

Girls' and Boys' Every Day Life and Media Culture

Between a Global and a Local Perspective

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The basic aim of the research project is to focus on the role of media culture in 8-15 years old children's every-day-life, in leisure time life as well as in school life. A closer examination of children's' every day life will be carried out in three various geographical areas in Denmark. The project is planned to start in Autumn 1997 and to be finish in Summer 2002.

The research group assume that various local environments provide various conditions for children's every-day-life and for their cultural activities. Furthermore it is assumed that these various conditions influence the way in which they use media. The term media cover a continuum from printed media over sound-media and movies/video to the new hybrid forms of the computer-multimedia.

A characteristic feature of the recent media development is internationalisation which implicate that children all over the world watch the same types of television programmes. An increasing globalization of media has taken place. This development has influenced society, including children and their use of media. At the same time, there is a world-wide tendency of searching the local culture in local community.

On the basis of an interdisciplinary culture analytical approach, the research group has chosen particularly to focus on to main themes, both crucial to children in welfare society of to-day: *a) generation* and *b) gender*

Generation: Apparently, a generational problem appear in relation to new media. Up till now, the school primarily has introduced children to an educational culture closely bounded up with the printed and spoken word. In leisure time, however, when

children do their own options, they use – and play with – all sorts of media.

This contrast is also generational contrast. Children's media cultural competence is far from teachers' cultural competence. In relation to the parents, it is assumed to be more varied. Sometimes children use media to shield themselves from adults, and in this is a latent source of generational conflicts. Sometimes, however, the use of media establish a fellow feeling between parents and their children; e.g. father's and son's shared interest in TV-sport-programmes and computer-plays

Gender: Often, children's leisure activities and use of media take place as separate boy- respectively girl-activities. This is in contrast to the official ideology in school as well as at labour market where the intention is co-operation between the two sexes.

Therefore, a crucial research topic is the enlightening of how children use media in their building up a gender identity in an every-day-life that is market by ambiguity and change, especially with regard to the gender roles.

In a three year period the research group will follow samples of children at 2nd to 5th grade and 6th to 8th grade in the Danish Folkeskole (8-11 years and 12-15 years old) in 3 communities. The research will make use of quantitative as well as qualitative methods.

The research group expect that the project will serve to develop existing theories and methodological approaches in this research field. Furthermore, it is assumed that the project will produce new knowledge and results that will strengthen research environments and research education (ph.d. studies etc.), both in individual institutions (universities) and as cross-institutional networks. That is:

- enlighten children's media use in various local environment in a generation- and a gender-perspective

- enlighten the interplay between international media culture and children's own cultural activities and expressions
- point out diversities and similarities in relation to media and information technology in a generation perspective
- point out to what extent children acquire cultural competence and knowledge by means of their media use, and to what extent this acquiring influence their learning processes at school
- improve the field of media pedagogics, – understood as teaching and as well as learning media and information technology – both in relation to pupils and teachers
- qualify and vary the public debate on children and media

It is expected that the research project '*Girls' and Boys' Every Day Life and Media Culture – between a Global and a Locale Perspective*' will provide a new and better basis for political and educational initiatives concerning children's life and the function of media in welfare society – for the benefit of the child.

The members of research group constitute an interdisciplinary team at 'The Royal Danish School of Educational Studies' in Copenhagen and Skive Branch. The project co-operate with other research projects founded by the research programme: 'Children's condition and welfare' of the Danish research Councils. Leaders of the project are Associate Professor Dr. Birgitte Tufte and Associate Professor Ph.d. Niels Kryger, the former is answerable to Research Councils. The other members of the team is: MA Ole Christensen (Ph.d. student), Associate Professor Herdis Toft, Associate Professor Ulla Ambrosius Madsen.