ethnology (Højrup 1983; Löfgren 1988; Mörck 1991), leisure research (Witt 1981; Marsden et al 1982; Crawford et al 1986; Olszewska and Roberts 1989), media and communications (Frank and Greenberg 1980; Heiskanen 1986; Donohew et al 1987; Erämetsä 1990; Lekvall and Hult von Steyern 1990; Reimer and Rosengren 1990; Reimer forthcoming b), philosophy (Kamler 1984), political science (De Graaf and De Graaf 1988; Selin 1993; Gibbins and Reimer forthcoming b), psychology (Holman 1984; Pitts and Woodside 1984; Robertson et al 1984), social work (Hermansson 1988), sociology (Lewis 1981; Sobel 1981; Mitchell 1983; Peterson 1983,1992; Bourdieu 1984; Roos and Rahkonen 1985; Trondman 1989; Bocock 1992; Johansson and Miegel 1992; Johansson 1993), and the sociology of consumerism (Ewen and Ewen 1982; Featherstone 1983; Haug 1986; Slater 1987; Mort 1989; Nava 1992; Shields 1992). Some of these studies use other terms than lifestyle for what may reasonably be seen as the concept of lifestyle.

3. Cf. DiMaggio 1979; Garnham and Williams 1980; Brubaker 1985; Reimer 1986a, forthoming b; Frow 1987; Roe 1987; Broady 1990; Lash 1990; Fenster 1991; Laermans 1992.

4. One may wonder if there may not still be researchers who think that lifestyles are "real" when reading Zetterberg (1977), who argues that a proportion of the Swedish population does not seem to have a lifestyle at all, or Mitchell, who outlines The Nine American Lifestyles (1983). But I would rather interpret this as ways of trying to raise the status of one's results than as a radical rethinking of the ontological status of lifestyles.

5. Thålin (1985) distinguishes between four leisure dimensions (Outdoor Activities, Entertainment, High Culture and Time Spending), Donohew et al (1987) between four lifestyle types (Disengaged Homemaker, Outgoing Activist, Restrained Activist and Working Class Climber), and Hermansson (1988) between three youth lifestyles (Parent Directed, Peer-Group Directed and Community Directed). Zetterberg (1977) distinguishes between nine lifestyles (Religion, Cooking, etc), and so does Mitchell (1983) (Sustainers, Belongers, etc), whereas Frank and Greenberg (1980) distinguish between fourteen lifestyles (Arts, Athletics, etc).

6. Several concepts have been used in different disciplines for grasping more or less the same phenomenon. Besides the concept of lifestyle, researchers have applied, for instance, the concepts of subculture, taste culture, culture class, status group, ways of life, life-mode and patterns of cultural choice (Gans 1974; Clarke et al 1976; Zablocki and Kanter 1976; Lewis 1981; Højrup 1983; Peterson 1983; Allardt 1986; Johansson and Miegel 1992).

   Of these concepts, it may be remarked that generally, the more common concepts, such as subcultures and lifestyles, have more complex, diffuse meanings, whereas the less commonly used concepts, such as taste cultures and patterns of cultural choice, tend to have more specific and less contested meanings.

7. Cf. chapter two; Thunberg et al 1982; Bjurström 1991.

8. Cf Bishop 1970; Witt 1971; McKechnie 1974; Gruenberg 1983.

9. With the so called Q-technique, it is possible to obtain groups of people instead of groups of activities, but that type of factor analysis is seldom used in this context (cf. Gutman 1978, however).

10. Cf. Frank and Greenberg 1980; Hughes and Peterson 1983; Marsden and Reed 1983; Donohew et al 1987.

11. Even if one would state that only a specific number of components are necessary in order to construct distinct lifestyles, one would still run into empirical problems. Using for instance ten lifestyle components, and arguing that each of these components may be seen as dichotomies – a questionable assumptions in itself – one still winds up with 1024 possible lifestyles.

SIX

# The Mass Media: Cultural Form and Genre

Mass media use may be seen as a "meeting" between an individual in his or her social context and a specific mass medium. In the two preceding chapters, I discussed how one may conceive of the part played by the individual in such a meeting. In this chapter I will take up the part of the mass media.

The two concepts that I will focus upon in this chapter are the concepts of cultural form and genre. In using the media, people choose on the one hand between different types of media, and on the other between different types of media content. I will here use the concept of cultural form in order to discuss the properties of different types of media, and I will use the concept of genre in order to discuss the properties of different types of media content.

## Cultural Form

Most studies on media use have concentrated on television. As I discussed in chapter three, this is due to the dominant position of American research. Normally, research has focused either on the differences in the viewing of different television programs or genres (quantitative studies), or on the different uses that may be made out of different programs or genres (qualitative studies).

Sometimes, however, the medium as such is at centre of attention. This has been the case mainly within qualitative research, when scholars have tried to define the key elements or characteristics of television. For instance, in an often reprinted article, Newcomb (1976:275) defines television's key elements to be intimacy, continuity and history. Similarly, Tarroni (1976:301) sees immediacy, spontaneity and topicality as television's key characteristics.

In order to characterize one medium's key elements, it is necessary to at least implicitly relate the medium to other media. A medium's key characteristics are

those that distinguish it from other media. It is those characteristics that the term *cultural form*, coined by Raymond Williams, tries to cover.

Williams himself discussed, typically enough, mainly the cultural form of television, but he made a general distinction between *electronic media* and *print media* that has become widely discussed. According to Williams, the main distinction between these two types of media is that print media consist of discreet items, whereas the primary characteristic of electronic media is one of sequence or flow. Specific programs are broadcast on radio and television, but through trailers, commercials, etc, there are no intervals. Instead, radio and television are planned flows, with the intention being to keep the listener/viewer fixed in front of the radio or the TV set. This leads to a different kind of experience than the traditional one of reading a book or watching a play, and this is indicated by the way we instead of speaking of specific programs tend to speak of the general experience of "listening to the radio", or of "watching television" (1974:86-96).

Another way of distinguishing between print media and electronic media has been suggested by Meyrowitz (1985: ch.6). First, he applies Goffman's (1969) distinction between communication and expression in social interaction to the mass media. He argues that print media only contain communications, the presentation of intentional messages, whereas electronic media also convey personal expressions. In print media, the journalist is not present. He or she cannot be seen or heard. On the radio or on television, things are different. In those media, it is impossible not to convey expressions. Second, he uses Langer's (1957) distinction between discursive and presentational symbols:

> Print strips messages of most of their presentational forms; it conveys only discursive information. But most electronic media convey a rich range of presentational information along with discursive symbols. Radio conveys sounds and vocalizations. Television adds visual forms (1985:96).

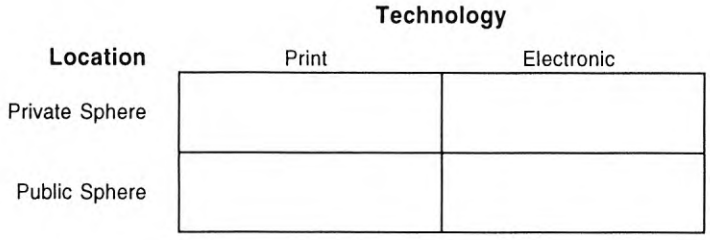
Taken together, this means, according to Meyrowitz, that print media is highly suitable for logic and for rational discussions. Debates in print tend to become abstract and focused on issues. Electronic media, on the other hand, are better at conveying emotions and presenting personalities.

In distinguishing between the characteristics of different types of media, obviously the difference between electronic media and print media is easy to discern, as outlined above. But it is of course possible to focus on other differences as well.

Another main distinction between different types of media concerns their locations in the *public or private spheres* (cf. chapter two). Some media are considered to belong to domesticity, others not. The cinema and the theater are public sphere media (even though they may be privately owned) and the newspaper, radio and television are private sphere media. This is also an important distinction when it comes to understanding a medium's characteristics.[1] In Figure 6.1, these two

dimensions are related to each other. A medium's cultural form is shaped on the one hand by its technology and on the other hand by its location.

**Figure 6.1** Cultural Form




The distinctions in Figure 6.1 are to a certain extent functions of technological differences. Some things that can be done with electronic media can never be done with print media. But the differences are mainly cultural, and that is why I am using the concept of cultural form. The cultural forms that mass media take, and the functions they may have, are not essential. They may – and do – change.[2]

For instance, it is not the case that those media that we see as private sphere media by necessity belong to the private sphere. All of these media once belonged to the public sphere. The growth of the newspaper is intimately related to the growth and transformation of the public sphere, and both radio and television initially had their main audiences in public arenas.[3] During a long and complicated process, these media have become *naturalized* in the private sphere. They have "captured time and space" in the domestic sphere (Johnson 1981; Moores 1988).[4]

It is thus necessary to distinguish between what different media may do, due to their technological characteristics, and what they actually do in a historically specific situation. First, the technique may be used differently. Comparing cinema and television, Ellis describes one of the main characteristics of cinema to be its focus on offering single separate fictions, viewed in conditions of relatively intense and sustained attention (1982:89). Television, on the other hand, offers a number of intersecting sequences, and it engages the look or the glance rather than the concentrated gaze (1982:128; cf. Dahlén 1990).

Second, the output may differ: Television institutions have a conception of what their audiences may look like, and this shapes their output. As Ellis writes:

> Broadcast TV, its institutions and many of its practitioners alike assume that its domestic audience takes the form of families. "The home" and "the family" are terms which have become tangled together in the commercial culture of the twentieth century. They both point to a set of deeply held assumptions of the nature of

> "normal" human existence. The family is held to consist of a particular unit of parent and children: broadcast TV assumes that this is the basis and heart of its audience (1982:113).

Television productions are based on conceptions of who the audience is, and this is obviously not unique for television. Cinema productions in the classic Hollywood mould have on the whole tried to satisfy what has been termed "the male gaze" (Mulvey 1975), and prestigious morning papers direct their attention more towards their male readers than towards their female readers (Kratz 1991a).

The cultural forms of different media are thus not fixed once and for all. This is important to point out. In analysing the uses made of the different media at a specific situation it is necessary to outline what the cultural forms are at that particular time. Those forms are important for the choices people make. Media placed in the public sphere may demand more effort in order to be used, but due to what they may offer, for some groups of people it may be worth the effort, etc.

## Genre

In distinguishing between different types of mass media content, in a manner similar to how I distinguished between the cultural forms of different media, I will use the concept of *genre*.

Classifying works of art into different groups is of course an old phenomenon. It may be traced back to at least Aristotle (Williams 1977:180). The term genre, however, dates from the nineteenth century (Cohen 1986:203). Originally, it was used in order to classify literary works of high value. The popular culture works of the era existed outside genres (Threadgold 1989:121). Over the years, this has changed:

> Now it is "popular culture", mass culture, that is generic, ruled as it is by market pressures to differentiate to a limited degree in order to cater to various sectors or consumers, and to repeat commercially successful patterns, ingredients and formulas. By contrast, "true literature" is marked by self-expresssion, creative autonomy, and originality, and hence by a freedom from all constrictions and constraints, including those of genre (Neale 1990:63).

In order to deliver "products" regularly, artists within popular culture work with conventions and with formulas. They place themselves within genres. Producing works as parts of genres is an extremely rational and economic way to create, and as Cawelti writes: "Once familiar with a formula, the writer who devotes himself to this sort of creation does not have to make as many difficult artistic decisions as a novelist working without a formula" (1976:9).

The concept of genre thus seems to be especially suited for both the production and the analysis of popular culture. But there does not seem to be any good reasons not to apply it to all kinds of artistic works. It would be very difficult to argue that the "true literature" is free from constraints, or that the concept of genre cannot be used in relation to such works. Obviously, any writer or artist living in a Western society is constrained by economic pressures of different kinds, and he or she always, more or less explicitly, produces works in relation to earlier produced works.

I will here apply the concept of genre to the total mass media output. I will conceive of the mass media texts as belonging to different genres. But how may one classify the media output? It is not obvious what such a classification should look like. Just like the concept of lifestyle, the concept of genre does not stand for something that is real in the sense that there is an exact number of actual genres. Each classification into genres is made on the basis of certain principles and it is made for a certain purpose (cf. Cohen 1986:204).

This does not imply that there are not some classifications that are more reasonable than others, however. The most obvious distinction for the mass media, or at least for many different types of mass media, is the one between *fiction* and *non-fiction*. Corner argues that these two genres differ markedly in that non-fiction primarily has to do with different kinds of knowledge, whereas fiction primarily has to do with what he calls imaginative pleasure. Specifically in relation to television, he writes:

> the levels of referentiality, modes of address, symbolic discourse and the presence or otherwise of television's own representatives (e.g. presenter, host, reporter) serve to mark the two areas out into distinctive communicative realms (Corner 1991:276).

In principle any mass media text may meaningfully be seen as either fiction or non-fiction. Another main distinction that may be made in relation to the mass media content is the one between *popular culture and high culture*. This distinction is historically speaking a very important one (cf. chapter two). It would not be possible, however, to combine these two dimensions of fiction/non-fiction and popular culture/high culture into a typology. All fiction may reasonably well be placed as either high culture or low culture. But that is not possible to do with all non-fiction. News articles or news programs do not fit easily into that dimension.

Another way of using the concept of genre is to move to a lower level of abstraction. Many analyses of the media output are concerned with the specificity of more closely delienated types of content, of soap operas, Westerns, etc. There seems to be few systematic efforts carried out in order to classify such genres, and relate them to each, however.

One exception to this rule is Berger (1992). According to him, the media output may be classified in two dimensions, the objective and the emotive. The objective dimension is similar to the difference between fiction and non-fiction. The emotive

dimension concerns "the affective aspects of consciousness – personal feelings, emotions, that sort of things" (Berger 1992:7). It concerns whether the output generates strong emotions or not.

On the basis of these two dimensions, it is possible to relate different genres to each other. For example, news are weak on the emotive dimension and high on the objective dimension, sports are strong on the emotive dimension and high on the objective dimension, soap operas are strong on the emotive dimension and low on the objective dimension, and commercials are weak on the emotive dimension and low on the objective dimension (Berger 1992:8).

Berger's classification implies that certain genres through their specific characteristics may elicit certain responses. Put in other words, different genres give different *expectations* to audiences (Neale 1983,1990; cf. Lindholm 1988). When going to the cinema to watch a Western, the expectations are totally different than when going to see a melodrama, for instance. This, of course, is important when analysing media use, and the reasons behind the use. We choose a certain type of output on the basis of that we know roughly what to expect from it, and this we connect with our wishes and desires. This is what makes the genre concept specifically important in this context.

## Summing Up

In this chapter I have discussed the two concepts of cultural form and genre. I have argued that these two concepts may help us understand first why individuals in everyday life decide to use the mass media rather than do something else, and second why individuals tend to choose one particular medium and one particular type of content rather than another medium and another type of content.

A medium's cultural form and the specific genre that a certain text belongs to are characteristics of the medium in question. It has nothing to do with the individual. The question of how important the cultural form and the particular genre are for the choice made by a particular individual, depends on how each individual perceives of these characteristics, however. In order to understand this historically specific meeting, it is important not to confuse the possibilities offered by different media with their functions for people. The discussion here has been centrered on outlining what the media offer. The question of the extent to which these offers are taken up by people is another question.

For instance, in Berger's typology, some genres are expected to generate emotional responses, whereas some genres are not. It may be the case that the properties of some genres do offer these possibilities to greater extents than other genres, but the question of whether people actually take up such offers must be analysed empirically. It is not something that follows automatically from the properties of the genre.

It must also be emphasised that genres should be perceived of as processes (Cohen 1986:205). Each new text belonging to a genre changes the genre somewhat. A certain genre may be "frozen" at a particular moment in order to be analysed, but the characteristics found are valid only for that particular moment. To this may be added that in late modernity, intertextuality is becoming more and more common. New works deliberately refer to, and are based upon, other works – and should be "read" in relation to them. It is therefore becoming increasingly difficult to determine the exact boundaries of a genre (cf. Fiske 1987:108; Dahlén 1991:28).

Be that as it may, the characteristics of different media – their cultural forms – and of different types of content – the genres – must be taken into account in analyses of media use. They must also be treated in historically specific settings. I will take up this problematic again in the empirical part of the dissertation.

## Notes

1. Cf. Ohlsson's (1989:30-31) discussion on different media's different demands on physical resources in order for people to use them.
2. The processes in which the mass media partake are quite often complex and contradictory. Television and radio have contributed to the "withdrawal to interior space" (cf. chapter two), but at the same time, cinema has contributed to keeping the public sphere attractive (Reimer 1993).
3. Cf. Habermas 1962/1989; Moores 1988; Löfgren 1990; Reimer forthcoming a.
4. It should be noted that this portrayal concerns Western societies. In other societies, of course, the cultural forms may be different.

SEVEN

# Understanding Mass Media Use

In this final chapter of the theoretical part of the dissertation, I will put the pieces from the preceding chapters together and outline how one may understand mass media use in late modernity. That is, I will suggest one perspective from which mass media use may be looked at; a perspective that I will put to use in the second part of the dissertation. In line with the modernization perspective outlined in chapter two, I will try to combine the general with the specific. I will start by discussing the general processes in everyday life that lead to the choice of any leisure practice. I will then discuss the specificity of the mass media.

The chapter consists of two sections. In the first section I will initially very broadly outline the process leading to the choice of different leisure practices in everyday life. This process, and the relationship between the components involved in the process, will subsequently be problematized and discussed. This will be carried out through discussions of the concepts of life environment, subjectivity and articulation. Following on those discussions, in section two I will turn to the mass media, and discuss the relationship between people's interests and the specific properties of the media.

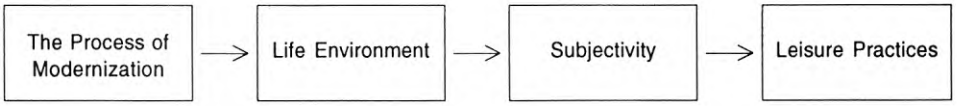
## The Choice of Leisure Practices

I will start this section by presenting a model of the choice of leisure practices. To do so is to insist on the rather obvious fact that the choices we make in the sphere of leisure are not random. They are structured, and it is possible to understand them. This does not mean that a specific choice made by a specific individual may be deduced from the model. The choices are structured, not pre-determined. But the idea behind the model is to try to combine structuring aspects with the free will of the individual.

Using the classical tripartite division between objective, intersubjective and subjective worlds, my perspective on mass media use, and on the choice of leisure practices, looks like this: The point of departure is taken in the objective forces of

the process of modernization. As I discussed in chapter two, these centrifugal – but ambivalent – forces affect all individuals undergoing the experience of modernity. They are in that sense the obvious starting point in a model such as this one.

**Figure 7.1** The Choice of Leisure Practices




The forces of the process of modernization do not "work" immediately at individuals, however. They are mediated through the intersubjective life environment that each individual belongs to. This is the rather stable environment within which everyday life is acted out. It is within this life environment that people's subjectivities are produced. These subjectivities in turn structure the choice of leisure practices.

This is a very simple model of behaviour. But I use it here in order to identify the components that are involved in the processes under study and in order to give an indication of how they are related to each other. I will now deal with these components one by one.

## *Life Environment*

In chapter two I discussed the modernity perspective on everyday life. The strength of that perspective is that it manages to logically hold together a number of simultaneous, sometimes conflicting tendencies. With a modernity perspective, it is possible to think in terms of an underlying logic behind all everyday life processes (Habermas 1990:2).

However, it is difficult to outline how this logic, and the corresponding processes of modernization, actually work on different individuals and groupings. It may be difficult to understand why and how (on what grounds, etc) these objective forces affect different individuals differently. For whom are the effects of modernization positive, and for whom are they negative? Etc.

In order to understand these processes, it is necessary to take into account that they take place within what may be called a person's *life environment.* As social beings we live in an environment that in a sense we must take for granted. The environment is there, and we cannot alter it at will. It is structured in a specific way, it has certain characteristics, and we share it with other people. This is the intersubjective world of each individual.

A person's life environment consists of the more overarching structures of the area – the town, the village, etc – that he or she lives in. These structures are divided into, or made sense of as, different everyday life segments; segments that are more or less relevant for different people at different times. Some of the segments belong to the private sphere and some of the segments belong to the public sphere. As I discussed in chapter two, for most people leisure time means spending time in the private sphere, primarily in one's home, but also in the homes of friends. But also the public sphere contains a number of segments that people find attractive – segments filled with entertainment, cultivation, shopping, etc. These segments are in principle open to the general public. In practice, however, the openness and availability of these segments may be questioned (Lieberg 1993).

It is within this intersubjective life environment that our subjectivities concretely are produced. This means that our subjectivities are *socially* produced; it is in interaction with people – within the context of our life environment – that we become members of society (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966: ch.1).

## *The Production of Subjectivity*

Hall (1992:275) has distinguished between three conceptions of identity. The first conception is the traditional Enlightenment subject. In this view, each individual is fully centrered and unified. Individuals change during a life-time, but one's identity is basically fixed. The second conception is the sociological subject. This is a view that acknowledges that an individual's identity is formed in interaction, in relation to a surrounding society. Such a view obviously differs from the view of the Enlightenment subject, but what they have in common is that they both put forward a notion of a unified subject. This is precisely what is questioned in the third conception, a conception that Hall calls the postmodern subject. In this view, the subject has no fixed or essential identity. Identity is:

> formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us...The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent "self". Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about (Hall 1992:277).

This view of a multifaceted, and to a certain extent contradictory, subject is not by any means new to the 1990s. Such a view was put forward already a century ago by William James (1890/1950: ch.10). However, as Stryker (1980:23) has argued, for a long period of time this view of the subject was neglected, and it is only recently that the view has become commonly recognized.[1]

Given these notions, how shall one conceive of the subject? The traditional way has been to conceive of one-dimensional hierarchies, based normally on social class, but as noted above, contemporary social and cultural theory seem to empha-

size that, in a complex, contradictory consumer culture, reductionist theories of culture must be questioned.[2] That does not mean that "anything goes". Some characteristics are more determining than others. But it means that in contemporary society, one should not expect any simple and necessary relationships – if one ever could.

Bourdieu's (1984) social space is an attempt to make these one-dimensional hierarchies at least two-dimensional. But, as I discussed in chapter five, the question is whether such a conceptualizaton suffices in late modernity. A more multidimensional conceptualization is probably called for; a conceptualization that emphasises the interplay between all relevant characteristics (cf. Reimer forthcoming b).

In accordance with the perspective outlined in earlier chapters, my way of proceeding will be to distinguish between three types of factors that shape a person's subjectivity: structural, positional and individual factors.

The structural factors are by definition identical for all people living in the same environment, and they differ between life environments. That is, the structural factors shaping life in large cities are different from the structural factors shaping life in the countryside. "The Metropolitan Experience" (Chambers 1986) of living in a densely populated environment with many daily social encounters, and with the possibilities of an extensive public life, differs markedly from living a more private life in a less densely populated environment with fewer daily social encounters.

The positional factors differ between different individuals living in the same environment. For a long period of time, cultural analysis focused on *class*. It was through one's position in the class structure that one experienced and made sense of everyday life (Clarke et al 1976:13). This factor is obviously still highly relevant, and especially if one takes into account distinctions within each class; the distinctions between groupings characterized by different types of capital (Bourdieu 1984).

But, as already argued, also other positional factors must be taken into account. *Gender* is a factor impossible to ignore. As Hall writes: "A theory of culture which cannot account for patriarchal structures of dominance and oppression is, in the wake of feminism, a non-starter" (1980b:39).

These two characteristics constitute the starting point for any everyday life analysis. But there are also other factors that cannot be discounted. The role of *education* in the socialization process is widely recognized. As Roe argues:

> Thus, while social origin defines opportunity and influences all areas of life, it is the school which amplifies and multiplies, by means of its channellings and sortings, the cultural habits and dispositions inherited from the original milieux (1992:338; cf Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Roe 1983a).

It is furthermore necessary to take into account the intricate factor of *age*. Going through the life course, from birth to death, people act and think differently; in different phases the interests and ambitions differ. This means that people in a specific phase always will have a number of characteristics in common that unite them – no matter how different they may be otherwise.[3]

With the help of the positional factors of class, gender, education and age, it is possible to construct important sections of social space. However, some points are necessary to make in this context:

First, it is important to note that the "meanings" of these factors can never be read straight from the objective characteristics. These meanings are not static. The characteristics are constantly worked upon and transformed. The importance of education, for instance, is not the objective knowledge acquired during a certain period of an individual's life, but what the individual today makes of the whole schooling experience – in relation to other practices. It is thus necessary to account for the subjective meanings of these objective characteristics; the meanings that individuals create out of objective factors. This involves taking into account the complete trajectory of any individual; not only how the past is incorporated in the present, but also how one's probable future is judged.

Second, these factors should not be taken one by one. They obviously interact. There is always an intricate relationship between class and gender, for instance, and the way that a person decides to act in a specific situation is always based on the combination of all relevant factors.

And third, the importance of each factor should not be judged only generally. The factors are more important in some occasions than in others. They are always important *in relation* to something, and depending on what that something is, the gender part or the class part of one's identity may be more or less relevant.

Finally, the individual factors in this conceptualization consist of people's values. These values are, as I outlined in chapter four, both socially and individually oriented, and they consist of both desires and desirabilities. Just as the positional factors, the different values should not be taken one by one. They belong within a value-formation, and value conflicts are not uncommon.

## *Articulation*

People's subjectivities may be seen as continually produced – and reproduced – in the interaction between the three different types of factors as outlined above. Proceeding with the model over the choice of leisure practices, the process in which the contradictory subject becomes dominated by one constellation of determining factors and carries out a practice in everyday life may be understood as the particular *articulation* between one's subjectivity and a leisure practice.

Articulation, as outlined by Laclau (1982:7-13), concerns the linkages that under certain conditions may be made between two elements; linkages that are neither necessary nor absolute for all time. By insisting on non-necessary but possible articulations, all connections and linkages will be treated as contingent. The objective for an analysis, then, is to specify the circumstances under which these articulations may take place (cf. Hall 1986; Grossberg 1992: ch.1).

The point of using the concept of articulation is that it makes it possible to break with all notions of essentialism. There is no necessary relationship between, for instance, gender and domesticity. The roles played at home are socially constructed, not natural. But the concept is also useful in the sense that one can combine the notion of anti-essentialism with an idea of structures. Even if there are no necessary relations, some relations are still more probable and others.

**Figure 7.2:** Subjectivity and the Choice of Leisure Practices

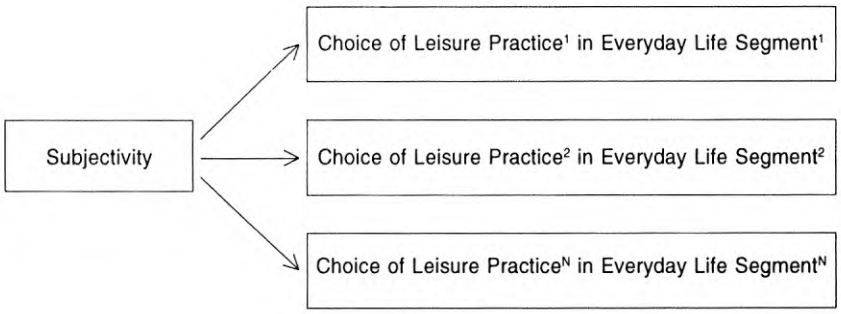



Figure 7.2 presents the final step in the process of choosing leisure practices: From a particular point in social space, and under certain conditions, any subject may be articulated with a specific leisure practice (practices $p_1$-$p_n$). These practices belong to different everyday life segments. The articulation is based on a correspondence between a person's subjectivity and a specific practice. Taken together, the practices make up a person's whole lifestyle.

## The Logic of Mass Media Use

The general model presented in the previous sections is based on a relational perspective on the choice of leisure practices. It tries to outline how the choices made by each subject are similar to those choices made by subjects with similar objective conditions of existence, and, even more to the point, how the choices are similar to those made by human beings with similar subjectivities.

The particular practices carried out by each subject cannot be satisfactorily traced through such a procedure solely, however. It is necessary also to take into account what may be called the specific logic of each particular practice. This logic may be seen as the particular way in which the general process structuring the choice of leisure practices meets a specific practice.

In chapter six I discussed how one should view the properties of different media and of different types of media content. Those discussions may now be regarded in the light of the perspective outlined in this chapter.

The mass media practices are guided from the mass media side by the cultural form of each mass medium and by the genre that each text belongs to. How should one conceive of the articulation of these properties with the structural, positional and individual factors outlined in this chapter?

First, within the total life environment, it is possible to speak also of a mass media environment. A person's life environment may be more or less saturated by media due to factors more or less under his or her control. The mass media structure looks different in different countries, and within the same country, it may also differ. For instance, depending on where one lives, the television output (the number of stations possible to receive) may differ. This is something which is difficult to change for a single individual. Similarly, the mass media environment may or may not include newspapers that are regularly being delivered to the home. This may be a personal decision, but it may also be a decision that has to be negotiated within a family. These differences in the mass media environment obviously set limits for what one can or what one cannot do with the media.

When it comes to the different cultural forms of different media, the private/ public distinction is mainly related to structural factors. The output of public sphere media differs quite markedly within different life environments, making the possible articulation between, for instance, people living in metropolitan areas and cinema going, into a probable articulation. Leaving the private sphere for media practices in the public sphere may also be related to positional and individual factors, however. Depending on factors such as one's cultural upbringing and one's social situation, using public sphere media may more or less be felt to be the natural thing to do.

The different properties of print and electronic media make them more or less accessible for different groups of people. Electronic media are more democratic; the codes for using them are much easier to learn (Meyrowitz 1985: ch.6). And the output of print media and electronic media is often directed to different groups of people, making some groups feel comfortable with the output and others not. Such correspondences may be found between, for instance, the family and television, between the white male and the cinema, and between the middle class male and prestige morning newspapers. This means that positional factors are strongly related to the choice of different kinds of media.

Moving to the level of genre, people differentially positioned in social space, and people with different individual characteristics, have different views on what they want to consume, and the knowledge of genre makes it possible to obtain what one wants. That is, the articulation between people's desires and certain genres is strong, at least as long as genres stay relatively fixed (cf. chapter six).

Taken together, this means that there is an interplay between structural, positional and individual factors that make the choices of different cultural forms and of different genres more or less probable for different people. This is furthermore a dynamic interplay in the sense that the factors involved continually change. The mass media output may be frozen at any particular point in time, but in reality, it is an output that evolves due to, among other things, the reactions of the media consumers.

In order to make the articulations outlined above concrete – in order to look at the dynamic interplay between the factors involved – it is necessary to work historically specific. That is the purpose of the second part of the book.

## Summing Up

In this chapter I have tried to show how one may understand media use in late modernity. Analyses of media use, or of cultural practices generally, tend to wind up privileging either structure or agency.[4] The perspective here has been one of trying to combine structural contraints with the notion of an active individual placed in a social context.

The notion of subjectivity has been especially useful in this context. It is with the help of this notion that one may explain why there are no simple, linear relationships between one's objective conditions of existence and one's leisure practices; by taking into account that the subject *is* contradictory, one may understand why and how in a specific situation (or in a specific leisure field) the subject will be dominated by one particular part of his or her subjectivity and not another. One may also understand how subjects in different leisure fields may wind up in "alliances" with different subjects.

This last point is especially important because it makes explicit the fact that, contrary to what has sometimes been argued in the postmodern discourse, the subject is not a de-centred, "free-floating" subject. It is a socially produced subject; a subject with structured relationships to other subjects in different everyday life segments.

## Notes

1. The concepts of identity and subjectivity are not the only concepts possible to use in this context. The *self-concept* has recently enjoyed a revival within social psychology (Gecas 1982:1), and it is nowadays used in a way similar to the use of the concept of identity. That is, the emphasis is placed on a dynamic and socially based self (Gecas 1982; Markus and Wurf 1987; Burkitt 1991). Similar discussions may be found in relation to the concept of *personality*. As Pervin writes: "The emphasis is on that which is integrative and dynamic as opposed to that which is fragmented and static" (1985:84; cf. Carson 1989; Magnusson and Törestad 1993). The concept of *role* is by definition tied to multiplicity; people take on different roles in different social situations. It must be distinguished from the concept of subjectivity that I use on the grounds that it presupposes a fixed person visible when the roles are put aside, however (cf. Turner 1978; Biddle 1986).

2. Cf. Hall 1980b:38; Kellner 1983:78; Featherstone 1987:55.

3. I have here focused on age in order to discuss life course differences and similarities. It should be noted that age related differences also may be due to generational or period effects, however (cf. Riley 1973; Kertzer 1983).

4. Cf. Johansson (1993) for a comparison of the structural perspective of Bourdieu with the agency perspective of American cultural studies, as exemplified by Grossberg.

# PART TWO

# AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF MASS MEDIA USE

EIGHT

# Background: The Swedish Mass Media Environment

On the basis of the discussions carried out in the first section of this dissertation, I will now conduct an empirical analysis of mass media use in Sweden in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. In order to make clear the specificity of Swedish mass media use at this particular point in time I will in this chapter present the Swedish mass media environment. In the first section of the chapter I will give a short historical background to the environment, and I will then outline the changes occurring presently. In the third section I will briefly outline the current mass media environment with the help of the distinction between basic and specialized media. Finally, I will discuss what I see as the two main battles raging within the environment, battles concerning identity and taste.[1]

## A Short Historical Background

In the previous chapter, I briefly introduced the notion of mass media environment. At any given time, there is in any given country a certain mass media environment that is specific for that particular country. This environment consists both of the different media available (the mass media structure), and of the uses that are made of them.

In order to fully understand what such an environment looks like, and why it looks the way it does, it is necessary to apply an historical perspective. The growth of the mass media is intimately related to the process of modernization and the current environment is an outcome of long and complex processes that have made some media into natural components in everyday life, and other media into less natural components. Some mass media have become naturalized in the private sphere, others have not.

In the context of this dissertation, it is of course only possible to give a very broad overview over these processes; it is only possible to sketch very briefly

what has happened during the last one hundred fifty years or so. The starting point may on all accounts be taken in the newspapers of the 19th Century, however. In Sweden as in other Western countries these papers played many different roles. For merchants and businessmen, the newspapers were a crucial source of information on a market that was to large to control through personal communication, and for a growing general public, the newspapers served as a source of information on things happening far away. For the political parties, the newspapers were used for the distribution of political views. The newspapers furthermore made possible the rise of a bourgeois public sphere, and they aided both in the nationalization of Sweden, and in the creation of local communities.

In the 20th Century, the mediazation process continued with the introduction of electronic media. The history of the introduction of cinemas, of radio and of television in Sweden is of course a history with similarities to other Western countries. Basically, the picture is one of electronic media initially disrupting everyday life, and then becoming naturalized within it.

The cinema early on became a popular part of everyday life outside the home. Going to the cinema meant being able to see Swedish films and popular Swedish actors, but it also gave Swedish audiences opportunities to get impulses from abroad. English and especially American movies appealed to the Swedish crowds; in the movies, another way of life than that normally experienced was portrayed. The popularity of the cinema was at its height in the mid 1950s, then after the introduction of television, interest dropped. During the 1960s, two thirds of all cinemas disappeared. Since then, the number of cinemas has stayed relatively constant, and cinema going is today for many people a regular activity.

Radio had an even more disruptive effect on everyday life than did the cinema, in the sense that it quickly became directed towards the private sphere. From the start radio was organised as a public service medium, and just like the newspapers in the 19th Century, radio assisted in the nationalization of Sweden; in "making Sweden Swedish" (Löfgren 1990). Radio was also used to cultivate the listeners – to some extent against their wishes. Radio broadcasting started in 1925, and since then, radio listening has been a daily practice shared by most Swedish people. The role played by the radio peaked in the 1950s, when radio programs in the weekends could capture the attention of most Swedes. During the last decade, the number of radio channels available to the general public has increased substantially.

In the mid 1950s, television was introduced, and after a while, this new medium took over as the most common evening leisure practice. Also television was straight from the start organised as a public service medium. In 1969, a second television channel was added, and in the late 1980s the television output increased dramatically through the introduction of cable and satellite television. Through television, for almost four decades Anglo-American popular culture has been brought to Swedish homes, and its influence on Swedish social life has been debated all through the time period.[2]

## A Changing Mass Media Environment

Not unlike what has been the case in many other Western European countries, the Swedish media system has evolved in the interplay between public service broadcasting and a private newspaper industry. Until the late 1980s the system could be described as fairly stable. However, during a short time span, commercial and private television have been introduced, and satellite channels via cable or satellite dishes are widely available. The Swedish mass media system is not as stable as it used to be, and the mass media environment, within which people lead their everyday lives, has consequently changed.

Many changes have taken place during the last couple of years, but it is fair to say that main changes have occurred during the whole of the 1980s. All through the period, there has been a growth in the media system, both in terms of the number of media units and in the total output of different media. As Weibull and Anshelm argue:

> A general trend of Swedish media developments during the 1980s is that the media, as in most other industrialized countries, have increased in importance. In 1989 there are more newspapers and magazines, radio and television channels, book publishing and films distributed than there were ten years earlier. Among the general public the time devoted to media use has increased (1992:45; cf. Johnsson-Smaragdi 1989).

These changes have been extensive in comparison to what happened during earlier time periods. The mass media output has become more diversified. Through satellite television, the output has become more international, and through on the one hand the introduction of new local and regional radio stations and on the other hand the decision to place the second public service TV channel outside Stockholm, the output has become more local. The competition for audiences has increased (Weibull and Anshelm 1992:61).

It is important to emphasise, however, that thus far these changes have not dramatically shaken the foundations of the traditional media. The time spent with the mass media has increased, but not drastically, and the old traditional media (public service broadcasting and local newspapers) have on the whole kept their roles in everyday life.

## Basic and Specialized Media

The contemporary mass media environment in Sweden consists of a – for Sweden specific – mixture of print media and electronic media. Within this environment, most media use is concentrated to the private sphere. It is mainly in the private sphere that people watch television and read newspapers.[3] The one public sphere medium that attracts a larger amount of people is the cinema.

There is a distinction to be made between different media when it comes to their involvement in everyday life. This may be seen as a distinction between *basic* and *specialized* media. The basic media in Sweden are radio, television and newspapers. They offer the kind of material that people need in everyday life in order to function as *social beings*. They aid in the interpretation of important events happening world-wide as well as of events happening in people's immediate surroundings, they give hints on how to handle new situations, and they may give pleasure in social surroundings. Specialized media give different people different kinds of impulses that they use for more *personal reasons*. They may be valuable for a person's self-understanding, for decisions concerning what to buy and wear, for instance, or they may be used for personal entertainment. Examples of specialized media in Sweden are books and magazines in the private sphere and the cinema and the theater in the public sphere.[4]

Taking the main media one by one, from a comparative perspective, *newspapers* have an unusually strong standing in Sweden. The circulation per inhabitant is among the highest in the world, and almost 80 per cent of the population subscribe to at least one morning paper (Hellingwerf 1993:108). Most morning newspapers are still either local or regional, and so are their orientation; it is through reading the local newspaper that most Swedish people obtain information on their local community. This local orientation is of course one reason behind the mass market success of the Swedish newspapers. However, it is also important to note that local newspapers are not only locally oriented. Rather, they have an "omnibus" character. They combine a local orientation with material covering all possible aspects with relevance for everyday life (Weibull 1993a:276).

Beside the local newspapers, who mainly serve their local communities, there are some morning papers who try to combine the local orientation with being a cultural or economic supplement to local newspapers in other parts of the country. These are the Stockholm morning newpapers. These papers thus direct themselves both to a general and to a more specific audience (Kratz 1991a).

All daily newspapers are not morning papers. There are also three evening tabloid newspapers published every day. Two of these three papers are national. Whereas the morning papers try to combine information with entertainment, the tabloid press is on the whole mainly entertainment oriented.

With such a high penetration of the market, and with their historical and cultural background, it is not surprising to find that the reading of newspapers is a very common activity. On an average day, 70 per cent of the Swedish population read a morning newspaper, and each day roughly 30 minutes are spent reading the local newspaper.

People with stable social roles and with stable positions in the local communities (people with high levels of education, people from the middle classes and older people) are more likely to read local newspapers than are other people. The reading of evening newspapers, on the other hand, is more common among young

people than among old people. But also structural factors are important: People living in Stockholm tend to read local newspapers to a lesser degree and evening newspapers to a greater degree than people living outside the capital (Weibull 1983,1993b).

It should be noted that the affiliation to political parties outlined above has not disappeared, even though it has weakened. Most newspapers show their political orientation in their editorials, and the choice of newspapers is still partly made on political grounds (Weibull 1983: ch.7; Björkqvist 1989).

Public service broadcasting consists currently of four *radio* channels and two *television* channels. The proportion of listeners and viewers of radio and Swedish television an average day is about 80 per cent. This percentage has not changed significantly during the last decade. The amount of time spent listening to the radio daily has increased from 70 to 80 minutes, whereas the time spent in front of the television set has stayed roughly the same: an average day, viewers spend on average about two hours in front of the screen. The ways of viewing television is changing, however: Swedish people increasingly combine viewing with other activities.

The television output consists of a mixture of primarily news, documentaries, fiction and sports. In this mixture, fiction plays a smaller role than it does in countries dominated by commercial television. People from the middle classes are heavily over-represented on television, both in factual programs and in fiction. In Swedish fiction, people from the working classes are somewhat more likely to appear than in imported fiction, but the general pattern is still the same.

Radio listening is strongly related to age, but otherwise, positional factors is not particularly important when it comes to the listening to radio. Level of education is important for the viewing of TV, however. People with low levels of education are more likely to watch television than people with high levels of education. Young people (up to the age of 15) and people above the age of 65 watch television more regularly than do people within other age groups.[5]

As I have already mentioned, public service broadcasting now has to compete with other kinds of broadcasting. There is one privately owned terrestrial channel, TV4, that reaches almost all Swedish households and a number of satellite channels available in roughly half of the Swedish households. The program output of TV4 is a mixture of news and entertainment, whereas the other channels offer mainly entertainment and sports. The satellite channels, MTV, Eurosport and others, have especially managed to attract young viewers (Cronholm 1993).

The Swedish media environment is in many ways heavily dominated by the basic media of radio, television and the daily newspapers, both in terms of output and in terms of use. But there are of course also other media that are necessary to take into account.

*Weekly and monthly magazines* are natural components in the Swedish mass media environment. The general magazines (directed towards women or the family) decreased in importance steadily during the last twenty years, but instead, specialized magazines were added to the media system. Especially popular have magazines devoted to "home and living", popular science and economy become. There are now many more specialized magazines than there are general magazines. Young people and females tend to read magazines to a much greater extent than old people and males do (Weibull and Anshelm 1992; Hafstrand 1993).

Almost one third of the Swedish population read *books* an average day. This figure has not changed at all during the last decade, and as far as comparisons can be made, it seems as if book reading is about as common today as it was in the late 1940s. The number of books published has increased steadily during the last ten years, but the increase concerns mainly specialized literature, aimed for a professional public. The production of fiction is stable (about 2000 titles each year plus another 1000 titles aimed at the children's market). Of these books, half are Swedish, half are translations. 80 per cent of all translated books are originally written in English. Thrillers and romance books are most widely read. Book reading is a practice associated primarily with people with high levels of education, with females and with young people.[6]

The sale of *phonograms* is dominated by five major transnational companies – just like in most Western countries. 90 per cent of all phonograms released are non-Swedish, and the most common genre is pop/rock (50 per cent of all phonograms), followed by classical music (30 per cent) and jazz (15 per cent). Swedish people buy on average three phonograms each year. Young people both buy and listen to phonograms more than older people do. Almost all young people in Sweden listen to phonograms every week, whereas less than 50 per cent in older age groups do so. The interest in pop/rock seems to have increased from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, whereas interest in other music genres have remained stable.[7]

I discussed earlier how the number of *cinemas* decreased in Sweden during the 1960s. Today, around 1000 different films are shown each year, out of which almost 30 per cent are Swedish. And even though the number of cinemas has stayed the same for the last twenty years, the number of visitors going to the cinema each year is dropping – like in most other Western European countries. Cinema going is heavily related to age (Lindung 1984; Reimer 1993).

The recent drop in cinema going is obviously related to the entrance of the *video recorder* in the media system. More than 65 per cent of the population have access to a video in the home. This is more common among young people than among old people, and it is especially common in the metropolitan areas. The video is mainly used for "time-shifting", but it is also used to show rented films. Recently, the video camera has given the video machine a new function (Kratz 1992a; Anshelm 1993).

It is not self-evident that going to the *theatre* constitutes a mass media practice. The sender is not physically removed from the reciever, for instance. However, the performance of a play does contain aspects typical of a mass communication process; the relationship between the sender and the receiver is uni-directional, and there are normally more receivers than senders.

Theatre going is not the most common of media practices, but surveys show that roughly 30 per cent of the Swedish population visit the theatre in order to see traditional (spoken) theatre at least once a year. This figure has remained constant since the late 1960s. If one adds musicals, revues, etc, the figure rises to more than 50 per cent. The most popular genre is the comedy, followed by revues.

Theatre going is heavily structured by life environment. People living in metropolitan areas visit theatres more often than others. This is of course to a large extent due to the fact that theatres are more common in such areas. People with high levels of education are more frequent theatre visitors than are others.[8]

## Identity and Taste

In this chapter I have tried to point out the key characteristics, and the specificity, of the Swedish mass media environment. I have tried to show the importance of local newspapers and of public service broadcasting. These are the media that more than others structure the everyday lives of Swedish people.

Around these and other media a number of "battles" have taken place. These are battles that have centrered on *identity* and on *taste*. Newspapers, radio and television have all assisted in the creation of an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991). The 19th Century newspapers made it possible for readers all over the country to be participants in common debates. No matter where one lived, one could stay informed on all things of national interest. Through the introduction of first radio and then television, the feeling of a common, Swedish identity could be strengthened even further. Specific programs broadcast year after year on Christmas Eve, on New Year's Eve, etc, made these occasions into specific *Swedish* occasions; occasions that thereby differed from corresponding ones in for instance Denmark, Norway or Great Britain.

But the mass media have also at the same time transmitted "foreign" influences. As already outlined, during the whole of the 20th Century, Swedish people have received international (mainly Anglo-American) impulses through going to the cinema, watching television and listening to music. This means that all through the century, debates have raged concerning our "genuine" Swedish identity; is it disappearing?[9]

These debates obviously centre not only on identity, but also on taste – and distaste. They contain constrasting viewpoints on what is good and proper, and what is not.

Public service broadcasting has been used in order to cultivate the Swedish audience. On one level, this may be seen as a contribution to the democratization of Swedish society; to make sure that all people, no matter their place of residence or social class, are well informed on those matters that concern them as citizens.

But on another more problematic level, the attemps towards cultivation has concerned the belief in the superiority of certain cultural forms. It has concerned the relationship between high culture and popular culture, and the question of who is to determine what people should do in their leisure time.

These debates have on many occasions turned into situations best described as "moral panics" (Cohen 1972/1987; Drotner 1992). These panics concern processes in which foreign impulses, directed mainly towards youth and spread through the mass media, are said to be threats to societal values and interests. Dime novels, jazz music, comic books and video nasties are examples of popular culture forms that have been attacked in such debates.[10]

The battles over identity and taste are by no means unique to Swedish society. Such battles have taken place in all Western European countries.[11] However, the battles look different in different contexts, and the present Swedish mass media environment is the outcome of the specific battles fought in this country until now.[12]

Presently, the battles over identity and taste are more heated than for a long time. This is of course due to to the rapid changes going in the Swedish mass media system. The mass media output has increased significantly during the latest decade, and the environment as a whole has become increasingly differentiated. Localisation and internationalisation are the twin processes currently at work – here as in other countries.[13]

Thus far, it seems as if the reactions among the Swedish people to a changing mass media system are very similar to those reactions noted in other Western countries. That is, there is little evidence of dramatic changes in mass media practices.[14] On the other hand, to expect dramatic changes in media behaviour in countries that already are quite media saturated may be beside the point altogether. It is the more subtle kinds of changes that I will try to trace in the empirical chapters of this dissertation.

## Notes

1. Analyses of the Swedish mass media environment are of course numerous. The work is to a large extent systematized and organized by NORDICOM, the Nordic Documentation Central for Mass Communication Research (Carlsson and Anshelm 1993). The three main research centres for Swedish media research are the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Göteborg, the Unit of Media and Communication Studies, University of Lund, and the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Stockholm. Until 1993, the research department at the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, PUB, was one of the main centres for research on radio and television. It now no longer exists.

2. For historical overviews, cf. Holmberg et al 1983; Cederberg and Elgemyr 1984; Löfgren 1990; Furhammar 1991; Hadenius and Weibull 1993.

3. It should be noted that the reading of newspapers at work is becoming increasingly common, however. Cf. Reimer and Weibull 1985; Hadenius and Weibull 1993: ch.11.

4. Cf. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989:306 and Weibull 1993a:270-274 for discussions on the difference between social and personal reasons for using the mass media.

5. Cf. Nowak 1988; Ross 1988; Gahlin 1989; Björkqvist-Hellingwerf 1993; Findahl 1993; Hedman 1993.

6. Cf. Lindung 1984; Nordberg and Nylöf 1990; Yrlid 1993.

7. Cf. Nordberg and Nylöf 1988; Nylöf 1990; Burnett 1993.

8. Cf. Swedner 1970; Sauter et al 1986; Strid 1989; Nordberg and Nylöf 1992.

9. A curious example of the relationship between "the Swedish" and "the foreign" is the typically Swedish christmas practice of watching Donald Duck on television. The program was introduced in 1960, and it has changed the ways that Swedish people celebrate Christmas. More than 60 per cent of the Swedish population watch the program (Gahlin and Nordström 1991).

10. For an overview of Swedish moral panics, cf. Boëthius forthcoming b. For discussions of the moral panic surrounding video nasties, the latest Swedish moral panic, cf. Roe 1985 and Reimer 1986b. One should note that battles over taste sometimes turn into moral panics. But one should not focus exclusively on such instances. The battles over taste are normally less spectacular. Cf. Bolin 1994 for an analysis of ways of making distinctions in everyday life with the help of popular culture.

11. Cf. Hebdige 1988, Brunsdon 1991 and Schou 1992 for discussions on similar battles fought in other European countries.

12. I have here focused on 20th Century battles over taste, but these are not in any ways modern phenomena. Similar battles took place in relation to the theatre in Sweden during the 19th Century, when the "cultivated" parts of the theatre audiences managed to discipline – and eventually drive away – the rowdier parts (Hellspong 1983; Nordmark 1993).

13. Cf. Morley and Robins 1989; Schlesinger 1991; Featherstone 1993.

14. Cf. Becker and Schoenbach 1989 for a comparison of audience responses to media diversification in eleven countries.

NINE

# Structuring the Analysis

In chapter seven I outlined how, in principle, one may view mass media use as the result of the articulation of a person's subjectivity with a specific media text. From there it is not possible to proceed straight to an empirical analysis, however. It is necessary first to specify how one conceives of the relationship between the different types of factors shaping people's subjectivities and the media output in a concrete historical setting. On the basis of such a model, it then becomes possible to present the research questions that will be put to the material. These are the two tasks to be undertaken in this chapter.

## A Research Model

I have argued that people's subjectivities are produced in the interaction between three types of factors – structural, positional and individual. This contradictory subjectivity may then be related to different leisure practices.

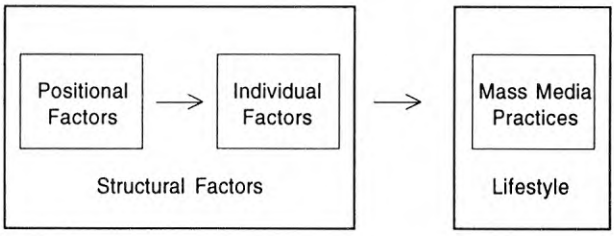
There are two different types of relationships to take into account in this process: First, the relationship between the three factors producing the subjectivity. And second, the relationship between these factors and the media output.

The structural factors constitute the life environment that each individual belongs to. Within this environment, the positional factors are related to the individual factors. As already outlined, these individual factors are people's values.

Through the interaction between these factors, a subjectivity that may be articulated with different types of mass media practices is produced. The choice of different practices is related to the cultural form and genre of different types of media output, and the practices are components in a person's whole lifestyle (Figure 9.1).[1]

The structural and the individual factors need not be problematized more as of now. They consist of the life environment and of people's values. When it comes

**Figure 9.1** A Research Model




to the positional factors, there are two points necessary to make at this stage, however.

First, I argued earlier that class belonging and gender are important distinguishing characteristics when it comes to perceiving of social space. But if one is to insist on the possibility of different articulations in different everyday life situations, then it is necessary to break with an *a priori* decision of which positional factors are the most important. In some situations, a person's identity may be a class identity, but in other situations, the fact of being young may be more important. Beside social class and gender, I will thus focus also on characteristics such as education, age, level of income and marital status.

Second, even though some positional factors may dominate a certain everyday life situation, it is important to remember that an exclusive focus on that relationship would be misleading. There is always a whole structure of relationships necessary to take into account. As Bourdieu writes:

> The particular relations between a dependent variable ... and so-called independent variables such as sex, age and religion, or even educational level, income and occupation tend to mask the complete system of relationships which constitutes the true principle of the specific strength and form of the effects registered in any particular correlation. The most independent of "independent" variables conceals a whole network of statistical relations which are present, implicitly, in its relationship with any given opinion or practice (1984:103).

No one is "only" young or male. The structure of relationships that guides any practice must as far as it is possible be kept intact. That is, trying to statistically "control" for other independent variables would only conceal the real matter, which is that the meaning of being young, for instance, is the fact of being young *and* male *and* working class.[2]

In earlier chapters I have discussed the distinctions that may be made between different types of media content, and I have outlined briefly what the Swedish media system looks like. The different types of media – with different cultural

forms – that I will focus upon are television, local newspapers, evening newspapers, weekly magazines, video recorders, books, the cinema and the theatre. These media are all parts of the Swedish mass media environment. Some are basic (newpapers and television) and some are specialized (books, magazines, video recorders, the cinema and the theatre). Two of the media are placed in the public sphere, whereas the others are mainly associated with the private sphere. The one main mass medium that I unfortunately cannot deal with empirically is radio (cf. chapter ten).

When it comes to the question of genre, I will distinguish between a number of different genres that are to be found in all basic media, and in some of the specialized media. These genres include different types of news, entertainment, high culture and sports.

The genres differ to the extent that some are fictional and some are non-fictional. Some of the genres may furthermore be analysed in relation to the high culture/ popular culture distinction.

## Research Questions

In the analysis, I will focus on five main research questions. Each of the main questions is divided into a number of sub-questions.

1. What does the relationship between positional factors and the uses of the mass media look like?

a How important are different positional factors for the choice of different types of media (different cultural forms)?

b How important are different positional factors for the choice of different mass media genres?

c Have the relationships changed between 1986 and 1992?

Relating media use to positional factors is the traditional starting point for analyses of media use, and it is the question that I will begin my analysis with. I will focus both on the cultural forms of different media, and on different genres on television and in the local newspaper, and I will analyse whether there have been any changes in the patterns during the time period under study. These questions will be dealt with in chapters eleven through fourteen.

2. What does the relationship between structural factors and the uses of the mass media look like?

a How important is the life environment for the choice of different types of media?

b How important is the life environment for the choice of different genres?

c Have the relationships changed between 1986 and 1992?

In this section of the analysis, I will introduce the structural factor of life environment. This I will do in relation both to different genres and to different types of media. I will take into account the interaction between positional and structural factors, and I will look at the relationships over time (chapter fifteen).

3. What does the relationship between individual factors and the uses of the mass media look like?

a How important are people's values for the choice of different types of media?

b How important are people's values for the choice of different genres?

c Have the relationships changed between 1986 and 1992?

In this section, I will add the individual factor of human values to the analysis (cf. chapter four). I will look into the relationship between values and the choice of both different genres and different types of media. The interaction between structural, positional and individual factors will be treated, and I will analyse whether the patterns have changed over a five year period (chapter sixteen).

4. How do people combine different types of media?

a What does the relationship between public sphere media and private sphere media look like?

b What does the relationship between electronic media and print media look like?

5. What does the relationship between mass media use and lifestyles look like?

a How embedded in different everyday life segments are different media practices?

b How important are people's life environments for the practices in different everyday life segments?

c How important are different positional factors for the practices in different everyday life segments?

d How important are people's values for the practices in different everyday life segments?

This section of the empirical analysis differs from the others in the sense that I will look at media use within a lifestyle context. I will first look at the combination of media: I will analyse the extent to which people combine on the one hand private and public sphere media, and on the other hand print and electronic me-

dia. I will then construct different everyday life segments, and I will analyse how embedded media practices are in these different segments (chapter seventeen).

## Notes

1. For analytical reasons, all relationships included in the figure are regarded as uni-directional. That is the type of simplification that sometimes is necessary in empirical research. Obviously, a person's lifestyle will have an impact on his or her values, for example, but that is not what interests me in this context.

2. Empirically, it is not possible to be as all-encompassing as one would like to be in this context. In order to study all relevant relationships simultaneously, one needs larger number of cases in one's surveys than one normally has.

TEN

# The Empirical Study: Society Opinion Mass Media 1986-1992

In this chapter I will describe the data that I will use in the empirical analysis. I will first describe the surveys that I have used – the Society Opinion Media series of surveys – and I will then discuss the specific questions that I have used in the analysis. In relation to those discussions, I will also outline how structural and positional factors have changed between 1986 and 1992. My use of statistical techniques will then be taken up, and finally, I will discuss the validity of my approach.

## Society Opinion Media: A Presentation

Society Opinion Media (SOM) is the name given to a sequence of nationwide surveys that have been conducted by researchers from three departments at Göteborg University: the department of political science, the department of journalism and mass communication, and the school of public administration.

The surveys are conducted yearly since 1986. The objective of the surveys is to create possibilities for systematic analyses of the opinions and actions of Swedish people in a number of different contexts. Questions in the surveys concern, among other things, politics, the mass media and leisure. By conducting the surveys yearly, and by using a base of identical questions each year, with the help of the surveys it becomes possible not only to analyse the opinions and actions of the Swedish people at one particular point in time, but also to systematically analyse changes in these opinions and actions.[1]

The surveys are based on mail questionnaires. Random one-step sampling is used, and the questionnaires are sent to 2500 Swedish citizens between the ages of 15 and 75.[2] The questionnaires normally consist of between 16 and 20 pages of questions, and most questions are based on fixed response alternatives.

The response rate has varied between 66 and 71 per cent. Young people (up to 20 years of age) and older people have tended to answer to somewhat greater extents than people between 20 and 40 years of age, but the differences have not been great. There are no differences in response rates between men and women. Analyses of respondents' replies have not detected any major weaknesses in the material (Cf. Kratz 1992b; Rönström 1993).

## Operationalizations

The questions that I will use from the surveys concern on the one hand the factors involved in the production of subjectivity, and on the other hand factors having to do with media use and leisure practices.

### *Structural Factors*

I have argued that the structural factors shaping individual action may be conceived of as the life environment that each individual belongs to. In the SOM surveys, respondents are asked to judge the character of the area they live in; if they feel they live 1) in the countryside, 2) in a town, or 3) in a city/metropolitan area. I will use this subjective question in order to distinguish between four life environments. I will use the first two alternatives as they are. The third alternative, city or a metropolitan area, is too broad to be really useful, however. I will therefore combine the subjective evaluation made by the respondents with an objective criterium. Those people who according to the surveys live in the three major metropolitan areas – Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö – will be separated from the other respondents. According to this definition, about one fifth of the Swedish population live in the countryside, and about one tenth live in metropolitan areas. The rest of the population live in towns or cities. These proportions have not changed substantially between 1986 and 1992.[3]

In 1986, 1987, and in 1992, a question measuring the time the respondents had lived in their present environment was included. This question on the one hand indicates the attachment that one may feel towards one's environment, and on the other hand, it indicates which groups of people are the most geographically mobile. About 40 per cent of the population have never moved at all, and almost 15 per cent have moved within the latest five years. Young people and people with high levels of education are more likely to move than others. It is mainly people living in metropolitan areas who are new to their environments.

### *Positional Factors*

I will use six different positional factors: social class, age, gender, level of education, household income and marital status.[4]

These factors are more or less easy to operationalize. The gender factor does not need any explanation. When it comes to marital status I will distinguish between people who are single and people who either are married or living together. Age and level of household income are of course continuous variables, but in the analysis they have been classified into three groups. People between 15 and 29 years of age are considered to be young, middle aged people are between 30 and 49 years old, and old people are between 50 and 75 years old. Level of household income has been adjusted over the years in order to keep a similar proportion of people within each of the three categories.

Education and class position are the two concepts most difficult to operationalize. For the operationalization of education, I have used a question where the respondents have eleven alternatives marking their level of education. These eleven alternatives have then been reduced to three levels, low medium and high. Class position may be judged either subjectively or objectively. I have used a question tapping subjective class position. The respondents were asked to mark which of the following five categories they felt they belonged to: a working class family, a lower middle class family, an upper middle class/academic family, farmer or self-employed. These five categories are used in the analysis as they are stated here.

The proportion of males and females, and the proportion of single and married people, is roughly the same each year. Similarly, the proportion of people within each of the three age groups and within each of the three levels of income is also fairly stable. About one fourth of the population are classified as being young, and the rest are evenly divided between being middle aged and old. One third of the population have low levels of income, one fifth high levels, and the rest a medium level of income. About 30 per cent of the population are single, whereas 70 per cent either are married or living together.

The two remaining factors have changed noticeably over the years. The average level of education has risen. In 1992, one fourth of the population have a high level of education. This means an increase by ten percentage points in six years. The rest of the population are about as likely to have a medium as a low level of education. The proportion of people having working class backgrounds have dropped somewhat, even though still almost half of the population have this background. Almost one third feel they come from a lower middle class family, and about ten per cent from an upper middle class family. Ten per cent say they are self-employed; less than five per cent are farmers.

The positional factors described here are not unrelated to the structural factors outlined earlier. That is, the different life environments consist to a greater or lesser degree of people with different positional characteristics. There are fewer older people in the metropolitan areas than there are in the countryside, and consequently, fewer younger people in the countryside. To a somewhat greater extent than females, males tend to live in the countryside. Even greater differences may be found in relation to level of education, income, social class and marital

status. The countryside is an environment with relatively speaking more working class people, more people with low levels of education and income, and with more married people. The life environment of the metropolitan areas is the opposite of the countryside environment.

## *Individual Factors*

In chapter four I argued that a reasonable value conceptualization in late modernity is one that captures values that are connected either to desires or desirabilities, and values that are either individually or socially oriented. In order to do so, I will use four items chosen from Rokeach's 18 terminal values: the values of pleasure, self-accomplishment, equality and wisdom. It is of course impossible to state that a specific value holds the same meaning for everybody; the same value may very well be a desire for one person and a desirability for another person. The meaning of the value may also change depending on the context. However, it may be argued that different values have different "preferred meanings", and with such a perspective, it may be argued that self-accomplishment and wisdom may be seen more as personally oriented than as socially oriented values, whereas the opposite holds for pleasure and equality. Pleasure is more likely to be a desire than a desirability, whereas wisdom and equality are more likely to be desirabilities. Self-accomplishment may be seen both as a desire and as a desirability.

In addition to these four values, I will use Inglehart's materialist and postmaterialist value orientations. Although the postmaterialist theory is controversial, and although these two value orientations are too abstract to be able to capture in terms of desirabilities/desires, and in terms of individually/socially oriented values, I believe that their standing within empirical research is so strong that they should be included. I will, however, re-conceptualize them as two types of value orientations that are possible to combine.

The Inglehartian and the Rokeachean value conceptualizations have seldom been systematically related to each other, but there are connections between them. As Habermas (1983:80) has pointed out, the postmaterialism value scale contains both expressive attitudes toward self-realization and self-experience, and orientations characteristic of moral sensibility; a belief in civil rights and self-determination.

The expressive attitudes identified by Habermas correspond to a certain degree to the value of pleasure. The notion of moral sensibility may in a wider sense be said to be linked both to the value of equality and to the value of wisdom. Self-accomplishment, on the other hand, would fall ouside the materialist/postmaterialist conceptualization.

The value formation of any individual may thus be grasped as the specific way in which these and other values are combined. One may, to a smaller or greater extent, be guided by pleasure *and* equality, by pleasure *and* wisdom, by materialism *and* wisdom, etc.

The Rokeach value battery has been included in the 1986, 1988, 1990, 1991 and 1992 surveys, and the Inglehart battery in the 1986, 1987, 1989 and 1991 surveys.

### *Mass Media Use Indicators*

In the previous chapter, I explained that I would analyse the uses of eight different media: television, local newspapers, evening newspapers, books, weekly magazines, video, the cinema and the theatre.

Local newspaper reading and television viewing are measured on scales based on the number of days in each week the respondents normally use these media. Evening newspaper reading is measured on a five point scale, with the possible responses ranging from reading evening newspaper 6 or 7 days a week to never reading such papers. When it comes to books, magazines, video, cinema and theatre, the questions used measure how often during the last twelve months the respondents had carried out the different practices; from several times each week to not once in twelve months. The two questions on newspaper reading (local newspapers and evening newspapers) have been included in all surveys, and the questions on the specialized media have been included in all surveys since 1987.[5] The question on television viewing has only been included in the 1992 survey.

The uses of different genres will be taken up in relation to the two basic media of television and morning newspapers. I will use a question about which genres in the two media the respondents use. The question measures, on a four point scale, how much of the output of each genre one normally watches. For television, the genres in question are entertainment, news, documentaries, sports, culture and nature programs; for morning newspapers, local news, domestic news, foreign news, culture, sports, radio/TV features and advertisements. The alternatives offered were as follows: watch/read "nothing/almost nothing", "not much", "fairly much" or "everything/almost everything" of the output of each genre. The question on television genres was included in the 1986, 1991 and 1992 surveys, the question on newspaper genres only in the 1986 survey.[6]

Some things need to be said in relation to these questions. First, the analysis is restricted to these specific genres. It does not cover all types of programs that may be found on Swedish television, or all types of articles that may be found in a local newspaper. The analysis is thus not set up to be a complete analysis of the viewing/reading patterns of Swedish audiences. Second, the measure used concerns *how much of the output* of each genre one watches or reads, not how many hours or how many days of the week one watches or reads. In order to understand how frequent the viewing/reading of these genres are for each person, the replies must be related to the total output of each genre in each medium.

For television, the six genres included in the questionnaire make up a substantial part of the output of Swedish Television (in 1990 about 75 per cent of the total output), and in that sense they may give a reasonable indication of the viewing

patterns existing among Swedish television viewers. Entertainment, sports and documentaries are more common genres on TV than the others. In 1991 each of them made up almost twenty per cent of the total output. They were followed by news and culture, each of which made up ten per cent of the output. Nature programs made up roughly five per cent of the total output. Since 1985/86 the output of sports and documentaries has increased somewhat, whereas the output of culture has decreased (Carlsson and Anshelm, 1991:188).

For local newspapers, it is of course not possible to generally state an output. However, a content analysis of two local newspapers carried out in 1986 shows that the six editorial genres included in the questionnaire made up 75-80 per cent of the output in the two newspapers at that time. Between thirty and forty per cent of the output consisted of local news and between ten and twenty five per cent consisted of sports. Domestic and foreign news each made up about ten per cent of the output, whereas culture and radio/TV features made up a very small proportion of the output (Reimer 1986c).

### *Lifestyle Indicators*

I will use the same question in relation to everyday life segments and lifestyles that I use for the specialized media. That is, I will broaden the analysis by using items covering other leisure practices than media practices. The question on leisure practices has been included in all SOM surveys since 1987, but the number of practices included has varied. The 1988 SOM survey was more detailed in this respect than other surveys (28 items), and I will therefore concentrate on that survey.

## Statistical Techniques

In order to analyse the empirical material properly, I have used a number of different statistical techniques. The technique most often used is analysis of variance with multiple classification analysis (MCA). The main advantage with this technique in this context is that the technique does not demand linear relationships. With the help of the technique, it is possible to analyse not only how strongly related two variables are, but also what the relationship looks like. If there is a relationship between age and TV viewing, it is of course relevant to find out not only how strong that relationship is, but also whether it is young people, middle aged people or old people who are the most regular viewers. I will thus use analysis of variance for most relationships between independent and dependent variables. The main exception to this pattern is that in those cases when the relationships are clearly linear, I will use product moment correlation coefficients, especially when using values as independent variables.

In order to analyse whether a number of variables are systematically related to each other, I will use factor analysis. This is relevant both when relating the uses of different genres to each other, and when relating different leisure practices to each other. This is the procedure used in order to analyse different everyday life segments, for instance. I am also interested in analysing how similar or different people's patterns of practices are. I have therefore also conducted a number of cluster analyses.

It should be pointed out that factor and cluster analyses must be used with care. I argued in chapter five that much empirical work on lifestyles relies too heavily on a mechanical use of factor analysis. In the empirical analysis, I have tried to use both factor and cluster analysis in a more theoretically guided fashion. This means, for instance, that I have selected only those leisure items that make sense in relation to the lifestyle conceptualization put forward.[7]

## Validity

The SOM surveys are traditional mail questionnaire surveys, with all the advantages and disadvantages that such surveys have. There are good possibilities for making generalizations and for making systematic comparisons over time and space, but it is difficult to get detailed replies, it is impossible to follow up questions, etc.

I will not discuss the general merits – and the general problems – of quantitative analyses here (cf. Belson 1986). Suffice to say that the choice of a quantitative technique for this analysis is made on the grounds that it fits the objective of this specific study. It does not mean that the technique as such is superior to qualitative techniques, but it means that in order to obtain generalizable results on Swedish mass media practices, this is the most reasonable technique to use.

However, what *is* necesssary to discuss is the questions that I concretely will use in the analysis. How valid are they? First, I believe that the question tapping a person's life environment is perfectly valid given the conceptualization of life environment; the question differentiates between living in the countryside, in cities, towns and in metropolitan areas. What the question is not able to do, is to distinguish between differences within each of these environments. That is, some parts of a metropolitan area may be more metropolitan than what other areas are. In order to take this into account, I have used a narrow definition of "metropolitan area". Only people living in the centres of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö are characterized as living in metropolitan areas.

Another problem with the question concerns the fact that the Stockholm environment often differs from other metropolitan environments. We know, for instance, that people living in Stockholm read local newspapers less regularly than people living in Göteborg or Malmö. However, normally the similarities between the

three environments are stronger than the differences, and therefore this categorization, despite its problems, is superior to other alternatives.

When it comes to the positional factors, the questions used are extremely traditional. They have been used with roughly the same wordings in other surveys before. The two questions that are the most difficult are the ones tapping social class and level of education.

I have used a subjective measure of social class. This is not a problem as such, but the question is not totally logical. It is a mixture of trying to measure class belonging and of trying to construct a family type classification. Self-employed is hardly a class in the same sense as a working class or a lower middle class, and the alternative upper middle class/academic mixes two aspects in one question.

The question on education is reasonably put in order to capture a one-dimensional educational structure. However, in line with the thinking of Bourdieu and others, it would have been preferable to have a variable that would have distinguished between different types of education.

The idea of measuring people's values (the individual factor) in quantitative surveys have been hotly debated, as I discussed in chapter four. The values used are the ones that without any doubts are the most frequently used in quantitative surveys, and if there is a problem, then the problem is not unique for this analysis. However, I believe that a major weakness with the value items is that they are put to people on a general level, outside any kinds of contexts. There can be no doubt that the importance of different values to a large extent depends on the situation. Values are always invoked in relation to something (cf. chapter four). This is not a problem if one is interested in the general relationships between a number of values, but it is a problem if one, like here, is interested in the roles played by different values in relation to everyday life practices.

Among the questions on media use, the ones tapping habitual behaviour should be the least problematic: there is a "real" pattern that the respondents may interpret the question against. This is not to say that people always give reliable answers to such questions, however. Prestige answers cannot be discounted (cf. Reimer 1986c).

By using questions on how much of the output of certain genres people normally watch or read, one assumes that each person is aware of how big the output of each genre actually is. This may be a problematic assumption. And when it comes to the question on television, with the arrival of satellite television, it is probably impossible anyhow to watch "everything/almost everything" of genres such as entertainment. It is questionable whether it is possible to even watch "fairly much". Thus, in using the question, those labels should not be interpreted literally. If a respondent replies that he or she watches "everything/almost everything" of the entertainment output on television, then this should be interpreted as an indication of that the viewing of the genre seems be something that the respon-

dent does quite regularly. The measure, then, should be regarded as an indication of people's subjective orientations to a number of specified genres.

Taken together, I believe that some of the questions used in the analysis could have been improved, as I have suggested here. Some other questions could also have been included. However, these are problems facing all researchers working with surveys outside one's own control.

On the other hand, I believe that the data as they now look are useful for my purposes – as long as one does not forget the need for interpretation. In chapter three I discussed the current standing of the field of media use research. I believe that this data may provide useful knowledge in relation to that field. The type of data is not suited for analysing what concrete social contexts may mean for people's uses of the media. However, the data *are* valid for helping us better understand how macro-level structures interact with other factors in guiding people's leisure practices.

## Notes

1. Basic analyses of the SOM surveys are published at least once a year. Cf. Holmberg and Weibull 1992,1993.
2. In 1992, the sample was increased to 2800, and also non-Swedish citizens were included in the sample. Non-Swedish citizens had also been included in the 1986 and 1989 surveys (Rönström 1993:196).
3. Distinguishing between more or less urban, and more or less rural, areas is by no means the only possibility for capturing the specificity of different life environments. Anshelm has argued that beside the rural-urban distinction, it may also be meaningful to distinguish between life environments that differ when it comes to level of religiosity, political activity, press structure, post-industrial structure, geographical location and geographical mobility (1990:11). However, in relation to mass media use, I believe that the distinction applied here is the most fruitful.
4. With the exception of education and marital status in the 1987 survey, all of these questions have been included in all SOM surveys.
5. The question was asked on the basis of a six point scale in 1987; from 1988 onwards a seven point scale was used.
6. The genre of nature programs was not included in the 1986 survey.
7. The analyses have all been run with the help of the SPSS/PC statistical package. Additional data referred to but not presented in tables or figures are available from the author.

ELEVEN

# The Uses of the Mass Media 1: Newspapers

In this first chapter of the empirical analysis I will focus on the reading of newspapers. I will analyse how newspaper reading is structured by positional factors. This is the traditional way of analysing mass media use, and it will form the basis on which the rest of the analysis will build. As outlined in chapter eight, both morning and evening newspapers are widely read in Sweden, and I will look into the reading patterns for both types of newspapers. In the analysis, I will focus both on the habitual practice of reading newspapers as such and on the reading of different genres. I will also analyse how these patterns have evolved during a six year period, between 1986 and 1992.

## Habitual Newspaper Reading

This first section of this chapter is divided into three parts. First I will look at the reading of local morning newspapers, then at the reading of evening newspapers. Finally I will look at the combination of these reading practices.

### *Local Newspapers*

The local newspaper has a very strong position in Swedish society. For many people, having a local newspaper in the home is something that comes almost naturally. It is part of the home environment to the same extent as is the kitchen sink and the living room sofa. Almost 80 per cent of the Swedish population live in homes having a subscription to the local newspaper (Hellingwerf 1993:108).

But local newspapers are not only delivered to the homes of Swedish citizens, they are also widely and regularly read. Table 11.1 shows that during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, nine people out of ten read a local newspaper at least once a week. That is, only a minority of the Swedish population have decided not to have regular contact with the local newspaper (cf. Kratz and Weibull 1993).

Most people choose to read the local newspaper on a very regular basis. More than 60 per cent of the population read the paper at least six days a week. However, there are signs towards a change in this pattern: The percentage of readers at least six days a week seem to be slowly but steadily decreasing.

**Table 11.1** Reading of Local Newspapers. SOM 1986-1992 (Per Cent and Anova/MCA).

| | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Every Week | 90 % | 92 % | 92 % | 92 % | 91 % | 90 % | 90 % |
| Six Days a Week | 69 % | 72 % | 72 % | 72 % | 71 % | 70 % | 66 % |
| Grand Mean | 4.92 | 5.07 | 5.09 | 5.10 | 5.02 | 4.97 | 4.86 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | -.42 | -.43 | -.55 | -.58 | -.53 | -.66 | -.54 |
| 30-49 | .14 | .03 | .19 | .12 | .12 | .19 | .07 |
| 50-75 | .19 | .27 | .21 | .31 | .26 | .28 | .32 |
| Eta | .13 * | .15 * | .18 * | .20 * | .17 * | .20 * | .17 * |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | |
| Male | .03 | -.03 | .01 | .05 | -.03 | .00 | .03 |
| Female | -.03 | .03 | -.01 | -.05 | .03 | .00 | -.03 |
| Eta | .01 | .02 | .01 | .03 | .03 | .00 | .01 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.16 | – | -.09 | .04 | -.08 | .04 | -.09 |
| Medium | .03 | – | -.07 | -.19 | -.05 | -.34 | -.03 |
| High | .45 | – | .28 | .22 | .27 | .49 | .18 |
| Eta | .10 * | – | .08 * | .09 * | .06 | .16 * | .05 |
| **Class** | | | | | | | |
| Working Class | -.24 | -.20 | -.27 | -.23 | -.18 | -.31 | -.31 |
| Farmer | .05 | .35 | .21 | .42 | -.04 | .10 | .55 |
| Lower Middle Class | .26 | .14 | .12 | .09 | .20 | .24 | .15 |
| Upper Middle Class | .65 | .23 | .61 | .29 | .32 | .56 | .61 |
| Self-Employed | -.03 | .14 | .18 | .23 | -.06 | .03 | .09 |
| Eta | .15 * | .11 * | .16 * | .12 * | .10 * | .16 * | .17 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.32 | -.07 | -.20 | -.22 | -.20 | -.33 | -.46 |
| Medium | .10 | .00 | .05 | .00 | .01 | .05 | .13 |
| High | .35 | .09 | .23 | .33 | .36 | .47 | .53 |
| Eta | .14 * | .04 | .10 * | .11 * | .11 * | .15 * | .19 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | |
| Single | -.24 | – | -.48 | -.44 | -.27 | -.59 | -.53 |
| Married | .11 | – | .22 | .18 | .12 | .26 | .24 |
| Eta | .09 * | – | .18 * | .16 * | .09 * | .20 *. | 18 * |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in value between 0 and 6

The regularity with which people decide to read the local newspaper is highly structured by positional factors. This may be deduced by looking at the MCA-analysis in Table 11.1. The relationships presented in the table are bivariate

relationships. They consist on the one hand of the deviations from the means for each subgroup from the general mean and on the other hand of a measure of strength of the covariation between each positional factor and newspaper reading. The measure, eta, does not demand linear relationships.[1] For example: The general mean for newspaper reading in 1986 is 4.92, i.e. reading a morning paper almost five days a week. The mean for young people is 4.50 (4.92-0.42), for middle aged people 5.06 (4.92+0.14) and for old people 5.11 (4.92+0.19). The relationship is significant at the .05 level (eta=.13).

The reading of local newspapers is structured mainly by social class, level of income, marital status and age. In deciding to read – or not to read – a local newspaper, these are the parts of people's identities that are the most important. People from the upper middle classes are much more likely to read a local newspaper regularly than are people from the working classes. Similarly, people with high levels of income, married people and older people are more probable regular morning newspaper readers than are people with low levels of income, single people and young people.

These patterns suggest that a number of different factors are involved when it comes to the choice of reading local newspapers. The local newspaper tries to direct itself to all people living in the area of distribution. But apparently not everyone feels that the newspaper is something necessarily needed. Many young people, for instance, are in a somewhat mobile and unsettled *social* situation. Moving from one town to another, or from one relationship to another, they do not live the kind of life for which a daily newspaper seems necessary – at least not given the outlook of the newspapers currently published. Many single people are facing a similar situation.

The differences due to social class – and to a lesser degree to level of education – must be interpreted in another way. These differences are less social and more *cultural* in nature. People brought up in upper middle class families more "naturally" feel that the newspaper is theirs. It concerns them to a greater degree than it does people from working class families. These differences are then strengthened through different paths through the schooling system (cf. Roe 1983).

Finally, to these two factors must be added an *economic* factor. It is obviously the case that for most people, having access to a local newspaper costs money. If that money is not available, then the probability for reading diminishes (cf. Kratz and Weibull 1991).

Table 11.1 indicates that the differences in reading are rather stable over time. That is, the relationships look similar for the different years, and the strengths of the relationships have not changed dramatically. The one change that may be noted is that age seems to become more important for the reading of local newspapers. For both young and old people, the regularity of reading is decreasing, but it is decreasing more strongly among young people.

The patterns presented in Table 11.1 are based on treating positional factors separately. But obviously these factors are related to each other. Middle class people tend to have higher levels of education than working class people, and young people are on average more highly educated than are old people, etc. This means, for instance, that the reading patterns of old people will be similar to the reading patterns of people with low levels of education.

On the other hand, disregarding the relationship as such between different positional factors, these factors interact in relation to specific practices. An individual from the working classes is also male, for instance, and of a certain age, and it is the combination of these characteristics that direct the subjectivity of an individual towards different practices.

The relationship between these different positional factors may be treated in two different ways. Either one tries to "control" for other variables in order to arrive at the unique effect of each positional factor. Or one tries to look at the relationships simultaneously. I will mainly use the latter strategy in this analysis.[2]

How do the different positional factors interact? In the first place, age differs from the other positional factors presented in Table 11.1 in the sense that by definition it is a characteristic that will change. Everyone moves eventually from the youngest to the oldest age group, and going through the life course, everyday life necessarily changes.

Generally the differences in reading patterns are strongest at middle age. Young people read on the whole less than older people do, and the differences within this age group is rather small. In middle age, more people read the local newspaper regularly, but at the same time, the differences in reading habits increase. People in stable social situations (married people with high levels of income) are much more likely to read morning newspapers than people in less stable social situations. Then at older age, when even more people read the local newspaper daily, the differences become smaller once again (Appendix 1).

Looking more closely at the relationship between positional factors and reading habits, it is necessary to distinguish between two types of patterns. On the one hand, taking into account more than one of the positional factors at the same time means that some patterns become clearer and stronger. Old people read local newspapers more regularly than young people. People with high levels of income are more regular readers than are people with low levels of income.

Combining these two factors means obtaining a pattern according to which the most regular readers of local newspapers are to be found among those that both have a high level of income *and* are of middle or old age. These people's reading habits are totally different from the reading habits of young and middle aged people with low levels of income. The two factors of age and income thus interact and produce a highly structured pattern. It is not enough to be old in order to be a

regular newspaper reader. It is necessary to be in a stable financial situation as well (Appendix 2).

Similar patterns may be found for other combinations, for instance age and social class, and for age and marital status. That is, great differences in reading habits are to be found on the one hand between young people from working class families and old people from the upper middle classes, and on the other hand between single young people and old people living together.

Another type of pattern is also to be found, however. It is not always the case that two positional factors interact and strengthen the bivariate relationships. The relationship between social class, income and reading may be taken as an example.

For people in working class families and for self-employed people, level of income is highly relevant for the decision to read newspapers regularly. Within these groups, there is a clear relationship between income and regularity of newspaper reading. This is a similar pattern to the ones presented initially. However, within middle class families, and especially within upper middle class families, this pattern is not to be found. These people tend to read newspapers regularly no matter the level of income. Cultural factors are for these people more important than economical factors (Appendix 3).

### *Evening Newspapers*

The alternative to reading a morning newspaper normally subscribed to is to read an evening newspaper. This is what more than half of the Swedish population do at least once a week. For most people, however, the reading is rather infrequent. Roughly 20 per cent read an evening newspaper at least six days a week.

The evening newspapers differ in content from the morning papers by being more entertainment oriented. Another difference is that they do not have the local character of the morning newspapers. And as can be seen in Table 11.2 (next page), the people who feel at home with an evening newspaper are on the whole different from those reading morning newspapers the most regularly.

Just like the reading of morning papers, evening newspaper readership is structured by social class and age, but the patterns have been reversed. The most regular readers are young people and people coming from working class families. People with lower levels of education are more frequent readers than are people with higher levels of education. Also, reading an evening newspaper is a practice associated more with males than with females. Level of income is not strongly related.

Ever since the breakthrough of the evening newspapers in the 1950s, these papers have been associated with young people. There are no indications in the data presented here that this is about to change. On the contrary, the cultural form of

the evening newspaper seems to attract people at a certain age and in a certain social situation. The reading of evening newspapers does not seem to be tied to generational differences. Studies conducted in the 1970s reveal similar patterns to the ones presented here, suggesting that young people, when growing old and when changing their social situations, increasingly leave these papers behind (Weibull 1983:106-111).

**Table 11.2** Reading of Evening Newspapers. SOM 1986-1992 (Per Cent and Anova/ MCA).

| | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Every Week | 56 % | 64 % | 63 % | 61 % | 56 % | 62 % | 56 % |
| Six Days a Week | 17 % | 21 % | 21 % | 21 % | 18 % | 19 % | 15 % |
| Grand Mean | 1.85 | 2.16 | 2.12 | 2.10 | 1.96 | 2.11 | 1.91 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .27 | .29 | .18 | .13 | .20 | .24 | .19 |
| 30-49 | -.03 | -.04 | .10 | .08 | .00 | -.01 | .01 |
| 50-75 | -.17 | -.16 | -.23 | -.19 | -.15 | -.16 | -.15 |
| Eta | .13 * | .14 * | .14 * | .10 * | .10 * | .12 * | .11 * |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | |
| Male | .15 | .07 | .09 | .08 | .05 | .12 | .09 |
| Female | -.15 | -.06 | -.08 | -.08 | -.05 | -.13 | -.10 |
| Eta | .11 * | .05 * | .07 * | .06 * | .04 | .10 * | .08 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.08 | – | .06 | .09 | .10 | .09 | .21 |
| Medium | .25 | – | .06 | .11 | .13 | .17 | .02 |
| High | -.40 | – | -.22 | -.32 | -.39 | -.44 | -.35 |
| Eta | .16 * | – | .09 * | .13 * | .16 * | .18 * | .17 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | | |
| Working Class | .16 | .13 | .20 | .22 | .19 | .16 | .22 |
| Farmer | -.83 | -.60 | -.78 | -.87 | -.73 | -.44 | -.45 |
| Lower Middle Class | .03 | .04 | .01 | -.02 | .00 | .04 | -.14 |
| Upper Middle Class | -.67 | -.36 | -.42 | -.50 | -.69 | -.54 | -.49 |
| Self-Employed | .06 | -.07 | -.08 | .04 | .10 | .03 | .09 |
| Eta | .23 * | .15 * | .21 * | .22 * | .22 * | .18 * | .20 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.20 | -.06 | -.17 | -.14 | .01 | -.14 | -.06 |
| Medium | .17 | .08 | .05 | .11 | .05 | .11 | .08 |
| High | .03 | -.04 | .17 | .00 | -.09 | -.01 | -.06 |
| Eta | .13 * | .05 | .11 * | .08 * | .04 | .08 * | .05 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | |
| Single | .01 | – | .08 | -.11 | .05 | .02 | .09 |
| Married | -.02 | – | -.04 | .05 | -.02 | -.01 | -.04 |
| Eta | .01 | – | .04 | .05 * | .03 | .01 | .05 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in value between 0 and 4

### *Reading Combinations*

To call the evening newspaper an alternative to the morning newspaper may be a bit misleading, since it is a practice carried out by the majority of the Swedish population each week. However, it is a complement in the sense that the reading of an evening newspaper for most people is a practice not neessarily carried out every day. It is something most Swedish people do sometimes each week – and mainly on Sundays, when for many people there *is* no local newspaper.

Roughly one in five Swedes read both morning and evening papers regularly (a morning paper at least six days a week and an evening paper at least three days a week). For 15 per cent of the population, the evening newspaper is the only regular newspaper.

It is not especially surprising to find that it is mainly among younger people, among people with low levels of education and among single people that the evening newspaper is the only regular newspaper. For these people, the local newspaper has never been a natural everyday life component.

Combining both types of newspapers is something that is most common among self-employed and among people with low levels of education. These are the groups of people, for whom the evening newspaper most typically functions as a complement to the morning newspaper.

People from the upper middle classes, older people and people with high levels of education are most likely not to engage in the reading of evening newspapers. This does not mean that they read daily newspapers to a lesser degree than others, however. Instead, these people normally read more than one morning newspaper. They combine the local newspaper with one of the Stockholm morning papers (Weibull 1983:115-116). The patterns have not changed substantially between 1986 and 1992.

## Newspaper Genres

I will now turn to the reading of different newspaper genres in local morning papers. We know that the reading of the local morning newspaper is a very common practice as such, but we also know that it is a practice that is structured by positional factors such as age, social class and income. Taking these facts as points of departures, which genres do people turn to regularly?

As discussed in chapter ten, the question used measures how much of the output of a number of specified genres one normally reads. It is thus not a direct measure of behaviour, and it is not a measure that covers all kinds of output in the local newspaper. The question should therefore be regarded as a measure of people's subjective orientations to a number of key genres in the local newspaper.

Of the seven genres included in the SOM 1986 survey, the only year the question has been asked, local news is the genre people follow most closely (the highest mean). This is followed by domestic news, radio/TV features, advertisements and foreign news. The genres that people follow the least closely are sports and culture.

**Table 11.3** Reading of Newspaper Genres. SOM 1986 (Per Cent and Anova/MCA).

| | Domestic News | Foreign News | Culture | Local News | Advertisements | Sports | Radio/TV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Almost Everything | 19 % | 13 % | 6 % | 35 % | 13 % | 20 % | 23 % |
| Almost Nothing | 3 % | 6 % | 27 % | 3 % | 12 % | 28 % | 8 % |
| Grand Mean | 2.93 | 2.66 | 2.04 | 3.18 | 2.53 | 2.37 | 2.76 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | -.32 | -.22 | -.30 | -.27 | .03 | .16 | .30 |
| 30-49 | .04 | .00 | -.04 | .02 | .03 | -.06 | -.21 |
| 50-75 | .23 | .18 | .32 | .20 | -.05 | -.08 | -.05 |
| Eta | .31 * | .21 * | .30 * | .26 * | .04 | .10 * | .23 * |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | |
| Male | -.04 | .04 | -.15 | -.06 | -.05 | .46 | -.09 |
| Female | .05 | -.04 | .16 | .06 | .05 | -.50 | .09 |
| Eta | .06 * | .05 | .18 * | .08 * | .06 * | .44 * | .10 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | | |
| Low | .05 | -.05 | -.03 | .19 | .10 | .07 | .06 |
| Medium | -.09 | -.04 | -.10 | -.12 | .03 | .05 | .06 |
| High | .07 | .26 | .35 | -.27 | -.40 | -.36 | -.33 |
| Eta | .10 * | .14 * | .18 * | .25 * | .20 * | .14 * | .16 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | | |
| Working Class | -.02 | -.07 | -.09 | .10 | .11 | .17 | .12 |
| Farmer | -.10 | -.37 | -.11 | .17 | .21 | -.22 | -.05 |
| Lower Middle Class | .06 | .12 | .08 | -.10 | -.05 | -.14 | -.08 |
| Upper Middle Class | .04 | .28 | .32 | -.36 | -.41 | -.28 | -.36 |
| Self-Employed | -.06 | -.12 | -.05 | .05 | -.10 | -.11 | -.04 |
| Eta | .06 | .18 * | .16 * | .20 * | .19 * | .16 * | .17 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | |
| Low | .03 | -.01 | .08 | .09 | .06 | .00 | .18 |
| Medium | -.01 | .00 | -.06 | .04 | .03 | .05 | -.02 |
| High | -.03 | .02 | -.02 | -.21 | -.14 | -.09 | -.24 |
| Eta | .04 | .01 | .07 * | .16 * | .09 * | .05 | .18 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | |
| Single | -.15 | -.07 | -.07 | -.14 | -.03 | .10 | .25 |
| Married | .07 | .03 | .03 | .07 | .01 | -.05 | -.12 |
| Eta | .14 * | .06 * | .05 * | .13 * | .02 | .06 * | .19 * |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in value between 1 and 4

By focusing on the means for each genre, one obtains a measure showing how people on average judge the different genres. Such a measure should be complemented, however, by a measure that takes into account the intensity in reading. That is, some of the genres differentiate the readers more than others. This is clearly the case for sports. This genre is followed very closely by one fifth of the population, whereas almost 30 per cent never read any sports articles at all. The other genre also differentiating a large part of the population is culture. The proportion never reading any culture articles is as high as the proportion of non-sports readers. But culture is followed very closely by a much smaller proportion of the Swedish population – only by six per cent.

All three news genres are positively related to age. That is, the higher the age, the more probable is the regular reading of these genres. However, local news is read mainly by people with low levels of education and by people from the working classes, whereas foreign news is read mainly by people with high levels of education and by people from the upper middle classes. Domestic news is not as strongly related to social class and education as are the other news genres. Similar patterns are to be found in relation to culture.

The genres of sports and radio/TV features are more closely followed by young than by old people. Radio/TV features are on the whole the genre that young people follow the closest! These two genres are also followed by more working class than middle class people, and by people with low rather than high levels of education. The sports genre is furthermore a male genre (the strongest relationship altogether) whereas radio/TV features is a female genre. The only genre that is not related to age is the genre of advertisements. The genre is followed most closely by people with low levels of education, by people from working class families and by farmers.

The patterns presented here are highly similar to what has been reported in earlier studies. The choice of newspaper genres seem to be stable across time, both on a general level, and on a group level. Local news has in all studies conducted since the mid 1970s been the most widely read genre, and together with domestic news, radio/TV features and family news (an item not included in the SOM surveys), they constitute a primary reading; they make up a selection of genres that most readers tend to follow. On the basis of these shared genres, different groups of readers then, due to specific interests, choose different genres (Weibull 1993a:270-274).

I discussed above how differences in the regularity of reading local newspapers became marked first in middle age. This is not the case when it comes to choices of genres. For some genres, differences are large already among young people, and for some of the genres, it is *only* among young people that any differences are to be found. In all age groups, the genres of foreign news, advertisements and radio/TV features are all strongly related to both education and social class. Culture is strongly related to education and local news to social class in all age

groups. This means that for all of these genres the cultural differences due to one's background and education are important at all stages of the life course.

There are also other processes at play, however. There is an interaction between marital status and age, which means that many of the genres are structured by marital status only among younger people. Single young people read more articles on radio/TV than do married young people. Married young people on the other hand read more of all types of news articles than do young single people. All of these differences have disappeared by middle age (Appendix 4).

How is reading of different genres related to the general reading of local newspapers and evening newspapers? Obviously, if you read the local newspaper regularly, you are expected to read more of the core content of the paper than if you only read it sporadically. But it is not necessarily the case that sporadic and regular readers choose the same material. The regular readers tend to follow the genres of news and culture more closely than more sporadic readers tend to do. However, there is no relationship between regularity of reading and the reading of sports, radio/TV features and advertisements. When they do read morning papers, readers of evening newspapers read the sports pages to a greater extent than do the average reader. They are also to a certain extent more regular readers of radio/TV features and news. They read less of the material on the culture pages, however.

I have thus far studied the different genres one by one. But in so doing, it has also been possible to note that the choice of one genre is not unrelated to the choice of other genres. Most genres are positively correlated. This is especially true for the three news genres and for culture. The only two genres that are significantly negatively correlated are culture and sports.

These patterns suggest that a number of important dimensions may be found within the material. Earlier Swedish studies, using a much larger number of genres, have found two main dimensions in the reading of morning newspapers, one dimension concerning geographical distance and one dimension concerning highbrow/lowbrow genres – culture, editorials and domestic news vs. entertainment, sports and comic strips (Weibull 1983:318). A factor analysis conducted on these seven genres does not produce those two dimensions, however. Instead, three factors are found in the data. The first factor consists primarily of foreign news, domestic news and culture. The second factor consists mainly of advertisements and radio/TV features. The third factor is a sports factor. One of the genres, local news, does not load heavily on any of the three factors (Appendix 5).

In relation to earlier studies, what we have here is mainly a distinction between reading of highbrow and lowbrow material, with the lowbrow material divided on two factors. The geographical dimension does not turn up. Specifying a four factor solution does not help either. We then only split advertisements and radio/TV features into two separate factors.

This result does not contradict the idea of four dimensions. The number of factors obtained is obviously related to the number of items used in the factor analysis. However, what the analysis does tell us, is that staying on this level of abstraction, and using these genres, the most important distinction in the reading patterns is that between highbrow and lowbrow genres.

It is furthermore the case that the differences in reading patterns between people with different positional characteristics become even more marked on this level of analysis. Comparing the first factor with the other two factors, there is a clear distinction between old people and young people, between people with high and low levels of education, between the middle class and the working class and between married people and single people.

## Reading Profiles

It would have been possible to stop the analysis here. Finding the relevant dimensions in a material often constitutes the final step. However, it should not be forgotten what factor analyses can – and cannot – do. Factor analysis is a technique for data reduction. It is a way of organising large number of items into a smaller number of factors. It is a way of trying to understand how the different items – here genres – are related to each other.

This is obviously both important and meaningful. But it is also important to emphasise that the patterns obtained do not tell us much about how concrete individuals combine different genres into specific reading profiles. In order to do so, it is necessary to move from factor analysis to cluster analysis. With such an analysis, it becomes possible to study how groups of people – not groups of items – are related to each other.

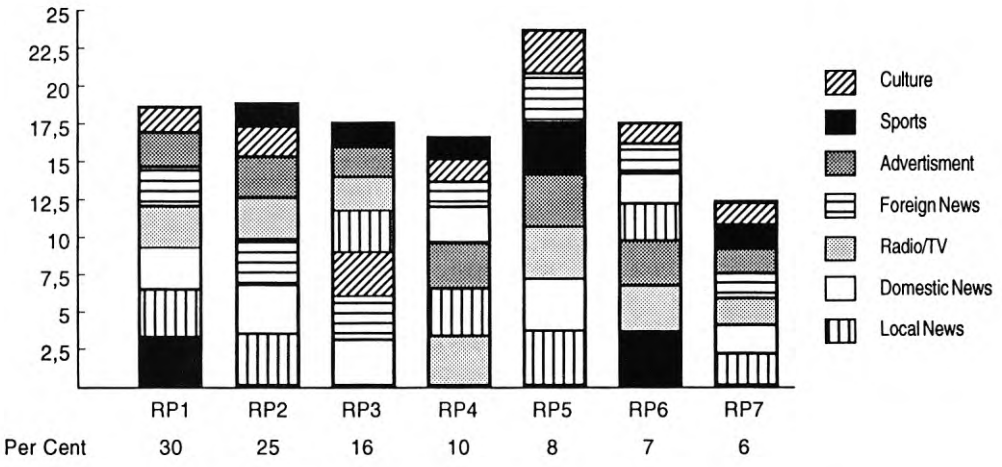
Figure 11.1 (next page) presents seven clusters of people with different reading profiles. Each cluster consists of a number of people, and each individual belongs only to one cluster. For each cluster, the table provides the average level of reading of the genre in question.[3]

Grouping all respondents into separate clusters, what the figure tells us first of all is that the reading profiles are not at all as different as are the factors presented earlier. Factor analysis highlights the differences inherent in the data, but that is not the same as to say that individuals only read either culture or sports. Some people have those either/or profiles, but for many people the combination of culture and sports is a quite possible combination.

The most common reading profile, given the construction of precisely seven clusters, is to read sports and local news to a greater extent than other genres. Some 30 per cent of the respondents belong to this cluster. The other big cluster, with 25 per cent of the respondents, is a news cluster (local, domestic and fo-

reign). The third biggest cluster (16 per cent) consists of people combining news with culture. Of the four remaining clusters, one consists of people reading almost everything (no 5), one of people reading very little (no 7), one of people reading mainly lowbrow genres (no 4) and one of people reading mainly sports (no 6).

**Figure 11.1** Reading Profiles SOM 1986




The figure thus shows the centrality of local news. For all seven clusters, local news is an important genre. That is, people differ quite markedly when it comes to reading profiles, but they do so on the basis of a common agreement on the importance of following local news.

The big sports/local news cluster is predominantly male. People from the working classes are also over-represented in this cluster. The news cluster is a cluster consisting primarily of middle aged and old people, and it contains more females than males. Highly educated people and people from the upper middle classes are over-represented in the cluster consisting of people reading mainly highbrow genres (news and culture). Both the sports cluster and the lowbrow genre cluster consist mainly of young people. In the latter cluster people with high levels of education and people from the upper middle classes are very unprobable. The cluster of people reading less than average in the local newspaper is made up of unproportionally many farmers, whereas the cluster with people reading most types of material consists to a great extent of old people, working class people and people with low levels of income (Appendix 6).

## Discussion

In this chapter I have discussed Swedish people's relationships to daily newspapers. It is quite clear that for most Swedes, newspapers have become naturalized in everyday life. Reading the local morning paper or the evening paper is a practice that is carried out on a regular basis. About 80 per cent of the population may be classified as regular readers of daily newspapers, and 70 per cent read the local morning newspaper at least six days a week.

There are of course many reasons behind the widespread regular reading of daily newspapers. A main reason often put forward has to do with the feeling of *attachment* and *belonging* in the community (cf. Janowitz 1967; Stamm 1985). The daily newspapers may not have created the communities within which they work, but they build upon and strengthen them. If you feel you belong, having the newspaper is a sign of this belongingness, and in order to see how the community evolves, it is necessary to read the paper on a regular basis. This interaction between citizens and newspapers may be found on local, regional and national levels, with the morning papers working mainly, but not exclusively, on the local and regional levels, and with the metropolitan press and the evening papers working on the national level.

The feeling of belonging to a local or regional community does not come by itself. For many people, it does not happen until one's social situation has been settled. Many young people, for instance, do not seem to put a high priority on such a belonging. One may have identified with the community before moving away from one's parents, but for a while the identification is lost. Then at middle age, or at the time when the social situation has been settled, the local community once again becomes important. Belonging is easier, or comes more naturally, for some people than others, however. If one wants to feel involved in what is happening in the local, regional or national community, it is a safer bet to grow up in a middle class home than in a working class home.

This line of reasoning has its merits. But it is important to point out, first that it is based on regarding age differences as life course differences rather than as generational or situational differences. Looking back in time, it is possible to see that young people when growing older have taken up more stable social lives, and in so doing, their uses of the local newspaper have corresponded with the use of earlier generations.

But that does not mean that each new generation necessarily will follow in the footsteps of the preceding generation. The SOM data have a time span of only six years, and it is impossible to state whether the differences in reading found here are due to life course or generational differences, but the fact that the regularity in reading is dropping somewhat *is* an indication of possible generational differences as well as the more clear differences having to do with life course (cf. Strid 1992).

Second, it must be pointed out that the view of the role of the local newspaper presented here is a static view. The role of the local newspaper is taken to be essential and natural. The local newspaper may have assisted in the creation of the local community, and it may still assist in upholding this community. But this role may of course change. The fewer people that read the paper, the lesser role in the local community it will have. A time may come when a stable social life and a steady position in the local community may be upheld with the help of other media than the local newspaper.[4]

About one fifth of the Swedish population read both morning and evening newspapers regularly, but the majority choose either the morning paper or the evening paper. This choice of paper is heavily structured by positional factors. The probability for reading a local newspaper is highest among middle aged or old people, among married people, among people with high levels of income, and among people from middle class families. The probability for reading an evening newspaper, on the other hand, is highest among young people, among males, among single people and among people from working class families. And obviously these factors interact, so people having all these characteristics are more probable readers than anyone else.

Why are these differences so sharp? In order to understand this, it is necessary to take the cultural form of the papers into consideration. With the local newspaper, most people sign a contract. A subscription is taken up, money is paid, and in exchange the paper is delivered to the home with a promise that it will deliver the information – in the widest sense of the word – that the citizen needs. The local newspaper delivers information necessary to have at work, and it delivers information necessary to have in order to participate in everyday life conversations. The mere fact of being a subscriber – the commitment to the paper – is furthermore in itself a sign of belonging. As long as the expectations are fulfilled it is almost impossible not to sign such a contract – especially of course for people feeling involved in the local, regional or national community; for people with stable social situations.

With the evening papers, it is not possible to sign such a contract. Buying the paper is a decision that must literally be taken every day, no matter how habitual that decision may be. The cost of buying the evening newspaper may be higher than the cost of subscribing to a local newspaper, but it is a cost made in very small installments, and it is furthermore a cost that may be terminated directly. The evening newspaper offers a cultural product tailored to suit people with a type of everyday life which varies from day to day. If one feels like staying home in the evening, then one may buy the paper, otherwise not. If the evening paper – or one of the evening papers – offers something particularly attractive a specific day, then one may choose to buy the paper for that reason, otherwise not. There are no commitments – neither formal nor moral – to the paper. Such a situation seems to suit a rather large part of the Swedish population.[5]

I have here focused on differences in the cultural forms of local morning papers and evening papers in Sweden in the 1980s/1990s. The point in so doing is that these historically specific forms are crucial to take into account if one wants to understand why some people choose one type of newspaper and some people choose another type of newspaper. The cultural form of a medium "fits" more or less well in with the context of people's everyday lives. The practice of reading an evening newspaper is a practice that fits with being young and single. It does not fit as well with being old and married.

Newspapers do not only offer a number of cultural forms, however. They also have specific contents that attain their meanings within the forms. Morning and evening papers have most genres in common. But the space allocated to each genre differs between the papers, and so does the treatment of the genre. Using the distinction between "high" and "low", the evening papers are on the whole more directed towards lowbrow genres, whereas the morning papers try to balance the high with the low. The treatment of the genres corresponds to this distinction. Even when presenting news and culture, the evening papers do so in a lighter and more accessible way than do the morning papers.

It is important to emphasize what constitutes the specificity of the local newspaper: *the centrality of local news*. Above I discussed the contract signed between reader and newspaper. On the level of genre, this means that what this contract is based on is the promise that the newspaper delivers information on one's local environment. It is above all this information that it is necessary to be acquainted with when going to work or going to school. Other media, of course, may deliver other kinds of important information.

The reading of local news is thus the one thing that unites all readers of the local newspaper. But from there on, people take different ways through the paper.[6] I identified seven distinct reading profiles. Each of the profiles was typical for one group of readers, and it distinguished them from other groups of readers. Taste and distaste thus structure the reading.

The main distinction to be found in the reading profiles concerns the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow genres. The choice of genres is to a large extent dependent on one's position in social space. That is, the probability of having a specific profile differs depending on characteristics such as social class, age and gender. The highbrow/lowbrow distinction primarily positions middle aged and old married people from the middle classes against single young people from the working classes.

In presenting these patterns, it should also be pointed out that even though some groups are over-represented within specific clusters, this does not necessarily mean that these groups constitute the majority in the cluster in question, however. The highrow reading profile is strongly related to level of education and social class, but not only highly educated people and people from the upper middle classes have this profile. The most common level of education among those that

have this profile is the medium level, and more than 25 per cent of the readers in this group have a working class background.

This means that, just as important as it is to point out differences between groups with different positional characteristics, as important is it to remember the differences that exist *within* these groups. This brings us back to the question of contradictory, or at least complex, subjectivities. Social class is an important factor in the production of the subjectivity directing each individual towards specific media practices. But it is not the only one. It is a factor that for each individual has to be reconciled with other factors.

## Notes

1. Since most local newspapers are published six days a week, the mean is calculated on the values 0 to 6.

2. It should be noted, however, that the bivariate relationships presented in Table 11.1 stay significant after control for each other, even though the strenghts of the relationships become somewhat weaker.

3. "Quick cluster" in the SPSS/PC package.

4. Roughly ten per cent of the Swedish population decide to stay outside the "imagined community" that the local newspapers try to build – or build upon. This group of non-readers is not as homogeneous as one could have imagined, given the reading patterns presented in this chapter. It is rather the case that it seems possible to be a non-reader almost disregarding positional factors. Young people are somewhat more likely than old people to be non-readers of local newspapers, but the differences are small. Similarly, people with high levels of education are about as probable to be non-readers as are people with low or medium levels of education. The differences have furthermore decreased between 1986 and 1992. The only positional factors making a real difference are social class and level of income. People from the upper middle classes and people with high levels of income are highly unlikely to be non-readers.

5. It may be argued that for some people, there is a moral or a political commitment to the Social Democrat evening newspaper Aftonbladet.

6. For a more detailed discussion of people's different ways through the local newspaper, cf. Weibull 1983:310-313. Cf. Jarlbro 1988b for a qualitative analysis of newspaper reading.

TWELVE

# The Uses of the Mass Media 2: Television

In this chapter I will focus on another basic medium, television. I will first analyse the regularity in viewing as such, then turning to the viewing of different television genres, and finally to the question of people's viewing profiles.

## Habitual Television Viewing

The objective of this chapter is to study how television viewing is located within people's everyday lives. As I discussed in chapter eight, the television output offered to Swedish households has increased drastically. Simultaneously, the viewing of television has been transformed from a typical evening practice to a practice that is possible to carry out 24 hours a day. How has this affected television viewing?

The first thing to note in Table 12.1 (next page), is that, not surprisingly, television viewing is a very common Swedish practice. Almost everybody in Sweden watches television every week, and 60 per cent do so every day. This makes it together with radio listening the most common Swedish media practice altogether (cf. Findahl 1993).

The social situation is an important factor for the viewing of television as such. That is, regular viewers are above all people having time available for watching. Old people watch television more regularly than do other people, as shown here, and other surveys, inluding people under the age of 15, show that they, too, watch television to a great extent (cf. chapter eight).

But also other factors are important. There is a well known relationship between level of education and television viewing: People with low levels of education watch television more regularly than do people with high levels of education. And people from the upper middle classes watch television to a lesser extent than

everyone else. The cultural form of television is in itself more attractive for some people than it is for others.

**Table 12.1** Television Viewing. SOM 1992 (Per Cent and Anova/MCA).

| | 1992 |
|---|---|
| Every Week | 99 % |
| Every Day | 61 % |
| Grand Mean | 5.39 |
| **Age** | |
| 15-29 | -.03 |
| 30-49 | -.16 |
| 50-75 | .20 |
| Eta | .17 * |
| **Gender** | |
| Male | .01 |
| Female | -.01 |
| Eta | .01 |
| **Education** | |
| Low | .16 |
| Medium | .00 |
| High | -.23 |
| Eta | .16 * |
| **Class** | |
| Working Class | .04 |
| Farmer | -.02 |
| Lower Middle Class | .03 |
| Upper Middle Class | -.14 |
| Self-Employed | -.06 |
| Eta | .07 |
| **Income** | |
| Low | .02 |
| Medium | .05 |
| High | -.16 |
| Eta | .09 * |
| **Marital Status** | |
| Single | -.05 |
| Married | .02 |
| Eta | .04 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in value between 1 and 6

The relationships between positional factors and television viewing are less related to one's life course phase than are the relationships between positional factors and newspaper reading. The one exception concerns marital status. Young people (15-29), be they single or married, do not spend a lot of time in front of the television set. At middle age, however, married people tend to do so to a greater

extent than do single people. Then at old age, both single and married people watch television very regularly.

The patterns presented follow in line with earlier studies. The increase in the television output does not seem to have changed the regularity with which different groups of people watch television. As outlined in chapter eight, the total time spent in front of the television set does not seem to have increased either. The two things that *have* happened are that viewing to some extent have become a practice carried out also in the daytime and late at night, and that a sizeable proportion of the population (20 per cent an average day in 1991) watch satellite channels regularly (Cronholm 1993; Findahl 1993).

## Television Genres

I will now turn to the viewing of different genres. As presented in chapter ten, the material to be analysed in this section consists of the responses to the question of how much one normally watches of the output of six main television genres found on Swedish television: entertainment, news, documentaries, sports, culture and nature programs. The question was included in the SOM 1986, 1991 and 1992 studies, with the genre of nature programs not being included until 1991. As described in chapter ten, these six genres make up a substantial part of the output of Swedish Television – in 1990 about 75 percent of the total output – and they may thus give a reasonable indication of the viewing patterns existing in Sweden.

With these points in mind, the first picture of Swedish people's choices of television genres is given in Table 12.2 (next page). The table shows that watching news is the one practice that most people carry out regularly. News programs make up a large proportion of the Swedish television output, and Swedish people watch them to a great extent. There are furthermore relatively few people that do not watch news at all (a low percentage claiming to watch almost nothing).

Nature programs, when shown on television (only five percent of the output consists of such programs) is also quite commonly viewed. Entertainment programs are more frequently broadcast and are not used to the same degree as the nature programs, but it is a genre that most people watch regularly. The viewing patterns for the other three genres are more specific and restricted to smaller groups, the least watched altogether being the culture genre; the genre dividing the public the most being sports.

People tended to follow news and documentaries more closely in 1992 than in 1986, whereas the opposite is true for sports and entertainment. However, this should be interpreted against the background of changes in the mass media output during the time period. The increasing output of sports and entertainment makes it more difficult in 1992 than in 1986 to follow all or even most programs.

**Table 12.2** Viewing of Television Genres. SOM 1992 (Per Cent and Anova/MCA).

| | Entertainment | News | Documentaries | Sports | Culture | Nature |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Almost Everything | 5 % | 18 % | 4 % | 12 % | 2 % | 11 % |
| Almost Nothing | 4 % | 1 % | 6 % | 25 % | 25 % | 6 % |
| Grand Mean | 2.60 | 3.00 | 2.46 | 2.28 | 2.00 | 2.65 |
| **Age** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .11 | -.34 | -.23 | .02 | -.30 | -.31 |
| 30-49 | -.12 | -.02 | -.02 | -.09 | -.07 | -.10 |
| 50-75 | .05 | .28 | .19 | .09 | .31 | .33 |
| Eta | 15 * | .39 * | .25 * | .08 * | .33 * | .34 * |
| **Gender** | | | | | | |
| Male | -.03 | .05 | .03 | .35 | -.08 | .04 |
| Female | .03 | -.06 | -.04 | -.38 | .09 | -.05 |
| Eta | .05 * | .09 * | .05 * | .38 * | .12 * | .06 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| Low | .16 | .08 | -.02 | .24 | -.04 | .23 |
| Medium | .02 | -.08 | -.02 | -.03 | -.05 | -.06 |
| High | -.28 | .00 | .07 | -.32 | .13 | -.27 |
| Eta | .26 * | .12 * | .06 * | .23 * | .10 * | .26 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | |
| Working Class | .16 | -.06 | -.07 | .11 | -.14 | .07 |
| Farmer | -.07 | -.04 | -.12 | -.03 | .14 | .23 |
| Lower Middle Class | -.08 | .08 | .10 | -.08 | .14 | .00 |
| Upper Middle Class | -.31 | .05 | .05 | -.29 | .19 | -.28 |
| Self-Employed | -.11 | .02 | .03 | .06 | -.04 | -.04 |
| Eta | .25 * | .10 * | .11 * | .14 * | .19 * | .16 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | |
| Low | .10 | .03 | .03 | .01 | .08 | .13 |
| Medium | .01 | -.02 | -.02 | .06 | -.07 | -.01 |
| High | -.19 | -.02 | .00 | -.14 | .00 | -.21 |
| Eta | .16 * | .04 | .03 | .08 * | .09 * | .16 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | |
| Single | .04 | -.14 | -.03 | .04 | -.04 | -.12 |
| Married | -.02 | .06 | .01 | -.02 | .02 | .05 |
| Eta | .04 | .16 * | .03 | .03 | .04 | .11 * |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in value between 1 and 4

Studies of actual time spent watching different genres are better indicators of actual changes in viewing patterns. Such studies have shown that factual programs (except news) lost out when the second Swedish television channel was introduced in 1969. People then turned uncreasingly to fiction. Since then, the time spent with different genres has stayed relatively constant, with the exception of an increase in sports viewing (Cronholm et al 1993).

The viewing of all genres are related to age. Old people watch news, documentaries, culture and nature programs to a greater extent than young people do. The genres

of sports and entertainment are watched mainly by old *and* by young people (up to the age of 30).

The viewers of news and documentaries have similar positional characteristics. Besides being old, these viewers are on the whole more likely to belong to the middle than the working classes. The genres are to a certain extent also male. Culture is even stronger related to class background than are news and documentaries. This genre is however a female genre.

The viewers of nature programs have their old age in common with the viewers of news, documentaries and culture, but they are more likely to have a working class background, and they have lower levels of both education and income than have the viewers of the other three genres. These characteristics are similar to the ones typical of the viewers of entertainment, with the exception that many of these viewers are young. The sports genre, finally, is a predominantly male genre.

The relationship between the viewing of different genres and positional factors has stayed roughly the same during the time period. Some changes may be noted, however. The differences in sports viewing between people with different levels of education have increased, and so have the differences in culture viewing between people with different class background. The similarities by far outweigh the differences, however.

In the previous chapter I discussed how the reading patterns of Swedish people to a great extent was tied to one's life course phase. This was not the case for the viewing of television as such. The choice of genres is related to life course, however, and there is an interaction between age and the other positional factors.

For most of the genres, the differences in viewing between males and females exist only among young people. Young males watch news, documentaries and nature programs to a much greater extent than young females do, and the opposite is true for the viewing of entertainment. However, from middle age and onwards, there are no gender differences in viewing. The one exception from this pattern is the viewing of culture; here gender differences start at middle age. From there on, females view more culture programs than do males.

Differences due to social class and education grow ever stronger with age. On the whole the patterns become more polarized, with working class people and people with low levels of education increasingly turning towards entertainment, sports and nature programs, and middle class people and people with higher levels of education increasingly turning towards culture. The only genre these two groups have in common is news (Appendix 7).

Do sporadic and regular television viewers watch the same genres? The general pattern is that the more one watches television, the more one watches all genres. There is one exception to this general pattern, however. Regular television viewers do not watch more culture programs than do sporadic television viewers. This

means that, relatively speaking, the sporadic viewers turn to culture on television more often than do the regular viewers.

Thus far I have treated the television genres separately, but it is obvious that one's taste for a genre is not unrelated to one's taste – or distaste – for other genres. The tables presented have suggested such relationships, and an analysis of the correlations between the genres confirms this. Almost all genres are positively correlated. This means that there is a general viewing factor at work. If you watch television at all, you tend to watch something from each genre at least some time.

The highest total correlations are those between documentaries and news (.44*) and between documentaries and culture (.43*). The lowest correlations are those between entertainment and culture (-.05). The patterns looked roughly the same in 1986.

The correlations are altogether higher, the higher the age. The greatest differences by far are those concerning entertainment and news. Within the oldest age group, the correlation is .27*, within the youngest age group it is -.03. Thus, as a general pattern, older people either watch both genres or none, whereas for young people there is no relationship at all. This difference did not exist in 1986. At that time, news and entertainment were similarly correlated in all age groups.

The fact that documentaries, news and culture are highly correlated would suggest a high/low dichotomy, with sports, nature and entertainment at the other side of the dichotomy. It would also fall in line with much of the data presented this far. On the other hand, news, as already shown, is watched in principle by everybody, and sports is a genre dividing people more than others.

An exploratory factor analysis with all genres included gives us in 1992 two factors, with documentaries, culture and news loading on the first factor, entertainment and sports loading on the second factor and nature loading weakly on both factors. Specifying a three factor solution splits the second factor of entertainment and sports into two separate factors. A factor analysis for 1986, although without the nature item, gives a quite similar pattern.

These factors are obviously not "real" in any meaningful sense of the word. They are based on the inclusion of precisely these five or six items, and omitting any of these, or including another item, may change the pattern rather drastically. Thus, if one would like to present as homogeneous factors as possible, the best way of acting would be to omit nature and either culture or news and then present either a two or a three factor solution.

Factor analyses do have their value, however. The analyses run here show that there is no simple pattern to be found in the viewing of these television genres. And by running factor analyses within different age groups – and at different points in time – it becomes possible to analyse the stability in these relationships.

**Table 12.3** Viewing of Television Genres: Factor Analysis in Different Age Groups. SOM 1986 and 1992.

| 1986 | 15-29 | | 30-49 | | 50-75 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F1 | F2 | F1 | F2 | F1 | F2 |
| Entertainment | .00 | **.75** | .03 | **.77** | -.05 | **.80** |
| News | **.61** | **.47** | **.56** | **.47** | **.45** | **.51** |
| Documentaries | **.85** | .08 | **.82** | .00 | **.85** | .02 |
| Sports | -.05 | **.67** | -.13 | **.73** | -.07 | **.74** |
| Culture | **.73** | -.31 | **.80** | -.16 | **.83** | -.12 |
| Percentage Explained | 35 | 25 | 36 | 25 | 37 | 24 |

| 1992 | 15-29 | | 30-49 | | 50-75 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F1 | F2 | F1 | F2 | F1 | F2 |
| Entertainment | -.08 | **.74** | .04 | **.77** | .01 | **.74** |
| News | **.72** | .07 | **.70** | .35 | **.45** | **.56** |
| Documentaries | **.82** | .10 | **.82** | -.01 | **.83** | .08 |
| Sports | .09 | **.77** | -.04 | **.68** | -.17 | **.75** |
| Culture | **.64** | -.16 | **.66** | -.33 | **.81** | -.17 |
| Percentage Explained | 32 | 23 | 33 | 26 | 35 | 26 |

Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Oblimin, Pattern Matrix

In Table 12.3 an interesting pattern is shown. Even though an exploratory factor analysis in all three age groups at both points in time lead to two factors, these two factors look different in different age groups. And the pattern has furthermore changed between 1986 and 1992.[1]

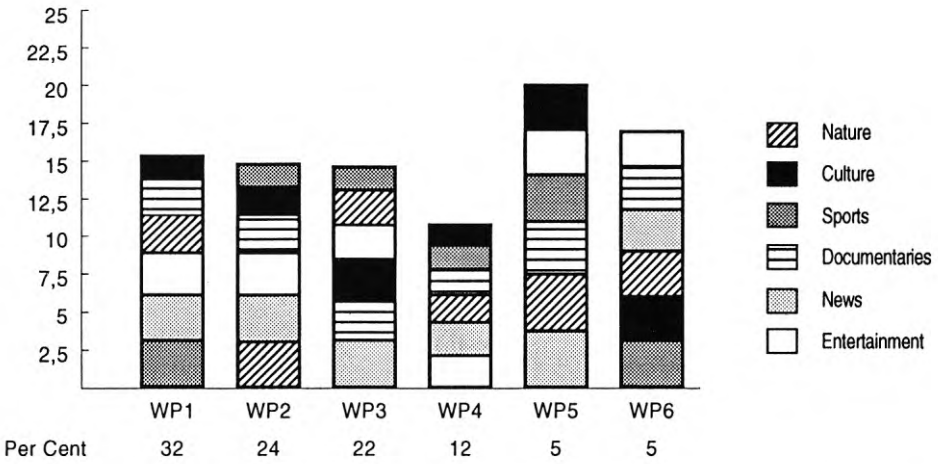
In all age groups in 1986, documentaries and culture load on the first factor and sports and entertainment on the second factor, whereas news loads on both factors. In 1992 this pattern can only be found in the oldest age group. In the other age groups, news loads only on the first factor, with documentaries and culture. It may thus be concluded that the viewing patterns have changed between 1986 and 1992. The patterns suggest an increasing polarization in viewing activities among young and middle aged people.

The increasing polarization seems to have somewhat strengthened the relationship between positional factors and television viewing. Among young people, level of education and class background both have an impact on the viewing of documentaries, news and culture in 1992 (factor one). That was not the case in 1986. Similarly, among old people, gender, level of education and class background have a stronger impact on the viewing of sports, entertainment and news in 1992 than they had in 1986 (Appendix 8).

## Viewing Profiles

How do people concretely combine the different genres? Figure 12.1 presents six clusters of people having different viewing profiles. For all six clusters, news is an important component. This is a result similar to the one obtained in relation to people's reading profiles. However, news is not the only genre that in principle all people tend to watch. Also documentaries and entertainment are included in most people's viewing profiles.[2]

**Figure 12.1** Viewing Profiles SOM 1992




The biggest cluster consists of people viewing news, entertainment and sports very regularly. Roughly 30 per cent belong to this cluster. The second biggest cluster, with about one fourth of the population, consists of people combining news with entertainment and nature programs. The third big cluster (22 per cent) has a viewing profile oriented towards highbrow genres (news, documentaries and culture). The other three clusters consist of fewer people. Of these three clusters, one consists of people watching all kinds of genres (no 5), one of people not watching much at all (no 4), and one of people combining news mainly with sports, but to a certain extent also with culture and nature programs (no 6).

The news/entertainment/sports cluster is, not surprisingly, similar to the sports/news cluster found for newspaper reading. It is a male cluster, but it is in comparison to the newspaper cluster younger. The proportion of people with a low level of education is also higher. The news/entertainment/nature cluster is a female cluster, with a high proportion of people having low levels of education and income. The cluster directed towards highbrow genres has an over-representation of people with high levels of income and education, and they come to a great extent from the upper middle classes. It is predominantly young people who

watch comparatively little of the television output. For the two remaining clusters, the relationships to positional factors are rather small, the exception being that cluster no 5 contains a high proportion of old people (Appendix 9).

## Discussion

In this chapter I have taken a look at the choices people make in front of the television set. These choices are not always made completely independent of other people's choices. It may even be the case that, being a member in a social network, the free choice over one's leisure time is more an exception than a rule. In that sense the patterns presented should be seen as the outcome of a constant negotiation concerning a number of choices in the private sphere; choices concerning in this case whether to watch television or doing something else, and choices concerning which type of output to use. These negotiations are probably more difficult in a family situation than they are for people living in single households, but the problem is real for everybody. Even if one lives alone, there are always different possibilities for spending one's leisure time, and a choice must always be made (cf. Bausinger 1984; Morley 1986).

The reasons for watching television differ to a certain extent from the reasons for reading newspapers. This has to do with the cultural form of television. As Meyrowitz (1985) has argued, television's form is more democratic than that of the newspaper. In principle television can be understood by everybody. But television is also more *social.* It is possible to combine television viewing with other practices, and it is possible to discuss with other people the programs one is watching. The relationship to television is thus totally different from the relationship which one has with the daily newspaper (cf. Ohlsson 1989).

These characteristics of the medium, and of the viewing situation, correspond to the output presented on television. Compared to newspapers, television offers more entertainment and debates, that is, more programs that one may use socially as well as intellectually. This means that people's viewing profiles are centrered not as much on news solely, as on a mixture of programs. Most people view both news and different types of entertainment programs regularly, and these genres are then to a different extent combined with more specialized interests, such as culture, sports or nature programs.

The viewing profiles that are the results of these mixtures are not as distinct as people's reading profiles; the similarities between the profiles are greater. In earlier days, when the Swedish television output consisted of one or two channels, it was more or less impossible not to mix news, entertainment, sports and culture. One had to watch what was being offered. Now the situation is more similar to the reading situation. It is possible to choose between different types of output simply by changing channels, and in principle, at least, it is possible to totally avoid those genres one dislikes.

The mixed viewing profiles are thus not necessary outcomes of the television output on offer today. The profiles are the results of decisions taken by the viewers to mix genres in these specific ways. One may wonder, of course, why this is so. Is this the "natural" way to use television? Or are the reasons historical? Being accustomed to using television in one particular way, one continues to do so.

If the reasons are historical, and based on traditions, then changes in the media situation may cause one's habits to change. And looking at the viewing patterns for 1986 and 1992, there are some signs suggesting the emergence of new viewing patterns.

Both in 1986 and in 1992, there seems to be a high/low dimension in Swedish people's viewing patterns; a distinction between on the one hand the viewing of culture and documentaries and on the other hand the viewing of entertainment and sports. In 1986 news stood *above* this dimension. It fitted in with both viewing profiles.

In 1992 this was no longer the case, at least not for young and middle aged people. For them, news belonged inside the high/low dimension. It was as constitutive of the dimension as was the other genres. This is a clear sign of changing viewing patterns.

This suggests that the possibilities to create more distinct viewing profiles when the television output increases *is* taken up by viewers. Television viewing is an extremely common Swedish everyday life practice. But this does not mean that television is viewed undiscriminantly. When given the chance to choose, people choose different genres. This is in line with ideas of both the active viewer and of specific "taste cultures". However, it seems as if these new taste cultures to a great extent correspond to class cultures. That is, the differences in viewing patterns between people from working class and middle class families seem to increase when the television output becomes more differentiated. People are given the opportunity to choose. They do indeed choose, but they seem to do so along class lines.

## Notes

1. The genre of nature has been dropped in order to facilitate a comparison between 1986 and 1992.
2. Trying to isolate specific clusters of Swedish television viewers is not an activity frequently carried out. The main exception is a number of analyses by researchers within the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation in the early 1970s. However, in their analyses, they did not cluster according to program preferences, but to viewing times (cf. Berg and Höijer 1970; Berg and Gahlin 1972).

THIRTEEN

# The Uses of the Mass Media 3: Specialized Media in the Private Sphere

In the following two chapters, I will focus on what I in chapter eight characterized as specialized mass media; as mass media that are used selectively and often for personal reasons. I will study five such media. Three of them are normally found in the private sphere. These are books, video recorders and weekly magazines. Two of them are found in the public sphere: the cinema and the theatre. In this chapter, I will take a look at the private sphere media, and in the next chapter I will take a look at the public sphere media.

In the analysis, I will focus on the cultural forms of these media. That is, the data available concern the regularity with which the media are used, and the changes that have occurred in these patterns between 1988 and 1992.

## Book Reading, Video Watching and Magazine Reading

The bookshelf is an important piece of furniture in most Swedish homes, and when entering a Swedish household, one would be highly surprised if one did not notice any books at all. Books are oriented towards in principle every citizen, and they are a common component in Swedish households.

The weekly magazine is a type of medium that is not as common, and its importance has furthermore dropped over the years. At the moment, there are less than ten weekly magazines on the Swedish market. Of these, most are family oriented, and they are especially oriented towards females. The other weekly magazines are "gossip" magazines and teenage magazines. Also these magazines have a female rather than male orientation (Hafstrand 1993:186).

When it comes to the video recorder, this is a relatively new gadget in Swedish households. In 1982, only 15 per cent of the Swedish population had access to a video recorder in the home (Weibull 1992:200). According to the SOM survey 1992, this figure has now risen to 70 per cent. In early days, the video was used

mainly to rent movies from video stores. Today, "time-shifting" is by far the most common use made of the video (Weibull 1992:211).

These remarks are made in order to indicate some of the basic differences between these three media. They are all located in the private sphere, but within this sphere their functions are different. This is due partly to their inherent characteristics – to what print and electronic media can do – but also to what they are set out to do in a concrete historical setting (cf. chapter six). Thus, the family orientation of the weekly magazines is not a necessary orientation, and the main uses made of the video recorder have changed already in its first decade in Swedish homes. These historically specific uses are of course determined within the context of the whole mass media system at a given point in time.

How often are these media used? The first thing to note is that even though not all of these media are directed towards the general public, only a small minority never come into contact with them. Only about ten per cent of the population do not read at least one book and one weekly magazine a year, and about twenty per cent never come into contact with a video recorder. The most common practice altogether of these three (the highest mean) is magazine reading. The three media are used in different rhythms, however. More people read books daily than read weekly magazines.

**Table 13.1** Book Reading, Video Watching and Magazine Reading. SOM 1988-1992 (Per Cent and Means).

| | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Books** | | | | | |
| At Least Once a Year | 88 | 90 | 88 | 86 | 88 |
| Every Week | 29 | 34 | 32 | 31 | 31 |
| Several Times a Week | 17 | 22 | 20 | 18 | 19 |
| Mean | 4.22 | 4.51 | 4.33 | 4.20 | 4.26 |
| **Video** | | | | | |
| At Least Once a Year | 73 | 75 | 78 | 82 | 83 |
| Every Week | 22 | 28 | 30 | 31 | 33 |
| Several Times a Week | 7 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 12 |
| Mean | 3.61 | 3.84 | 4.04 | 4.20 | 4.24 |
| **Magazines** | | | | | |
| At Least Once a Year | 93 | 92 | 92 | 92 | 93 |
| Every Week | 42 | 43 | 44 | 39 | 43 |
| Several Times a Week | 12 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 12 |
| Mean | 4.71 | 4.72 | 4.75 | 4.68 | 4.78 |

Comment: The variables range in values between 1 and 7

Both book and magazine reading have been stable during the time period under study. Video watching on the other hand has become a more typical everyday

practice during these years. The proportion of weekly video viewers has increased from 22 to 33 per cent.

We know from previous studies that these media practices are highly structured by socio-economic characteristics, and the SOM surveys confirm their results. Book reading is a practice associated mainly with females, with highly educated people, with people from the middle classes, and with single people.

Video watching is mainly related to age. Young people use video recorders much more than people in older age groups do. But it is also the case that males, self-employed, and working class people are over-represented among the viewers.

**Table 13.2** Book Reading, Video Watching and Magazine Reading. SOM 1988, 1990 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Books | | | Video | | | Magazines | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 |
| Grand Mean | 4.22 | 4.33 | 4.26 | 3.61 | 4.04 | 4.24 | 4.71 | 4.75 | 4.78 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .29 | .11 | .10 | 1.26 | 1.15 | .97 | .32 | .36 | .40 |
| 30-49 | -.07 | .03 | .00 | .05 | .40 | .29 | -.20 | -.02 | -.09 |
| 50-75 | -.15 | -.11 | -.08 | -1.09 | -1.26 | -1.05 | -.04 | -.24 | -.19 |
| Eta | .09 * | .05 | .04 | .44 * | .48 * | .41 * | .12 * | .13 * | .14 * |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | -.47 | -.43 | -.42 | .20 | .24 | .11 | -.24 | -.33 | -.21 |
| Female | .42 | .44 | .46 | -.18 | -.25 | -.12 | .22 | .33 | .23 |
| Eta | .22 * | .22 * | .22 * | .09 * | .12 * | .06 * | .13 * | .19 * | .13 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.70 | -.62 | -.66 | -.22 | -.37 | -.27 | .22 | .15 | .08 |
| Medium | .21 | .21 | .05 | .30 | .48 | .28 | .05 | .12 | .10 |
| High | .90 | .77 | .94 | -.13 | -.06 | -.01 | -.47 | -.43 | -.27 |
| Eta | .31 * | .28 * | .31 * | .12 * | .18 * | .12 * | .15 * | .13 * | .09 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | | | | |
| Working Class | -.30 | -.45 | -.42 | .22 | .18 | .21 | .17 | .29 | .19 |
| Farmer | -.58 | -.77 | -.41 | -1.22 | -1.45 | -1.09 | .07 | -.37 | .46 |
| Lower Middle Class | .31 | .32 | .30 | -.11 | -.13 | -.13 | -.16 | -.24 | -.18 |
| Upper Middle Class | .96 | 1.01 | 1.08 | -.21 | -.22 | -.22 | -.28 | -.72 | -.30 |
| Self-Employed | -.38 | .25 | -.08 | .03 | .27 | .13 | -.07 | .24 | -.19 |
| Eta | .22 * | .25 * | .25 * | .15 * | .16 * | .14 * | .10 * | .19 * | .13 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.01 | -.06 | .02 | -.48 | -.44 | -.36 | -.01 | .01 | .12 |
| Medium | -.10 | -.06 | -.16 | .14 | .23 | .21 | .07 | .07 | -.06 |
| High | .14 | .21 | .31 | .44 | .42 | .16 | -.07 | -.15 | -.08 |
| Eta | .05 | .06 | .09 * | .18 * | .18 * | .13 * | .03 | .05 | .05 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | | | |
| Single | .38 | .27 | .26 | .31 | .10 | .19 | .04 | .04 | .02 |
| Married | -.17 | -.12 | -.12 | -.15 | -.04 | -.08 | -.02 | -.02 | -.01 |
| Eta | .13 * | .09 * | .09 * | .10 * | .03 | .06 * | .01 | .01 | .01 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variables range in values between 1 and 7

Just like video watching magazine reading is a practice associated with youth. But magazine readers are more often female than male. They are likely to have a working class background, and a low or medium level of education.

It is interesting to note that neither of these patterns have changed significantly between 1986 and 1992. That is, even though the output of weekly magazines has changed, and even though video watching has become a much more common practice, people's uses of these media are still structured by positional factors in similar ways.

The patterns of magazine reading are not only stable over time, they also seem to be stable across the life course: The relationship between positional factors and magazine reading is roughly the same for all age groups. People read magazines mainly when they are young, but gender and class patterns remain even when magazine reading becomes less common, and when the choice of magazines changes.

For book reading and video watching, the situation is different. Even though females tend to read books more regularly than males at all phases of the life course, the differences are greatest in younger years. On the other hand, differences due to marital status tend to become greater, the higher the age. Book reading is always a solitary practice, but at younger years, there are more alternatives to book reading for single people than there are later on in life. Then, when an increasing part of everyday life is spent in the home, book reading becomes a more attractive practice than before.

Differences in video watching are greater among young than among old people. Up to the age of thirty, people with low levels of education, and people with working class background, tend to watch videos to a much greater extent than people with high levels of education and people from the middle classes. For old people these differences do not exist. Instead, level of income becomes important: People with high levels of income tend to watch video more regularly than people with low levels of income (Appendix 10).

## Combining Specialized Media in the Private Sphere

People who often watch videos also tend often to read magazines. But otherwise, on the whole, specialized media practices in the private sphere are only weakly related to each other. The way one combines different media practices is related to one's age, however. Some combinations are much more probable in some age groups than in others. Thus, a substantial proportion of young and middle aged people both watch video and read magazines regularly, whereas among older people these practices are less strongly related.

With the help of the question measuring the regularity with which people use the different media, it is possible to give an estimate of how a normal media week in the private sphere looks for different parts of the Swedish population. The three media can be combined in eight different ways: One can use just the one medium, one can combine two of them, one can use all three – or one can be a non-user of the three media.

About 70 per cent of the respondents either watch video or read books or magazines every week. Thus it is the exception rather than the rule not to carry out such practices. Of the seven possible combinations, the most common pattern is to only read magazines, but it is also common only to read books or to combine all three practices.

**Table 13.3** Weekly Media Practices in the Private Sphere. SOM 1988-1992 (Per Cent).

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1988 | 35 | 16 | 6 | 21 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 4 |
| 1989 | 29 | 16 | 8 | 20 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| 1990 | 30 | 14 | 10 | 18 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 6 |
| 1991 | 31 | 14 | 12 | 17 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 5 |
| 1992 | 29 | 14 | 9 | 18 | 5 | 7 | 14 | 6 |

1 = None of These Activities
2 = Only Book Reading
3 = Only Video Watching
4 = Only Magazine Reading
5 = Book Reading and Video Watching
6 = Book Reading and Magazine Reading
7 = Video Watching and Magazine Reading
8 = Book Reading, Video Watching and Magazine Reading

The most obvious change that has occurred during the period of study is the greater role played by video watching. We know from Table 13.1 that video viewing has increased between 1988 and 1992, and that the proportion of respondents who only watched video doubled between 1988 and 1991. However, in 1992 this proportion decreased, and the question is if this is a sign of the video recorder having found its niche beside other media, or if it is a temporary fluctuation.

Young people are more involved in these practices than are old people. A typical pattern among young people is to either watch only videos, or to combine video watching with magazine reading. A typical pattern among old people is to only read magazines.

Males and females have rather different media patterns in the private sphere. Females are much more likely to carry out at least one of these practices each week, and the only pattern that is a typical male pattern is to only watch videos.

People with high levels of education are quite likely to only read books in the private sphere, whereas people with low levels of education are more likely to only read magazines, or to combine magazine reading with video watching.

The class pattern is similar. People from the middle classes are the ones most likely to only read books, whereas people from the working classes either just read magazines, or they read magazines and watch videos.

A household's level of income does not seem to be strongly related to people's media patterns. A person's marital status, on the other hand, seems to be relevant. Single people are more active than are married people (Appendix 11).

## Discussion

In this chapter I have focused on a number of specialized media practices that normally are carried out in the private sphere. Why are these media not basic? This has to do first with their availability and accessibility. Using these media may demand a certain effort. It may mean having to leave the private sphere momentarily in order to go out and buy a magazine. Or it may mean having to invest in a video recorder.

Another reason has of course to do with the uses that can be made of them. The uses of these media are not fixed once and for all, but each media has certain properties that set limits for what one may or may not do with them. A video recorder, for instance, may be used to show material that already is available on television, or one may rent videos from a store. In the first case one can only control one's time better, and in the other case, the material available in the store may be aimed at a specific group of customers only (youth, for instance).[1] The choice of whether to use a medium is furthermore also dependent on other available media. That is, the function of a medium may be different depending of the structure of the whole media system.

Thus, these specialized media will be of most use for those people who both feel that the activity is worth the effort involved, and that the material available – or the whole media experience – is speaking to them.

The patterns analysed here are similar to the ones presented for television viewing. However, one main difference is that these practices seem to be more relevant for *young people* than is television viewing. This is true for both video watching and for magazine reading, albeit for partly different reasons. Magazines may offer material that is not offered on television or in newspapers. It is especially the monthly magazines who have managed to find a niche with products directed towards specific taste cultures among youth, but also the weekly magazines present articles on topics that young people – especially young girls – find relevant (cf. McRobbie 1982).

Also the video recorder may be used in order to consume material not available otherwise. It is possible to rent films never shown on television in video shops.[2] But the interest in video watching is likely also to depend on an increasing control over the viewing environment – maybe away from the control of parents. Video viewing becomes an important practice in the passage to adulthood (cf. Roe 1983b).

But age is of course not the only positional factor that is related to the uses of these media. Females read books and magazines to a much greater extent than men do – no matter age, level of education or social class. The private sphere is to a certain extent *the woman's sphere*. Women spend on average more time in the home than men do, and one of the things they do in the home – beside working – is to use media (cf. Berk 1980; Morley 1986).

An unfortunate aspect of the SOM surveys is that they do not include any questions on what kinds of books and magazines people read, or what kinds of video films they rent. However, we know from previous studies that both magazine reading and video watching primarily are directed towards different popular culture genres (cf. chapter eight). What the analysis here shows is that the uses of these genres fall back upon a culturally based taste pattern. People with high levels of cultural capital are less likely to read magazines and to watch video than people coming from other classes.

Books cannot be categorized generally as either popular culture or high culture products, of course. It is also necessary to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. Of these different kinds of books, the most widely read ones are popular culture books: thriller and romance books (Nordberg and Nylöf 1990:7). But even so, the cultural form of books is apparently different from the cultural form of magazines. It is a form that attracts people with high levels of cultural capital more than others. The taste patterns are thus completely different for book reading (including popular culture books) than for magazine reading and video watching.

It was possible to show that the patterns for television viewing were changing somewhat between 1986 and 1992. For book and magazine reading, there are no similar changes to be found. These two media seem to have found their audiences a long time age (cf. Nordberg and Nylöf 1990; Hafstrand 1993).

However, what *has* happened during this five year period is that video recorders have become more naturalized in the homes. They have now captured both the time and space of at least young Swedish households. Time will tell whether the differences visible today are life course differences or whether they are generational differences. A reasonable assumption is that they are due to generational differences; young people growing up with the video recorder will probably continue to use it also later on in life.

It is finally important to note that there are no significant signs of any reduced impact of the traditional positional factors on these media practices. Factors such

as age and social class are on the whole as important for book reading, magazine reading and video watching in 1992 as they were in 1988. The individualization hypothesis does not get any support.

## Notes

1. One may also show recordings made with video cameras, but that is less important in this context.
2. Competition from satellite television and an increasing output of movies on national television has made it less attractive to rent videos, however (Anshelm 1993:324).

FOURTEEN

# The Uses of the Mass Media 4: Public Sphere Media

In this chapter, I will continue the analysis of specialized media, but I will here focus on two public sphere media, the cinema and the theatre.

## Cinema and Theatre Going

One of the results of the ongoing modernization process is that everyday life increasingly is being spent in the private sphere. The mass media have obviously been an important actor in this development, and most modern mass media are placed squarely in the private sphere.

The two main exceptions are the cinema and the theatre. These two media are public sphere media in the sense that they are open to the general public, and as such, they function as upholders of an attractive public sphere in at least cities and metropolitan areas.

This is not to say that the role of these two media are forever fixed. Cinema going is not as popular as it used to be, for instance (cf. chapter eight). However, the public sphere practices, although not as common as the private sphere practices, are still carried out regularly by a not insubstantial proportion of the Swedish population. About 15 per cent of the Swedish population visit the cinema every month and about 60 per cent go at least once a year. As expected, the proportion going to the theatre is lower, but all the same, at least one half of the population went to the theatre at least once during the latest twelve month period. The figures did not change drastically between 1988 and 1992.[1]

Altogether, the public sphere practices are more clearly structured than are the media practices belonging to the private sphere. Cinema audiences are predominantly young, they belong to the middle classes, and they are characterized by a high level of education. They are furthermore more often than not single.

**Table 14.1** Cinema and Theatre Going. SOM 1988-1992 (Per Cent and Means).

| | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cinema** | | | | | |
| At Least Once a Year | 59 | 62 | 58 | 62 | 63 |
| Every Six Months | 41 | 43 | 37 | 42 | 41 |
| Every Month | 14 | 17 | 14 | 14 | 13 |
| Mean | 2.49 | 2.55 | 2.40 | 2.49 | 2.47 |
| **Theatre** | | | | | |
| At Least Once a Year | 56 | 49 | 49 | 46 | 50 |
| Every Six Months | 31 | 24 | 23 | 19 | 22 |
| Every Month | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Mean | 2.09 | 1.85 | 1.89 | 1.78 | 1.85 |

Comment: The variables range in values between 1 and 7

Theatre audiences share some of these characteristics. They are also highly educated, and they belong to a great extent to the middle classes. But they are as often old as they are young, and they tend to have a high level of income. These patterns have remained stable between 1988 and 1992 (Appendix 12). They furthermore confirm the results of previous studies (cf. Nordberg and Nylöf 1992; Reimer 1993).

Cinema going is thus an activity for the young. They are the ones to leave the private sphere for the pleasure of seeing a new film. But not all young people do so. It is especially young single, upper middle class people that visit the cinema. This can be seen in Figure 14.1. More than 60 per cent of this group visit the cinema every month.

The reason behind this high level of cinema going is due to an interaction between age, marital status and social class. Young people go to the cinema far more regularly than middle aged or old people, single people go to the cinema more often than married people, and people from the upper middle classes go to the cinema more often than people from the working classes. The net result of these relationships is quite marked.

Marital status is less important for young middle class people than it is for young working class people. Only 19 per cent married, young working class people visit the cinema regularly, as compared to 47 per cent single, young working class people. The difference among young upper middle class people is only 20 percentage points. This suggests that the cultural factor of being brought up in a middle class home is more important for one's interest in the cinema than the social factor of being single.

Figure 14.1 also shows that the differences in cinema going between single and married people, and between working class and middle class people, remain after

**Figure 14.1A** Cinema Going Among Young People SOM 1989-1992 (Pooled Data)

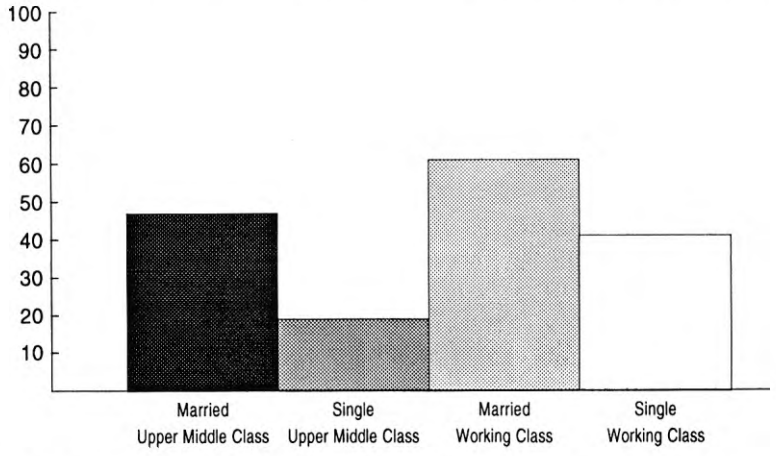



**Figure 14.1B** Cinema Going Among Middle Aged People SOM 1989-1992 (Pooled Data)

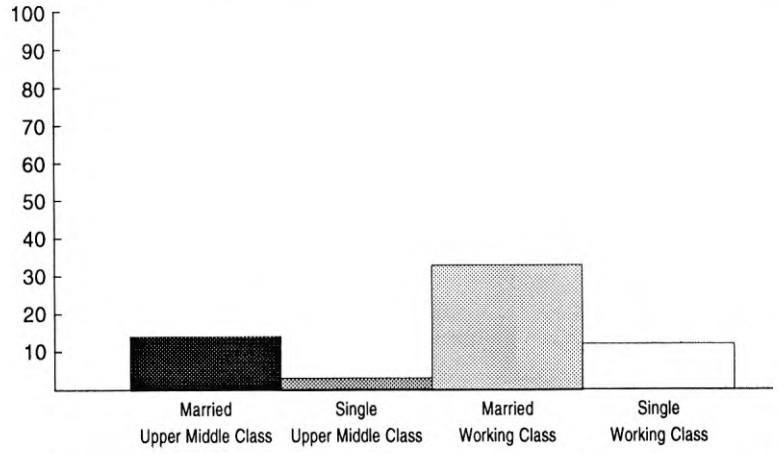
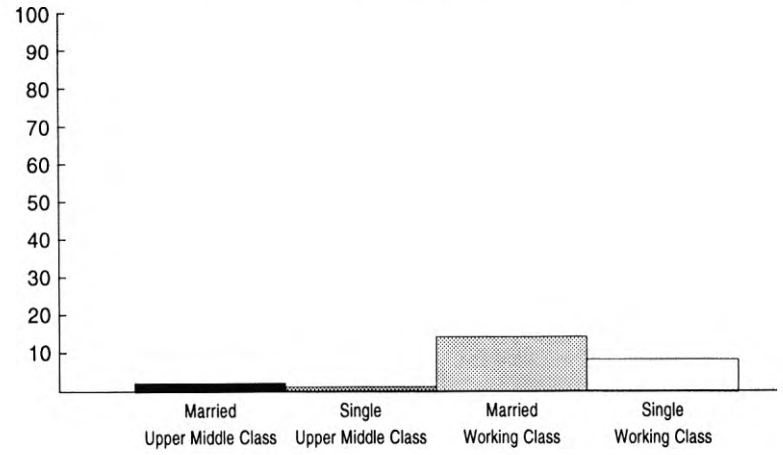



**Figure 14.1C** Cinema Going Among Old People SOM 1989-1992 (Pooled Data)



the age of thirty, albeit on a lower level. But age, social class and marital status are not the only positional factors of relevance for cinema going for middle aged and old people. Also level of income and level of education become important factors for the decision to visit the cinema. That is, from middle age and onwards, cinema going is no longer a common, "natural" practice. In order to continue with regular cinema visits, it is necessary to feel strongly for the cinema, not just for movies. Otherwise television suffices. Put in other terms, what one needs is a certain amount of popular culture capital. If that is coupled with a certain amount of economic capital, then the likelihood for regular cinema visits increases further (Appendix 13).

Theatre going is an activity that is structured much more similarly in all age groups. The only exception to this pattern is that level of income tends to become more important with increasing age. Old people do not generally visit the theatre more than young people do. Instead, what happens with increasing age is that people with low levels of income visit the theatre more seldom than when they were young. People with high levels of income become more regular theatre visitors (Appendix 13).

## Combining Cinema and Theatre Going

The two public sphere media are strongly correlated. The probability is quite high that people visiting the theatre also go to the cinema. The correlation is stronger among old people than among young people, but it is significant at all ages. The relationship seems to be stable over time.

Altogether, almost 50 per cent of the Swedish population participate in these public sphere practices at least once every six months. 25 per cent go only to the cinema, about 5 per cent only to the theatre, while about 15 per cent visit both the cinema and the theatre as regularly.

Not surprisingly, young people are more active than are older people, but the choices of public sphere media differ. It is highly unlikely for young people to only visit the theatre, whereas this is a choice made by ten per cent of the people in the oldest age group. People with high levels of education tend to visit the public sphere more than people with other levels of education, no matter the medium. The class pattern is more intricate: As many working class people as upper middle class people are regular cinema goers only. But upper middle class people are four times as likely to visit both the cinema and the theatre regularly. For these people, there is no opposition between these two practices (Appendix 14).

## Discussion

In the concluding discussion of the previous chapter I argued that specialized media in the private sphere may demand a greater effort than do basic media. This is of course even more relevant for public sphere media, and as the analysis shows, the uses of these two media are more structured than are the uses of the private sphere media. Everyday life has increasingly been moved to the private sphere, and today the activities available in the public sphere are directed only to parts of the population, and consequently, only parts of the population partake in these activities.

Age is once again the main determinant. It is mainly young people who visit to the cinema, by far the most popular of the two public sphere media. 40 per cent of the respondents between 15 and 19 years of age had gone to the cinema at least once a month during the last twelve month period. This may be compared with 33 per cent of the respondents between 20 and 29 years of age, and less than 10 per cent of the respondents in all other age groups.

But age is obviously not the sole determinant. There are very clear differences in media practices between people living single and married lives. Single people are altogether more media active, and especially so when it comes to activities in the public sphere. This is the case with both cinema and theatre going. These differences are clearly socially based differences. Without the more stable social network of the family, activities in the public sphere become more attractive.

Beside these socially based differences, also class and level of education have an impact on media practices in the public sphere. Highly educated people and especially people from the upper middle classes are much more likely to visit the theatre or the cinema than people with other levels of education and from other classes. These differences are less socially and more culturally based. That is, for people from the upper middle classes – for people with levels of cultural capital – cinema and theatre visits are "normal" practices, routinized within everyday life in a way which is rare for people within other classes.

However, the differences *between* cinema and theater going should not be forgotten. Even though both practices very clearly are structured by positional characteristics, cinema going still is a common everyday life practice. This is not the case for theatre going. This is a more exclusive practice, carried out primarily in metropolitan areas by people with high levels of either cultural or economic capital. It furthermore seems to be a practice that many people would like to keep as something special, as an event rather than as a common practice. Thus, in a Stockholm survey conducted in 1983, about 40 per cent of the respondents felt that when going to the theatre, people should dress up for the occasion (Sauter et al 1986:376).[2]

It should finally be noted that in focusing on the theatre as a cultural form as has been done here, one tends to over emphasize the homogeneity of the practice of theatre going. There is a distinction to be made *within* the theatre audience that the data available here cannot capture; distinctions based on *taste*. This distinction may be noted by looking at audiences going to private vs. state supported theatres. In state supported theatres, the output normally consists of classical or modern plays. In private theatres, people get to see actors well known from television performing primarily in comedies. These are different worlds. The world of the state supported theatres is a world for people with cultural capital. The world of the private theatres is a world for people with economic capital. These two worlds seldom meet.

## Notes

1. It is difficult to make strict comparisons on the regularity of theatre going in Sweden over longer time periods. On the one hand, different techniques have been used (personal interviews and surveys), and on the other hand, the questions used have been different. If one distinguishes between theatre, musicals and revues the proportion of theatre visitors will be lower than if one only asks about theatre visits (cf. Strid 1989:44). This means that the SOM surveys will give a higher estimate of the regularity in theatre going than studies conducted by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, for instance.

2. Interestingly enough, the view was less common among regular theatre visitors than among others. It should be added that it seems as if the proportion of Stockholm residents who feel that people should dress up for the theatre has dropped since the mid 1960s. Cf. Hellspong 1983.

FIFTEEN

# Mass Media Use and Life Environment

In this discussion, I have thus far concentrated on the possible importance of positional characteristics for the choice of mass media practices. Within the international (Anglo-American) academic community, this is the traditional way of analysing media use, and the type of analysis that forms the basis for other analyses.

As shown in the four preceding chapters, such a way of proceeding is both reasonable and necessary. People's positional characteristics are obviously important for their media practices. But important as these may be, they of course do not single-handedly determine how in a given social context we decide to act and react in our everyday lives. In this chapter I will therefore broaden the picture by focusing on the role that structural factors play for the media choices people make. These structural factors I will study with the help of the concept of *life environment.*[1]

I will distinguish between the life environment of rural areas, towns, cities and metropolitan areas. These environments differ in a number of ways. The number of daily personal contacts differ; the more densely populated the area, the more likely it is to meet different people daily. Different environments also differ when it comes to everyday life opportunities. In urban areas, there is a large output of organised entertainments in the public sphere, whereas in rural areas this is normally not the case. And the environments are differently populated. In metropolitan areas, the proportion of young and highly educated people is higher than it is in the countryside (cf. chapter ten).

Two types of questions will be addressed in this chapter. First, are the mass media patterns altogether different in different environments? How different are the patterns for cinema and theatre going considering the fact that the output differs in different areas? Is there a television pattern typical for rural areas, and another pattern typical for the metropolitan areas – even though the television output is similar? These are descriptive questions dealing with the dominant patterns of mass media use for each type of environment.

But second, what kind of impact does a person's life environment have on his or her everyday life practices? Different environments are differently populated, and the possibilities for carrying out different practices differ. What does it mean to be highly educated and living in the countryside compared to be highly educated and living in a metropolitan area? That is, how do structural and positional factors interact and together create specific media use patterns? This is the second type of question addressed in this chapter.

I will start the analysis by looking at the impact of different life environments on the choices made among different media (cultural form). I will then focus on geographical mobility. Finally, I will analyse the impact of life environment on the choices made among different genres in the media output.

## Life Environment and Cultural Form

Different life environments give different opportunities for people's leisure practices. Hunting or fishing, for instance, are practices that normally cannot be carried out in metropolitan areas. When it comes to mass media practices, some practices are equally easy to carry out in any environment, whereas others are not. It is possible to watch television everywhere in Sweden, but the possibilities for visiting the theatre or the cinema are greater in metropolitan areas than in rural areas simply because there *are* more cinemas and theatres.

Table 15.1 shows that not only are the opportunities for going to public sphere media greater in urban areas, people also take these opportunities. The relationship is clearly linear: The more densely populated the area one lives in, the greater the possibility for both cinema and theatre visits. This is not at all surprising, and it confirms results from previous studies (cf. chapter eight).

It is not only these practices that are carried out more or less regularly in different environments, however. Also the choice of other practices differs between the life environments. People living in metropolitan areas read books to a much greater extent than do other people. The evening newspaper is less common in rural than in other areas, and magazine reading and video watching are practices mainly associated with living in small towns. All these differences seem to exist for the whole time period under study. The one notable change is that the differences in the reading of an evening newspaper have become smaller between 1986 and 1992.

The only practices that are unrelated to life environment are the reading of the local newspaper and television viewing. However, when it comes to newspaper reading, it should be remembered that we know from previous studies that people living in Stockholm read morning newspapers less regularly than others. That is, had we distinguished between different metropolitan areas, also morning newspaper reading had been related to life environment (Weibull 1983:81-82; Kratz and Weibull 1993:2-6).[2]

**Table 15.1** Mass Media Practices in Different Life Environments. SOM 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Morning Newspaper | | | Evening Newspaper | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1986 | 1989 | 1992 | 1986 | 1989 | 1992 |
| Means | 4.97 | 5.10 | 4.86 | 2.10 | 2.10 | 1.91 |
| Rural Area | -.06 | -.01 | -.05 | -.41 | -.25 | -.13 |
| Town | -.12 | .02 | -.05 | .07 | .11 | .12 |
| City | .30 | .10 | .15 | .09 | .05 | -.02 |
| Metropolitan Area | -.23 | -.24 | -.17 | .17 | -.04 | -.11 |
| Eta | .11 * | .06 | .06 | .15 * | .10 * | .08 |

| | Books | | Video | | Magazines | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1988 | 1992 | 1988 | 1992 | 1988 | 1992 |
| Means | 4.22 | 4.26 | 3.62 | 4.24 | 4.71 | 4.78 |
| Rural Area | -.54 | -.63 | -.11 | -.18 | .00 | -.03 |
| Town | -.19 | -.18 | .14 | .19 | .10 | .16 |
| City | .32 | .31 | .01 | -.08 | .00 | -.04 |
| Metropolitan Area | .53 | .65 | -.26 | -.10 | -.31 | -.33 |
| Eta | .18 * | .20 * | .06 | .07 * | .07 | .09 * |

| | Cinema | | Theater | | Television |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1988 | 1992 | 1988 | 1992 | 1992 |
| Means | 2.49 | 2.47 | 2.10 | 1.84 | 5.29 |
| Rural Area | -.37 | -.42 | -.32 | -.34 | -.01 |
| Town | -.02 | -.04 | -.18 | -.10 | .06 |
| City | .12 | .08 | .16 | .16 | -.03 |
| Metropolitan Area | .32 | .53 | .59 | .38 | -.09 |
| Eta | .13 * | .18 * | .22 * | .21 * | .06 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variables range in values in the following way:
Evening Newspaper 0-4; Local Newspaper 0-6;Television 1-6; Other Mass Media Practices 1-7

It thus seems possible to speak of different mass media environments within the different life environments. People living in different environments do choose different media. But to which extent is this due to the fact that the environments are differently populated? What do the relationships between positional factors and media practices look like in different life environments?

First, the relationship between positional characteristics and television viewing is roughly the same in all life environments. This means that older people and people with low levels of education watch television more regularly than others no matter the life environment.

The other two basic media, morning and evening newspapers, are differently related to positional characteristics in different life environments, however. Level of education and level of income are more important for the reading of the local

newspaper in urban than in rural areas. In order to understand this, it is necessary to take into account the newspaper's local orientation, and the paper's success in making everyone feel "at home" with the paper (cf. Kratz 1991a). Apparently, this is something the paper manages with in smaller communities, but not in larger areas. Thus, in rural areas, almost everybody reads the local newspaper, whereas in metropolitan areas, the differences in reading are clearly marked. In these areas – and especially in Stockholm – people with low levels of income and education do not feel that the morning newspapers speak to them.

This is instead the case with the evening newspaper. The most typical evening newspaper reader is a person with a low level of education living in a metropolitan area (the highest mean). It is in these urban areas that the evening newspapers function as alternatives to the morning newspapers (Appendix 15).[3]

Of the three specialized media practices normally carried out in the private sphere, one, book reading, is similarly related to positional characteristics in all life environments. People from the upper middle classes read more books than others, but all groups of people tend to read books more regularly in urban than in rural areas. There is in other words a rather simple and straight forward impact of life environment on book reading.

The patterns for video watching and magazine reading are more intricate. Middle aged or old people watch videos to the same extent wherever they live, but young people do so much less in metropolitan areas than in other areas. Similarly, married people read magazines to the same extent everywhere, whereas single people do so to a greater extent in the countryside than in urban areas. This suggests that for young people and for single people, the alternatives offered to video watching and to magazine reading in metropolitan areas seem more attractive than these media practices, and are taken up instead. In rural areas, the alternatives may not be as attractive (Appendix 16).

For theatre going, the relationships are on the whole stronger the more densely populated the life environment. Level of education and level of income are more important for theatre going in cities and metropolitan areas than they are in rural areas and in towns. For cinema going, the pattern is the opposite. Level of education, income and age are more important in rural than in urban areas.

These patterns should be interpreted in relation both to differences in life environment and to differences in cultural forms. Both cinemas and theatres are more common in urban than in rural areas. The possibilities for visits are thus greater in some areas, and as already shown, people on the whole tend to visit both the cinema and the theatre more often in such areas.

However, these opportunities are taken up in two different ways. Cinema going is a much more common practice, a practice oriented towards most people. With a large output, everyone within the environment tends to visit the cinema more regularly – no matter positional characteristics. Theatre going, on the other hand,

is a practice oriented towards a smaller group. This means that with a larger output, this is taken up frequently by precisely this group. Other groups also become more regular theatre visitors, but not at all to the same extent. This means that the differences in theatre going are much greater in metropolitan areas than in rural areas (Appendix 17).

## Geographical Mobility

In a sense, a person's life environment is a given structure; a structure that is very difficult to change. However, people are not tied to the same environments forever. It is possible to move to new environments. In so doing, it is necessary to acquire new habits, or to take up the old ones in new contexts.

Most people move from rural to urban areas, and most people who move are young and highly educated (chapter ten). We also know that the media output is more diversified in urban than rural areas, and that the media use patterns are more similar in rural areas. This means that one should expect a greater stability in media use patterns in rural than in urban areas. People new to rural environments should be more likely to follow existing patterns than people new to urban environments.

In Table 15.2 (next page), the relationship between the time spent in present life environent and newspaper reading and cinema going is presented. The table shows first of all that it *is* in urban areas that this factor is of importance for these two mass media practices. In rural areas, there is no significant relationship with either newspaper reading or with cinema going.

In urban areas, the time spent in present life environment is important almost disregarding positional characteristics. However, for some people, being new to an environment is more important than for other people. When it comes to regular newspaper reading, being new to an environment is a factor that is especially crucial for working class people and for single people. These people are on the whole less likely to read a morning newspaper than most people. Furthermore, have they recently moved, the probability for becoming or staying non-readers increases even more. It is a typical example of how structural and positional factors interact.

The "effect" on cinema going of being new to one's life environment is stronger for married and middle age people than it is for others. These are two groups of people that seldom go to the cinema if they have stayed a long time in the same life environment. However, if they move to a new city or metropolitan area, they are likely to switch behaviour and become frequent cinema visitors – in comparison with other married and middle aged people. In the new life environment, they create new everyday life patterns.

**Table 15.2** Newspaper Reading and Cinema Going, Time Spent in Present Life Environment and Positional Factors. SOM 1992 (Product Moment Correlation Coefficients).

| | Newspaper Reading | | Cinema Going | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rural Area/Town Area | City/Metropolitan Area | Rural Area/Town Area | City/Metropolitan Area |
| **Age** | | | | |
| 15-29 | -.02 | -.10 | .06 | .06 |
| 30-49 | -.08 | -.17 * | -.05 | .16 * |
| 50-75 | -.04 | -.12 | -.03 | .06 |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Male | -.03 | -.17 * | -.03 | .15 * |
| Female | -.02 | -.09 | -.11 * | .03 |
| **Education** | | | | |
| Low | -.07 | -.10 | -.08 | .12 |
| Medium | .03 | -.16 * | -.06 | -.04 |
| High | -.06 | -.17 * | -.15 | .07 |
| **Class** | | | | |
| Working Class | -.05 | -.21 * | -.13 * | .12 |
| Lower Middle Class | .03 | -.17 * | .06 | .08 |
| Upper Middle Class | .30 | -.11 | -.26 | .04 |
| Self-Employed | -.05 | .08 | .12 | .24 |
| **Income** | | | | |
| Low | -.10 | -.18 * | -.05 | .14 |
| Medium | .00 | -.11 | -.06 | .12 |
| High | .02 | .05 | -.07 | .01 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | |
| Single | -.14 | -.21 * | -.04 | .01 |
| Married | -.02 | -.12 * | -.02 | .18 * |

* Significant at .01 level

## Life Environment and Genre

Do people living in different environments choose different genres? Is there a rural pattern that is different from a metropolitan pattern? What these questions touch upon is the *relevance* of different types of mass media output for people living in specific environments.

Table 15.3 shows that it does not seem far fetched to speak of differences in the dominant patterns of both television viewing and newspaper reading in different environments. Some genres are more read and watched in some areas than others.

The differences in viewing and reading are almost one-dimensional. In the countryside and in small towns, people on the whole read more local news and advertisements, and they watch more entertainment and nature programs, than people in cities and in metropolitan areas do. People in the larger environments read more

foreign news and culture, and they tend to watch more documentaries and culture programs than do people in the countryside and in towns.

**Table 15.3** Choices of Genre in Different Life Environments. SOM 1986 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Morning Newspaper 1986 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Domestic News | | Culture | Advertisements | | | Radio/TV |
| | | Foreign News | | Local News | | Sports | |
| Means | 2.93 | 2.66 | 2.04 | 3.18 | 2.53 | 2.37 | 2.74 |
| Rural Area | -.07 | -.21 | -.08 | .14 | .12 | -.15 | .00 |
| Town | -.02 | -.02 | -.09 | .07 | .01 | .05 | .02 |
| City | .06 | .08 | .06 | -.08 | .02 | .04 | .02 |
| Metropolitan Area | .03 | .20 | .24 | -.25 | -.25 | -.06 | -.12 |
| Eta | .07 | .15 * | .13 * | .16 * | .12 * | .07 | .05 |

| | Television 1986 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Entertainment | News | Documentaries | Sports | Culture |
| Means | 2.71 | 2.88 | 2.28 | 2.50 | 1.96 |
| Rural Area | .02 | -.10 | -.18 | -.13 | -.08 |
| Town | .01 | .00 | -.01 | .03 | -.03 |
| City | .00 | .04 | .05 | .06 | .01 |
| Metropolitan Area | -.07 | .05 | .14 | -.06 | .19 |
| Eta | .04 | .08 * | .13 * | .07 | .10 * |

| | Television 1992 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Entertainment | News | Documentaries | Sports | Culture | Nature |
| Means | 2.60 | 3.01 | 2.46 | 2.28 | 2.00 | 2.65 |
| Rural Area | .03 | -.06 | -.16 | .08 | -.12 | .11 |
| Town | .11 | -.01 | .01 | .06 | -.04 | .08 |
| City | -.08 | .00 | .05 | -.04 | .09 | -.07 |
| Metropolitan Area | -.16 | .11 | .09 | -.18 | .05 | -.21 |
| Eta | .15 * | .08 * | .12 * | .09 * | .10 * | .14 * |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variables range in values between 0 and 3

One pattern has changed between 1986 and 1992. In 1986 there were no differences in the viewing of entertainment in different areas, but since then the viewing has decreased in the metropolitan areas.[4]

Young and middle aged people tend to watch entertainment regularly on television if living in the countryside but not if living in a metropolitan area. This difference does not exist for old people. These patterns suggest once again that for young people media use to a certain extent is a practice carried out when no other alternatives are available.

However, what the patterns show most of all is the local/cosmopolitan distinction (Merton 1949/1979). The things happening in the local community is very important for people living in rural areas, whereas this is not the case for people in urban areas. For them, foreign news is as important as local news (cf. Weibull 1983:260-266).[5]

The differences outlined above are general ones, due to differences in life environment. But obviously, not all people in rural areas and in towns are locally oriented, and not all people in cities and in metropolitan areas are cosmopolitans. Similarly, some people in rural areas are cosmopolitans, and some people in metropolitan areas are locally oriented.

Young people in rural areas are not much more locally oriented than are young people in metropolitan areas. The fact of being young and not living in a stable social situation means that the local community on the whole is regarded as rather uninteresting.

People from the working classes and people with low levels of income in metropolitan areas are not only less interested in foreign news than are other people in the environment, their interest is similar to the interest among working class and low income people in rural areas. For these groups of people, the metropolitan area apparently does not make them into "world citizens". To a certain extent they instead hold on to an interest in the local community (Appendix 18).

## Discussion

What the analyses in this chapter have shown is that what I have called the life environment of each individual is important for his or her media practices in a number of different ways.

There is first of all an immediate impact of one's life environment on the choice of media practices that is easy to see and understand. If you live in an environment with easy access to cinemas and theatres, you tend to go more often to the cinema and the theatre than if you live in an environment where cinemas and theatres are difficult to reach. This is in one sense trivial, and it is definitely not an original finding, but it is an indication of how people adjust and change according to the environment they belong to.

In addition to this immediate impact, there are also more subtle impacts, however. Even though the television output normally is identical in the countryside and in big cities, and even though it is rather easy to buy books in any part of Sweden, also these patterns are different in different life environments. In order to understand why this is so, it is necessary to take into account the interaction between positional and structural characteristics, but it is also necessary to focus on the specificity of different media's different cultural forms, and on the characteristics

of different genres. This is not enough, however. It is also necessary to take into account how mass media practices interact with other everyday life practices.

Thus, in smaller communities (less densely populated areas), the community feeling is shared by a rather large proportion of the people living there. The local newspaper serves for these people an important function, and local news is a genre most people turn to. In larger communities (especially Stockholm), it is more difficult for the local newspapers to serve this function. The historically specific cultural form of morning newspapers is best suited for the local community. The evening newspaper, on the other hand, manages to take over some of the functions of the local newspaper for some people in metropolitan areas – especially for people with small amounts of economic and cultural capital.

The uses of specialized media cannot be understood unless one takes into account the fact that they compete with non-media practices. That is, the choice to rent a video, for instance, is made in relation to other possible alternatives, and those alternatives differ between life environments. Therefore, young people in metropolitan areas tend to watch videos less regularly than young people in the countryside. Also the mass media practices of single people differ depending on life environment. For people with more stable social situations, the alternatives given within different life environments are less important for the choices that they make. For them, the choice of a magazine or a video is more of a positive choice than it is for people in less stable social situations.

All in all, it seems reasonable to speak of specific "cultures" for each life environment: The look of an environment, the activities going on there, the kinds of problems that are relevant for the environment, the subjects that are being discussed, all these things that characterize the environment create a specific culture that each individual may feel more or less part of. The culture of the countryside and of small towns is on the whole locally oriented, whereas the culture of cities and – especially – of metropolitan areas is more cosmopolitan. Those individuals that feel they belong to the different cultures tend to use the media in ways that fit with the culture in question.

The latter point – the need to feel that one belongs – is important to emphasize. One should not see the patterns outlined as necessary or automatic. In each particular case, it is a matter of people of flesh and blood making decisions within social networks concerning what to do with their leisure time. The patterns show what people with similar socio-economic properties are most likely to do, not what everybody is doing. Some people may choose to act in totally different ways than what is expected given their positional characteristics. And some groups are altoegether less involved in the culture at hand.

Thus, theatre going is part of the culture of metropolitan areas, and as already shown, people with all kinds of socio-economic properties go to the theatre to a greater extent than people with corresponding properties in other environments do. But the differences in this activity are much greater in the metropolitan areas

than in other areas. The middle classes take advantage of the opportunities given. People from the working classes are in this respect not as forward.

This last point may be put in more general terms: The mass media output is more diversified in urban than in rural environments. Such an output leads to greater differences in mass media practices than what a less diversified output does. This in turn seems to lead to greater differences in media practices between groups differently positioned in social space. That is, people from different classes tend to use the media in more similar ways in rural areas than they do in urban areas. This means that in this respect the "metropolitan experience", instead of bringing about an individualization and a weakening of traditional socio-economic bonds, tends to strengthen these bonds.

## Notes

1. Within the Swedish academic community, structural factors have traditionally been included in mass media use analyses. This is to a large extent due to the strong role played by local newspapers in the Swedish mass media environment. The local mass media structures have differed, and thereby it has become meaningful to include the structure in the analyses as an explanatory variable (Weibull 1983: ch.3,1985). But also television viewing in different environments has systematically been analysed (Kjellmor and Wigren 1989; Wigren 1990).

2. It is furthermore the case that with another conceptualization of life environment, also television viewing had been related to life environment: People living in the northern parts of Sweden tend to watch television somewhat more regularly than others (Kjellmor and Wigren 1989:2).

3. Cf. Weibull 1983:111-116 for a more detailed discussion of the relationship between the reading of morning and evening newspapers.

4. It is difficult to make strict comparisons with older studies. Regional differences in television viewing have mainly concerned north/south differences (Wigren 1990). Differences in reading patterns as the ones presented here are well known from earlier studies, however (cf. Weibull 1983:263).

5. Merton (1949/1979) used the local/cosmopolitan distinction in order to study differences in people's orientations *within* a local community, but it is obviously a valid distinction also in relation to differences *between* communities.

SIXTEEN

# Mass Media Use and Values

As shown in the preceding chapters, mass media use is structured by people's positional characteristics and it is structured by factors having to do with a person's life environment. However, even though positional and structural factors are necessary to take into account in order to understand people's everyday life behaviour, the knowledge of these factors are not enough when trying to predict a specific person's choice of media practices with any reasonable level of accuracy. Clearly, people with similar positional characteristics living in similar life environments use the mass media differently, and if we want to understand why this is so, we must turn also to other factors beside those dealt with up until now. We must turn to individual factors.

In chapter four I argued that people's actions in everyday life are guided by *values*. These are the individual factors that in my conceptualization make up the final component in a person's subjectivity. It is furthermore the factor that most clearly connects a person's subjectivity with a specific everyday life practice.

In this chapter I will focus upon two value orientations and four values. On the one hand, I will focus on materialist and postmaterialist value orientations, and on the other hand, I will focus on four more specific values, the values of self-accomplishment, equality, pleasure and wisdom (cf. chapter ten). The main question to be put concerns the relationship between a person's values and his or her mass media use. What does it look like? This question will be put both to the choice of different media and to the choice of specific genres within the mass media output. But the relationship between values and media use cannot be treated in isolation. Therefore, a second objective for this chapter is to analyse how values are articulated with both structural and positional factors towards specific mass media practices.

## Values and Cultural Form

In this first section of the chapter, I will deal with the relationship between values and mass media use on a general level. That is, without taking into account the choice of output, do people's values guide them towards specific media as such?

Is there a connection between values and the different cultural forms of a medium at a specific point in time?

Table 16.1 shows this to be the case. The table presents the relationship between values and the uses of seven media at two points in time, and as the table shows, the uses of all of the media are related to human values at both points in time. On the whole the relationships are significant, but modest.

**Table 16.1** Mass Media Practices and Values. SOM 1986, 1988, 1989 and 1991 (Product Moment Correlation Coefficients).

| | Materialism | Postmaterialism | Self-accomplishment | Equality | Pleasure | Wisdom |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Local Newspaper | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .09 * | .01 | .01 | -.06 | -.06 * | .01 |
| 1991 | .00 | .01 | -.07 * | -.05 | -.08 * | -.02 |
| Evening Paper | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .08 * | .01 | .09 * | .00 | .14 * | -.02 |
| 1991 | .07 * | -.06 | .07 * | .02 | .18 * | -.06 |
| Books | | | | | | |
| 1988/1989 | -.11 * | .07 * | .11 * | .02 | -.20 * | .06 |
| 1991 | -.09 * | .06 | .13 * | .06 | -.15 * | .08 * |
| Video | | | | | | |
| 1988/1989 | -.08 * | -.14 * | .16 * | -.01 | .23 * | -.05 |
| 1991 | -.09 * | -.15 * | .09 * | -.08 * | .20 * | .01 |
| Magazines | | | | | | |
| 1988/1989 | .07 * | -.03 | .03 | .05 | .17 * | .01 |
| 1991 | .10 * | -.02 | -.03 | .06 | .15 * | -.01 |
| Cinema | | | | | | |
| 1988/1989 | -.25 * | -.12 * | .25 * | .03 | .21 * | .06 * |
| 1991 | -.19 * | -.13 * | .20 * | -.04 | .19 * | -.01 |
| Theater | | | | | | |
| 1988/1989 | -.11 * | .04 | .13 * | -.03 | -.09 * | .09 * |
| 1991 | -.11 * | -.01 | .05 | .01 | -.07 * | .01 |

* Significant at .01 level

Materialist and postmaterialist values are both weakly, positively correlated with print media, but not with the same types of print media. Materialist values are positively related to the reading of evening newspapers and weekly magazines, whereas postmaterialist values are positively related to book reading. Both materialist and postmaterialist values are, however, negatively related to electronic media (video watching and cinema going).

Wisdom is weakly related to highbrow activities such as book reading and theatre going. This is contrasted clearly with the value of pleasure, which is related to the

reading of evening newspapers and magazines, and to video watching and cinema going. Pleasure is on the whole the most important value for the choices of different media. Self-accomplishment seems to be important for the uses of most media, and the relationship to cinema going is especially strong. Equality, on the other hand, is not strongly related to any of these media.

How should these relationships be interpreted? First, the relationships indicate that there is a correspondence between specific values and what the different media offer. People guided by pleasure turn to such media that may give pleasure; media such as magazines and the cinema. Similarly, if seeking wisdom, people are more likely to turn to books than to evening newspapers. This is the component in a person's subjectivity that most concretely "connects" the subjectivity with everyday life practices.

Second, values are abstract, but as can be deduced from the table, the scope of different values differs. Pleasure and wisdom are clearly directed towards few, similar types of media. Self-accomplishment, on the other hand, is broader. It may lead towards more different types of media.

Third, different media may also be attractive for a different number of reasons; more than one value may lead to them. The weak relationship between values and the reading of local newspapers suggests that the more general and basic the medium, the less tied it is to specific values. The reasons for turning to this medium are many, and as shown in chapter eleven, it is a practice carried out by most people. Other media, such as the cinema, for instance, are more closely tied only to values of a specific kind.

## Values and Genre

I will now turn to the choices made of different genres, in both newspapers and on television. The data used here are for newspapers collected in 1986, and for television collected in 1986 and in 1991. The main result is similar to the one presented in the previous section: values are important for the choices that people make. All genres are significantly and positively related to at least one of the six values, and most of the genres are related to three of four values. The relationships are on the whole once again weak, however.

The main pattern in Table 16.2 (next page) is that the more specific the genre, the fewer values are important. For sports, only one value – pleasure – is invoked, and for the reading of advertisements, only two – pleasure and materialism.

Materialism and postmaterialism are more important for the choices of different genres than for the choice of different media. They are positively related to all kinds of news both on television (at two points in time) and in the local newspaper. Postmaterialism is also related to culture, and materialism to entertainment.

**Table 16.2** Mass Media Genres and Values. SOM 1986 and 1991 (Product Moment Correlation Coefficients).

| | Materialism | Postmaterialism | Self-accomplishment | Equality | Pleasure | Wisdom |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Television** | | | | | | |
| Entertainment | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .21 * | .04 | .08 * | .09 * | .10 * | -.03 |
| 1991 | .22 * | .07 * | -.03 | .08 * | .18 * | .01 |
| News | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .21 * | .06 * | .03 | .06 | -.11 * | .06 |
| 1991 | .17 * | .14 * | -.06 | .05 | -.10 * | .12 * |
| Documentaries | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .04 | .14 * | .06 | .12 * | -.13 * | .07 * |
| 1991 | .01 | .16 * | .00 | .09 * | -.12 * | .11 * |
| Sports | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .07 * | -.05 | -.02 | -.05 | .06 * | -.03 |
| 1991 | .03 | -.07 * | -.01 | -.05 | .11 * | .03 |
| Culture | | | | | | |
| 1986 | -.01 | .17 * | .06 | .13 * | -.16 * | .08 * |
| 1991 | .00 | .20 * | -.04 | .13 * | -.14 * | .11 * |
| Nature | | | | | | |
| 1991 | .14 * | .14 * | -.08 * | .12 * | -.01 | .08 * |
| **Local Newspapers** | | | | | | |
| Radio/TV | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .09 * | -.10 * | -.03 | -.09 * | .09 * | -.06 |
| Domestic News | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .16 * | .08 * | .05 | .10 | .14 * | -.01 |
| Foreign News | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .10 * | .12 * | .05 | .05 | -.06 | .09 * |
| Culture | | | | | | |
| 1986 | -.05 | .08 * | .06 | .01 | -.07 | .09 * |
| Local News | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .23 * | .18 * | .06 | .12 * | -.12 * | .11 * |
| Advertisements | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .11 * | .14 * | .03 | .10 * | -.02 | .02 |
| Sports | | | | | | |
| 1986 | .05 | .00 * | -.02 | .03 | .11 * | .00 |

* Significant at .01 level

Pleasure and wisdom are related to different genres in a pattern resembling the one presented in Table 16.1: Wisdom is related to news, documentaries and culture, whereas pleasure is related to entertainment, sports and domestic news in the local newspaper. The relationships for pleasure are weaker here, however.

Equality is related both to highbrow and lowbrow genres; on the one hand to documentaries and culture, and on the other hand to entertainment. Self-accomplishment is not related to any of the genres.

## Values, Mass Media Use and Positional/Structural Factors

There is thus a bivariate relationship between values and mass media practices; between individual factors and mass media use. I will now add structural and positional factors to the analysis. First, it is necessary to briefly outline how common these values are among people with different positional and structural characteristics.

Materialists are primarily old, and they have on the whole lower levels of education. They are furthermore over-represented among farmers and among people with low levels of income.

Postmaterialists share a number of characteristics with materialists. They are also primarily old, with lower levels of education. But they are more likely to be female than male, and they are more likely to live in metropolitan areas than in the towns or cities.

Both pleasure and self-accomplishment are values that are more common among youth than among old people. However, pleasure is negatively related to level of education, whereas self-accomplishment is positively related. Pleasure is a value typical of single people and of working class people. Self-accomplishment is an upper middle class value.

Equality is valued higher among females than among men, and it is also a common value among people from the working classes, and among people with low levels of education and income. Wisdom, finally, is the one value that is rather unrelated to positional and structural characteristics.

These patterns show, as expected, that people do not come to their values in individual fashions. On the contrary, values are highly related to one's position in social space; they are socially grounded.[1]

An analysis of the relationship between values and media practices for people with different positional and structural characteristics shows that values indeed *are* important for people's media practices – also after control for positional and structural characteristics.

It is not possible to conduct a detailed analysis of all the relationships involved between six different values and an even greater number of mass media practices within different groups of people, but in order to give a general overview, in Table 16.3 (next page) the five strongest relationships are presented: the relationships between materialism and entertainment on TV, between materialism and local news, between postmaterialism and culture on TV, between self-accomplishment and cinema going, and between pleasure and video watching.

The most important thing to note in the table is that the different values on the whole are important for the choice of the media practices disregarding people's positional and structural characteristics. About 90 per cent of the relationships

presented are significant. Some values are more common among some groups of people than among others, but the different values have an impact among all kinds of groups. For instance, materialism is a much more common value among old people than among young people, but the correlations between the value and the reading of local news are practically identical for young and old people. This suggests that it is not possible to discount the independent impact that values may have on everyday life practices.

**Table 16.3** Values, Mass Media Practices and Positional/Structural Factors. SOM 1991 (Product Moment Correlation Coefficients and Per Cent).

| | Materialism | | Postmaterialism | Self-accomplishment | Pleasure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **TV** | **Print** | **TV** | | |
| | Entertainment | Local News | Culture | **Cinema** | **Video** |
| **Age** | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .13 * | .14 * | .12 * | .17 * | .19 * |
| 30-49 | .29 * | .19 * | .22 * | .06 | .10 * |
| 50-75 | .13 * | .17 * | .11 * | .11 * | .04 |
| **Gender** | | | | | |
| Male | .22 * | .16 * | .18 * | .20 * | .18 * |
| Female | .22 * | .28 * | .16 * | .21 * | .23 * |
| **Education** | | | | | |
| Low | .13 * | .23 * | .17 * | .24 * | .20 * |
| Medium | .21 * | .13 * | .28 * | .14 * | .28 * |
| High | .19 * | .22 * | .16 * | .13 * | .08 |
| **Class** | | | | | |
| Working Class | .17 * | .21 * | .20 * | .19 * | .21 * |
| Lower Middle Class | .31 * | .29 * | .19 * | .13 * | .21 * |
| Upper Middle Class | .24 * | .09 | .22 * | .11 * | .16 |
| Self-Employed | .23 * | .18 | .23 * | .19 * | .08 |
| **Income** | | | | | |
| Low | .20 * | .32 * | .20 * | .29 * | .20 * |
| Medium | .29 * | .20 * | .25 * | .17 * | .21 * |
| High | .12 | .10 | .12 | .07 | .16 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | |
| Single | .21 * | .30 * | .32 * | .20 * | .26 * |
| Married | .23 * | .19 * | .15 * | .18 * | .17 * |
| **Life Environment** | | | | | |
| Rural Area | .16 * | .16 * | .22 * | .26 * | .18 * |
| Town | .22 * | .14 * | .21 * | .17 * | .19 * |
| City | .20 * | .33 * | .22 * | .25 * | .23 * |
| Metropolitan Area | .32 * | .23 * | .07 | .07 | .22 * |

* Significant at .01 level

Beside this general pattern, for some people, some values are more important in relation to some practices than for other people. Thus, it is primarily for middle aged and for middle class people that materialism makes a difference for the

watching of entertainment on television. Postmaterialism is especially important for the watching of culture among people with medium levels of education and among single people. Self-accomplishment is important for cinema visits primarily among people with low levels of income, and pleasure is a value with a rather strong impact on video watching among people with medium levels of education and among single people.

## Discussion

As discussed in chapter four, the topic of value change is a central and important one in contemporary social analysis, and I have in this chapter given an indication of how such value changes are related to mass media practices in the late 1980s and the early 1990s.

Value change in itself is not what primarily interests me in this analysis, however. The point I have tried to make is not that media research should focus on values because values are changing. The point is that media research should focus on values because values guide people in everyday life. That is, if we are to understand mass media use, we need to bring people's values into the analysis.

The first thing to point out in an analysis such as this, is that people's values are structured by positional characteristics. Young people are much more likely to be guided by the value of pleasure than older people, and people from the working classes are more likely to be guided by the value of equality than people from other classes, for instance. This means that certain values are held, almost "naturally", by a majority of people within certain groups. But it is also the case that some of the values analysed are quite uncommon within certain groups. People from the upper middle classes are more unlikely to be guided by pleasure than are other people, and the same may be said for farmers and the value of self-accomplishment.

These patterns reveal how socially grounded values are. Values are individual characteristics in the sense that they belong to individuals, but individuals come to their values in social interaction. This means that also when focusing on individual characteristics, and when arguing for the importance of such characteristics, the point of departure is necessarily taken in each person's social context.

Given these points, what I have done in this chapter is to try to study the importance of values for people's choices of mass media practices. This is not an easy task. There are not many studies to build upon, and the value items used are not constructed for the purpose of doing analyses such as this one. This means that it is somewhat difficult to interpret the findings; it is difficult to know what to expect.[2]

What may then be said? The analysis has shown that there is a weak but significant relationship between values and mass media use. People guided by materialist values differ from people guided by postmaterialist values when it comes to mass media practices, and more specific values such as self-accomplishment, equality, pleasure and wisdom are also important for the choice of practices in everyday life. This means that people with the same age, gender and class background guided by different values with a certain probability tend to choose different mass media practices. The relationships are not strong, but they exist.

In other words: there is a correspondence between a person's values and his or her choice of media practices. Why is this so? In one sense the question is banal. If we are guided by values in everyday life, then we choose such activities that correspond to these values and that fulfill our needs. But why precisely these activities and not others?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to take into account not only the specific properties of media contents but the whole experience of a mass media practice. Then it may be possible to understand why certain values may lead towards some media practices and not towards other media practices (cf. chapter three).

To give one example: There is a strong relationship between the value of pleasure and the viewing of entertainment on television. How are we to understand this? First, entertainment as a genre is partly produced to give pleasure. Second, not only are the programs produced to give pleasure, but the audience also expect the programs to be pleasurable. There is an agreement between producers and audiences concerning the content and the uses to be made of different genres. And third, people have an easy access to the television programs, something which may be important for this type of material. In order to have a pleasurable evening, it is not necessary for the experience to be anything else than the actual viewing of the programs in the private sphere, alone, with the family or with some friends.

All relationships between values and mass media use may not be as straightforward as the relationship between pleasure and entertainment, but they may be discussed in a similar manner. With such a procedure, it is possible to grasp why a specific value leads towards a specific mass media practice.

However, having said that, it must be emphasised that such an analysis in itself is not enough. First, in everyday life people are guided by more than one value. A person's value formation as a whole is very difficult to grasp (cf. chapter four). There is no way one can do that in an analysis such as this, for instance. But even though the task is difficult to deal with empirically, we must be aware of the fact that in everyday life, different values may oppose each other, and the outcome, in the shape of behaviour, should be seen as the outcome of a constant negotiation between contradictory values.

Second, each particular value may lead towards more than one media practice. A value such as wisdom has an impact not only on the viewing of news, but also on the viewing of documentaries and culture, and the value of self-accomplishment has an impact both on book reading and on cinema going. Values shape our basic outlook on life, and they therefore guide us towards a number of different activities in everyday life, mass media activities as well as other activities.

Third, it is also necessary to point out that more than one value may lead to the same media practice. The genre of culture may be taken as an example. Both equality and wisdom seem to guide people towards this genre. The patterns are complex, however. There is an interaction between positional factors, values and the watching of culture, and this interaction looks different for equality and wisdom: Equality is especially important for young and middle aged people, whereas wisdom is more important for middle aged and for old people. The pattern shows that different values may lead towards the same output, but it also indicates that people may watch similar programs for different reasons.

Finally, I have argued repeatedly that the relationships between values and mass media practices are not particularly strong. This should be discussed in relation to the individualization hypothesis. If it is the case that values as individual factors in the production of subjectivity are unimportant for the choice of mass media practices, then it would seem as if the hypothesis would be rejected; it would seem as if structural and positional factors would suffice for analyses of everyday life practices.

Is this a reasonable conclusion? No, I think that such a conclusion is somewhat premature. I believe that the analysis has indicated something of the role that values may play in relation to mass media pratices. The patterns are not clear-cut in any way, but I believe that this is due partly to what I in chapter ten discussed as the problem of accurately being able to determine the role of values if one does not take into account the context within which they are put to use.

Values are always invoked in relation to something – to different mass media practices, for instance. It is thus not the general importance of the value of pleasure that is relevant in this context. It is the specific importance of the value of pleasure in relation to book reading. Unfortunately, it is this latter relationship that we cannot properly grasp with the surveys at hand.

## Notes

1. The choice of a rating procedure for the measurement of values makes it difficult to compare Swedish people's values in this survey with people's values in other countries. However, it would seem as if a rating procedure for the measurement of materialism and postmaterialism tends to produce more postmaterialists among old people and less postmaterialists among young people than what a ranking procedure does (cf. Inglehart 1989; Reimer 1989a,1989b).

2. Johansson and Miegel's study of the relationship between values and mass media use among young people in two cities in southern Sweden is to my knowledge the only study carried out that is similar enough to this to make comparisons meaningful. But even in that case, such comparisons can only be made on a rather general level. Pleasure is related to an interest in watching film comedies, for instance (1992:183).

SEVENTEEN

# Mass Media Use and Lifestyles

In this final step of the empirical analysis, I will broaden the perspective on media use. I will first relate the different media practices to each other, and I will then locate them within a lifestyle context.

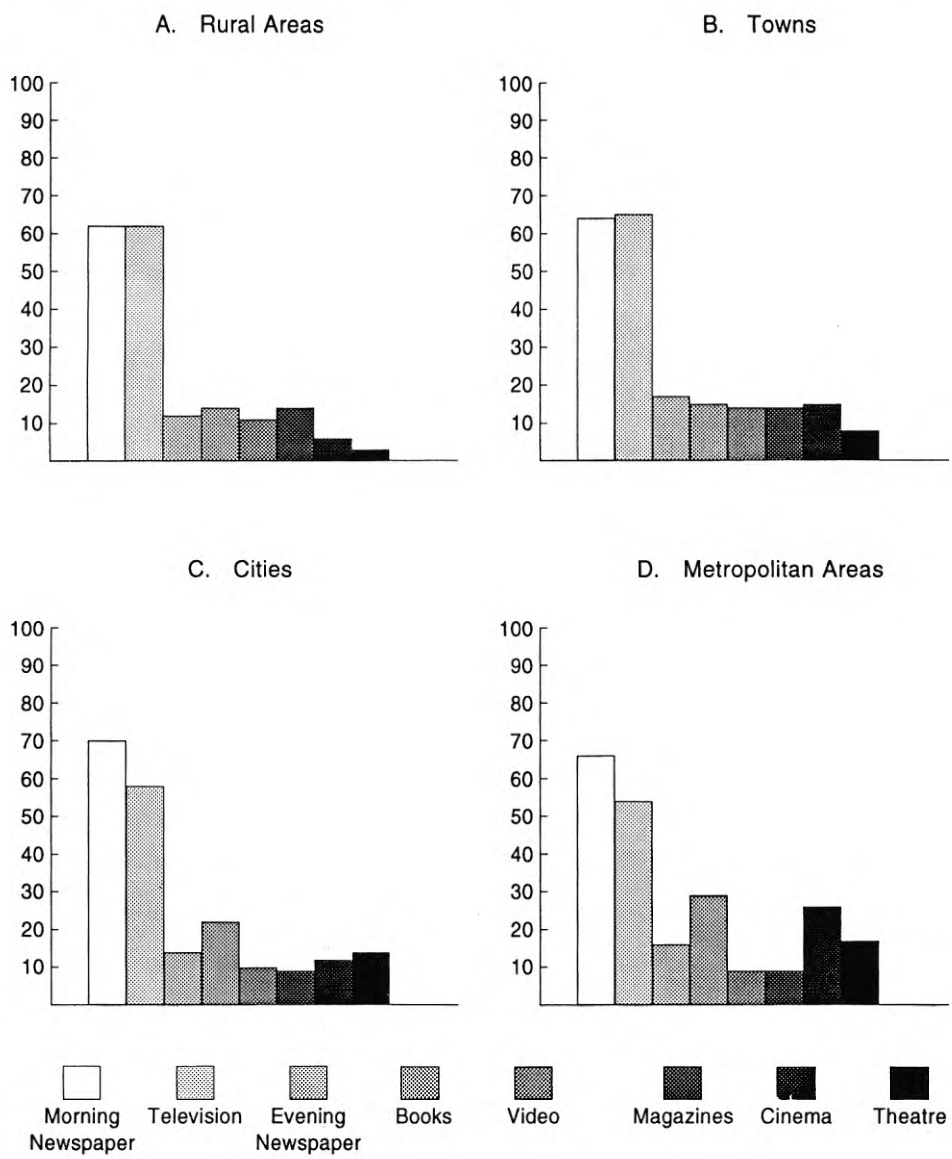
## Mass Media Combinations

Throughout the dissertation, I have distinguished between basic and specialized media. The basic media of television and newspapers are more commonly used than are specialized media such as evening newspapers, books and magazines. The objective of this section is to analyse how these practices are combined. How do people combine basic media with specialized media, and how are the private sphere media combined with the public sphere media?

Figure 17.1 (next page) gives an initial overview of the uses of different media in different life environments. The two basic media are of course most commonly used, but also the private sphere specialized media are used weekly by many people. The public sphere media have regular audiences, but people turn to these media on a monthly or quarterly basis rather than on a weekly basis. On the whole the patterns are similar in all life environments, but people in metropolitan areas visit the cinema and the theatre more often than do other people, whereas television viewing and magazine reading is more common the less densely populated the area.[1]

The results in Figure 17.1 thus indicate once again that the more densely populated the life environment, the more active people are in the public sphere when it comes to media practices. The opportunities open to people in the metropolitan areas are taken up. However, this does not mean that people in urban areas on the whole use media in the private sphere less than others. On the whole, people in metropolitan areas tend to live in more media saturated homes than do people living in other areas. They are more likely to have access to cable television, to a cd player, etc (Kratz 1993:97).

**Figure 17.1** Mass Media Practices in Different Life Environments. SOM 1992 (Per Cent).




In chapter eleven, I showed that the reading of morning and evening newspapers is negatively correlated; readers of morning papers tend to read evening papers to a lesser extent than non-readers and vice versa. We also know from chapter thirteen that of the specialized media in the private sphere, magazine reading and video watching are positively related, whereas book reading is unrelated to the uses of the other specialized private sphere media.

Putting this more generally, it may be stated that the relationships between basic and specialized media in the private sphere on the whole are weak. The reading of the local newspaper is unrelated to all specialized media. However, both evening newspaper reading and TV watching are positively related to magazine reading and both of them are negatively related to book reading. Evening newspaper reading is furthermore positively related to video watching.

These patterns suggest a high/low dimension when it comes to the uses of different types of media in the private sphere, with book reading positioned at one end of the dimension and with video watching, magazine reading and evening newspaper reading positioned at the other end. Television seems to take an intermediary position, at least as long as television is treated on the level of cultural form.

Moving to the level of genre, this is no longer the case, however. The patterns of television viewing correspond to the patterns of the uses of different media. Viewers of documentaries and culture programs tend to read books and morning newspapers regularly, but they do not watch video as often. Viewers of entertainment, on the other hand, tend also to be regular video viewers and readers of evening newspapers and magazines. They are not likely to read books, however.[2]

The patterns in the private sphere are thus rather clearcut. On both the level of genre and on the level of cultural form, the patterns of media use tend to fall back on a high/low distinction. What happens when we add the two public sphere media to the analysis?

The first thing to note in Table 17.1 (next page) is that there is no private sphere/public sphere dimension. The public sphere and the private sphere media are not negatively related to each other. But neither is there a simple high/low distinction. The relationships depend both on cultural form and genre.

Theatre going may be placed within a high/low dimension. It is positively related to book reading, to the reading of local newspapers, and to the viewing of culture programs and documentaries. It is negatively related to the reading of evening newspapers, and to the viewing of entertainment and sports.

The relationship between cinema going and the uses of private sphere media looks quite different, however. Cinema going is positively related to all specialized media, as well as to the reading of evening newspapers, but it is negatively related to the viewing of all television genres.

These patterns thus suggest that, with some exceptions, the uses of most types of media and most genres may be related to each other within one dimension. On the level of cultural form, the exceptions to this general pattern are morning newspapers, television and the cinema. Taking the choice of genre into consideration, television also falls inside the high/low pattern. The question of whether this is the case also for newspapers cannot be dealt with empirically due to the lack of suitable data. However, the uses of the same genres in television and in newspapers

are strongly correlated, suggesting that newspapers would fall inside the same pattern.[3]

**Table 17.1** Mass Media Combinations: Private and Public Sphere Media. SOM 1992 (Product Moment Correlation Coefficients).

| | Cinema Going | Theatre Going |
|---|---|---|
| Local Newspaper | -.04 | .10 * |
| Evening Newspaper | .08 * | -.07 * |
| Television Viewing | -.10 * | -.11 * |
| Book Reading | .22 * | .27 * |
| Video Watching | .28 * | -.01 |
| Magazine Reading | .09 * | .01 |
| **TV Genres** | | |
| Entertainment | -.09 * | -.16 * |
| News | -.22 * | .01 |
| Documentaries | -.07 * | .10 * |
| Sports | -.06 * | -.13 * |
| Culture | -.05 * | .24 * |
| Nature | -.23 * | -.07 * |

* Significant at .01 level

Cinema going is more complex. It is a practice that seems to stand *above* the high/low distinction. It is furthermore a practice with an impact on other practices. In areas with many cinemas, the uses of other media differ from the uses in areas with fewer cinemas.

## Lifestyles

An argument carried all through the dissertation has been that mass media practices are normal, everyday life practices, related to other everyday life practices. In order to understand why people use the media the way they do, it is necessary to look at the context in which these practices are carried out; to look at the relationship between all kinds of everyday life practices. This is the objective for this final section of the empirical analysis.

### *Everyday Life Segments*

A person's leisure time may be spent in many different places, and it may be spent by carrying out many different kinds of practices. Some of these practices are routinely carried out, others are not. Some of the practices are media practices, others are not.

Table 17.2 shows how common the media practices analysed in this dissertation are in relation to a number of non-media leisure practices. Of all these practices, television viewing and newspaper reading stand out dramatically, but also the specialized media practices – especially magazine reading and book reading – are more commonly carried out than most non-media practices.

**Table 17.2** Leisure Practices. SOM 1988 (Per Cent and Means).

| | Every Week | At Least Every Three Months | Means |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Watching Television*** | 99 | – | – |
| **Reading Local Newspapers*** | 90 | – | – |
| **Reading Evening Newspapers*** | 56 | – | – |
| **Reading Magazines** | 42 | 76 | 4.71 |
| Outdoor Practices | 37 | 74 | 4.62 |
| Doing Something Extra for the Family | 27 | 74 | 4.43 |
| Gardening | 40 | 68 | 4.43 |
| Sports and Excercises | 44 | 66 | 4.37 |
| **Reading Books** | 30 | 63 | 4.22 |
| Inviting People for Dinner | 6 | 70 | 3.92 |
| Lotteries | 36 | 58 | 3.87 |
| Discussing Politics | 22 | 54 | 3.72 |
| Working Overtime | 28 | 53 | 3.68 |
| **Watching Video** | 22 | 53 | 3.61 |
| Going to Restaurants in the Evenings | 2 | 35 | 2.77 |
| Going Dancing | 6 | 37 | 2.76 |
| Team Sports | 22 | 33 | 2.72 |
| Praying to God | 20 | 30 | 2.72 |
| Home Furnishing | 7 | 30 | 2.66 |
| **Going to the Cinema** | 2 | 30 | 2.49 |
| Painting, Drawing, Writing Diaries | 17 | 26 | 2.42 |
| Taking Evening Courses | 14 | 26 | 2.41 |
| Going to Museums or Exhibitions | 1 | 19 | 2.28 |
| **Going to the Theater** | 1 | 17 | 2.09 |
| Going to Church | 6 | 17 | 2.09 |
| Earning Extra Money | 7 | 18 | 1.95 |
| Playing Musical Instruments | 10 | 17 | 1.91 |
| Going to Lectures | 3 | 15 | 1.83 |
| Buying and Selling Shares | 1 | 6 | 1.44 |
| Buying and Selling Antiques or Art | 0 | 2 | 1.20 |
| Participating in Demonstrations | 0 | 1 | 1.09 |

Comment: The variables range in values between 0 and 6

* SOM Survey 1992

On the whole, the most common practices are a mixture of private sphere and public sphere practices, and of indoor and outdoor practices. It may also be noted that the different practices have their specific rhythms. Gardening or sports are practices that people tend to carry out every week – if at all. Other practices, such as going dancing or going to restaurants, can hardly be carried on such a regular basis.

The choice of leisure practices are to a certain extent structurally determined. Gardening is only possible if one has a garden, and consequently, it is a practice that is common in rural areas but not in metropolitan areas.

But all differences in practices between the four life environments are not related to differences in opportunities. Some differences are rather due to the "cultures" of different environments. Beside television watching and newspaper reading, book reading is the most common of all practices in metropolitan areas, whereas it is only the tenth most common practice in rural areas (Appendix 19).

It is of course impossible to cover all kinds of leisure practices in surveys like these, and it is difficult to make sure that even the most relevant practices have been included. However, the choice of practices is partly based on what is included in the surveys of Swedish living conditions, carried out by Statistics Sweden. In their analyses, distinctions are made between outdoor practices, sports, culture practices, entertainment and hobbies. These five groups of practices are more or less well covered also in the SOM surveys. In addition to those practices, the SOM surveys include some more *social* practices, such as inviting people for dinner, and doing something extra for the family.

The Living Condition surveys have been carried out three times: in 1976, 1982/ 83 and in 1990/91. The leisure patterns have on the whole not changed dramatically during the time period under study, but some things have happened: The interest in carrying out outdoor sports practices is going down, whereas indoor sports practices are becoming more popular. The interest is furthermore declining for different kinds of indoor hobbies (sewing, knitting, painting, etc). However, the main change that seems to have happened is that people increasingly turn to entertainment in the public sphere. The proportion of people regularly going to pubs, restaurants, etc has increased significantly during the last decade or so.

Two groups have especially changed their leisure patterns. People above the age of 65 have become more active; it seems as if people are increasingly able to continue with their leisure practices at old age. But also females have changed their leisure patterns rather drastically. Their activities have become more oriented towards the public sphere. Females, and especially young females, are more likely to visit restaurants, pubs and cinemas in 1991 than they were a decade earlier, and they are also more likely to visit gyms and other sports arenas (for work-outs, etc.). They are less interested in indoor hobbies than they used to be.[4]

In Table 17.2, the different leisure practices were treated separately. But what interests me primarily, as outlined earlier, is how these different practices constitute different everyday life segments, and how one may understand the role of the media within these segments.

With the help of a factor analysis of roughly 30 different leisure practices, I have constructed nine distinct everyday life segments. The idea behind the construction is to come up with a solution that as far as possible takes into account those

distinctions in everyday life that we know are important; distinctions such as high culture vs. popular culture, the private vs. the public, and nature vs. culture.[5]

**Table 17.3** Everyday Life Segments. Factor Analysis. SOM 1988.

| | F1 | F2 | F3 | F4 | F5 | F6 | F7 | F8 | F9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Going to Museums or Exhibitions | .70 | | | | | | | | |
| Going to Lectures | .65 | | | | | | | | |
| Discussing Politics | .57 | | | | | | | | |
| **Reading Books** | .56 | | | | | | | | |
| **Going to the Theater** | .53 | | | | | | | | |
| Taking Evening Courses | .53 | | | | | | | | |
| Going to Restaurants in the Evenings | | .71 | | | | | | | |
| Going Dancing | | .69 | | | | | | | |
| **Going to the Cinema** | | .65 | | | | | | | |
| Earning Extra Money | | .51 | | | | | | | |
| Home Furnishing | | | .80 | | | | | | |
| Gardening | | | .57 | | | | | | |
| Lotteries | | | | .67 | | | | | |
| **Reading Magazines** | | | | .65 | | | | | |
| **Reading Evening Newspapers** | | | | .62 | | | | | |
| Sports and Excercises | | | | | .74 | | | | |
| Outdoor Activities | | | | | .59 | | | | |
| Team Sports | | | | | .53 | | | | |
| Going to Church | | | | | | .87 | | | |
| Praying to God | | | | | | .83 | | | |
| Painting, Drawing, Writing Diaries | | | | | | | .62 | | |
| Playing Musical Instruments | | | | | | | .55 | | |
| Doing Something Extra for the Family | | | | | | | | .80 | |
| Inviting People for Dinner | | | | | | | | .79 | |
| **Reading Morning Newspapers** | | | | | | | | | .80 |
| **Watching Video** | | | | | | | | | |
| Buying and Selling Antiques or Art | | | | | | | | | |
| Working Overtime | | | | | | | | | |

Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Oblimin, Pattern Matrix

As Table 17.3 shows, the first of the nine segments is a *high culture* segment. It contains practices traditionally associated with high culture, both in the private and in the public sphere. The second segment is a *public sphere entertainment* segment. It contains practices such as going dancing and going to the cinema. Segment number three is a *house and garden* segment, and the fourth segment is a *private sphere entertainment* segment. This is a segment that includes magazine and evening newspaper reading. The fifth segment is a *sports* segment. The sixth segment is a *religious* segment, and segment number seven is oriented towards

*expressive* practices: painting, drawing, playing musical instruments, etc. The eight segment concerns *family and friends*, and the ninth segment is oriented towards the *morning newspaper*.[6]

These nine everyday life segments thus cover different parts of everyday life. Some of the segments may be valid and important for most Swedish people, whereas other segments are more exclusive. Some people may direct their attention towards most of the segments, whereas other people may concentrate on just one or two.

The construction supports the idea of treating mass media practices as normal, everyday life practices, related to non-media practices; it indicates very clearly how the mass media practices are embedded in different everyday life segments. Two of the specialized media practices, book reading and theatre going, belong to the high culture segment. These practices are related to practices such as visiting museums and attending lectures. There is a common, underlying factor uniting these different practices. Two other specialized media practices, evening paper and magazine reading, make up a private sphere segment together with lotteries. This is an entertainment segment, and the fact that a private sphere entertainment segment mainly consists of mass media practices is on the one hand of course an outcome of the items included in the survey, but it is also an indication of the important role the mass media play in the way of entertainment in the private sphere. Cinema going belongs to a public sphere entertainment segment; people who are regular cinema visitors also tend to go to restaurants and to discos regularly. The only specialized media practice outside these nine segments is video watching.

Questions on television viewing were not included in the SOM 1988 survey, and therefore it is not possible to empirically analyse whether this practice constitutes a segment of its own, or whether it falls within one of the private sphere segments. Newspaper reading was included, however, and as Table 17.3 shows, this is a practice that constitutes its own segment. This is an interesting result, indicating the special role played by the local newspaper in Sweden.

## *Everyday Life Segments, Structural and Positional Factors*

How are these everyday life segments related to structural and positional factors? Many of the segments are significantly related to *life environment*: The house and garden segment and the religious segment are important everyday life segments for people living in rural areas. This is not the case for the high culture segment. People living in towns are more active than other people in the domestic entertainment segment. In cities and, especially in metropolitan areas, people are more likely to carry out practices related to the high culture segment.

These differences are not especially surprising. They show the rather straight forward structural effects of differences in ways of living (houses in rural areas

vs. flats in metropolitan areas), and in high culture opportunities. In the Living Condition surveys, these differences may also be found. On the whole, they seem to be stable over time, but it seems as if the increase in visits to restaurants, pubs and other public sphere entertainments is occurring only in metropolitan areas, thereby increasing the differences in leisure practices between different life environments.

All positional factors are related to the practices in the different everyday life segments. Starting with *age*, the public entertainment segment, the sports segment and the expressive segment are all attractive for young people. Middle aged people are most active in the house and garden segment and in the family and friends segment. Old people are over-represented within the religious segment. These are rather obvious life course differences, but it should be remembered the changes in leisure patterns among young females according to the Living Conditions surveys, suggesting that also generational factors are involved.

A typical *male* segment is the house and garden segment. *Female* segments, on the other hand, are religion, family and friends, and high culture. The house and garden/family and friends distinction indicates that traditional gender patterns still are strong (cf. A. Rosengren 1991).

Many segments are related to *level of education*. People with low levels of education are not over-represented within any of the segments, but they are very unlikely to be active within the high culture segment. People with medium levels of education are active within the public sphere entertainment and the sports segments. High culture is the one segment most typical for people with high levels of education.

These patterns are similar to the patterns for *class* background. However, it may be added that working class people are heavily involved in the private sphere entertainment segment, farmers in the religious segment, and the middle classes primarily in the high culture segment. Upper middle class people are on the whole more active than are other people.

Differences according to class and education are both culturally and socially based. There is the obvious relationship between being brought up in an environment in which book reading and theatre going are common practices and the carrying out of such practices also later in life. But there is also a social factor in the sense that people from the upper middle classes in comparison to working class people tend to have less physically demanding occupations, making it easier to use the leisure time more actively (cf. Swedner 1971).

A high level of *income* means that the probability for an active participation in the high culture, the public sphere entertainment and the sports segments increases. A low level of income is related to an interest in the religious segment. Economic factors are obviously relevant in everyday life. Some practices are more expensive than others. The relationship between income and religion should be discussed in relation to age, however. People with low levels of income are over-represented among old people.

*Single* people are more active than are *married* people in the public sphere entertainment, the high culture and the expressive segments. Married people are more active in the house and garden segment and in the family and friends segment. These patterns are clearly social in character, and they correspond to patterns shown for media use in earlier chapters.[7]

The patterns described above all concern segments of everyday life; segments that people are more or less drawn to, and in which they spend their leisure time. As outlined in chapter five, they should not be confused with lifestyles, however. People do not spend all of their time in just one of the segments. Everyday life is on the whole spent moving between different segments.

I have already argued that it is futile to try to close down a person's lifestyle in one, specific pattern of practices. But it *is* possible to analyse how different structural, positional and individual factors are articulated with different everyday life segments in specific combinations that to a certain extent may indicate differences in lifestyles. In so doing, one may get an impression of which everyday life segments people actually move inbetween.

In Figure 17.2, an initial, broad overview over these articulations is presented. Different life environments give people different opportunities and possibilites; some things are easier to carry out in the countryside than in a metropolitan area – and vice versa. People in different phases of the life course have different interests and ambitions; being young means being physically and mentally more mobile and unsettled than later on in life. Together these two factors shape people's interests in different everyday life segments. Together they make specific combinations of everyday life segments more or less probable.

The figure shows how relevant the nine everyday life segments are for people at different phases of the life course living in different environments. For each group of people, the table shows the segments that are more typical for that group than for other groups. This means that what the figure shows is *distinctions* in everyday life. It shows in which ways groups positioned differently in social space distinguish themselves from other groups in social space.[8]

Starting by treating the two factors separately, the table illustrates clearly that young people on the whole lead more diverse lives than do older people. They are involved in more everyday life segments than are older people, and they are especially more active when it concerns everyday life segments placed in the public sphere. Old people are more religiously oriented than are young people, and they are more interested in taking care of house and family. The importance of life environment tends to fall back on a private/public distinction. An interest in house and garden is typical of rural environments only, and the high culture segment is a typical metropolitan everyday life segment.

**Figure 17.2** Combination of Everyday Life Segments. Age and Life Environment. SOM 1988 (Anova/MCA).

| Life Environment | Age / Education 15-29 | 30-49 | 50-75 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rural Area | | | |
| | Expressive** | House and Garden** | House and Garden*** |
| | Public Sphere | | Religion** |
| | Entertainment* | | |
| | Sports* | | |
| Town | | | |
| | Public Sphere | | |
| | Entertainment** | | |
| | Sports** | | |
| | Expressive** | | |
| City | | | |
| | Public Sphere | High Culture* | Religion* |
| | Entertainment*** | Family and Friends* | |
| | High Culture* | | |
| | Sports* | | |
| | Expressive* | | |
| Metropolitan Area | | | |
| | High Culture*** | High Culture*** | |
| | Public Sphere | | |
| | Entertainment*** | | |
| | Sports*** | | |
| | Expressive*** | | |

* Means .20-29 Above General Mean
** Means .30-39 Above General Mean
*** Means .40 or More Above General Mean

But there is also an interaction between the factors that is important to note. Young people share an interest in outdoor entertainments and in sports no matter where they live. They are furthermore as interested in expressing themselves through playing musical instruments or writing diaries in rural as in urban areas. These things young people up to the age of thirty have in common. However, in addition to these practices, young people living in cities and in metropolitan areas *also* tend to visit museums and theatres regularly.

The lifestyles of middle aged and old people tend to be more structurally shaped than are the lifestyles of young people. That is, they have fewer everyday life segments in common. In rural areas, house and garden stands out as *the* segment of interest, whereas in urban areas this role is taken by high culture.

What do these patterns tell us about people's mass media practices? I believe they illustrate how mass media practices are integrated in everyday life, and I believe they do so in two different ways. First, young people on the whole are more

media active than are old people. No matter where they live, they use the mass media, but – and this is the important part – they do so within a larger everyday life context. The mass media practices are important for young people, but maybe not on their own. The practices attain their meaning in relation to other practices. For instance, going to the cinema is enjoyable because it means meeting people in the public sphere, and it is a practice that effortlessly and logically may be combined with a visit to a pub or a restaurant. The cinema visit is enjoyable to the extent that it fits in with other entertainments in the public sphere.

This is the first way in which the patterns illustrate how the mass media are integrated in everyday life. This may be seen as an illustration of how media practices are distinctive for different groups, and of how these practices – together with other practices – may serve very specific functions. For young people in all life environments, the mass media practices concern both entertainment and cultivation in the public sphere. For middle aged people in urban areas, they concern cultivation in the public sphere; a cultivation with pleasurable moments, no doubt.

But there is also a second way in which the patterns illustrate the role of the media in everyday life, and this may be noted by looking for the things that *cannot* be found in the figure. The figure is based on the relationship between age, life environment and nine everyday life segments. But there are only seven segments in the figure. Two segments do not turn up at all. These two segments are so widely shared that they are not distinctive of any of the groups. Which are the two segments? It is the morning newspaper segment, and it is the segment directed towards entertainment in the private sphere; a segment consisting mainly of mass media practices.

Thus, what this tells us is, first, that the mass media play important – and different – roles for people positioned differently in social space. These practices belong almost "naturally" to larger everyday life contexts, together with other non-media practices. They create distinctions in everyday life.

But second, there are no other practices as widely shared as some of the mass media practices. Somewhat paradoxically, mass media practices both constitute distinct everyday life segments for some groups of people – together with other practices – *and* they stand on their own, without the help of other practices, so to speak, as the only practices shared by in principle all citizens.

This was a general picture, possible to deduce by looking at some main factors structuring everyday life. However, in order to paint a more nuanced picture, it is necessary also to take into account other factors, and it is especially necessary to take into account how different factors interact in creating different lifestyles.

In Figure 17.3 I have distinguished between two life environments, one consisting of rural areas and of towns, and one consisting of cities and metropolitan areas. Within these two environments, it is possible to study how age interacts

with other positional factors in determining the interest in different everyday life segments.

On the whole, Figure 17.3 shows how differently Swedish people, due to structural and positional factors, lead their lives. There is a structure in the table that to a certain extent depends on the impact of age and life environment, as described before, but people's subjectivities are clearly shaped also by other factors.

The gender factor is not particularly important among young people. Males and females spend their leisure time in similar ways – no matter where they live. However, at middle age, the differences start to increase according to a very traditional pattern: Men start taking interest in keeping house and garden in order, whereas females take control inside the house (including taking care of friends). This happens especially in rural areas. In urban areas, males and females tend to get involved in similar everyday life segments. These differences should not be seen as totally structurally determined, however. They must be seen in relation also to positional factors. Swedish women are wage earners to a greater extent than what women are in any other country in the world, but this is the case primarily for women living in urban areas. In rural areas, women are more likely to be housewives (cf. Björkman and Sandberg 1988:212-215).

The social class and education patterns are very strong. Middle class people and people with high levels of education lead more diversified lives than do other people. They partake in the same everyday life segments as do working class people and people with low levels of education, but they *also* partake in other segments. The patterns are rather similar in the different life environments, indicating that the positional, cultural factors of education and class are more important in this context than is the structural factor of life environment (cf. Jönsson et al 1993:164-174).

People with high levels of income are active in more everyday life segments than are people with low levels of income. But these differences only exist from middle age and onwards. Before then, everybody, no matter the level of income tends to carry out similar practices. However, among middle aged and old people, a high level of economic capital makes possible more diversified lifestyles than those of other people – especially if living in metropolitan areas.

Marital status, finally, is also highly relevant for the choice of lifestyle. In youth, single and married people are about as active, even though the choice of everyday life different segments somewhat differs. They share an interest in the public sphere entertainment segment, but single people combine this segment with sports and expressive practices, whereas married people combine it with an interest in family and friends.

When older, single people in urban areas still lead an active public sphere life. This is not the case for single people in rural areas. Married people, on the other

**Figure 17.3** Combination of Everyday Life Segments. Positional Factors in Different Life Environments. SOM 1988 (Anova/MCA).

| | Rural Area/Town Gender | | City/Metropolitan Area Gender | | Rural Area/Town Marital Status | | City/Metropolitan Area Marital Status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** | **Single** | **Married** | **Single** | **Married** |
| Age | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Sports*<br>Expressive* | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Expressive***<br>Sports** | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Sports**<br>High Culture* | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>High Culture**<br>Expressive**<br>Sports* | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Expressive***<br>Sports** | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment**<br>Sports*<br>Family and Friends* | High Culture***<br>Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Expressive*** | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Family and Friends** |
| 30-49 | House and Garden*** | Family and Friends** | High Culture* | High Culture***<br>Family and Friends*** | | Private Sphere<br>Entertainment**<br>Family and Friends* | High Culture*** | High Culture*<br>House and Garden*<br>Family and Friends* |
| 50-75 | House and Garden** | Religion*** | | Religion*** | Religion*** | House and Garden* | High Culture*<br>Religion* | |

* Means .20-29 Above General Mean
** Means .30-39 Above General Mean
*** Means .40 or More Above General Mean

**Figure 17.3** (Continued)

| | Rural Area/Town Social Class | | | City/Metropolitan Area Social Class | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Working Class** | **Lower Middle Class** | **Upper Middle Class** | **Self-Employed** | **Working Class** | **Lower Middle Class** | **Upper Middle Class** | **Self-Employed** |
| Age | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | | | | | | | |
| Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Expressive* | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Sports ***<br>Expressive* | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment(***)<br>High Culture(***)<br>Sports(***)<br>Religion(***)<br>Expressive(***) | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment(***)<br>Expressive(**)<br>Sports(*) | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Private Sphere<br>Entertainment* | High Culture***<br>Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Sports***<br>Expressive*** | High Culture***<br>Public Sphere<br>Entertainment***<br>Sports***<br>Family and Friends***<br>Religion**<br>Expressive**<br>Morning Newspaper* | Public Sphere<br>Entertainment(***)<br>Sports(***)<br>High Culture(*) |
| 30-49 | | | | | | | |
| Private Sphere<br>Entertainment* | House and Garden**<br>Family and Friends* | High Culture(***)<br>House and Garden(***)<br>Family and Friends(***)<br>Sports(**)<br>Religion(**)<br>Expressive(*)<br>Morning Newspaper(*) | Family and Friends* | Private Sphere<br>Entertainment* | High Culture*** | High Culture***<br>Family and Friends***<br>Religion**<br>Morning Newspaper**<br>House and Garden* | Family and Friends(**) |
| 50-75 | | | | | | | |
| | Religion***<br>House and Garden** | High Culture(***)<br>House and Garden(***)<br>Family and Friends(***)<br>Morning Newspaper(*) | Religion(***)<br>Morning Newspaper(*) | Private Sphere<br>Entertainment* | Religion* | High Culture***<br>Religion***<br>Morning Newepaper**<br>Family and Friends* | Family and Friends(**)<br>Religion(*) |

* Means .20-29 Above General Mean
** Means .30-39 Above General Mean
*** Means .40 or More Above General Mean
( ) N Less Than 30

**Figure 17.3** (Continued)

| Rural Area/Town Education | | | City/Metropolitan Area Education | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Low** | **Medium** | **High** | **Low** | **Medium** | **High** |
| Age | | | | | |
| 15-29 | | | | | |
| Public Sphere Entertainment** Expressive** Sports* | Public Sphere Entertainment*** Expressive* Sports* | High Culture(***) Public Sphere Entertainment(***) Sports(***) Expressive(***) Family and Friends(*) | Public Sphere Entertainment(***) Private Sphere Entertainment(*) | Public Sphere Entertainment*** Sports** Expressive* | High Culture*** Public Sphere Entertainment*** Expressive** Sports* |
| 30-49 | | | | | |
| Private Sphere Entertainment* | House and Garden* Family and Friends * | High Culture*** House and Garden*** Family and Friends ** | Private Sphere Entertainment** | High Culture* Family and Friends * | Public Sphere Entertainment*** Sports* Family and Friends* Morning Newspaper * |
| 50-75 | | | | | |
| Religion* | High Culture** Religion** | High Culture(***) House and Garden(**) | Private Sphere Entertainment* | High Culture* Religion* | High Culture*** Family and Friends** Religion* |

* Means .20-29 Above General Mean
** Means .30-39 Above General Mean
*** Means .40 or More Above General Mean
( ) N Less Than 30

**Figure 17.3** (Continued)

| Rural Area/Town Income | | | City/Metropolitan Area Income | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Low** | **Medium** | **High** | **Low** | **Medium** | **High** |
| Age | | | | | |
| 15-29 | | | | | |
| Public Sphere Entertainment*** Expressive*** | Public Sphere Entertainment** Sports** Expressive* | Public Sphere Entertainment*** Sports*** Private Sphere Entertainment* Expressive* | Public Sphere Entertainment*** High Culture** Sports* Expressive* | Public Sphere Entertainment*** High Culture** Sports* Expressive* | Public Sphere Entertainment*** Sports** Expressive** High Culture* |
| 30-49 | | | | | |
| | House and Garden* | House and Garden*** Family and Friends * | Private Sphere Entertainment*** | | Public Sphere Entertainment*** Family and Friends** House and Garden* Sports* Morning Newspaper* |
| 50-75 | | | | | |
| Religion*** | House and Garden* Private Sphere Entertainment* | House and Garden*** | Religion** | | High Culture** Morning Newspaper* |

* Means .20-29 Above General Mean
** Means .30-39 Above General Mean
*** Means .40 or More Above General Mean

hand, show an increasing interest in house and garden and in the family. If they live in an urban area, these interests are combined with high culture.[9]

## Discussion

In this concluding chapter of the empirical analysis, I have tried to show how media practices are embedded in larger segments of everyday life. The choices that people continually make between different types of media, and between different genres, are of course to a great extent dependent on specific media characteristics, but the choices are made within a larger context. Different media practices belong to different everyday life segments, and also the choices must be regarded on that level. That is, people feel at home within certain segments, and they carry out practices that belong to these segments. Some of these practices are media practices, others are not. Young people in metropolitan areas who visit the cinema regularly also tend to go to restaurants and to discos. This is for them a perfectly natural combination. Similarly, the theatre and the museum belong to the same everyday life segment. These are both high culture practices, and if one enjoys one practice, the probability is high that one also enjoys the other practice.

Different leisure practices thus have become naturalized within specific segments of everyday life. And in the same way as different practices are naturalized within different segments, our sense-making of everyday life is based on a naturalization of the segments as such, and on a relatively clear understanding of the specific relationships between the segments. We tend to see it as self-evident for instance that high culture and entertainment are different entities, and that there is clear distinction between them.

Why do we make the choices we do? As social beings we have learned the difference between the different everyday life segments. We know which kinds of people to expect when entering the different segments. We know whether the segments are for us – or not. Thus, we choose practices from the point of view of our position in social space. Young working class people living in the countryside do not normally consider high culture to be a relevant everyday life segment. For young upper middle class people in metropolitan areas, on the other hand, this is an extremely relevant segment.

It is important to remember that these patterns always depend on specific articulations between a number of factors and a concrete practice. A position in social space does not by necessity lead to a certain practice. When it comes to high culture, apparently young people's class identities determine their tastes. But this is not always the case. When it comes to entertainment, for instance, the fact of being young is more important than being working class or middle class.

The patterns found in the analysis are rather distinct. Life environment, life course, social class position, etc, are all important for the choices that people make in

everyday life. But it must be emphasised that what is shown is a specific pattern at one specific point in time. One could run the risk of regarding the patterns as general, valid for almost any time: Young people have in principle the same interests no matter life environment, gender or class. Later on in life, differences become more marked. There is nothing in the SOM surveys that would contradict this general interpretation.

However, there is a dynamic in social space that such an interpretation misses. In order to grasp this dynamic, it is necessary to look at leisure practices over a longer time period. Then one may note that things may be changing.

The Living Conditions surveys have shown that during the last decade social life has changed. Females have increasingly turned to practices in the public sphere. They have increasingly left their traditional roles behind. If one takes this into account, one notices that the patterns found here are valid for the late 1980s/early 1990s, but they would not have been valid for the the late 1970s/early 1980s. Had the same analysis been carried out on data from that point in time, then the general conclusion would have been that differences due to life environment and class start at an early age. That is, the general pattern of similar everyday life practices among most young people today is due to changes in young women's lifestyles during the last decade or so.

Finally, contemporary mass media use research has stressed that media use cannot properly be understood if viewed in isolation. People's mass media practices must be related to the larger contexts within which they belong. What I have tried to do in this chapter is to show how these practices are integrated with other practices in everyday life; how these practices together make up a person's lifestyle.

A not insubstantial proportion of people's mass media practices consists of practices that are solidly anchored in different everyday life segments. They are important components in the segments, but they are by no means the only ones. Such segments are normally public sphere segments, and they are attractive only for some groups in social space; groups which distinguish themselves from other groups precisely by being visible in the public sphere. It is within such contexts that cinema and theatre visits should be understood.

But there is also another type of mass media practices, and these make up more specific media everyday life segments. They are of course not unrelated to other practices, but they constitute their own segments. The local newspaper is the best example of such a segment, but also other private sphere media practices make up such segments. Their distinctness may be indicated by the way they give us a general experience – of reading the newspaper, of watching television, etc – as much as specific experiences of concrete texts (cf. Williams 1974:84-96). An interesting point about these segments is that, despite the fact that they in one sense are more unique and specific than other practices, they are the ones that are shared by most citizens. These are not distinguishing practices. These are truly common practices.

## Notes

1. TV viewing: Daily. Newspaper reading: At least 6 days a week. Book reading, video watching and magazine reading: Several times a week. Cinema going: Every three months. Theatre going: Every six months.

2. The question on the reading of different genres in morning newspapers was only included in the SOM 1986 survey. Therefore, this reading cannot be related to the uses of specialized media.

3. In the SOM 1986 survey, the correlation between sports reading and sports watching is .79*, and the correlation between the reading and viewing of culture is .61*.

4. For a presentation of the Living Condition surveys, cf. "Levnadsförhållanden. Rapport nr 85. Fritid 1976-1991".

5. In order to obtain this solution, the least common of all activities, participating in demonstrations, has been dropped.

6. Selin (1993) has carried out a similar analysis of these items, but he also included a question concerning the possession of TV sets, personal computers and cars in the household, thereby winding up with slightly different factors.

7. In order to keep the analysis as clear and meaningful as possible, I have concentrated on structural and positional factors in this chapter. Better indicators of individual factors would be needed for a proper analysis of the relationship between such factors and lifestyles. Suffice here to say that individual factors are related to some of the everyday life segments. Self-accomplishment is related to the high culture, the public sphere entertainment and the sports segment. Equality is related to the family and friends segment. Pleasure is related to both entertainment segments, and wisdom is related to high culture, to religion and to the family and friends segment. Materialism and postmaterialism were not included in the SOM 1988 survey.

8. The table is based on factor loadings obtained from the factor analysis presented in Table 17.3. Only the factor score coefficients from the variables in the table have been used.

9. Values are not at all as important as life environment and age are for people's combinations of everyday life segments. The over all pattern is that people at a certain age living in a specific life environment lead similar lives no matter their values.

   However, it may be pointed out, first, that values may strengthen people's involvement in a specific everyday life segment. For example, young people guided by self-accomplishment living in rural areas are more active in the different everyday life segments than are young people not guided by the value.

   And second, on some occasions values do seem to have an independent impact. This seems to be the case for both pleasure and wisdom, primarily among old people. Pleasure is positively related to an involvement in the private sphere entertainment segment in both rural and metropolitan areas, and wisdom is positively related to religion also in both rural and metropolitan areas.

EIGHTEEN

# Concluding Discussion: Mass Media Use in Late Modernity

In this concluding chapter, I will take up two of the most central themes of the dissertation; themes that I have dealt with both theoretically and empirically. The first theme concerns the reasons behind people's everyday life practices: How are we to understand mass media use in late modernity? The second theme concerns the role of the media in relation to time and space in late modern environments.

## Subjectivities and Distinctions

In contemporary social theory, the process of individualization is gaining increasing attention. As Lash and Urry write:

> This accelerating individualization process is a process in which agency is set free from structure, a process in which, further, it is structural change itself in modernization that so to speak forces agency to take on powers that heretofore lay in social structures themselves (1994:5).

Individuals are culturally released; they are forced to take on the responsibility themselves of deciding how to lead their lives. And when this happens, individuals start to make personal decisions; they do not follow traditional class or gender patterns (cf. chapter two; Beck 1992:87).

There is no doubt that structural changes are causing changes in everyday life. But what happens when people are culturally released – when agency is set free from structure? Without stable structures to fall back on, how *do* people act and react? Do they make personal decisions, as Beck and others claim? There is as I see it a problem in taking this for granted. A loosening of traditional constraints does not necessarily mean that individuals give up traditional ways of acting. In order to understand what the individualization process may lead to, it is necessary to start with a theory of how the self as such is constituted, and then proceed from there.

In this dissertation, I have discussed how the notion of a unified and essential subject has been increasingly questioned. Instead, what is put forward is a notion of a multifaceted and sometimes contradictory subject; a subject made up of a number of conflicting subjectivities (cf. chapter seven). This subject is socially, not individually grounded. It is created in interaction with other social beings, it is continually being re-created, and it acts differently in different social situations depending on which part of one's subjectivity that is deemed most relevant in each specific situation.

What are the implications of this view of the self for the individualization process? It means that one avoids the risk of seeing the process as necessarily leading towards a breakdown of old allegiances and relationships. If people's subjectivities are socially grounded, one should not expect individual action to be purely individually oriented; one should not expect to find a new postmodern individual oriented towards hedonism and personal satisfaction solely.[1] Rather, what one *may* expect is that people – as social beings – either try to uphold old allegiances and relationships even though the structural basis is missing, or they try to form new allegiances. How this is carried out, and what these relationships may look like, must be treated in historically specific contexts, however.

In the analysis, I have focused on how people's subjectivities are shaped in interaction between structural, positional and individual factors, and on how these subjectivities are articulated with mass media practices and with other everyday life practices. The analysis has shown that all three types of factors are important for the choice of such practices, but not to the same extent. In relation both to mass media practices and to non-media everyday life practices, positional factors are more important than are structural and individual factors.

The analysis has also shown that on the whole, there are no signs of an increasing individualization in the choice of everyday life practices in Sweden in the late 1980s/early 1990s. The relationships between traditional structural and positional factors and everyday life practices – and specifically mass media practices – have not become weaker during the time period under study. The relationships are furthermore as strong among young people as among old people.

How are we to understand the mass media choices that people make, then? One may distinguish between two possible perspectives on these choices. On the one hand one may focus on those properties of each mass media text that make it attractive for an individual, regardless of what other individuals may choose. In this sense each singular choice is *substantive*. It is based on the fact that a certain text consists of certain properties that distinguish it from other texts, and by taking these properties into account, one may understand why one text attracts some individuals more than it does other individuals.

However, the practices under study are *social* practices, made by social human beings. They are carried out within the context of everyday life, and they are structured by one's relationship to other individuals. In order not to fall into the

fallacy that the choice of one text over another is a purely individual choice, based on the inherent properties of the text in question, it is necessary to take into account the social relationships that any individual enters into. One must grasp the choices also as *relational* choices; people make choices in everyday life in order to associate themselves with some people and in order to distinguish themselves from other people.

These two perspectives are obviously not mutually exclusive. It is quite possible, and I believe necessary, to combine them. Without a substantive perspective, one cannot grasp the specificity, or the attraction, of each singular text. And without a relational perspective, one cannot grasp the social reasons behind the choice.

Both of these perspectives are tied to the question of subjectivity, albeit in different ways. The relational perspective deals with *distinctions*. Which groups of people in social space tend to carry out similar practices? According to the individualization hypothesis, the choices made in everyday life are supposed to become more and more individually based. But what the analysis has shown is rather that people still tend to make decisions based on traditional physical and social affinities. This does not mean that agency is not set free from structure: People *are* becoming culturally released. But it does mean that people – when set free – tend to orient themselves in old ways. They tend to fall back on those parts of their identities that have to with gender and social class, for instance.

A relational perspective may help us understand why the working classes and the upper middle classes have different tastes; these two groupings are differently positioned in social space, and their tastes differ correspondingly. The choice of practices is made in relation to the choice of practices made by other groupings in social space. But in order to understand what their tastes are, a relational perspective does not suffice. It is necessary also to take into account the specific properties of the media output.

In the analysis, I have discussed the specific characteristics of different mass media practices with the help of the concepts of cultural form and genre. These characteristics, I have argued, are important in order to understand the substantive choices people make. Through the use of these concepts, it becomes possible to understand which media practices different subjectivities are articulated with.

Both the cultural form of a mass medium and the characteristics of a genre are historically specific. They evolve over time. In the analysis, I have tried to show what these forms and genres look like in Sweden in the late 1980s/early 1990s. Some media are more basic than others (newspapers and television), and some genres attract the attention of most Swedish people (local news in newspapers, entertainment on television). These are truly common practices.

But in addition to these shared practices, it is possible to distinguish between a highbrow and a lowbrow pattern of media use. There is a distinction to be found

in the choice of medium, and there is a similar distinction to be found when it comes to the choices of genres.

It does not suffice just to state that these patterns exist, however. Why do they look the way they do? In the analysis, I have tried to discuss this matter by focusing on how the different cultural forms and different genres may "fit" more or less well with different subjectivities. I have focused on social, cultural and economic reasons behind the choices made. I have also argued that it is necessary to take into account the fact that media practices are embedded in larger everyday life segments. There is no "natural" distinction between media practices and non-media practices.

The empirical analysis has covered the period of 1986 to 1992. This is of course a short time period, and if there is a certain over-all stability in people's media use patterns, then that should come as no great surprise. However, this does not mean that things have not changed during the time period under study.

First, it seems as if the late 1980s/early 1990s constitutes a time period in which the everyday life practices of men and women, and especially of young men and women, are becoming more similar. Young women increasingly turn to everyday life practices traditionally associated with men. Instead of spending their time in the private sphere carrying out "female" practices, young women are becoming increasingly visible in the public sphere.

These changes are intimately related to people's life environments. It is only in larger cities and in metropolitan areas, where the opportunities for an extensive public life is given, that young women's everyday life practices are becoming more similar to those of young men. This is the one occasion where one may note that "the metropolitan experience" is leading towards a breakdown of traditional positional patterns in everyday life practices.

This means, second, that differences in everyday life practices between different life environments are increasing. The "culture" of a rural area differs markedly from the "culture" of an urban area, and these changes seem to increase. In rural areas, traditional gender patterns are still strong, whereas, as noted above, in urban areas these patterns are changing. This does not mean that everyday life patterns in urban areas are less structured altogether, however. They are *differently* structured; they are structured on the bases of social class and education – more so than what is the case in rural areas.

The patterns outlined above may be regarded as outcomes of general modernization processes, and in that sense it is not surprising that everyday life is changing more rapidly in urban than in rural areas, or that everyday life in metropolitan areas on the whole is more differentiated. The changes are furthermore examples of how *general* modernization processes affect everyday life. It would not be possible to reduce these changes to one, primary cause. The reasons behind young women becoming increasingly visible in public spaces have to do with changes in

upbringing, with changes in the labour market, etc, and they affect a number of different parts of everyday life. They lead to changes in media practices as well as to changes in other everyday life practices.

But there are also changes in media practices that are more intimately related to mediazation processes. What has happened in Sweden during the time period under study is the introduction of commercial and private television, and a subsequent increase in the number of channels available for viewing. This increase has made it possible for people to be more selective in their viewing behaviour. What the analysis has shown is that people tend to become more selective when they are given the chance. They tend to watch more of their favourite genres, and less of other genres. This has led to an increasing *differentiation* in viewing practices. There is a clearer highbrow/lowbrow distinction in Swedish viewing patterns in 1992 than in 1986. It is furthermore the case that the genre of news, which used to stand above this distinction, is starting to become a constitutive part of the highbrow viewing pattern. That is, news on television is not as common a practice – as shared a practice – in 1992 as it was six years earlier.

People thus become more selective when they get the chance. With a choice between news on one channel, possibly high culture on one channel, and sports and entertainments on other channels, some people turn to the news, some to high culture and some to sports and entertainments. These are personal choices, made by individuals in their homes in their leisure time. The results could thus be used to support the notion of the active audience. However, it must be emphasised that the choices people make in front of the television set are socially and culturally grounded. The increasing differentiation in viewing practices has led to increasing class differences in viewing. People choose, but they do so along class lines.

How specifically Swedish are these patterns? I have argued repeatedly that in analyses such as this one, it is necessary to be historically and culturally specific. In the analysis, I have therefore outlined the specificity of the Swedish mass media environment, and I have tried to show how the environment has attained its current "look". From those descriptions, it should have become clear that, quite unsurprisingly, the Swedish mass media environment on the whole is similar to other West European media environments, but that it obviously to a certain degree also differs from other environments (the role of the local newspaper, the organisation of public service broadcasting, etc).

I believe that it is necessary to hold on to the notion of the specificity of different mass media environments, even in times of globalisation and transnationalisation. The way that the Swedish mass media system has evolved depends on the specific articulation between a number of economic, social, political and cultural factors, some of which are media specific, and some of which are more general. In order to understand the current uses of the media in Sweden, these factors must be taken into account.

However, this does not mean that the processes and structures that characterize Swedish society are unrelated to corresponding processes and structures in other Western societies. As Erikson and Widerberg (1988:343) argue, even though the positional factors of gender and social class often are considered to be less important in Sweden than in most other countries, systematic comparative research shows that in most respects it probably is more reasonable to emphasise the similarities rather than the differences between Sweden and other industrialized countries.

The patterns presented in this analysis should therefore be regarded first of all as typical of one nation in an historically specific phase. *But* I would argue that the interpretation made of the individualization hypothesis – when culturally released people fall back upon, and try to hold on to, old allegiances and traditions – is relevant also for other Western societies.

## Time, Space and the Mass Media

A central theme in contemporary social theory concerns the relationship between time and space. In late modernity this relationship is reorganised, it is argued. Social relations are "lifted out" of local contexts, and there is an increasing speed-up of the pace of life (Giddens 1990,1991; Harvey 1989).

The mass media are obviously playing an important role in the restructuring of time and space. The changes that may be observed are intimately related to technological development, and this includes new media technologies.

However, it should be remembered that the mass media always have played an important role in the organisation of time and space in everyday life. Domestic life is organised and routinised with the help of the mass media. People read the morning newspaper while eating breakfast, listen to the radio during daytime, and watch television in the evenings. The cultural forms of the different media are designed so that the different media may fit into the rhythms of everyday life. It is possible to get an overview of the morning's news in the local newspapers in 20 minutes, and the flow that is typical of broadcasting is suitable for a combination of media use with other everyday life practices.

All in all, the mass media maintain the continuity of everyday life patterns. As Scannell argues:

> It is not, of course, that broadcasting creates or determines these patterns, but it is inextricably implicated in them, giving them substance and content, a texture of relevances, presencing in the mundane here-and-now a multiplicity of actual and imaginary worlds, and yet always oriented to, speaking to, the immediate contexts and circumstances of listeners and viewers (1988:27).

Everyday life is structured with the help of the mass media. The media may be used rationally in order to fulfill needs for information, entertainment, etc, but equally important, the media fill the gaps between other everyday life practices; practices that may be more purposeful. This is Hermes' point when arguing, somewhat provocatively, that media use often is meaningless:

> Meaninglessness, I believe, is part of media use in the sense that one simply cannot stop and think about every thing one does during a normal day's work and leisure, in and outside of the home. Life is largely organized around routines that do no allow for elaborate self-reflection (1993:498).

Media use is meaningless in the sense that it is not always reflective and active. It cannot be. We need breaks between demanding activities, and if silence sufficed in earlier phases of modernity, it seems as if in late modernity we prefer something that speaks to us.

Initially I stated that the relationship between time and space is changing in late modernity. The media have for a long time provided a structure for everyday life. What happens to this structure in late modernity? Meyrowitz has argued that electronic media, and especially television, are having a tremendous impact on people's sense of place:

> Many Americans may no longer seem to "know their place" because the traditionally interlocking components of "place" have been split apart by electronic media. Wherever one is now – at home, at work, or in a car – one may be in touch and tuned-in (1985:308).

Social place has become separated from physical place, and when the world becomes relatively placeless, then for many people it also becomes senseless, Meyrowitz argues. This means that the role of the media is changing. From having provided a feeling of stability and continuity, they now increasingly disrupt our sense of place. From having created "imagined communities" – communities to which we felt we belonged, together with people we never had met – they now increasingly produce a feeling of disorientation.

Is this correct? In some ways the portrayal referred to above is convincing. The cultural forms of electronic media differ from the cultural forms of print media, and the images that we daily receive in our living-rooms may be unsettling. However, there are two major problems with the portrayal:

First, there is in the portrayal no real understanding of the ways that media use are embedded in larger everyday life contexts. As I have tried to show in the analysis, media practices to a great extent attain their meanings in relation to – and together with – other practices. They are components in different everyday life segments. This means that an exclusive focus on the media risks missing the role that media use plays in everyday life. It risks over estimating changes occurring due to changes in the mass media system.

And second, the portrayal is based on an essential notion of what "place" must be; a territory with an "apparently reassuring boundedness" (Massey 1992:13). For many people this may very well be what place is all about. As the analysis has shown, for many people the local community is a natural and essential ground on which to base one's cultural identity. But for others, it may be something else. With increasing travel, and with a steady supply of impulses through the media, place need not be singular and bounded. It may be stretched out.

There is thus not *one* sense of place, and one should not try to make the role of the media into just one. The mass media's role in changing our conceptions of time, space and place is necessarily ambivalent.

## Notes

1. Statements concerning postmodern individuals are normally based on analyses of postmodern cultural works, or of postmodern environments, rather than of analyses of people. Such statements are problematic in the same way as are statements of media effects based on content analyses (cf. Baudrillard 1980:142-143).

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**Appendix 1** Reading of Local Newspapers in Different Age Groups. SOM 1986-1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .06 | .07 | .06 | .09 | .01 | .01 | .05 |
| 30-49 | .03 | .04 | .03 | .01 | .00 | .01 | .02 |
| 50-75 | .03 | .02 | .06 | .00 | .05 | .03 | .01 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .12 * | – | .14 * | .10 | .10 | .14 * | .13 * |
| 30-49 | .16 * | – | .17 * | .09 | .07 | .18 * | .09 |
| 50-75 | .16 * | – | .06 | .06 | .14 * | .08 | .08 |
| **Class** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .12 | .13 | .16 * | .13 | .10 | .14 | .15 |
| 30-49 | .17 * | .14 * | .21 * | .14 * | .09 | .19 * | .18 * |
| 50-75 | .18 * | .17 * | .10 | .09 | .13 | .15 * | .14 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .10 | .05 | .06 | .11 | .12 | .13 * | .10 |
| 30-49 | .16 * | .05 | .17 * | .17 * | .16 * | .25 * | .30 * |
| 50-75 | .18 * | .14 * | .11 * | .09 | .10 | .12 * | .16 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .06 | – | .07 | .04 | .04 | .02 | .06 |
| 30-49 | .08 * | – | .21 * | .14 * | .01 | .28 * | .24 * |
| 50-75 | .10 * | – | .11 * | .11 * | .08 | .13 * | .12 * |

* Significant at .05 level

**Appendix 2** Reading of Local Newspapers. Age and Household Income. SOM 1986, 1989 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | 1986 | 1989 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grand Mean | 5.00 | 5.13 | 4.88 |
| **15-29** | | | |
| Low Income | -.61 | -.73 | -.70 |
| Medium Income | -.38 | -.60 | -.47 |
| High Income | -.06 | -.14 | -.08 |
| **30-49** | | | |
| Low Income | -.39 | -.40 | -.91 |
| Medium Income | .16 | .07 | .24 |
| High Income | .40 | .45 | .59 |
| **50-75** | | | |
| Low Income | -.10 | .15 | -.02 |
| Medium Income | .43 | .38 | .43 |
| High Income | .71 | .52 | .76 |
| Eta | .20 * | .22 * | .26 * |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in value between 0 and 6

**Appendix 3** Reading of Local Newspapers. Social Class and Household Income. SOM 1986, 1989 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | 1986 | 1989 | 1992 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grand Mean | 4.99 | 5.12 | 4.91 |
| **Working Class** | | | |
| Low Income | -.43 | -.45 | -.63 |
| Medium Income | -.04 | -.11 | -.05 |
| High Income | -.36 | .42 | .22 |
| **Lower Middle Class** | | | |
| Low Income | -.26 | -.07 | -.43 |
| Medium Income | .30 | .01 | .38 |
| High Income | .69 | .36 | .25 |
| **Upper Middle Class** | | | |
| Low Income | .21 | .05 | -.20 |
| Medium Income | .62 | .40 | .85 |
| High Income | .69 | .33 | .77 |
| **Self-Employed** | | | |
| Low Income | -.34 | .20 | -.31 |
| Medium Income | .17 | .22 | -.25 |
| High Income | .16 | .38 | .96 |
| Eta | .21 * | .16 * | .25 * |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in value between 0 and 6

**Appendix 4** Reading of Newspaper Genres in Different Age Groups. SOM 1986 (Anova/ MCA).

| | Domestic News | Foreign News | Culture | Local News | Advertisements | Sports | Radio/TV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .02 | .08 | .01 | .13 * | .06 | .01 | .38 * |
| 30-49 | .08 | .01 | .07 | .22 * | .06 | .06 | .51 * |
| 50-75 | .18 * | .08 | .10 * | .18 * | .16 * | .09 | .41 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .20 * | .14 * | .15 * | .17 * | .07 | .13 * | .11 |
| 30-49 | .18 * | .06 | .19 * | .17 * | .29 * | .25 * | .20 * |
| 50-75 | .14 * | .03 | .18 * | .30 * | .31 * | .21 * | .12 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .17 * | .02 | .17 * | .04 | .22 * | .24 * | .06 |
| 30-49 | .22 * | .11 | .23 * | .22 * | .26 * | .18 * | .24 * |
| 50-75 | .16 * | .10 | .19 * | .20 * | .19 * | .19 * | .16 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .04 | .05 | .08 | .09 | .15 * | .18 * | .07 |
| 30-49 | .18 * | .06 | .03 | .04 | .14 * | .04 | .08 |
| 50-75 | .31 * | .05 | .05 | .08 | .25 * | .17 * | .06 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .18 * | .18 * | .12 * | .01 | .13 * | .10 | .09 |
| 30-49 | .01 | .06 | .03 | .02 | .00 | .09 | .01 |
| 50-75 | .18 * | .07 | .03 | .05 | .05 | .06 | .00 |

* Significant at .05 level

**Appendix 5** Reading of Newspaper Genres: Factor Analysis. SOM 1986.

| | F1 | F2 | F3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Domestic News | **.86** | .10 | .06 |
| Foreign News | **.88** | .10 | .06 |
| Culture | **.63** | -.02 | -.31 |
| Local News | .42 | .54 | -.10 |
| Advertisements | -.10 | **.80** | -.06 |
| Sports | .07 | .07 | **.94** |
| Radio/TV Features | -.05 | **.67** | .16 |
| Percentage Explained | 31 | 20 | 14 |

Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Oblimin, Pattern Matrix

**Appendix 6** Reading Profiles and Positional Factors. SOM 1986 (Per Cent).

| | RP1 | RP2 | RP3 | RP4 | RP5 | RP6 | RP7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 30 | 25 | 16 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | 31 | 16 | 9 | 16 | 6 | 15 | 7 |
| 30-49 | 31 | 28 | 15 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| 50-75 | 26 | 28 | 22 | 6 | 11 | 2 | 4 |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | |
| Male | 42 | 17 | 11 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 5 |
| Female | 16 | 32 | 20 | 15 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | |
| Low | 32 | 28 | 8 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| Medium | 31 | 22 | 15 | 12 | 7 | 9 | 4 |
| High | 22 | 23 | 38 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| **Class** | | | | | | | |
| Working Class | 34 | 23 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| Farmer | 22 | 24 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 12 |
| Lower Middle Class | 26 | 30 | 20 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 2 |
| Upper Middle Class | 25 | 21 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 9 |
| Self-Employed | 31 | 24 | 17 | 12 | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| **Income** | | | | | | | |
| Low | 26 | 26 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 7 | 5 |
| Medium | 33 | 26 | 14 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| High | 29 | 24 | 22 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | |
| Single | 32 | 19 | 14 | 13 | 6 | 10 | 5 |
| Married | 28 | 28 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 6 |

Comment: See Figure 11.1

**Appendix 7** Viewing of Television Genres in Different Age Groups. SOM 1992 (Anova/ MCA).

| | Entertainment | News | Documentaries | Sports | Culture | Nature |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .09 * | .12 * | .10 * | .37 * | .09 | .10 * |
| 30-49 | .01 | .06 | .06 | .41 * | .14 * | .04 |
| 50-75 | .07 | .06 | .02 | .36 * | .17 * | .02 |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .16 * | .17 * | .13 * | .15 * | .13 * | .11 |
| 30-49 | .30 * | .05 | .12 * | .22 * | .19 * | .25 * |
| 50-75 | .29 * | .07 | .13 * | .28 * | .23 * | .24 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .20 * | .19 * | .06 | .09 | .18 * | .08 |
| 30-49 | .26 * | .14 * | .14 * | .12 * | .14 * | .21 * |
| 50-75 | .27 * | .09 | .10 | .25 * | .19 * | .25 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .11 | .05 | .05 | .03 | .07 | .08 |
| 30-49 | .09 | .06 | .09 | .05 | .10 * | .15 * |
| 50-75 | .21 * | .09 | .10 | .25 * | .19 * | .25 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .00 | .14 * | .08 | .12 * | .08 | .19 * |
| 30-49 | .03 | .07 | .08 * | .02 | .06 | .00 |
| 50-75 | .03 | .01 | .07 | .03 | .12 * | .04 |

* Significant at .05 level

**Appendix 8** Viewing of Television Genres. Factor Scores in Different Age Groups. SOM 1986 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | F1 | | F2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1986 | 1992 | 1986 | 1992 |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| 15-29 | .10 * | .08 | .21 * | .21 * |
| 30-49 | .16 * | .01 | .24 * | .28 * |
| 50-75 | .15 * | .16 * | .11 * | .21 * |
| **Education** | | | | |
| 15-29 | .11 | .20 * | .19 * | .19 * |
| 30-49 | .16 * | .15 * | .29 * | .33 * |
| 50-75 | .27 * | .24 * | .27 * | .37 * |
| **Class** | | | | |
| 15-29 | .10 | .20 * | .14 | .16 * |
| 30-49 | .19 * | .16 * | .31 * | .25 * |
| 50-75 | .22 * | .18 * | .22 * | .34 * |
| **Income** | | | | |
| 15-29 | .05 | .05 | .05 | .06 |
| 30-49 | .09 | .09 | .12 * | .07 |
| 50-75 | .06 | .09 | .16 * | .23 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | |
| 15-29 | .12 * | .13 * | .04 | .08 |
| 30-49 | .07 | .04 | .08 | .07 |
| 50-75 | .00 | .10 * | .08 | .04 |

* Significant at .05 level

**Appendix 9** Viewing Profiles and Positional Factors. SOM 1992 (Per Cent).

| | WP1 | WP2 | WP3 | WP4 | WP5 | WP6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 32 | 24 | 22 | 12 | 5 | 5 |
| **Age** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | 38 | 21 | 15 | 22 | 2 | 3 |
| 30-49 | 32 | 25 | 25 | 12 | 2 | 5 |
| 50-75 | 28 | 25 | 24 | 4 | 12 | 6 |
| **Gender** | | | | | | |
| Male | 46 | 18 | 14 | 9 | 6 | 7 |
| Female | 17 | 30 | 30 | 16 | 4 | 3 |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| Low | 40 | 27 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| Medium | 32 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 5 | 4 |
| High | 21 | 18 | 41 | 14 | 3 | 4 |
| **Class** | | | | | | |
| Working Class | 37 | 27 | 14 | 13 | 5 | 4 |
| Farmer | 29 | 31 | 20 | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| Lower Middle Class | 29 | 22 | 28 | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| Upper Middle Class | 22 | 17 | 44 | 11 | 2 | 4 |
| Self-Employed | 36 | 25 | 18 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| **Income** | | | | | | |
| Low | 28 | 29 | 20 | 10 | 7 | 6 |
| Medium | 36 | 22 | 21 | 12 | 5 | 4 |
| High | 31 | 19 | 29 | 14 | 3 | 4 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | |
| Single | 32 | 22 | 20 | 15 | 6 | 5 |
| Married | 33 | 25 | 23 | 10 | 5 | 4 |

Comment: See Figure 12.1

**Appendix 10** Book Reading, Video Watching and Magazine Reading in Different Age Groups. SOM 1988, 1990 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Books | | | Video | | | Magazines | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .32 * | .30 * | .26 * | .13 * | .13 * | .09 | .10 * | .16 * | .18 * |
| 30-49 | .24 * | .25 * | .25 * | .07 | .11 * | .09 * | .12 * | .12 * | .01 |
| 50-75 | .13 * | .11 * | .16 * | .12 * | .17 * | .07 | .17 * | .26 * | .19 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .24 * | .22 * | .24 * | .22 * | .26 * | .15 * | .13 * | .17 * | .04 |
| 30-49 | .36 * | .28 * | .34 * | .15 * | .15 * | .12 * | .20 * | .16 * | .12 * |
| 50-75 | .30 * | .31 * | .34 * | .08 | .09 | .04 | .14 * | .19 * | .14 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .23 * | .23 * | .26 * | .18 * | .20 * | .21 * | .10 | .15 | .14 |
| 30-49 | .25 * | .25 * | .25 * | .17 * | .18 * | .09 | .11 | .23 * | .19 * |
| 50-75 | .21 * | .27 * | .28 * | .12 | .15 * | .07 | .13 | .19 * | .16 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .11 | .05 | .07 | .17 * | .06 | .08 | .08 | .12 | .08 |
| 30-49 | .11 * | .07 | .09 | .08 | .08 | .09 | .05 | .15 * | .01 |
| 50-75 | .08 | .09 | .14 * | .23 * | .22 * | .21 * | .07 | .06 | .06 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .08 | .02 | .01 | .06 | .16 * | .17 * | .05 | .03 | .07 |
| 30-49 | .11 * | .07 | .09 * | .04 | .18 * | .05 | .05 | .02 | .05 |
| 50-75 | .12 * | .16 * | .12 * | .11 * | .08 | .12 * | .06 | .05 | .11 * |

* Significant at .05 level

**Appendix 11** Weekly Media Practices in the Private Sphere in Different Groups. SOM 1992 (Per Cent).

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | 25 | 13 | 12 | 13 | 4 | 5 | 21 | 7 |
| 30-49 | 32 | 14 | 10 | 16 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 5 |
| 50-75 | 30 | 15 | 5 | 23 | 4 | 8 | 10 | 5 |
| **Gender** | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 35 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 5 | 15 | 4 |
| Female | 23 | 17 | 5 | 22 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 7 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | 31 | 8 | 8 | 24 | 4 | 5 | 15 | 5 |
| Medium | 29 | 11 | 10 | 16 | 4 | 7 | 17 | 6 |
| High | 27 | 27 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| **Class** | | | | | | | | |
| Working Class | 27 | 9 | 10 | 20 | 4 | 7 | 18 | 5 |
| Farmer | 26 | 13 | 0 | 42 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 4 |
| Lower Middle Class | 33 | 11 | 10 | 17 | 4 | 5 | 10 | 6 |
| Upper Middle Class | 29 | 26 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 6 |
| Self-Employed | 31 | 16 | 7 | 17 | 5 | 4 | 13 | 6 |
| **Household Income** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | 25 | 15 | 6 | 21 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 5 |
| Medium | 32 | 12 | 10 | 16 | 6 | 5 | 14 | 6 |
| High | 33 | 17 | 10 | 14 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 6 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | | |
| Single | 24 | 16 | 9 | 16 | 5 | 6 | 18 | 6 |
| Married | 32 | 13 | 8 | 18 | 4 | 7 | 12 | 5 |

Comment: See Table 13.3

**Appendix 12** Cinema and Theatre Going. SOM 1988, 1990 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Cinema | | | Theatre | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 |
| Grand Mean | 2.49 | 2.40 | 2.47 | 2.09 | 1.89 | 1.85 |
| **Age** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | 1.43 | 1.41 | 1.17 | .17 | .06 | -.04 |
| 30-49 | -.25 | -.18 | -.08 | -.05 | -.06 | -.03 |
| 50-75 | -.91 | -.86 | -.78 | -.08 | .02 | .06 |
| Eta | .60 * | .58 * | .50 * | .09 * | .04 | .04 |
| **Gender** | | | | | | |
| Male | .03 | -.01 | -.07 | -.11 | -.13 | -.14 |
| Female | -.03 | .01 | .08 | .10 | .13 | .15 |
| Eta | .02 | .01 | .05 | .08 * | .11 * | .13 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| Low | -.61 | -.64 | -.56 | -.49 | -.32 | -.26 |
| Medium | .33 | .36 | .25 | .09 | .03 | -.02 |
| High | .50 | .58 | .47 | .69 | .52 | .44 |
| Eta | .32 * | .35 * | .30 * | .36 * | .29 * | .25 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | |
| Working Class | -.10 | -.20 | -.09 | -.38 | -.32 | -.32 |
| Farmer | -.74 | -.57 | -.71 | -.36 | -.36 | -.19 |
| Lower Middle Class | .04 | .09 | -.01 | .28 | .16 | .22 |
| Upper Middle Class | .66 | .63 | .53 | .97 | .89 | .65 |
| Self-Employed | -.08 | .14 | .04 | .05 | .14 | .14 |
| Eta | .18 * | .18 * | .16 * | .36 * | .33 * | .31 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | |
| Low | -.13 | -.11 | -.06 | -.10 | -.15 | -.12 |
| Medium | -.10 | -.05 | -.01 | -.15 | -.06 | -.06 |
| High | .29 | .29 | .12 | .32 | .36 | .34 |
| Eta | .12 * | .10 * | .04 | .16 * | .17 * | .16 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | |
| Single | .77 | .77 | .56 | .28 | .17 | .05 |
| Married | -.36 | -.33 | -.25 | -.13 | -.07 | -.02 |
| Eta | .34 * | .33 * | .25 * | .15 * | .10 * | .03 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variables range in value between 1 and 7

**Appendix 13** Cinema and Theatre Going in Different Age Groups. SOM 1988, 1990 and 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Cinema | | | Theatre | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 | 1988 | 1990 | 1992 |
| **Gender** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .04 | .11 * | .02 | .08 | .14 * | .17 * |
| 30-49 | .04 | .00 | .03 | .13 * | .10 * | .15 * |
| 50-75 | .10 * | .11 * | .06 | .03 | .09 | .10 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .13 * | .20 * | .13 * | .32 * | .33 * | .22 * |
| 30-49 | .24 * | .23 * | .20 * | .40 * | .25 * | .24 * |
| 50-75 | .30 * | .34 * | .28 * | .36 * | .34 * | .35 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .18 * | .21 * | .21 * | .34 * | .34 * | .36 * |
| 30-49 | .23 * | .27 * | .20 * | .38 * | .36 * | .28 * |
| 50-75 | .26 * | .28 * | .29 * | .39 * | .34 * | .34 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .18 * | .09 | .07 | .11 | .04 | .09 |
| 30-49 | .09 | .08 | .04 | .20 * | .23 * | .15 * |
| 50-75 | .25 * | .20 * | .25 * | .24 * | .27 * | .25 * |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .31 * | .33 * | .19 * | .22 * | .08 | .00 |
| 30-49 | .19 * | .20 * | .10 * | .10 * | .09 * | .05 |
| 50-75 | .03 | .13 * | .09 * | .08 * | .11 * | .05 |

* Significant at .05 level

**Appendix 14** Regular Media Practices in the Public Sphere in Different Groups. SOM 1992 (Per Cent).

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total** | 54 | 45 | 6 | 16 |
| **Age** | | | | |
| 15-29 | 25 | 55 | 1 | 19 |
| 30-49 | 56 | 23 | 5 | 16 |
| 50-75 | 73 | 4 | 10 | 12 |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Male | 57 | 26 | 5 | 13 |
| Female | 51 | 24 | 6 | 19 |
| **Education** | | | | |
| Low | 74 | 14 | 5 | 8 |
| Medium | 47 | 33 | 5 | 16 |
| High | 35 | 29 | 9 | 27 |
| **Class** | | | | |
| Working Class | 62 | 27 | 2 | 8 |
| Farmer | 79 | 6 | 4 | 11 |
| Lower Middle Class | 50 | 22 | 10 | 18 |
| Upper Middle Class | 32 | 24 | 10 | 34 |
| Self-Employed | 54 | 20 | 8 | 18 |
| **Household Income** | | | | |
| Low | 58 | 25 | 41 | 3 |
| Medium | 56 | 25 | 4 | 14 |
| High | 43 | 22 | 11 | 23 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | |
| Single | 41 | 37 | 4 | 18 |
| Married | 61 | 19 | 7 | 14 |

Comment: Practices Carried Out At Least Every Six Months

1= None of These Activities

2= Only Cinema Going

3= Only Theatre Going

4= Cinema and Theatre Going

**Appendix 15** Newspaper Reading, Life Environment and Positional Factors. SOM 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Morning Newspaper | | | | Evening Newspaper | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area |
| Grand Mean | 4.81 | 4.81 | 5.01 | 4.69 | 1.78 | 2.03 | 1.89 | 1.80 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | -.52 | -.55 | -.48 | -.61 | .40 | .23 | .07 | .03 |
| 30-49 | .05 | .12 | .02 | .11 | .10 | .01 | -.01 | -.06 |
| 50-75 | .29 | .34 | .26 | .44 | -.37 | -.21 | -.03 | .05 |
| Eta | .16 * | .18 * | .15 * | .19 * | .24 * | .14 * | .03 | .04 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.07 | -.03 | .05 | -.93 | .01 | .05 | .42 | .83 |
| Medium | .07 | -.02 | -.14 | .10 | .08 | .03 | -.04 | -.07 |
| High | .08 | .06 | .10 | .44 | -.23 | -.23 | -.36 | -.40 |
| Eta | .04 | .01 | .06 | .25 * | .08 | .08 | .25 * | .36 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.07 | -.31 | -.67 | -.99 | -.21 | -.03 | -.01 | .07 |
| Medium | -.13 | .04 | .25 | .50 | .21 | .06 | .03 | -.01 |
| High | .69 | .45 | .49 | .62 | .11 | -.11 | -.04 | -.07 |
| Eta | .13 * | .13 * | .27 * | .34 * | .16 * | .05 | .02 | .04 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variable ranges in values in the following way:
Local Newspapers 0 - 6; Evening Newspapers 0 - 4

**Appendix 16** Video Watching and Magazine Reading, Life Environment and Positional Factors. SOM 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Video Watching | | | | Magazine Reading | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area |
| Grand Mean | 4.06 | 4.43 | 4.17 | 4.14 | 4.75 | 4.94 | 4.74 | 4.45 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | 1.30 | .95 | .92 | .65 | .49 | .38 | .24 | .54 |
| 30-49 | .39 | .20 | .37 | .22 | -.05 | -.15 | -.07 | -.10 |
| 50-75 | -1.35 | -1.05 | -.91 | -.93 | -.28 | -.16 | -.08 | -.39 |
| Eta | .51 * | .40 * | .37 * | .33 * | .16 * | .14 * | .08 | .20 * |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.43 | -.32 | -.25 | .26 | -.06 | .01 | .19 | .12 |
| Medium | .51 | .34 | .22 | -.22 | .06 | .15 | .04 | .04 |
| High | .10 | .00 | .00 | .03 | .05 | -.42 | -.22 | -.10 |
| Eta | .21 * | .15 * | .09 | .09 | .03 | .11 * | .10 | .05 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | | |
| Single | .35 | .32 | .04 | -.09 | .24 | .14 | -.05 | -.38 |
| Married | -.12 | -.15 | -.01 | .05 | -.08 | -.07 | .02 | .22 |
| Eta | .10 | .11 * | .01 | .03 | .07 | .06 | .02 | .16 * |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variables range in values between 1 and 7

**Appendix 17** Cinema and Theatre Going, Life Environment and Positional Factors. SOM 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Cinema | | | | Theatre | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area |
| Grand Mean | 2.05 | 2.43 | 2.56 | 3.00 | 1.50 | 1.74 | 2.00 | 2.23 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | .93 | 1.22 | 1.30 | .97 | -.06 | .00 | -.06 | -.03 |
| 30-49 | .06 | -.20 | -.03 | -.07 | .07 | -.05 | -.03 | -.13 |
| 50-75 | -.70 | -.81 | -.73 | -.86 | -.03 | .06 | .06 | .20 |
| Eta | .50 * | .54 * | .52 * | .44 * | .07 | .04 | .04 | .12 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.46 | -.36 | -.77 | -.54 | -.12 | -.12 | -.34 | -.49 |
| Medium | .40 | .32 | .22 | -.11 | .11 | -.02 | -.09 | .05 |
| High | .52 | .15 | .48 | .38 | .13 | .39 | .41 | .23 |
| Eta | .36 * | .21 | .36 * | .23 * | .15 * | .17 * | .26 * | .24 * |
| **Class** | | | | | | | | |
| Working Class | .01 | -.05 | -.08 | -.08 | -.13 | -.23 | -.41 | -.42 |
| Farmer | -.29 | (-.77) | (-.50) | – | .16 | (-.24) | (.32) | – |
| Lower Middle Class | .14 | -.05 | -.18 | -.03 | .15 | .33 | .03 | .09 |
| Upper Middle Class | (.58) | .65 | .35 | .34 | (.69) | -.53 | -.57 | -.37 |
| Self-Employed | -.12 | .07 | .20 | -.24 | -.06 | .05 | .34 | .12 |
| Eta | .16 * | .14 * | .14 * | .12 | .28 * | .26 * | .32 * | .25 * |
| **Income** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | -.19 | -.05 | -.02 | .27 | -.03 | -.10 | -.16 | -.10 |
| Medium | .13 | .04 | -.09 | -.11 | .01 | .02 | -.15 | -.13 |
| High | .27 | -.06 | .17 | -.20 | .09 | .14 | .45 | .29 |
| Eta | .14 * | .03 | .07 | .13 | .05 | .08 | .22 * | .15 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variables range in values between 1 and 7

( ) N Less Than 30

**Appendix 18** Reading of Local and Foreign News, Life Environment and Positional Factors. SOM 1992 (Anova/MCA).

| | Local News | | | | Foreign News | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area | Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area |
| Grand Mean | 3.32 | 3.26 | 3.11 | 2.93 | 2.45 | 2.63 | 2.72 | 2.86 |
| **Age** | | | | | | | | |
| 15-29 | -.32 | -.23 | -.32 | -.23 | -.34 | -.25 | -.16 | -.34 |
| 30-49 | .01 | .07 | -.06 | -.03 | .00 | .04 | -.04 | .05 |
| 50-75 | .17 | .18 | .27 | .20 | .20 | .24 | .16 | .07 |
| Eta | .28 * | .25 * | .30 * | .24 * | .26 * | .25 * | .18 * | .12 |
| **Education** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | .04 | .17 | .35 | .10 | .01 | .02 | -.05 | -.14 |
| Medium | -.07 | -.13 | -.16 | .02 | -.09 | -.08 | -.03 | .00 |
| High | .00 | -.18 | -.35 | -.15 | .37 | .23 | .17 | .16 |
| Eta | .07 | .23 * | .36 * | .13 | .13 * | .12 * | .11 | .15 |
| **Income** | | | | | | | | |
| Low | .05 | .03 | .14 | .10 | .07 | -.02 | -.03 | .08 |
| Medium | .02 | .03 | .03 | .15 | -.07 | .00 | .02 | .07 |
| High | -.27 | -.11 | -.19 | -.25 | -.03 | .03 | .01 | -.14 |
| Eta | .14 | .09 | .16 * | .24 * | .08 | .02 | .03 | .13 |
| **Marital Status** | | | | | | | | |
| Single | -.18 | -.14 | -.17 | .02 | -.12 | -.13 | -.06 | .09 |
| Married | .08 | .07 | .08 | -.01 | .05 | .06 | .03 | -.01 |
| Eta | .18 * | .15 * | .14 * | .03 | .10 | .11 * | .05 | .08 |

* Significant at .05 level

Comment: The dependent variables range in values between 1 and 4

**Appendix 19** Leisure Practices and Life Environment. SOM 1988.

| Rural Area | Town | City | Metropolitan Area |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. **Television** | 1. **Television** | 1. **Television** | 1. **Television** |
| 2. **Local Newspaper** | 2. **Local Newspaper** | 2. **Local Newspaper** | 2. **Local Newspaper** |
| 3. **Evening Paper** | 3. **Evening Paper** | 3. **Evening Paper** | 3. **Evening Paper** |
| 4. Gardening | 4. **Magazines** | 4. **Magazines** | 4. **Books** |
| 5. **Magazines** | 5. Outdoor Activities | 5. Outdoor Activities | 5. **Magazines** |
| 6. Outdoor Activities | 6. Excercises | 6. **Books** | 6. Something Extra for the Family |
| 7. Something Extra for the Family | 7. Gardening | 7. Something Extra for the Family | 7. Outdoor Activities |
| 8. Exercises | 8. Something Extra for the Family | 8. Excercises | 8. Discussing Politics |
| 9. Lotteries | 9. Lotteries | 9. Gardening | 9. Exercises |
| 10. **Books** | 10. **Books** | 10. Inviting People for Dinner | 10. Inviting People for Dinner |
| 13. **Video** | 13. **Video** | 14. **Video** | 14. **Video** |
| 23. **Cinema** | 20. **Cinema** | 19. **Cinema** | 18. **Cinema** |
| 27. **Theatre** | 25. **Theatre** | 24. **Theatre** | 19. **Theatre** |

How are we to understand the uses people make of the mass media in contemporary Western societies? Why do some media practices become "natural" components in everyday life for some people, but not for others? These are the questions addressed in **The Most Common of Practices. On Mass Media Use in Late Modernity.**

In the book, Bo Reimer analyses the uses of the mass media in Sweden in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. He argues that in order to understand mass media use, it is necessary to integrate the media with other processes in everyday life. This means that the analysis is carried out through the theoretical framework of modernity, and that mass media practices are conceived of as natural components in people's lifestyles.

The study shows that, despite all notions of an increasing individualization in everyday life, mass media use is still socially and culturally structured. The study furthermore shows that these structured differences seem to increase when the mass media output becomes more diversified.

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Almqvist & Wiksell International
ISBN 91-22-01622-8