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The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 2009; 625; 151

DOI: 10.1177/0002716209338572

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Half a Century of Television in the Lives of Our Children

By

SONIA LIVINGSTONE

The quintessential image of the television audience is of the family viewing at home—sitting together comfortably in front of the lively set. Accompanying this happy image is its negative—a child viewing alone while real life goes on elsewhere. This article reviews evidence over five decades regarding the changing place of television in children's lives. It argues that, notwithstanding postwar trends that have significantly changed adolescence, the family home, and wider consumer society, there was time for the 1950s *family television* experiment to spawn the 1960s and 1970s *family television* experiment, thereby shaping normative expectations—academic, policy, and popular—regarding television audiences for years to come. At the turn of the twenty-first century, we must recognize that it was the underlying long-term trend of individualization, and its associated trends of consumerism, globalization, and democratization, that, historically and now, more profoundly frame the place of television in the family.

Keywords: children; television; family; audience; historical change; individualization; parental mediation

Television and the Family: What Do We Want to Know?

The quintessential image of the television audience is of the family viewing at home—children and parents sitting together comfortably in front of the lively set. Accompanying this happy image is its negative—a child viewing alone, square-eyed and trancelike, while real

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DOI: 10.1177/0002716209338572

life goes on elsewhere. The former image was quickly popularized by broadcasting industries in many Western countries after the Second World War. It represents the hope of shared pleasure that motivated the public to purchase and install this new technology as quickly as they could afford to do so (Butsch 2000; Spigel 1992). The latter image, reproduced by newspapers, parenting magazines, and public policy pronouncements, represents the fear that motivated funding for empirical research by social science designed to investigate television's potentially harmful effects (Rowland 1983; Wartella and Reeves 1985). So who was right? Can we, after half a century or so of television in our homes and, furthermore, half a century or so of research, identify what difference television made to the family?

The moral panics associated with the arrival of each new medium, which demand that research address the same questions over and over again—about the displacement of reading, exercise, and conversation; about social isolation and addiction; about violent and consumerist content (Barker and Petley 2001)—have a long history. Bettelheim (1999) traces them back via Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, blamed for a wave of suicides in eighteenth-century Germany, to Plato's ideal state that banned imaginative literature for corrupting the young. But what this makes plain is that society's perennial anxieties about children, childhood, and the family are catalyzed by "the new," the popular hope being that by fixing the technology, society can fix the problems of childhood. However, a critical rejection of both moral panics and technological determinism does not permit us to conclude that television played no role in the unfolding history of the family in the twentieth century. Indeed, I am partly provoked to write this article by the notable absence of answers to the "so what?" question from the many scholars who, over the decades, have zealously charted the facts and figures on the prominence of television within the family.¹ Surely television must have made some difference. Equally surely, family life would have been different without television or had television been itself different.

To avert the charge of technological determinism hovering in the minds of this volume's readers (MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999), I stress that the starting point must be the recognition that television, both the domestic set and its broadcast forms and contents, was developed, designed, financed, regulated, and marketed by the very society that then worried about the consequences. Crucially, society has itself undergone profound changes over the past half century, so that television is just one of many factors that have influenced family life in the second half of the twentieth century. These changes include the urbanization and education of the population, the growing emancipation of women, the growth of affluent individualism and the rise of consumer society together with an increasingly dispossessed poor, the gradual inclusion of the diversity of the population in terms of ethnicity and sexuality, the decline in public participation and political commitment, and, specifically relevant here, the posttraditional family and research on adolescence. Together, these factors have refashioned the family during the twentieth century in the direction of individualization and democratization, ever further away from the Victorian family (Beck and

Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Coontz 1997; Gadlin 1978); they have therefore also shaped the context within which television was appropriated, acquiring a meaningful place within the family.²

Parallel changes in media and in childhood must be considered in tandem if we are to avoid either technological or cultural determinism. However, this short article can only sketch the outline of an analysis of television's place in the lives of parents and children, and in so doing, it must rely on an even sketchier account of the major societal shifts during the past half century to contextualize the arrival of television. Specifically, I argue, first, that the coincidence of mass television in the 1950s and what Stephanie Coontz (1997) has called "the 1950s family experiment" meant that for a time the arrival of television signaled a temporary but culturally significant grouping of the family around the living room set (and the nation around the prime-time terrestrial schedules). However, historical evidence reveals that this only briefly bucks the longer-term trend toward the multiplication and diversification of media that has facilitated what Patrice Flichy (2002) calls "living together separately" or, more abstractly, the processes of individualization, consumerism, and globalization that characterize Western societies in late modernity.

"Family Television": An Accident of History

Research conducted from the 1950s on, when television reached the mass market in many Western countries, showed a collective coming together of the family around the set, with domestic living space rearranged to create the family room (i.e., television room; Spigel 1992) and the domestic timetable adjusted to fit the television schedules (Scannell 1988).³ Compared with those without television, Hilde Himmelweit and her colleagues found in 1955 to 1956 that children in television households were slightly more likely to stay indoors and to share both time and interests with their parents. Television rapidly became children's main leisure activity, to some extent displacing reading and "doing nothing" and providing functionally equivalent leisure with little detrimental effect on schoolwork. Viewing figures quickly reached just under two hours per day (the greatest amount of time spent on any leisure activity; Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince 1958).⁴ From the early years of television, viewers spent less time alone and more time indoors with the family (though not necessarily talking to each other!), with television tending to displace going to the cinema and socializing with others (Andreasen 1994; Katz and Gurevitch 1976; Robinson and Godbey 1997).

Although in the 1950s family life and gender roles became unusually predictable and settled, this was, as historical trends in social statistics show, "a very short interlude that people mistakenly identify as 'traditional'" (Coontz 1997, 54). I suggest that a similar misconception, occasioning a similar nostalgia, has become associated with "the 1950s family experiment," namely that of "family television". For several decades, television has been seen as—and for many people has been—what the family watched together, after father came home from work and when mother had finished tidying the house for the day. Television

represented a key means by which father, by choosing to watch “his” programs, asserted his economic power; while mother, who regulated the children’s viewing while father was at work, showed her moral proficiency in managing her family. Yet, as Morley’s (1986) account of family television illustrated, fundamental tensions between genders and generations were often exacerbated rather than alleviated by these normative expectations regarding the family.

In short, family television was more a popular ideal than an actuality. Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958) showed that even in the 1950s, children stayed up late watching television, watching “inappropriate” programs and conflicting with their parents. Oswell (2002) adds that though television was promoted as a joint activity for parents and children (consider the title of the popular British preschool program *Watch with Mother*), it was widely understood as providing a babysitter that allowed mother to do something else. In short, the signs of individualization as the dominant trend were already present. Interestingly, notwithstanding the decades of research on whether the television was or was not beneficial for the family, it was apparent from the outset that physical colocation does not guarantee emotional cohesiveness. In a statement that one could still write today, Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince wrote,

Television does keep members of the family at home more. But it is doubtful whether it binds the family together more than in this physical sense, except while the children are young. As they grow older, their viewing becomes more silent and personal. Also, as children grow into adolescence, the increased time spent with the family may set up strains, since it runs counter to their need to make contacts outside. (P. 25)

Compared with radio, which took children for granted within the family audience, its mode of address asserting a unifying voice to bring the family together around the hearth, television arrived when the trend toward individualization was well under way (Oswell 2002). Family members were dispersing around the home, developing diverse lifestyle tastes and identities, partly because of the coincidental arrival of central heating (though few public discourses attack central heating for breaking up the family!). Faced with the task of addressing an already heterogeneous audience, television drew more on the techniques of market research to distinguish the child audience from the adult audience than it attempted to draw the generations together. Thus, television has progressively distinguished kid, teen, and, later, toddler and tween market segments through programming form, content, and style (Kenway and Bullen 2008), addressing each as distinctive from each other and from adults, encouraging certain activities, interests, and even subversive joys (Seiter 1993), while associating peer culture and youthful identity with the messages of marketing, merchandising, and distinction (Kline 1993).⁵

Locating Television in the Longer History of Individualization

*Individualization*⁶ refers to a social change with a much longer history than the half century addressed here: as early as the end of the seventeenth century, one

could identify “the privatization of families from each other, and the individualization of members within families” (Luke 1989, 39). But for young people, the change has been more recent, for the notion of “teenager” emerged only in the 1950s (Abrams 1959; France 2007), this in turn resulting from the conjunction of several key changes—from children having a productive role in the economy to that of children as consumers (Cunningham 1995), the extension of formal education from mid- to late teens and a commensurate rise in the average age of leaving home (France 2007), and the advent of consumer culture that created youth culture to fill the new space between childhood and adulthood (Osgerby 1998).⁷ The consequence is not simply the replacement of the traditional norms and values by which parents socialized their children (Gadlin 1978) in favor of the peer group but, rather, the emergence of the new responsibility, namely, “the reflexive project of the self which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives” (Giddens 1991, 5). Here, the media play a key role, providing the resources for identity construction and display and the occasions for negotiating and defining aspects of one’s identity against the expressions of others.

Comparing the 1950s with the 1980s, Ziehe (1994, 2) argues that the new consumer opportunities of postwar Western societies were framed in terms of ambivalent desires for ever higher domestic and personal living standards, resulting in “an increasing orientation towards questions of life style” that in turn became crystallized in the parallel discourses surrounding youth, thereby encoding cultural change in terms of generational conflict. Ziehe stresses the importance of music here, but for Osgerby (1998), television was also crucial as it addresses young people as distinctive in identity, lifestyle, and attitudes, encouraging their construction of a leisure career that, being itself subject to pervasive market forces and peer pressures, is perceived by parents as making them “grow up faster and earlier” (while postponing adult responsibilities longer). As Coontz (1997, 13) puts it, “In some ways, childhood has actually been prolonged, if it is measured by dependence on parents and segregation from adult activities”; this dependence is in a state of tension with young people’s growing autonomy in the realms of leisure, consumption, appearance, and identity. It is this tension, surely, that is expressed in the conflicts of adolescence that are, in turn, so often expressed as conflicts over the use of media at home.

Not only children and teenagers but also the family and television have changed, coevolving (Andreasen 1994) through the postwar decades. For many, family life in the 1950s was undoubtedly cohesive and stable, with sufficient affluence to fuel the consumer boom to which both the birth of youth culture (Osgerby 1998) and the golden age of television (Spigel 1992) were linked. While television diffused rapidly, rising in the United States from 9 percent of households in 1950 to 87 percent by 1960, the significant change over the next thirty years was not so much the saturation of the market, though this occurred (with 98 percent of households having television by 1990), but rather the growth of multiset households. Along with the linked technologies (satellite and cable channels, videocassette recorders, electronic games, etc.), this transformed the home

into a multimedia environment capable of supporting not only a shared interest in the nightly news, the national soap opera, or the Saturday film but also the diverse and niche interests of each individual separately.

In this manner, television followed the trend established for electronic media throughout the past century: the gramophone from the start of the twentieth century, the telephone from the 1920s, radio from the 1930s, television from the 1950s, the VCR from the 1970s, the computer from the 1980s, and now the Internet. Each has begun its career in the main collective family space of the living room, but as prices fall and multiplication and mobility of goods become feasible, each has moved into more individualized, personalized, and, for children, unsupervised, spaces, particularly the bedroom but also the study, playroom, and kitchen, thereby spreading both spatially and temporally—from defined and prioritized spaces and times to casual use throughout the home and throughout the day (Flichy 2002; Livingstone 2002).

Ratings show that television as a shared experience is in steady decline, for children and adults, with the increasing diversity of channels resulting in greater fragmentation of the audience and ever less adherence to a scheduled timetable of viewing. Today, few programs attain mass audiences on the scale of, say, U.K. soaps twenty years ago (with 15 to 20 million viewers in a nation of some 60 million). Even mass audiences may not share their experiences: in the late 1980s, I observed a family of six, all fans of the Australian soap opera *Neighbours*, who watched on different sets or at different times—a dispersed mass audience, eschewing colocation in the family room (Livingstone 1992).⁸

In 1955, watching alone was relatively rare: 24 percent of ten- and eleven-year-olds watched children's programs alone, as did 23 percent of thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds; for evening programs, the proportions were 11 percent (ten- and eleven-year-olds) and 9 percent (thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds). Viewing with parents, on the other hand, was very common, particularly for evening programs: 81 percent (ten- and eleven-year-olds) and 88 percent (thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds); though even at that time, children's programs were more often shared with siblings than parents (Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince 1958). Four decades later, watching alone had not risen among ten- and eleven-year-olds, but for thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds, viewing alone rose sharply to 32 percent. Meanwhile, viewing with parents fell, both for the ten- and eleven-year-olds and, more strikingly, for the thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds (33 percent with father, 40 percent with mother) (Livingstone, Bovill, and Gaskell 1999).⁹ A longitudinal study conducted in Iceland found that the percentage of ten- to fifteen-year-olds who usually watched television alone rose from 2 percent in 1968 to 40 percent in 2003, while the proportion who watched with their parents fell commensurately (Broddason 2006).

There has been, in short, a discernible shift away from shared toward privatized viewing over the past four decades, and, arguably because adolescents began to be labeled "teenagers" from the 1950s onwards, this shift is more evident for thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds than for ten- and eleven-year-olds.¹⁰ Although multiple sets and competing program preferences facilitate this trend

(having television in one's bedroom adds half an hour to daily U.K. viewing time and one and a half hours in the United States; see Livingstone 2002; Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout 2005), the primary driver is children themselves—the Young People, New Media project found children wish to watch alone even more they actually do.¹¹

Looking Ahead: The Changing Public Agenda

I had first thought to argue that, for its first twenty years or so, television brought the family together but then, from the 1970s onward, it began to pull them apart. But a better account is one that recognizes the signs of individualization from the very early years of television (and before)—in strategies of audience segmentation, in a history of multiplication and personalization of domestic media, in youthful desires to escape the parental gaze, and so on. Before these signs gathered strength, which took some decades, being dependent on longer-term trends regarding adolescence, the family, and consumer society, there was time for the 1950s *family* experiment to spawn the 1960s and 1970s *family television* experiment. This moment in time, it seems, shaped normative expectations—academic, policy, and popular—regarding television audiences for years to come. But at the turn of the twenty-first century, we must recognize that it was the underlying long-term trend of individualization, and its associated trends of consumerism, globalization, and the democratization of the family, that more strongly shaped and was itself facilitated by television. Two consequences of individualization are worth signaling by way of conclusion. These concern parental mediation and media literacy, concepts that are central to today's research and policy agendas, yet they barely figured fifty years ago. Parental mediation, I suggest, gains a new importance in what Giddens (1993, 184-85) calls "the democratization of the private sphere," while media literacy arises in the context of the individualization of risk (Beck [1986]2005)—in this case, risk of media harm.

The social trends of the twentieth century combined to transform the Victorian family, a model of domestic life that prioritized a culture of stability, hard work, security, duty, and respect, into the democratic family that prizes role flexibility, gender and generational equality, and a culture of self-fulfillment and individual rights. As Giddens (1991, 7) put it, in the democratized private sphere, children have gained the right to "determine and regulate the conditions of their association" within the family, while parents have gained the duty to protect them from coercion, ensure their involvement in key decisions, be accountable to them and others, and respect and expect respect. For young people, this resulted in part from the economic and legal hiatus that opened up in the past fifty years between dependent child and independent adult, resulting in tensions between the discourse of needs and that of individual rights. The new child-centered model of the family offers some resolution insofar as it advocates that parents should provide for their children economically for an extended period while simultaneously recognizing their independence in terms of sociality and culture, for now "the

goal of individual self-realisation overshadows community solidarity and stability” (Gadlin 1978, 236). However, this creates new difficulties in balancing the requirements of parents and children, difficulties to be resolved through negotiation rather than, as before, strict discipline, and that are often expressed through conflicts over space (the front door, the bedroom door), time (what to do, and watch, when), and media (personal vs. shared media, content preferences, etc.; see Andreasen 1994; Livingstone 2002).¹²

Given this context, it is intriguing to note that Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958) asked few questions about parental mediation or regulation of television, observing simply that one in five do control (ban, restrict, encourage) their child’s viewing and concluding that “control, then, is rare, and where it exists, it is aimed at preventing the child from watching horror or frightening programmes” (pp. 378-79). Possibly, Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince said little about parental mediation in the 1950s because its importance was obvious rather than because its role was then unanticipated. In early American research, the importance of parental mediation received a little more consideration, especially as a problem among supposedly negligent working-class families, who tended to treat television as the electronic babysitter, permitting their children access to content appropriate only for adults (Butsch 2000; Klapper 1960).

Today, parental mediation is conceptualized as combining three distinct strategies of restriction (on time, length, or content of viewing), evaluation (guiding children on quality, interpretation, criticism), and co-use (discussion while viewing, sharing the viewing experience). But in the work of Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958), Klapper (1960), and Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961), parenting was understood in terms of the Victorian model, with only restrictive mediation being considered. For example, Schramm, Lyle, and Parker discuss parental authority by noting that “late bedtimes tend to occur in homes where parental control is lax,” and they stress the parental duty “to shield a child from undue fright resulting from television” (p. 148). But they say nothing that conceives of parents as equals who may share (or conflict over) the entertainment of viewing or as supporters who help their children get ahead or keep up in education or consumption. By contrast, in today’s democratic family model, the latter strategies are instead emphasized (Valkenburg et al. 1999). Nathanson (2004) asks parents to discuss screen violence with their children, for example, rather than banning their viewing. States seek to roll back national regimes of broadcasting regulation; public policy is again determined that parents should bear the primary responsibility for managing and controlling their children’s media exposure, even though this demands a restrictive approach that problematically casts parents back into precisely the gatekeeper and rule-enforcer role they have escaped from, albeit ambivalently, in recent decades (Livingstone and Bober 2006).¹³

Notwithstanding these shifts, children’s escape from authoritarian parents has been curtailed, especially by comparison with the comparative freedoms of fifty years ago, though for different reasons. Childhood and youth have, over the period we are concerned with here, become key sites for the anxieties of the risk society—a term by which Beck ([1986]2005) points to the reflexive recognition of postwar recent society that it faces vast yet uncertain and unmanageable risks

of its own making.¹⁴ Not only are parents responsible for protecting their children from such risks, including the risk of media-related harms (Millwood Hargrave and Livingstone 2009), but children, too, in a context of the individualization of risk, are responsible. In the media and communication landscape, these risks are signaled by digital convergence. As the EC's information society and media commissioner, Viviane Reding, said in December 2007,

In a digital era, media literacy is crucial for achieving full and active citizenship. . . . The ability to read and write—or traditional literacy—is no longer sufficient in this day and age. . . . Everyone (old and young) needs to get to grips with the new digital world in which we live. For this, continuous information and education is more important than regulation. (Europa 2007)

Media literacy was not, it seems, a term in Himmelweit's vocabulary, though she was very interested in differential levels of intelligence as a mediator of television's influence (Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince 1958). As Luke (1990, 282) observes, the prevailing behaviorist tradition meant that "the possibility that viewers bring anything other than demographic variables to the screen was conceptually excluded." But following the cognitive reframing not only of psychology but also, therefore, of the psychology of the viewer, media literacy, we saw both a new focus on critical literacy as empowerment (Pecora 2007) but also, more critically, that "the discourse cleared a space for institutionalized practices of intervention"—notably, media education, parental mediation, and devolved content regulation (Luke 1990, 282). Today, media literacy continues to grow in importance on both academic and policy agendas, given current efforts to devolve media risks to an empowered and media-savvy public (Livingstone 2008). The family's role in mediating the television (and also an array of other media, including the Internet) is, therefore, increasingly an educational one, an informal extension of the formal requirements for children's learning, protection, and participation. But television's role in mediating the family means that the children are somewhere else, evading parental guidance, and, precisely, doing their own thing even when at home.

Notes

1. I will not, here, review research on television's effects on individual attitudes and behaviors, except to note the growing body of findings that, broadly, support the conclusion that television has cultivated certain assumptions, beliefs, and mores in the population as a whole, reinforcing a normative status quo of consumerism and do-it-yourself lifestyle identity, along with a mainstreaming of public opinion and a fear of crime, strangers, and the unfamiliar (Millwood Hargrave and Livingstone 2009).

2. As Hill and Tisdall (1997, 66) observe, "The idea of family is to some degree a fluid one, with a mix of concepts at its core—direct biological relatedness, parental caring role, long-term cohabitation, permanent belonging." Indeed, given limitations of space, I will not here stress the complex, multidimensional, and historically contingent nature of family, childhood, youth, and television—but I hope the reader will not take this to mean that I intend them in any simple fashion.

3. Indeed, the marketing and design of television still seeks to shape family space and time to its expectations—unusually for media both before and since. The home computer notoriously does not fit well into the home, print media never sought to, and the radio quickly adjusted to fit people's schedules rather than the other way around.

4. This figure has risen today to nearly two and a half hours in the United Kingdom (Livingstone 2002) and to three hours per day in the United States (Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout 2005). I thank Friedrich Krotz for drawing to my attention a German project published by Gerhard Maletke (1959) as *Fernsehen im Leben der Jugend* (Hamburg, Germany: Hand-Bredow Institut). As in the United Kingdom and the United States (Schramm, Lyle, and Parker 1961), this showed that family viewing quickly reached fifteen to twenty hours per week, a level from which subsequent research in Western countries shows little increase (see also Broddason 2006; Johnsson-Smaragdi 1992).

5. Ironically, throughout the dominance of mass communication, popular fears regarding “kids’ culture” stressed the homogenizing effect of commercialization; today, the more commercially effective strategy capitalizes upon the process of individualization, providing—and profiting from—fast-changing niche markets and diversified taste cultures. Yet, television’s power has its limits: children and, especially, teenagers remain a notoriously hard market for either advertisers or broadcasters to reach; children still generally prefer to play with friends or ride their bikes than watch television (Livingstone 2002), and when they do watch, they reinterpret the meanings offered to them in ways that fit their own perceptions, such reinterpretation being sufficiently creative for the media industry itself to hire so-called cool hunters and incorporate the inventions of youth culture in developing its own innovations (Jenkins 2003).

6. *Individualization* refers to the thesis that traditional social distinctions (particularly social class) are declining in importance as determinants of people’s (especially young people’s) life course, resulting in a fragmentation of (or perhaps liberation from) traditional norms and values (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

7. It is noteworthy that, although Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958) did not find television to have any impact on children’s aggression, they did find that those with television became more ambitious and middle class in their aspirations and values, and girls also became more conformist in their desire to adopt feminine roles.

8. This is not to say that television is no longer important in the family but, rather, to reveal the diverse and sometimes counternormative ways in which it is embedded in the dispersed family, providing a common or private leisure activity, symbolic resources for family conversation and negotiation, and an occasion for the socialization of children regarding the wider world (Goodman 1983). For many families, family time is also media time, especially television time, and television may be positioned as scapegoat, boundary marker, escape, time manager, stress reducer, bartering agent, babysitter, companion, and more.

9. Himmelweit asked in 1955, “With whom do you most often view?” (see Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince 1958). The Young People, New Media project asked almost the same question in the United Kingdom in 1997 (“With whom do you watch television for more than half the time?”) but did not distinguish children’s from evening programs.

10. Note that today, research extends the age range of “children and young people” up to eighteen, while Himmelweit researched only those from ten to fourteen years old—after all, in mid-1950s Britain, pupils left school at fourteen or fifteen and entered the adult world, as apprentices if not as fully independent (see Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince 1958).

11. This is not to classify young people as social isolates: note the discussion above of the changing nature of childhood. Nor should we overstate the case: most six- to seventeen-year-olds, including older teens, said they eat a main meal (75 percent) and watch television (68 percent) with their parents on most days of the week, and most talk to them about something that matters at least once or twice a week (70 percent). For parents, television viewing remains the activity they most commonly share with their children (Livingstone 2002).

12. Much of this privatized use of media is focused on the bedroom, once a rather chilly and uncomfortable, sometimes forbidden, place in which to escape the demands of family life but now positively valued for opportunities for socializing and identity work, saturated with media images, sounds, technological artifacts, and other media products.

13. It is noteworthy that Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958), writing in the then-dominant public service context of the United Kingdom (Oswell 2002), direct most of their recommendations to broadcasters (the new intermediaries—in *loco parentis* in the process of socialization), since, as Katz (2003) argues, television disintermediated parents; while Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961), writing in the commercial context of American (and, now, international) broadcasting, divide theirs more evenly, as today, among broadcasters, parents, schools, and government.

14. Part of this story is that, as outside spaces were construed as increasingly risky for children, home took over as the locus of safety, identity, and leisure. So, supporting Raymond Williams's (1974) identification of the privatization of leisure, historian Hugh Cunningham (1995, 179) concludes that for children, the postwar period saw a "shift from a life focused on the street to one focused on the home . . . [and] this was accompanied by a change in the social organisation of the home. Parents, and in particular fathers, became less remote and authoritarian, less the centre of attention when they were present." One stark illustration: Hillman et al. (1990) found that while in 1971, 80 percent of U.K. seven- and eight-year-old children walked to school on their own, by 1990 this figure had dropped to 9 percent. Within the home, especially for children, the bedroom has become a central locus of media-rich leisure and, hence, of the mediation of everyday life. Thus, while television in the 1950s drew people home voluntarily, by the 1990s children had become trapped at home, with television no longer their preferred activity (Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince 1958), except for a "boring day" when they are not allowed out (Livingstone, Bovill, and Gaskell 1999).

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