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SCHOLARSHIP

MADELEINE KLEBERG

VIEWS ON WOMEN. HOME AND FAMILY PROGRAMMING IN SWEDISH TELEVISION 1956-1969

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM, MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION, STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY,
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Television entered Swedish households during the 1960s, a decade of far-reaching social, political and economic change. Sweden had experienced the most rapid economic growth in modern times during the 1950s and 1960s, and average household income was the highest in Europe. The success of what came to be known as the "Swedish model" rested on a combination of sustained demand for labour, the successive extension of social benefits, and growth in the public sector. In the 1960s, some social conditions and prevailing conventions within the welfare state were called into question. Not only were conventions challenged, but material conditions changed as well when "housewives" began to seek employment outside the home as never before. The traditional family circle, where fathers earned the family's income and mothers tended the children and managed the household, was more and more widely questioned.

Regular television services started on a single channel in the autumn of 1956. Until late 1969, Sweden had only one TV channel. Thus, television came on the scene just as Swedish family life was undergoing a fundamental transition, as women were no longer content solely to serve their family's needs.

In a feminist historical perspective it is interesting to specify the ideas and perceptions of women's situation that were current in different quarters in different periods. It is particularly interesting to study a period like the 1960s, when forces tending toward radical change were gaining momentum. When proponents of the established order are challenged by groups who seek to install a new order, the question of who gains access to publicity, and the space and framing given different points of view assume crucial importance.

The early years of Swedish television are interesting, from both a feminist and a media historical point of view. A political majority had decided that television would be organised along the same lines as radio 30 years earlier regarding public service broadcasting, patterned in large part after the BBC. The new medium was widely discussed, and Swedish households quickly equipped themselves with sets. There are several reasons why I have chosen to study social reportage and documentaries rather than, for example, news journalism. Social reportage and documentaries focus on parts of reality that other journalistic genres tend to neglect. Given programming which, due to "newsification" increasingly focuses on various power elites, it seemed fruitful to study other journalistic genres' choice of themes and narrative style. In other words: The aim of my work has been to cast light on the subject of gender, and particularly married women, during the specified period. A second aim has been to contribute to media historiography, with particular focus on the narrative strategies employed in television reportage in early years.

Over 70 programmes that explicitly raised issues relating to married women's conditions in the home and in working life were produced between 1956 and 1969. Most of these were produced by the "Home and Family" desk within the Public Affairs Department of the television company. These programmes are analysed in the light of feminist theory concerning perceptions of the similarity or dissimilarity of the sexes (e.g., Simone de Beauvoir, Diana Fuss, Toril Moi), of the relationship of the home and domestic life to the rest of society (e.g., Nancy Fraser, Jürgen Habermas), and of the demarcation of the private and public spheres (e.g., Seyla Benhabib, Joan B Landes, Joshua Meyrowitz).

In terms of media theory, the point of departure is constructionist in the sense that programme output as such is conceived of as an artefact, and the programmes as a discourse (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, Stuart Hall). The choice of narrative technique is related to the thematic content (e.g., John Corner, Bill Nichols) which in turn is considered in relation to other contemporary discussions of women's conditions.

Common to all the programmes, whether they dealt with the family and the home or with working life, is a basic distinction between the spheres of responsibility of married women and men, respectively. There is an indisputable distinction between women and men. The programmes' lack of a class perspective or, more precisely, the unreflected predominance of an upper-middle class perspective, is striking. The mothers who took part in the programmes all seem to have academic education. Furthermore, women's entry into working life is discussed more in terms of an opportunity for stimulus and a chance to get away from the stress of bringing up children than as an economic necessity. Should women choose to take employment outside the home, it would have to be done within the existing socio-economic framework, and without shirking their prime responsibility for managing the home and caring for the children.

An analysis of the Swedish discussion of sex roles in the early 1960s as it developed among feminists, political movements, labour market organisations, women's professional organisations and housewives' organisations found two principle ideologies to predominate. The one was termed "radical," the other "moderate." The latter took its point of departure in the idea of women's two roles. In terms of this analysis, the output of the "Home and Family" desk falls into the moderate camp, whether it focused on family or on working life. This position is explained by the unit's recurrent interest in ways to rationalise women's household chores and the professionalisation of childcare.

But there were other hindrances to more progressive journalistic practices, e.g., the opinion stated by a parliamentary commission on radio and television in 1965 that inasmuch as there was no public policy regulating family life and women's roles in society, television had no mandate to act as a megaphone for the minority of citizens who advocated a more modern attitude.

One of the last reportage programmes in the period under study criticised the Swedish suburbs then under construction for their sterility, their lack of public childcare facilities and the lack of either workplaces or opportunities for professional training, all of which combined to keep women isolated in their homes. In contrast to programmes from the early 1960s, with their advocacy thesis that women might combine their dual roles, this programme criticised breaches in the Welfare State that kept women from realising the ideal of free choice, i.e., the freedom to combine home and working life or to choose one or the other.

But in general, the programmes addressing married women's daily conditions may be seen as expressions of a kind of "conscientious" journalism in the sense that they stopped short of challenging the patriarchal discourse by making socio-economic demands like public investment in child care or a more equal division of labour in the household. Even if this voice of moderation may well have been a tactical choice, making it possible for television to deal with the situation of married women and their opportunities for employment outside the home in the first place, the strategy was of no interest to the politically conscious feminist movement that gained momentum in the last years of the 1960s.

One should also take into account that toward the end of the 1960s, the "women's issues" and "sex roles" perspectives were displaced by a class perspective, which in part explains why the overall shift in attitudes toward women's conditions in Swedish society was not reflected in Swedish television output. Women's needs came to be looked on as a "special interest" which, it was feared, might complicate perceptions of broader working class interests. As such, women's interests were perceived to be marginal, and they were consequently marginalised within the practice of journalism, as well. In sum, when Sweden's second public service channel was being organised toward the end of the 1960s, it was as natural not to include a "home and family" desk in the new organisation as it had been to include one 13 years earlier.

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FAREWELL TO MASS COMMUNICATION? THE PROJECT OF THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

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This dissertation attempts to critically survey Adorno's analysis of the culture industry, which involves his reflections on both culture and communication in capitalist society. I read Adorno's conceptualisation of the culture industry as an open and contradictory text and claim that Adorno's arguments about the culture industry are based upon his dual and contradictory views of society, culture, subject and communication in human life. In doing so, I portray Adorno as both a "dogmatic sociologist" and a "dynamic philosopher." When he played the first role, Adorno stressed the totalising repression of the administered society and culture. However, when he shifted to the second position, he tended to stand by the negating and redemptive possibilities in both aesthetic culture and dialectical communication.

Furthermore, this dissertation is an "intellectual genealogy" of Adorno's notion of culture industry, particularly in terms of the interrelationship between social production, ideological text and audience consumption in the human life of communication. I demonstrate that the culture industry is never an isolated notion, but an ongoing project which has continued in three different approaches to mass communication in the Western Marxist terrain: Habermas' conceptualisation of inter-subjective legiti-

macy; Hall's ideological analysis of objective representation; and critical audience studies of subjective interpretation. These approaches usually emphasise their discontinuities with Adorno's arguments about the culture industry; I show their continuities with Adorno in terms of production, text and consumption in mass mediated communication. Therefore, this dissertation is an "internal" reflection on critical mass communication studies within the Western Marxism. It explores how the concept of culture changes from Adorno's aesthetic emphasis into a semiotic one in Hall's textual analysis of ideology, and then into an anti-aesthetic position in the current cultural studies of audience. More importantly, this dissertation discusses how the notion of communication shifts from Adorno's never-ending opposition and reconciliation between subject and object, into Habermas' inter-subjective dialogues, Hall's objective signification and representation, or subjective hermeneutic action in critical audience studies.

Although this ongoing project of the culture industry is a sustained theoretical effort to deal with the problematic of culture and communication between human life and social production, from its very inception, it denies any possibility of mass communication. I argue that this project instead aims to preserve individuality and individual communication through the never-ending contradictions between symbolic consumption and material production, as well as between human subjects and inhuman objective relations. The realisation of communication, as Adorno claimed, is achieved only through the personal opposition of human life against socially objectified subjectivity constructed in culture industry. His ideal of communication always involves a wrestling between subject and object, particular and universal, experience and information. Communication is a negatively dialectical strategy for the human subject, achieving both objective subjectivity and subjective objectivity — "non-identity with identity."

As Adorno's successors, contemporary critical communication scholars continue his life-long effort to rescue fragments of human agency from the wreckage of capitalism. For Habermas, communication involves "deliberation and arguments" among human subjects, which always has a dwelling point in inter-individual conversations. The triumph of human life and communication over social and cultural production is only realisable when inter-subjective communicative rationality is autonomous, if not isolated from, the objective means and mode of mass communication in everyday life. In contrast to Habermas' inter-subjective view of communication, Hall argues that the possibility of communication is reliant on cultivating individuality in ideological texts by creating linkage and confrontation between the subject and the object, the structural and the individual. Nevertheless, according to critical audience studies, the ideal of communication is achieved in individual information of power and truth, self and other, in his or her private existence. Communication materialises in the interpretation — the hermeneutic action — that changes individual beings and opens up personal worlds and inter-actions. In this way, contemporary critical mass communication studies reaches the climax of Adorno's culture industry project: the pursuit of individuality against objective domination, the formation of individual communication against the alienated mode of mass communication in the culture industry.

This project of the culture industry, in my view, is unfinished, since it only dwells on individual communication rather than communication among the masses, on personal freedom instead of collective solidarity. Therefore, this current project is not a Marxist critique, but a bourgeois one. The dis-articulation between social-cultural

production and human life may make personal communication possible; however, the re-articulation of human communication with social production is the sole opportunity for inter-subjective mass communication. While the current project of the culture industry is concerned with “individual questions” about self-realisation of social power and cultural truth, the Marxist project of mass communication must transform the questions of life, production and inter-subjectivity into “social and collective concerns.” The question of how mass communication of individuals is transformed into a public community of individuals is still the incomplete task that lies ahead for critical mass communication studies. If the culture industry has played a significant role in producing “individuation” without losing collectivity in capitalist society, then the Marxist project of mass communication aims to create a new social collectivity, without damaging individual particularity. Not the farewell to mass communication, but the pursuit of mass communication — communication among the masses — is the only way to complete this unfinished project.

APHRA KERR

IRELAND IN THE GLOBAL INFORMATION ECONOMY: INNOVATION AND MULTIMEDIA “CONTENT” INDUSTRIES

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The central concern of this thesis is to understand the historical factors, which have contributed to the emergence of particular information industries in Ireland, and the factors shaping the emergence of content innovations within these industries today. Its first section deals with theories of social and technological change from a variety of disciplines and the development of a multi-level and interdisciplinary research framework. This framework is then applied in the next two sections, which deal with the national and institutional context of innovation in Ireland and processes of innovation in four multimedia content organisations.

Section One critically examines information society theories, as well as attempts to define and measure the information or knowledge economy. This thesis found Bell’s approach to theorising social change to be technologically determinist, historicist and logocentric. It also rejects his separation of society into three distinct spheres which, it is proposed, wrongly segregates culture from the means of production and politics. It argues that the culture industries are economic entities, which both produce artefacts and stimulate demand for other goods through advertising. Perhaps the most fundamental criticism of this work and the reports it draws upon is the lack of consideration it gives to the role of final users in the innovation process and the semantic value of the information. The emergence of new information industries, occupations and artefacts are seen by Bell as driven by upstream technological and scientific innovations and he consistently fails to interrogate wider socio-cultural changes. None of the works examined pay any attention to the diversity and quality of the information produced or what is done with it.

The research framework developed in this thesis draws upon social shaping of technology and science theories, the national systems of innovation approach within economics and the history and political economy of media technologies. This framework attempts to be sensitive to broad patterns of social, economic and cultural change globally as well as more meso and micro changes at the national and local level.

Within this framework innovation is perceived as a risky, uncertain and dynamic process which involves processes of learning, networking and flows of information within organisations and to upstream and downstream actors. Innovation is also conceptualised as a political and socially embedded process. The framework recognises that while radical innovations are important, incremental innovations often lead to wider diffusion. The framework is also alert to the fact that not all innovations are technological: conceptual, social, political and institutional innovations must also be considered. Finally, this framework conceptualises multimedia content industries as culture industries and recognises the particular role that these industries and their artefacts play within society and everyday life.

A historical analysis of developments in Ireland found that demographic changes over the past hundred years have had a significant influence on the structure of the work force. The existence of a large, young, English speaking and well-educated workforce has been only one of many factors, which has aided the development of the information industries in Ireland. However, the national systems of innovation approach alerts us also to the importance of institutional and political factors. The thesis found that a number of economic and industrial development plans from the late 1950s have fostered an environment which is financially favourable towards foreign owned multinational investment in a number of key sectors including computer hardware, software and internationally traded services. Significantly, national industrial, science and technology policies have not supported to any great degree indigenous innovations in these areas. Entrepreneurs, scientists and engineers have traditionally been dependent on European research programmes to support such work or have emigrated. Cultural policies, while significant in relation to the development of traditional media sectors, have been particularly silent in relation to new media.

An analysis of the changing structure of employment in Ireland illustrates the effects of these policies and priorities in different economic sectors. In particular, there is a significant difference in size, technological capacity and rates of innovation between foreign owned and indigenous manufacturing and service companies and a very low level of household penetration and use of new ICTs in Ireland. New information industries in Ireland are dominated by foreign owned multinationals and new information goods and services, which are produced in Ireland, are mainly for export. The government has been particularly slow to develop initiatives that would contribute to the development of new multimedia services for the domestic market.

Multimedia industries are to be found in a diverse range of manufacturing and service sub-sectors. In the early 1990s multimedia was a contested concept and it provides an interesting case for the active study of how a concept is given meaning by society. However by the late 1990s the term had lost its hyphen and certain societal processes were leading to the alignment of different constituencies and the emergence of some form of social consensus around its definition. This definition associates the term with the combination of different forms in one digital channel and has become

synonymous with the personal computer. The terminology used often borrows heavily from techno-economic discourses and advertising representations produced by software and hardware multinationals during the late 1990s.

Multimedia is defined as a software industry by relevant industrial development agencies and little attention is paid to the content or social relevance of the artefacts produced. In a continuation of historical development priorities financial support is made available to foreign owned multinationals that wish to locate in Ireland, and export abroad, and to Irish owned companies who wish to produce internationally traded services. There is little support available to Irish multimedia content companies who wish to produce cultural or educational products for the Irish market. This raises crucial issues in relation to the diversity and relevance of multimedia content products available on the market for Irish users. It also calls into question the presumptions about how new ICTs will result in greater equality and the democratisation of communications as espoused by both national and European information society policy documents.

An examination of innovation processes in four multimedia content organisations from different industrial backgrounds confirms this assertion. It was apparent from the case studies that companies from a software/IT background adopted a technologically driven content design strategy where content was secondary to technological and economic imperatives. By contrast companies from a more media/arts background adopted quite a different content driven design strategy which tried to take into account the cultural specificities, cultural conventions and shared meanings of their target markets. They were also driven by a wider range of imperatives including artistic and public service values. However innovation in all of these cases was, regardless of the organisation's size, a messy, uncertain and experimental process. Innovation ideas emerged from numerous sources and there were immense difficulties involved in obtaining public funding for content innovations aimed specifically at minority markets.

Multimedia content production for these organisations involved task orientated learning by doing and learning by interacting while final users played an important role in testing and subsequent incremental innovations. Indeed the indigenous multimedia content organisations played a crucial role in local market development and acted as intermediaries in relation to translating the global technological platforms into familiar, meaningful and useful local artefacts. In all cases local traditional media/content organisations proved to be a crucial element in the innovation process given their knowledge of local cultural tastes and norms. In the final analysis local cultural, social and political factors were seen as important brakes acting to limit the march of global technologies and calling into question the perception, widely promoted within information society documents, that all forms of digitised information are equal.