

Scandinavian Media Histories. A Comparative Study

Institutions, Genres and Culture in a National and Global Perspective¹

IB BONDEBJERG

It seems that Scandinavian media research over the past 10 years has finally reached a stage at which the construction of media histories has become important. There has, of course, always been a historical dimension in media studies, and some of the early studies were in fact very historic, dealing with the rise of the press and democracy. And in every Scandinavian country we have also seen a number of historical monographs on both print media and audiovisual media and film. But what we are talking about here is not just the work of individual scholars or research on single media, but the nearly simultaneous projects in all countries to construct a more coherent *national media history*² with a broader coverage of all or at least important aspects of several media. The construction of a separate, national media history is a convincing sign of a mature media discipline.

The Nordic countries have many social and cultural similarities and constitute a perfect area for a more regional media history: a regional history of media in a part of Europe that has been greatly influenced from the outset not just by ideals and programs from other European countries, but also by those from the much earlier developed and much more powerful American media and culture industry. Nevertheless what we have seen is a development of *national* media history projects in Scandinavia, very much focused on finding the specificities of each national media culture, specificities that are certainly there. This is not surprising since the media thus far have been very important for the construction of the early quite socially divided nation state (especially through newspapers) and for the stronger democratic and intentionally more homogenized and interconnected modern national welfare states (especially through radio, TV).

The media have helped to construct a modern nation state and create a public, national forum and in fact also to circulate cultural traditions and democratic values and debate. They have also created strong confrontations among different social and cultural classes and different forms of cultural taste, and the media have been caught between groups of society experiencing media as the cause of cultural and democratic decline and other groups seeing media as the expansion of democracy and a common culture. But in this

media melting pot of lifestyles and cultural forms – this mixing of traditional local communities and bigger urban communities in front of the same transmitter, the same screen – the mass media have certainly had an important role in the construction and transformation of national spaces.

But from the very beginning, this construction of a national media culture, a common cultural space of different traditions and lifestyles, has also been influenced and deeply connected to a global space. Even if the concept of a national media history may still be valid, it is also increasingly problematic: The digitalization and convergence of media and the strong moves towards a globalized network society are changing both our conceptions of the old media and the reality and structure of a new media culture. The nation state as a historical construction is losing many of its essential functions and boundaries. The very object of a media history is thus being transformed at the precise point at which the first wave of Nordic media histories has been published.

However, as I have already stated, national media histories must be written first, the empirical data must be collected and interpreted, before we can move on to media histories that are in a more direct sense conceived as part of a global media history. But although the concept of a national media culture is institutionally important, the Nordic audiences have for many decades been living in a culture extending beyond the national: they are also Scandinavians and Europeans, though sometimes reluctantly or even in a hostile way, using the dissociation from the already incorporated Other to try to define a national essence. In all Scandinavian countries, we also know that Anglo-American culture on all levels is the ‘*lingua franca*’ of globalization, especially as concerns music, films, TV fiction, etc. But although this may be conceived by some as a threat to a national, cultural identity, globalization is in fact as old as the Bible. From the beginning of time, all cultural processes have involved a generic mix of ‘us’ and ‘them’, whereby things once belonging solely to the Other become genuinely ours over the span of a few centuries. And this phenomenon is not only tied to popular culture: the print and music cultures of the 17th and 18th centuries tell a story of globalization and cultural formats that travelled rapidly across borders. What may characterize the late 20th and 21st centuries is the technologically that increased the ways by which and speed with which cultural globalization takes place.

As I will point out in the following, although the now already published Nordic media histories are to varying degrees focused on national media history, the Scandinavian theories and models underlying the writing of media histories have been open to an alternative model. Many researchers behind these media histories have tried, at least conceptually, to dissociate themselves from: a) a very *national concept* of media; b) a very *traditional institutional and top-down* concept of media; and c) a very *static and traditionally literary concept of media texts*. The ideal has clearly been to develop a more integrated and interdisciplinary writing of media history. But an ideal conceptualization is one thing, and the actual strategies, narratives and models used in the writing of the ‘national’, Nordic media histories another. The Nordic countries have much in common, and the basic developments in the Nordic media culture are very redundant from one country to another, as becomes clearly visible when comparing their national media histories. In the writing of the Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish media histories, however, this similarity is not mentioned, and each national media history is often written as if the national development were unique. At the same time, the Scandinavian media histories are also very different in terms of both the theories and methods used and the dominant perspective.

Culture, Genre, Reception

In 1990, before the national, Scandinavian media history projects took off, SMID in Denmark discussed media history at their annual meeting. Hans Fredrik Dahl (later a prominent figure in the writing of Norwegian media history) was there and spoke in favour of a media history concept separate from the literary tradition of the aesthetic history of the single autonomous work. He also rejected technological and institutional history as the main perspective of media history, and instead argued for a *social and cultural history of mentalities* as a model for media history. (Dahl 1990: 12)

Dahl's 1990 model of media history

- Social and cultural history of mentalities
- Aesthetics of habits and everyday life (ritual, repetitive)
- Culture of reception
- Nation in global framework

In his article, Dahl correctly points to the need for a media history as *cultural history*, rather than literary history. His understanding of *mass* media and *mass* communication is founded on an *aesthetic of habits and everyday life* rather than the aesthetics of the singular work and the high culture art concept. Dahl makes two additional important points in his article: a national history cannot be written unless it is clearly imbedded in a *global framework*, because a large part of media history is based on *repetitive, serial formats* that appear in all countries. He also points to the need to conceptualize *reception* not just as a national phenomenon, but as a phenomenon related to a large number of transnational phenomena. He therefore at least partially opposes the idea of media as an important factor in the construction of national, cultural identities, rather seeing it as a mediator between the global, the national and the local.

In his theoretical model for the writing of media history, Dahl clearly makes a polemic demarcation concerning the literary aesthetic model of historical development and the general moral rejection of mass media and popular culture to be found in many traditional literary histories. However, in his polemic eagerness, he almost ends up in the opposite position concerning the textual side of media history: that everything in mass media can be described as repetitive, serialized and basically mainstream, everyday culture and aesthetics. It would be wise here to remember Umberto Eco's famous attack on the modernist notion of innovation and repetition, and the general understanding of popular culture as merely repetitive and high culture as always innovative (Eco, 1985). The interaction between repetition and innovation is just as crucial for media as for film and literature, for popular culture as for high art, but we tend only to see it in the field of media, whereas film and literature tend to stand out as more autonomous aesthetic sectors. High culture and art are institutionally defined in opposition to each other, but in fact very often interact and respond to the same basic developments. There should be no difference between a media aesthetic and a literary aesthetic – there is only one aesthetic.

If we look at the three main generic super genres of radio and television: *Fiction*, *Non-fiction* and *Entertainment*, it is easy to point to very long-running formats and series in all three areas: news-programs, soaps and quiz shows, for example. But even when there seem to be many basic repetitive patterns, it is also easy to find very important historical shifts and innovations as well as to point to how national products differ from glo-

bal formulas, though there is heavy influence from global media and interaction between global and national in media. The global formula *Big Brother*, for instance, clearly developed very differently in Denmark and Germany, in terms of both the filling out of the formula, the casting, the unfolding of the narrative, and the reception. The German version focused much more directly on the sexual taboos and games, whereas the Danish version turned into a meta-play for and against the program (Bondebjerg, 2002). And if we take a closer look at other program genres: documentaries, TV-theatre and miniseries and programs for children and youth, for instance, we find not only exceptionally innovative programs, but also national formulas that contradict the notion of a global media culture without any particular national specificity and solely based on a few repetitive transnational formulas. In fact the nature of the global is misunderstood if it is only interpreted as the same global formulas existing everywhere, just as the national is misunderstood if it is conceived as only essentially national. What we are facing is an increasingly messy melting pot of globalization involving a great deal of cross-fertilization, a phenomenon often called 'glocalization'.

I will argue, therefore, that what is needed in the construction of a national media history is a combination of elements of a more *institutional history*, a *history of the aesthetic of programs and genres* and a *cultural history of media reception*. This can, of course, never be merely a national history, as indeed no other history of art, literature and communication can be: the global, the national and the local are intimately connected, not just in our era of intense globalization, but also in earlier historical periods (Held et al., 1999). But as we shall see in my analysis of the historical models used in Scandinavian media histories, the national has a prominent place, although with different emphases across different histories. To mention just one example: Dahl and Bastiansen's work on NRK. *Over til Oslo* (Dahl & Bastiansen, 1999), especially the third volume on the monopoly period from 1945-1981, is a rather closed, national, institutional history of radio and TV including some important aspects of program and genre history, but greatly focussed on institutional history. In opposition to this, the other Norwegian project on both film and TV – the popular 'coffee table edition' *Kinoens Mørke – Fjernsynets Lys* (Dahl et al., 1996) – takes a much closer look at national TV and film history in terms of reception and genre, and in doing so stresses the global aspect of reception and its influence on the national and the local.

Models of Media History: A Theoretical Outline

Although media history is clearly an area demanding a broader framework of mentality history, of cultural and social contexts and a strong dimension of reception, this does not undermine or contradict the need for an aesthetic genre perspective. On the contrary, I would put it very strongly and say, that any cultural and social history of the media is invalid if it doesn't include the content aspect and the general and specific aesthetic, discourse and rhetoric of the main genres. It is, of course, completely acceptable to write special monographs focusing on more specific and narrow aspects of media history. But when we construct and write an authoritative, national media history, we need to develop a cross-disciplinary theoretical and methodological approach and we need to combine the different aspects of institutions, genres and audiences in a context of broader cultural and social history.

It is, of course, no easy task to write such a comprehensive and broad media history, not least because the empirical data on audiences, the programs themselves and even the more institutional dimensions are difficult to obtain. Especially when trying to write not

just the history of radio and television, as Swedish media historians have done, or TV, film and radio history, as the Norwegians did, but all types of media from print to computer, as the Danish boldly set out to do, one must have a fairly broad scope of investigation and a vast ocean of empirical data, often difficult to access and analyse (see also Klinger, 1997). Research in media history is a broad area linked to social, technological as well as economic forces, imbedded in power structures and institutions; media are related to cultural domains both on an institutional level and on a more content- and product-oriented aesthetic level; and media are certainly tied in many ways to everyday life through the reception and use of them in different segments of society. In the following presentation of theories and methods in media history, I will follow a rough trisection of dimensions:

- The social and institutional dimension
- The cultural-symbolic dimension
- The everyday culture dimension

I will return to the specification of these dimensions, but let me first make a short reference to the writing of film history, a tradition that for obvious reasons is much more developed and institutionalised than a broader media history. In Allen and Gomery's definition of basic forms of film history (Allen & Gomery, 1985), they identify at least four different forms of focus in film history:

- *aesthetic history* (auteur, individual works, genres, etc.)
- *technological history* (sound, film cameras, digitalization, etc.)
- *economic history* (the market vs. public funding, studio system, etc.)
- *social history* (production structures, audience studies, cinema as social and cultural mentality history)

Now we can find prototypical examples of works on film history that focus narrowly on one of these aspects or combine several or all. But if we look at the international standard textbook by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film History. An Introduction* (1994 and later editions), we find an expanded theoretical and methodological statement on writing film history that argues for an integration of dimensions, although with emphasis on a special understanding of aesthetic forms.

Bordwell and Thompson identify three types of motivations and principal questions underlying the writing of their film history:

- *The change in normalization of dominant film uses*: combinations of film form, film style, film modes becoming global or national standards (the Hollywood system, the European art cinema, etc.)
- *The influence of structures of film industry*: modes of production and distribution (industrial, artisan, other forms)
- *Cross-cultural processes*: national and international influences on film form, production

Now Bordwell and Thompson clearly take as their starting point an aesthetic-formal perspective, a perspective, however, which doesn't just reflect history as a string of works, but as a process of interaction among dominant and emerging modes, genres and

types of films. They therefore see films as imbedded in a broader institutional and social perspective of production, distribution and use. Their film history tries to describe how things were, to bring forth hard evidence and facts, as well as to explain and interpret – to confront history with how and why questions. The explanatory frameworks are many: *chronology*, *periodization*, *causality* (individual, collective and structural) and *influence/significance* (intrinsic-artistic, influence, typicality). The narrative presented in Bordwell and Thompson's book is the counter-argument to the rejection of media history as aesthetic genre history: it is in fact a formal-aesthetic history with a broad, social and cultural context. One could argue, however, that the formal-aesthetic perspective results in the narrowing and near disappearance of reception as a more concrete cultural and empirical phenomenon.

But let me now return to a more specified segmentation of the three media historical dimensions outlined above:

- *The social and institutional dimension*
 - Technology (traditional technologies – digitalization and convergence)
 - Economic conditions: market vs. public sphere
 - Institutional structure and political and ideological 'contract'
 - Production practices: individual – group – management
 - Interaction between media sectors and other sectors
 - National, local and global dimensions
- *The aesthetic, cultural-symbolic dimension*
 - Media as part of ongoing development (modernization, democratization, etc.)
 - Change in mentality over time: periodization
 - Genres as cultural-symbolic discourses reflecting and negotiating fundamental stories and values
 - The text-category: singular works – works as prototypes of generic corpus – the super-text (flow and schedules)
 - Quantitative and qualitative textual analysis
 - Intertextuality and intermediality
- *The everyday culture dimension*
 - The everyday contexts of media use (ethnography, memory)
 - Relation between use of different media
 - Quantitative, demographic data – lifestyles
 - Qualitative data on specific programs
 - Reviews and public media critique and debate
 - The global in the local

Thus, media historians must see media as *part of the institutional infrastructure of society and culture*. The media produce and communicate under the influence of technological conditions and development. They act inside a framework of a certain general contract with society and through interaction with other media, other social and cultural institutions and under the influence of local, national and global forces and traditions. The public service ideology or the Hollywood code constitutes such a contract, trans-

formed during the course of historical development. The public service ideology has undergone drastic changes in the past few years, for instance under the influence of digitalization, media convergence and increased globalization. The institutional dimension can be used as a more generalized framework of the media history narrative, but will often result in a very concrete, personalized approach as well. Leading producers and figures in media history will be used as important 'characters' in this kind of narrative, just as political dimensions of regulation or market forces will be important elements in the search for causality and explanations. Examples of media histories with a clear institutional main focus and perspective are Dahl and Bastiansen's NRK-history and Stig Hadenius's volume in the Swedish media history, *Kampen om monopol* [The Struggle for Monopoly](1998). Both these media histories combine structural institutional explanations with detailed accounts of political and institutional conflicts and negotiations between main characters that have influenced the development.

Media historians must secondly see media as part of an *aesthetic, cultural symbolic universe*, a network of discursive structures that reflect and influence historical development and the mentality of specific periods. All media histories search for systematic criteria for periodization, whereby a number of important determining factors interconnect and provoke a slow or fast change in the whole media culture. These are usually based on either institutional factors, important shifts in the generic system and the discursive regimes or on a combination of external factors and media developments. As regards newspapers, radio and television, the design or composition of the flow or the schedules is often an important empirical data element in these kinds of explanations.

In their eye-opening book *The form of news*, Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone tell the history of American newspapers based on the design of the newspaper-page, from which they generate a special social meaning and relation between newspaper and reader. They combine a history of form (technique and aesthetic) with social and cultural history (meaning and ideology). The periodization and social meaning and form develop through *stylistic regimes* from the traditional to classicist and high and late modernism, *types of production* from industrial, via professional to corporate form and with three different ideals of *communicative relations or communication metaphors*: Department store, Social map and index (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2001: 20).

Barnhurst & Nerone The Form of News

Formation	Victorian		Modern
Year	1890	1940	1960 1990
Phase	Traditionel	Classicist	Late
Type	Industrial	Professional	Corporate
Ideal	Dept.store	Social Map	Index

Another recent and good example of this form of aesthetic, cultural-symbolic and discursive history is Stig Hjarvard's *Tv-nyheder i konkurrence* [TV-news in Competition], which explicitly combines the sociological theories of institutions and structuration (Giddens) as a material and mental resource and the study of aesthetic and discursive structures and their development over time. Qualitative analysis and case studies of selected news programmes are combined with more quantitative content analysis. The periodization of the news discourses is partly based on the shift in dominance and com-

bination of basic news elements and themes and on a parallel shift in relations between TV-news and the symbolic concept of the audience (Hjarvard, 1999: 175).

Three Phases of Political TV-News in Denmark

	Early monopoly	Late monopoly	Competition
Media function	Channel	Forum	Meeting place
Journalist function	Pedagogue	Mediator	People's advocate
Source of rationality	Administration	Politics	Everyday life
State form	Corporative	Social liberal	Responsive

It is interesting to note that a similar approach has been adopted by Monika Djerf Pierre and Lennart Weibull in the third and last volume of the Swedish media history, *Spegla, granska, tolka* [Mirroring, Interrogating, Interpretation] (2001), in which they see the development of news and topicality as a story of the relation between society, the political institutions and the media, on the one hand, and the relation to the audience, on the other. The four periods identified produce a very different journalistic rhetoric and discourse and very different concepts of society and the audience: 'upplysning' [information], with a very passive concept of the audience and a very strong sense of society's responsibility and the media's role subordinated to that responsibility; 'spegling' [mirroring], with a more passive search for reality and facts; 'granskning' [interrogate], in which the media became more independent and critical towards society, a kind of watchdog for the audience; 'talkning' [interpretation], indicating a more popularized and user-oriented form of journalism.

In the aesthetic, cultural-symbolic approach to media, the question of what constitutes a text in media history is also a much debated and multifaceted issue. Following Dahl's attack on the overly single-work-oriented aesthetic approach, another historical tendency is not to deal with individual programs and more qualitative, deep-textual analysis of prototypical examples, but instead to focus on programming, flow and thus the 'super-text' of media. The relation between generic categories on a schedule, the themes taken up over a longer period, the relation between fiction, non-fiction, and between information, culture and entertainment etc. can be studied in order to find the 'institutional text' of a specific media. The difference between for instance a public service channel and a commercial channel is usually quite clear on this super-text level. But also the way the programming schedule is structured in specific time-slots and directed towards specific segments of implied audiences can lead to more general conclusions concerning the symbolic-cultural level of media. One recent Scandinavian example of this is Henrik Søndergaard's *DR i tv-konkurrencens tidsalder* [DR in the Age of TV-Competition]. The structure and organization of flows and programming are important parameters in media research and can help identify and corroborate periodization and major shifts. But they cannot replace the analysis of more qualitative element of genres and typical programs: programs or at least types of programs constitute the core of the cultural history of both production and reception. Programs and the experience and influence of programs are what media history is centrally about: we don't experience technology and media institutions as such, we experience and use programs or content of any kind.

The last dimension of media history research is *the level of everyday culture and reception*, which involves studies taking their point of departure in either the way people use and talk about media and specific types of programs in a qualitative reception per-

spective or through ethnographic studies of contemporary audiences or memories of older forms of media use. This approach can also be combined with more quantitative data, not always available in older periods, but especially interesting if they reflect demographic differences in regions, education, social status, cultural habitus and lifestyle, gender, generation, etc. Two recent examples in Scandinavian media history come to mind: Birgitte Höijer's *Det hörde vi allihop. Etermedierna och publiken under 1900-talet* [We all heard it – broadcast media and the audience in the 20th century] – a sub-study of the large Swedish Media History Project. Here Birgitta Höijer consistently illustrates not just the empirical facts, but the cognitive structures of media use and the relations media established between public and private life. A cultural and social cognitive approach to reception of media content has the potential to fill the gap between more reception aesthetic approaches, on the one hand, and qualitative empirical reception studies, on the other.

Another way of approaching the reception and audience perspective is to search for relations between the way different media reflect everyday life and family norms. Leif Ove Larsen does this in a very convincing way in his study of romantic comedies in Norwegian film between 1950-1965, *Moderniseringsmoro* (1998). A popular discourse and narrative in one medium (the weekly magazines) is connected with the discourse of another popular medium and discourse (romantic comedies). Leif Ove Larsen's study clearly indicates that films reflect, interpret and interact with transformations in everyday life and with modernization processes and problems the audience can recognize and identify with.

The Rise of Media History Projects in Scandinavia: Differences and Similarities

In Dahl's previously mentioned article from 1990 he notes that, when he was preparing his own NRK-history, he read a number of international broadcasting histories and was struck by the similarities in periodization, explanations and textual forms. His conclusion was, as already mentioned, that in media history the national dimension is substantially less interesting than the international dimension. There is probably some truth to this statement, but as we have seen Dahl himself returns to national specificity and explanations when writing his Norwegian radio-TV history. But at least when considering the Western world, we do often recognize the same kinds of periods, the same kinds of conflicts (between for instance the elite and the popular), the same main genres and the same kind of general development from a public service monopoly, or public service dominance with a few commercial stations, to a multi-channel culture. But at the same time we find striking differences.

Why did England move so rapidly into a duopoly of public service and commercialism before some Scandinavian monopolies were even established? Why did the Americans choose an almost pure commercial and only structurally regulated model? Why has France been characterized by such a strong national bias and control? Why is Germany characterized by regionalization unseen in any other country in Europe? Why is Holland so religiously pillarized? We may be able to talk about periods and tendencies that are cross national and influenced by, for instance, the strong transnational influence from American television and lifestyle, but at the same time it is clear that the explanation for the differences among national media systems observed throughout the past century are to be found outside the media themselves. The national culture and its political and social traditions strongly influence the basic structure and development of the media. Thus

the media are simultaneously profoundly national and profoundly international, and have lately become more globalized at the institutional level as well.

The Scandinavian countries however share many social and cultural structures and values, and therefore it might be expected that the national media histories are variations of the same prototype: strong, monopolized public service institutions that still hold a firm grip on the audience in a globalized network society and that have experienced a number of fairly similar periods of dominant production and institutional ideology. The book I edited in 1996, in which the development in each Scandinavian country is analysed, confirms this (Bondebjerg, 1996). In my own article on Danish TV, I proposed a periodization based on both the programming structure and the relation with the audience: Paternalistic period (1951-1964), Classic public service (1964-1980), Mixed culture period (1980-). In articles by Henrik Bastiansen and Madeleine Kleberg on the Norwegian and Swedish development, respectively, these three periods, with small differences and some shifts in end-point years, are basically confirmed. However Finland and Iceland reveal somewhat different developments based on specific national differences.

But even though the historical developments of the Scandinavian media cultures have great similarities, the models for writing media history and the theories and methods underlying the Scandinavian media history projects are very different, although a mainstream tendency towards traditional institutional history is very prominent. In Sweden, Stig Hadenius, Lennart Weibull and Dag Nordmark in 1991 launched the project *History of Swedish Broadcasting Media* (Hadenius et al., 1992), in which the focus is only on radio and television. The project on broadcasting media is based on a number of specific sub-studies, separately published (Bokförlaget Prisma, Stockholm), and three volumes that summarize the individual studies. The first volume (Stig Hadenius, 1998) focuses on the *institutional history* of broadcasting, the development of media in relation to questions of technology, economy, the state, popular movements, political parties and other institutions in society. The questions address which forces have influenced the organization, economy and policy of broadcasting media. The focus is not just national but also on comparative studies of influences from other broadcasting systems in Europe in particular. The two subsequent volumes focus on *program production*: one volume focuses on cultural programs, entertainment, fiction, children's programs and documentaries (Dag Nordmark, 1999); the second volume is dedicated to news, information and factual programming (Djerf Pierre & Weibull, 2001) in a broader sense, including sports programmes.

In his introduction to the volume on fiction, culture and entertainment, Dag Nordmark, who has a background in literary studies, clearly states that the focus of the book is "the composition of programming and the gradual change over 70 years" (Nordmark, 1999: 18, my translation). The focus is on genres and the super-text of television, the programming within a certain main area. He also underlines his special interest in genres specific to TV. However he also addresses the ongoing cultural conflict between "education and entertainment and how these have influenced each other" (Nordmark, 1999: 18, my translation). In other words, this is a media history based on genre and cultural history. It is clearly different then from the first and very institutional volume. Nordmark does take reception into consideration, partly in the cultural sense by looking at the conflict between the elite and the broad audience, partly through analysing more quantitative data on listeners and viewers. But the main focus is on genre and culture.

In their introduction to the volume on news and topicality, Monica Djerf Pierre and Lennart Weibull also indicate a clear genre and culture approach, but they focus much

more on the relationship between discourses in news and topicality and a more general dimension of mentality history: “Our perception of the world, our mentality is largely formed by sounds and images from radio and tv.” (Djerf Pierre & Weibull, 2001: 11, my translation). They raise four issues: *the relation between journalism and other social institutions*; *the reaction to and reception of journalism*; *why journalism has changed and what caused this change* (institutional, international influence, individuals) and finally *the influence of journalism on changes in society and the development of democracy*. This is a rather traditional approach it seems, but their periodization is pretty daring, since it is based on discursive arguments, or as they say: “the fundamental ideas in journalism, the journalistic logic that characterizes a period.” It is a discursive point of view not only found in journalistic genre-structures and rhetoric, but also in the implied audience of the journalistic discourse. Thus the periods are defined according to how the journalistic discourses position themselves towards the audience and the social and political institutions, which is clearly visible in the metaphoric title of the four periods identified: *Upplysning* [Information], (1925-1945), *Spegling* [Mirroring], (1945-1965), *Granskning* [Interrogation], (1965-1985) and *Tolkning* [Interpretation], (1985-1995).

Much more traditional and also cautious is Henrik Dahl’s impressive three-volume work on NRK’s history (Volume 3 written together with Bastiansen). In the first volume on the years 1920-1940, Dahl spells out his theoretical position and method. He defines his approach as a special point of view, looking for *the connection between technology and culture, economy and administration*. He focuses on broadcasting as a system of independent but connected parts. Dahl, however, makes a very clear demarcation: he is studying the *institution*, not primarily programs and not primarily audiences and reception. Both have a role to play, but the main focus is: “The radio sends out the programs, but only some of them come back to the institution as reactions through debate or political demands. That is what this book is about, not how broadcasting has formed society, but how society has formed broadcasting – and how broadcasting has formed itself.” (Dahl, 1999, bd. 1: 11, my translation). Being a more traditional historian, Dahl – quite different from the scholars writing the Swedish media history – questions both the value and status of program analysis and reception. The sources are difficult to obtain and evaluate, Dahl states, and the programs are so numerous that it is difficult to determine what should be selected and analysed as typical. Thus Dahl’s media history is quite a clear example of institutional media history in which some aspects of programs and reception are presented, but mostly it is, as he also states in the third volume, *an institutional history and a history of political opinions, influences and debates on media institutions*.

This Norwegian NRK-history stands quite sharply in contrast to the other Norwegian media history, the project *Moving Images in Norway*, which ran from 1990-1993 as a joint project between departments in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Volda, Lillehammer and Stavanger. This project, like the Swedish, involved the cooperation of around 70 people, senior researchers, doctoral students and masters students. The results were reported in 18 separate studies covering different aspects of film and television history, and besides these academic reports, five of the senior researchers (Jostein Gripsrud, Hans Frederik Dahl, Gunnar Iversen, Kathrine Skretting, Bjørn Sørensen) published a more popular version of the main results called *Kinoens mørke – Fjernsynets Lys. Levende bilder i Norge gjennom hundre år* [The darkness of cinema – the light of television: moving images in Norway through one hundred years], Dahl et al., 1996.

The main characteristics of this Norwegian project is that it definitely takes the point of view of the audience and at the outset belongs to the model of an *everyday culture*

media history. But the project very strongly leans towards the *aesthetic symbolic model*, since its focus is on text and context as part of reception history. Jostein Gripsrud indicates in his presentation that, in reception history, there is a necessary focus on typical texts so that reception studies do not “lapse into general social and cultural history” (Gripsrud, 1994: 17). In the Norwegian project, the focus is on the text in its institutional contexts and its meeting with a historically situated audience. As a consequence, the project, among other things, not only systematically analyses the *primary texts* of the films and TV-programs, but *the secondary texts* as well (fan magazines, popular weeklies, studio publicity, film reviews, etc.). The project not only used quantitative data on the audiences and their viewing preferences and behaviour (cinema-TV audience statistics and top-lists of the most popular films and programs), but they also included and called forth *tertiary texts*. This was done through a national campaign asking people in Norway to send in memoirs concerning cinema and early programs in general as well as particular films, programs and stars.

This focus indicated that, for instance, American films and TV-programs are given as much space as national programs, because – seen from an audience point of view – American products have made up between 50-80% of the viewing experience for Norwegian audiences. The construction of a national visual culture is not neglected and underestimated, but seen through the eyes of the audience, it is integrated with or related to global cinema and television. Visual culture formations are part of a wider realm of identity and modernization, as Gripsrud formulates it:

Through the institutions of cinema and television, filmic texts have in particular worked in relation to the desires and anxieties of highly complex audiences, immersed in the process of modernization. That audiences have been complex, divided along lines of gender, social class, national and regional cultures is of course extremely important. Reception history must try to account for the ways in which these audiences have experienced and made use of films in their attempts at defining their identities, formulating their aspirations and anxieties, in different socio-historical situations. (Gripsrud, 1994: 22)

The Finnish media history is found in both a more thorough three-volume publication and a more condensed one-volume version. My remarks in the following are only based on the condensed volume. It has a certain likeness with the Norwegian NRK-project; it is an institutional history of the development of radio and television from 1926-1996. And it follows a fairly traditional historical narrative from early radio, through radio during the Second World War and the late 40s, finishing with an approximately 120-page-long description of the period from 1949-1996, called a “changing society”. The periodization indicates the major role of television and the “image” of radio and TV in society: the outsider (1949-1964), a pioneer (1965-1969), “captivated by politics” (1970-1981) and finally “one among many on the market” (1982-1996). Finally about 50 pages are devoted to technological history.

Within the individual periods, we find first a systematic account of institutional factors and political framework and then aspects of program history with reference to both program structuring and individual genres. There are also few, but unsystematic, references to reception – both qualitatively and quantitatively defined. And it is altogether a more political, institutional media history than a history of culture and everyday life.

The Danish project (in which I myself played an important role as editor of Volume 3 (1960-1995, Jensen, 1996-97) is, compared with the Swedish and the Norwegian, much broader in terms of scope, the historical period and number of media covered, and it

might be characterized as a pragmatic combination of several perspectives in media history. The project covers the period from 1840-1995 and is subdivided into four main periods, 1840-1880, 1880-1920, 1920-1960, 1960-1995. The Danish media history, as regards its theories and methodologies, relies on cultural studies and qualitative textual analysis, on the one hand, and a focus on audiences and consumption as in the Norwegian project, on the other.

The intention of the Danish media history was to inscribe media in a broader socio-cultural context, to see the media and their content in relation to other cultural and aesthetic forms. The intention was also to focus on both those media and forms of media use that were sanctioned as legitimate and culturally superior by the establishment and the cultural elite and those forms that were given new and stronger circulation by the development of modern technologies and the broader mass public. In his foreword to the Danish media history (Jensen, 1996: 9ff), Klaus Bruhn Jensen also stresses the ongoing dialogue between the local and the national, on the one hand, and the national and the global, on the other. Media history is basically linked to the technological development of mass production and distribution and to the rise of the nation state. The development of modern media is therefore, as Klaus Bruhn Jensen points out, closely related to processes of industrialization, democratization and secularization. The overall historical development moves through three technological changes: printing culture, the traditional audiovisual culture of film, photo and broadcasting media, and the present and future multimedia culture based on computing, convergence and digitalization.

In this process, the media surely contributed both to the forming and construction of a national identity and a national public sphere with new relations between centre and periphery and to the expansion and transformation of national and local spaces in light of trans-nationalization and globalization. The Danish media history unfolds as a story of how the media interact with the construction of this national and global space and how they interact with the general democratization and spreading of information, in relation to which we also see the conflicts between local cultures and the centrally constructed and institutionalized culture and between elite cultures and mass cultures.

To study and clarify these relations, the Danish media history and the Norwegian film and TV-history both use particularly rich case studies, from which more general perspectives can be drawn. Volume 1, called the “Prehistory of media 1840-1880” mainly deals with the printed media of that period, and earlier, and its role as part of a growing political democracy. On the one hand, we have print media related to a popular taste in one kind of book and periodical, on the other, we have the rise of the educational and informational magazines and newspapers linked to a new political and cultural public sphere. The analysis of these print media thus leads to the description not just of different types of print media and different genres, but also of different audiences and cultures within one developing national culture, which has not yet become a modern democracy. Another aspect is linked to the new and dominant media, the newspaper and the weeklies, and their combination of textuality and visuality. In these print media, a growing number of drawings and later photos spread the national and global world to increasingly larger parts of society. The development of railways and telegraphs and the development of newspapers and pictures/photos knit the nation state more closely together and bring the world to formerly isolated and separate local cultures. But as a case study of one provincial and one Copenhagen newspaper shows, these cultures are still worlds apart. The strength of the combination of a more general historical presentation and case studies is, therefore, that case studies give concrete insight into different worlds. They illustrate the heterogeneity of media developments: the analysis of a national big city newspaper and

a local and regional paper tells us about two worlds and two audiences in one and the same nation (Jensen 1996: 91ff)

Another case study (in Volume 3) show how the moon landing in 1969 and the first global live satellite transmission of Elvis Presley's Hawaii concert influenced the Danish audience and created a new feeling of global simultaneity. The first in a series of movements towards a more global media culture later developed to the Internet and its interactive kind of specialized global communication system. The point made in the analysis is that this globalization is just a continuation and shift in degree and technology, but not necessarily in nature from earlier mediated forms of the local, the national and the global, and that globalization certainly does not equal homogenisation, but that the local and national levels are still very important and have new possibilities created by technology (Jensen, 1997: 44ff).

Media History: The Vertical and the Horizontal Axes

As is probably clear from what has already been said, the Danish media history and in fact all the Scandinavian media histories are fairly chronological narratives of the medium in focus, set in a particular period and described in its broader, cultural context. Only the Danish media history, however, provides a fairly systematic account of the following media: books (although mostly the popular mass literature), newspapers, weeklies and other periodical print media, cartoons, advertising, radio, television, film and new media and in some periods aspects of popular entertainment like circus, music hall, rock and pop culture. The analysis of each of these media takes into account both institutional aspects, important genres and aesthetic forms as well as cultural and social aspects of representation and use.

In each of the organizing periods, the relation between old and new media is clearly indicated in the sense that new dominating media are given priority over older media. At one level then, this narrative is organized as a vertical, chronological story of the development of new technologies and new media, in relation to which other media find a new place in the national media culture. It is a well-known fact that radio and television together changed the use and form of newspapers, that television challenged the traditional cinematic culture, and that the whole system of media since the Second World War has changed the time structure and organization of daily life and the traditional cultural patterns of consumption.

Therefore the vertical story of the different media is also a story about a horizontal context in which media interact with each other and with culture and the life of the audience. From the beginning, the writing of the Danish media history was therefore also defined through a series of more thematically organized descriptions of phenomena that horizontally connect different media, and in each volume there are five identical paragraphs allowing comparison of topics over time: "*Danish Media*" (dealing with the relation between national products and international import: Literature in Volumes 1 and 2 and the number of domestic and foreign channels-channels in Volume 3) ; "*Cultural Places*" (indicating typical historical places of cultural consumption in each period: "Literary saloons" in Volume 1, "Public places with illuminated news" in Volume 2 and "Rock festivals in Volume 3"); "*Beer for sale*" (showing how a popular national product was advertised over time in different media); "*Posters*" (giving a short history of the poster as medium) and "*How is the nation*" (which deals with the relation between local and national culture: the number of provincial newspapers in Volumes 1 and 2 and the distribution of different kinds of television technology in Volume 3).

Apart from these perhaps more entertaining glimpses of horizontal lines through history, the chapters dealing with the individual media do, of course, take into consideration the relation between different media and the ongoing inter-medial dialogue or struggle – the struggle and relation between print media and visual media, between radio and print media, between radio and television, and between television and cinema, just to name a few. In the other Scandinavian media histories this principle of a combined horizontal and vertical perspective is also visible. Especially the Norwegian “coffee table version” interrupts the chronological narrative with cases that break the causal more single media-oriented narration. And the Swedish media history also lapses into such illustrative cases. But this approach is clearly strongest developed in the Danish version.

The Watershed of the 1960s According to Nordic Media Histories

My comparative remarks on the overall structure and perspective of the Nordic media histories have identified a very dominant focus on social and institutional media history. This dominates both the Norwegian NRK history, parts of the Swedish radio-TV history and the Finnish media history. Only the Norwegian film and television history and the Danish media history tend to take the aesthetic cultural-symbolic point of view as well as the everyday reception point of view, the Danish in a weaker sense than the Norwegian and mostly using rich case studies. Only the Danish work looks at the more or less total media history, but because of this it doesn't delve as deeply into institutional history as do the other Nordic books focusing on just radio and TV. The national level plays a very dominant role, again with the Norwegian film and TV history as radically different, and also with the Danish containing a more global focus than the dominant models.

This characterization is, of course, unfair if we take a closer look, because although one of the three dimensions I have defined clearly establishes itself as the main paradigm and main narrative, ‘the national, institutional narrative paradigm’, we have seen for instance a much more differentiated strategy and model in the Swedish media history (with a discursive-symbolic dimension very strongly present). And even in those Norwegian and Finnish presentations where the institutional paradigm is most dominant, the concepts of text, genre and audiences play an important role. Moreover, though the focus tends to be national, the global is not totally absent. But my main point here is that we could still benefit from joint Nordic collaboration on a much more cross disciplinary and integrated media history, with all three main dimensions more strongly represented and with a shift away from national specificity to the regional in a more European and global perspective.

This becomes clear when we enter the narratives and explanations used in the different national versions of the media history of the 60s. If we look at the dominant paradigm first, the NRK and the Finnish Broadcasting history enter this period from a clear institutional point of view. In the Norwegian version, most of the 100 pages devoted to the period 1960-1968 deal with institutional conflicts related to the emerging strength of television and a transition for radio as regards its new functions and relations with the audience. Internal documents and debates, the role of key persons, the conflict about the public service contract are explained with many illustrative details; economic, political, technological and quantitative data on programming and the rise in national coverage are combined into a convincing story of institutional transformation. However another angle is also important in Bastiansen and Dahl's narrative here: the transformation from a more paternalistic and controlled broadcasting system to a more independent system and the controversies this historical change created. The cases presented are the question of

sexuality on TV, the conflict between modern TV-theatre and popular taste, and the more active role of news broadcast and in relation to the political system. Bottom up broadcasting with a more open attitude towards listeners and viewers and with the integration of ordinary everyday life becomes another trend. The more independent and critical position is continued in the period after 1968, and the more audience-oriented position is also a first step towards tendencies that are becoming much stronger as deregulation sets in. Bastiansen and Dahl in their analysis only have very few hints of globalization. On the contrary they tend to stress that even when a global crisis enters broadcasting media, radio and TV's function as a national arena.

The Finnish story of the 60s also starts in institutional conflicts, not just between radio and TV, but also between the commercial MTV and the public Finnish broadcasting. But again, although this institutional perspective fills more than half of the pages, the Finnish media history also follows the same kinds of changes as the Norwegian: the transformation from a strong paternalistic paradigm and a television reflecting middle class values to a broader audience orientation, and the move away from a restricted ideology of objectivity and neutrality to more active forms of news and journalism. The relation to the global situation is somewhat more present here, since the special Finnish situation close to the Soviet sphere makes it more salient. Also in the Finnish narrative the struggle between popular entertainment and culture and the TV-theatre and between the new youth culture and the traditional culture are used as inroads to the transformation of the general public service programming philosophy. As in the Norwegian version, however, there is practically no reference whatsoever to the influence of American culture and TV-series and programs. The national is a rather enclosed, institutional world and there is no general reference to the broader cultural and social history.

The Swedish media history cannot directly be compared with the others, since the 1960 watershed is described in each of the three volumes in relation to fiction-entertainment, institutional aspects and factual programs. But if we look at the volume on news and factual programs (Djerf Pierre & Weibull, 2001), the main explanatory framework is globalization and the 1968 movements, which influenced the media and led to a move from paternalism and objectivity to involvement. The concept of authority was changed and with it a new phase (interrogation) in journalism started in which television became part of a more polarized society. This development is followed through a study not just of certain new programs and institutional changes and the people behind them, but also studies of how people understood and related to television and news. Although this story is mostly told as an institutional history, it is a type of media history much more dedicated to broader social history and a genre and reception perspective.

Nevertheless, the approach found in both the Danish media history and the Norwegian film and TV history is much more contextualized. The Danish Volume 3 opens with a broader social and cultural profile of the changes taking place in the development of a modern welfare society, setting the scene from the perspective of everyday life. From that perspective it gives a general overview of tendencies, moving between the construction of a national space and an increasingly globalized space. And finally enter the basic quantitative and qualitative data on both print media and audiovisual media as well as on the changes in social, cultural, generational, geographical divides and lifestyles. Using case studies to enter the world of mediated communication, the Danish media history takes up the rise of advertising and the welfare society, sexual liberation, the globalization of the national space and the cultural divide between popular culture, media culture and the cultural and intellectual establishment. The themes and tendencies are much the

same as those observed in the other Nordic media histories, but the focus and the number of media involved make a difference. After this broader opening, presenting the general development and media culture, the narrative then moves first into a more detailed story of the important youth culture and its relation to music and other media, into advertising, the basic trends in television and radio and on to film and print media.

Also the Norwegian film and TV history takes the broader cultural context as a starting point and uses cases related to some of the basic media genres as a fundamental narrative principle. Like the Danish, it tries to synthesize general tendencies in media culture and view changes from a perspective of changes in the everyday life of the audience. Media discourses and media culture are not so much related to a social and institutional dimension as to a cultural symbolic and an everyday culture. However, once again we see that the main tendencies and cases used to define the 60s are the same: the cultural divide and the challenges to the more normative pre-60s culture exemplified by the quiz genre, James Bond movies and the youth culture in general; the creation of both a national arena or forum (with a royal wedding as the main example) and a global 'village' (the televised moon landing); and the youth rebellion, the growth of a more global consciousness and mentality related to, for instance, the role of the Vietnam war.

The explanatory framework used in the Scandinavian media histories to analyse the 1960s shows an obvious similarity in the fundamental changes taking place and refers to the same kind of global-national trends and conflicts. However the media histories taking the national and institutional point of view get into detailed accounts of events and processes that somehow are not genuinely national and they tend to ignore the relation between media genres and the everyday lives of audiences. The dominant paradigm in Scandinavian media history moves the history of media too far from the social and cultural context and too close to a world of only nationally produced TV culture. Of course, only national media research can study national media production, and this work is extremely important. However, when the national media histories have developed a more solid ground, a comparative media history becomes more necessary and possible. But even in the study of a national media culture, the broader global perspective is important, both because global media products have taken up the major proportion of audience use and because global products have heavily influenced national products and production culture.

Towards a Scandinavian and European Media History?

Scandinavian media history research has taken a giant leap from the 90s until today, trying to develop a more comprehensive national media history. There is, however, a great deal left to be done:

- more basic research on individual media
- based on this research, also a future integrative media history focusing more strongly on the social and institutional dimension, the aesthetic, cultural-symbolic dimension as well as the everyday culture.
- comparative global studies of media, media genres and media use

What we have thus far is not even *the national* media history including all the major media. Apart from the daring Danes trying to cover a long period and many media, most other Scandinavian media histories are divided into radio-TV histories, press history and

film history. And only in Norway have scholars tried to combine film and television, which in many parts of international research are worlds apart.

We therefore are still lacking a broader media and cultural history aiming at what Hans Fredrik Dahl in 1990 called a broader social and cultural history of mentalities and the aesthetics and habits of everyday life. We are also in great need of a media history in which the relation between the national, local and regional inside the individual nation state is more strongly and directly related to the interaction between the different national levels and processes of globalization. To end on perhaps a somewhat lofty note: the way we conceive and construct our national stories and narratives is extremely important for the ways in which we prepare ourselves to understand a future world in which the national dimension of the past century will most certainly change even more dramatically. Media historians will have enough to do to last more than one generation!

Notes

1. Revised and edited version of lecture presented to the Plenary Session on Media History, 15th Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research, Reykjavik, Iceland, August 11-13, 2001.
2. This article does not deal with all Scandinavian media histories. The focus is on TV-radio history. Several national film histories have been written and especially press history is a major area not taken into consideration here. Sweden has recently produced a very impressive press history in seven volumes, as well as a shorter and more popular four-volume edition. But the rich field of press history in all Scandinavian countries is not dealt with here.

References

- Allen, Robert C. & Douglas Gomery (1985) *Film History. Theory and Practice*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Barnhurst, Kevin & John Nerone (2001) *The Form of News*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Bondebjerg, Ib (1993) *Elektroniske fiktioner. TV som fortællende medie*. [Electronic Fictions. Television as a Narrative Medium.] København: Borgen.
- Bondebjerg, Ib & Francesco Bono (1996) *Television in Scandinavia. History, Politics and Aesthetics*. Luton: Luton University Press.
- Bondebjerg, Ib (2002) The Mediation of Every Day Life: Genre, Discourse and Spectacle in Reality-TV, in Anne Jerslev (ed.) *Realism and 'Reality' in Film and Television*. Northern Lights. Film and Media Studies Yearbook 2002. København: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Bordwell, David & Kristin Thompson (1994) *Film History. An Introduction*. Madison Wisconsin: Macgraw Hill.
- Dahl, Hans Fredrik (1990) Kan Batman dateres? Om massekommunikasjonen som kulturhistorie, *Mediekultur*, nr. 13, 1990, p. 5-20.
- Dahl, Hans Fredrik et al. (ed.) (1996) *Kinoens mørke – Fjernsynets lys. Levende bilder i Norge gjennom hundre år*. [The Darkness of Cinema – The Light of Television.] Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.
- Dahl, Hans Fredrik (1999) *Hallo-Hallo. Kringkastning I Norge 1920-1940*. Oslo: Cappelen.
- Dahl, Hans Fredrik (1999) *Dette er London. NRK i krig 1940-1945*. Oslo: Cappelen.
- Dahl, Hans Fredrik & Henrik Bastiansen (1999) *Over til Oslo. NRK som monopol 1945-81*. Oslo N.J. Cappelen.
- Djerf Pierre, Monica & Lennart Weibull (2001) *Spegla, granska, tolka. Aktualitetsjournalistik i svensk radio och tv under 1900-talet*. Stockholm: Prisma.
- Gripsrud, Jostein (1994) Moving Images, Moving Identities. Text and Context in the Reception History of Film and Television. In Gripsrud & Skretting: *History of Moving Images: Reports from a Norwegian Project*. Oslo: Research Council of Norway, p. 16-37
- Hadenius, Stig, Lennart Weibull & Dag Nordmark (1992) *De svenska etermediernas historia. Projektbeskrivning*. [History of Swedish Broadcasting Media. Project Description.] Internal publication: University of Göteborg.
- Hadenius, Stig (1998) *Kampen om monopolet*. Stockholm: Prisma.
- Held et al. (1999) *Global Transformations*. Stanford California: Stanford University Press.

- Hjarvard, Stig & Søndergaard, Henrik (1988) *Nærsyn på fjernsyn*. [A Close Look at Television.] København: C.A. Reitzel.
- Hjarvard, Stig (1995) *Internationale tv-nyheder*. [International Television News.] København: Akademisk forlag.
- Hjarvard, Stig (1999) *Tv-nyheder i konkurrence*. [TV News in Competition.] København: Samfundslitteratur.
- Höijer, Birgitta (1998) *Det hörde vi allihop. Etermedierna och publiken under 1900-talet*. Stockholm: Prisma, Stiftelsen Etermedierna i Sverige.
- Jensen, Klaus Bruhn (1986) *Making Sense of the News*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Jensen, Klaus Bruhn (ed) (1996-1997) *Dansk Mediehistorie. Vol.1-3* [Danish Media History. Vol. 1-3] København: Samleren.
- Jensen, Klaus Bruhn (1998) Hvad man ikke ved. Dagsorden for forskning i (dansk) mediehistorie. [What We Don't Know. Agenda for research in (Danish) Media History.] *Nordicom Information*. Vol. 20: 1-2, pp.27-36.
- Klinger, Barbara (1997) Film History Terminable and Interminable: Recovering the Past in Reception Studies, *Screen*, 38:2, pp.107-127.
- Larsen, Leif Ove (1998) *Moderniseringsmoro*. Bergen: Institutt for Medievitenskap.
- Nordmark, Dag (1999) *Finrummet och lekstugan. Om kulturutbudet i radio och tv*. Stockholm: Prisma.
- Rundradioen 1926-1996* (1997) *Rundradions historia i Finland*. Helsinki: Yle.
- Søndergaard, Henrik (1994) *DR i tv-konkurrencens tidsalder*. [DR in the age of tv-competition.] København: Samfundslitteratur.