



Television – The Parallel School

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It is widely recognized that school-aged children in most European countries are watching an average of 2.5 to 3.0 hours of television every day. If we add the time spent with radio, newspapers, internet, magazines, and other leisure-time media, the total amount of time children aged 9-15 spend with media is estimated to be about four to six hours every day.

This may be a matter of alarm to some teachers and parents who see students spending less time reading or doing school assignments. They fear that children will not be involved in a balanced set of activities that will develop social skills, commitment to family and Church, and creativity-building hobbies.

An alternative view is that young people probably spend as much time in school-related activities today as they always have and that, in an increasingly urbanized society, they may learn many socially useful skills from television and other media. In this view, television, cinema, and popular magazines are not the adversary of formal education in the schools and the rearing of children in the family. Studies show that television use has *not* changed significantly the use of other media such as reading¹. Most of the time spent in new media is taken from activities such as playing in the neighborhood or simple boredom. Media use can make a significant contribution to school achievement and to developing important life skills. The popular media become what many have termed the parallel school.

¹ Barrie Gunter and Jill McAleer. *Children and television*. London: Routledge, 1997. 9-16.

The educational process of the media is, obviously, different from that in the context of the school, the Church or in the family, in that it is an activity that young people themselves choose and that *responds more closely to their own core identity*. It is the argument of this essay that schools, the family and the Church must recognize more actively the role of media use by young people and integrate this into the education process so that media use can enhance formal education and, in turn, be enhanced by formal education.

How young people organize their time depends largely on the social class and educational levels of the parents and on the personal interests of the young people themselves. Families of higher social status and education tend to emphasize school achievement, and they tend to introduce far more information and social contact in the family which will reproduce the social status of the parents in the children. Parents of higher educational levels tend to lead their children into media use which is going to „educate” them more or will give them much greater verbal skills. Thus children of better educated parents use much less television, are encouraged to read more books and become involved with activities which will help their balanced development and better academic achievement

The use of internet by children, especially in the European context, is still not as wide as the discussion of this would suggest². The research on the potential educational use of the home computer by children is in a very initial stage³.

Teachers or youth leaders may be very helpful in guiding young people from families with parents of lower educational levels and more modest ambitions for their children toward life-long media use habits which will be far more enriching and enjoyable. This is especially important in the case of young people with greater intellectual and analytic capacity.

² Stefan Weiler. *Computer kids are avid TV viewers*, in Paul Lohr and Manfred Meyer (eds.). *Children, Television and the new media*. Munich: Internationales Zentrealinstitut fur das Jugend- und Bildungsfersehen (IZI), 1999, p. 100-113.

³ Sonia Livingston. *Young People and New Media*. London: Sage Publications, 2002.

Do Young People Learn Useful Things from Television?

Leisure-time activities outside of the context of formal education selected by the young person are likely to be closer to the personal identity building process. As children move toward adolescence and beyond, the media are not just a source of education and entertainment, but the place where young people meet to know each other and establish their generational identity. Children meet their parents and siblings watching television together and tend to decide what media content means through social interaction. As children move into peer groups, these groups of friends will be the site where the meaning of media is decided upon in discussions with other friends. This form of education is more likely to be related to how to get along in life and will be less restricted to instrumental tasks in life. All studies of children's use of media have observed that a young person is active, that is, continually scanning the information horizon to select resources that will help to answer questions or clarify „who am I". The young may occasionally encounter a film or television program that responds profoundly to the personal quest, but the questions that a young person brings to a specific television program are likely to come out of a broad social life context of family, friends, neighborhood and personal life development. This context leads the young person to choose a given type of television program or other media and select certain ideas in a particular way.

In most countries the most popular television programs among children ages 4-15 are movies, drama and light entertainment. British studies find that the most popular drama series are light situation comedies. Boys in older age groups watch more sports while girls are more attracted to more sentimental „soap opera" type of serials. Younger children tend to watch animated cartoons and some especially prepared programs for children.

A careful British study analyzed what children aged 8-15 learn from serial dramas, science programs and quiz programs⁴. Other

⁴ Brian R. Clifford, Barrie Gunter, Jill McAleer. *Television and Children: Program Evaluation, Comprehension and Impact*. Hove, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995.

studies have analyzed learning from news, documentary and other genres.

Learning from Drama Programs

Drama aimed at general family use is of particular interest because this is a genre so frequently attractive to children. The study found that all age groups 8-15 were able to understand correctly the content and story line, a repeated finding that refutes the observation that much general family programming is simply „over the heads” of children. In fact, children aged 9-10 were slightly better able to follow a drama about a police woman than were children in the 11-12 year old group.

Learning from television drama by children depends on the degree of knowledge of the subject, firsthand experience with the problem presented and familiarity with the genre. The viewing of the two popular police shows by the children in Britain did not change knowledge or attitudes significantly, which suggests that their previous knowledge and attitudes on the subject were somewhat vague but well-set. The children did come away from the viewing convinced that a woman could do the work of police quite as well as a man⁵.

Other research on learning from fiction drama suggests that convictions about the nature of the world build up slowly from the repetition of a general trend of many series. A steady diet of a particular kind of program such as a police show, especially if the viewer comes from a life context in which there is considerable criminal activity, leads to a distorted belief that the life context is much like that portrayed in this drama.

Learning from Science Programs

Children enjoy science programs and are attracted to them. In a British study of children's comprehension of a program about

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

the human skeletal structure, children of the 9-10 age group understood well 55 per cent of the content while the comprehension level of the 14-15 age level went up to 75 per cent. Children of all ages could recall after the program about 50 to 60 per cent of the content⁶. A major factor in the appreciation, comprehension and retention of information is the general knowledge background of the child. A child who would have more knowledge about science from the school and who regularly watched TV science shows would gradually develop a much more sophisticated understanding of these programs and would gain the ability to use the information well.

The British study of children's learning from science programs found that if the children had studied in school something of the material seen on television, they enjoyed, understood and recalled much more⁷. If teachers were to introduce children to science programs in the classroom and to encourage them to watch these series, it is very likely that the students would understand much better what is taught in the school. As students grow older, however, the watching of science programs tends to drop off, and interests turn to broader cultural and social issues.

The Use of Television in the Schools

In many countries-Britain would be an example-the broadcasting organizations have developed series of broadcasts for use in the schools. The BBC and IBA in Britain, have produced each year some 50 to 100 television series for the schools. A series is usually about ten linked programs of thirty minutes each on topics which are related to the school curriculum. These are used largely to enrich a teaching activity to which the teacher is already committed. These series are particularly useful for teaching more esoteric, rapidly advancing bodies of knowledge, such as science, which may be beyond the capacity of individual teachers. The in-school series are also useful for drama, literature,

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 90-164.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

history, and social issues. At present some 90 per cent of the schools in Britain are using some of these broadcasts and, once teachers become accustomed to using them, they report that the broadcasts improve the learning process significantly⁸.

One of the great benefits of the use of televised materials in the schools is that it gradually develops in students a taste for more culturally and educationally significant television. Although most schools spend a large amount of time on print literature, most adults will spend far more time with film, television and radio culture. Television now is offering a great selection of culturally very significant materials, but the schools need to introduce students to the use of this.

Television for Young Children

Studies have confirmed that young children, ages 3-7, who watch programs especially prepared to stimulate curiosity and creativity or to actively interact with the show, perform better in school and develop more analytic, „thinking” capacities. This is referred to as the „creativity spiral”. That is, children who enter school with more study and information gained from television or other media have skills which enable them to take much more advantage of what the school has to offer and become progressively better students. These are the students who develop confidence in their academic abilities and eventually choose to go to university and to enter into managerial or entrepreneurial roles in life.

What are the characteristics of children’s programming that develop these capacities?⁹

⁸ Anthony Bates. *Broadcasting in Education: An Evaluation*. London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1984.

⁹ Sandra Calvert. *Children’s Journeys Through the Information Age*. London: The McGraw-Hill College, 1999, pp 184-207.

Presents Age-Appropriate Content

Developmental psychology has discovered the ages at which children learn certain basic human communication skills best. For example, the program *Sesame Street*, building on the discovery that children's vocabulary grows most from ages 2 to 5, helps children broaden vocabulary. This may be particularly significant when the educational level of parents may be more limited.

Presents Role Models of the Same Social Background

For example, the program may present farmers and working-class people who have academic and managerial skills so that children from these backgrounds could identify with these aspirations and skills.

Uses Language Comprehensible for Children

Children understand language that is within their vocabulary range, that is useful for a task introduced by the program, that is concrete and that has a direct visual referent on the screen.

Interactivity

The program portrays a program presenter speaking with children in the studio audience and asking the children questions. This presenter then waits long enough to suggest an answer so that children in the media audience can think of their own answers. Some programs introduce an activity such as drawing or playing games. New computer-based programs using a CD-ROM which invite children to interact with the computer program.

Repetition

Since television presents material quickly, programs come back to the same material and explain it in a different way. Video cassettes allow children to see a program as often as they like.

A Familiar Setting

Children like to come back to a familiar presenter and a familiar set of television characters...all as if they are the usual friends.

Programs with Unified Themes

Children can follow a program more easily if every aspect is unified around a basic theme. The most frequent unifier is a task that all do together or an exploration activity such a visit to a particular place. Also popular are stories in which children learn to enter into the feelings and motives of protagonists and which carry dramatic build ups that requires courage on the part of the hero. Stories are good for communicating values and attitudes and getting young people to learn by identification with the heroes.

Using a Familiar Adult Personality Speaking with and Guiding Children on the Show

Children like an adult to spend time with them, speak to them, attend to their questions, explain things to them, tell them stories, encourage them and play with them. A very successful format of children's educational program is a gentle but lively adult figure interacting with a group of children in a joyous and entertaining mood.

Introduces Children to Reading

The television program will feature reading visuals and characters reading, but will also make easily available reading materials that accompany the television program.

A Multimedia Learning Environment

Recent children's programs have introduced a combined print, televised and interactive software support package.

This brief article can present only a representative sample of what we know about the qualities of good children's programming, but it says much about the educational process through media.

Television and Reading

It is widely argued that watching television causes young people to read less and to have lower abstract analytic capacity. The current research, however, does not support this belief. Students with more academic capacity and students from better educated families where reading is customary watch less television and continue to read as they always have. Those who come from families where there is little reading were not reading before or after. Television seems to have largely replaced an interest in action-adventure reading, comic books and pulp magazines¹⁰.

Studies tend to confirm that in middle-class families with a richer informational environment, children have better school performance and better reading capacity if

- there is less watching of general television programming in the preschool period,

¹⁰ Gunter and McAleer. *Children and Television*. Pp 167-174.

- there is a more orderly home environment,
- the parents are of a more curious, discussing type and
- and parents use a less authoritarian style of parental guidance.

In working class families with a less rich informational environment, watching useful television programs contributed to better school performance and better reading capacities. In general, most families now find their contact with the cultural world of a nation largely through television, in part, because it is less expensive than buying books or borrowing them from libraries. For these families, television is the introduction into the world of print literature.

All of this suggests that the best foundation for good school performance and good all round human development of young people is a balanced set of media and other activities. It would certainly be a mistake to forbid a young person to have any contact with television, popular music or other forms of popular culture that are a part of wholesome young culture. This requires, however, good family guidance of the environment of children.

Parental Guidance of Children's Use of Television and Other Media

Research has confirmed that television use by children is very much influenced by the patterns of communication between parents and of parents with children. The parental pattern of media use often provides a structure for children's use of media. If parents cannot communicate well among themselves, they and their children will find their solace by watching television or using other media in silence or alone.

The ideal model of family communication is one in which spaces of family interaction are protected and exercised. Differences of opinion are allowed to be expressed, but also to be worked through and reconciled as much as possible. The use of media is one area in which family interaction is encouraged. Ideally a family will watch selected programs, in part, because they are

commonly enjoyed by all in the family and because all enjoy conversing about them. They will be selected because they are rated as good by critics and because they show good human values, especially values that this family prizes very much. Talking about the programs from the time children are small is of great importance. Some studies have shown that if family use of general family programs begins early, when children reach adolescence they may have their own media with their own friends, but they watch television to be with the family.

There is convincing evidence that, around the world, family communication and family guidance of children's use of television is deteriorating. One indicator is the rising incidence of divorce. It is most important for young couples and for families to become aware of the factors in this. It is also important to be aware that the economic and political systems of today are not concerned about our community or family space and that economic pressures tend to pull the family apart.

A first factor is the decline of the family as an economic unit in a more rural setting which set up an external interaction system bringing family members together on a socio-emotional basis. Today both husbands and wives work in separate worlds-and spend too many hours in work-and share little in common.

Secondly, a consumer-oriented culture has shifted family values from the persons in the family to „things“. Families solve problems of communication by getting more „things“.

Thirdly, these barriers to communication cause a spiral of continual disintegrating communication in the family. The less the communication and sharing, the more difficult it is to encourage good media use.

Young families, which have become aware of these pressures, have set up firm rules of spaces for family communication which are consonant with the professional and work demands of our urban society. Firstly, work and professional commitments are adapted so that families will have activities (an external system) together. This brings family members together to know and experience each other. Secondly, parents and children develop some media or other popular culture activity together. This enables them to share some ideas and values about the culture

around us. This might be a favorite television program, going out to cinema together, going to museums or historical sites together, reading a popular book together, etc. Thirdly, families need to have moments to invite in friends of different members of the family when all the family is together. This provides a context of interaction among the cultural worlds (and media worlds) to which different family members belong. Fourthly, every family needs to have its moments of religious ritual: moments when members of the family feel harmony among themselves, harmony with the universe and harmony with the creator. These are moments of deep reconciliation. Again, this might be a moment of sharing media together.

Virtually all texts on media and children recommend the following points¹¹:

1. Parents should set up their own guidelines for responsible media use.
2. Parents should view at least some television with children and discuss programs with children even when they can't see them with the children. If there cannot be at least a discussion of what a child has seen (even if parents can't be with them), then it should be discouraged.
3. Parents should be particularly cautious about violent and frightening material, especially for young children. Overly violent scenes or scenes with much explicit sexual portrayal can be very disturbing for children. If some of this is seen, parents should talk about this with children. Research suggests that children are far more frightened and traumatized than parents think.
4. Parents should especially make a point to engage children in discussion when there is a likely to be a misunderstanding of a distorted, biased or stereotyped picture of the world.
5. Finally, parents need to treat children as having some active good sense about the media. Sometimes there is a kind of exploratory testing by children. Often they come up with their own common sense values that even parents can learn from.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp 195-196.

Unfortunately, our churches do little to encourage this kind of family life because most churches are guided mainly by legalisms. Marriage preparation courses are largely preparation to live within the structures of Church law. As long as all members of a congregation are living according to the law of the Church, that seems sufficient. Preparation of young people for marriage does very little to create sense of family community and how to use the all-pervading presence of media to foster this community.

Does Media Violence Cause Aggressiveness and Other Harm to Children?

Much of the world's great literature, sacred writings, history and drama portrays violence. At times some of what is considered part of the world's cultural heritage seems to condone violence (for example, when it concerns national loyalty), but more often it is part of a narrative structure in which there is a struggle to defend and clarify values with the final result of community harmony restored. Most people reading literature and history portraying violence understand that the violence of the world is a fact that we must be aware of in order to work against it.

It is widely agreed that television, especially commercial and internationally exported television, presents an extraordinary amount of violence and sexual explicitness. Television violence portrayals have a greater impact than, for example, print media because it is such a literal, explicit, everyday medium. There is little conclusive evidence, however, that this causes the general audience to become more aggressive, although there certainly are some cases in which mentally unbalanced individuals have been influenced by television to commit acts of violence¹². There is also evidence that for persons who live in a context in which violence is an ideal and a way of life, television portrayals are a model of action which may, in some instances, lead persons to

¹² *Ibid.*, pp 92-116.

use violent means to resolve problems¹³. Violence portrayals are more likely to have a negative effect on children when the violence is condoned or when the hero is praised for violence. The more that children identify with violent characters, the worse the effect. Violence is more likely to have a negative effect on younger children when parents do not discuss violent portrayals with their children.

There is widespread agreement, however, that programming for children should not carry explicit violence and sexual portrayals for the following reasons:

- (1) Children under ten to twelve years of age often do not have the moral maturity to see that the violent action is not condoned. Children are often seen imitating violence on television, and this can become part of their personalities.
- (2) Violence is frightening to children and may leave permanent traumas with them.
- (3) Violence reduces the imaginative, playful interpretation of media, especially among children, and reduces the ability of media to develop imagination and creativity.
- (4) Children who see much more violent television and live in a less-communicative family tend to be more aggressive and they believe that the world is a more hostile violent place¹⁴.

It is difficult to evaluate the general cultural impact of television portrayals of explicit violence and sexuality, but it seems to be part of a general trend toward the deterioration of human and community relations in our post-industrial societies. Human relations tend to be more instrumental and superficial. These relations involve less tenderness, feeling and loyalty. It is difficult to say that the popular media cause this because it is the general political-economic structure of post-industrial society which sets

¹³ Tannis M. MacBeth (ed.). *Tuning in to Young Viewers: Social Science Perspectives on Television*. London: Sage Publications, 1996, pp 142-145.

¹⁴ Brad J. Bushman and L. Rowell Huesmann. *Effects of Televised Violence on Aggression*, in Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer (eds.), *Handbook of Children and the Media*. London: Sage Publications, 2001, pp. 223-254.

the stage for this. The media reflect our conditions of life, but unfortunately we do not use the media sufficiently to reflect on the culture we are creating.

Education for Critical Use of the Media

Virtually all discussions of media and children recommend that a program of education for use of the media be introduced into the schools, but with the cooperation of families, the public and commercial systems of broadcasting and other institutions such as the Church¹⁵.

Some form of education for use of the popular media should be a part of the universal education curriculum much as literature is considered a part of the curriculum. It should also be a part of religious instruction and of preparation especially for marriage and family. Often, youth activities are built around discussion of media.

Media education is not intended to build up a snobbish, hypercritical attitude toward television, but rather to see this as a presentation of popular culture which can be enjoyed and appreciated by the general public. Good popular television is always attractive and enjoyable for the public. The objective of media education is to understand it better so that it can be appreciated more. It is important to learn that there is a time in life for religious reading and a time for more serious philosophical reading, but also a time for light entertainment which has a beauty all of its own.

To be effective, media education must build upon the „natural” way audiences use media. All media use is a leisure-time experience and is meant to be entertainment, a means of relaxing enjoyment. Thus, media education should deal with the ordinary television that a given group typically watches, understands and enjoys, not a higher art style of television that some critics might recommend. If young people enjoy a currently popular situation comedy or action adventure show (and that popular program

¹⁵ David Buckingham. *Moving images: Understanding children's emotional responses to television*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996, pp 316-317.

does have some good qualities!), then that would be a good starting point. Later, the discussion can move into more subtle popular material and to see many different genres of situation comedy or adventure shows.

Media education today has a variety of objectives, each building on the natural way that audiences view television or use another medium.

Media Literacy

The most basic thing audiences do is to try to figure out what it means-what is the story line, what a particular character stands for and what the whole show is about. Thus, a basic objective is to understand what the producer is trying to say or imply. Most television viewers catch only a small part of what the producer is „saying”.

Understand the Productive Art of the Industry

Secondly, audiences are curious about the process of production of the program and how the producer creates the illusions of reality or of dreams. It is important for audiences to see that all media is a selective production of reality and to know how the media industry works, from finance to creating stars. People like to become „insiders” to the production process and to become in a way a „co-producer” of the meaning.

Discover One's Personal View

Every member of the audience has a particular cultural and personal background and interprets the production in a slightly different way. People are only vaguely aware that they have their own diverse opinions based on their personal identities. Sometimes, the crowd shouts down a dissident or unique view. It is helpful if the production introduces clues that encourages each

person to become aware of his or her own interpretation, the personal identity behind this, and then to affirm one's own opinion about a media piece. This helps a person to gradually assume responsibility for one's own view and values. This approach can be very helpful to lead young people to express and defend their own values about a television presentation. Usually, personal intuitions represent a basic sense of goodness.

Critical Evaluation

Once viewers have appropriated their own views, they are in a position to evaluate the production in terms of their own values. This is often the moment of critical appreciation and the moment when ideological distortions become apparent. This is the point at which students can develop a critique of the culture.

Discussing the Meaning

Recent research has discovered that people like to compare their interpretations of a media production in order to clarify their own opinions. Using the media is much more of a social activity than was earlier thought to be true. Media education encourages audiences to discuss and debate the cultural meaning because this is a major part of the enjoyment.

Creating Their Own Media

Most real fans of a particular kind of television or other medium come to the point of wanting to make their own. One of the most typical examples is that young people interested in music like to form their own bands. Media education encourages participants to be active in creating their own media and to develop their capacity to express their ideas.

This description of media education methodology reveals why incorporating media studies into school curricula is so deeply

educative. It brings students out of their narrow worlds into a much broader interpretation of culture.

CONCLUSIONS: The Long-term Contribution of Television to Child Development and Human Development

It is clear that television can teach young people many valuable things and that media education can make television an entry into the national culture. There is widespread agreement that if smaller children are introduced to programming especially produced for children to stimulate their curiosity, imagination and creativity, this will set in motion a life-long spiral of better school work, entry into a more imaginative and creative world and then to occupations that are creative¹⁶.

It may be helpful to summarize the contexts in which television and similar media such as cinema can make a particularly strong positive contribution to personal and social development, but also to indicate other contexts where heavier use of such media introduces risks and should be carefully monitored.

Contexts where Media Make a Strong Positive Contribution

The contribution of television and similar media will be greatest in families where there is good communication between parents and children and where parents watch and/or discuss at least some television or other media with their children. When parents appreciate the contribution that a balanced use of good media, along with other activities, can make to their children's development and guide their children toward this, television is likely to be a good preparation for school and an enrichment of the school and other experiences. This will steer young people toward a life-long habit of good use of popular media that will enable them to use newspapers, television, cinema, popular magazines and other media for wholesome enjoyment and to be in

¹⁶ Tannis MacBeth. *Tuning in to Young Viewers*. p. 210-211.

contact with current affairs and the current culture of their nation. They will have a balanced critical view of popular culture, be able to discuss this intelligently in their circles of friends and be able to participate in some form of media, especially at the local level. All of this leads young people toward more central leadership positions in their communities, parishes and work contexts.

This good use of popular media will be strongest in families of higher educational background and higher social status. The educational and social background of such parents will help them guide their children's use of media. If parents have a lower educational level and are involved in occupations that are more of manual labor, these parents will be less able to guide their children in the use of media, school and other activities that will lead them toward central social positions. These young people are likely to lead a life that is culturally and socially more marginal, unless the school and youth organizations can supply what parents may lack. The school, youth organizations and youth guides in the parish or neighborhood can help children and adolescents to discover whatever talent that gives them self-confidence. This guidance will lead them toward a balanced set of leisure activities, including the use of media, that will develop their talents. For example, if a young person has a particular fascination with science, youth guides can point to a media use of science programs that will make up for the lack of inspiration in working-class families¹⁷. The youth guides can orient young people toward a positive cycle of more central community participation.

The socialization of media within contexts of family, school and Church may become a greater challenge with the multiplication of personally-owned media and the privatization of media use. Children and adolescents are increasingly educating themselves and taking control of the use of media¹⁸. This suggests that guidance in the family and other contexts is going to depend

¹⁷ The popular film, *Billy Elliot*, portrays a young boy in a poor industrial town of northern England attracted to a professional dance career, but discouraged from this by his family and working class neighborhood. The film describes how a neighborhood teacher supplies for what is lacking in the family. The film itself is an example of media that can be an inspiration to young people.

¹⁸ Sonia Livingstone. *Young people and new media*. London: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 211.

less on external rules and discipline and more on good and constant communication between children and adults responsible for the moral development of children. The use of media is becoming so complex that constant discussion and discernment is needed.

High Risk Use of Television and Other Media

The current research suggests that the children and adolescents at highest risk are those who come from higher-status families where there is particularly bad communication between parents and children and little guidance in the use of media. These young people will have rich media resources but will drift toward the most violent and distracting media, in part to cover over the pain of alienation in the family. This will lead toward lower scholastic achievement and lower imaginative creativity. Their media use will reinforce the use of pornographic and violent media to support their depression, and will lead them toward more violent, erratic solutions in life. Their heavy use of media with no mediating discussion will lead toward a distorted „television” view of the world and they will be less aware that this is a useful but one-sided portrayal. The higher status background may give these young people greater confidence and aspirations, but they are more likely to be persons of greater social immorality and destructive, conflictive people in their family, community and career contexts. Their immersion in media during childhood and adolescence will distance them from community-oriented youth activities, and they are less likely to become supportive members of the community, the parish or professional organizations.

Another high risk group are young people, especially young males, whose parents have low education, low social status and live in neighborhoods of low social status. Their parents, like the group described above, have little time and ability to guide their children. The life context of these children and adolescents will be full of insecurity and violently emotional incidents: frequent unemployment, accidents, frequent moving from one house to another, clashes with police, extremely marginal academic exper-

ience. These young people will grow up on a diet of media which is more violent and pornographic than any similar group, and because their lives are in a more violent context they are more likely to take models of violent solutions from the media. Like the young people in the analysis above, these adolescents will be alienated from the school, the youth organizations, parishes and others that might be able to guide them.

These and other similar „high risk” groups need very special attention and guidance. Because they are not easily reached in schools and youth organizations, it will require almost individual attention to locate them and give them a type of close parental guidance that will enable them to break out of a vicious cycle.

→ **KEYWORDS –** MEDIA, FAMILY, EDUCATION, MEDIA EDUCATION