

# Multidimensional Social History of Television

## Social Uses of Finnish Television from the 1950s to the 2000s

**Article (Accepted version)**

**Post-print (ie final draft post-refereeing)**

- **Original citation:** Kortti, Jukka 'Multidimensional Social History of Television. Social Uses of Finnish Television from the 1950s to the 2000s' *Television & New Media* Volume 12 Issue 4 July 2011 pp. 299-313. DOI: 10.1177/1527476410385475

*The article discusses the social uses of television from the late 1950s to the mid 2000s. In the tradition of media ethnography, it depicts both the structural and relational uses of television. It looks at changes of watching television in social intercourse: in family viewing and social life outside the home. The primary sources for the study comprise two collections of written reminiscences about television in Finnish everyday life. The article shows how multidimensional the uses of television have been over the decades and how TV has played often an important role in social life. Looking broadly at the findings, you could say that despite the many technological and cultural changes in television's history, most of the main features of television habits remain. TV still is a social family media.*

**Keywords:** audience; broadcasting; media ethnography; Finnish television; media history; social history

As in several other developed Western countries, social intercourse diminished a great deal towards the end of the twentieth century in Finland, too, particularly during weekends. At the same time, however, time use surveys (Niemi & Pääkkönen 2001, 36, 42) indicate that leisure time increased approximately one hour a week. Television's role in this development is unquestionable. As it spread aggressively in the United States in the 1950s and in Europe mainly in the 1960s, television influenced not only communication, but also a new social life. Being at the heart of post-war modernism, it offered models for living and for taking part in an increasingly consumption-oriented lifestyle that was mostly private and revolved around family.

In the past twenty years, the role of digitalisation has been even more important for privatisation, with computers and the Internet keeping people at home and mobile phones making personal

communication considerably easier. Despite the fact that it is considered that digitalisation makes media use and, consequently, social media more fragmented and individualistic, there are also signs of media becoming more social in the form new social media. However, this social networking mostly takes place virtual reality, for instance, on Facebook and Twitter. Television is also thought to be turning into a more and more personal medium, as both television itself and its audiences are becoming more fragmented. Could it be that digital television's abundant supply and the possible fragmentation resulting from it means that TV might lose its role as the family-centred social media?

This article examines Finnish television from socio-historical perspective. I will look at how television has related to social intercourse in Finland, and whether its influence has been only regressive. It is interested in the socio-cultural implications of television, particularly its influence on social intercourse, and, in general, issues related to the social aspects of television. The television programmes themselves are a secondary focus in the study – how they affect viewers' everyday lives (shared favourite programmes, rhythms of life, visiting neighbours, family relations, etc.)

The primary sources for the study include two collections, written reminiscences about television in the Finnish everyday. This type of oral history data has rarely been used in media studies.

Collecting written reminiscences, ethnographic writing, has a long tradition in the Finnish history and folklore studies, and methodologically they have been categorised under the oral history research data. The corpus includes two written reminiscences. The name of the first data set, a written collection, is 'Elokuva ennen ja nyt' (Cinema in the Past and Present); it has been collected by the Finnish National Board of Antiquity in 1996 (6 800 pages, 845 respondents). One part of the memoirs concerns television, and it has not been analysed previously. The sample

of the total data is 246 respondents (65 men, 181 women). About 90 per cent of the respondents were born before 1955. To cover the experiences of the younger generations as well, the media memories of students were collected during a course on media history in The University of Helsinki during the autumn 2005. This data consists of 87 respondents (32 men, 53 women, 2 sex unknown), born mostly in the early 1980s.<sup>1</sup>

The Finnish television is divided, according to John Ellis (2000), into three periods. The first period, from the 1950s to the 1980s, was the *era of scarcity*. This was the phase of the development of public service broadcasting. Television tended to present definitive programming to a mass audience. The second phase, the *era of availability*, lasted until the millennium and it meant the explosion of channels and programmes through cables, satellites and videos. Television became an important vehicle for transmitting and creating post-modern culture. Now we are living in the *era of plenty*, which is linked to the increasing of multiple of channels, digitalisation, (technical and economic) convergence and effective global media markets. In Finland, this means, roughly speaking, the years 1956–1987 (era of scarcity), 1987–2001 (era of availability) and 2001 onwards (era of plenty). In 2000s the growing interest towards the Finnish television history has produced analyses (see Pajala 2006; Elfving 2008; Wiio 2007) referring to the categories by Ellis with some minor differences to my periods. The idea that we are living in the era of plenty now can also be found in the studies of the digitalisation of Finnish television accordingly (see Näränen 2006; Kangaspunta 2007).

Finnish television audiences were already being studied in the late 1960s, however. When the uses and gratifications approach was rediscovered in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, it was mostly due to the fact that television had become the most important medium in people's daily lives. At that time, the research conducted by the national broadcasting companies was linked to the growing

interest in television audiences. In Finland, this kind of research was carried out as part of the national broadcasting company YLE's so-called PTS (Section for Long Term Planning) projects. Actually, the most fruitful studies on Finnish media use have been done by folklorists and sociologists. One of the very few Finnish researchers interested in television audiences, especially from the point of view of cultural studies, is the sociologist Pertti Alasuutari (see Alasuutari, 1999; Alasuutari et al., 1991). YLE has also published academic anthologies that have included analyses of Finnish television viewing and the role of television in the life of Finns in the late 1980s (see Heikkinen 1986; Heikkinen 1989). They were influenced by the growing interest in life stories especially prevalent in sociology at that time. Since the early 1990s, the research on Finnish television audiences has been more sporadic and published mainly in the YLE yearbooks. There is no comprehensive study on Finnish television viewing, not to mention a historical approach – before my own (Kortti 2007) work.

According to the American media ethnographer James Lull (1990, 35–44), social uses of television at home can be regarded as structural and relational. Structural uses are further divided into environmental and regulative uses. Environmental use includes television's role as background noise, as part of sociability and comfort. Regulative use refers to the ways in which communication (certain modes of conversation) as well as schedules and activities (e.g. eating and bedtime) are organised around television. By contrast, relational, or rational use, is essentially related to the use of television in families.

Although I have examined<sup>2</sup> the history of Finnish television in all of the areas mentioned above, I mainly focus on the relational use of television here. However, I also examine the structural use of television from the standpoint of regulative actions, such as how life is timetabled by television and how it is talked about outside the domestic sphere. My examples concentrate on television as a

family media, how it is used for timing daily life and as a source of discussions. My starting point is that television is not only technical medium transmitting information from impersonal institutions to anonymous audiences, but a social medium as well.

### **A Post-Modern Vision: Private Channels for All?**

The research question of my study is based on the ideas of Michel de Certeau (1988), who has theorised everyday life, arguing that people act creatively in their everyday lives (tactics) by reshaping meanings they have been supplied with (strategies). My approach relates especially to Certeau's (ibid., 31) fascination in the question: What will the consumers come up with after analysing the images transmitted through television and their time spent by the TV set? This issue is connected to my broader interest in how the Finns experience television in their everyday lives and how television has affected these lives. With regard to the research on popular culture and consumption, Certeau's idea is fruitful because the versatility and unpredictability of tactics does not necessarily follow a certain pattern. Certeau's analytical model highlights the complexity of consumerism.

At least since the 1980s, consumers have been regarded by extreme postmodernist views as sovereign "shoppers" and "tourists" on the market, or "creators of counterculture".<sup>3</sup> "Power of the viewer" has, however, been "power of the weak". In other words, viewers may not have power to change media structures, but rather to "negotiate" with them in their everyday lives. Postmodern research, in particular, has drawn attention to the idea of an "active audience", as if in a critical response to the classic notion of the Frankfurt School according to which media manipulates and controls masses. Both these lines of thought represent extremities, while TV viewing is a much

more complicated issue. When studying TV audiences, television has to be considered as a part of highly complicated national and international changes in economy, politics, and technology.

Certain modes of media use are also linked to people's sense of identity (McQuail 1997, 120). On the other hand, Cecilia Tichin (1991, 63), who has studied the early years of television viewing in the United States, argues that emphasising individuality in viewing were related to American values of individualism and democracy, which stemmed from the Enlightenment. Individual self-assertion did not however quite fit in with the concepts of family, partner or group. In this respect, American individualism was in contradiction with the metaphor of the "electronic hearth", which dominated the American debate over television in the 1950s.

It is assumed that the increasing segmentation and fragmentation eradicate the collective aspect of TV viewing. American cable television, in which hundreds of channels have highly homogeneous but small audiences (narrowcasting), is considered to set an example for the general development of television. That is to say, there would no longer be shared experiences and a sense of community, often associated especially with national broadcasting companies. This line of reasoning was common in the 1980s and early 1990s, when development was coupled with postmodern capitalist culture (see e.g. Ang 1996, 162–180; McQuail 1997, 133, 137–138; Morley 1992, 289). In any case, at the latest in the first decade of the 2000s, we should now be in the narrowcasting reality.

The Finnish sociologist J. P. Roos (1989, 89) argued that even in the 1980s when most Finns had access to only a couple of channels it was already difficult to find naïve, unreserved viewing in which audience follows all prime time programmes. Instead, viewing was rather selective, affected by social and cultural conformity, or to use the sociological phrase of the era "life skills". On the other hand, Roos (*ibid.*, 91) believes that this kind of new television, which focuses its full capacity

on a few basic programme types targeted to carefully segmented small audiences, increases addictiveness. Before the breakthrough of cultural studies and postmodernism in the 1980s, TV viewing was generally considered to have a deteriorating effect on social life. It is indeed not uncommon to come across with this idea even today. But is that really the case?

### **Family Member**

We really enjoy staying together at home... honest! Nowadays we often spend family evenings together, have a nice cup of coffee, chat, watching the telly. Mother does her knitting, and children are also more at home in the evenings. Thanks to our television, we are now closer to one other than ever before. It has such a clear picture and clean sound. But then, we do have a BLAUPUNKT – the best, as the children say. Before we bought it, we made a deal with the children that they would first do their homework and then watch the telly. We are pleased with our decision, and You should get a Blaupunkt to Your home too...

- Finnish print ad for Blaupunkt TV set, 1960

In the early stages of television, TV set advertisements frequently presented happy families gathered around the TV in the living room, and advertising texts would show families brought together by television. A television as a family member was an extremely typical point of view in advertising in the early 1960s. The television was like a child, and always more reliable than the spouse. The myths in the ads disagreed with the dystopias associated with television in the early stages, which warned of television's corrupting effect on family-life. The American television set ads, too, emphasised family values, promising that television would unite families (Spigel 1992, 80).

The power of television in modern society comes clear especially through its influence on the family, its activity, passivity, choices, interests or observation. Television is a medium for the family, viewed and discussed at homes.<sup>4</sup> Television is being watched either alone, with family, or with friends. It is part of the family culture in other respects as well, providing families with models for how to programme, schedule and structure life. In addition to the metaphorical sense, television can be considered a family member in a literal sense, because it is integrated in the daily social relationships of households. Indeed, it is the focal point of families' emotional and cognitive energy. It has the power to release or to sustain tension at home. On the other hand, it may also provide comfort and a sense of security. (Silverstone 1994, 20, 24, 38, 40.)

Television was addressed as a family member in advertising and other contexts in the early stages in particular, but the metaphor has survived later as well. As a respondent in the first data set recalls:

It was easy to find a place for the telly in our small room, as there were not so many choices. And it fit well in the household, deciding to be a "family member", as it still is. (Male, born 1946)

The data set collected from students reveals that the family member metaphor is also found in the language of the "atomised generation",<sup>5</sup> albeit in a slightly different context than earlier:

Paying for downloading movies from the Internet is probably a plausible future vision. Basic programme supply will certainly survive, though, because television's function is not just to present programmes selected especially for you, but rather to be a family member which can be viewed regardless of the programme. (Male, born 1977)

Television has thus been regarded as highly personalised domestic appliance, resembling a family member, in people's everyday speech. Marshall McLuhan's (1964, 25–26) famous slogan "the medium is the message" entails the idea that the real message (or messages) of television is not



what is conveyed by its sound and image, but rather its form. According to Jean Baudrillard (1998, 123) this comes through particularly in how television shapes family and group structures.

In the era of availability, family was perceived as a natural unit in ethnographic television audience research, such as James Lull's (1990, 30) study *Inside Family Viewing*. According to David Morley (1986, 25), a family is not simply a group individuals; it is larger than the sum of its members. When studying television's impact on families, the whole family should be taken into account instead of focusing on its member separately. Television has an important role at homes in making rules and decisions, creating conflicts and controlling relationships. According to Shaun Moores (1993, 59), research such as Morley's and Lull's is in many respects in fact research on the internal functions taking place at home and the leisure and work habits of households, with television working only as the starting point for research.

The idea about the breakdown of television's communality in the era of plenty is mostly based on the fact that there are more alternatives available now than before. Also, in the very early days of television, it was common to view nearly all programmes, which was indeed to some extent possible due to small supply. Since then the main differences within families were connected to programmes or programme genres. In the older material, a respondent recalled:

In the early years, the '60s, there were hardly any difficulties in selecting TV programmes, which secured peace in the family. As there were only two channels, there weren't so many overlapping programmes, which is quite uncommon nowadays. (Male, born 1923)

With the divergence of viewing and increase of programme supply, there emerged conflicts and disagreements within families over selecting programmes and, more generally, individual preferences concerning TV viewing. In the older material, conflicts were caused by the desire to

watch different programmes at the same time. Television's role in setting rules and decision-making, creating conflicts and controlling relationships has culminated into what is viewed and how viewing takes place. The problem was later solved by another TV set or/and a video recorder. Along with separate televisions, viewing became more independent and private. Consequently, especially young people's television viewing increased and changed content-wise. Different televisions often have different function, which are not limited to merely following television programmes:

Now I and my husband have two televisions: one in the living room and another in the bedroom. In the living room we can watch the digital set top box, DVD films and use the Play Station, and in the bedroom we can watch videos. (Female, born 1975)

A breakdown of the uniform television culture is also clearly noticeable in the student comments in the more recent data set. Independent TV viewing is also related to growing up, because especially during puberty children tend to pull away from their parents. However, when talking about buying something, students did not make a clear distinction between their own and their parents' purchases, which gives the impression that they are still closely involved in the media consumption of their childhood homes.

What also has an influence on the transformation of uniform culture is that the concept of family is becoming more heterogenic: on the one hand, the nuclear family has not been the "only family" for many years (see Morley 1992, 163–164); on the other, there are less shared programmes. A more significant factor resulting in decrease of viewing television together in families is, however, the abundance of programme supply: it is easy to find personal favourites for each family member, and these may be aired simultaneously. Television is increasingly taking over the kitchen, too, not only in an attempt to alleviate family conflicts but also to provide entertainment during domestic chores.

Nevertheless, the results of my research indicate that families continue viewing television together a lot even after shifting to the era of availability, a fact which children, in particular, seem to be glad about.

The programmes that family members have viewed together have initiated an interest in certain types of programmes and topics (e.g. news, sports, and specific TV series) and left adolescents with warm memories of moments spent together gathered around the television. Besides togetherness, the respondents perceived the discussions spurred by the programmes important:

When I was in school, we used watch the Moomins as a whole family once a week. I still regard the Moomins as one of the best children's TV series. The weekly recurring moments of watching the telly together with my parents gave, at least in retrospect, a feeling of security and togetherness in a little schoolchild's life. (Female, born 1984)

Parents' viewing and discussing television with their children can be seen as an opportunity for the parents to pass on their experience of life to their children. This is part of television's capability to act as a resource of social togetherness (Lull 1990, 29). Television may also have had the effect of strengthening the sense of belonging by preventing conflicts and strengthening or, at a later stage, weakening the parents' role. According to psychological research, parents are mediators between a broader social, cultural, economic as well as historical environment and children's behaviour and personality. Children and adolescents also expect their parents to spend time with them. An important form of spending time together is relaxing by the television. In the hectic family life of the end of the twentieth century, it was television that offered one of the only occasions for parents to spend time with their children:

The rigid attitude toward watching television changed, when my family bought a new TV set when I was eight years old. Little by little, television began to evolve into a device that offered important

moments together with my parents. Friday evenings we used to watch *Dallas* and *Dynasty* with my mother and my little sister. It developed into a mutual moment and experience with my mother, who hardly ever had time to sit down with us children. Television defined our Saturday evenings as well, because then the whole family watched German detective series. They were moments spent together with my father. (Female, born 1979)

All in all, not too many generalisations can be made on the basis of how television has been viewed in Finnish homes. Despite the fact that certain developments can be found in my research findings, as for instance how certain programmes are followed together less when children grow older or when the number of TV sets and VCR's within the household increases, viewing habits remain diverse. What further complicates making universal observations is that television viewing as social form is not a very rational and premeditated way of spending leisure time.

These observations seem to support the notion that stems from research conducted by television ethnographers that the concept of family should not be taken as given. Instead, it should be perceived as a problematic and complex concept, which alters when subjected to various cultural and social influences. Historically, family has changed, being constantly in the middle of a process as system. For that reason, the quality and the quantity of TV viewing may alter between families greatly. Patterns of living within a family also change as children grow. In addition, it is necessary to consider the modernisation level of the culture in question, since this has a great impact on family life. In this context, it is also important to examine different socio-economic levels, instead of simply looking at the national macro-level. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that *family* is not the same as *household*; indeed, families do extend beyond the household. When examining only television viewing, it becomes clear that viewing habits differ between families (see Gunter & McAleer 1990, 130; Lull 1990, 146–146, 155–156; Morley 1986, 25–27; Morley 1992: 203; Moores 1993, 104).

From the standpoint of the families, the impact of television has been two-fold. On the one hand, it has alienated families in that communication between family member while viewing is minimal, and viewing is even more independent activity when there are several TV sets available. On the other hand, with shared programmes and viewing rituals involved in them, television has also brought family members closer to one another. Regardless of its diversity of the concept, family remains a basic unit of society. Although the family constantly renews, it is held together by biological, social and emotional bonds, relations of power and responsibility as well as shared values and goals. In this open and dynamic, multi-personal system of family, the models of interaction between individual members are complex. Indeed, family members can be considered to actively construct their own everyday lives. To sum up the findings, viewing habits in the families have remained relatively unaltered during the past decades. The most significant change is that viewing has become more private, but, in essence, television nevertheless seems to remain the ‘electronic hearth’.

### **Television and Time Management**

TV did restrict visiting times and life rhythm pretty much. We always checked out what’s on television and hastened our other chores to be able to sit down in peace and watch the tube. We didn’t have many other indulgences; we didn’t need any, really. (Female, born 1931)

Following television broadcasts regularly has had an effect on people’s daily routines. Television is important in that it sets up a timetable and pace for everyday life, strongly influencing social intercourse as well. In this respect, the media create a sense of solidarity: people are doing things in pace with other people, even if they do not know each other. For this reason television viewing creates a certain sense of security, as when considered social activity in the family.

Radio and television have not only affected daily and weekly rhythm, but also created a new kind of concept for a calendar year, the television year, which organises and coordinates social life, creating expectations for the future (Scannel 1996, 16, 153–156). The media as whole has influenced people's time perspective, their perception of time, growth of the importance of time, temporality of the everyday life, and increasing tempo of life.

All things considered, in the first data set, television affected the rhythm of life in over half of those respondents who had addressed the issue. The most apparent observation from the early years of television was that the bedtimes of the Finns were postponed. In addition, viewing took much time from and influenced the timing other activities (e.g. mealtimes, going to the sauna, even milking the cows). The modernisation process of the 1960s, when the economic structure of Finland changed and the characteristics of agrarian society were disappeared dramatically, was exceptionally speedy even in the scale of whole Europe. In the late 1950s, however, the largest part of the Finns still lived in rural communities.<sup>6</sup> In the student data set, the impact of television on the life rhythm is naturally more comprehensive as television has accompanied them throughout their lives.

A good example how bedtimes were postponed is when the ten o'clock news was launched on the Finnish commercial channel MTV. The alternative news for public broadcasting company YLE's half past eight news took place as late as 1981. In those days, the YLE news was broadcast on both channels at the same time. According to time use research (Niemi & Pääkkönen 1989, 57), the news put off the Finns' bedtime by 30 minutes. One viewer's incentive to view the MTV news broadcast appeared as desire to participate in an "imagined community" in an interesting way (see Anderson 1983):

When ten o'clock news started on television, we tried to watch them but we were always tired. Then I heard once that when they were on (at 10 p.m.) half of Finland was asleep, so we quit watching and went to bed in time. But nowadays we often watch them. (Female, born 1924)

The single most important programme that set the pace for everyday life in the first twenty years of Finnish television was, however, the American serial *Payton Place*, which began in the late 1960s. It was the first prime time soap opera in Finland and it was immensely popular. It even threatened one of the core summer traditions in Finland, that spending time at the summer cottage:

*Payton Place*, which was very popular, began in spring 1968, and I was hooked, too. I was taking some courses in Tampere for a week in June, and since the friend I stayed with didn't have a TV, I thought I'd come all the way to Turku for the night. But then this friend of mine arranged it for me to watch it with someone who lived in the same building as my friend. At that time people came back to town from their summer cottages for Wednesday evenings. Even weekdays were known as Monday, Tuesday, *Payton Place*, Thursday, etc. When the serial eventually ended, a television news announcer jested that 'Now Finland is resuming the Gregorian calendar again'. (Female, born 1923)

The first actual daytime soap opera broadcast in Finland, *The Bold and the Beautiful* had a similar impact in the 1990s, though affecting a different time of the day:

*Payton Place* was on late in the evening, so by then people had returned home, and meetings were over, too. If it had been on earlier, people would probably have done like they do now, saying 'don't call us now that we're watching *The Bold and the Beautiful*'. (ibid.)

David Gauntlett and Annette Hill (1998, 23–35, 283–285) conducted a research which examined British television viewing in the early 1990s. Using television diaries as their material, they observed that, besides the news, the programme genre which determined everyday timetables the most was the soap opera. In the data set of this study, students recalled that television has been

important for organising timetables since childhood. Children's programmes, in particular, are essentially reflected in what is remembered of the daily and weekly routines.

Even as a child, television determined time and time use. The difference between weekdays and weekends was marked by Saturday's children's programmes. It was really a totally different thing to sit under the blanket eating candy and watching cartoons, than to be dragged to day care or school. On weekdays the children's programmes distinguished day from night: we ate supper and went to bed after the children's programme Pikku Kakkonen. (Female, born 1979)

The above-mentioned rituals have survived to the 2000s, even if it is easier than before to reschedule the viewing with DVRs and especially recording set-top-boxes in Finland nowadays. Technological innovations facilitate controlling television's influence on daily routines. What is more, the programme supply in the era of plenty forces to make choices, to prioritise. Increasing channels and new technological possibilities may mould viewing, but they do not alter human behaviour, however (McQuail 1997, 143).

### **Talking about TV**

An integral part of the disciplinary history of the communication studies, the use and gratification studies has paid attention to how common it is to talk about television in various situations ranging from suburban breakfast tables and coffee breaks at work to the school yard. For instance, the research by McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972, 158), which is regarded as a key text of the tradition, describes how a member of television audience gets gratification from talking about a television quiz show. In my research material, talking about programmes is strongly present:

People talked about TV programmes at work and with friends. When Saturday night TV talk shows and debates came on, people talked about them and expressed their own opinions. Plays were talked about,



too. People's tastes varied. Politics was approached according to party political views. People stuck with like-minded folks, and scolded their opponents. (Male, born 1924)

Television and programme choices don't determine a person to the extent they did in the upper level of comprehensive school. Reality shows could be considered a kind of phenomenon among people of my age, however. At least in my circle of friends we watch and analyse shows like *Big Brother* and *Idols* together regularly. (Female, born 1984)

Talking about television programmes is crucial in order for the programme to gain popularity and to become a part of cultural capital in the general discourse (Hobson 1989, 167). As Markku Veijalainen, one of the most popular Finnish TV presenters, whose career as a TV reporter started as early as the 1960s, pointed out in an interview (the TV programme *60-luvun kuvakirja*, [The 60s Picture Book, 2007]): “We always dreamt of making a programme that would talked about in the coffee tables next day.”

However, it is interesting that the most renowned and controversial programmes of the so called *Reporadio*-era are conspicuous by their absence in the first data set. In the late 1960s, *Reporadio* was a nickname given to the Finnish national broadcasting company after Director-General of Yleisradio Eino S. Repo (1965–1970). *Reporadio* is remembered, among other things, for its “informational programme policy” and radical, leftish ideas about public broadcasting.<sup>7</sup> It seems that those certain “profane” programmes (cabarets by Television Theatre and so called “Special Affairs” programmes) which have become mythical in the Finnish public sphere are myths only for the elite while “ordinary people” reminisce mostly the sports, news and, first of all, entertainment programmes.

Another essential feature of TV talk, the oral culture of television, is gossiping (Fiske 1987, 77–80; Fiske 1992, 66; Gray 1992). The soap opera, in particular, involves chatting both textually and contextually about the programmes outside the home (Hobson 1990). Sociolinguists have labelled gossiping as a feminine genre of speech, a key to women's subculture (Moore 1993, 40).

As television sets became more common, the social life of families began to revolve around television more and more. As a result, topics derived from television and other media partly replaced the habit of keeping track of and discussing about events in people's immediate surroundings. In this sense, television became an "electronic hearth" in Finland during the 1960s. Research conducted in Finland affirms (Leppänen, Marttila & Pihlajamäki 2000, 30; Snell, Lahelma & Toppinen 2003, 67) the importance of television talk. People long for the feeling of communality. For instance, one criterion for assessing how interesting documentaries and current affairs programmes are is whether or not their topics raise discussion at work next day.

Only 17 respondents in the first data set said they did not discuss TV programmes. There is indeed an aspect of social pressure involved: being unaware of a certain programme might entail being left outside the circle of friends, colleagues or neighbours. Talking about television programmes also resulted in following particular programmes because of the influence of friends. Television programmes were indeed a very important topic in the lives of youngsters. There were certain programmes one had to watch in order to follow and to participate in discussions. A group identity was created through these programmes. Nevertheless, for many, television viewing decreased after teenage years when they began studying. Talking about television programmes was also a part of teenagers' general sense of belonging:

A funny thing compared to my current behaviour with programmes is that I didn't really follow other programmes than those approved of by my friends. These days anything except this fact is claimed

about following both magazines and TV programmes. If no one watches *Big Brother* now, then earlier it would really not have been watched. Maybe it was just more genuine, to use a well-worn expression, when you were younger. (Male, born 1983)

A vital part of the culture of viewing *Big Brother*, for example, is discussion which takes place on the discussion forum of the programme's website. The Internet has brought a new dimension to talking, or gossiping, about TV programmes, and it has not only meant that audiences would be fragmented into small groups. A Finnish marketing manager operating in mobile and movie business commented on the issue in a newspaper article in September 2006 (Metsämäki 2006): "More than half of the Finns aged 15 to 17 visit the *IRC-Galleria*<sup>8</sup> on a daily basis. I think it's pointless to grumble that young people are fragmented."

It actually seems that technological convergence of media culture has increased the communality of television. It was easier to be a committed fan<sup>9</sup> even before the arrival of the Internet than in the early days of television, because today much more is written about programmes:

I have no particular impression of the discussions about TV programmes in the school and with friends. But there were certain programmes which almost everybody watched. In the primary and secondary schools, at least *Beverly Hills 90210* and *Melrose Place* were programmes that were generally favoured by my peers; each had their faves and pet peeves among the stars. I also talked a lot about *Twin Peaks* with my friends who watched it. We also got our hands on Finnish and foreign magazines which wrote about the series. (Female, born 1981)

## **Development of Multiform TV Communalities**

In September 2006, the Finnish psychologist Hannu Haikonen (2006) wrote a sarcastic letter to the editor in the leading Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*: “There must be a research paper out there, arguing that television viewing increases sociability and communality!” His text criticises television in a style that resembles the opposition to television of the upper social groups in the 1950s. Haikonen sees television as an addictive medium, an antithesis to creativity, stimulation, intelligence, personality, sociality and communality. Even if the observations on the development of the television viewing of the Finns can not be directly translated into arguments about advancing sociability, they do, however, indicate that social intercourse has not diminished with the development of television – it may even be quite the opposite.

A medium like television, which is mainly used at home, can be seen as a bridge between private and public. Media use is a form of normal social behaviour and an acceptable substitute for real social intercourse. On the other hand, in the broad view, media may also initiate the process of socialisation. While facilitating social learning, it provides a means of more extensive participation in society. This aspect of media becomes apparent in people’s need to share media experiences with each other. Media talk is particularly useful when trying to come in contact with strangers without being too intrusive. Although media, especially television, may have ‘killed’ certain forms of social intercourse, there is not clear evidence that the influence of television would be merely regressive, as regards sociability. It is equally possible that social intercourse either increases or declines because of the media. (McQuail 1997, 90–91, 98–99.) Indeed, observations on the Finnish history of television viewing seem to support this view.

The fact that collective viewing declined with the spread TV sets does not mean that people would have ceased to gather together to view television, even outside the domestic sphere. Many ritualistic programmes, such as beauty contests and royal weddings, have been important since the first steps of television (see e.g. Dayan & Katz 1992). Spectator sport, in particular, continues to be a significant form of social viewing. In the first data set, the Olympic Games, ice-hockey and winter sports gathered people around the tube to share the experience:

When the World Championships in Athletics, Nordic World Ski Championships or the Olympic Games were on, the first thing we'd say after a good day was 'We won gold!' Then you'd go through the situations seriously and in detail. In spectator sports, the Finns are serious sports addicts in the sense that they tend follow the games in one way or another. And they can talk about them, too. (Male, born 1946)

As a form of social viewing, spectator sport takes place outside the home: in pubs, for instance. It is likely that this particular trend is on the rise, because the television rights of sports events have shifted to pay TV. Instead of purchasing a charge card, people prefer watching the matches their favourite teams' in a public space.

The Finns' habit of following same programmes at the same time has outlived the era of uniform culture from the 1960s to 1980s. There are certain entertainment programmes people want experience at the same time with others – not to mention the national ritual type of programmes such as the news, sports, or the Independence Day Gala.<sup>10</sup> Despite failing to reach the same viewer rates as in the age of two channels, a sense of collectivity has nevertheless remained.

In the 1990s and 2000s, young people developed a weekly ritual of watching certain TV programmes, which was a highly social event. In the students' reminiscence of school times, a

number of American serials, such as *Melrose Place*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Friends*, *Ally McBeal* and *Sex in the City*, seem to play a particularly important role in social intercourse. In fact, very few respondents refer to viewing television by themselves in the 2000s, as they are mostly accompanied by at least their boyfriends or girlfriends. In the students' media reminiscences, viewing television collectively is associated especially to family in childhood and, later, to friends.

In hindsight, viewing was surprisingly social activity, especially in the primary school. If you didn't watch some programmes, you didn't know what was talked about... I still talk a lot about TV programmes with my friends and family, especially reality shows. Hardly a day passes without discussing either *Idols* or *Big Brother*. Especially the latter evokes great passions in all its dullness: people either love it or hate it. I used to be hooked on this particular series, and it was actually the first series in which the Internet discussion forums were more interesting than the viewing experience. It was even frustrating to watch the programme, having read about the events on the Internet the day before. (Female, born 1985)

Interestingly, social television viewing continues to adulthood. In the 2000s, especially reality shows are one of the genres that are being viewed collectively. The multimedia intercourse of the reality shows is stretched to new levels in virtual communities. *Big Brother*, in particular, is regarded as a turning point for the definition of audience. The programme has demonstrated that mass media phenomena cannot be explained simply by looking at audiences, since people may participate in media events in various ways. This implies using several media either simultaneously or separately as well as commercial exploitation of people's interests. (Ross & Nightingale 2003, 3–5.)

The rules of mass media are not simple, however, as they are marked by interactivity as well as attempts at achieving consensus, and choices that are limited by unique boundaries of the group or society. Furthermore, they will not be realised according the laws of probability related to human

behaviour. (Lull 1990, 78) Although viewing is often passive, the way the programmes address audiences does not determine how active or passive viewing is. Also, the role of television may remain secondary in social intercourse, as it may be switched on merely as background noise, while socialising is more important. It is the structural form of viewing, environmentality, which Lull mentions, that is essentially related to television.

Ethnographic media research has showed that the rules of using media at home are complex and often unspoken, and they vary from one family to another (see e.g. Morley 1986). Age and gender are influential as well. In addition to individual significance assigned to and gratification gained from entertainment and information value, viewing television programmes may be motivated by, for instance, the desire to look good in the eyes of friends or the opposite sex (identity formation), avoiding feelings of being an outsider (group identity), or simply the search of sense of communality created by media (as part of the imagined community). Media convergence has brought more and more social networking and virtual interaction into viewing, with people creating their individual viewing tactics. All in all, social considerations are still an important aspect of viewing television (see Table below).

**Table: Television in Social interaction**

<b>ERA OF SCARCITY</b> <b>1956–1987</b>	<b>ERA OF AVAILABILITY</b> <b>1987–2001</b>	<b>ERA OF PLENTY</b> <b>2001-</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Collective watching</li> <li>-Change in visiting culture</li> <li>-The influence of TV to other leisure activities</li> <li>-The influence of TV on the timing of daily activities</li> <li>-Oral culture (chatting and gossiping about TV programmes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Collective watching of TV and videos</li> <li>-TV as background noise</li> <li>-The influence of TV on the timing of daily activities</li> <li>-Time management through the use of videos</li> <li>-Oral culture (chatting and gossiping about TV programmes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collective watching of TV and DVDs</li> <li>-TV as background noise</li> <li>-Priorities in the timing of daily activities</li> <li>- Time management through downloading and the use of DVRs</li> <li>- Oral culture (chatting and gossiping about TV programmes, and on the Internet too)</li> </ul>

**Traditions and Social Intercourse Remain and Transform**

It has been argued that, in the eras of availability and of plenty, television would no longer be a collective media, but rather a part of segmented post-Fordian market and consumption world in which identities are switched like channels. The student narratives tell another story, however. Indeed, reality television is an important television phenomenon, which has clearly increased the social character of television. For its content, reality television can be regarded as postmodern, reflecting the special features of the era of uncertainty, individualism and construed truths, while its viewing habits display the same customs as in the era of uniform culture.

Postmodern media society produces neo-tribes in which communality is generated by media images and phenomena instead of ideologies. These create a new sense of belonging. It is good to bear in mind, however, that nation states and strong collective identities have not disappeared. The role of



the media in maintaining and reinforcing them is, in fact, essential (Maffesoli 1995; McQuail 1997, 147).

Though television's influence on social intercourse was indeed radical, a number of Finnish traditions did survive. Routine aspects related to television have seemed to be merged into old culture-specific Finnish traditions. In this sense, it could be said that television is a *transmodern* medium (Hartley 1999): in addition to new traditions, the use of television involves customs prevalent before its invention. The most distinctively Finnish viewing tradition that is still very much alive is watching television after taking a sauna. A respondent told about television in the 1960s:

I remember how great it was when the broadcasting time extended until midnight on Saturdays. After the working week, Saturday got a special stature. Banks were closed at 1 p.m., and nothing can beat feeling of freedom that followed. You came to the clean home (we had a 'division of labour' with my husband, and it was his turn to do the chores on Saturdays). The granny who lived downstairs had baked. We had a bun circle, because I couldn't bake. We went to the sauna and ate Janssons Frestelse<sup>11</sup> or cabbage pie and then went to watch the tube. That's what I call happiness. You could have watched TV until the break of day. (Female, born 1937)

In England, for instance, a similar tradition is viewing television after the five o'clock tea (O'Sullivan 1991, 171). Instead of only challenging and undermining shared values and beliefs, the media can be used to expand and reinforce traditions (Thompson 1995, 183, 192, 195). A case in point is the suburbanisation process in Finland, which was connected to urbanisation and migration from the country to the cities. By no means were rural traditions totally abandoned immediately after settling to a new dwelling place; instead, old traditions were transposed to meet the requirements of the new surroundings and social climate. As the historian Eric Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) has pointed out, it is also necessary to bear in mind that some of the

traditions assumed to date back hundreds of years are, in fact, relatively recent, often deriving from the nineteenth century. Similarly, modern conceptions of home and family are largely the creation of the commercial and cultural rise of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century. In addition to the influence of different cultures, modern family life is resulting from the ever-changing, historically determined relationship between the public and private spaces. Television was essentially involved in this transformation process. (Silverstone 1994, 25, 24)

The use of media as part of modern and post-modern life in western societies is strongly associated with community, but it is also connected to individuality, which complicates media consumption. Generally, however, routine uses of media are fairly unproblematic, as they constitute an integral part of familiar surroundings and practices, and relate to family ties, to neighbours, work and school. Individual choices are not necessarily conscious, but sometimes conscious media choices may strengthen identification with other people.

Many media routines serve to create a sense of continuity and safety, as in the case of Finland. Even in the era of plenty, the strong state-owned broadcasting company as well as the exceptionally multifaceted full-service commercial television companies have been able to attract the Finns to watch television collectively. In August 2007, Finnish television switched over to digital and terminated analogue broadcasting entirely (with the exception of cable households, which had an extension to convert until the end of February 2008). The first TV audience measurements and surveys show that digitalisation has not altered the situation significantly, although it seems to have eventually implanted the idea of pay TV into Finnish television. What is remarkable is that young people, who suppose to have dumped television in their lives for the Internet and other digital media, watch TV more than never before.

People seem to like viewing television as members of an imagined community as well as physically in the same space with others, sharing experiences face to face. Indeed, collective viewing seems to dissolve the notion of the fragmentation of television. Certain television programmes are increasingly ordered or downloaded – either legally or illegally – to be viewed in a suitable occasion, but it seems unlikely that this would put an end to the need to experiencing live broadcasts or watching television simultaneously with other people in other ways. Most people want scheduled programmes from television in order to experience “old-fashioned communality” in the digital era, too. To be sure, the television and the computer are by nature different media appliances.

## References

Alasuutari, Pertti., ed. 1999. *Rethinking the Media Audience: The New Agenda*. London: Sage.

Alasuutari, Pertti, and Karen Armstrong, and Juha Kytömäki. 1991. *Reality and Fiction in Finnish Television*, Research Reports 3/1991. Helsinki: Yleisradio.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Ang, Ien. 1996. *Living room Wars. Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World*. London and New York: Routledge.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1998. *The Consumer Society*. London Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage

Dayan, Daniel, and Elihu Katz. 1992. *Media Events. The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- De Certeau, Michel. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Elfving, Sari. 2008. *Taikalaatikko ja tunteiden tulkit. Televisio-ohjelmia ja esiintyjiä koskeva kirjoittelu suomalaisissa lehdissä 1960- 1970-luvuilla*. Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto.
- Ellis, John. 2000. *Seeing Things. Television in the Age of Uncertainty*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Fiske, John. 1987. *Television Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Fiske, John. 1989a. *Understanding Popular Culture*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Fiske, John. 1989b. *Reading the Popular*. London: Routledge.
- Fiske, John. 1992. Moments of Television: Neither the Text Nor the Audience. In *Remote Control. Television, Audiences & Cultural Power*, ed. Ellen Seiter, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner, and Eva-Maria Warth. London: Routledge.
- Gauntlett, David, and Annette Hill. 1999. *TV Living. Television, Culture and Everyday Life*. British Film Institute. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gray, Ann. 1992. *Video Playtime. The Gendering of a Leisure Technology*. London: Routledge/Comedia.
- Gunter, Barrie, and Jill L. McAleer. 1990. *Children and Television. The One Eyed Monster?* London and New York: Routledge.
- Haikonen, Hannu. 2006. Television katselun haitoista pitäisi varoittaa myös aikuisia. *Helsingin Sanomat* 12 September 2006, sec. C4.
- Hartley, John. 1999. *Uses of Television*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Heikkinen, Kalle., ed. 1986. *Kymmenen esseetä elämäntavasta*. Helsinki: Oy Yleisradio Ab.
- Heikkinen, Kalle., ed. 1989. *Elämää kuvavirrassa*. Helsinki: Oy Yleisradio Ab & Tammi.
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger., ed. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hobson, Dorothy. 1989. Soap Operas at Work. In *Remote Control. Television, Audiences & Cultural Power*, ed. Ellen Seiter, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner, and Eva-Maria Warth. London: Routledge.
- Hobson, Dorothy. 1990. Women Audience and the Workplace. In *Television and Women's Culture. The Politics of the Popular*, ed. Mary Ellen Brown. London: Sage.
- Kangaspunta, Seppo. 2006. *Yhteisöllinen digi-tv. Digitaalisen television uusi yhteisöllisyys, yhteisöllisyyden tuotteistaminen ja yhteisötelevisiön vaihtoehto*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Kortti, Jukka. 2007. *Näköradiosta digiboksiin. Suomalaisen television sosiokulttuurinen historia*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- Kortti, Jukka, and Tuuli Anna Mähönen. 2009. Reminiscing Television. Media Ethnography, Oral History and Finnish Third Generation Media History. *European Journal of Communication* 24 (1): 49–67.
- Leppänen, Sanna, and Mikko Marttila, and Timo Pihlajamäki. 2000. Tulevaisuuden kanavat ja palvelut. In *Kohti yksilöllistä mediamaisemaa 2000: Kuluttajatukimukset-hanke. Teknologiakatsaus 98/2000*. Helsinki: Tekes.
- Lull, James. 1990. *Inside Family Viewing. Ethnographic Research on Television's Audiences*. London: Routledge.
- McCarthy, Anna. 2001. *Ambient Television*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Maffesoli, Michel. 1995. *Maailman mieli. Yhteisöllisen tyylin muodoista*. Finnish translation Mika Määttänen. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- McLuhan, Marshall. 1964. *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). New York: Mentor Book.
- McQuail, Denis. 1997. *Audience Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- McQuail, Denis, and Jay G. Blumler, and J.R. Brown. 1972. *The Television Audience: A Revised Perspective*. In *Sociology of Mass Communications*, ed. Denis McQuail. Suffolk: Penguin Books.
- Metsämäki, Mikko. 2006. Mellakka jatkuu. *Markkinointi ja Mainonta* 26 (2006): 20.
- Moore, Shaun. 1993. *Interpreting Audiences. The Ethnography of Media Consumption*. London: Sage.
- Morley, David. 1986. *Family Television. Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*. London: Comedia.
- Morley, David. 1992. *Television, Audiences & Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Niemi, Iris, and Hannu Pääkkönen. 1989. *Ajankäytön muutokset 1980-luvulla*. Helsinki: Tilastokeskus, Tutkimuksia 153.
- Niemi, Iris, and Hannu Pääkkönen. 2001. *Ajankäytön muutokset 1990-luvulla*. Helsinki: Tilastokeskus. Kulttuuri ja viestintä 2001:6.
- Nikunen, Kaarina. 2007. Intermedial Practises of Fandom. *Nordicom Review* 28 (2): 111–128.
- Näränen, Pertti. 2006. *Digitaalinen televisio. Analyysijä alkuhistoriasta, viestintäpoliittisista haasteista ja tv-järjestelmän muuttumisesta*. Tampere: Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 1132.
- O'Sullivan, Tim. 1991. Television Memories and Cultures of Viewing, 1950–65. In *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in Cultural History*, ed. John Corner. London: BFI.
- Pajala, Mari. 2006. *Erot järjestykseen! Eurovision laulukilpailu, kansallisuus ja televisiohistoria*. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto, Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja, 88.
- Roos, J.P. 1989. Televisio – arkielämän hallitsija, uhka ja erottelija. In *Elämää kuvavirrassa*, ed. Kalle Heikkinen. Helsinki: Oy Yleisradio Ab & Tammi.
- Ross, Karen, and Virginia Nightingale. 2003. *Media and Audiences. New Perspectives*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

- Salasuo, Mikko. 2006. *Atomisoitunut sukupolvi. Pääkaupunkiseudun nuorisokulttuurinen maisema ja nuorisotyön haasteita 2000-luvun alussa*. Helsinki: Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus. Tutkimuksia 2006:6.
- Salokangas, Raimo. 1996. The Finnish Broadcasting Company and the Changing Finnish Society, 1949–1996 in *Yleisradio 1926–1996: A History of Broadcasting in Finland*, ed. Rauno Endén. Helsinki: YLE, 107–228.
- Scannel, Paddy. 1996. *Radio, Television & Modern Life. A Phenomenological Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Senghaas, Dieter. 1985. *The European Experience. A Historical Critique of Development Theory*. New Hampshire: Berg Publishers.
- Silverstone, Roger. 1994. *Television and Everyday Life*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Snell, Susanna, and Anna Lahelma, and Pilvi Toppinen. 2003. *Parempia ohjelmia. TV-ohjelmatestien satoa 2001–2003*. Helsinki: YLE Yleisötutkimus.
- Spigel, Lynn. 1992. *Make Room for TV. Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Thompson John B. 1995. *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tichi, Cecelia. 1991. *Electronic Hearth: Creating an American Television Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- TV programme: *60-luvun kuvakirja, osa 5: Rohkeaa puhetta*, 2007. Director: Ari Matikainen. Script: Elina Heino & Ari Matikainen. Producer: Liisa Akimof. A Production House production for YLE Teema.
- Wiio, Juhani., ed. 2007. *Television viisi vuosikymmentä. Suomalainen television ja sen ohjelmat 1950-luvulta digiaikaan*. Helsinki: SKS.

---

<sup>1</sup> More about the methodology of the study, see: Kortti & Mähönen 2009.

---

<sup>2</sup> This article is based on a project (Kortti 2007) concerning the arrival, diffusion and integration of television and its changing technological and cultural role and impact on the everyday life of the Finns and their worldviews during the period from the mid-1950s to the 21st century. Besides the institutional, economic, social and cultural narrative of the Finnish television, there is also an analytic chapter about the changes in Finnish TV-viewing in the study. The objects of research are (1) the role of television as an everyday commodity, the impact of television on the (2) worldviews and (3) social interaction of Finns. The discussion of television in social intercourse is divided to the study of changes in family viewing, gender preferences and in social life outside home.

<sup>3</sup> John Fiske (1987; 1989a; 1989b) took Certeau's view to the extreme, believing that people are opposed to everything that the system has to offer and do what they want with it; in short, they are ideal everyday heroes.

<sup>4</sup> Television is definitely present in public spaces as well. On television outside of the domestic sphere see e.g. McCarthy 2001.

<sup>5</sup> The concept of atomised generation refers to a nuclear- or mosaic-like generation, the smallest parts that move vibrantly and dynamically in the field of cultural phenomena. Atomisation can be presented as a large scale process that cuts through a generation. The freedom and requirement of choice is characteristic of the life of the atomised generation. In Finland, the concept is used by the scholar Mikko Salasuo. See Salasuo 2006 (with English Summary).

<sup>6</sup> Before the 1950s Finland was the least developed country in Scandinavia, but by the early 1970s it had assumed the typical form of most industrialized societies in the world. (Senghaas 1985, 71–80)

<sup>7</sup> About the history of Finnish television see Salokangas 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Before Facebook, IRC-Galleria was the largest social networking site in Finland. The registered users can present the pictures and communicate with each other in various ways. The average age of the users is approximately 20 years.

<sup>9</sup> Research on fans of TV programmes has become an independent branch of research, fan studies, which has been recently done to some extent in Finland (see e.g. Ross & Nightingale 2003, 120–145; Nikunen 2007).

<sup>10</sup> The live broadcast from the Independence Day reception in the Presidential Palace on the 6th of December has dominated the viewer rates overwhelmingly for decades. The idea of the programme is, in short, that the presidential couple receive Finland's political and cultural elite and diplomats from embassies in front of the television cameras, after which they are filmed dancing. In addition, some of the guests are interviewed. The most important issue are, however, the evening dresses and coiffures of the female guests.

<sup>11</sup> A potato and anchovy casserole (traditional Scandinavian meal).