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Gender Equality in Swedish Public Service Television

There is no getting away from the fact that traditionally and world-wide the television industries have been dominated by men. (...) While the men were predominant in most occupations in the first half of the twentieth century, it is probably of some additional significance that the early period of television coincided with a time when (at least in the developed western world) prevailing ideologies of womanhood that kept women at home (Casey, Calvert, Casey, French, Lewis, 2005, p. 299).

According to Jostein Gripsrud, media representations of various social groups can provoke many emotional reactions, especially in situations when there is a strong identification with the group or even “one’s identity is created by belonging to this group” (1999, p. 27). Gripsrud states that gender and ethnicity are group categories that are especially affected by this issue.

Analysis of gender equality in television or other media can be divided into three areas: employment policies, sources in the news programmes and the programme content. In this article, I will discuss these three questions referring to the Swedish public service television Sveriges Television (SVT) and also give some examples of the content of contemporary fictional programmes produced by SVT.

I will use the term ‘gender equality’ both as defined by the European Parliament as equality of men and women in regard to law (Schonard, 2017) but also in a broader meaning as defined by the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure in 2015 as having “the same social value, as well as equal rights and obligations and access

to resources” (Minister Infrastruktury i Rozwoju, 2015). This latter principle is supposed to guarantee a possibility to choose one’s life path without limitations resulting from gender stereotypes¹.

Equal Rights Movements and the Media

Just as in the USA and the rest of Europe, the Scandinavian first-wave feminism focused mostly on suffrage as well as giving women independence from husbands or male relatives. In Sweden, for example, since 1845 women could inherit in the same way as men and since 1864 men could not discipline their wives with corporal punishment. Starting in the 1930s the work on creating the Swedish welfare state, *folkhemmet* (the people’s home), intensified aiming at raising healthy and good people that would comprise a civic society. The reforms included improvement of the living conditions for Swedish citizens and due to this process women received more rights and were encouraged to work.

A movement to change media was included in the activities of the second-wave feminism that started in the sixties and in the beginning concerned symbolic issues, for example employing first female presenters.

Listening to the Radio and Watching Television in Sweden

Relatively few Swedish women listened to the radio in its early stage because they simply did not have time. The first radio receivers demanded that listeners sit with headphones on, which was impossible for women who had to spend time in the kitchen after coming home from work. Women who listened to the radio in the twenties and thirties in Sweden were usually single and listened mostly to music while knitting or mending clothes (Höijer, 1998, p. 68).

Still, women were encouraged to use the early public service media to listen to the lectures that were an important part of the Swedish public broadcasting. In a debate in the late twenties and early thirties about radio lectures versus live lectures, the supporters of the new medium claimed that it could help to educate housewives. One of the listeners stated that in the countryside or small towns

housewives and peasants will not come to a lecture because they have to be at home looking after their children and the farm. The audience who really needs the lectures does not attend them. (...) And we should understand how much increasing the mother’s intelligence would mean to the country. Like mother like children (Nordberg, 1998, p. 74).

The television changed media’s habits. According to an American researcher Lynn Spigel, television in the United States, unlike the radio, from the very beginning was a female domain. Spigel analysed the phenomenon of the American fifties television from a gender perspective. According to her, television was female because it took the central place at home, which at that time belonged to women

and was connected with commercialism and consumption. However, television did not divide the family the way radio did, it was rather perceived as the medium that bonded the family which gathered to watch it together.

In the USA, the programming broadcast during the day was adapted to housewives' schedules and "the major networks were also intent upon designing programs to suit the content and organization of the housewife's day" (Spigel, 1992, p. 78). The development of television in the fifties in the USA was also connected with the development of the suburbia where housewives could feel lonely. Television gave them an opportunity to participate in the public sphere while they actually were in the private one (Spigel, 1992, p. 74-76).

The way American women watched television in the fifties did not correspond with the Swedish pattern. Firstly, television was introduced in Sweden much later than in the United States (officially in 1958) and secondly, as a part of engineering the abovementioned Swedish *folkhemmet*, women were encouraged to work outside home since the 1930s. The encouragement was supported by introduction of various types of childcare in the forties and the fifties. It should also be stressed that the Scandinavian television was at that time, and to some extent still is today, mostly educational, while the American TV was considered commercial, entertaining and representing mass culture.

Nowadays, with the exception of book reading, there are very small gender differences in media use in Sweden as presented in Table 1 (Wadbring, 2016, p. 9).

Table 1: Daily media reach in Sweden among 9-79-year olds (%)

	Men	Women
Internet	83	78
Television	80	80
Radio	69	68
Newspapers	66	64
Books	30	42

Employment of Women in Swedish Public-service Media from the Historical and Legal Perspective

The editorial leadership at the news programme *Aktuellt* consists of men. Programme directors and other editorial chiefs are men, foreign and domestic reporters are men. Are there then no female reporters on *Aktuellt*? Of course - secretaries, script girls, producers and five female reporters. And what do they do? They deal with medicine, environment, housing, family, social and children's issues. Just like at home, one might say (Carlsson, 1976, cited in Löfgren-Nilsson, 2013, p. 179).

The above quote seems unreal today, in the second decade of the twenty-first century when international research positions Scandinavia at the top of gender equality ratings. According to the Global Gender Gap Index from 2016 that was based on several criteria like economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment (that were further divided in subtopics), four Nordic countries are at the top of the ranking. Iceland is the country that has the smallest gender gap among analysed 144 countries, Norway came second, Finland third and Sweden fourth (*The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, 2016).

Employment of women in Swedish public service media progressed according to the women's changing situation in the public sphere. Research, not only Scandinavian, often concerns employment of women in different positions in news services because, as Swedish researcher Monica Löfgren-Nilsson states: "Within feminist media studies the dominating news room culture has often been considered to accord better with masculinity and the values and beliefs of female journalists have been described as an opposing culture" (2013, p. 173). Therefore, progress in this category would indicate the general improvement of equality.

As Swedish public service media were very educational from the moment they were established, the first medium – radio – broadcast many lectures. It is surprising to discover that in 1936 as many as 101 women were radio lecturers, but two years later the number decreased to only 34. The reason was not the sudden change in the employment policy but the general state politics concerning demographics. The high number of female lecturers is explained by a Swedish campaign to increase birth rates that was conducted at the time by the government. Women most often held lectures for housewives (Lindgren, 1996, p. 10), but in general, Carl Anders Dymling, then the director of the radio information department, was conservative and did not employ women on more prominent positions. Women worked as "secretaries, typists, and cleaners" (Sverige Radio, 2010).

When Swedish public service television started to broadcast its first news service in 1958, "women were practically invisible both as sources and as journalists" (Löfgren-Nilsson, 2013, p. 171). Still in 1968 the staff of the main news service *Aktuellt* consisted of 34 men and 4 women. In the seventies women in public service television still were employed mainly in the office positions, for example as secretaries, and producer's or director's assistants (Engblom, 1998, p. 224).

Swedish media researcher Olle Sjögren writes that in the early stage the lack of gender balance in public service television was striking (2000, p. 261). However, Scandinavia was not an exception in this area, at BBC, the first news service female presenter was employed in 1960 (Pederson, 1998, p. 63). When in 1975 a research on equal opportunities in media was conducted in the United Kingdom, it was established that the position of women was worse than in the

1950s and the percentage of women employed in media had decreased from 18% to 15% (Engblom, 1998, p. 224).

An American sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter whose analysis of roles in organizations was described in *Men and Women of the Corporation* in 1977 also confirms the employment policies in media in the seventies. Conducting some empirical research in an American private company, Kanter observed that men and women had different positions and different tasks. Kanter's research proved that in this period of time women worked at lower levels not only in private corporations but also in public institutions:

Women populate organizations, but they practically never run them, especially large businesses and public establishments. (...) At the same time women are to clerical labor what men are to management – in almost the same proportions (Kanter, 1993, p. 16-17).

In her book, Kanter argued that in the late sixties and early seventies large organizations' employment policy was characterised by "sex polarization and sex segregation" (1993, p. 16. In 2005, Bernadette Casey, Neil Casey et al. who were analysing television stated that in the last 30 years there had been a change and the television industry had introduced more career opportunities for women, but it is still too early to talk about full gender equality (p. 299).

Describing women's place in news service in 1965-1985, Monica Löfgren-Nilsson states that it was a period of "war and conflict" in which various feminist activities were undertaken and in the result the number of female reporters increased gradually (2015, p. 208).

But it was first in the 1980s that women received administrative higher positions within the public service media structures. As a result of the previous fight, the recruitment in media in the late eighties and nineties was more gender balanced. For example, in SVT in 1997, among producers and journalists the male-female ratio was 60-40 (Engblom, 1998, p. 224).

Nowadays, public service media are obliged to observe Antidiscrimination Law (*Diskrimineringslag*) from 2008 that forbids discrimination based on gender, sexual identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation and age. All Swedish employers are obliged to investigate complaints considering, for example, bullying, as well as put in place actions that counter discrimination. If the work place is not gender-balanced, the employer should try to make it more equal. According to the law, Swedish employers are also obliged to prepare a gender equality plan every three years. The law also introduces the Antidiscrimination Ombudsman (*Diskrimineringslag*, 2008).

In 2016, the Swedish government called itself “the first feminist government in the world”, which is explained by the fact that gender equality was the key factor when the government’s priorities were determined (*Jämställdhet*, n.d.). At the moment, Sweden has 22 ministers (some ministries have more than one minister) and 12 of them are women (*Sveriges regering*, n.d.).

As far as television is concerned, SVT adopted a new strategy in 2016 that is very similar to the law. According to this document, public service television should strive for employment policy that would consider equality of “gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religions, opinions, sexual orientation, disability” (Edström, Jacobsson, 2015, p. 52).

Women as Presenters, Reporters and Sources

Danish researcher Vibeke Pedersen writes about sudden growth in the number of female television presenters in the mid-nineties after the audio-visual media deregulation. She states that in 1994 women “comprised half of all television presenters, not only on the new commercial stations, but on the old public service station as well” (1999, p. 94). The problem, according to Pedersen, was that it was not done in the name of gender equality: women were employed mostly as figurehead or ‘pretty faces’ for premieres of new formats and it often meant a return to traditionally perceived femininity: “It can be stated that women were invited [to host programmes] as a guarantee of goodness and beauty according to the classical bourgeoisie perception of women” (1998, p. 61), as a decoration of the male world. This approach excluded involvement of the female presenters in women’s real problems or talking about the intimate private sphere.

Pedersen also noted that employing young, attractive, ambitious but often inexperienced women for public service media was an indicator of populism because they were a symbol of commercial television. The main purpose of public service television at the time of deregulation was to disassociate from mass culture, it could mean avoiding employment of women as presenters and hosts (Pedersen, 1998, p. 57, 61). Andreas Huyssen argued in the same spirit that mass culture in the twentieth century was associated with women and the “real, authentic” culture, the kind that public service broadcasters advocated was the male domain (1986, p. 45-47). The conclusion, according to Pedersen, is that “women [were] marginalized in public service television, they were trivialized in commercial television” (1999, p. 94).

The Swedish research on representation of women in public service news programmes in 1958-2003 shows that the number of programmes prepared by women as well as use of female sources increased with time (Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004, p. 41). The percentage of women on screen was still lower than men.

Table 2: The number of features prepared by women in news programmes *Aktuellt* (SVT2) and *Rapport* (SVT1) in 1958-2003 (%)

Period	Aktuellt	Rapport	Total
1958-1965	9	-	9
1968-1980	11	15	12
1980-1995	33	30	32
2000-2003	36	28	32
2000	38	30	33

(Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004, p. 41).

In the same report, a summary of topics prepared by male and female journalists was presented. In 1958-1965, women dealt mainly with culture, entertainment and human interest. The difference was especially visible in the latter topic, it was 18% of men and 58% of women who covered it. On the other hand, more men (46%) than women (14%) worked on subjects connected with war, politics, and economy. The number in this area increased in the period of 1968-1980: it was 53% of women and 72% of men (Löfgren-Nilsson, 2004, p. 45).

In 2003, the research showed that in SVT only 25% of news sources e.g. interviewees or experts were women. In case of politicians invited to television programmes the number was higher – 39%. As a result, the Swedish public service media established a work group that monitored and measured this type of data in order to impact gender equality. In Table 3 the data from 2007-2010 is presented.

Table 3: Women in SVT news service

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Experts, interviewees	38,3%	39%	36%	38%
Reporters, producers	42,5%	46,3%	46%	41%

Source: Sveriges Television¹

In Women Count report from 2013, it was stated that the number of men and women in the Swedish government and parliament was almost equal, but as many as 81% of politicians on television were men. The same year, European Institute for Gender Equality published a report in which it was stated that in Sweden the journalist profession is still dominated by men but public service media

¹ E-mail exchange with Morgan Olofsson, then the director of news programme *Rapport* SVT1, 23.03.2011.

and tabloids are the most equal in this respect (*Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Advancing gender equality in decision-making in media organisations*, 2013, p. 16, 34). A different report from the same year showed that in Sweden women outnumbered men as members of boards of media organizations (54%) (Kammars Larsson, Roos, Haraldsson, Bjerner, 2013, p. 20).

In the Global Media Monitoring Swedish national report, there is a separate chapter on public service media. According to the report, SVT adopted a strategy called “Reflecting Sweden and equal treatment” that concerned both the organisational culture and the television content.

Content of SVT's Programmes

Comparing the television world with the ‘real’ world, it became apparent that the former is populated by many more men than women; men are more likely to be seen in jobs or careers, to inhabit the wider range of roles, (...), age range and be seen in more body shapes. Many programmes and advertisements surveyed showed women as either overwhelmingly domestic creatures (housewives, mothers) or as sexual prizes and accessories to men (bodies to sell products, assistants to male authority figures) (Casey, et al., 2005, p. 76).

The increase of employment of women in media does not automatically impact programme content. The content is the result of many factors, such as producing and writing programmes by representatives of specific gender or generally accepted conventions and norms referring to gender determined by the culture of the country.

In 1976, George Gerbner and Larry Gross in *Living with Television: The Violence Profile* used the term “symbolic annihilation” concerning social groups and phenomena. The researchers claimed that “representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation” (Gerbner, Gross, 1979, p. 375). Gaye Tuchman developed this thought and referred it to the deprecation and ignoring women in media (1978, p. 12-17). Three years after Gerbner’s first publication on symbolic annihilation, the author described media strategies, aiming at ignoring and ‘annihilating’ women.

The first one is discrediting, a tactic in which the television shows “the most bizarre or provocative manifestations of the threatening movement in order to try to discredit it and to mobilize conventional sentiment against it” (Gerbner, 1978, *The Dynamics of Cultural Resistance* p. 48). The second strategy called “isolating” is choosing an important element of the movement in question, giving it a specific place “such as reservation, a ghetto or a kitchen” (Gerbner, 1978, p. 48), and then telling the group that is limited to this place that nobody should try to remove them from this “sacred area”. The last strategy, “undercutting”, was also called

by Gerbner “the tactic of terror”. It means discouraging the group from escaping the isolated place. As an example of the last tactic, Gerbner describes using rape by television as any other normal crime and accepting pornography. Gerbner wrote about those tactics referring to women in television, but he also pointed out that they could be used to undermine social classes, ethnic groups or minorities (Gerbner, 1978, p. 48).

The research on the contents of the programmes is difficult because programmes that directly concern gender equality are only a small sample of what media content tells us about gender or women’s positions and roles in society. The representation of women would have to be examined in every single genre and every single programme concerning stereotypes, quantitative analysis of roles, overrepresentation of men and many others.

The Scandinavian research on representation often focuses on press and if audiovisual media are examined, public service television is not always separated from the commercial ones. Another genre that is also often analysed is television advertisement, but this topic does not concern the Swedish public service television where commercials are not allowed.

Another area that is regularly examined is programmes for children and young people. Swedish researcher Ingegerd Rydin describes SVT children’s programmes from the early eighties, the time when public service television was still the only existing one in Scandinavia. At that time, editorial team of children’s television expressed the will to change traditional perception of male and female social roles. However, analysis of the programmes indicated that they promoted very traditional, idyllic but also patriarchal world. Rydin explains the causes of this situation:

Apparently the cultural heritage and tradition are strong and barely flexible structures, not prone to a quick change. Adults, even if they want to be seen as very progressive, look at childhood with nostalgia and therefore create the childhood world based on older values. Many writers consider their own childhood to be exemplary, which means that the traditional male and female roles can be changed very slowly (2000, p. 333-334).

The main activities for women in the programmes that Rydin analysed were caring for children and home while men were associated with production, politics, and other activities in the public sphere. The division was connected with gender value and status assessment: men were valued higher and therefore had higher status. In 1983, Swedish researcher and media gender equality activist Ulla B. Abrahamsson also described the content of SVT children’s programmes from one year. According to the analysis, men appeared on screen more often than women and women’s work outside home was portrayed as unimportant or nonexistent. Abra-

hamsson concluded that the image of women in those programmes was traditional and outdated and that they did not show any attempt at presenting gender equality on Swedish television (Abrahamsson cited by Rydin, 2000, 278-280).

Comparing representation of gender on television with Swedish society, in 1988 Abrahamsson wrote that there was an equal number of men and women in Sweden in all age groups. Two most numerous groups were at the age of 31-64 and over 65 (slightly more women). However, in television programmes for adults, men were characters or real people aged 13-30 half time as often as women, while in a group aged 31-64 four times as often. Abrahamsson conducted a similar research in 1980 and in 1985, and she noticed that during the five years when the Swedish law had changed to women's favour, the situation in television programmes remained the same (1988, 34-35).

In the twenty-first century, the situation did not improve to a larger extent world-wide. A research that was concluded in 180 countries in 2009 showed that women were more visible in media than 15 years earlier but they were still shown in traditional roles. In 2015, a media monitoring concerning female presence and roles was conducted in 108 countries. The representation of women in television programmes had not changed in relation to the previous research, and women in media were still mainly mothers, wives and, more often than men, victims (Siebke, Rosslund, 2010).

Reflecting on the situation, Abrahamsson stated that to improve gender equality in media content, the media needed to portray more women and show women and men as equal (1988, p. 35).

Gerbner stated that television shows the current cultural norms, its role is stabilising and introducing change is against the nature of this medium (1978, *The Dynamics of Cultural Resistance*, p. 364-365). Ten years later, Abrahamsson wondered if public service media that "serve the public" should at all question the existent norms and values (1988, p. 36). The problem is that Abrahamsson wrote it in the eighties, but even then the Swedish culture was egalitarian and equality was one of the key values.

In 1997, SVT joined an EU co-financed project – Gender Portrayal Network, which is promoting good practice in gender depiction in television. Together with the Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish public service broadcasters, SVT was going to survey how women and men were portrayed on television. During the first year of the project, SVT carried out a survey called "Who speaks in television?". The results of the analysis of the various SVT content showed that women comprised 36% of people who spoke on television (*Public service uppföljning för Sverige Television 1997*, n.d.). In 1999, the project continued in the form of meetings of producers and management aiming at creating better quality programmes with women. As a result, the training material called Screening Gender was developed in a form of text and video.

In the frame of the project, in 2000, SVT decided to carry out an analysis of the content of its television series. Ulla B. Abrahamsson analysed 10 TV-series produced by SVT and concluded that “majority of the 25 characters was relatively equal in comparison with the stereotypes for men and women” (*Public service uppföljning för Sverige Television 2001*, n.d.). What the researcher found problematic was that the depictions of women lacked depth which could be caused by the fact that the creators were mainly men.

The next step was the preparation of a scheme of evaluation of male and female roles in the programmes in 2003, which was supposed to help to set measurable goals. One of those goals was to increase the number of women participating in the creative processes. In 2006, SVT measured the number of women in various genres and programme categories: presenters, hosts, directors, experts, etc. Another goal was set – the society in programmes for children and young people should be presented as equal. During 2006, several different assessments of various programmes were conducted. A number of them were programmes containing news and information of various kinds. At the same time, SVT started searching for female comedians and writers (*SVT's reports for 2002-2005*, n.d.).

One of the results of this search is e.g. two programmes that represent the Swedish female comic scene. In 2012, SVT broadcast an adaptation of a French comedic format *Vous les femmes (WOMEN!)* that featured six Swedish actresses of whom three are also stand-up comedians. The series called in Swedish *Högklackat (In High Heels)* was described by SVT as “Successful series with elite comedians” (SVT, n.d.). Every episode was a series of sketches making fun of stereotypes of women, men and the society in general. In 2016, a similar programme is broadcast, but this time it is a genuine female comedic group that writes it and plays all the main roles. The group *Stallet (The Stable)* comes from Malmö and shows in their sketches a real female perspective, among other things, on: work, motherhood, menstruation, couple life, and blind dates. Showing good female comedians is still rare on television so Swedish public service television deserves applause.

In 2012, a Swedish media and communication magazine *Resumé* criticised SVT for a low number of female directors in the broadcaster's own productions. *Resumé* pointed out that one of the most popular programmes during the whole year *Julkalender (Christmas Calendar)* had not been directed by a woman in 11 years. The criticism did change SVT's approach and in 2014 and 2015 the programme was directed by women (*Resumé*, 2012).

SVT's public service report from 1997 shows progress towards gender-balanced employment policy within the institution. The closer analysis of the reports from 1997-2016 indicates that in the beginning the strive for gender equality on screen was seen more as a series of actions or a project, as exemplified by the *Prix Egalia* described further in the article. Between 1997 and 2006, gender equality was also a separate issue in the reports although already in 2001 in the proposition for broadcasting licence conditions for 2002-2005 the Ministry of

Culture suggested that the whole broadcast content should be characterised by “gender equality perspective” (*Radio och TV i allmänhetens tjänst 2002-2005*, 2000, Proposition 2000/01:94). However this phrase was first added to SVT’s licence conditions for 2014-2019 (Kulturdepartementet, 2013, *Tillstånd för Sveriges Television AB att sända tv och sökbar text-tv*).

Before this approach was adopted, gender equality was also defined as an issue that had “great significance for the Swedish public opinion.” (*Public service uppföljning för Sverige Television 1997*, n.d.). In SVT’s 1997 annual report and account, it is stated that television programmes that support gender equality in the best way are rewarded an annual prize Prix Egalia. In the 1998 report, the same phrase is repeated but this time the title of the rewarded programme is mentioned – it was the series *Glappet* (The Gap or The Hiatus, Peter Schildt 1997)².

The series tells a story of two best friends Ella and Josefin who graduated from primary school and feel like a new exciting period in their life is about to start. Ella decides to continue her education and moves to a secondary school while Josefin starts to work as a shop assistant. At night, before the first day of their new lives, the girls promise each other a continuous support and write their manifesto: “We are going to be heard, we are going to be seen, we are going to be present, we are the new woman, nothing can stop us, girl power, freedom, independence” (Episode 1).

Although the series received very good reviews in 1997, today it seems intrusively educational. The girls and their peers seem too naive and romantic at times while the teachers and students of the Swedish secondary school of the late 1990s resemble often those of 1890s – for example when students or teachers recite long and poetic monologues. The difference is the Swedish liberal attitude to sex. When the girls start relationships with married lawyers 25 years their senior, the sexual relations are not frowned upon. The inappropriate part of the relationships is the fact that girls betray their manifesto becoming quickly emotionally and to a certain extent financially dependent on the men. However, the overall content is excessively pedagogic with scenes like the teacher giving a speech on women’s right in episode 6 or Ella looking with fear and indignation at women in a plastic surgery clinic.

The strength of the series is its humour – there are many intentionally funny scenes. There is also one seemingly funny scene that shows how much the world’s attitude towards gender related violence has changed since the late nineties. Ella decides to lose her virginity with a boy, Odin, whom all girls at school admire. She does it at a party when the boy is drunk and half asleep. In the morning the boy knows that something happened and is embarrassed because he does not remember how and with whom. He goes to the school nurse who in the beginning thinks

² Available on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ_NQOXGFPg&list=PL75DBFB3831044274 (Accessed December 12, 2016).

that it was a homosexual rape but when she finds out 'the offender' was a girl she laughs at Odin. She says things that many girls and women can still hear today in such situations: "I don't believe a girl would be able to seduce you if you didn't lead her on" (Episode 3). Odin is really upset because he was just "flirting and having fun" but hears that one has to take responsibility for the signals one sends.

In 2016, the creator of the series Christina Herrström wrote on her blog that she had not thought about helping the victims of male rapes when she had come up with the idea of the episode: "I was not aware then that men can be raped". Her purpose with changing the gender of the victim was to show how women were treated.

In 1998, the Prix Egalia was awarded to an Emmy-awarded (best foreign TV film) *Den tatuerade änkan* (The Tattooed Widow, Lars Molin, 1998). The film is a story of a 60-year old Ester, a good wife, mother and grandmother who realises that she has not lived the life she once wanted. As it happens, she inherits some money and can start an independent life moving out from her family. The younger family members who have been taking advantage of her as well as taking her for granted, see what she has done for them all those years and their lives change for good as well. It is a good comedy and often subtle but it is also clear that again the film was awarded as a special 'gender project' and it lacks a 'female gaze'.

In 1975, Laura Mulvey in her famous essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* criticised the male gaze in the cinema films that she called "a world ordered by sexual imbalance" (p. 837). Giving examples from several films Mulvey argues that the female image and representation in cinema is controlled by the "ideology of the patriarchal order. (p. 483). There is one scene in *Glappet* when it is a girl (Ella) who admires a boy's body while he is asleep but in the rest of the series the male gaze is dominant. The audience can only see Ella and Josefin putting make up on, doing each other's hair, taking off their clothes and putting on nice dresses. When the girls meet their older male friends the viewer sees the girls through their eyes when the men talk about their beauty and freshness.

There are two scenes in *Glappet* that seem, intentionally or not, to expose the male gaze: one when Ella is talking to a school janitor asking him for a key with a number that ends with six – "sex" that in Swedish means both six and sex. He repeats the number too many times looking at the girl and smiling lustfully. The other situation is when the girls get sexy lingerie from the lawyers and the viewer sees that the looks on theirs and the men's faces could not differ more. Still, the intrusive use of symbols turns the television series into a parable for teenagers.

Nowadays, the female gaze should be understood not just as reversing the situation and showing attractive male bodies as they are seen by women but something that actually changed in the SVT's approach between 2005 and 2006. The female gaze should be an effort to put the female perspective into all aspects of the programmes of all genres and portraying women in them accordingly.

In December 2016, several SVT productions involving women are broadcast. As far as quantity is concerned: the number of guests and presenters in programmes focused on various types of news, SVT makes sure that there is a good balance between the sexes. An example can be a culture programme *Sverige!* (Sweden!) where the host is a woman and in 14 episodes each including three features, 15 of the features concern female representatives of different arts.

I would argue that today the challenge for the SVT is a television series especially because many of them are crime stories based on famous books traditionally inhabited by male detectives and policemen like Wallander, Beck or Van Veeteren. In 2016, SVT produced and broadcast two crime stories in which women were main characters. In both cases male characters that were equally important accompanied women but analysing those series I tried to look for the quality of female perspective and not limit myself to numbers.

Springfloden (The Spring Tide, Niklas Ohlson, Mattias Ohlson, Pontus Klänge, 2016) is a story of Olivia, a young Police Academy student who tries to solve a case that her policeman father was obsessed with before he died. For Olivia it is a school project for the summer but she soon is also engaged in it as her father was. She gets help from a former policeman Tom Stilton who did not stand the pressure and is homeless when we meet him in the series. In contrast to Stilton and Olivia's father, who paid a high personal price for the police work, there are two strong and ambitious women: Olivia and an older police investigator Mette who seems to be a perfect woman. She is stable, sensible, and successful both professionally and in her private life. There are other strong women in the series but they are of doubtful ethics – a former luxury prostitute Jackie, a businesswoman Linn and a psychologist Eva. Linn and Eva can also be perceived as victims. The same concerns Ovette, a homeless Vera and the main victim, the brutally murdered, pregnant Adelita.

The series was based on a book by Cilla and Rolf Börjlind who also wrote the screenplay but despite the female creative contribution I do not find too many influences of a female perspective. The reason is not because the murderer turns out to be woman but because despite the fact that this SVT series is crowded with women, and the men seem either weak or evil, the female characters lack depth and complexity (maybe with the exception of Linn). The good aspect is that *Springfloden* is a well-made and well-played crime series and what should be applauded, many middle-aged and older women have good roles in it and they are not objectified but it is hardly a 'female gaze'.

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Gender Equality in Swedish Public Service Television

The purpose of the article is to present and analyse how gender equality principles are implemented in the Swedish public service television Sveriges Television (SVT). The analysis takes into consideration three aspects of the equal rights approach: employment policies, sources in the news programmes and the programme content. The employment of women in public service media is discussed from the historical and legal perspective while the news sources are analysed based on contemporary research and statistics. The last part of the article focuses on examples of portrayal of women in three television series produced by SVT. One of the television series aired in 1997 was aimed at younger audience and received a Swedish prize for successful implementation of gender equality in television content while the other two are contemporary crime dramas.