The Social Embeddedness of Media Use

Action Theoretical Contributions to the Study of TV Use in Everyday Life

Henk Westerik

Mouton de Gruyter

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Preface

Although many people assume that television viewing has lost it's dominant role as an entertainment and news medium, research usually shows that television is still the main source of news and television viewing still is the single most important leisure time activity. It is therefore obvious that it is playing a major role in the everyday life of most people – almost anywhere in the world. No wonder, then, that many scholars have studied television (news) viewing to determine why people watch or why they don't. The standard approaches to this research problem have usually been either to explain television (news) viewing on the basis of individual characteristics (e. g. educational level, needs and values – the uses approach) or on the basis of program characteristics (e. g. program content, scheduling – the audience flow approach). In this monograph, studies are presented that supplement these approaches with a third way of studying television (news) use. Using insights of Schutzean sociology and the Media use As Social Action perspective, enhancements are made to the explanatory apparatus of the well know Uses and Gratifications theory with concepts that are related to short-lived, transient situations.

The studies presented in this monograph – which are part of an all embracing project on the social embeddedness of media use – all emphasize the role of immediate, everyday life experiences in shaping television (news) use. For instance, they show how partners, parents and children directly influence each other's viewing decisions, and also how one's own television news use during the day affects subsequent use during that same day.

Methodological innovation is a central aspect of the studies presented in this monograph. All studies address and / or use event history analysis as a method of studying television (news) use. Even though Snyder already in 1991 demonstrated several applications of event history analysis in studies of mass media and interpersonal communication, and though she argued that 'it is superior to some alternative techniques for dealing with change over time, because it takes advantage of more information and allows analysis of change situated in time' (p. 465), until now the technique has only seldom been used in the field of communication research

Only the studies in this monograph thus are able to explore dimensions of television news use that have not received attention so far, more specifically how television (news) use is often connected to a short-termed, ever changing situational context. By using event history analysis in this way, media use is portrayed as an integral part of everyday life.

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(NISCO), Faculty of Social Sciences, Radboud University Nijmegen. The authors want to thank all those who have made this research effort possible, especially Frans Hüskens for managerial backing; Frank Huysmans and Ruben P. Konig for their contributions to theory and the construction of the measurement instrument and Judith E. Rosenbaum for her editorial comments.

Contents

Chapter 1

The social embeddedness of media use: An introduction

Henk Westerik and Karsten Renckstorf

Theory and research on the subject of the social embeddedness of media use have changed considerably during the last sixty years. Originally, mass communication was seen primarily as a process in which just two parties were involved: [a] suppliers of information or 'senders' on the one hand and [b] mass media audiences of 'receivers' on the other. During those years, it was usually assumed that 'sender' and 'receiver' had clearly distinct roles: senders determined the content of the mass media and made sure that these messages were delivered properly to receivers; and receivers would absorb these messages and would respond just as the sender had intended. Ultimately, sender intentions and the delivery of messages were seen as crucial determining factors shaping the behavior of receivers.

Yet almost immediately, theoretical and empirical objections against this view were voiced as well. Empirical research made clear that 'senders' could not simply 'deliver' messages to all intended receivers (Hyman & Sheatsley, 1947). It also became evident that message reception and consumption were not to be seen as uniform activities of isolated individual receivers. Instead, ideas were put forward about primary groups, interpersonal communication, and opinion leaders contributing to the process of mass communication (Merton, 1949; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Klapper, 1957; cf. Renckstorf & McQuail, 1996). Eventually, scholars realized that the receiver's intentions were all-important for understanding receivers' media use (Bauer, 1964). Research for press and broadcasters boosted this development by emphasizing the importance of understanding the audience (see, for instance, Bogart, 1991). Within a scientific context, this brought the *Uses and Gratifications approach* (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974) to the forefront.

Uses and Gratifications, as it became institutionalized during the 1970s, used a simplified model of human decision making to explain media use. According to this model, individuals were assumed [a] to have full control over their actions, [b] to be fully knowledgeable about the consequences of their deeds, and [c] to choose the most desirable line of action. Over the years, new elements

have been introduced to the model, making it more complex. This development is lauded as progression by Palmgreen (1985) and Rubin (2002), yet one might contend that this meant that Uses and Gratifications became more incoherent as well. To prevent this from happening, some researchers proposed to reformulate audience theory in terms of an overarching action theory (cf. Anderson & Meyer, 1988; Charlton & Neumann, 1986; Renckstorf, 1989). One of these alternative approaches, the so-called *'Media use As Social Action' approach* (cf. Renckstorf, 1996, in the following: MASA) served here as the theoretical and methodological point of departure. It can be seen as a radicalization of the Uses and Gratifications approach. MASA emphasizes that media use is very much like other types of social conduct. This means that users are not to be seen as isolated individuals but as individuals who are embedded in a social context that deeply influences their lives, their patterns of action and their media use.

Of course such influences of the social context on the individual are not to be seen as the influence of an 'unmoved mover'. Often the social influence *on* individuals is similar or even identical to the social influences *of* individuals. People influence each other, though not always in symmetrical ways. For instance, we do not influence our past, but our past is influencing us (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973; 1989). Yet, in order to understand origins of human conduct and its consequences, we have to study the *process* of how people construct their conduct and how such conduct and its consequences unfold.

This emphasis on the process character of action is also paramount in the MASA perspective on media use. It usually portrays *social action* as something that is constructed in some chronological order by self-aware actors (cf. Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). It stresses that individuals are constantly trying to *master the situation* they are faced with. This orientation gives rise to subjective *definitions of their situation*. They will diagnose that situation as *problematic* (in case they have not dealt with it before) or as *non-problematic* (as they know how to deal with it). If a situation is deemed non-problematic, individuals will invoke a *routine* response to deal with it almost without further reflection. Otherwise, they will first have to raise their awareness of the problem; conceive of possible solutions; make a decision, and implement it; and then evaluate the newly created situation. Apart from that, actions will constantly feed back to the make-up of the individual and his social environment. The individual will acquire routines, and the environment may change (cf. Renckstorf, 1996; Renckstorf & Wester, 2004).

Past studies have overwhelmingly treated media use as if it were a static aspect of individuals. Sometimes, researchers make theoretical assumptions about media use being not a purely individualistic 'thing' but instead a socially created activity. However, usually these assumptions are not translated into sufficiently sensitive research models (Schaap, Renckstorf & Wester, 1998; Renckstorf & Wester, 2001). Interesting questions are therefore how this focus on media use as a static characteristic of individuals came to dominate commu-

nication research, and how an alternative to this view (i. e. a *process oriented* and more *social view of media use)* can be translated into research designs – even into quantitative ones. These are the questions that are central to this monograph, in which we report the results of an empirical research project on the social embeddedness of media use*.

In chapter 2 *("Transcending Uses and Gratifications: Media use as Social Action and the use of Event History Analysis")* we address these questions and line out the main theoretical and methodological assumptions of the whole enterprise. As the process character of media use is so important to action theoretical approaches, it is worth looking at conceptualizations and research outcomes of alternative research traditions that have been developed over the years. An example of this is research on *audience duplication* and *audience flow* (Goodhardt, 1966; Goodhardt, Ehrenberg & Collins, 1975; Barwise & Ehrenberg, 1988; Cooper, 1996). At first sight, this research tradition seems to be incompatible with an action theoretical approach, as it emphasizes audience passivity rather than activity. "It would be wrong to conclude that program choice is a very active process… The efforts viewers are prepared to invest in their viewing is usually minimal" (Barwise, Ehrenberg, & Goodhardt, 1982: 22). Moreover, the focus is usually not on the intentions of individual audience members, but on the consequences of programming and scheduling which are assumed to "produce certain behaviors" (Cooper, 1996: 97).

Yet, as we argue in chapter 3 *("The situational and time-varying context of routines in television viewing: An event history analysis"),* there has been some convergence between the insights of *gratification research* and *audience flow research* in the past (e. g. Webster & Wakshlag, 1983). Audience flow research has shown that personal factors such as audience availability influence media use, and within audience studies the insight has grown that the audience will often expose itself to the media as of the gratifying aspects of exposure itself, without bothering too much about content gratifications (as opposed to process gratifications, see Jeffres, 1978; Wenner, 1985). From a social action perspective, such ideas make perfectly sense, because it assumes that media use is an integral part of everyday life. *Media use is just one way of dealing with problems in everyday life*. It will often be a routine response to recurring problems that people meet at home: how to avoid boredom, how to spend time with others, how to relax, etc.

To explore the usefulness of an approach in which media use was seen as a way of dealing with everyday life problems, we decided to use *discrete time event history analysis*, because this analytical tool is capable of explaining a event (e. g. starting to watch television) on the basis of both time-varying fac-

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tors (e. g. the co-presence of others) and time-constant ones (e. g. interest in sports). An inventory was developed by the Nijmegen Institute of Communication Research which included measures of values, ideas, demographic characteristics, media use and measures of everyday life activities. Using this inventory, 825 Dutch adults were interviewed during the first three months of 2000 (Konig et al., 2005). As a follow up to this study a time use diary developed by Huysmans (2005) was administered to respondents and their household members, resulting in 822 time use diaries (from 445 households) returned. We then analyzed the results of this survey in three empirical studies that are reported in chapters 3–5.

In the first empirical study (chapter 3), we take a closer look on how television viewing is connected with the rest of everyday life activities and situations. We not only focus on individual 'causes' of viewing initiation, but also on social influence (i. e., in this context: the influence that partners have). We show how some activities in everyday life act as a substitute for television viewing and how other activities trigger subsequent television viewing. For instance, we show that participatory activities do have a dual effect on television viewing: they inhibit viewing by the partner who is participating, but they trigger viewing by the partner who is left behind. We further show that there are tensions between participating in family life and watching television. At one hand, we find that participation in family life triggers television viewing. One the other hand, we see that it also helps people to cut short their viewing episodes.

In chapter 4 *("Watching TV news in everyday life: An event history analysis")*, we shift our attention from watching television in general to watching *television news* in particular. As television news in 2000 is aired at fixed points in time, and because it makes use of fixed formats, we assumed that it would easily become part of time-structuring family ritual (Lull, 1980; Dahlgren, 1988) that may reinforce democratic and family values (Hagen, 1994[a, b]; Rothenbuhler, 1985). Our findings, however, point in another well-known direction. Three-quarters of the variance of news viewing initiation that is explained, is explained by time of the day and having watched television in the preceding quarters. So, we find here something that is very much a confirmation of the idea that 'people watch by the clock and not by the program' (Gerbner, 2007). On the other hand, there is some evidence suggesting that news viewing – more than television viewing in general – may be seen as a true family activity. Presence of non-family hinders news viewing initiation, while the presence of the partner within the family dwelling triggers news viewing as well. This effect even persists after controlling for the effect of (general) television viewing in preceding quarter. So, yes, it is a family ritual, but so is television viewing in general, and news viewing appears not to be radically different from that.

Having established that partners influenced each other's viewing activities, we turn to the influence of parents on children and vice versa. In a general sense,

these influences are likely to occur since social action is usually the outcome of a process in which both individuals and their social contexts are involved (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973; 1989). Usually, this idea applied in media socialization research, i. e. research about how parents influence the way in which children (mostly elementary school children) learn to use the media (e. g. Bonfadelli, 1981; 1993; Comstock & Scharrer, 2001; Himmelweit & Swift, 1976; Stone & Wetherington, 1979; Warren, 2005). But one can also use this idea in research on reverse socialization effects (Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2005), i. e. research on how children influence media use by their parents. As coming of age involves that a child learns to treat adults as equals, such effects are very likely to occur during the teenage years.

Our findings on this topic, are presented in chapter 5 *("The social character of parental and adolescent television viewing: An event history analysis").* It shows that adolescent viewing is partly brought about by private access to television viewing. Engagement in family life also enhances some viewing, yet it limits the length of viewing episodes. Apart from that, we find that teenagers influence parental viewing as well. Our data even suggest that the influence of teenagers on their parents is more direct than the influence of parents on the children. Parents tend to start watching television when their adolescent child is doing so, but adolescents do not start watching when their parents are watching. They are more influenced by the general example set by their parents ('parental modeling'), i. e. by their habits of media use.

This monograph ends with a summary of the main findings of the Social Embeddedness of Media Use project in chapter 6. In this chapter ("*On the use of an action theoretical approach to television (news) viewing"),* we further discuss implications that these findings may have for future theoretical and empirical research into media use in everyday life.

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Chapter 2

Transcending Uses and Gratifications: Media use as social action and the use of event history analysis*

Henk Westerik, Karsten Renckstorf, Jan Lammers and Fred Wester

Abstract

It is argued that since its institutionalization in the 1970s, Uses and Gratifications research has been heavily influenced by applied economic theories about Expectancy Value and Subjective Expected Utility. Underlying these theories are assumptions about the acting individual having full mastery of situations. This idea is contrasted with the way in which action theory portrays action. Here, mastery of situations is not assumed at forehand, but depends on the situation and is something that has to be achieved. Action theories further emphasize the influence of others. Applying these ideas to the study of media use means that more attention has to be paid to processes of gaining mastery, to situational influences, and to the influence of others. It is argued that discrete-time event history analysis may be a valuable tool to accomplish this. This may contribute to the study of several important questions in communication research, regarding audience flow and audience selectivity, and the social uses of media use.

Keywords: Uses and Gratifications, action theory, media use, social action, event history analysis.

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Introduction

Since the 1950s, when communication researchers for the first time became disenchanted with effect analysis as a way of understanding the social impact of the media, several perspectives have been developed to improve or replace the initial effect or media centered theory. The 'Uses and Gratifications' perspective (in the following: U&G) has gained a special place among these alternatives as one of the most widely used (Bryant and Miron, 2004). During the last five years, it may have lost some ground to theories that are primarily used to deal with the content and impact of mediated messages such as framing theory, cultivation analysis, and the agenda setting approach. Yet, one can confidently say that U&G is still the standard perspective for studying audience activity, and that it is likely to remain so in the coming years (Ruggiero, 2000). Given this sustained interest by the community of communication researchers, it seems useful to contribute to the continuing critical reflection on U&G. More specifically, we will discuss the way in which U&G conceptualizes human action. Based on this discussion, we will suggest improvements to U&G theory and methods, with special reference to event history analysis as a valuable tool for overcoming shortcomings in U&G methodology.

According to Bryant and Miron, U&G's year of birth is 1959. In that year Bernard Berelson claimed that communication research appeared to be dead, and Elihu Katz responded that research 'should move from what media do to people (persuasion) to what people do with the media' (Katz, 1959: 686). However, to date back the origins of U&G to 1959 is somewhat questionable. One can even go back to early gratification studies such as Herzog (1944). However, in our view, the institutionalization of U&G as a distinct research tradition took place only in the 1970s. This was when the label 'Uses and Gratifications', some formalized assumptions, and some typical research practices met each other and gained a following.

Economic thinking evidently played a critical role in the establishment of U&G as an institutionalized approach. In 1968, Lundberg and Hultèn – economic psychologists by training (SSE, 2006[a, b]) – defined a 'Uses and Gratifications' model in terms of a number of theoretical assumptions. Five of these assumptions were cited by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973, 1974) in their classic essay about 'utilization of mass communication by the individual'. These assumptions were that '(1) The audience is conceived of as active, that is, an important part of mass media use is assumed to be goal directed (…); (2) much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member (…); (3) the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction (…); (4) many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members (…); (5) value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communications should be suspended while

audience orientations are explored on their own terms (…)' (Katz et al., 1974: 21–22).

In the same contribution, Katz et al. posed that only 'expectations' with respect to mass media and other resources were to be seen as the immediate causes of 'media exposure (or engagement in other activities)' (Katz et al., 1974: 20). The way in which these expectations were measured, were largely similar to the way Lundberg and Hultèn (1968) proposed. This meant that on the one hand people were asked to indicate the importance of have a specific 'need' fulfilled (e. g., 'How important is it for you to keep up with the way the government performs its functions?') and on the other hand how the media were helpful in this respect (e. g., 'How much does listening to the radio help you to keep up with the way the government performs its functions?'). This operationalization of expectations closely resembles operationalizations of motivational factors in theories about decision-making in which expectancy value (EV) and subjective expected utility (SEU) were central concepts (cf. Edwards, 1954) or of one of the later variants of this family of applied economic theories (e. g., Fishbein, 1963).

Up to the end of the 1970s the link between U&G and economic theory was not widely recognized however (Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rosengren, 1985). Consequently, U&G could be criticized for being atheoretical during most of the 1970s. Yet, from then on, several scholars explicitly linked EV/SEU models and U&G and integrated the two approaches (Babrow, 1989; Galloway and Meek, 1981; Rayburn and Palmgreen, 1984; Sepstrup, 1980; Swanson, 1987; Van Leuven, 1981). So, at least from that moment on, U&G could no longer be considered to be 'basically a very atheoretical approach' (Elliott, 1973: 156).

Conceptual difficulties

With the integration of EV/SEU theory into models describing audience activity, EV/SEU-like problems were introduced into the field. These problems were partly related to the assumptions of economic models of human conduct about the decision-making process (cf. Edwards, 1954). Some of these ideas seem to be at odds with common sense ideas concerning media use.

A first assumption in these economic theories is that people act on the basis of complete or adequate information. However, this assumption seems difficult to apply to the field of audience activity, where the central problem is the very act of consulting information (by watching television programs, listening radio broadcasts, reading newspapers, surfing the web, etc.).

An additional assumption of economic theory is that people make rational choices. This would imply that people are able to determine the value or utility of different lines of action, and would decide for that alternative that has high-

est value or utility. If applied to media use, this assumption is highly problematic as well, because many people seem to use media on the basis of habits in stead of conscious deliberation (Windahl, 1981; Rubin, 1984).

A third assumption underlying applications of EV/SEU theory in social science is that people have full control over their acts (cf. Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). In the case of media use this means that they are free to watch, listen, read, anticipate, and recall media related experiences, or to abstain from them. This is a rather unrealistic assumption for a couple of reasons. In the first place, it seems unreasonable to assume that people watch as much television as they want; they have work to do, have to look after children, or have other commitments. Consequently, they are not always 'available' for watching television (cf. Webster and Wakshlag, 1983) or using other media. Another reason why it is unrealistic to assume that people have full control over their media use has to do with the fact that not all people have the skills to use these media in a 'rational', intersubjectively meaningful way. Such meaningful use of the media is not thinkable without being acquainted with the world that is presented/represented by the media and/or being acquainted with the codes of presentation/representation of these media. For instance, it seems that not being acquainted with 'adult affairs' (such as politics and economics) withholds youngsters from picking up the habit of reading newspaper (Barnhurst and Wartella, 1991). And evidently, semi-literates will find it hard to read a newspaper on a daily basis. A third reason why it is unrealistic to assume that people have full control over their media use is they tend to use media in the co-presence of others, who can influence their media use (Ang, 1995). This has been largely ignored by U&G, which commonly focuses on utilization of mass communication by the individual, instead of media use as collective behavior or social action.

So, the initial U&G perspective was based on an economic theory that can be characterized by three assumptions that have been questioned over the years. In response to this criticism, many 'improvements' to the original model have been suggested and implemented (see Ruggiero, 2000). This has resulted in a considerable number of differing U&G models. A common trait of these models is that they are rather complex, be it for a reason. "The many arrows and boxes of the model may appear bewildering, but we believe they represent a minimum of concepts and relations (…) if these complex phenomena are to be grasped at all" (Palmgreen et al., 1985: 18). The increasing complexity of U&G models is also clear from a recent reformulation of its basic assumptions by Rubin (2002). According to him, U&G now assumes that "media audiences are variably active", that "a host of social and psychological factors guide, filter or mediate communication behavior", that the degree in which media satisfy needs "varies among individuals based on their social and psychological circumstances" and that "people are typically more influential than the media, but not always" (528).

The increasing complexity of U&G has resulted in a shift away from the EV/SEU assumptions of the early days. A fine example of this is the way in which the concept of 'gratifications' was dealt with. According to Rayburn (1996), it was first used predominantly as an antecedent of media use, as 'gratifications sought', which one might see as something equivalent to the 'expected value' or the 'subjective expected utility' of an act of media use. However, during the 1970s, researchers began to emphasize that people do not always get what they want. Hence it was necessary to allow a new concept, that of 'gratifications obtained' to become part of U&G theory (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979). The concept of 'gratifications obtained', however, does not have an equivalent in basic EV/SEU theories 3 and for a good reason. The idea of not getting what you want is somewhat at odds with the assumptions about 'ideal' actions as being rational and based on complete information.

This movement away from the straightforward assumptions of the original studies is usually seen as 'systematic progression' (Rubin, 2002: 531) or as refinement of the original perspective (Ruggiero, 2000). This 'progression' means that a discrepancy has grown between SEU, EV, and other rational choice theories on one hand and the results from empirical U&G studies on the other hand. Of course, this development does not mean that the SEU, EV, or other rational theories have lost their value for the study of audience activity. They still may be useful as providing parsimonious models for the prediction of media use in cases in which media use is responsive to unambiguous rewards (see Koppl and Whitman, 2004, for the argument). SEU, EV, and other rational choice theories, however, are too limited to account for many other aspects of audience activity in the context of everyday life. Consequently, a more comprehensive theory is needed for creating a more complete picture of audience activity. In the remainder of this article, we will argue that action theories (e. g., Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, 1989) as applied to the field of communication research in the MASA perspective (Renckstorf, 1996; Renckstorf and Wester, 2004) can be seen as more comprehensive approach of audience activity, and we will discuss methodological implications of this approach.

Action theory and media use

Proposing that audience activity should be studied using some variant of action theory is not a particularly new idea. In 1974 McQuail and Gurevitch said that an approach of audience activity based on Schutzean action theory "has been least adopted, yet (…) it may also hold out most promise for future work' (294). In the years that followed, several scholars made efforts to develop a social action perspective for mass communication research (for an overview, see Renckstorf and McQuail, 1996). These efforts, however, have not resulted

in integration between action theory and the U&G perspective. Action theories (such as social constructivism, symbolic interactionism, and framing theory) are still treated as distinct from U&G (e. g., Bryant and Miron, 2004). In our view, this is regrettable, because action theory can be used to create a more comprehensive model of audience activity. Such a more comprehensive model is needed, because the initial EV/SEU model underlying the original U&G tradition cannot account for the phenomena studied today under the heading of 'audience activity', and extending the model is not possible without violating the assumptions underlying EV/SEU models.

The assumptions underlying EV/SEU models about action as being based on full information, rational deliberation and full control over the intended action seem to be too restrictive to be successfully applied to the subject of 'audience activity'. Our own objections to a straightforward application of EV/SEU models are based on two considerations. Our first and most fundamental argument is that EV/SEU models are based on a positivistic world view; they assume that people know the world as it is (cf. Littlejohn, 1983). This position is not tenable. It seems unreasonable to assume a real world (not even a life-world) which is completely knowable; in which rational deliberation could solve all personal or cultural contingencies, and where people have full control over their actions. Instead, it is far more plausible to assume that images of the life-world must be created by processes of defining situations and interpreting actions and objects (Thomas, 1932; Schutz and Luckmann, 1973; Berger and Luckmann, 1966); that these definitions and interpretations are to be seen as neither natural nor permanent, but socially constructed and provisional instead (Blumer, 1969; Wilson, 1970); and that the control that actors can exert over their actions is neither complete nor permanent. Human beings are permanently confronted with situations in which solutions have to be developed and methods of response have to be tried out. This may result in some degree of control, but never in full control, because the situational context of action is changing permanently (Wilson, 1970; Renckstorf, 1996).

A second objection we make against a rigid use of EV/SEU models to account for media use is that such models run the risk of becoming too focused on the subjective experience of individual actors. Though this subjective experience is important, it is obviously not the only thing that deserves attention. There are also factors outside consciousness that influence action, at least that is what actors experience. "In the natural attitude no one would even get the idea that he himself is the whole world. Every child learns sooner or later to recognize the limits that are set for his action; everybody runs into the boundaries of his experience. No one believes that he could return to yesterday, no one leaps over a mountain, no one tries to bring down the moon from the sky. When a an tries to slip into another person's shoes, he fails. And on a given occasion, everyone eventually reaches the conclusion that he too cannot escape

death. Such assumptions (…) can be called knowledge of the 'transcendence' of the world" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1989: 102).

So, according to Schutz and Luckmann, there are unmastered, transcendent elements in the world of everyday life that are reckoned with and that will influence future action. This transcendence is not complete, but neither is control. Individuals find themselves in a mixed situation. The elements of the life-world are "partly imposed on, partly so to speak 'feasible' for, the individual" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 113). Consequently, we can speak of a partial transcendence of the life-world. It is this partial transcendence of everyday life that is lacking in straightforward applications of EV/SEU models. It is, on the other hand, an integral part of action theory. Consequently, it is possible to improve research into audience activity by using action theoretical ideas.

Straightforward EV/SEU models cannot cope with 'naturalistic settings' in which individuals have no complete mastery over the situations they are part of. Consequently, such models tend to concentrate on the prediction of 'behavioral intentions' (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), instead of action itself. This means that some important, socially visible aspects of behavior are ignored. Action is then reduced to an unproblematic picking and choosing of the most attractive behavioral alternative. This means that such research will inevitably offer an incomplete picture of the way in which action takes shape. Action theoretical approaches offer a way out of this one-sidedness by describing how situations are mastered. As a tool for this, Renckstorf (1996) has developed the so called MASA model (earlier presented in Bosman et al., 1989), spelling out two alternative pathways to mastery of situations. In both pathways, action starts with the perception of a situation. That perception is then assumed to become more focused on elements that are most relevant to the actor ('thematization'). This is followed by a phase during which the actor determines whether s/he has a routine way of dealing with these elements ('diagnostization'). If yes, s/he will apply a routine response to the situation ('external action'). If not, s/he will have to work out a response ('projection') and decide to implement it ('decision'). After that decision has been made, an 'external action' may take place: A new situation emerges with new transcendent elements to be mastered by the actor.

The MASA model can be seen as a basic action theoretical framework for describing separate instances of human action. Often, however, researchers will feel a need to gain broader insight into human action by taking a longer term perspective. In that case, they will have to ignore how mastery of discrete situations takes shape and focus on the larger picture. In such a case the type and level of mastery will be central, not the specific mastery of specific situations. Actional theory also offers conceptual tools for this level of abstraction. It has several concepts such as 'stock of knowledge' and 'structure of relevance' that are directly linked to differences in degree of mastery of situations. Additionally, it offers a description of long term processes that are likely to affect familiarity, control,

and valuation of everyday life, such as habituation, routinization, typification, institutionalization, objectivation, and socialization (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). In short, action theory offers a more comprehensive look at short term and long term factors determining the mastery that people have over their life-world.

A common trait of action theories is that they describe action as processes of mastering situations. It assumes that as this process proceeds in time, mastery changes and so do the unmastered, transcendent elements. From this, we can infer that by describing these changes we can learn more about these unmastered elements. However, temporality is just one source of transcendencies. Another source of unmastered elements in the life-world are the people with who the actor interacts. "However close we may be to one another, the Other's world necessarily transcends mine" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1989: 109). These others are further likely to influence the actor's actions including his/her media use. They may influence the actor in a way s/he did not foresee. This is also true for media use by the actor, which is often realized in co-presence of others, who – as said earlier – have an influence on the media use as well (Ang, 1995).

The consequence of the presence of transcendent elements in the life-world means we cannot be too sure that expectancies, values, and subjective utilities abstracted from real life situations will be very successful in the prediction of action. The actor and his or her mastery of a situation differ from situation to situation. Or to put it differently, action is conditioned by the situation-bound preferences, problems, and solutions. In the pre-preparation stage, aspects of the situation may condition motivation by imposing some thematic relevance. During the actual preparation of an action, the actor has to reckon with "the pressure of action and time in an actually present situation" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1989: 47). The same holds for the execution stage of action. "The everyday life-world is the region of reality in which man can engage himself and which he can change … At the same time, the objectivities in this realm (including the acts and the results of actions of other men) limit his free possibilities of action. They place him up against obstacles that can be surmounted, as well as barriers that are insurmountable" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 3).

By taking the unmastered situational context of action into consideration, the MASA perspective transcends some limitations of U&G theory. It recognizes that in some situations, the solution to a subjective problem may simply be to activate a routine response, for example, turning on the television, perhaps even regardless of the program. It recognizes that in other situations, responses may be quite different. "Mass media and their messages are (…) objects (…) for (acting) individuals which they first observe and perceive and then, depending on the situation, thematize and diagnose" (Renckstorf, 1996: 27). And part of that situation can be the co-presences of others, the "actual and potential patterns of social action and interaction" (Renckstorf, 1996: 28) that co shape viewing, listening, or viewing respectively.

Methodological implications

In the preceding we have presented our view on the difficulties in U&G, and the solutions that action theory might offer. The main difference between an EV/SEU based theory of media use (of which some early versions of U&G provided some clear examples) and an action theoretical theory (such as the MASA model discussed in our text) is located in the issue of goal attainment (including and the role of media use in it). Although both approaches emphasize that actors aim at achieving some goal, they disagree on how problematic goal attainment is in the context of everyday life. In EV/SEU, goal achievement is seen as rather unproblematic, because the individual is granted almost full mastery over situations. In action theoretical approaches, goal achievement is assumed to be far more difficult. Situations are seen as partially transcendent; they are not mastered beforehand. In action theory, mastery is something to be achieved by both short-term processes (e. g., implementing a new solution) and by long-term processes (e. g., accumulation of routines). Moreover, it is assumed that each situation brings its own relevancies, problems, and solutions with it. The presence or absence of others is likely to contribute considerably to the way in which situations are mastered.

The aforementioned considerations have many consequences for the way in which action in general and media use in particular should be studied. But before entering into that, it should again be emphasized that there is also much common ground between an EV/SEU inspired approach such as U&G and the action theoretical MASA approach. Both approaches emphasize that individuals make use of the media because of the benefits associated with it, and both assume that cognitive processes are a key ingredient in the preparation of action. Consequently, researchers from both traditions are faced with the task of reconstructing mental states and processes leading up to media use, either by means of introspective techniques, or by applying inferential methods (Hendriks Vettehen, Renckstorf, and Wester, 1996; Renckstorf and Wester, 2004).

There is, however, a considerable difference in ideas about how introspection and inference can be carried out. In EV/SEU approaches such as U&G, the tendency is rather strong to abstract media use from its time and space bound context. Actional theoretical approaches such as MASA, in contrast, tend to pay more attention to action as a process that proceeds over time, and as something that takes place in a specific situation, a specific place and a specific social context. This different emphasis has considerable methodological repercussions. The first is, of course, that action theorist should stress that data should be gathered by means of techniques that allow action to be studied as something that proceeds over time, as something that starts, continues and ends.

The classic example of this way gathering and describing such data is the case study, which can be defined as an in-depth, longitudinal examination of a

single instance or event (Davey, 1991). According to Wilbur Schramm (quoted in Yin, 2003: 12) "the essence of a case study (…) is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: Why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result". In such a case study, several research techniques can be employed, such as the time line interview, protocol analysis, thought listing and thinking aloud techniques (Cacioppo, Von Hippel, and Ernst, 1997; Dervin, 1989; Ericsson and Simon, 1984; Van Someren, Barnard, and Sandberg, 1994; Schaap, Renckstorf, and Wester, 2005).

Studying action as a process that develops over time is, however, not necessarily the prerogative of qualitative research. Quantitative techniques such as panel analysis, cohort analysis, and time series analysis may also reveal processual aspects of action. They are, however, limited techniques because usually they either consist of a limited number of observations per person (panel analysis) or they are applied to aggregated, non-individualized data (cohort analysis, time series analysis). So, for studying action as a process by which some person tries to deal with some situation, these designs are not particularly well-suited. For these purposes, however, discrete-time event history analysis seems appropriate (Allison, 1984; Yaffee, Austin, and Hinkle, 1994; Westerik, Renckstorf, Wester, and Lammers, 2004).

In discrete-time event history analysis (or discrete-time survival analysis) the focus of the researcher is on the occurrence and timing of an event. For each individual, multiple observations are made. Classic applications of event history analysis are in the field of medicine, were it is often used to analyze factor related to the occurrence of death or illness. An example from this field may clarify the basic concepts of this analytical technique.

If the 'event' to be predicted is death, and researchers choose to predict the chances of death for every single year after a person is born, then one ends up with 1 observation (death) for those who died for their first birthday, 2 observations (life, death) for those who died being 1 year old, 3 observations (life, life, death) for those who died being 2 years old. In event history analysis, these observations are called person-periods. For each person-period, research shows whether an event took place. Usually, however, researchers gather more information. They often want to know what makes events happen, and thus data on predictor variables are gathered. These variables can be time-invariant; such variables are constants within individuals (in our example gender, race, year of birth and birth weight could be such time-invariant variables). Other variables – the time-varying ones – may have a different value for every observed year (In our present example age, actual weight and household income could be such time-varying variables). Using discrete-time event history analysis, the effect of all time-invariant and time-varying predictors on the criterion variable can be established simultaneously. Additionally, one can model interaction effects. In our example, this could mean that

one could test the proposition that gender moderates the effects of age on the chances of dying.

The above described technique of event history analysis has seldom been used in the field of communication research (e. g., Zhu and Weaver, 1989; Westerik et al., 2005), even though it has clearly some potential for clarifying important issues in communication research (Snyder, 1991). Yet, it seems obvious that it could be easily used in this domain to test the utility of ideas about media use as a process embedded in specific situations. In that case, of course, the event to be predicted will not be that of death, but most likely that of initiation or termination of media use (or other activities). If so employed, discrete-time event history analysis can help to portray media use as an integral part of everyday life. It can show how human action is dynamically responding to problems in relation to changing circumstances. At the same time, it could show how small projects of action (such as particular instances of media use) can be understood as an embedded part of a "daily plans and (…) overarching longer-term plans" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1989: 31).

In this way, discrete-time event history analysis can help to investigate several of the unsolved questions within communication research. One of these questions is how the idea of conscious audience activity as it is emphasized with U&G can be reconciled with notions of more routine audience activity as highlighted in research on audience duplication and audience flow (Cooper, 1996). Discrete-time event history analysis can serve both approaches, because it can simultaneously deal with the temporal phenomena from flow and duplication research and the more static person bound concepts from gratifications research. To give an example, one can predict someone's television initiation at day x on the basis of his/her television use the day(s) before (thereby revealing the influence of routines, including 'repeat viewing') while at the same time taking into account influences from time-invariant variables such as gratifications sought from television viewing in general.

When applied to time-use diaries and similar time budget data, discrete-time event history analysis can help to further investigate the way in which people influence each other. For instance, it is well-known that children's viewing styles and preferences are influenced by their parents (e. g., Heeter et al., 1988). But in order to find out *how* this parental influence takes place additional research is needed. Is heavy viewing the result of watching a lot of television together, is it the result of a lack of supervision, or is it due to lacking alternatives? Such questions can only be answered by means of research that takes the viewing situation (as recorded by means of time use diary) into account. For the research questions posed here, event history analysis of matched diaries of family members may very well yield relevant answers.

And finally, discrete-time event history analysis may shed light on questions pertaining to media 'effects'. If it is true that television viewing facilitates

communication with household members (Lull, 1980), then it seems relevant to establish whether an activated television set increases the chances of a conversation starting. Or if television viewing inhibits civic participation, as Putnam (1995) has hypothesized, then one could analyze whether television viewing effectively blocks social participation. In testing such propositions, discrete-time event history analysis may prove to be very useful.

In short, discrete-time event history analysis can be useful as a technique to portray media use as something that is conceived of as social action that proceeds through time and is embedded in time bound situations. By considering the role played by such situational aspects of media use, and by paying attention to way in which people influence each others media use, communication research can go beyond the limits of the early versions of gratifications research.

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Chapter 3

The situational and time-varying context of routines in television viewing*

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Abstract

Building on an action theoretical perspective, it is assumed that most television viewing is a routine response to frequently occurring situations, which together make up everyday life. This interplay between television viewing and everyday life was studied using data from a national survey among Dutch adults (N = 825) and their families. From this survey, data of 225 couples were analyzed using event history analysis. Results indicate that one cannot see television viewing as merely an alternative for other activities. For instance, participatory activities have two distinct effects: They tend to inhibit television viewing by the actor but stimulate television viewing by the actor's partner. The effect of contacts with other variables appears to be important as well: Being at home, engagement in child care, household work, and eating and drinking often enhances television viewing. But presence of non-family may inhibit television viewing. Education was shown to have a consistently negative impact on television viewing, and there appeared to be some gender specific inducements for termination of television viewing.

Keywords: television viewing, everyday life, event history analysis, action theoretical perspective

Introduction

During the last sixty years, there has been a clear trend in the development of theories on the subject of the social embeddedness of media use. At first, media use was seen as a process that only two groups of participants were involved in:

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Suppliers of information (or 'senders') and the general public. It was assumed that both senders and the general public had clearly defined and distinct roles. Senders would define what news was 'fit to print' – or what would be aired. On the other hand, the aggregate of receivers was assumed to be willing and capable of consuming these messages and to react by displaying behaviors as intended by the sender. In a word, the concept of the audience was that it was rather passive. The intentions of the sender and the transmission of messages were seen as decisive factors in the creation of audience behavior.

However, soon after empirical and theoretical research started, criticisms of these initial ideas were voiced and theory was revised. First, it was argued that not all individual audience members were capable of receiving and understanding all media messages that were aimed at them (Hyman and Sheatsley, 1947). Therefore it was recognized that some audience segments were not reached – but this was seen as a defect of these segments. Subsequently, this idea of defectiveness was replaced by a less derogatory conceptualization of audience activity: It was assumed that primary groups, interpersonal communication, and opinion leaders played a role in processes of message diffusion and reception (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Klapper, 1960). Finally, researchers and theorists recognized that the reception of mediated messages was not governed by intentions of senders only, but by the intentions of the audience as well. In fact, it was assumed that the audience used the media for its own purposes (Bauer, 1964; Barnlund, 1970).

As a consequence of this theoretical development, a new standard was developed for studying the audience: The uses and gratifications approach of media use. Researchers within this approach tended to portray the audience as goal-directed and intention-driven. They assumed that audience members use media to gratify felt needs; that the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction; that people "are sufficiently self-aware to be able to report their interests and motives for media use," and that value judgments should not interfere with "the exploration of audience orientations in their own terms" (cf. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1974: 21–22).

Of course, this approach met with criticism as well. Part of this criticism came from researchers investigating audience duplication research. This research tradition is primarily known for its contention that if two programs are consecutively aired on the same channel, they usually tend to have largely the same audience, even if the content of these programs is different. According to duplication research, this phenomenon is so strong that it leaves little room for active, goal-oriented program choice. "Programming and scheduling are considered important characteristics that might (…) produce certain behaviors" (Cooper, 1996: 97).

Over the years, there has been some convergence between the insights of gratification research and duplication research (e. g., Webster and Wakshlag,

1983). Among duplication researchers it has become accepted that personal factors (e. g., 'audience availability') play a role in program choice, that the inheritance effect is weakened if many programs are available simultaneously, and that the size of the audience that a program inherits from its predecessor is greater if that predecessor is of the same genre. On the other hand, gratification research started to pay more attention to habit formation and routinization (e. g., Rubin, 1984). Additionally, it increasingly focused on gratifying aspects of viewing itself ('process gratifications') instead of focusing only on the gratifying aspects of media content ('content gratifications'; see Jeffres, 1978; Wenner, 1985).

Theory

Today, theoretical and methodological differences between audience duplication research and Uses and Gratifications still persist. In duplication research, program exposure is seen as an attribute of programs, and programs are treated as units of analysis. In gratifications research, watching a program is seen as an attribute of viewers, and individual viewers are treated as units of analysis. These differing approaches of program exposure are, however, not necessarily mutually exclusive. They can be reconciled by using the concept of routinization as employed by the Media use As Social Action approach (or MASA; see Bosman et al, 2001; Renckstorf, 1996; Renckstorf and Wester, 2001). It is the objective of this study to examine the usefulness of some assumptions of this approach by means of an empirical examination of television viewing in the Netherlands.

According to the MASA approach, all human action can be seen as guided by intentionality, i. e., by the fact that people try to master the situation they are part of. Additionally, it assumes that there are two different pathways towards action. The first pathway is followed in case an individual faces a situation for which s/he has not developed a routine response. In that case s/he will first have to become aware of the lack of routine responses, work out one or more solutions, make decisions on what solution to implement, before, eventually, external action can take place. Thus, the first pathway towards external action is a rather long and laborious one. The second pathway is much shorter. In case an individual faces a situation s/he has dealt with before, s/he will attach prereflexive meaning to that experience and carry out some everyday routine to handle this experience. This second pathway is utilized much more frequently than the first one; it is the normal procedure for everyday action (Renckstorf, 1996; Zijderveld, 1974).

According to the MASA approach, most actions are routine responses to frequently recurring, subjectively defined situations. As television viewing is

seen as only one mode of human action among many, it is assumed that most occurrences of television viewing are explained as routine responses to frequently recurring situations as well. In this study, we will therefore establish the usefulness of the MASA approach by explaining television viewing as a response to such situations, which are thought to be linked with at least three different aspects of everyday life.

First, we will study television viewing as a response to the dynamics of everyday life. According to the MASA approach, actions are not to be thought of as emanating from a fixed, abstract, and constant personality structure. Instead, it assumes that actions are to be seen as subjectively defined responses to subjectively defined problems, which can vary from situation to situation, and from time to time. We will therefore investigate how television viewing correlates with dynamic aspects of everyday life, such as time of day, being at home versus elsewhere, and activities performed by the individual. In doing so, we also hope to contribute to a debate within communication science about how television viewing fits in with the rest of leisure.

We will, on the one hand, test the ideas of researchers and theorists who conceive of television viewing as an activity that is incompatible with the performance of other conduct. Consequently, they blame television for an alleged demise of person-to-person contact in western societies during the last fifty years (Jonscher, 1995; Putnam, 1995). On the other hand, there are scholars who posit that television viewing and other activities are intertwined, and may even strengthen each other. One of the proponents of this idea is Rothenbuhler (1985). According to him, the combination of watching television, eating, and drinking can sometimes be seen as a ritual for celebrating shared interests and values within a circle of family and friends. And following Lull (1988), television is a facilitator of social contact within the family; "The activated television set guarantees its users a non-stop backdrop of verbal communication against which they can construct their interpersonal exchanges" (202).

A second aspect of everyday life that may have an impact on television viewing is that of co-presence, co-action, and more specifically co-viewing. As Lull (1988) argues, television viewing can be seen as a routine mode of family conduct that may confirm the family as a unit of interdependent personalities. Consequently, it is not to be seen as an individual activity only. Therefore, one should not predict television viewing only on the basis of individual characteristics, but include variables indicative of other aspects of the social context as well. In recent research, this idea has received considerable support. Research by Huysmans (2001) clearly indicates that partners substantially influence each other's viewing behaviors. Additionally, as research by Konig, Kraaykamp, and Westerik (2003) shows, the media budgets of partners are closely related. Yet, there is still much to explore concerning the interplay between household members. Past research tends to be focused on the effects of co-viewing; it

might be of interest to see what the effects are of broadening the scope from co-viewing to co-action.

A third and final aspect of everyday life that we will take into account is that of how television relates to the social and demographic statuses of individuals. On the basis of the MASA approach, it seems reasonable that these statuses are likely to have an influence on television viewing. The reason for this is that these statuses are linked to the occurrence of everyday problems and the availability of solutions, which in turn may have a bearing on how television is used to cope with this problem. For instance, in most societies women tend to take on more responsibilities for children and household work than men, and western societies are no exception to this rule (cf. Campbell and Lee, 1992; Van der Lippe, 1992). This unequal distribution of responsibilities may have several and sometimes contradictory consequences for television viewing. For instance, one might assume that women are at home more and are therefore able to start watching earlier, but one might also argue that the responsibilities felt by women are incompatible with sustained episodes of viewing, and that women will therefore be reluctant to start or to continue watching television.

Research findings with respect to the consequences of gender for television viewing are often confusing. Several studies indicate that men watch more television than women do, but an equal number of studies indicates the opposite. Recently, Konig, Kraaykamp, and Westerik (2003) argue that in the Netherlands gender differences in television viewing are largely something of the past. They did, however, not investigate the way in which gender has a moderating effect on other variables. This is a considerable limitation, because doubts have been raised about the degree to which factors used for explaining television viewing are equally relevant for men and women (Huysmans, 2001). For instance, men may see home as a place of leisure, whereas many women may see home as work, according to Morley (1986). Consequently, one might expect that the effect of being at home on television viewing will be stronger for men than for women.

The relationship between television viewing and education is somewhat less controversial. Television viewing is usually negatively correlated with education. A reason for this may be that it is seen as being incompatible with being a member of the higher educated, cultural elite (Bourdieu, 1984; Ganzeboom, 1988). Another explanation may be that the higher educated have less leisure time (Van de Broek, Knulst, and Breedveld, 1999).

The effects of age on television viewing is less clear. In adulthood, television viewing appears to increase with age (Dimmick, 1979). However, some studies report a strong positive correlation between television exposure and age, and other studies only a weak one (Frissen, 1992). The reason behind these positive correlations are, however, unclear. It may be that for older adults the time pressures related to raising children and getting settled in a career subside

(Wilensky, 1960), and that this in turn increases television viewing time. But it may also be that people increasingly use television as a substitute for more active ways of social participation (Graney and Graney, 1974).

The above mentioned four theoretical concerns have led us to formulate the following research questions:

- First, to shed some light on the question of how the use of television is linked to the performance of other behaviors, we will investigate whether the performance of these other activities has an influence on watching television.
- Second, following our interest in the social influences on television viewing, we will look at how household members influence each other's television viewing, paying special attention to the role of partners. Key research questions in this context are: What influence does being at home have on television viewing? What influence does the co-presence of others have on television viewing? What influence does household size have? And to examine the role of partners, we will seek an answer to the question what mutual influence partners have on each other's viewing behaviors.
- Third, because our aim is to study the link between television viewing and its situational context we will employ event history analysis to analyze television viewing. This type of analysis will enable us to look for answers to the following questions: How are initiation and termination of television viewing influenced by time-functional and time-varying variables?
- Fourth, and finally, we will look at how gender, age, and education affect television viewing. Do gender, age, and educational level influence television viewing? Is this a direct, unmediated influence? And are the factors that explain television viewing equally relevant for men and women?

Methods

Sampling

In order to address the above-formulated research questions, a national representative probability survey was used, held in the Netherlands during the first three months of 2000 by the Nijmegen Institute of Communication Research. This study consisted of 825 personal interviews with Dutch adults. As a follow-up to these interviews, respondents and their household members aged 10 or older were asked to fill in additional questionnaires and time use diaries. Out of all 825 households, 287 households cooperated fully with this part of the study; out of 121 households, some members did and others did not participate, and of 410 households not a single person participated in the questionnaire and diary part[1].

For this research, we only used data acquired from people who were part of a (heterosexual) couple of whom both partners had returned the time use

diary. In total, data from 225 couples (or 450 individuals) could be used. We estimated the representativeness of this subsample by comparing the gender by age profile of this subsample with that of the official population estimate as provided by CBS / Statistics Netherlands (2000). As Table 1 shows, there was a reasonable match between the distributions of gender by age in the sample and the assumed population, with one notable exception: In our sample couples aged thirty and younger were heavily underrepresented. Due to this under-representation the sample distribution deviated significantly from what was expected on the basis of government statistics (chi-square = 41.9; df = 21, p = .004). The preceding means that research findings must be interpreted with some caution. Findings cannot be used to predict absolute levels of television viewing for heterosexual couples in the Netherlands. This, however, does not interfere with the main purpose of our research, which is to investigate the mechanisms underlying television viewing.

Table 1. *Representativeness of the primary NiCoR-sample: sample and population data on distribution by gender and age for couples sharing the same address*

Sample distribution				Official government estimates*			
	male	female	Total		male	female	total
15–29	0,03	0,04	0.05	15–29	0.05	0.07	0.11
30–34	0,05	0,07	0.10	30–34	0.06	0.06	0.12
35–39	0,06	0,07	0.13	35–39	0.06	0.06	0.13
40–44	0,08	0,08	0.14	40–44	0.06	0.06	0.12
45–49	0,07	0,08	0.15	45–49	0.06	0.05	0.11
50–54	0,06	0,05	0.13	50–54	0.06	0.05	0.11
55–59	0,05	0,05	0.08	55–59	0.04	0.04	0.08
60–64	0,05	0,03	0.08	60–64	0.04	0.03	0.07
65–69	0,03	0,02	0.07	65–69	0.03	0.03	0.06
70–74	0,02	0,02	0.05	70–74	0.02	0.02	0.04
75+	0,01	0,00	0.02	75+	0.03	0.02	0.04
Total	0,50	0,50	1.00	Total	0.50	0.50	1.00
N	217	215	432				8,196,032

Goodness of fit test gender by age of sample vs. population estimate: chi-square = 34.5; df = 21, p =.0316. For 30+ only: chi-square = 26.2; df = 19, p =.125.
* source Official Government statistics: CBS/Statistics Netherlands 2000.

Measurement

Data-gathering. All participants in the time use study were asked to fill out a diary. For every single quarter of the day, they were asked to answer open-ended

questions about their time use. For each quarter, respondents could write down their answer in their own words, or indicate that they were doing the same as in the preceding quarter. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate where and with whom they were during a specific quarter (five subquestions to indicate with whom); whether or not they had watched television or audio (ten subquestions to indicate what channel/medium); whether or not they had listened to radio or audio recordings (six subquestions to indicate type of program/ content), and whether or not they had read something (four subquestions about what). Questions about personal characteristics were measured by means of a personal interview (if available) or otherwise by means of a written questionnaire.

Dependent variables. Dependent variables were 'initiation of television viewing' and 'termination of television viewing'. Both variables were based on the respondent's viewing status as it developed throughout the day. This viewing status was established on the basis of responses to both open-ended and closed questions about time use and television viewing. If the respondent did not indicate that s/he did not watch television during the n^{th} quarter, s/he was allotted a '0' score for 'initiation of television viewing' during that quarter. However, if the respondent did in some way indicate that s/he watch television during the n^{th} quarter, s/he was allotted a '1' score for 'initiation of television viewing' during that quarter, provided s/he did not watch television in the preceding quarter. In the latter case, s/he was allotted a 'missing' score for 'initiation of television viewing' during that quarter, meaning that quarter would be left out of any subsequent analysis involving 'initiation of television viewing'. 'Termination of television viewing' was defined as the opposite of 'initiation of television viewing'. So, if a respondent indicated s/he had been watching television during a specific quarter *n*, s/he was allotted a '0' for that quarter – except if s/he had not been watching television during the preceding quarter *n-1*. The first quarter of non-viewing after an episode of viewing was always coded as '1' (termination).

Independent variables. In total, 33 independent variables were defined. These variables can be arranged into three main groups: Six time-functional, four time-constant, and 23 time-varying variables (cf. Yaffee and Austin, 1994). The six time-functional variables were 'time of day'; 'time of day squared'; 'time at risk of initiation'; 'time at risk of initiation squared'; 'time at risk of termination'; and 'time at risk of termination squared'. 'Time of day' was defined as a continuous variable ranging from 1 (= 4:00–4:15 AM) to 96 (= next day 3:45–4:00 AM). The squared value of this variable was also included in analyses to allow for curvilinear effects of this variable. 'Time at risk of initiation' was defined as the number of quarters elapsed since 'termination of television viewing' occurred. 'Time at risk of termination' was defined as the number of quarters elapsed since 'initiation of television viewing' occurred. Note that if a subject is at risk of initiation (i. e., s/he is not watching television) s/he is not at risk of termination vice versa. Hence, in case 'time at risk of initiation' has

a valid score, 'time at risk of termination' has a missing score, and the reverse. 'Time at risk of initiation' and its square will be used as predictors of 'initiation of television viewing', and 'time at risk of termination' and its square will be used as predictors of 'termination of television viewing'. Four of the independent variables were time-constant variables (i. e., for a given individual, scores for all quarters were assumed to be the same). These variables were gender (0 = male, 1 = female); age (ranging from 18 to 79); household size (ranging from 2 to 8 persons), and highest completed level of education (ranging from 1 = no elementary school to 10 = postgraduate degrees).

Finally, there were 23 time-varying variables, all dummy-coded (0 = no, 1 = yes). All these time-varying variables were lagged, so that the scores for the dependent variable for the n^{th} quarter could be predicted on the basis of the score for the independent variable for the $n\text{-}1^{th}$ quarter. Within these time-varying variables, three subgroups of variables can be distinguished. The first subgroup consists of variables indicative of the situations in which the respondent was involved: Being 'at home'; being 'alone'; being 'with kids'; being 'with adult family'; and being 'with non-family'. A second subgroup was indicative of activities undertaken by the respondent: 'Sleeping and personal care'; 'eating and drinking'; 'household work and child care'; 'socializing, hobbies, and indoor games'; 'sports, social, and cultural participation'; 'reading and listening to radio or audio'; and 'transportation'. Finally, the same variables were recorded for a respondent's partner. 'Partner use of television and video' was used as a predictor of initiation and termination as well[2].

Analysis

Design. To clarify some of the basic concepts in the following event history analysis, we will now discuss an empirical example of data suitable for this type of analysis as provided by Hasebrink and Krotz (1992; see Table 2). In passing, we will also clarify some of the analytical decisions made.

Table 2. *Individual television viewing during the day, continuous data. Example provided by Hasebrink and Krotz (1992)*

15:21:38	First initiation of television viewing
17:24:59	First termination of television viewing
17:44:30	Second initiation of television viewing
18:16:27	Second termination of television viewing
23:28:57	Third initiation of television viewing
00:41:56	Third termination of television viewing

First, note that in some respects the data provided by Hasebrink and Krotz are more precise than our data. The Hasebrink and Krotz data identify the time of the occurrence of 'initiation of television viewing' and 'termination of television viewing' very precisely, up to the second. Our time grid is cruder: It consists of quarters. Yet, the fixed character of our time grid facilitates reporting of patterns of parallel activities that would otherwise be less easy to recall and report[3]. Because of this time-grid only a discrete time variant of event history analysis was appropriate. A translation of the Hasebrink and Krotz into such a time grid is graphically presented in Figure 1.

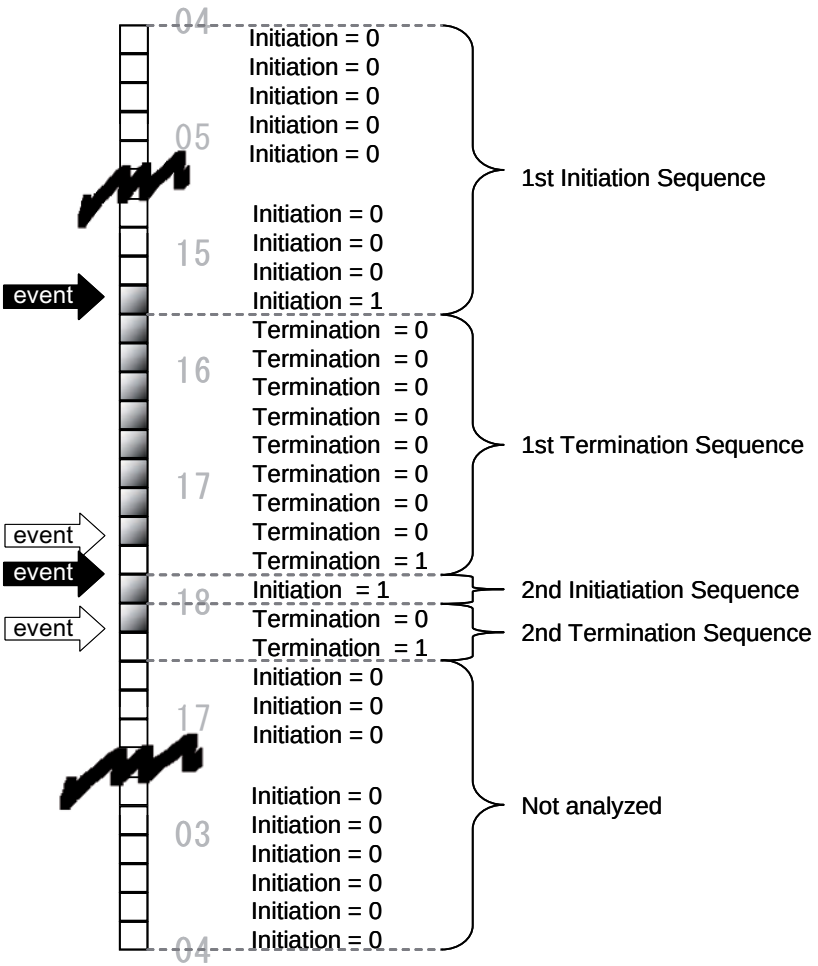

Figure 1. *Individual television viewing between 4:00 AM and 4:00 PM, discrete data. Example, based on Hasebrink and Krotz (1992)*

Figure 1 shows that a single individual can go through several changes (or 'events') throughout the day. Twice, the sampled subject goes from non-viewing to viewing, an event we have called 'initiation of television viewing'. And also twice, the subject goes from viewing to non-viewing and experiences the 'termination of television viewing' event.

Data restrictions. In the original Krotz-Hasebrink example the respondent went through six changes, three times from non-viewing to viewing and three times from viewing to non-viewing. In event history analysis, these events are sometimes analyzed simultaneously, as if they are similar and had similar causes. However, because we did not have data on how long respondents were at risk of first initiation of television viewing, we could not analyze all viewing episodes simultaneously. We therefore decided to analyze only data relating to the first and second episode of viewing. Given that in our sample 75 percent of all respondents did not start watching television for the third time, and because of that the first two episodes made up more than 80 percent of all viewing time, we questioned the additional information value of analyzing the remaining episodes.

We further restricted our analyses to the prediction of viewing initiation and termination on weekdays only. The reason for this is that living arrangements on weekdays may differ from that during weekends.

Model estimation. Because of the discrete nature of our data, we chose logistic event modeling. Interpretation of parameters will be similar to that in common logistic regression, with one notable exception: Not the person, but the person-period will be the unit of analysis. This means that the model does not predict the probability that an event will happen to a person, but the conditional probability that an event will happen to a person in a particular interval.

Analysis of both initiation and termination were carried out in two stages. The first stage was directed at finding a parsimonious set of predictors for a given dependent variable (e. g., 'initiation of television viewing'). This was done by first entering all relevant predictors and then deleting the least significant predictor until only significant predictors were left in the regression model and no significant predictors were left out (tested with the likelihood ratio test, .05 level, two-tailed). Next, during a second stage, we tried to find out whether the first stage model was equally suited for male and female partners, and if not, what additions should be made. Second stage analysis always started with entering all relevant gender-related interactions into the model. So if the first stage ended up with a model with two significant predictors (X_1 and X_2) and without gender (G), we started the second stage with an extended model which did not only include the main effects of X_1 and X_2, but also the main effect of gender (G) and the interactions (X_1 by G, and X_2 by G). We then would compare the fit of the initial and the extended model and calculate the significance of the difference. In case of no significant difference, we would conclude that the first stage model is equally valid for men and women. In the opposite case,

we would conclude that the model was not equally valid for men and women. In that case, we would start deleting the least significant interactions until only significant interactions were left over in the predictor set.

Results

Average levels of television viewing

Before we present the results of the event history analysis we carried out, we will first present an overview of aggregate viewing patterns in our sample. Table 3 presents some basic data on the episodes of television viewing and non-viewing per day. In the first three columns in the left half of this table, data on episodes of non-viewing are presented. The first column shows the distribution of the episodes of non-viewing. It shows that in total 1,217 episodes of non-viewing were sampled, and that most of these episodes (i.e., 844 or 69.5 %) are either the first or the second episode of the day. The second column shows how many episodes of non-viewing the average respondent went through. The total of the second column is 271.7 %, meaning that on average the sampled respondent went through 2.7 episodes of non-viewing. The third column shows length of episode of non-viewing. Clearly, the first episode of non-viewing is on average much longer than the subsequent ones. Its average duration is 14 hours and 9 minutes. Given that the observation interval starts at 4:00 AM this means that the average viewer starts watching television at 6:09 PM.

Table 3. *Episode of television viewing and non-viewing by sequential order: numbers of sampled episodes; percentage of sampled respondents involved; mean duration of episode*

	Episodes of non-viewing			Episodes of viewing		
	N (episodes)	% of sampled respondents	Mean duration	N (episodes)	% of sampled respondents	Mean duration
1st episode	448	100,0 %	14:09	398	88,8 %	1:35
2nd episode	396	88,4 %	4:30	225	50,2 %	1:34
3rd episode	224	50,0 %	4:01	98	21,9 %	1:20
4th episode	96	21,4 %	3:42	35	7,8 %	1:39
5th episode	35	7,8 %	2:58	14	3,1 %	0:55
6th episode	14	3,1 %	3:50	4	0,9 %	0:48
7th episode	4	0,9 %	5:33			
Total	1217	271,7 %	21:20	774	172,8 %	2:39

The right half of Table 3 shows data on the episodes of viewing. The first column in the right half of the table shows that 774 episodes of viewing were sampled, and that the majority of these episodes (i.e., 623 or 80.4 % of these 774 episodes) were either a first or second episode. The second column in the right half of Table 3 shows that most of the respondents went through one or two episodes of viewing, but only 21.9 % through a third, and 7.8 % through a fourth. Finally, the third column in the right half of Table 3 shows that duration of an episode is not related to its sequential order. The association between duration and sequential order is not significant[4].

Average timing of television viewing. Figure 2 shows the average timing of television viewing for our sample. It is at its peak between 8:00 PM and 8:15 PM. At this time, 52 % of all sampled subjects is watching television. Of these 52 %, more than 50 % is in its first, and more than 30 % in its second viewing episode. So, for understanding prime time, understanding of initiation and termination of these two viewing episodes is clearly of paramount importance.

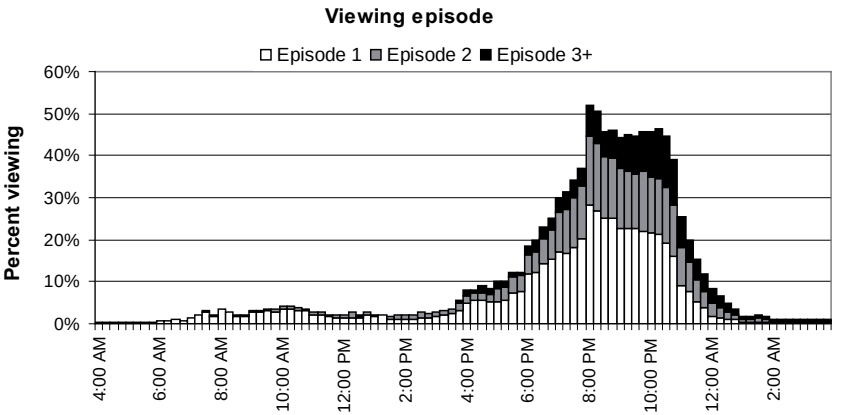

Figure 2. *Percentage of respondents watching television, by time of the day*

Event history analysis of first initiation of television viewing

We now come to the core part of this study, i.e., determining the influence of individual and household characteristics on television viewing. First we tried to determine what factors contribute to the initiation of television viewing by regressing initiation on the time-functional, time-constant, and time-varying variables and then reducing the number of variables by a stepwise removal of non-significant variables. We did this two times, for the initiation of the first and second viewing episode respectively. The estimated model for the first initiation of television viewing is presented in Table 4.

Time-functional effects. The first two rows of Table 4 are indicative of 'time-functional effects'. These variables play an important role in the prediction of initiation. In a model with only these two time-functional variables, 8.4 % of the observed differences in initiation are explained. According to this model, the predicted probability that initiation will take place is at its highest at 10:00 PM. Note that this does not mean that the average person starts viewing at 10:00 PM. On the contrary, by then most people will have started watching television already. However, for those who have not started to watch television by then, the risk is higher than at any other time before or after.

Table 4. *Prediction of first initiation of television viewing on time-functional, time-constant and time-varying variables. Final model*

Variable	B	S.E.	LR	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Time of Day	0,091	0,015	37,7	1	0,000	1,09
Time of Day Squared	-0,001	0,000	16,1	1	0,000	1,00
Self: Gender (m=0, f=1)	-0,363	0,111	10,7	1	0,001	0,70
Self: Age	-0,023	0,004	25,6	1	0,000	0,98
Self: Highest Completed Level of Education	-0,087	0,026	11,9	1	0,001	0,92
Self: At Home	0,752	0,142	30,8	1	0,000	2,12
Self: With Non-Family	-0,607	0,199	10,5	1	0,001	0,55
Self: Work, School, and Study	-1,610	0,321	32,7	1	0,000	0,20
Self: Household Work and Child Care	0,371	0,139	7,0	1	0,008	1,45
Self: Eating and drinking	0,398	0,155	6,4	1	0,012	1,49
Self: Socializing, Hobbies, and Indoor Games	-0,407	0,182	5,4	1	0,020	0,67
Self: Reading	0,517	0,189	6,9	1	0,008	1,68
Self: Transportation	0,683	0,201	11,2	1	0,001	1,98
Partner: Sleeping and Personal Care	-0,593	0,217	8,1	1	0,005	0,55
Partner: Work, School, and Study	-0,651	0,173	15,9	1	0,000	0,52
Partner: Watching Television	0,856	0,166	23,2	1	0,000	2,35
Constant	-5,130	0,476	116,3	1	0,000	0,01

N (person-quarters): 24913. Likelihood chi-square model: 644.2; df = 16; p =.000. Nagelkerke's R^2 = 16.9 %.

Effects of time-constant personal characteristics. We now will focus on the influence of four time-constant variables: Household size, age, education, and gender. Simultaneous inclusion of these four time-constant variables increases Nagelkerke's R^2 from 8.4 % to 8.8 %. So they play a modest role. According to Table 4, age and education have negative effects on initiation. Given that ninety percent of all sampled people start watching television at least once, this prob-

ably means that elderly and higher educated people are likely to postpone television viewing. The bivariate effect of age on first initiation and that of level of education on initiation were both negative as well. The effect of household size on initiation was neither in bivariate nor in multivariate analysis significant.

The effect of gender was somewhat complex. Gender has a positive effect on first initiation in bivariate analysis, meaning that on average women are more likely to start watching early in the day. However, as one can see in Table 4, this effect of gender becomes negative if other relevant predictors of initiation are included. An explanation for this could be that women are more often in situations in which they can watch television. They are more often at home and therefore have more opportunities to start watching early in the day. However, the multivariate analysis suggests that in similar circumstances men are more likely to start watching. So if men are at home, they are actually more likely to start watching television than women. A reason for this may be that women, unlike men, see home as a social context for which they are primarily responsible. In other words, they are not simply at home, they are homemakers at work (cf. Morley, 1986).

In trying to answer the last part of our fourth research question (about the similarity between the factors that explain television viewing for men and women) we analyzed whether or not the process of initiation is analogous for men and women. We did this by comparing the model displayed in Table 4 with a model that also included relevant gender-related interaction terms[5]. These added terms did, however, not significantly improve the model[6]. Therefore we conclude that first initiation is a process that is the same for men and women.

Effects of engagement in family settings and contacts with others. In separate bivariate analyses, four out of five variables indicative of engagement in family settings and contacts with others had a positive effect on first initiation, and one had a negative effect. 'At home, alone', 'with kids', and 'with adult family' were all significant positive predictors of the initiation of television viewing, while 'being with non-family' had a significant negative effect. These bivariate effects suggest that in the Netherlands, television viewing is a private activity. Watching television is something one does at home, with kids or with adult family or when one is alone. It is not something that is undertaken with people from outside the household.

A more or less similar picture emerges from multivariate analysis. In this analysis, 'being at home' again has a positive effect, and 'being with non-family' again a negative effect on initiation. The effects of these two variables were considerable. After entering them into the equation, Nagelkerke's R^2 increased from 8.8 % to 12.8 %. The effects of 'being alone', 'with kids' or 'with adult family' did not retain significance in multivariate analysis. This means that these variables do not influence the first initiation of television viewing directly, but are spurious or influence initiation via other predictor variables.

Own activities as antecedents of television initiation. Following our first research question, we looked at how a respondent's own activities influence the initiation of television viewing. In the final model, six variables indicative of own activities are retained. After adding these variables, Nagelkerke's R^2 increased from 12.8 % to 15.5 %, so they have some predictive power.

Some effects of activity variables are easy to understand. Variables indicative of home bound activities (such as 'eating and drinking', 'household work' and 'child care', and 'reading') tend to have a positive effect on initiation. This means that such activities tend to precede initiation directly and may play an enhancing role.

An exception to the rule that indoor activities precede and/or enhance first viewing initiation is the negative effect of 'socializing' and involvement in 'hobbies and indoor games' on initiation. It appears that this activity tends to inhibit or postpone television viewing. That is also the effect of involvement in 'work', 'school', or 'study'.

A special case is that of transportation. It has a positive effect on initiation. In order to understand this, one has to keep in mind that all activity variables are lagged, so that initiation of television viewing can be predicted on the basis of activities in the preceding quarters. The positive effect of transportation on initiation can therefore also be interpreted as merely reflecting a temporal order. Our finding simply means that many people turn on the television as soon as they have come home.

Partner activities antecedents of television initiation. We also found some modest support for our assumption that viewing initiation by the respondent is influenced by the actions of her/his partner. By entering variables related to activities by the respondent's partner, the percentage of explained variance as measured by Nagelkerke's R^2 increases from 15.5 % to 16.9 %. Synchronization appears to be key word for understanding the effects of partner activities here. For instance, if the partner is sleeping or engaged in personal care, this has a negative effect on the initiation of television viewing. The likely explanation for this is that partners synchronize their time use, and that if one partner is getting ready for bed, the other partner will follow soon and will not start watching television.

The synchronization mechanism may also explain why engagement in 'work', 'school', or 'study' by the partner has a negative effect on initiation of viewing by the partner. And finally, it explains why viewing by the respondent's partner has a positive impact on initiation of television viewing by the respondent. This validates similar observations made in an earlier study by Huysmans (2001).

Event history analysis of second initiation of television viewing

The models explaining first and second initiation of television viewing have many similarities, but some dissimilarities as well. The most striking dissimi-

larity is the effect of reading. It has a positive effect on first but a negative effect on second initiation of television viewing. So the first time that people start watching television is often preceded by some reading, but if they start reading again, the probability of re-initiation is diminished significantly. Reading is, apparently, compatible with spending some time in front of the television set but not with watching television more than once a day.

Besides the reversal of the effect of reading, there are some other differences as well. Some predictors of first initiation appear to have no direct effect on second initiation. This is true for age, education, and gender. These time-constant variables all had a negative effect on first initiation but had no such effect on second initiation. So being old, higher educated, and female appears to produce a compressed viewing pattern, with most viewing concentrated at the end of the day. Other variables that have a significant negative effect on first but not on second initiation are involvement in 'household work' and 'child care' by the respondent; 'eating and drinking' by the respondent; 'sleeping and personal care' by respondent's partner; and involvement in 'work, school, or study' by respondent's partner. An explanation for the fact that these variables are not significant predictors of second initiation may be that most of them do not operate during the evening hours, during which most re-initiation of television viewing takes place. This interpretation is, however, somewhat odd for understanding the disappearance of the effect of 'sleeping and personal care' by the partner – these activities are of course more typical of evening hours than of daytime hours. So for this finding, another explanation is needed, and perhaps it is rather simple. The fact that 'sleeping and personal care' by the partner is not included in the final model predicting second initiation of viewing may be caused by the fact that the role of this variable is now being taken care of by another variable: 'Sleeping and personal care' *by the respondent*. 'Sleeping and personal care' *by the partner* remains significant if that variable is not entered.

A third group of dissimilarities was made up by variables that had no significant effect on first viewing initiation but did have an effect on second viewing initiation. As mentioned earlier, 'sleeping and personal care' by the respondent was one of these variables. Another variable that newly emerged as a predictor of initiation was that of engagement in 'sports, social, and cultural participation'. It makes sense that this variable specifically competes with second initiation of television viewing, because both second re-initiation of television viewing and engagement in sport and participation take place during the evening hours, so they may compete with each other. This finding offers some support for the displacement hypothesis put forward by Putnam (1995).

Furthermore, there were some clear similarities between the models for first and second initiation as well. In both models, 'time of day' has a curvilinear effect on initiation. This effect is complemented in the model for second initiation by the effect of 'time at risk', which also has a curvilinear effect. The

latter effect means that re-initiation of television viewing is likely to take place either just after finishing the first viewing session, or otherwise after a long interval of non-viewing. Additional similarities between the models for first and second initiation are that being 'at home' and 'watching television' by respondent's partner again show as positive predictors, and being 'with non-family'; involvement in 'work, school, and study'; and 'socializing' and engagement in 'hobbies or indoor games' again stand in the way of initiation.

A final similarity between the models for first and second initiation was that both models are valid for men and women alike. For second initiation, this was tested by a comparison of the fit of the model displayed in Table 5 with a model that also included the gender variable and relevant gender-related interaction terms. This did not significantly improve the model[7]. Therefore we conclude that the mechanisms underlying second initiation appear to be the same for both men and women.

Table 5. *Prediction of second initiation of television viewing on time-functional, time-constant and time-varying variables. Final model*

Variable	B	S.E.	LR	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Time of Day	0,194	0,034	41,5	1	0,000	1,21
Time of Day Squared	-0,002	0,000	35,0	1	0,000	1,00
Time at Risk	-0,031	0,015	4,2	1	0,039	0,97
Time at Risk Squared	0,001	0,000	5,8	1	0,016	1,00
Self: At Home	0,452	0,189	6,0	1	0,015	1,57
Self: With Non-Family	-1,074	0,290	16,9	1	0,000	0,34
Self: Sleeping and Personal Care;	-2,283	0,358	52,3	1	0,000	0,10
Self: Work, School or Study	-0,949	0,346	8,9	1	0,003	0,39
Self: Socializing, Hobbies and Indoor Games;	-0,498	0,223	5,4	1	0,020	0,61
Self: Sports, Social and Cultural participation;	-1,660	0,522	16,2	1	0,000	0,19
Self: Reading	-0,728	0,263	8,9	1	0,003	0,48
Self: Transportation	0,669	0,246	7,1	1	0,008	1,95
Partner: Watching Television	0,743	0,178	16,2	1	0,000	2,10
Constant	-8,066	0,962	70,3	1	0,000	0,00

N (person-quarters): 7068. Likelihood chi-square model: 385.5; df = 13; p = .000.
R^2 Nagelkerke = 21.7 %.

Event history analysis of first termination of television viewing

To understand the factors involved in the termination of television viewing we used an analogues procedure as for initiation. This resulted in a

model for the prediction of first termination of television viewing presented in Table 6.

Time-functional effects. Again, the first two variables indicate time-functional effects. The interpretation of these effects is that for those watching television for the first time, the chances of viewing termination are relatively low at the start of the evening. They are higher during the daytime and at the end of the evening. 'Time at risk' has no effect on termination, i.e., the time someone has already spent in front of the television does not predict how likely it is that s/he will stop viewing. The combined predictive power of time-functional effects is moderate. A model using the above-mentioned time-functional effects explains 3.9% of all differences in the timing of termination.

Effects of time-constant personal characteristics. Of all four time-constant variables ('household size', gender, age, and level of education) only education and 'household size' were retained in the final model, signaling that these are the only two time-constant variables that have a direct influence on termination. The effect is in both cases positive, meaning that higher educated people and those from larger households tend to watch television for relatively short intervals. Inclusion of education and 'household size' into the estimated model augments the variance explained from 3.9 to 6.8 percent.

The effect of education is relatively strong. The higher educated appear to watch for shorter intervals, but we cannot ascertain why. It could be a consequence of the degree of self-discipline that higher educated people have developed, or a value culture that is present only among those higher educated. Furthermore, it could also be the result of the fact that higher educated people tend to have less physically demanding jobs; or perhaps is it that mental habits of those higher educated are at odds with watching indiscriminately and thus for an extended period. We do not know why the higher educated watch for shorter intervals. However, our data do suggest that it is not only because of the fact that those higher educated have other activity patterns. If this were the case, then the effect of one's level of education would have melted away after entering activity-related variables, which it did not.

Age has no direct effect on first termination. As a single predictor, it has a significant negative effect on termination, meaning that the elderly apparently do watch television for longer periods of time. However, as soon as education is entered into the equation, the effect of age becomes insignificant. So it seems that older people tend to be reluctant to turn off the television because of their lack of education. Had they had more opportunity for education, they might not have developed these routines that keep them glued to the television set.

Table 6. *Prediction of first termination of television viewing on time-functional, time-constant and time-varying variables. Final model*

Variable	B	S.E.	LR	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Time of Day	-0,094	0,016	35,4	1	0,000	0,91
Time of Day Squared	0,001	0,000	26,7	1	0,000	1,00
Household Size	0,125	0,049	6,4	1	0,011	1,13
Self: Highest Completed Level of Education	0,132	0,027	23,5	1	0,000	1,14
Self: Sleeping and Personal Care;	0,904	0,254	11,8	1	0,001	2,47
Self: Reading	-0,631	0,274	6,0	1	0,014	0,53
Partner: Socializing, Hobbies and Indoor Games	-0,444	0,182	6,4	1	0,011	0,64
Partner: Watching Television	-0,462	0,128	13,2	1	0,000	0,63
Constant	-0,039	0,371	0,0	1	0,917	0,96

N (person-quarters): 2524. Likelihood chi-square model: 137.4 df = 8; p <.001. R^2 Nagelkerke = 9.1 %

Gender does apparently not have any impact on first television termination. The zero order effect of gender is neither significant, nor is it a significant predictor of first television termination in multivariate analysis. We have also checked whether or not the model present in Table 6 was equally valid for men and women, using the procedure outlined earlier. It did not produce a significantly better model, so we assume that gender has no influence on first termination at all[8].

Effects of engagement in family settings and contacts with others. The five time-varying variables ('at home', 'alone', 'with kids', 'with adult family', 'with non-family') did not have a direct effect on termination. Similarly, none of the zero order associations between these variables and first termination were significant. So we conclude that engagement in the family settings and contacts with others do not have a measurable influence on termination.

Effects of activities. Out of the nine variables indicative of own activities and of the ten variables indicative of partner activities, only four contributed significantly to the prediction of first viewing termination, and their effect is rather moderate. The variable 'sleeping and personal care' by the respondent has a positive effect on termination of television viewing. It is easy to understand why. It is very likely that people will cease to watch television after getting ready for bed, or if they are already in bed, watching television. So we see here that turning off the television marks the end of the day. Table 6 further indicates that reading is a negative predictor of termination. Those who read before or while watching television appear to be reluctant to stop watching. We are unable to establish why though.

The effects of partner activities are easier to interpret. If the respondent's partner is engaged in 'socializing, hobbies, and indoor games', the respondent will be more likely to continue watching television. Here, watching television appears to operate as substitute activity that compensates for partner unavailability. The negative effect of television viewing by the partner on viewing termination is, of course, easy to understand. Again, we see that partners like to watch television together. As said, the effect of activity related variables on first termination is rather moderate. Inclusion of 'sleeping and personal care' and 'reading' by the respondent increases the explained variance from 6.8 to 8.1 percent. Moreover, inclusion of partner activities augments the explained variance to 9.1 percent.

A genderized model for explanation of second termination of television viewing

Before we discuss the last model to be presented, we have to explicate how we arrived at it. As before, we started with a set of 28 predictors, which were reduced by means of a backward stepwise procedure so that only significant predictors were retained. For the model explaining the second termination of television viewing, retained predictors were 'time of day' plus its square; highest educational level of the respondent; 'work, school, or study'; engagement in 'sports' by the respondent; 'social and cultural participation' by the respondent; 'sports, social, and cultural participation' by the partner; and 'watching television' by the partner. Our next step in the analysis then was to check whether the model was equally valid for men and women, by adding gender-related interaction terms to the model. In total, seven gender-related interaction terms and the gender variable itself were entered into the model. Then we evaluated the change in model fit, to see whether it was significant. In this case it was[9]. Then, the nonsignificant interaction terms were removed by means of a backward stepwise procedure. This resulted in our final, 'genderized' model, presented in Table 7.

Again, we see that time has a curvilinear effect on the probability of termination. Chances of termination are high before noon and after midnight. They are at their lowest at 6:30 PM – just as we saw for the chances of terminating the first viewing episode. Nagelkerke's R^2 for the model with 'time of day' and its square is 3.9 %, which is again moderate.

Table 7. *Prediction of second termination of television viewing on time-functional, time-constant and time-varying variables. Final 'genderized' model*

Variable	B	S.E.	LR	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Time of Day	-0,190	0,035	30,1	1	0,000	0,83
Time of Day Squared	0,002	0,000	29,8	1	0,000	1,00
Gender	1,270	0,384	11,0	1	0,001	3,56
Self: Highest Completed Level of Education	0,167	0,047	12,7	1	0,000	1,18
Self: Highest Educational Level by Gender	-0,177	0,067	7,1	1	0,008	0,84
Self: Work, School or Study	-1,952	0,715	10,0	1	0,002	0,14
Partner: Sports, Social and Cultural participation	-0,979	0,441	6,2	1	0,013	0,38
Partner: Watching Television	-0,458	0,163	8,1	1	0,004	0,63
Constant	2,929	1,045	7,9	1	0,005	18,71

N (person-quarters): 1398. Likelihood chi-square model: 66.7; df = 8; $p < .001$. R^2 Nagelkerke = 8.0 %

A second similarity between first and second termination is the role played by level of education. Again, we see that high education promotes termination of viewing. However, here, for the second viewing episode, we find this is only true for men. For women, this effect is almost non-existent. Women cut short their second viewing episode anyway, regardless of their level of education. As a result, we see that lower educated men watch for longer intervals, and the highest educated men watch for shorter intervals, than their female counterparts. An explanation for this may be that home is a leisure context for lower educated men, but not for women or higher educated men.

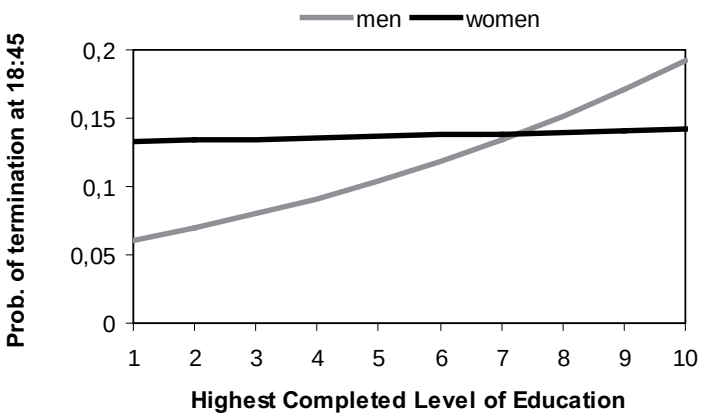

Figure 3. *Estimated educational differences in probability of second termination at 18:45 by gender*

By entering gender, level of education, and 'educational level by gender' into the equation, Nagelkerke's R^2 increases from 3.9 % to 5.5 %. An extra 1.1 % is gained by entering the variable indicative of engagement in 'work, school, or study' by the respondent into the equation. An explanation for this effect may be that we are here dealing with real television fans. They have already watched television before work, and now they come from their work, or school, or from doing their homework and turn on the television almost right away.

By including engagement in 'sports, social, and cultural participation' and 'watching television' by the partner, Nagelkerke's R^2 finally increases from 5.6 % to 8.0 %. Again, these effects are no surprise. In all preceding analyses, 'television viewing' by the partner has been associated with viewing initiation or continuation by the respondent, and here we see the same. The negative effect of engagement in 'sports, social, and cultural participation' is not a big surprise either. In the case of first viewing termination, we saw that 'socializing, hobbies, and indoor games' by the partner prevented termination. We then argued that watching television appears to operate as substitute activity that compensates for partner unavailability. The same reasoning applies here as well. So, our interpretation of this effect is that in case one partner is engaged in participation, s/he tends to be unavailable for the other partner. In that case, the other partner will fill in the gap of that absence by continuing to watch television.

Discussion

At the end of this article, we would like to summarize our main findings and reflect on consequences of our findings for existing theory and research.

Summary. Our first research question was how television viewing is influenced by the performance of other activities. It is clear from our data that these other activities do have an influence, and that this influence is not always negative. People often start watching television right after engagement in household work and child care, and after eating and drinking. Sleeping and personal care, as well as occupational activities are, on the other hand, very effective blockers of television initiation. Moreover, participatory activities (such as socializing, engagement in hobbies and games, and in sports, social, or cultural participation) appear to delay, cut short and inhibit television viewing.

Our second research question directly relates to the embeddedness of television viewing in a web of primary social ties. Our data indicate that being at home, and being involved in home-centered activities, are both positively related to the initiation of television viewing. Conversely, the co-presence of non-family prevents the initiation of viewing. So it seems that the family setting promotes the *initiation* of television viewing. This does, however, not mean that the family setting only promotes television viewing. This becomes clear

from our analyses of viewing termination, in which we saw presence within the family setting does not protect against termination of viewing, and that large households actually tend to have higher levels of viewing termination. So, family life does promote some television viewing, but it does not promote long sustained viewing sessions.

Furthermore, we found some expected and unexpected effects of partner activities. As expected, we found that viewing by one partner increased the likelihood of the other partner starting or continuing to watch television. Nor were we surprised by the finding that occupational activities and sleeping and personal care by one partner predicted non-initiation of viewing by the other partner. These findings can be interpreted as additional evidence for the idea that partners synchronize their activities, and that television viewing is part of that synchronization process. We were, on the other hand, somewhat surprised by the finding that participatory activities (socializing, engagement in hobbies and games, sports, and cultural and social participation) by one partner appeared to inhibit termination of viewing by the other partner. Our understanding of this finding is that in such situations, television viewing acts as a substitute that compensates for partner unavailability.

Finally, we found that stable personal characteristics played a role in shaping television viewing as well. Most consistent appeared to be the influence of highest completed level of education. Education apparently inhibits initiation of television viewing and promotes the early termination of viewing sessions. We found some indications that education is less important for understanding the viewing patterns of women. The influence of gender on routines in television viewing appeared to be rather complicated. On average, women tend to start watching television earlier than men. However, if the effect of the situational context is controlled for (particularly the fact the women are more often at home) another picture emerges. We then see that women are more reluctant to start watching television. We further saw that on average, women tend to interrupt their second viewing session earlier than men. Finally, age had a considerable impact on initiation and termination. On average, the elderly postpone viewing. Once they have started, they watch for longer intervals. However, this appeared not to be a genuine effect of age but an effect of education instead.

Conclusion. In this article we have elaborated on some central ideas from the Media Use As Social Action approach. Building on the assumption that most human actions are routine responses to frequently occurring experiences and that television viewing usually is a routine way of coping with such frequently occurring experiences, we analyzed the interplay between television viewing and other aspects of everyday life.

We found that television viewing is an integral part of family life and an alternative to it as well. Or put otherwise, one might say that television viewing is partly a shared activity and partly a substitute activity. As a shared activity, it is

combined with family activities such as eating and drinking, household work, and child care. And as a substitute activity, it can serve as a surrogate partner if the real partner is unavailable. This latter finding confirms the parasocial character of television viewing as discussed by Graney and Graney (1974), Horton and Wohl (1956), Prakke (1956), Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985), and Rubin and Perse (1987).

Notes

1. Of an additional 7 households, it is unknown whether they participated fully or partially (due to incomplete information gathered during the personal interview).
2. In response to the questions "What were you doing? What else were you doing?" respondents could describe in their own words what they had done, during a given quarter. These answers were preliminary coded using the three-digit code scheme introduced by Eurostat (2000), and then for the purpose of this research into 14 broad categories. Then, fourteen dummies were created and then lagged. Recoding of three-digit Eurostat codes into 10 broader activity categories was done by applying the following scheme: 010, 011, 012, 019, 530, 531, 030, 031, 032, 033, 039 → Sleeping and Personal Care; 020, 021, 022, 029 → Eating and Drinking; 100, 110, 111, 112, 113, 119, 121, 122, 131, 133, 139, 141, 142, 149, 200, 210, 211, 212, 213, 219, 220, 221 → Work, School, and Study; 300, 310, 311, 312, 313, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 329, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 365, 366, 369, 370, 371, 379, 390, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 389 → Household Work and Child Care; 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 519, 540, 364, 700, 710, 711, 712, 713, 719, 720, 721, 726, 722, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 739 → Socializing, Hobbies and Indoor Games; 410, 411, 412, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 391, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 529, 600, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 621, 630, 631 → Sports, Social and Cultural participation; 800, 810, 811, 813, 814, 815, 819 → reading; 820, 821, 822, 829 → watching television or video; 830, 831, 832, 839 → listening to radio or audio; 900 thru 994 → transportation. Note that the dummy for watching television or video was *not* used as a predictor of the initiation or termination of someone's own television viewing; it was only used as a predictor of the initiation or termination of television viewing by someone's partner. Moreover, it was used without restrictions as a predictor of the initiation or termination of someone's own television *news* use.
3. Past research indicates that fixed time interval data usually present a picture of everyday life activities that is largely unbiased (Oudhof, Stoop, and Luttikhuizen, 1988). An advantage of a fixed time grid is that it provides a basis for the recall of events (Freedman, Thornton, Camburn, Alwin, and Young-Demarco, 1988) although there appears to be some underreporting of activities of short duration (Harvey, 1993; Huysmans, 2001).
4. Tested at .05 with one-way analysis of variance.
5. So, to give an example the interaction term 'household size × gender' was added to the variable 'household size', the interaction term 'self: at home × gender' was added to the variable 'self: at home', etc.

6. Likelihood chi-square of the initial model: 644.2; df = 16; p < .001. Likelihood chi-square of the model with gender and gender interactions: 656.8; df = 31; p < .001; likelihood chi-square of the difference between these models 12.7; df = 24; p = .623
7. Likelihood chi-square of the initial model: 385.5; df = 13; p < .001. Likelihood chi-square of the model with gender and gender interactions: 403.9; df = 27; p = < .001; likelihood chi-square of the difference between these models 18.4; df = 24; p = .190.
8. Likelihood chi-square of the initial model: 137.4; df = 8; p <. 001; likelihood chi-square of the model with gender and gender interactions: 152.5; df = 17; p <. 001; likelihood chi-square of the difference between these models 15.1; df = 9; p < .089.
9. Likelihood chi-square of the initial model: 58.8; df = 7; p < .001. Likelihood chi-square of the model with gender and gender interactions: 79.4; df = 15; p < .001. Likelihood chi-square of the difference between these models 20.6; df = 8; p < .01.

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Chapter 4

Watching television news in everyday life: An event history analysis*

Henk Westerik, Karsten Renckstorf, Jan Lammers and Fred Wester

Abstract

Drawing on insights from audience flow research, uses and gratifications research, and action theory, it is argued that individuals use news as integral part of their everyday lives, and that news use serves different purposes at the same time. Hypotheses about the differential dynamics of 'news use as surveillance' and 'news use as a time killer' are tested using event history analysis of diary data from 189 Dutch male-female couples. Results indicate that audience availability and inertia explain most differences in timing and occurrence of news viewing initiation. However, the hypothesized time-varying effects of 'news use as surveillance' and 'news use as a time killer' also play a role.

Keywords: News Use, Audience Flow, Uses and Gratifications, Social Action Theory, Event History Analysis

Introduction

In western democracies, being well-informed about the news is often perceived as a civic duty (e. g. Barnhurst & Wartella, 1991; Hagen, 1994[a, b]). To fulfill this duty, people tend to rely on primarily television news (Robinson & Levy, 1986). Although watching television news has recently lost considerable ground to on

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line news use, watching television news still represents half of the time people spend on the news (Pew, 2002).

Watching news helps people keep in touch with society as a whole (Mindich, 2005). It serves as a facilitator of small talk with family, friends or colleagues (Levy, 1977), and it helps to structure family life and to strengthen family ties (Hagen, 1994[a, b]; Lull, 1980; 1988; Rothenbuhler, 1985). All in all, watching news has an important place in social life, and a decline in news viewing may have negative social consequences. This makes it important to understand the reasons behind television news viewing.

Theory

The Uses and Gratifications approach is an obvious framework to use when it comes to conceptualizing news viewing. It is the standard approach for studying types of audience activity such as the selective attention for and elaboration of media and their content (cf.. Bryant & Miron, 2004), and it has been applied to the study of news use before (e. g. Levy, 1977; Rubin & Perse, 1987; Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004; Lloyd, 2004; Diddi & LaRose, 2006). It tries to explain why people use (e. g. watch, listen, read, recall) specific media, programs, and contents by relating to personal characteristics. *Typically, the individual is seen as the unit of analysis,* and media use is seen as being caused by individual characteristics. Research on news is no exception to these practices. For instance, news use has been linked with the degree to which individuals have parasocial relationships with news personalities (Levy, 1979), the ritualized and instrumental viewing motives they report (Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985), the degree to which they seek surveillance or other gratifications (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004), and the extent to which they have a habit of using news (Diddi & LaRose, 2006).

However, Uses and Gratifications is not the only approach used to explain audience behavior. An alternative to this is the audience duplication or audience flow approach (e. g. Webster and Wakshlag, 1983; Cooper, 1996; Webster, 2006). This approach emphasizes that separate behaviors (e. g. watching a particular program) are usually part of a wider behavioral pattern (e. g. repeat viewing, channel loyalty, audience availability). Another difference is that its main concern is not the audience (why are audience members watching?) but program characteristics (why does this program attract an audience of this size?). *The unit of analysis is typically the program*; audience characteristics (audience size, the degree in which audiences overlap) are considered as aspects of those programs.

Clearly, there are differences between uses and gratifications research and audience flow research in how they analyze and conceptualize media use. Yet

along with Van den Bulck (2006), we believe that they can be seen as complementary. The main difference between these two approaches is that they highlight different aspects of media use. Uses and Gratifications emphasizes the fact that media use is to be seen as the result of deliberate decision making, and Audience Flow Research stresses that media use can often be seen as a more or less automatic response to certain situations and certain program characteristics. However, there is room for both modes of media use in our model for explaining the use of television news, that is, within theoretical conceptualizations which conceive media use as some kind of social action (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973; 1989; Renckstorf, 1996; Renckstorf & Wester, 2001; Westerik, Renckstorf, Wester, & Lammers, 2006).

The essence of social action theories is that individual actions are not (solely) to be seen as caused by universal biological, psychological, or rational mechanisms that are the same for all people, but rather as something that can be modified by interpretations as they are created in cultures and in social groups by individual actors (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Several researchers have applied such ideas to the domain of media use (e. g. Anderson & Meyer, 1988; Charlton & Neumann, 1986; Renckstorf, 1996). One of these approaches, the so-called 'Media use As Social Action' approach (cf. Renckstorf, 1996, hereafter MASA) served here as the theoretical and methodological point of departure for this study.

An important concept in action theory that can be used to link the central concepts of Uses and Gratifications and Audience Flow Research is that of *routinization* (cf. Renckstorf, 1996). This concept can best be clarified by pointing out the difference between routine and non-routine action. If an individual comes across a problem and subjectively defines it for the first time, s/he will not have a *routine* to deal with that problem, and thus s/he will have to work out an adequate solution to it. Part of this preparatory process may be the act of making a deliberate decision between functional alternatives – which is a central process in uses and gratifications research. After an individual has made a decision, s/he may implement it by performing some overt behavior, such as watching television or reading a book. Afterwards, the individual may evaluate the outcomes of that actions, and may integrate new insights into his/her personal stock of knowledge and rearrange his/her personal 'structure of relevance' (i. e. what s/he sees as important). For instance, s/he may conclude: "If mom does not come home, I can always watch television." This in turn may pave the way for the development of routines that will allow the individual to almost 'automatically' respond to the absence of the mother by watching television. And if children are often left alone during the afternoon, such a response may become 'institutionalized' in the sense that others (e. g. other children, broadcasters, parents) will share the insight into the existence of that patterned action, that is, that 'routine' (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966). It is

this type of institutionalized behavior and the underlying effort-saving routines that are central to Audience Flow Research and that we will integrate into our model explaining television news use.

Though there is some research on news selection and use from an audience flow perspective (e. g. Chang, 1998), studies on the uses and gratifications of television news use appear to be much more numerous (for a comprehensive review of three decades of television news research, cf. Schaap, Renckstorf & Wester, 2000). This type of user-oriented research has focused on [a] general characteristics of television news viewing, [b] general characteristics of television news viewers, and [c] distinctive characteristics of television news viewers and non-viewers. Exemplary conclusions that can be drawn from this research are that [a] viewing is often a secondary activity, [b] that interactions between co-viewers are often limited to short remarks, and [c] that news viewers tend to seek 'informational' or 'personal utility ' gratifications (Schaap et al., 2000).

A typical characteristic of the research on news exposure so far has been that it has focused, almost without exception, on news exposure as 'frequency of news viewing or the amount of time spent viewing' (Schaap et al., 2000, p. 61). These are evidently characteristics of individuals (who watch either for long or short periods, frequently or infrequently) and not of situations. Because of that, even situational influences (e. g. the influence of being at home one television viewing) tended to be explained in terms of individual characteristics (e. g. the percentage of time spent at home) and not as a true *situational variable*. This is unfortunate for both empirical and theoretical reasons.

Research has shown (e. g. Mutsaers, 1996) that the actual situation in which an individual is engaged immediately affects his/her actual viewing behavior. Furthermore we know from audience flow research that someone's actual viewing behavior (a time variant, situational variable) affects subsequent viewing as well (e. g. Webster, 2006). This is not without reason, but it follows from *theoretical considerations*. According to Schutz and Luckmann (1973), characteristics of situations affect the motivational basis of social action. What is an important motivator in one situation may be quite irrelevant in other. For instance, 'keeping up appearances' may be highly important in public places but may be less important in private life (Goffman, 1959). Obviously, similar ideas may also be applied to the domain of television viewing. For instance, it seems reasonable to assume that people are more likely to indulge in 'guilty pleasures' (e. g. watching television for too long, or watching socially undesirable content) when nobody is around (cf. Westerik, Renckstorf, Lammers, & Wester, 2007). In more general terms, however, one might assume that the individual integrates actual characteristics of both him/herself and his or her social environment into his or her subjective definition of a situation, which in turn affects subsequent media use, including television news use (cf. Renckstorf, 1996; Renckstorf & Wester, 2001).

Characteristics of the individual and his or her life-world may be time varying ('I am with my family') but constant as well ('I am an adult') . Consequently, definitions of situations and subsequent (news) media use are affected by *both time-varying and time-invariant aspects* of individual and his or her life. In attending to both personal and situational characteristics as factors that influence television news viewing, this study goes beyond most existing research on television use that usually focuses on one of these two factors. In addition, we look at the *interplay* between these two influences, that is, at how the influence of individual static characteristics (such as existing routines and interests) with regard to news use changes throughout the day as a consequence of situational changes (that is to say, the acts of television news use that have already occurred during the day).

Hypotheses

In the preceding theory section, we have outlined that to understand someone's (news) media use, one has to understand how s/he defines a situation. This process of defining a situation may be seen as a process by which an individual 'assesses' a situation against the backdrop of his or her desire to master his/her situation. This assessment will dictate how to deal with the situation.

It is important to emphasize that these 'assessments' and 'decisions' made by the individual will often (but not always) be made in an near automatic way. If a person has been in a situation before and s/he has already developed a satisfying routine for dealing with it, some *routine* response (such as starting to watch television news) may be implemented without further conscious thinking. If, on the other hand, s/he is in a situation that is unfamiliar, that is, for which s/he has no routine solution, then a more conscious procedure for dealing with that situation may occur (e. g. projecting a solution, deciding what alternative will be implemented; see Renckstorf, 1996). Clearly, routines or habits have a tendency to persist (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). After all, by invoking routines people can save the energy consuming mental effort required to deal with the situation. Hence we hypothesize that:

H_1. The more a person is in the habit of watching television news, the greater the chance that s/he will (re)start watching the news on a given day.

On the other hand, one should not overstate the power of established routines or portray them as the sole initiators of action (in this case television news viewing). Routines can always be modified if they do not solve the problems they are supposed to solve. This means that to some extent, the actor will remain aware of the goals that an action is supposed to fulfill. Consequently, they will affect how the individual defines her/his situation and how s/he deals with goals (for instance, by initiating television news use).

From past research, we know that an important reason for exposing oneself to news is the subjectively felt 'need to stay informed' (Konig, Renckstorf, & Wester, 2001, p. 147). A lot of research has been carried out to describe what this need is, and this research indicates that news does not cater to some monolithic news need. There are many small needs that are addressed, for which the news offers "very mixed gratifications (…) It is a social activity and a form of mild entertainment as well. It keeps people in touch with their society and gives us something to talk about. It includes much of human interest as well as political and economic hard information" (McQuail, 2001, p. 398).

Thus there may be many needs that news use may meet, yet the most common gratification that appears to motivate people seems to be 'surveillance' (Eveland, 2001), that is, people's desire to stay informed about what is going on in the world. Another well-known and 'serious' motivation for watching television news is 'anticipated interaction' (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004). Many people indicate they watch television because it gives them something to talk about (e. g. Mindich, 2005). Moreover, one can expect that news addresses specific 'areas of interest' (cf. McQuail, 2001). Therefore we hypothesize:

H_2. The more a person defines watching television as means of getting informed about the world ('surveillance'), the greater the chance that s/he will (re)start watching television news.

H_3. The more a person perceives watching television as a way of learning about things that can be discussed in future conversations ('anticipated interaction'), the greater the chance that s/he will (re)start watching television news.

H_4. The more a person is interested in specific content categories addressed in newscasts (such as [a] serious news, [b] accidents and disasters, [c] celebrities, [d] sports, or the [e] weather), the greater the chance that s/he will (re) start watching television news.

Apart from watching television news for *content-centered* reasons, people also may watch for *process-related* reasons (for a recent discussion of the content-process distinction, see Song, LaRose, Eastin, & Lin, 2004). In that case it is not so much the information that people see as gratifying, but the very process of viewing itself.

An example of this is the 'affiliation' motive. As television is broadcasted daily at fixed times, it can be used as an opportunity for families to sit down and spend time together. This 'affiliation' motivation (Lull, 1990) may even motivate those who are not interested in news content at all.

Another example of a process related motive is that of 'killing time'. This has long been recognized to be an important motivation for television viewing *in general* (e. g. Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973). However, recent research indi-

cates that it also operates as a motive for watching the news (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004; Lloyd, 2004). In that case, watching a lot of television in general may act as a trigger of watching the news. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H_5. The more a person perceives watching television as an opportunity to meet other family members ('affiliation'), the greater the chance that s/he will (re)start watching television news.

H_6. The more a person has a habit of heavy general viewing, the greater the chance that s/he will (re)start watching television news.

Thus far we have presented explanations of news viewing in which only time-constant, person-bound factors were used as predictors of news use. Our reasoning was that if a person perceives some need or problem, or if s/he has developed a routine in the past, this may bring about television news use in the future. But we have not yet answered the question of what happens after a problem has been solved, after a need has been met, and after a routine has been invoked. Will that need, problem or routine then still trigger news use? We think not. If a problem has been solved, efforts aimed at solving that problem are likely to be reduced, at least for a while.

However, even that may be too much of a simplification. It may be true for actions that address only a single problem, but not for actions that address multiple problems at the same time. In that case, solving one problem will not mean that other problems are solved as well, and that further action may be suspended. It may be suspended if the remaining problems are unimportant, but if the remaining problems are important, action may be continued – but now for different, more limited reasons. In the case of watching television news, the latter scenario is the most likely one, because it addresses many needs.

So, we believe that watching news changes the urgency or salience of problems. Some problems may become less urgent, some other problems may remain urgent, and still other problems may gain additional urgency. Furthermore, we suspect that these alterations in the motives for television viewing will follow a predictable pattern. As many people name 'surveillance' reasons as their primary motivation for news exposure (e. g. Hagen, 1994[a, b]; McCombs & Poindexter, 1983), it seems likely that this will be the dominant motivation for those who have not seen any news yet. Furthermore, because we expect that watching television news is rather effective in catering for such surveillance needs, we suspect that this motivation will decline quite steeply. On the other hand, purely process-based motivation will not decline much, as needs such as combating boredom, loneliness, or killing time are not so easily met. They may remain important as predictors of news viewing initiation, regardless how many newscasts a person has already seen. This leads us to the following hypotheses:

H_7 The more newscasts an individual has already seen during a day, the less positive the effect of *surveillance motivations* on his/her news viewing (re) initiation (cf. H_2).

H_8. The more newscasts an individual has already seen during a day, the larger the effect of habitual *heavy general viewing* on his/her news viewing (re) initiation (cf. H_6).

Additional factors

Although gratification seeking and ritualized viewing patterns are important motivators of viewing, there are other important factors explaining television news initiation as well. Many of these factors are tied to specific, time-related situations ('thematic relevances', Schutz & Luckmann, 1973) that are associated with specific actions and situations. Following insights from past research on television (news) use, we will explore a number of these time-varying factors.

Most people watch television at home. They will often watch during prime time (the most popular newscasts in the Netherland are aired between 19:30 and 20:30), and a considerable number of people start watching television as soon as they get home (Westerik, Renckstorf, Wester & Lammers, 2005). Consequently, it may very well be that people start watching news as soon as they get home, or that they start watching in the beginning of prime time.

From audience flow research, we know that program exposure is affected by viewer inertia (the fact that people tend to 'stay tuned' to a program or channel) and audience availability (the fact that media use is often inhibited by other everyday life activities and situations such as sleep rhythms, social and occupational involvement). Consequently, one can expect that watching non-news on television may predict news viewing, simply because channels mix news content with other contents, and viewers may be reluctant to switch channels. Furthermore, one can expect that being engaged in activities other than television viewing may reduce the chance of news viewing initiation, just because those other activities make individuals unavailable for television viewing.

From research on the social uses of television (e. g. Lull, 1980; 1988), we can further learn that action may not always be an individual activity. Other household members may control the remote control and impose news viewing on others (cf. Westerik et al., 2006). Other family members may create a situation in which television viewing is more likely (e. g. Huysmans, Lammers, Renckstorf & Wester, 2000), by being away from home or by being engaged in some other activity, for instance (Westerik et al., 2005). In the case of a cultural taboo of watching television in the presence of non-family (see Hagen, 1994[a]), it may also take the form of a non-family member who enters the situation and thus prevents news viewing.

Apart from the above described gratification-related and situational characteristics, media use in general may also be seen as influenced by other 'personal' and 'structural variables', that is by characteristics of the individual and his environment that are relatively stable. After all, motivations are not solely bound to characteristics of the actual situation in which the individual is engaged (as is most clear in the above mentioned case of 'thematic relevances') but also to what a person already knows ('interpretational relevance') and what s/he is planning to do ('motivational relevance'; see Schutz & Luckmann, 1973).

Of course, the earlier mentioned gratifications may tap into essential aspects of the latter types of relevances. Yet past research reveals that news use may be linked to many other personal and social characteristics as well. For instance, we know from past research that news use is more common among older generations (see: Mindich, 2005; Pew, 2002). Research also shows that education tends to have a positive effect on television news viewing (e. g. Kwak, 1999) and in almost every culture, men tend to watch more news than women (Lull, 1988).

In between the immediate situational influences on news use (e. g. 'most people tend to watch television at home') and the long-term personal influences (e. g. 'education has a positive effect on television news viewing') there are also intermediate influences which are likely to change over the course of an individual's life. For instance, members of large households tend to watch less television, perhaps because they are more likely to be faced with alternative uses of time (e. g. competing distractions and responsibilities; cf. Mutsaers, 1996). Moreover, one might assume that parents avoid or postpone watching news because they do not want to expose their co-viewing children to the negative or violent contents of television news (cf. Walma Van der Molen, 2004). Furthermore, the Number Of Television Sets at home may also have an influence. As there are indications that multiple sets increase exposure to television in general (Comstock and Scharrer, 2001), this may increase the exposure to television news as well. One may further speculate that household income may have some effect and perhaps a negative one, as news viewing may be a cheap alternative for outdoor activities or newspaper reading.

Methods

Design

In this study, we will use *event history analysis* to test our hypotheses and to explore answers to our research questions (for an elaborate description of this analytical technique, see Westerik et al., 2005).

Event history predicts the likelihood of an event (in this case the act of television news initiation) for those who are *at risk* of experiencing that event. In

our example, those *at risk* are people who are not watching television news, while those not at risk are those people who are watching. So we predict how likely it is that someone who is not watching the news will become a viewer.

Predictors in event history analysis may be *time functional variables* (Yaffee & Austin, 1994). An example of such a variable is *Time of the Day*. Additionally, event history analysis can deal with both *time-invariant variables* (in this case a variable that has equal scores for every fifteen minute period of the day) and *time-varying variables* (with scores that may vary from one fifteen minute period to the next; cf. Yaffee & Austin, 1994). By entering a time-invariant variable such as *Gender* as predictor, we can analyze how someone's chances of news viewing initiation are affected by his or her gender. Likewise, by entering co-presence of children as a predictor (a time varying variable) we can see how the co-presence of a child enters someone's chances of news viewing initiation.

Furthermore, it is possible to include interactions of the differing predictors in the analysis. For instance one might include not only *Gender* and *Time of the Day* as a predictor but also the interaction *Gender* × *Time of the Day*. By allowing this interaction term into the equation, we can test whether the effects of Gender are stable during the day. To put it in more general terms, we do not have to assume that the same causes will always have same consequences regardless of the temporal or situational context, something other techniques cannot adequately deal with (Snyder, 1991). This is very important from a theoretical standpoint as well, because we are in a position not only to test hypotheses about individual *interpretational* and *motivational relevances*, but also to test those regarding situational *thematic relevances*. This may sound like a rather abstract advantage, but it is in fact practical. It allows us to differentiate between the motivations of those who have not seen any news yet and those who have seen some or even lots of news.

Because of the discrete nature of our data, we chose to use logistic event modeling. The interpretation of the estimated model will therefore be similar to that of models in common logistic regression, with one notable exception: not the *person*, but the *person-period* is the unit of analysis. This means that the model predicts the conditional probability that a person will start watching television news if s/he is not watching it already. The significance of effects was tested using both bivariate (only one predictor at a time) and multivariate analysis (more than one predictor a time). Multivariate analyses were carried out by means of backward stepwise procedures. Significance was tested using the Likelihood Ratio (at the .05 level).

Data

We used data from a national representative probability survey held in the Netherlands during the first three months of 2000 by the Nijmegen Institute of

Communication Research (NICoR). The initial study comprised 825 personal interviews with Dutch adults (Konig, Jacobs, Hendriks Vettehen, Renckstorf, & Beentjes 2005). As a follow-up to these interviews, respondents and their household members aged 10 or older were asked to fill in additional written questionnaires and time use diaries. A total of 287 households fully cooperated with this part of the study; in 121 households, some members did and others did not participate; and 410 households did not participate in the follow-up survey[1]. For the present study, we only used data from subjects who were part of a (heterosexual) couple of which both partners had returned the time-use diary. A further restriction was that we only analyzed data about media use during weekdays, and then only if both respondent and respondent's partner spent some time at home during the 4:00 PM – 4:00 AM interval. This meant that data from 189 couples (= 378 individuals) were used.

Measurement

All participants in the time-use study were asked to keep a diary. For every single fifteen minute period of the day, they were asked to answer open ended questions regarding their time use. For each period, respondents could write down their answer in their own words, or indicate that they were doing the same as in the preceding fifteen minute period. Moreover, respondents were asked to indicate where and with whom they were during a specific fifteen minute period, as well as whether or not they had watched television, whether or not they had listened to radio or audio recordings, and whether or not they had been reading. If possible, questions about personal characteristics were measured by means of a personal interview or a written questionnaire.

Variables

Criterion variable. Program content of all television channels targeting the Netherlands is routinely classified by the department of audience research of the government sponsored Netherlands Public Broadcasting organization (in Dutch, 'Publieke Omroep, dienst KLO'). By combining classifications of program content with channel choices from respondents, we determined the content of the programs respondents had been watching, during what time of the day. If, during the n^{th} fifteen minute period, an actor had watched at least 8 minutes of 'news' or 'current affairs' programming, that respondent was allotted an affirmative (1) score on News Viewing Initiation for that fifteen minute period, provided that s/he had not been watching television news for 8 minutes or more in the preceding fifteen minutes. In the latter case, s/he was allotted a 'missing' score for News Viewing Initiation during that quarter of an hour, meaning that it would be left out of any subsequent analyses. In all remain-

ing cases, respondents were allotted a non-affirmative (0) score. The total of non-affirmative scores (or 'non-events') was 12,363; the number of affirmative scores ('events') was 256 (M = .02; SD = .14). News Viewing Initiation is the criterion variable in all analyses performed.

Predictor variables. To test our main hypotheses, we used the following six variables as predictors of News Viewing Initiation: Number Of News Sequences Completed, Habitual News Viewing, Viewing For Surveillance. We also used five variables measuring content specific interests: Viewing For Anticipated Interaction, Viewing For Affiliation, Average Amount Of Viewing and a variable measuring Number Of News Sequences Completed.

Number Of News Sequences Completed (M = .49; SD = .63)[2] is an event-functional variable (cf. Yaffee & Austin, 1994). It measures the number of times a respondent has been exposed to television news and current affairs programs since 4:00 AM on a given day. The remaining variables for which hypotheses were formulated are time-constant variables (Yaffee & Austin, 1994). Habitual News Viewing was constructed as the means of four item scores (Cronbach's alpha = .74; M = 2.76; SD = .71) measuring how often respondent watched programs about 'news', 'politics', 'discussions', or 'current affairs' if they had the opportunity (1 = 'never'; 5 = 'nearly always'). Viewing For Surveillance is also a time constant variable. It is defined as agreeing with the statement 'For me television is a window to the world' (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree; M = 3.2; SD = .86).

To test our hypothesis concerning the effect of interest in specific contents, we included five variables. Serious News Interest was defined as the means of three items measuring interest in 'politics', 'economy and finance', and 'employment' (Cronbach's alpha = .76; M = 2.85; SD = .79). Interest In Accidents And Disasters was measured using a single item (M = 3.08; SD = .82), as was Interest In Celebrities (M = 2.04; SD = .91), Interest In Sports (M = 2.83; SD = 1.14); and Interest In The Weather (M = 3.42; SD = .81).

Viewing For Affiliation was measured in a using the statement 'I like sitting with the whole family in front of the television set' for respondents (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree; M = 3.21; SD = .95). Viewing For Anticipated Interaction was defined as the perceived frequency of 'discussing television programs with friends and acquaintances' if possible (1= never; 5 = almost always; M = 2.25; SD = .61). Measurement of Average Amount Of Viewing was based on respondents' assessments of how many minutes per day were spent on watching television (M = 170.7; SD = 111.7).

Control variables. As statistical controls and for explorative purposes, we included several variables measuring characteristics of respondents, of their partners, and of their households. We included Time Of Day as a time-functional variable (cf. Yaffee & Austin, 1994) shared by respondents and their partners, ranging from 49 (= 4:00 PM – 4:15 PM) through 96 (= 3:45 AM – 4:00 AM). It

is included in our analyses to make sure that estimated effects of Number Of News Sequences Completed, a variable that by definition correlates with Time Of Day, are not confounded. Because we anticipated curvilinear effects, we not only included the original variable (M = 73.4; SD = 6.3) but also its squared value (M = 5570.1; SD = 921.7). In order to avoid confounding the effect of Number Of News Sequences Completed, we also included Cumulative Exposure To Television (defined as the number of fifteen minute periods of television exposure since 4:00 PM up to the fifteen minute period preceding the quarter of an hour for which News Viewing Initiation was predicted; M = 5.9; SD = 5.4).

Household characteristics, demographic and structural variables are treated as time-constant variables (cf. Yaffee & Austin, 1994). They are included mainly because past research suggests they may be influential. The included household characteristics were (M = 3.03; SD = 1.2), Number Of Television Sets (M = 1.94; SD = .92), and Household Income (ranging from 1 'no income' through 12 'more than 5000 guilders' per month; M = 9.9; SD = 2.2). Demographics recorded for the respondents were Gender (1 = male, 2 = female; M = 1.5; SD = .5), Age (M = 47; SD = 12.7) and highest completed Education (1 = unfinished primary school, 10 = postgraduate education; M = 5.3; SD = 2.2).

We included 15 time-varying variables indicative of situations in which the respondent was engaged in the fifteen minute period before s/he was at risk of News Viewing Initiation. A first variable indicated whether or not the respondent had been At Home during the preceding quarter of an hour (M = .96; SD = .18). Four variables indicated whether the respondent was alone, and if not, which others were co-present: Alone (M = .12; SD = .18), With Children (M = .10; SD = .25), With Adult Family (M = .73; SD = .30) and With Non-Family (M = .05; SD = .15). Ten variables indicative of the activities by the respondent during the preceding quarter of an hour were also included: Sleeping And Personal Care (M = .42; SD = .23), Work, School And Study (M = .02; SD = .06), Household Work And Child Care (M = .13; SD = .14), Eating And Drinking (M = .1; SD = .09), Socializing, Hobbies And Indoor Games (M = .09; SD = .13), Sports, Social And Cultural Participation (M = .01; SD = .04)), Watching Television Or Videos (M = .20; SD = .18), Reading (M = .06; SD = .11), Listening To Radio Or Audio (M = .03; SD = .08), and Transportation (M = .03; SD = .06)[3].

Finally, we included 'partner variables'. For each time-constant 'respondent variable', we included a 'partner variable' that measured the same characteristic for the partner. Because data of sampled persons were used both for 'respondent data' and for 'partner data', descriptive statistics for time-constant 'respondent variables' and the corresponding 'partner variables' are identical. This is not the case for time-varying variables, because we did not sample similar intervals for both partners.

A first time varying partner variable that was included was one that indicated whether the respondent partner was at home during the preceding fifteen

minutes (At Home Partner, M = .78; SD = .27). We further included ten variables indicative of the activities by the Partner: Sleeping And Personal Care Partner (M = .42; SD = .24), Work, School And Study Partner (M = .06; SD = .14), Household Work And Child Care Partner (M = .1; SD = .12), Eating And Drinking Partner (M = .09; SD = .1), Socializing, Hobbies And Indoor Games Partner (M = .1; SD = .14), Sports, Social And Cultural Participation Partner (M = .03; SD = .07), Watching Television Or Videos Partner (M = .18; SD = .18), Reading Partner (M = .06; SD = .11), Listening To Radio Or Audio Partner (M = .03; SD = .09), and Transportation Partner (M = .04; SD = .07).

Results

Basic models

As a first test of our hypotheses and to explore the effect of the control variables, we estimated 57 equations predicting News Viewing Initiation on the basis of the differing 'respondent variables'. In these equations, we use only the base line variable Time Of Day and its square as controls.

In the model with both Time Of Day and its square as the predictors of News Viewing Initiation, we find highly significant effects for both variables ($b_{\text{Time Of Day}}$ = 1.3; s. e. = .133; change in -2LL = 177.1; df = 1; $p < .001$) and its square ($b_{\text{Time Of Day Squared}}$ = -.01; s. e. = .001; change in -2LL = 195.4; df = 1; $p < .001$). According to this model (hereafter the 'baseline model'), News Viewing Initiation is at its highest during the 8:00 PM – 8:30 PM interval.

As hypothesized (H_1), we find that Habitual News Viewing does have a positive effect on News Viewing Initiation if it is added to the baseline model (b = .48; s. e. = .086; change in -2LL = 30.4; df = 1; $p < .001$). We also find support for our hypothesis regarding the effect of Viewing For Surveillance (H_2). If this variable is added to the baseline model, the model fit improves significantly (b = .17; s. e. = .077; change in -2LL = 5.3; df = 1; $p < .05$). However, our data do not support our hypothesis that news use is influenced by Viewing For Anticipated Interaction (H_3). Our interest hypothesis (H_4) receives partial support. If Serious News Interest is added to the baseline model, the model is significantly improved (b = .37; s. e. = .081; change in -2LL = 21.3; df = 1; $p < .001$). The same is true for Interest In Sports (b = .17; s. e. = .056; change in -2LL = 9; df = 1; $p < .01$), and Interest In The Weather (b = .23; s. e. = .082; change in -2LL = 7.8; df = 1; $p < .01$). However, Interest In Accidents And Disasters and Interest In Celebrities do not have significant effects on News Viewing Initiation if they are added to the baseline model.

Our hypothesis that Viewing For Affiliation would trigger News Viewing Initiation (H_5) is not supported by our data. However, our hypothesis about the posi-

tive effects of Average Amount Of Viewing on News Viewing Initiation receives some support (b = .001; s. e. = .001; change in -2LL = 3.1; df = 1; $p < .10$)[4].

We also find a positive effect for Number Of News Sequences Completed if included in the baseline model (b = .21; s. e. = .096; change in -2LL = 4.5; df = 1; $p < .05$). At first glance, this appears to contradict our theoretical expectations that the Number Of News Sequences Completed should have a negative effect on News Viewing Initiation, yet we will see later that this is only an apparent contradiction.

We find a negative effect for Household Size (b = -.28; s. e. = .062; change in -2LL = 23.8; df = 1; $p < .001$), meaning that parents in larger households tend to inhibit or postpone News Viewing Initiation. Number Of Television Sets and Household Income do not have significant effects, nor does Gender. Age does however have a significant effect (b = .03; s. e. = .005; change in -2LL = 25.2; df = 1; $p < .001$), but the respondent's Education apparently does not.

Being At Home during the preceding fifteen minutes has a negative effect on News Viewing Initiation (b = -.85; s. e. = .217; change in -2LL = 12.7; df = 1; $p < .001$). To understand this effect, one has to keep in mind that we only analyzed the time intervals during which respondents were at home. A non-affirmative score (0) on this variable therefore means that the respondent has just arrived home, whereas an affirmative score (1) means that respondent is at home for at least one fifteen minute period. The negative effect of At Home therefore means that there are many people who start watching news as soon as they get home.

Being Alone, or With Kids, or With Adult Family during the preceding fifteen minutes appears to have no effect on News Viewing Initiation whatsoever. However, being With Non-Family apparently hinders News Viewing Initiation (b = -.67; s. e. = .343; change in -2LL = 4.7; df = 1; $p < .05$). Unsurprisingly, we found that Sleeping And Personal Care during the preceding fifteen minutes hinders News Viewing Initiation (b= -.91; s. e. = .296; change in -2LL = 11.5; df = 1; $p < .001$), but no other activity carried out by respondents during the preceding quarter of an hour appears to hinder News Viewing Initiation. Watching Television Or Video (but no news) during the preceding quarter of an hour appears to have a positive effect (b = .80; s. e. = .135; change in -2LL = 34.7; df = 1; $p < .001$) on watching news. Adding Cumulative Exposure To Television to the baseline model also resulted in a significant improvement of that model (b = .22; s. e. = .133; change in -2LL = 4.1; df = 1; $p < .05$)

We further explored the effect of partner characteristics on a respondent's News Viewing Initiation. This was done by first estimating a baseline model with one 'respondent variable' (e. g. Age respondent) and then adding a matching 'partner variable' (e. g. Age partner). According to these analyses, Age Partner does not improve the prediction of News Viewing Initiation if a respondent's age is already included as a predictor, nor does Education Partner significantly

improve a model in which a respondent's education is already included. However, Serious News Interest Partner (b = .18; s.e. = .08; -2 LL = 4.8; df = 1; $p < .05$) did have an effect on News Viewing Initiation, even after a respondent's own serious news interests were taken into account. This is, however, the only case in which a basic model can be improved by including a 'partner variable'.

A comprehensive model

To test our hypotheses further and to search for a comprehensive but parsimonious model, we carried out several subsequent multivariate analyses. *First,* we tested our interaction hypotheses (H_7 and H_8) by testing the effect of Number Of News Sequences Completed × Viewing For Surveillance and of Number Of News Sequences Completed × Average Amount Of Viewing had on News Viewing Initiation (-2 log likelihood ratio testing, backward stepwise, with all above-named predictors as controls). *Second,* we explored the effects of 'partner variables' on News Viewing Initiation using the above-described procedure, but now with [a] the non-significant effects from first analysis removed from the analysis and [b] the 'partner variables' included as test variables as well. *Third,* we tested the remaining hypotheses (H_1 through H_5) and explored other effects of respondent variables in the same manner, but now with [a] the non-significant effects from second analysis removed from the analysis and [b] the 'respondent variables' included as test variables as well. Finally, we explored the effect of the remaining (time functional, event functional, household) variables using a similar procedure. This resulted in our final model predicting News Viewing Initiation, which is presented in Table 1.

Hypothesis testing

First, we will discuss the findings that are most important for our theoretical framework. In hypothesis H_1, we stipulated that Habitual News Viewing predicts News Viewing Initiation. This hypothesis is fully supported.

In hypothesis H_2, we predicted that Viewing For Surveillance has a positive effect on News Viewing Initiation. The fact that the Number Of News Sequences Completed and Viewing For Surveillance interact, however, means that there is no *general* support for our second hypothesis. The hypothesis is only true if a person has not seen any news during the preceding day. In that case, those who define television as a means for surveillance are more likely to initiate news viewing. But for those who have already watched some news, an increased surveillance orientation does *not* mean s/he will be more likely to begin watching again. In other words, an interaction hypothesis (H_7) is supported.

Table 1. *Initiation of television news viewing, predicted on the basis of time-functional, time constant, and time varying variables (discrete-time event history analysis, multiple logistic regression)*

	B	S.E.	Change in -2LL*	df	Sig.
Time Of Day	1.155	.137	114.5	1	.000
Time Of Day Squared	-.009	.001	124.7	1	.000
Household Size	-.209	.067	10.2	1	.001
Age	.024	.006	16.5	1	.000
Education	.094	.034	7.5	1	.006
Number Of News Sequences Completed	-.054	.315	.0	1	.865
Viewing For Surveillance	.154	.087	3.2	1	.075
Viewing For Surveillance × News Sequences Completed	-.168	.088	3.5	1	.060
Average Amount Of Viewing	.000	.001	.4	1	.533
Average Amount Of Viewing × News Sequences Completed	.002	.001	7.3	1	.007
Serious News Interest	.188	.094	4.0	1	.045
Interest In The Weather	.201	.087	5.5	1	.019
Habitual News Viewing	.254	.100	6.4	1	.012
At Home, Preceding fifteen Minutes	-1.148	.229	20.4	1	.000
Watching Television Or Videos, Preceding Fifteen Minutes	.894	.149	36.1	1	.000
Interest In Celebrities Partner	-.174	.076	5.4	1	.020
Constant	-43.144	4.634	86.7	1	.000

* Change in -2 log likelihood model if variable deleted; Wald statistic for the constant.
Note 1: Only two-tailed significances are presented. This means that for effects for which a directional hypotheses were formulated (i.e. for Number of news sequences completed, Viewing For Surveillance, Average Amount Of Viewing, and their interactions) significances should be divided by 2.
Note 2: Model –2 log likelihood = 2080.3. Nagelkerke R^2 = .183; N = 12619 (person-quarters of an hour)

In hypothesis H_3 we predicted that Viewing For Anticipated Interaction triggers news viewing. We found, however, that adding this variable to the baseline model did not result in a better model. It is also lacking from the final model; so it apparently does not trigger news viewing. Hypothesis H_3 should thus be rejected.

Hypothesis H_4 is partially supported. Serious News Interest and Interest In The Weather apparently trigger news viewing, but interest in accidents and

disasters, celebrities, and sports apparently do not. Hypothesis H_5, which predicted that Viewing For Affiliation triggers news viewing, is not supported.

Hypothesis H_6 stated that heavy viewing predicts News Viewing Initiation. However, our data suggest that this is not generally the case. Heavy viewing only appears to trigger news viewing if some news viewing has already occurred. In contrast, our interaction hypothesis is fully supported. Just as stipulated in hypothesis H_8, scoring high on Average Amount Of Viewing predicts News Viewing Initiation but only when some news viewing has already taken place.

Exploration of other factors

Although our data lend considerable support for some of our hypotheses, this by no means implies that hypothesized effects are the most important ones. In fact, there are several predictors that have considerably more power.

The most powerful predictors of News Viewing Initiation are time-varying ones. The two most powerful predictors are Time Of Day and Time Of Day Squared – at least that is what the conditional -2 log likelihood values suggest. The estimated effect implies that the chances of News Viewing Initiation are at their highest during the first half of the evening (according to the baseline model, somewhere between 8:00 and 8:30 PM). The next most powerful predictor of News Viewing Initiation is Watching Television Or Videos during the preceding quarter of an hour. When people start watching the news, this often happens because they were already watching television and then continued to watch when the news came on. Another time varying factor that predicts News Viewing Initiation is homecoming (in our sample of person-quarters of an hour at home, this is indicated by the negative effect of being at home during the preceding quarter of an hour).

A second important group of powerful predictors of News Viewing Initiation is made up of structural and demographic variables. Age is the most powerful of these predictors. The estimated effect confirms numerous earlier observations linking news exposure to (old) age. The negative effect of Household Size was expected as well. Nor will anybody be surprised by the fact that Education appears to trigger News Viewing Initiation. Note that Education did not have a significant impact on News Viewing Initiation in our model with only Time Of Day and its square as controls. The explanation for this is a suppressor effect in which Watching Television Or Video and Average Amount Of Viewing are involved. Education is negatively correlated with these two variables, which both tend to have a positive effect on News Viewing Initiation. The consequence of deleting Watching Television Or Video and Average Amount Of Viewing from the predictor set is that the effect of Education becomes non-significant as well.

Discussion

In this study, we focused on the question of how motives for television news use affect the actual ways in which people watch television news. We assumed that television viewing is defined by the content gratifications that people seek from that activity and the extent to which they use it as a means to kill time (a process gratification). We further speculated that content seeking triggers initial news viewing, while habitual heavy viewing may bring about re-initiation of news viewing. Our findings supported our hypotheses about the different mechanisms underlying initiation and re-initiation: surveillance viewing triggers initial news exposure, while watching a lot of television triggers subsequent news exposure.

We further found that time varying audience availability factors (Time Of Day, being At Home, living in a small household) have a much larger impact. The same was true for viewer inertia (the fact that watching television during fifteen minute period x-1 triggered news viewing during fifteen minute period x). These findings are fully in line with a conceptualization of television viewing as being focused on the process of general television viewing, and not on getting some content-related gratifications from that experience. On the other hand, we saw that it is an oversimplification to say that content did not matter. Surveillance seeking, that is to say, being interested in serious news or the weather, along with Age and Education affected News Viewing Initiation, and these effects are likely to be content specific. Partner characteristics hardly played any role in News Viewing Initiation, whereas an earlier study (Westerik et al., 2005) showed that it has a significant influence on the initiation of television viewing *in general*.

On a more general theoretical level, we can conclude that our findings give more flesh and bones to the action theoretical notions of the importance of situational contexts and thematic relevances. We clearly found that transient situational contexts (alongside stable personal and social characteristics) played a role in shaping television news use. For instance we found that people often start watching television news as soon as they come home (alongside the fact that some groups, for instance higher educated people appear to be more eager to start watching news than others). Furthermore, we found that the more situation-bound thematic relevance appeared to play a role alongside the more person-bound motivational relevance. In less abstract terms, we found that news viewing motivations may differ from situation to situation. In situations in which no news viewing has occurred yet, people appear to be motivated by surveillance motivations, but in situations in which a lot of news viewing has already occurred additional news viewing seemed to be a side-effect of an underlying habit, such as heavy viewing.

Of course, our findings are not without qualifications, as the gratification data were gathered by means of an omnibus survey. This means that just a

handful of gratification statements could be administered. This means that central concepts such as 'viewing for surveillance' and 'viewing for affiliation' were measured using just one item. In order to measure 'viewing as a means to kill time', we had to use the 'actual time spent on viewing' as a proxy.

However, our research validated several insights from earlier research. The role played by audience availability and audience inertia related factors corroborated the usefulness of ideas from audience duplication research. We also validated earlier gratifications research, most notably research on the distinction between ritualistic and instrumental viewing (Rubin & Perse, 1987). However, we have shown that this distinction is not just a trait distinction, but that the action relevance of these different traits (i.e. from a ritualistic, process centered orientation and an instrumental, content centered orientation respectively) differs from situation to situation – just as postulated in the social action approach to media use (Renckstorf & Wester, 2001). In demonstrating that, we have also shown that media use indeed is rational, yet also bound to specific situations and preconditions (such as the accumulated amount of news seen during the preceding day and presence at home). We hope it may help to focus the attention of gratification researchers on the boundaries of rational and goal-directed media use, because in fact that seems to be the most fundamental question in audience centered research.

In addition, our study showed that initial news viewing is more content oriented than subsequent news viewing. This finding may have practical implications as well. If decreasing news exposure means that people increasingly skip watching an additional newscast, then there may be little to worry about, but if it means that people increasingly skip the news altogether, then the consequences may be more severe. Hence researchers of mass communications should especially focus on what makes people pay attention to news information for the first time on a given day.

Notes

1. Of an additional 7 households, it is unknown whether they participated fully or partially (due to incomplete information gathered during the personal interview).
2. In presenting our descriptive statistics, we use the individual as the unit of observation. For the time-varying variables this means that we first had to aggregate those variables from the person-period to the level of person-level (and only for those quarters during which the respondent was at home and at risk of (re)initiation of news viewing.
3. To create these variables, respondent were asked to answer for each quarter the open-ended questions: "What were you doing? What else were you doing?" The actors could describe in their own words what s/he had done, during a given quarter. These answers were preliminary coded using the three-digit code scheme intro-

duced by Eurostat (2000), and then for the purpose of this research into 10 broad categories. Then, fourteen dummies were created and lagged. Recoding was done using the following scheme: 010, 011, 012, 019, 530, 531 030, 031, 032, 033, 039 → 'sleeping and personal care'; 020, 021, 022, 029 → 'eating and drinking'; 100, 110, 111, 112, 113, 119, 121, 122, 131, 133, 139, 141, 142, 149, 200, 210, 211, 212, 213, 219, 220, 221 → Work, School, and Study; 300, 310. 311, 312, 313, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 329, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 365, 366, 369, 370, 371, 379, 390 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 389 → 'household work and child care; 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 519, 540, 364, 700, 710, 711, 712, 713, 719, 720, 721, 726, 722, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 739 → 'socializing, hobbies, and indoor games'; 410, 411, 412, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 391, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 529, 600, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 621, 630, 631 → 'sports, social, and cultural participation'; 800, 810, 811, 813, 814, 815, 819 → 'reading'; 820, 821, 822, 829 → 'watching television and video'; 830, 831, 832, 839 → 'listening to radio and audio'. 900 through 994 → 'transportation'. If a subject responding to the open ended questions on time-use did not indicate having watched television during that quarter, but did so indirectly by marking a box indicative of exposure to a television channel during a specific quarter s/he still was allotted a '1' for the variable 'watching television and video'.)

4. To avoid confusion, we report only on results of two-tailed significance testing at the .05-level. However, if a directional hypothesis is formulated, we will interpret effects that are significant at the .10-level (two-tailed testing) as significant.

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Chapter 5

The social character of parental and adolescent television viewing*

Henk Westerik, Karsten Renckstorf, Jan Lammers and Fred Wester

Abstract

The amount of time that people spend on watching television is a matter of social concern. In the past, several approaches have been developed explaining why people expose themselves to television, most notably the Uses and Gratifications approach. Building on an action theoretical framework, it is argued that the influence of routinization and situational context of television viewing (including the role played by others) should receive more attention. This approach is then applied to media use in households, with an emphasis on how adolescents and parents influence each other's television viewing. Event history analysis on data from 55 Dutch households (including 86 adolescents and their parents) show that the influence of parents and their adolescent children is reciprocal, that is, not only do parents influence their children, but children also influence their parents. This influence does, however, not increase during the teenage years, nor does parental influence diminish during those years.

Keywords: Television Viewing, Uses and Gratifications, Everyday Life, Socialization, Reverse Socialization, Event History Analysis, Social Action Theory

Introduction

It is a well-known fact that watching television has some long term consequences that most viewers would rather avoid. For instance, heavy viewing may increase body weight (e. g., Hancox, Milne, and Poulton, 2004; Hancox

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and Poulton, 2006), increase aggressiveness (e. g., Anderson and Bushman, 2002; Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen, and Brook, 2002), reduce educational achievement, reduce socioeconomic status and reduce well-being (Morgan, 1993; Comstock and Scharrer, 2001; Hancox, Milne, and Poulton, 2005; Vandewater et al., 2005).

Still, many people spend a lot of time watching television. In the US, an average person[1] watches 4.5 hours a day (Nielsen Media Research, 2005). In Western Europe, average viewing levels[2] tend to be somewhat lower. In most of the larger countries (e. g., Italy, Germany, and the UK) average viewing is between 3 and 4 hours a day, while in smaller countries (e. g., Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, or Switzerland) it is usually a little less than 3 hours a day (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2003). So, even in those smaller countries in Europe, watching television is still a significant part of everyday life.

The uses and gratifications of television viewing

Although television viewing is thus an activity of considerable social significance, there is still no single satisfying theory explaining why people watch television. Of course, Uses and Gratifications (U&G) is the most widely applied perspective when it comes to explaining individual differences in media exposure (Bryant and Miron, 2004). However, this approach is not without limitations.

In its classical formulations (e. g., Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1974; Rosengren, 1974), media use was seen as an activity driven by subjectively felt beliefs about the anticipated consequences of media use and the desirability of these consequences (gratifications). In turn, these beliefs were seen as resulting from an underlying need structure, which itself was caused by the personal characteristics and social circumstances of the individual.

During the 1980s and 1990s many U&G studies were published that elaborated on the role played by personal characteristics and social circumstances, resulting in models that became more and more complicated (Rubin, 2002). Another important development was the refinement of initial ideas about audience activity. Initially, scholars treated acts of media use as if they were brought about by free, discrete, conscious, and deliberate acts of will (cf. Katz et al., 1974; Blumler, 1979; Levy, 1983). Yet, this assumption was contradicted by research on audience flow which showed that individuals avoid laborious processes of media selection, in stead relying on undemanding routines of media use. This idea was then picked up by students of audience behavior (e. g., Rubin, 1984; Renckstorf, 1989), who argued that there are at least two modes of media use: a quasi-automatic 'ritualistic' mode in which an individual uses a medium as a routine response to a recurring problem; and an 'instrumental' mode, in which a medium is used in a self-aware and conscious way in order to deal with problems for which there are no instant solutions available.

Another shortcoming of the initial U&G approach was its tendency to pay little attention to the fact that television viewing is often directly affected by situational factors such as being at home, being involved in other activities, and being with others. This shortcoming was recognized early by researchers of audience flow processes (Goodhardt, Ehrenberg, and Collins, 1975; Webster and Wakshlag, 1982), who argued that situational factors are important because they have the potential of enabling or blocking media use, even if such use is highly preferred or rooted in well established routines.

A related point of criticism has been that U&G conceived media use in a manner that was too individualistic; it assumed that individuals make a free personal choice to expose themselves to a selection of media messages, and it ignored the influence of social contexts, for instance group processes (Elliot, 1974). Group processes are likely to occur within multi-person households as members decide about the availability of media equipment (e. g., newspaper and broadband subscriptions), living arrangements (e. g., the allocation of household tasks), and media use (e. g., who is in control of the remote in the living room; cf. Huysmans, 1996).

The importance of group processes for the explanation of program choices has been documented in several studies (for an early review and an example, see Webster and Wakshlag, 1982; see also Morley, 1986; Lull, 1988; Mutsaers, 1996). Subsequent research further shows that adult household members do not only influence each other's choice for specific program types, but also that their decisions to watch or to abstain from watching are correlated (Huysmans, Lammers, Renckstorf, and Wester, 2000) and that viewing (or non-viewing) by one partner triggers the other partner to do likewise (Westerik, Renckstorf, Wester, and Lammers, 2005).

Television viewing in everyday life

A critical assessment of U&G in its original form led to its reformulation in the Media use As Social Action approach (MASA, Renckstorf, 1996). This approach emphasizes that individuals are always embedded in a context of everyday life; they are constantly confronted with situations, which they are trying to master. This gives rise to subjective definitions of situations, meaning they will diagnose situations as problematic (they have not dealt with it before) or as non-problematic (they know how to deal with it).

If a situation is deemed non-problematic, individuals will invoke a routine response to deal with it almost without thinking. (For example: if someone is at home during the evening, feeling somewhat bored, s/he will usually not think very long before s/he decides what to do; s/he will just turn on the television or the computer.) The other possibility is that a situation is deemed problematic (e. g., a marginal stock investor has become concerned about the value

of his/her shares following the news earlier during the day). In that case, the person who experiences this problem will have to raise his/her awareness of the problem, conceive of possible solutions, make a decision, and implement it; and then evaluate the newly created situation (our marginal stock investor may discover business channels on his television). Apart from that, actions will constantly feed back to the make-up of the individual and his social environment, reinforcing or changing institutions and routines (our occasional shareholder may become a regular viewer of a business channel, thereby contributing to its financial success). Yet, those routines and institutions may be altered by new experiences occurring in everyday life.

Ang (1995) reviews examples of this newer approach of media use under the heading 'media in everyday life'. According to her, there is one common denominator in these newer studies in that they all address the question: 'How are the media integrated into our everyday lives?' (p. 217). In our view this label is very well-suited for studies that try to go beyond uses and gratifications by paying attention to things such as routine behavior, group decision making, and situational constraint. This is also attractive because the concept of everyday life links this study of audience research with approaches such as 'social constructivism' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) and Schutzean action theory (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973; 1989), which treat 'everyday life' as a very central concept. For instance, Schutz and Luckmann (1973) open their first chapter by saying: 'The sciences that would interpret and explain human action must begin with a description of (…) the reality which seems self-evident for men remaining within the natural attitude. This reality is their everyday life-world' (p. 3).

At the heart of the concept of 'everyday life' in the Schutzean sense is its 'partial transcendency' (Westerik, Renckstorf, Lammers, and Wester, 2006). This means that actors in everyday life always experience themselves as both powerful and finite. 'The everyday life-world is the region of reality in which man can engage himself and which he can change while he operates (…) At the same time, the objectivities and events which are already found in this realm (including the acts and the results of actions of other men) limit his free possibilities of action' (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, p. 3). This tension between reality as feasible for the actor, and reality as imposed on the actor, received too little attention in the initial U&G conceptualizations of audience behavior. It focused too much on the feasibility aspect of everyday life, ignored the role played by the 'objectivities and events' in everyday life (including the role played by others), and the *routines* they use to deal with the transcendent aspects of the life-world.

Media use of adolescents and their parents

Media use in childhood has been predicted with some success on the basis of parental and family characteristics that are not the result of choices made by the

child itself. For example, Bianchi and Robinson (1997) explain differences in watching television, reading, and other activities on the basis of variables such as parental education, family income, maternal employment status, number of children, family composition, sibling position, and ethnicity. A similar practice can be found in studies of adolescent media use. Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, and Wright (2001) emphasize the role played by contextual characteristics in shaping media use, most notably the role played by parental education. Moreover, Roe (2000) argues that variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, which are clearly imposed on the adolescent, have an important influence on adolescent media use.

One of the reasons behind the role played by such 'imposed' factors is, of course, the very process of socialization, which traditionally tends to be family specific (Roe, 2000; Berger and Berger, 1976). In part, this parental influence will be channeled through interaction between parents and their (adolescent) children (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). This follows also from research that indicates that the way in which parents interfere with their children's media use depends on the family background (Warren, Gerke, and Kelly, 2002). Parental interference is often studied under the labels of 'parental guidance' or 'parental mediation' (for a discussion of this concept, see Koolstra and Lucassen, 2004). These labels suggest that parental interference with media use by their (adolescent) children is deliberately induced with children's well-being in mind. In fact, Comstock and Scharrer (2001) argue that the most influence that parents have on their children's habitual media use is accidental. For instance, the unintended consequence of parents often being away from home, may be that their children will spend a lot of time in front of the television or playing video games. And parents may, of course, also interfere with their children's viewing based on selfish motives, for instance for confirmation of power relations (cf. Morley, 1986).

All the same, it is clear that parents, by their example, by what they say, or just by being around, are likely to have an impact on their (adolescent) children's media use; and that this may have a lasting influence on their children's future habits. Furthermore, they may influence their (adolescent) children's media use by granting or withholding them access to the differing media and to resources that might substitute for media use (Bovill and Livingstone, 2001; Bianchi and Robinson, 1997). In addition to parental influences there is of course also the influence of others (teachers, grandparents, siblings, friends, peers) that may have an influence on media use by (adolescent) children. Because interaction with friends and peers is so important during adolescence (Breeuwsma, 1994), use of the differing media is likely to be deeply affected by the adolescent's relationship with friends and peers (cf. Bonfadelli, 1981; Eggermont, 2006; Bovill and Livingstone, 2001).

In sum, then, it seems reasonable to conclude that others have considerable influence on media use of the (adolescent) child. Of course, this does not mean that such social influences are the only influences that count. On the contrary, there is convincing evidence that media use (and more specifically television viewing) also is influenced by more personal characteristics, such as the mental make-up of the child, his or her loyalty to friends, educational achievement, and school commitment (Comstock and Scharrer, 2001; Roe, 2000; Heim, Brandtzæg, Hertzberg Kaare, Endestad, and Torgersen, 2007). In addition, there is the influence of his or her past media use (the routinization that has taken place) and his or her existing structure of relevancies (including gratifications that are sought for, interests, and values; see Westerik et al., 2006; Renckstorf, 1996).

So, even in a time in which many adolescents have access to television and other media in the privacy of their own bedrooms (Bovill and Livingstone, 2001), it seems likely that both personal and social factors have an influence on media use by (adolescent) children. Some of these factors (e. g., the influence of parental co-presence) may be short-lived and immediate, other factors may have a lasting effect (e. g., socioeconomic status; Roe, 2000). And the effect of both social and personal factors is likely to vary as a function of age. During adolescence, human beings are expected to make a decision towards personal autonomy and self reliance (e. g. Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Bronfenbrenner, 2001). As part of this process, adolescents are expected to invest in symmetrical relationships (with friends and peers), and less in asymmetrical relationships (with parents, Breeuwsma, 1994). Hence, parental interference with media use (or 'parental mediation', or 'parental guidance') is likely to become less frequent as the adolescent is growing older (Lin and Atkin, 1989).

At some point in time, most adolescents and young adults leave the parental home and start living alone or with a partner, or with others. In that case, direct parental influence on media use will, of course, be drastically reduced. Yet, even before the adolescent leaves the parental home s/he tries to escape parental influence (e. g., Gould, 1978). This desire may reduce the effectiveness of the parental interference with media use. In fact, one might even speculate that as adolescents grow older, 'reverse socialization' effects (Van den Bulck and Van den Bergh, 2005) increasingly occur. In that case the influence of adolescents on parental media use would increase over the years.

Research questions

In the present study, which is part of a broader research project on the social embeddedness of media use (Westerik et al., 2005, 2006), we will focus on *television use*, because of its self-evident social significance. We will further focus on *adolescence* because of the possibly lasting effects of the habits acquired during this period (cf. Himmelweit and Swift, 1976) and, interesting

from a theoretical point of view, because of the ambiguity of adolescents in their relationships to family life and parents. This makes it interesting to study how parental and adolescent television viewing are related, and how parents and their adolescent children influence each other in this respect.

Finally, we will focus *on the everyday life family setting* as it is at home where most of the television viewing takes place. From an action theoretical point of view, in which it is argued that action is usually co-determined by characteristics of the situations in which they take place (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, p. 113–114; Westerik et al., 2006), it is thus very likely that characteristics of this setting will influence television viewing.

Accordingly, we will investigate television viewing with the above described perspective in mind. This means that we see television viewing not only as resulting from personal characteristics (e. g., gender, education, preferences) but also from social characteristics (e. g., parental education, household characteristics). Moreover, we expected that this is true for both adolescents and their parents. Therefore our first two research questions are:

RQ_1 What are the social and personal antecedents of adolescent television viewing?

RQ_2 What are the social and personal antecedents of parental television viewing?

Furthermore, building on the ideas that [a] media use is part of the totality of everyday life and thus reflects its overall changes, and that [b] this everyday life changes considerably during adolescence, we will further investigate:

RQ_3 Do the antecedents of *adolescent* and *parental* viewing vary as a function of the age of the adolescent?

Method

Analysis

In our theoretical framework it is assumed that household members have an *influence* on each other's actions, not just that their actions are *correlated*. This means we need to use either an experimental or a longitudinal design (cf. De Groot, 1969). Because we do not see how to apply an experimental design without compromising the everyday life setting, we are left only one option: applying a longitudinal design. In such a design one predicts some state of affairs or the occurrence of an event (A) at a certain moment in time (t) on the basis of another a status or an event (B) at an earlier moment (t-1). Though this method offers no watertight guarantees for finding out the direction of causality, because their behavior at both t and t-1 may have some common cause, this

still seems to be the best way possible to get indications about the antecedents of media use.

The longitudinal method by which we analyzed our data is event history analysis, or more specifically, because the discrete nature of our data, logistic event modeling. In this analysis we predict the occurrence of an event with those who are 'at risk' of this event. This means that in our research we will predict viewing *initiation* only for those who are at risk of initiation, that is for those who are not already watching television. Likewise, we will only predict viewing *termination* for those who are viewing.

Parameters are estimated using logistic regression on data sets in which the person-period is the unit of analysis. The interpretation will therefore be similar to that of models in common logistic regression, with one notable difference: the model does not predict the probability that an event will happen to a person, but the conditional probability that an event will happen to a person in a particular interval.

To answer our research questions we carried out four separate multivariate analyses, one for every dependent variable (adolescent viewing initiation, adolescent viewing termination, parental viewing initiation, and parental viewing termination). Every single multivariate analysis was conducted in three consecutive stages. *First stage analyses* were aimed at finding a parsimonious model predicting viewing initiation or termination using a stepwise model selection procedure. Only time of the day, personal and household characteristics were allowed as predictors during these analyses. Subsequently, we carried out *second stage analyses.* In second stage analyses, variables retained from the preceding first stage analyses were entered as controls. Then variables indicative of characteristics of others were allowed to enter the equation, again by means of a stepwise procedure. Finally, *third stage analyses* were carried out aiming at exploring the moderating effect of age. This again was done by means of a stepwise procedure, in which interaction terms were now allowed. These terms measured the product of adolescent age on the one hand and predictors retained in first and second stage analysis on the other. In all stages, an alpha of .05 was used.

Data

We used data from a national probability survey held in the Netherlands during the first three months of 2000 by the Nijmegen Institute of Communication Research (cf. Konig et al., 2005). The initial study comprised 825 personal interviews with Dutch adults. As a follow-up to these interviews, respondents and their fellow household members aged 10 or older were asked to fill in additional written questionnaires and time-use diaries. A total of 287 households fully cooperated with this part of the study; in 121 households, some members did and others did not participate; in 7 households, we could not evaluate the

completeness of the response; and in 410 households not a single person participated in the questionnaire and diary part.

For the diary, all participants were asked to answer open-ended questions regarding their time-use for each quarter of the day. These answers were subsequently coded into 11 broad activity categories[3]. Moreover, respondents were asked to indicate where and with whom they were during a specific quarter, whether or not they had watched TV, whether or not they had listened to radio or audio recordings, and whether or not they had been reading.

For this study, we analyzed diary data from the 55 households from which both parents and at least one child living at home had returned a time use diary. In our sample, the age of the sampled children ranged from nine years and nine months to 22 years and 11 months (with a mean of 14.5 year). Eighty-five percent of them fell within the age limits of 'adolescence' as defined by the World Health Organization (10–19 year olds; WHO, 1986), and 95 percent within the age limits of 'young people' as defined by an expert group for that same organization (1024 year olds; WHO, 1986). Although our sample does not perfectly match with the definition mentioned above, we choose to use the term 'adolescence' for our sample of persons still living with their parents in the parental home.

Data from 196 dairies were used: 55 diaries written by fathers, 55 by mothers, and 86 by children. From these dairies, only data from weekdays were used.

Data organization

Based on the aforementioned data, we created a person-period sourcefile, which included a dummy-variable indicating for each recorded person-quarter whether or not a person had watched television during that quarter and whether or not s/he was at home during that quarter. This source consisted of 18,816 records, that is 196 respondents × 96 quarters for each respondent. Based on this source file, we created four derivate files, the first explaining *adolescent viewing initiation* (N = 4195), the second *adolescent viewing termination* (N = 727), the third *parental viewing initiation* (N = 5261), and the fourth *parental viewing termination* (N = 845)[4].

Variables

In event history analysis, variables can be time-invariant (i. e., they are constant for all observations of a given individual) or time varying (i. e. for each individual, they can differ from observation to observation). Dependent variables in our analyses were: *adolescent viewing initiation, adolescent viewing termination, parental viewing initiation,* and *parental viewing termination*. For quarters for which a person is 'at risk' of viewing, s/he is allotted a '0' on *viewing initiation* if s/he does not watch and a '1' if s/he does. *Viewing termination* is defined in a

likewise manner, with '0' referring to continuation of viewing, and '1' to viewing termination. Time-invariant independent variables used in our analyses were:

– household characteristics such as *household size*[5] and *number of television sets* at home[6];
– demographics such as *age* of adolescent, father, and mother[7], *gender* of adolescent[8], *education* of adolescent, father and mother[9];
– measures of what people see as important, such as paternal or maternal adherence to *hedonistic values*[10], *family values*[11], and *egalitarian values*[12]; furthermore indicators of interests in specific subject such as *news interest*[13], *high culture interest*[14], *interest in science and nature*[15], *interest in sports*[16], *interest in religion*[17], and *interest in the weather*[18];
– measures of habitual viewing styles, such as *habitual dissonant viewing*[22], *habitual conversational viewing*[23], *habitual co-viewing*[24]; *selective news viewing*[25], and *exclusive news viewing*[26];
– time budget measures, such as *amount of participation*[27], *amount of sports activities*[28], and *amount of television viewing*[29].

All timevarying variables (except *time of the day*) were lagged, so that scores on independent variables were temporally antecedent to scores of dependent variables. Time-varying independent variables used in our analyses were:

– *Time of the day*[30] and its squared value*;*
– measures indicative of being *at home*[31], *alone*[32], *with children*[33], *with adult family*[34]; or *with non-family*[35];
– and measures indicative of spending time on *sleeping and personal care*[36], *work*, *school and study*[37], *household work and child care*[38], *eating and drinking*[39], *socializing*, *hobbies*, *and indoor games*[40], on *sports*, *social*, *and cultural participation*[41], *transportation*[42], *reading*[43], *listening to radio or audio*[44], *ICT use*[45], and *watching television or video*[46].

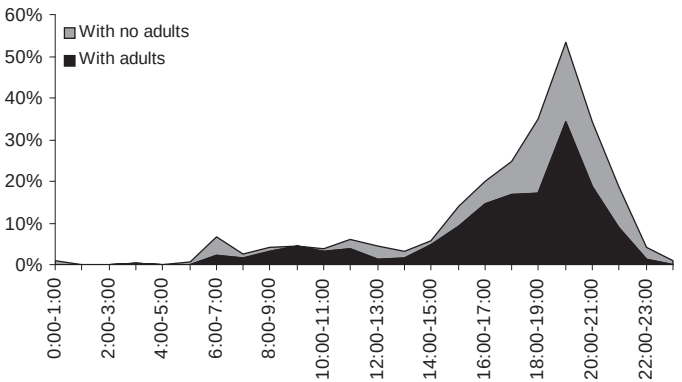

Figure 1. *Percentage of adolescents viewing by co-presence of adults and time of the day (N=91)*

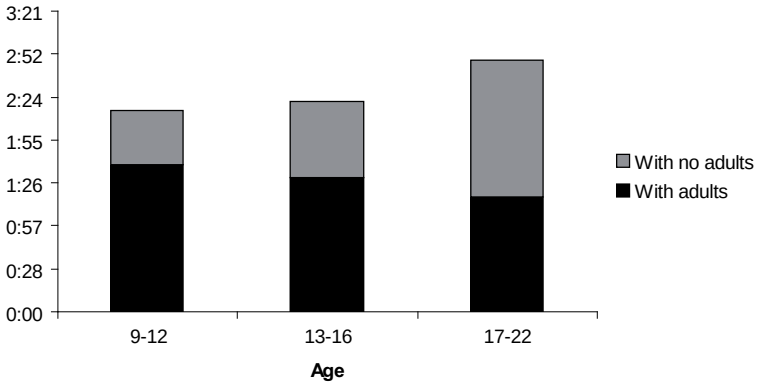

Figure 2. *Adolescents' viewing time by co-presence of adults and age (N=91)*

Results

Before w present the main findings of our study, we will first present a general picture of viewing of our adolescents sample[47]. Figure 1 shows that viewing by adolescents peaks between 19:00 and 20:00. By then more than fifty percent of the adolescents in our sample are watching.

Furthermore, we see that most adolescent viewing (approximately sixty percent) occurs in the co-presence of adult family members, and a somewhat smaller proportion in the co-presence of non-adults or alone. We can see that these two types of watching occur at roughly the same times[48].

In our sample, the difference between watching television in the presence of adults and watching television alone or with non-adults is clearly age-related. Older adolescents tend to spend most time in front of the television, but they spend least time watching television in the co-presence of adult family. For younger adolescents, the opposite is true. These findings thus suggest a developmental pattern in which adolescents increasingly develop a habit of watching television alone or with contemporaries, and decreasingly with adult family (father, mother); just as one should expect on the basis of the general theory of adolescence as a time of increasing (symmetrical) contact with contemporaries and decreasing (asymmetrical) contact with parents. However, even the oldest age group spends half of their viewing time in the co-presence of adult family. So, even for this group it seems interesting to analyze how their viewing is influenced by their parents and how they themselves influence parental viewing. In the subsequent event history analysis we will investigate how these activities of viewing are initiated and stopped by the social and personal characteristics of the individual.

Adolescent viewing initiation

Our final model predicting *adolescent viewing initiation* is presented in Table 1. In the first two rows, we see that time of the day does have a significant effect on viewing initiation. (Predicting adolescent viewing initiation solely on the basis of time of the day and its square would result in a peak of viewing initiation at 15:30). It means that the chances of viewing initiation vary throughout the day, and are at their maximum during the afternoon.

Table 1. *Factors influencing children's viewing initiation at home (N = 4195 person-quarters; Nagelkerke's R^2 = 27.9 %)*

		B	S.E.	-2LR Change	df	Sig.
Time	Quarter	.100	.0352	11.39	2	.003
	Quarter (squared)	-.001	.0004			
Shared	Number of television sets	.450	.0841	28.36	1	.000
Child	Viewing as seclusion	.335	.1326	6.16	1	.013
	*At home**	-1.172	.2540	19.42	1	.000
	*With adult family**	.591	.1932	9.38	1	.002
	*Sleeping and personal care**	-.916	.3465	7.32	1	.007
	*Household work and child care**	.856	.2959	7.45	1	.006
Father	Age	-.045	.0206	5.04	1	.025
	Egalitarian values	-.273	.1151	5.88	1	.015
	*Work, school and study**	-.797	.2222	13.22	1	.000
	*Transportation**	-1.848	.6194	14.24	1	.000
Mother	Habitual co-viewing	.483	.1321	14.17	1	.000
	*Sleeping and personal care**	-1.177	.4576	7.03	1	.008
	Constant	-3.966	1.4477	7.50	1	.006

* Variable is lagged, it refers to situations or activities during *previous* quarter
[a] Note that the unit of analysis is the person-quarter (here the 4195 quarters during which our 86 child-respondents were at risk of starting to watch television).

From a theoretical point of view, the effect presented in the third row of Table 1 is rather interesting. Here we see that the number of television sets in a household is very important for understanding how often and how early adolescents start watching. The raw data from our sample (N = 4195 person-quarters of adolescents) show that there is a clear linear relationship between number of television sets at home and the chances of starting or restarting television viewing while at home; for adolescents with 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 television sets, observed chances for (re)initiation during the next quarter are 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 percent – provided they were not already viewing. This suggests that adolescents watch more television

if they have more opportunities to watch privately. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the fourth row, which shows that adolescents who prefer to watch television in seclusion tend to start or restart viewing early.

Our analysis further reveals some time-varying situational influences. If an adolescent was already at home the previous quarter, his/her chances of starting or restarting viewing are reduced. Because we here analyzed only quarters during which the adolescent was at home, this means viewing is often one of the first things that an adolescent starts doing after s/he has arrived at home. Unsurprisingly, we see that sleeping and personal care do have a negative effect on viewing initiation; they usually do not start watching if they are preparing to go to bed or if they are already asleep.

Furthermore we see that being with adult family has a positive effect on viewing. This suggests that family life also tends to promote television viewing, as a social event within the family, as earlier suggested by Hagen (1994) and Rothenbuhler (1985). This may seem somewhat odd because we earlier saw that privatization of media use is also enhancing viewing initiation. But there is apparently more than one pathway for adolescents towards watching television: privatization of television is one of pathway, but engagement in family life is another[49].

Table 1 further reveals some parental influences as well. We see that adolescents whose father is relatively old are less likely to start viewing, and that having a father who adheres to egalitarian values reduces viewing initiation as well. So the identities of fathers are influencing viewing decisions made by their adolescent children. Apart from that, there is also an immediate effect of what they are doing on viewing initiation by their adolescent child. If fathers are at work or on the road, their children tend to postpone television viewing. An explanation for this is that a father at work or on the road cannot watch television, and thus they are less likely to trigger viewing by their adolescent children.

What mothers do also has an influence on viewing initiation by their adolescent child. Habitual co-viewing by the mother, the fact that she has a habit of watching television with others, has a positive effect on adolescent viewing initiation. Moreover, we find that if the mother has gone to bed (or is engaged in personal care) then the chances that her adolescent child will start watching television are reduced as well. So again we see that the family context of the adolescent may induce viewing.

Finally, we like to draw attention to two things that are *not* presented in Table 1. First, our data do *not* show that that adolescents start watching because their parents were already watching. That is apparently not the way in which parents influence their adolescents. It is the fact that other family members are around that triggers viewing initiation, not the specific fact that those other family members are watching television. Second, our data do *not* show that the antecedents of viewing initiation change during adolescence. We added an age related in-

teraction term for every main effect already found (so we entered age × quarter, age × quarter^2, age × number of television sets, etc. into the equation) but none of these interaction terms had any significant effect on the prediction of viewing initiation. So we did not find evidence supporting our theoretical assumption that the 'mechanisms'[50] that trigger viewing change during adolescence.

Adolescent viewing termination

Turning now to *adolescent viewing termination* (Table 2), we see that the chances of viewing vary throughout the day. Regressing adolescent viewing termination solely on time of the day and its square results in a model that peaks at 16:00. This means that the chances of terminating a viewing session are at their minimum during the second half of the afternoon.

Again, we find several indications for the social character of television viewing. However, in contrast to what we found earlier there is now a negative relationship between family life and watching television. If an adolescent has a habit of watching with others and if his/her father is available (because he is neither sleeping nor engaged in sports, social or cultural participation) then s/he tends to terminate his/her viewing sessions earlier.

Table 2. *Factors influencing children's viewing termination at home (N = 727 quarters; Nagelkerke's R^2 = 11.7 %)*

		B	S.E.	-2LR Change	df	Sig.
Time	Quarter	-.189	.0430	19.95	2	.000
	Quarter (squared)	.002	.0000			
Child	Amount of participation	.110	.0480	5.25	1	.022
	Habitual co-viewing	.317	.1080	9.10	1	.003
Father	Exclusive news viewing	.565	.1310	19.92	1	.000
	*Sleeping and personal care**	-1.477	.6270	7.17	1	.007
	*Sports, social and cultural participation**	-1.412	.5040	10.29	1	.001
	*Listening to radio or audio**	1.017	.3400	8.16	1	.004
Mother	Egalitarian values	-.295	.1400	4.61	1	.032
	Selective news viewing	.360	.1370	7.18	1	.007
	Constant	-.361	1.2310	.09	1	.769

* Variable is lagged, it refers to situations or activities during *previous* quarter

[a] Note that the unit of analysis is the person-quarter (here the 727 quarters during which our 86 child-respondents were at risk of terminating their television viewing session).

Another interesting finding in Table 2 is that viewing termination is positively related to more self-aware, goal-directed, deliberate types of action. Amount of participation is a positive predictor of termination, meaning that adolescents who are outgoing, who have a habit of visiting cinema, theater, ballet, concert or opera, exhibitions, museums, libraries, sporting events, amusement parks, or who went on an excursion or tourist trip, apparently tend to cut short their viewing episodes.

Early termination of viewing episodes is further enhanced by the parental news viewing styles. If an adolescent's father has a habit of watching the news without doing other things at the same time, and if an adolescent's mother exposes herself deliberately to newscasts, then the chances are high that the adolescent will be able to cut short his/her own viewing sessions.

Another finding in Table 2 is that viewing termination is enhanced if an adolescent's father is listening to the radio; perhaps that listening to the radio is 'hereditary' and that acts a substitute for watching television. A final finding in Table 2 is that adolescents whose mother adheres to egalitarian values tend to postpone viewing terminations. We do not see why this is so, perhaps it is a chance finding (but $p = .032$).

Again, we draw attention to the fact that adding age or age-related interaction terms do not result in a better model for prediction of viewing termination. So we conclude that age does not alter the mechanisms underlying adolescent viewing termination. And again, we see that parental viewing does not play a direct role; it does not inhibit or enhance viewing termination.

Parental viewing initiation

Leaving the case of adolescent viewing, we will look at what is causing television viewing by parents, and what role (adolescent) children play. We will first look at viewing initiation.

In Table 3, our final model predicting parental viewing initiation is presented. Again we see the significant impact of time of the day. Not surprisingly, our data indicate that parental viewing initiation peaks later than adolescent viewing initiation (18:00 vs. 15:30 respectively).

There are several similarities between parental and adolescent viewing initiation. A general pattern found earlier for adolescent viewing, namely that family life triggers viewing initiation, is re-emerging here. Again we see that viewing initiation is induced by arriving home, by the fact that an other household member has a habit of habitual co-viewing, and again we see that viewing initiation is delayed or postponed by sleeping and personal care, and by work, school or study related activities of other household members.

We further see that the way in which family life is affecting parental viewing changes as a function of adolescent age. [a] For parents with younger children,

arriving home does not trigger viewing initiation; but for parents with older children it does. [b] In families with younger (adolescent) children, the fact that one of the parents is having a meal hampers subsequent viewing initiation by the other parent. [c] In households with young adolescents, participation by one partner promotes viewing initiation by the other partner. In households with older adolescents, this effect does not occur.

Table 3. *Factors influencing parental viewing initiation at home[a] (N = 5261 person-quarters; Nagelkerke's R^2 = 28.2 %)*

		B	S.E.	-2LR Change	df	Sig.
Time	Quarter	.042	.0278	6.52	2	.038
	Quarter (squared)	.000	.0003			
Parent	Age	-.057	.0204	8.16	1	.004
	Interested in science and nature	.320	.1207	7.13	1	.008
	Interested in sports	.232	.0833	7.65	1	.006
	Habitual dissonant viewing	-.291	.1236	6.01	1	.014
	*At home**	1.211	1.0139	1.45	1	.229
	Idem × age children	-.175	.0671	6.87	1	.009
	*Sleeping and personal care**	-1.423	.3646	17.67	1	.000
	*Socializing, hobbies and indoor games**	-.520	.2370	5.18	1	.023
Other parent	Habitual co-viewing	.245	.1109	5.01	1	.025
	*Sleeping and personal care**	-1.139	.3597	10.89	1	.001
	*Work, school and study**	-.696	.2463	8.54	1	.003
	*Eating and drinking**	-3.350	1.2822	7.21	1	.007
	Idem × age children	.187	.0821	5.03	1	.025
	*Sports, social and cultural participation**	4.731	1.8160	6.80	1	.009
	Idem × age children	-.246	.1217	4.27	1	.039
	*Watching television or video**	.844	.2218	13.70	1	.000
Children	Amount of viewing	.002	.0007	4.46	1	.035
	*Work, school and study**	-.757	.2893	7.31	1	.007
	*ICT use**	-1.416	.7828	4.44	1	.035
	*Watching television or video**	.836	.2338	12.15	1	.000
	Age children	.127	.0649	3.82	1	.051
	Constant	-4.133	1.4294	.87	1	.352

* Variable is lagged, it refers to situations or activities during *previous* quarter

[a] Note that the unit of analysis is the person-quarter (here the 5261 quarters during which our 110 parent-respondents were at risk of starting to watch television).

These moderating effects are not what we expected. We expected that older adolescents had more influence on viewing decisions than younger ones. However, what we observe is that they lose influence. An explanation for this may be that if (adolescent) children grow older, they apparently become more self-reliant, and by becoming more self-reliant, they free their parents from their responsibility to reckon with their children.

Furthermore, we see that some parental viewing initiation is triggered by some mechanisms that do not play a role in adolescents. Old age, feelings of guilt about watching too much television, and spending much time on socializing, hobbies and indoor games inhibit or postpone viewing only for parents. Also, unlike adolescents, parents are drawn early to television viewing by an interest in science and nature and/or in sport[51]

Parental viewing termination

Finally, in Table 4 we present our model predicting parental viewing termination. Again, we looked at the time of termination. Parental viewing termination is at it lowest at 17:30. For adolescents, it is at its lowest at 16:00, so again we see that parental viewing lags adolescent viewing.

Table 4. *Factors influencing parental viewing termination at home (N = 845 quarters; Nagelkerke's R^2 = 10.3 %)*

		B	S.E.	-2LR Change	df	Sig.
Time	Quarter	-.152	.0322	22.29	2	.000
	Quarter (squared)	.001	.0003			
Parent	Viewing as surveillance	.213	.1029	4.33	1	.037
	*Sleeping and personal care**	1.131	.4436	5.89	1	.015
	*Household work and, child care**	.762	.3611	4.09	1	.043
Other parent	Interested in the weather	-.357	.1277	7.87	1	.005
	*At home**	-.408	.2021	3.98	1	.046
Children	Viewing as surveillance	-.260	.0958	7.51	1	.006
	Constant	3.494	.9977	12.26	1	.000

* Variable is lagged, it refers to situations or activities during *previous* quarter
[a] Note that the unit of analysis is the person-quarter (here the 845 quarters during which our 110 parent-respondents were at risk of terminating their television viewing session),.

Again, we see some evidence supporting the idea that family life and television viewing are positively related. If someone's partner is at home, then

watching television may last long (but engagement in household work and child care also increase the likelihood of viewing termination). Unsurprisingly, again, we see that sleeping and personal care tend to cut short viewing episodes.

Furthermore, we find some results that are hard to explain. If parents see television viewing as their window to the world ('Viewing as surveillance') then they tend to watch short sessions. However, if their (adolescent) children see viewing as their window to the world, then parental viewing termination tends to be inhibited or postponed. Nor have we a clear picture as to why interest in the weather of one parents prolongs viewing by the other parent. All in all, we conclude that we have still a rather bleak picture of how parental viewing termination takes shape.

Conclusion

Answering our first and second research questions, we conclude that the most important social and personal antecedents of television viewing, for both parents and their adolescent children, have to do with aspects of *family life*. Connecting with other family members usually encourages television viewing initiation, and this is true for both parents and (adolescent) children. Yet there are some exceptions to this rule. In the first place we saw that contact with other family members is protecting adolescents from watching too long. In the second place we saw that parents of young children are sometimes hampered in watching television by their responsibilities for young children. However, the overall picture remains that family life fosters television viewing.

A second factor fostering television viewing is the privatization of television use. This factor only affects adolescents. Adolescents in households with many TV sets and adolescents who think that television viewing is something you have to do on your own start watching early. However, they do not stop early, so the privatization of television use clearly results in watching more television by adolescents. It does not affect parental viewing.

The answer to our third research question is that we found no evidence in support of our idea that the mechanisms underlying viewing change during adolescence. We did find some evidence that the mechanisms underlying parental viewing change during that period, but the nature of this change was expected. We expected that the adolescent would more and more assume an adult role, and as a result, would gain more influence on parental viewing decisions. However, what we found was that older adolescents where less reckoned with, probably because they thought they could care for themselves and did not need extra attention.

Discussion

Our findings clearly show that parents influence viewing behaviors of their adolescent children. Yet, parental influence seems to be a side-effect of the way in which parents organize their own lives (most notably their timing of work, sleep, participation, and transportation). This finding is very much in line with earlier work by Hamilton (1998) and Comstock and Scharrer (2001), who see adolescent viewing in part as an unintended consequence of parental conduct. Our findings further documented 'reverse socialization' effects as hypothesized by Van den Bulck and Van den Bergh (2005). The clearest example of this is our finding that if a teenager is watching television, s/he is also triggering his/her parents to do likewise. This is rather similar to the way in which parents influence each other.

On a more general level, our findings fit rather well into our action theoretical conceptualization of media use, formulated elsewhere (Renckstorf and Wester, 2004; Westerik et al., 2006). Our data show that both chronic situations imposed on the teenager (e. g., parental age, parental values, number of television sets at home) as well as transient ones (e. g., time of the day, co-presence of others, own activities, activities of parents) have their impact on viewing decisions by the teenager. Our data further confirm our ideas about television viewing as a social activity. Television viewing is clearly responsive to the influence of others.

Finally, we present some practical implications of our studies. From this point of view, the large impact that number of television sets at home has on teenagers' viewing initiation may be our most salient finding. This finding can be used as an empirical argument in support of pediatric recommendations to remove television sets from adolescent bedrooms (cf. AAP, 2001; Comstock and Scharrer, 2001). On the other hand, it casts doubt on the effectiveness of parental co-viewing and parental discussion of television programs as ways of restraining teenage television viewing. Discussion appeared to have no effect at all, while co-viewing had mixed effects. It appeared to stimulate teenage viewing initiation but it reduced the duration of viewing episodes. Duration of teenage viewing episodes was further restrained by selective and exclusive parental news viewing styles. So all in all, parents do have some influence on teenage television viewing; but teenagers do have an influence on parental viewing as well.

Notes

1. Aged two years and older
2. In Europe, the minimum age for being included in television use statistics is not uniform. It varies from 3 years old (Switzerland and Sweden) to 12 years old (Austria, Luxemburg, Norway).

3. In response to the questions "What were you doing? What else were you doing?" respondent could describe in their own words what they had done, during a given quarter. These answers were preliminary coded using the three digit code scheme introduced by Eurostat (2000) No difference was made between primary and secondary activities. Recoding of three-digit Eurostat codes into 10 broader activity categories was done by applying the following scheme: 010, 011, 012, 019, 530, 531 030, 031, 032, 033, 039 J Sleeping and Personal Care; 020, 021, 022, 029 J Eating and Drinking; 100, 110, 111, 112, 113, 119, 121, 122, 131, 133, 139, 141, 142, 149, 200, 210, 211, 212, 213, 219, 220, 221 J Work, School, and Study ; 300, 310. 311, 312, 313, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 329, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 365, 366, 369, 370, 371, 379, 390 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 389 J Household Work and Child Care; 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 519, 540, 364, 700, 710, 711, 712, 713, 719, 720, 721, 726, 722, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 739 J Socializing, Hobbies and Indoor Games; 410, 411, 412, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 391, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 529, 600, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 621, 630, 631 J Sports, Social and Cultural participation; 800, 810, 811, 813, 814, 815, 819 J Reading; 820, 821, 822, 829 J Watching Television or Video; 830, 831, 832, 839 J Listening to Radio or Audio. 900 thru 994 J Transportation. Note that the dummy for Watching Television or Video was *not* used as a predictor of the initiation or termination of someone's own television viewing; it was only used as a predictor of the initiation or termination television viewing by others.
4. For analyses explaining adolescent viewing, we only included person-quarters for adolescents (i. e. 86 persons × 96 quarters per person = 8256 person-quarters) minus the first quarters of days (because of incomplete data) minus the quarters for which respondents did not indicate to be at home. This resulted in a total of 4922 valid person-quarters. Because one cannot predict viewing initiation for adolescents already viewing, the adolescent viewing initiation file consists of 4195 records indicative of quarters during which adolescents were at risk of viewing. During the remaining 727 quarters they were at risk of viewing termination, so these quarters make up the adolescent viewing termination file. Both files with data on adolescent viewing were supplemented with predictor variables relating to own characteristics of the adolescent (e. g. adolescent age), and parental characteristics (e. g. father's age, mother's age). In a likewise fashion, we created files for analyzing parental viewing initiation and termination. So, we first created a set of 10560 parental person-quarters (based on 110 parents, each contributing 96 quarters) of which we retained 6355 quarters with valid scores for which parents had confirmed being at home. During 5261 of these quarters, they were at risk of viewing initiation, and during 845 quarters at risk of viewing termination. For the parental files, definition of viewing initiation and termination was identical to that used for the adolescent files. Yet, a slightly different procedure was used for adding predictor variables. In families with more than one adolescent, the adolescent related predictor variables were defined as the mean of valid scores for all adolescents (e. g., mean age adolescents). \
5. Range 3 through 8; M = 4.3; SD = 1.01.
6. Range 0 through 5 ; M = 2.4; SD = 1.09.
7. Age of the 55 sampled fathers ranged from 32 thru 67 (M = 46.5, SD = 5.82), that of the 55 mothers from 31 thru 66 (M = 43.7, SD = 5.39), that of the 86 sampled 'adolescents' from 9 thru 22 (M = 14.5. SD = 3.46).

8. The gender distribution among the sampled adolescents was 39.4 % male (= 1) and 60.6 % female (= 2). Gender of parents was used to categorize them as father or mother.
9. Education was measured ranging from unfinished primary school (= 1) through postgraduate education (= 10). It was defined as highest completed level for fathers (M = 6.0, SD = 2.13) and mothers (M = 5.18, SD = 1.87). For adolescents, it was defined as highest attended level of education (M = 4.8, SD = 2.11).
10. No value orientations were measured for adolescents. All value orientations were measured using scales described by Scheepers, Schreuder, Felling, Peters, and Eisinga (1987). Fathers and mothers were asked to rate the importance of several items (varying from 1 = Not important at all, to 5 = very important). *Adherence to hedonistic values* was defined as the mean importance of 'having fun' and of 'enjoying life' for father (M = 3.6; SD = .84; Cronbach's alpha = .84) and mothers (M = 4.0; SD = .91; alpha = .83).
11. *Family values* was defined as the mean importance of 'a happy family life', 'having children', 'the future of my children', and 'paying attention to family life' for fathers (M = 4.1; SD = .63; alpha = .83) and mothers (M = 4.3; SD = .66; alpha = .83).
12. Adherence to *egalitarian values* was defined as the mean perceived importance of 'commitment to a society in which everyone has a voice', 'contributing to reduction of income differences', 'breaking through relations of power', and 'promoting equality in society' for fathers (M = 2.9; SD = .89; alpha = .87) and mothers (M = 2.9; SD = .73; alpha = .83).
13. Interest were measured using scales ranging from 'no interest' (1) through 'very strong interest' (5). *News interest* was defined as the mean of interest in 'economy and finance', 'politics', 'employment and unemployment', 'adolescent education', 'accidents and disasters', 'celebrities', and 'current affairs and debates' for adolescents (alpha = 0.83; M = 2.2; SD = 0.73), fathers (alpha = 0.55; M = 3.1; SD = 0.42), and mothers (alpha = 0.47; M = 3; SD = 0.39).
14. *High culture interest* was defined as the mean of the items measuring interest in 'classical music' and 'theatre plays and cabaret' for adolescents (alpha = 0.52; M = 2.1; SD = 0.93), fathers (alpha = 0.44; M = 2.4; SD = 0.81), and mothers (alpha = 0.55; M = 2.5; SD = 0.89).
15. *Interest in science and nature* was defined as the mean of two items measuring interest in 'science' and 'nature' respectively for adolescents (alpha = 0.66; M = 2.6; SD = 1.08), fathers (alpha = 0.64; M = 3.6; SD = 0.82), and mothers (alpha = 0.54; M = 3; SD = 0.79).
16. *Interest in sports* was measured with a single item for adolescents (M = 3.1; SD = 1.31), fathers (M = 3.1; SD = 1.22), and mothers (M = 2.4; SD = 0.88).
17. *Interest in religion* was measured with a single item for adolescents (M = 2.2; SD = 1.14), fathers (M = 3.1; SD = 1.21), and mothers (M = 3.2; SD = 1.12).
18. *Interest in the weather* was measured with a single item for adolescents (M = 2.8; SD = 1.14), fathers (M = 3.4; SD = 0.91), and mothers (M = 3.6; SD = 0.66).
19. *Viewing for surveillance* was measured as agreeing (1 = totally disagree, 5 = totally agree) with 'television for me is a window to the world' for adolescents (M = 2.6; SD = 1.08), fathers (M = 3.1, SD = .92), and mothers (M = 3.1; SD = .88).
20. *Viewing for seclusion* was measured as agreeing with 'Television viewing is something you must do when there are no others around' for adolescents (M = 1.9; SD = .74), fathers (M = 2.1, SD = .69) and mothers (M = 2.0; SD = .69).

21. *Viewing as socializing* was measured as agreeing with 'I like sitting with the whole household nicely around the television set' for adolescents (M = 3.5; SD = 1.04), fathers (M = 3.4, SD = .83) and mothers (M = 3.4; SD = .90).
22. *Habitual dissonant viewing* was defined as the frequency of 'being sorry for having watched television the whole evening (1 = never, 5 = almost always), for adolescents (M = 1.7; SD = .74), fathers (M = 2.0; SD = .72), and mothers (M = 1.9; SD = .77).
23. *Habitual conversational viewing* was defined analogous as the frequency of 'talking with other household members about what I in that moment see on television', for adolescents (M = 2.3; SD = .77), fathers (M = 2.5; SD = .89), and mothers (M = 2.3; SD = .72).
24. *Habitual co-viewing* was defined as mean of responses on two items 'of the times you are watching television, how often do you watch with fellow household members' (1 = never, 5 = almost always), and the reversed coded 'of the times you are watching television, how often do you watch alone', for adolescents (alpha = .67; M = 3.6; SD = .98), fathers (alpha = .69; M = 3.8; SD = .78), and mothers (alpha = .83; M = 3.8; SD = .79).
25. Selective news viewing was measured as the mean of three items ('I keep track with time not to miss the TV news', 'I plan the evening not to miss the TV news', 'I watch the news attentively from start to finish') for adolescents (alpha = .80; M = 3.7; SD = .81), for fathers (alpha = .46; M = 2.9; SD = .79), and mothers (alpha = .68; M = 3.0; SD = .82). Answers varied from 'Does not apply at all' (1) to 'Applies to me entirely' (5).
26. *Exclusive news viewing* was based on three items as well: 'I often read while watching TV News'; 'My mind wanders about during watching TV News'; 'I talk about other things while watching TV news' for adolescents (alpha = .68; M = 3.8; SD = .71), fathers (alpha = .82; M = 3.1; SD = .97), and mothers (alpha = .80; M = 2.9; SD = .90). Original codings are reversed here.
27. *Amount of participation* was measured by asking fathers, mothers and adolescents how often during the last four weeks they went to 'the cinema'; 'theater, ballet, concert or opera', 'an arts exhibition or a museum', 'a library', 'as a spectator to a sporting event', 'on a excursion, a tourist trip, or to an amusement park', and then summing up the answers for adolescents (M = 2,7; SD = 2,13), fathers (M = 1.7; SD = 1.95), and mothers (M = 4.3; SD = 12.48).
28. *Amount of sports activities* was measured in a similar way. So, respondents had to indicate how often during the last four weeks they engaged in 'jogging, running, walking as a sport', 'cycling as a sport', 'skiing', 'swimming as a sport', 'gymnastics', 'ballgames', or 'rowing, yacht racing, windsurfing' and then their answers were summed, resulting scores for adolescents (M = 5.8; SD = 6.76), fathers (M = 7,6; SD = 8,01), and mothers (M = 10,3; SD = 21,88).
29. *Amount of television viewing,* which was measured as the reported average amount of watching television and video's in minutes per day, for adolescents (M = 170; SD = 105), fathers (M = 149; SD = 115), and mothers (M = 143; SD = 84).
30. *Time of the day* was defined using rank numbers of quarters starting with 1 (4:00–4:15) and ending with 96 (3:45–4:00 of the following day) and its square. We did not predict viewing initiation and termination for quarter 1, because we predicted initiation and termination on the basis of variables relating to the previous quarter, and no data on the quarter before quarter 1 were available.

31. This and the subsequent variables were all dummy coded (0 = no, 1 = yes). Note that we analyzed only predicted a persons initiation and termination for quarters that s/he was at home, and that not all actors had the same probability of being at home. Adolescents were 57.2 % of the sampled time at home, fathers 51.4 %, and mothers 65.5 %. This does not mean that the variable *at home* is constant for the person whose television viewing is predicted because the at home variable is lagged. When at home, respective chances of being *at home* during the previous quarter were 96.4 %, 96.2 %, and 95.7 % for adolescents, fathers, and mothers.
32. True for 47.4 %, 14.7 %, and 17.8 % of the time spent at home by adolescents, fathers, and mothers respectively.
33. True for 6.4 %, 4.2 %, and 9.2 % of the time (see note 32).
34. True for 39.1 %, 73.5 %, and 67.4 % % of the time (see note 32).
35. True for 6.0 %, 4.9 %, and 5.9 % of the time (see note 32).
36. True for 60.0 %, 52.1 %, and 42.9 % of the time (see note 32).
37. True for 5.0 %, 4.7 %, and 2.2 % of the time (see note 32).
38. True for 2.5 %, 8.0 %, and 25.2 % of the time (see note 32).
39. True for 7.2 %, 9.0 %, and 11.7 % of the time (see note 32).
40. True for 8.4 %, 8.9 %, and 9.4 % of the time (see note 32).
41. True for 0.5 %, 0.7 %, and 0.2 % of the time (see note 32).
42. True for 2.5 %, 1.9 %, and 2.2 % of the time (see note 32).
43. True for 0.3 %, 4.2 %, and 2.8 % of the time (see note 32).
44. True for 4.4 %, 7.2 %, and 10.1 % of the time (see note 32).
45. True for 1.9 %, 2.1 %, and 0.8 % of the time (see note 32).
46. True for 14.8 %, 16.4 %, and 11.8 % of the time (see note 32).
47. The sample size here is 91, in the event history analysis 86 (because of missing data). Note that the ages of the 'adolescents' in our sample range from 9 to 22 years.
48. The correlation between the average percentage of adolescents watching alone per hour with the percentage of adolescents watching in the co-presence of adult household members per hour is .90 ($N = 24$; $P < .001$).
49. Another indication for the close connection between engagement in family life and viewing initiation is the positive effect of doing household work on subsequent viewing initiation.
50. Or to put it more precisely: the routines.
51. Note that in the row before the last row of Table 3, a non-significant effect of adolescent age is presented. We did not remove this effect because we could otherwise not determine the significance of interaction effects involving the 'young adolescents' variable.

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Chapter 6

On the use of an action theoretical approach to television (news) viewing

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Abstract

In this chapter, we summarize the main findings and conclusions of this research enterprise on the social embeddedness of television (news) use. We will sketch the theoretical background of the studies at hand and the dynamic character of television (news) use as it is situated in the context of everyday life. Finally, the implications of our studies for future research projects on this subject matter are discussed.

Keywords: Social embeddedness, media use, everyday life, future research

The theoretical context of the project

Our project was designed to study and analyze what role factors, processes and situations at the individual, the family household, and the societal level play in shaping patters of media use and how media use and non-media activities are related in an everyday life context. To answer these questions, we used insights from three research traditions.

The first of these traditions is one that asks what *stable factors* determine the use of different media. This field of study explains differences in media use on the basis of *individual characteristics* (such as gender, age, education, psychological make-up and interests), *family and household characteristics* (such as parental education, household composition, availability of media equipment), *and / or societal characteristics* (such as the average number of working hours per week and the available volume of television broadcasts). Examples of research in this tradition can be found in the work of Bryce (1987), Charlton and Neuman (1986), Huysmans (2001), Kraaykamp (2001), McLeod et al. (1996), Morley (1986), Neverla (1992), Van Dijk (1994), Westerik (2001), and Westerik, Konig, & Huysmans (2007).

A second research tradition has focused on *developmental processes* that individuals, families, and societies go through. For instance, it is well-known that media use changes over the life course (e. g. Bonfadelli, 1981, 1993; Dimmick, McCain, & Bolton, 1979, Eggermont, 2006; Mares & Woodard, 2006; Westerik, 2001), that changes in media use have to do with the developmental cycle of households (Zuzanek & Smale, 2001; Westerik, 2001), and that media use is affected by broader social changes or trends such as individualization and increased media availability (e. g. Jonscher, 1995).

A third research tradition has focused on *media use as the consequence of subjectively defined problems*. The 'Media use As Social Action' approach (Renckstorf, 1996; Renckstorf & Wester, 2004) can be seen as a example of this tradition that treats media use as a form of social action, i. e. as something that is constructed by self-aware individuals.

By assuming that individuals do not only reckon with more or less stable characteristics of themselves, others, and the society at large, but also with the dynamics that may be inherent in individuals, households and societies, it is possible and sensible to integrate these fields of study. According to this perspective, individuals will cope with stable characteristics and dynamisms as these are part of their everyday lives, and their way of coping with problems will often be connected with the practical nature of their everyday lives; for instance it will mostly be linked to specific times, specific places, and the interaction with specific others (cf. Schutz & Luckmann, 1973; 1989).

Theory

As has been stressed throughout the foregoing chapters, the whole project is rooted in the earlier formulated 'Media use As Social Action' perspective (Renckstorf, 1996; Renckstorf & Wester, 2004). Hence, it is also placed against the background of long term developments in the field of mass communications research, in which increasingly attentions was paid to the audience as a social category of active, self-aware and goal-directed agents. In the second chapter of this monograph, we discussed contemporary approaches that have studied audience activity. The most prominent of these apparently is the 'uses and gratifications' approach (U&G, Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). We argued that at the heart of this approach as it became institutionalized in the 1970s were *rational choice theories* such as the Expectancy Value (EV) theory and Subjective Expected Utility (SEU) theory (Edwards, 1954; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Underlying these theories are three assumptions: [a] *people act on the basis of complete or adequate information*, [b] *people are rational*, i. e. they can determine the utility of all alternative actions and decide for that alternative that has highest value or utility, and [c] *people have full control over their actions*.

We contrasted these assumptions with assumptions of Schutzean action theory (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973; 1989). Schutz portrays human action as something that is inextricably linked to 'everyday life', 'life world', and 'situations'. In Schutzean sociology, these concepts refer to realities that transcend the individual, in the sense that they are "partly imposed on, partly (…) 'feasible' for, the individual" (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 113). Consequently, *one cannot assume that individuals are fully informed about, rational towards, or in control of their everyday lives.* All in all, Schutzean theory is thus less restrictive than the aforementioned rational choice theories and may therefore be a better tool for dealing with the increasing complexity of explanatory models used in contemporary U&G research (cf. Renckstorf, 1996; Rubin, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000). It can help to overcome difficulties in U&G models and offers pathways to future research. To give some illustrations from empirical studies:

– By not assuming that actions are based on *full information,* research is invited on what people know and what people do not know about the media and their content, how this may change over time (e. g. what people learn from media through their media experiences) and how this affects their actions (including media use).

  Key mechanisms related to the uses and effects of the media cannot be understood if one does not weaken the full information assumption. The study of Norris (2000) may serve as an example for this. Norris argues that there are social differences in political knowledge, media use and civic engagement and that these differences are related to each other by means of a "virtuous circle" (Norris, 2000). She states that those most interested and knowledgeable pay most attention to political news. Learning more about public affairs reduces the barriers to further civic engagement and those who are politically involved become more interested in political news.

  Norris thus assumes that the decision to use news media use is not based on full information: there *are* differences in political knowledge, and these differences *do* affect decisions made with respect to news media use. Furthermore, her example shows that finding out such differences and how they can be explained may be a rewarding task for social scientists.

  Or to give an example of another possible virtuous circle: the relationship between patterns of listening to music, gathering and sharing music related information, and peer group involvement. It is evident that these behaviors are related (Von Feilitzen & Roe, 1992).Yet studying how these behaviors evolve and how they influence each other only makes sense if one can assume that there are interrelated – an assumption that is at odds with a the classic economic idea that choices are based on full information.

– Weakening the assumption that people act *fully rational* also seems necessary. After all, it is obvious that many people feel discontent with watching television for too long (cf. Hagen, 1994[a, b]). Heavy viewers often feel less

happy than those who watch little TV (Frey, Benesch, & Stutzer, 2007). And thus it seems obvious that "TV viewing is not generally utility maximizing" say the economists Frey, Benesch, and Stutzer (2007, 284). In their their view, TV viewing may often be described in terms of 'overconsumption' which is caused by the combination of people's 'time inconsistent preferences' and the differential short and long term costs of television viewing (e. g. immediate relaxation at the cost of not enough sleep, underinvestment in social contacts, education, and career).

The idea of time-inconsistent behavioral preferences is at odds with a strict straightforward interpretation of behavior as a purely rational affair. But it *is* consistent with action theoretical notions, such as the concept of 'thematic relevance' and the situation-boundedness of actions. With such concepts Schutz and Luckmann (1973, 1989) remind us of the fact that that what is important in one situation may be irrelevant in other situations. Choice processes and preferences may differ from situation to situation, and as a consequence, we may not assume that individuals will always be consistent. And thus they may regret sometimes the decisions they have made in a way that is inconsistent with the rationality assumptions underlying SEU models.

– Weakening of the *full control* assumption is a further step that communication research should take. This is most obvious for types of media use that require some expertise, for instance the use of print media and internet media. A well-known uses and gratification study in which the *full control* assumption is relaxed is that of LaRose & Eastin (2004) on internet use in which they show that differences in 'self-efficacy' for internet use (its 'perceived ease of use') are very important for understanding why people use or avoid internet use.

  However, weakening the full control assumption may also be important for less obvious reasons. For instance, it may not be obvious that the concept of self-efficacy is relevant for understanding why people watch television. After all, nearly all people can watch television, and only very few people will have difficulty finding a television program that they can understand. But that does, however, not mean that they are in full control of the television experience. As we have discussed in chapter 5, the perhaps the 'active' part of television exposure may not be the decision to start or to continue watching, but the decision to limit viewing time (see chapter 5) . For this, self-control is needed (Frey et al., 2007), and we all may have problems with that from time to time (cf. Hagen, 1994[a, b]), yet socially disadvantages groups may have such problems more often than others (cf. Hur, 2006).

In our research project, consisting of empirical studies, we thus decided to go beyond the restrictive assumptions of the above-described rational choice models. We have done this in three ways:

– First, we emphasized the concepts of *routines* and *personal interests* to explain differences in television viewing – largely as alternatives for and extensions of so-called rational decision making. Like rational decision making, these routines and interest guide action. Moreover, they are based on some information (mainly past experiences), present a selection of lines of action over which the individual has some control, and usually result in acts that the individual regards as beneficial. However, following routines and interest is not fully rational.
– Second, we emphasized the role of what Schutz and Luckmann (1989) called 'the medium transcendencies' of everyday life: *the unpredictable and uncontrolled influence that people have on each others actions.* This was done by analyzing data not from individuals, but from whole households.
– Third, we took the little transcendencies of everyday life into consideration, i. e. we paid attention to the fact that action is always tied to and constrained by a specific *place and time*.

Methods

In order to study the medium and little transcendencies of everyday life, use was made of diary data from members of 225 Dutch households (consisting of 225 couples and their children). For every quarter of a random selected week day, every respondent was asked to write down in his/own words what s/he was doing (both primary and secondary activities). Furthermore. they were asked to indicate for each quarter where and with whom they were, and which medium (if any) they were using. These data thus measured *time and place sensitive aspects of the situations* in which the respondents (couples/parents or children) were involved (i. e. aspects of the little transcendencies of everyday life) and by analyzing associations in the data, we were able to find out how these little transcendencies affect media use. By linking the data of the differing household members, we were also able to analyze how the actual co-presence of others and their actions influenced media use. In other words: we were able to study *the interaction context of media use* or, in more general terms (of Schutz & Luckmann, 1973) the role played others as the medium transcendencies of everyday life.

To analyze the above described diary data, we extensively employed discrete time event history analysis (for a full a description see the methods sections in the chapters 3, 4 & 5). This analytical tool allowed to analyze the above described data – including both *time varying and time constant variables* – simultaneously. An additional advantage of event history analysis is that it allowed us to go beyond a correlation design and utilize the temporal within data to make some distinction between antecedents of media use and their consequences – the acts of media use themselves.

Findings

The general framework presented in chapter 2 *("Transcending Uses and Gratifications:*

Media use as Social Action and the use of Event History Analysis") was then elaborated in three empirical studies. In the first study, presented in chapter 3 *("The situational and time-varying context of routines in television viewing: An event history analysis"*), we focused on the idea that media use (here: television viewing) is bound to specific times and places, the idea that it is interwoven with other aspects of everyday life (e. g. other activities), and the idea that others (here: partners) co-shape action (here: television viewing). The analysis confirmed several of the above formulated ideas: television viewing was indeed empirically related to specific times and places, some activities did and other activities did not have a inhibiting effect on subsequent television viewing, and someone's own chances of television viewing were clearly influenced by the activity pattern in which his or her partner was engaged. Viewing by one partner appeared to trigger initiation of television viewing and to inhibit termination of television viewing. Another observation we made was that partner unavailability (because work or participatory activities) triggered television viewing and/or protected against termination of viewing.

In the second study *("Watching TV news in everyday life: An event history analysis")* we took a closer look at television viewing by focusing on [a] television news viewing of subjects while at home, and [b] the role played by processes of problem solving in this. Our basic assumption guiding this study was that TV news viewing is more efficient in *satisfying content related needs* (surveillance in particular) and less efficient in *satisfying process oriented needs* (cf. ritualistic viewing, Rubin, 1984). This implies that the more news a person has seen [a] the weaker the influence of content related needs on viewing decision to be made and [b] the stronger the role played by process related needs.

Our findings generally supported the idea that the motivations for news viewing really change as a function of the amount of news a person has already seen (surveillance becomes less important, ritualistic motivations are getting more important). Our findings further confirm insights from audience flow research that people often do not watch because of program content, but because it is the right time to watch, as part of a daily ritual (e. g. because they have just arrived home), or because they were already watching television. Interestingly, we did not find that partner characteristics had much of an influence on news viewing. Combined, the findings of these two studies suggest that the influence of partners on each other's news viewing habits is *indirect*: if one partner is watching television, then s/he encourages the other partner to do likewise (cf. chapter 3) and this in turn may bring about news viewing as well (cf. chapter 4).

In our third study ("The social character of parental and adolescent television viewing: An event history analysis"), we focused on one of the most archetypal forms of social influence, the influence of parents on their children. We argued that because children are raised to increasingly bear responsibility themselves, parental influence on children's viewing habits will diminish as the child grows older. The increasing maturity of the child may also result in a process of reverse socialization, whereby parents are influenced by their children. Our study indeed showed that parents influenced children's viewing, and that children influenced viewing by their parents. Yet there appeared to be no gradual increase of children's control during the teenage years. The control that children have they already seem to have before they enter the teenage years, and the final step can apparently only be made by starting a household.

This third study thus again documented the *social character* of television viewing. Parents and children all influence each other viewing behavior. Our findings indicate that children influence parental viewing very much in the way in which parents influence each other. Yet there are some peculiarities: young children tend to *inhibit* viewing by a parent immediately after homecoming and after having meals or drinks. The influence of parents can often by described as unintended consequences of their parental lives (see also Comstock & Scharrer, 2001). For instance, it is not very likely that fathers engage in sports, social or cultural events or go to bed with the viewing habits of their children in mind. But there is a link, in that the aforementioned activities by the father tend to prolong television viewing by their children.

Limitations

Taken together, our empirical studies substantiated many ideas laid down in the theoretical framework: [a] we assumed and found that television viewing is to be seen as an integral part of everyday life; [b] we assumed and found that television viewing and television viewing was tied to specific times, places and activities; [c] we assumed and found that someone's own acts of viewing were influenced by others as well; and [d] we assumed and found that effort saving routines played a major role in the process.

Yet, with the wisdom of hindsight, we are aware of several limitations. A first limitation is that our data were gathered in just one country, the Netherlands, during the first three months of 2000. Needless to say, this sample cannot fully represent or mirror today's patterns of media use. In 2000 less than 40 percent of the Dutch households had access to the Internet at home, almost exclusively dial-up access via a modem. Today, more than 85 percent of the households has access to the internet at home, with 73 percent of all Dutch households having access via a broadband connection (Huysmans, De Haan, & Van den Broek,

2004; CBS, 2007). Another limitation of our studies is, of course, the relatively small sample size (225 households).

A third limitation is that we analyzed the relationship between the various non-media characteristics and acts of viewing in just one way. We only analyzed whether situations at a given quarter (t_0) will result in (news) viewing initiation or termination during the next quarter (t_1). This means *we did not analyze effects over a different time lag,* which might have been interesting as well. For instance, it might be interesting to predict viewing initiation on the basis of viewing patterns of a day or a week earlier, by which we could check for the effects of daily or weekly rhythms and repeat viewing. Unfortunately, or data did not allow for this kind of analysis. Moreover, *we did not analyze the effect of watching television on the performance of other activities* (resulting in questions like: does watching television inhibit or enhance family talk? Does it hinder or postpone participation?) *Nor did we analyze the co-occurrence of television viewing with other activities* (what else do people do while watching television?) In all of these cases, our data did not allow for these analyses. So, much is left to be done…

Another limitation was that we did not have measures of subjective experiences of situations at our disposal. This is a severe limitation, as according to our theoretical perspective, it is not the 'objective' situation as such that triggers a response (e. g. viewing termination) but the situation as it is subjectively perceived and mentally dealt with by the actor. Of course, given that many actions are part of society wide institutionalized patterns (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966) it is very likely that there are common connections between recurring situations and patterns of media use. Yet, even in more or less similar situations it is perfectly normal that people differ in how they deal with it. One father talking with his child may be reminded of a promise to help his child fixing a flat tire. But another father in the same situation may leave home and go to a public meeting were he is expected to attend, thereby bringing his child in a situation in which television viewing is more likely to occur.

In other words, the 'objective situation' (i. e. the definition of a situations that is shared and taken for granted definitions by actors, again Berger & Luckmann, 1966) may be very similar but its effects will remain rather unpredictable unless one also takes into account the 'subjective definition' of the situation including the problems defined by the actor, in our previous example: the problems associated with 'remembering a promise to help with a flat tire' and a 'feeling a responsibility to attend a meeting' respectively. Such subjective definitions of situations are however largely lacking from the current studies because diaries are not well-suited to gather such detailed information. As an alternative for a direct measurement of the mental processes, we inferred some of these processes by means of what one might call the inferential method (Hendriks Vettehen, Renckstorf, & Wester 1996). Additionally, we combined

combinations of gratifications and accumulated levels of news use on a given day to a proxies for actual levels of news gratifications obtained. Though this procedure rendered interesting results, it may be argued that a direct measurement is more convincing than the indirect pathways followed here[1].

Still another limitation was that our quantitative analytical method forced us to code data in a specific way, which might have been coded also in different but meaningful ways. To give an example, in chapter 3 we analyzed how several everyday life activities have an enhancing or blocking effect on subsequent television viewing. This analysis showed that some activities do and other activities do not such effects (e. g. we found that engagement in participatory activities had a strong blocking effect on subsequent initiation of television viewing). Yet, the coding scheme we used to categorize everyday activities (including participatory activities) stemmed from research dominated by microeconomic questions (e. g. research on the amount of informal production within the household), and the schemes used by this branch of research are not necessarily optimized to analyze the chances that someone will start/cease watching television or television news.

For instance, we put eating and drinking into the same category of activities ("Eating and drinking"), simply because the Eurostat (2000) activity coding list does not make a difference the activities of "having dinner" and "drinking coffee". From an economic point of view, this may make perfectly sense, but it may not be the most relevant coding in the context understanding what activities block and which activities enhance television viewing. For instance, one might hypothesize that there are many more families who see 'having dinner' as a defining family ritual characteristic of family life. If so, 'having dinner' is likely to block television viewing. On the other hand, one might hypothesize that 'drinking coffee' is less involving, and that it may therefore go well with watching television. In that case, 'drinking coffee' may even enhance television viewing – but we will never know of any difference between eating and drinking as long as these activities are treated as a single concept, and measured by a single variable. On the other hand, one also needs to set some limit to the number of activities that is coded separately (why on earth should one differentiate between the effects of drinking coffee and that of drinking tea or soft drinks?). So, in short, we lack up to now a categorization of activities that is tailored to the prediction of television (news) viewing.

Advancements and recommendations

Despite the above-mentioned evident limitations, we think our studies indeed contributed to the advancement of action theoretical study of television viewing in general and television news viewing in particular. On a general method-

ological level, our empirical studies showed some of the potential of applying event history analysis to discrete-time diary data to study television (news) viewing. This methodology allowed us to distinguish between the influence of *transient preconditions* for action (e. g time of the day, co-presence of others, actual performance of other activities) and the influence of *stable demographic characteristics* (e. g. gender, age, and education), *personal relevancies* (e. g. gratifications sought or obtained, interests), and *existing personal routines*. This was very desirable from a theoretical point of view, because it allowed us not only to asses simultaneously the importance of these variables which all have a place within the theoretical framework of the 'Media use As Social Action' approach. But it also allowed use to assess the usefulness of the two main theoretical approaches on television viewing: the 'Gratifications' paradigm with its focus on the influence of time constant phenomena, and the Audience Flow paradigm with its focus on the influence of time varying phenomena.

On a generalized theoretical level, our empirical studies corroborated the idea that television use is embedded in the social life of individuals. This social aspect was shown to operate at at least four levels. At the *societal level*, we saw the influence widely shared daily rhythms of supply and use of television programs and television news. At an *micro-social level*, we saw that household characteristics and characteristics of other household member influence viewing by the individual. At the *individual level*, we saw that viewing is determined by gratifications sought or obtained, demographic characteristics, habits and interests. And at the *situational level*, we saw that transient situations and activities of viewers and their partners also have some influence. In sum, then, we can conclude that viewing is embedded in the many situational, individual, interpersonal, and society-wide processes that make up everyday life. In combining the effects of the differing levels of organization, we were able to test and integrate findings from several theoretical approaches, most notably the audience flow research tradition (which stresses supra-individual influences) the uses and gratification tradition (which stresses individual influences), and social action theory (which stresses action as a process and as something that is tied to transient situations as experienced by individuals).

We regard our studies illustrations of how media use can be explained as a form of social action that arises in the midst of many influences. We have learned that many levels of organizations are important for understanding television viewing and television news viewing. Yet, a lot of work is still to be done. The gap between the theoretical concepts we used and the empirical reality under study still remains huge. For instance, we detected routine television use as a factor explaining television viewing, and we indeed saw that routine television use contributed to our prediction of discrete acts of viewing. Hence, we could not find out how the relationship between routinization of media use and discrete acts of media use should be seen, (e. g. does the process of routini-

zation work out for all persons in roughly the same way? What types of routinization can be distinguished? How are they related to differing acts of media use? How durable are they? Etc.) Nor did we gain full understanding of how and why non-media activities affect media activities. Is it a matter of choosing between allocating resources to either media or non-media activities? Or is it a matter of a cultural pattern that prescribes that some activities cannot be combined with television viewing? Or has it something to do with knowledge effects or the activation of scripts?. Such small and precise questions should be dealt with by future research. After all, it is by answering 'small' questions like these that the utility of future action theoretical studies may be further increased.

Note

1. This might be done by means of Experience Sampling (cf. Hormuth, 1986).

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